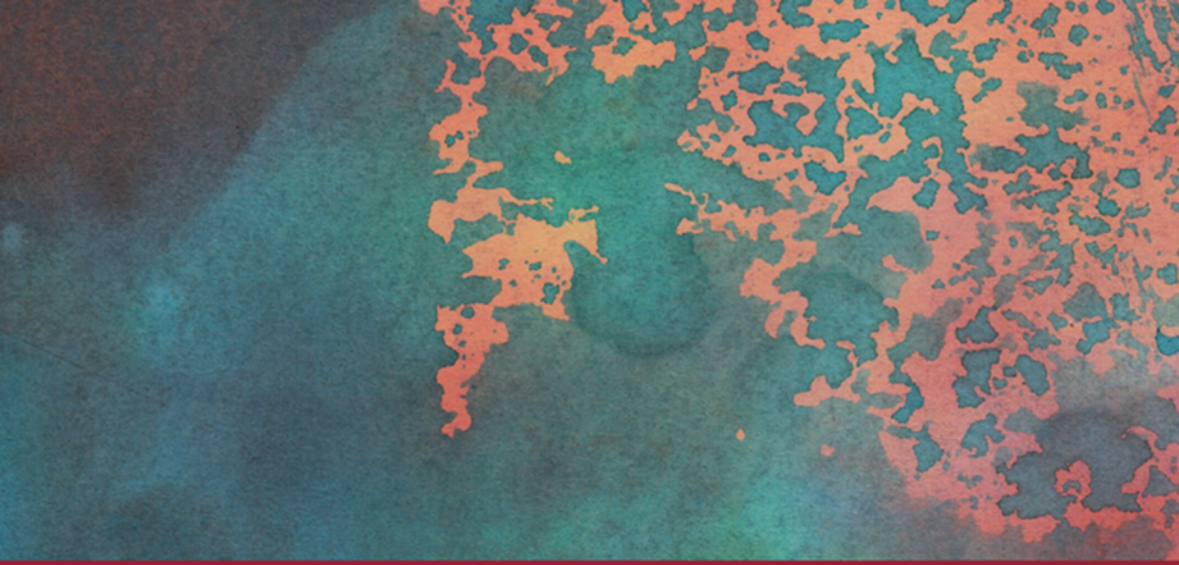

Routledge Studies in Religion and Politics

TOWARDS A NEW CHRISTIAN POLITICAL REALISM

THE AMSTERDAM SCHOOL OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE ROLE OF RELIGION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Simon Polinder

"Simon Polinder's book is a significant illustration of the progress made in the analysis of religion and International Relations over the last two decades. It does not simply state that religion matters but offers a theoretical framework to understand why and how it matters. It is a testimony of the promising advancement of the field of religion and politics."

Jocelyne Cesari, *Professor of Religion and Politics, University of Birmingham, UK*

"Religion has long been downplayed or ignored in theories of international relations. Simon Polinder addresses this issue, providing a critical reconstruction of the views of theorists that advocate for more attention to religion. Focusing on two of the 'giants' of IR theory, Hans Morgenthau and Kenneth Waltz, Polinder assesses their ideas in relation to religion, identifying theological inspiration from St Augustine and Reinhold Niebuhr. Polinder offers an alternative theoretical approach – 'new Christian political realism' – inspired by 'the Amsterdam School of Philosophy'. Polinder's book is a 'must read' for anyone interested in a strangely neglected topic: the role of religion in international relations."

Jeffrey Haynes, *Emeritus Professor of Politics, London Metropolitan University, UK*

"Scholars, for quite some time, have engaged the philosophy of social science in the study of international relations, and in the role of religion in international relations. This book furthers the debates in these areas in significant ways through the use of the Amsterdam School of Philosophy. Since the Amsterdam School recognizes its *own* religious foundations, it argues for an open, pluralistic, dialogical, approach, which recognizes all people, secular or religious, scholars, activists, or policy-makers – have a variety of presuppositions, contexts, and interests, which constitute their 'world-and-life views' and commitments, which *any* theorising needs to consider. In this way the Amsterdam School offers a creative, valuable approach, relevant to examining the empirical world, and to engaging with religion as an aspect of reality, a way of linking theory, practice, and interreligious dialogue, given the rise of the global South, and the multi-religious, multicultural and multipolar world of the twenty-first century."

Scott M. Thomas, *Associate Professor of International Relations, University of Bath, UK*

"It has been claimed in recent years that International Relations scholars and theories for a long time have neglected religion as a potential key factor in international relations. For that reason those practitioners working with IR theories were taken by surprise by the Iranian

revolution that led to the ousting of the Shah in the 1970-ties, the role of the Catholic Church in the collapse of communism or autocratic regimes in the 1980-ties and 1990-ties, and of course the 9/11 attacks in 2001. A quarter of a century later Simon Polinder takes stock of this claim and partly acknowledges the correctness of it: religion has been neglected indeed. However, at the same time he rehabilitates the 'old school' of Realism. Niebuhr, Morgenthau and Waltz had good reasons – even theological reasons – to use a 'realist' lense in the analysis of the relations between states and not give attention to religion. Key insights of Realism are still worth preserving. While drawing on the christian-philosophical tradition of the so called 'Amsterdam School', Polinder therefore gives a new synthesis that combines and deepens the views of Realists and their 'religion-critics', sketching the worldview and philosophy of science contours of a new 'Christian Realism'."

Govert J. Buijs, *Professor of Political Philosophy, Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Netherlands*

"Since the 1990s, when Samuel Huntington published his famous and contested essay 'Clash of civilizations', discussions on the place of religion and culture in IR were back on stage. Subsequent events and developments only reinforced that trend. The rise of terrorism, extremism, fundamentalism and populism since then compounded the notion of primacy of the domestic in international relations. Simon Polinder's book contributes to this ongoing reassessment of the role of religion in IR via three axes: he identifies instances of 'ideological blindness' for the role of religion in IR, debunks a series of arguments pivoting around the modernization and secularization thesis that do address religion, but in a far too deterministic and lopsided way, and offers a way forward – interestingly – by looking back and brushing the dust off classic realism and neorealist theory. Why not revert back to Augustine, Niebuhr, Morgenthau and even Waltz by combining a scientific approach to IR theory with a more theological, philosophical discussion on worldviews and beliefs? There is still too much to gain from these classics if we – with Polinder – scrutinize them carefully and critically to discard them to the status of historical source material. Given the abundance of today's arguments on religion, identity, culture clashes and the role of universalist paradigms (international law, human rights), Polinder's study is a constructive, careful and solid contribution to the 'turn to religion' in IR."

Beatrice A. de Graaf, *Distinguished Professor of International Relations and Governance, Utrecht University, Netherlands*

"I am so grateful for a book that not only capably introduces current debates in religion and international relations, but advances a genuinely new way of thinking about the problem: an 'Amsterdam School' for Christian Realism. It is a School of enormous philosophical and social scientific substance, and Polinder makes a landmark case that it should, and must, sit alongside fraternal projects in the English School, and in America. Theoretically robust and practically persuasive, this is the beginning of an important new paradigm."

Robert Joustra, *Professor of Politics & International Studies, Redeemer University, Canada*

"This book brings together an almost dizzying array of literature in a single volume. Dr Polinder revisits foundational IR scholars and texts in conversation with more recent research on religion and raises pertinent questions regarding the place of religion in the history of the field. These questions matter for contemporary scholarship exploring how exactly analysis of religion fits with the various different branches of IR theory. This is a challenge that continues to confront IR scholars and one to which this volume makes an important contribution."

Erin K. Wilson, *Chair of Politics and Religion, University of Groningen, Netherlands*

Towards A New Christian Political Realism

Towards A New Christian Political Realism presents a new theoretical approach to understanding the role of religion in international relations, considering the strengths of Christian realism, classical realism, and neorealism, as well as the literature about the relevance of religion for IR.

The book discusses the resurgence of religion and how it has become 'public' in the world since around the 1960s. It extensively describes the role religion plays in Hans Morgenthau's classical realism and Kenneth Waltz's neorealism and how both thinkers are indebted to an Augustinian way of thinking that has influenced political realism through Reinhold Niebuhr's Christian realism. The book presents an alternative approach inspired by the Amsterdam School of Philosophy: a new Christian political realism. It incorporates the theological inspiration of political realism and the necessity of theorizing while doing justice to the relevance and manifold manifestations of religion in international relations.

This book will be of interest to scholars and higher-level students of International Relations, the Amsterdam School of Philosophy, Classical Realism, Neorealism, Christian Realism, and Religious Studies, as well as practitioners working in the field of International Relations.

Simon Polinder is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Department of History of International Relations at Utrecht University, the Netherlands. He is associated with the project Reimagining Religion, Security and Social Transformation. His research is on religious leaders and their response to violent extremism in Kenya and Nigeria. He is the co-editor of the volume *Christian Faith, Philosophy and International Relations: The Lamb and the Wolf (2019)*. His dissertation received an Honorable Mention for the Mark Juergensmeyer Best Dissertation Award 2023.

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This series aims to publish high quality works on the topic of the resurgence of political forms of religion in both national and international contexts. This trend has been especially noticeable in the post-cold war era (that is, since the late 1980s). It has affected all the 'world religions' (including, Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism) in various parts of the world (such as, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and North Africa, South and Southeast Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa).

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For
my wife Harmke
Emily
Arthur

Contents

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1 Introduction

Toward a New Paradigm on Religion and IR?

Introduction

Ever since the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, religion has been a familiar theme in international politics. It is partly due to terrorist attacks and the actions of IS that religion re-emerged as a relevant factor. Other developments also strengthened this re-emergence. For example, think of the international actions and statements by former Presidents Bush and Ahmadinejad. Bush openly acknowledged that Jesus was his favorite philosopher and that prayer and faith were deciding factors during his presidency (Yang 2001). President Ahmadinejad from Iran concluded his United Nations speech in 2005 by asking God to hasten the appearance of the 12th imam Mahdi (ninth century), as he would rid the world of injustice (Yang 2001). In 2008, Ahmadinejad claimed that Imam Mahdi supported the daily operations of his government (Bruno 2008). The fact that Ahmadinejad reserved funds for the return of the 12th imam shows that he was willing to turn his religious ideas into actions. More recent examples are the way in which President Trump's policies are shaped. He openly acknowledges that some of his decisions are 'for the evangelicals', he regularly prays with and consults evangelical advisers and he uses religious symbols (Trump holding a Bible in front of St. John's Episcopal Church) to make political statements (Jenkins 2020). With the invasion of Russia into Ukraine, the religious references made by President Putin, and the political statements made by Patriarch Kirill, it also has become clear that religion cannot be overlooked (Polinder 2022). Still, taking religion seriously was not an obvious mindset for years. It was not until the 1990s that attention was finally paid to religion, international politics, and IR theory. In prior years, events occurred that could not be explained due to the lack of attention to religion. Recurring examples are the Iranian Revolution in 1979 and the Polish Revolution in the late 1980s. Religion played such a key role in these events that people slowly started to open their eyes to the meaning of religion in international politics. Since then, politicians and policymakers have become convinced that the role of religion in international affairs cannot and should not be ignored. As was brought forward by former US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright in 2006:

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> Since the terror attacks of 9/11, I have come to realize that it may have been I who was stuck in an earlier time. Like many other foreign policy professionals, I have had to adjust the lens through which I view the world, comprehending something that seemed to be a new reality but that had actually been evident for some time. The 1990s had been a decade of globalization and spectacular technological gains; the information revolution altered our lifestyle, transformed the workplace, and fostered the development of a whole new vocabulary. There was, however, another force at work. Almost everywhere, religious movements are thriving.
>
> (Albright 2006: 9,10)

Scholars too had discovered that the role of religion in international affairs could not be underestimated. A clear landmark of this development is Samuel Huntington's article 'The Clash of Civilizations', which appeared in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993 and was later turned into a best-selling book (Huntington 1993: 22–49; Huntington 1996). In the article, Huntington posited that the world was moving out of a Western-dominated phase based on Westphalian assumptions. According to Huntington, international politics would be increasingly defined by clashing civilizations, and noteworthy in his argument was that he primarily defined these civilizations along the lines of the dominant religions (Huntington 1993: 38, 54). Although Huntington's controversial thesis was strongly debated and criticized, he can nonetheless be considered the first to have highlighted the role of religion in world affairs and its consequences for International Relations (IR) theorizing.

In the wake of Huntington, many other scholars have written about religion, international relations and international relations theory, a trend that continues today. The undertone in these publications was astonishment: how could we have collectively overlooked religion? The overall opinion was that IR strongly contributed to the structural disregard of religion. So something had to change, that is, the lenses through which we view the world needed adjustment. The result of this is that religion has almost become a field of study in its own right within IR, like the sub-section International Political Economy (Farr 2008: 34).[1] A clear example of this is the founding of a special section Religion and International Relations at the International Studies Association in 2013.

One of the central conclusions of the literature is that International Relations ignores the role of religion in international relations. Inadequate theories lead to inadequate policies, which may have dramatic consequences. For example, if the United States had taken the role and significance of religion more seriously, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 would not have come as a complete surprise (Thomas 2005: 1–12).

> Does religion need to be brought into the existing concepts, theories, or paradigms of international relations or are new ones required? A more disquieting suggestion is that what is required is a new concept of theory and what it is supposed to do in international relations.
>
> (Thomas 2005: 12)

Scholars therefore urge that within IR more attention should be paid to the role of religion. Existing theories will have to be replaced or modified. There are scholars who aim to study and explain religion in international relations, but in this book I will focus on scholars who want to explain international relations by including religious factors:

> the basic theories of international relations, like realism, liberalism, constructivism, the English School and Marxism retain their explanatory power and describe important, and even dominant aspects of international relations, but unless they take religion into account they cannot provide a complete explanation for international politics and events.[2]
>
> (Fox 2009: 273)

The works of Huntington, Thomas, and Fox have two things in common: all draw attention to religion's presence in the world and maintain that existing theories and concepts are unable to grasp this phenomenon adequately and satisfactorily. They are concerned that mainstream IR overlooks religious factors in world affairs and argue that religion should be taken into account in IR.

1.1 A New Debate in IR: Religion

In IR, competing paradigms are frequently discussed. It is often used to describe the opposition between idealism and realism or the distinctions between realism, pluralism, and structuralism. These are different paradigms, because the various theories hold different starting points, worldviews, and understandings of what evidence is, and therefore they can hardly be compared or tested against each other. Each of the theories operates as a kind of self-contained intellectual community with its own journals, meetings, and leaders. Discussions between the various paradigms are rare and often result in predictable outcomes (Hollis & Smith 1991: 75, 76). In the past, there have been various challenges to existing paradigms in IR. Realism was a reaction to idealism and social constructivism was a critique on neorealism because it thought that important elements were left out. Critical theory, feminism, and green perspectives were not exactly distinct theories, but they challenged existing theories and the IR paradigm for the lack of attention to capitalist power structures, gender, and environmental issues (Steans et al. 2010: 103–228). Since the 1990s, scholars have added a new topic to this list: religion.[3] They argue that current mainstream IR is characterized by a set of institutional rules and practices as well as theoretical assumptions that are shaped by group commitments and controlled by the discipline, which prevents new insights from being taken into account, in this case regarding the role of religion. This group of scholars, whom I call 'religionists', challenge the IR paradigm on several fronts and hope to create a revolution within IR so that religion will be taken seriously.[4] These religionists maintain that IR theories should be far more attentive to

religious factors because religion is 'out there' in the real world and dealing with it is crucial to make sense of world affairs. They are convinced that IR theories are much better suited to empirically understand international affairs if they include religion. The following quotation from Thomas reflects this position clearly:

> Using the wrong conceptual map – or theory or paradigm – can be just as misleading (and maybe even more dangerous for your security) than using the wrong geographical map (…). The point is not only that such maps indicate inappropriate routes, but that they can hide or distract a researcher from observing those features of the religious and political landscape that do require attention.
>
> (Thomas 2005: 48)

The way in which the religionists want to consider religion varies. There are scholars who do not offer alternatives, but others either develop a new theoretical framework or propose to integrate religious factors into existing IR theories because they appreciate the value of current IR theory. However, the common ground is that they share the following main thesis and subtheses.

Main thesis:	IR has to consider the role of religion in the world.
Subthesis I:	Religion is everywhere in the world and IR should not ignore it.
Subthesis II:	IR has a bias against acknowledging the significance of religion because its study of international relations has been heavily influenced by Westphalian assumptions.
Subthesis III:	The 'old paradigm' suffers from philosophical limitations that make it difficult to take religion into account.

These three subtheses correspond with the three levels I will set out later in this chapter, namely the empirical level (subthesis I), the domain-specific level (subthesis II), and the level of philosophy of science (subthesis III). Although these subtheses each stand on their own, there is a relationship between them. Assumptions made on a philosophy of science level do influence the assumptions held on the level of IR, and ultimately what people see on the empirical level. Of course, this influence may also take place in the reverse direction.

1.2 Argument of the Book

This book addresses these theses because they are supported by a large number of scholars and they challenge the adequacy of prominent existing mainstream IR theories, especially realism and neorealism. I deal with the first subthesis in Chapters 2 and 3 and the second and third subtheses in Chapters 4 and 5, respectively. In response to the reproach of the religionists, I present how Hans Morgenthau's (1904–1980) classical realism and Kenneth Waltz's (1924–2013)

neorealism deal with religion in Chapters 6 and 8, respectively, and to what extent the criticism of the religionists is valid in Chapters 7 and 9.[5] My conclusion is that classical realism and neorealism have important arguments for their reticent approach to religion, but that they also have some shortcomings and that we need a new approach to overcome them. This approach, which I call a new Christian realism, takes religion seriously, but it is also open about its own political theology. This is what Chapter 10 is about. This approach adds a European or continental element to the current debate which is important because IR as a discipline itself is still dominated by the United States (e.g. Toft 2013: 673–691). The European or continental perspective that I am bringing in is the Amsterdam School of Philosophy.

1.3 The Amsterdam School of Philosophy

The Amsterdam School of Philosophy was developed by a group of philosophers who since the late 1920s have aimed to find a new integration of Christian faith and academic inquiry (Wolterstorff 1983: 69, 72).[6] As characterized by Hengstmengel, this is a Christian philosophical approach in the tradition of Aurelius Augustine (354–430) and John Calvin (1509–1564) (Hengstmengel 2015). This school emerged when scholars became dissatisfied on the one hand with the claim to 'neutrality' and 'objectivity' in modern science, and on the other hand with what they saw as cheap 'biblicistic' and often suffocating ways of bringing Christianity to bear on academic work. In contrast with both viewpoints, this school suggests conducting academic analysis based on the idea of 'intrinsic meaning'. This implies that reality itself, physical, human, and social reality, can only be understood in terms of certain distinctive *teloi*, certain intrinsic qualities that humans have to discern, respect, and bring to fruition – also in their academic analyses. The most influential figure in this school was the philosopher of law Herman Dooyeweerd (1894–1977), who, in turn, was inspired by Abraham Kuyper (1837–1920). The Amsterdam School is able to contribute to the debate on religion and international relations, because it has an open but critical perspective on what is going on in the empirical world while offering the possibility to involve religion in a constructive ordered fashion as an aspect of reality. In recent years, representatives of this school have developed what is called a 'Normative Practice Approach', which attempts to analyze human (professional) practices in terms of their qualifying *telos*, while at the same time taking full account of the material, economic, organizational, and political conditions and contexts of these practices. Moreover, according to this approach, the way people determine and embody the *telos*, worldviews, and religions plays a very important role. In this way, structural and contextual analyses are combined with cultural and worldview analyses. It is this perspective that I will bring in here and there, and which plays a role in the alternative approach to religion and international relations that I am proposing. This approach furthers the debate because it provides a framework that brings the various parties in the discussion together.

A major contribution of the Amsterdam School to discussions, about science and its neutrality, is its attention for the worldview level. The worldview level concerns the way in which people, and therefore scientists too, respond and relate to reality. Earlier on Govert Buijs and I wrote about this:

> No human being can escape from making, whether reflectedly or unreflectedly, fundamental choices about how they will relate to the world based on certain ideas about how and what the world is, about meaning. Humans have their Archimedean point, their anchor point of ultimate trust.
>
> (Buijs and Polinder 2020: 314, see also Goris and Polinder, 2023)

Fox and Sandler state that people almost universally possess a coherent, overarching, and articulated 'Weltanschauung', 'worldview', 'perspective', 'frame of reference', 'value orientation', or 'meaning system' that influences their behavior. Policymakers are not only influenced by their personal belief system but also by the religious affiliation of the people they represent and the political and cultural context they belong to (Fox and Sandal 2010; Fox and Sandler 2004: 57–59; Sandal and Fox 2013: 13, 14). The Amsterdam School considers the worldview level important, as it relates to people's overall vision of reality, which is nearly always a great influence on the way they conduct science.

1.4 Various Levels of Theorizing

Throughout this book, I distinguish four levels: (1) the empirical level; (2) the level of a specific domain; (3) the level of philosophy of science; and (4) the worldview level. Within the third level, I distinguish between four sub-levels, called (a) the social and cultural embeddedness; (b) ontology; (c) epistemology; and (d) methodology. This leaves us with the following structure:

Level 1. *Empirics*
Level 2. *Domain-specific*
Level 3. *Philosophy of science*

a. *Social and cultural embeddedness*
b. *Ontology*
c. *Epistemology*
d. *Methodology*

Level 4. *Worldview*

The empirical level is about the theoretical concepts about the world outside. The second level plays a more direct role in explaining a specific domain, like international politics, identifying the relevant actors and how they are constructed, and developing propositions about what is going on. The third level addresses the fundamental assumptions of social inquiry: the nature of human agency and its relationship to social structures, the role of ideas and material

forces in social life, and the proper form of social explanation (Wendt 1999: 4–7). The third level deals with social embeddedness, ontology, epistemology, and methodology (Bersselaar 2003: 17). The social and cultural embeddedness raises the question of the influence of the cultural and social context on academic research. For example, what are the beliefs at a certain time in history and how do they influence certain academic disciplines or research areas? Ontology discusses the nature of the subject matter. Is it observable with the senses? Is it a general phenomenon or a unique event? Epistemology deals with the question of how to understand the subject matter. Under what conditions can researchers, given the nature of the object, acquire knowledge about it? Should they act as an observer or as a participant? Should they engage in the object or leave it alone? Methodology addresses the question: how is the object of inquiry to be investigated (Bersselaar 2003: 17)? It is important to keep in mind that these four levels can be distinguished but cannot be separated. Assumptions made on the worldview (fourth level) or the level of philosophy of science (third level) have an influence on the second and first levels, but they cannot be reduced to each other. Sometimes, it is not clear if a certain assumption in a theory is of a philosophical or a worldview nature. The fact that these levels cannot be separated also means that it is often helpful to involve the worldview level in order to understand a scholarly theory fully and adequately. However, it is important to distinguish the worldview level from the other three, because most theories in general and in IR in particular, consist of the three levels mentioned. In other words, when I use the term 'theory', I refer to the three levels without the worldview level.

1.5 Definitions of Concepts

There are a number of important concepts which are used in this book which I define very briefly here (Polinder 2021: 34–46).[7]

- Worldview: an anchor, a more or less conceptual ultimate point of trust. A worldview consists of two parts: personal, ultimate commitments (sometimes also referred to as faith or trust commitments) and beliefs.
- Religion: the personal commitment to a set of beliefs about the ultimate ground of existence, a transcendent reference point, and the communities and practices that form around and follow from these beliefs.
- Religious worldview: a worldview (beliefs about an ultimate reality and personal commitment) based on a transcendent reference point.
- Secular worldview: a worldview (beliefs about an ultimate reality and personal commitment) without any transcendent reference point. It assumes a self-enclosed, immanent reality in which something is considered as ultimate reality. Often the term 'naturalism' is used as a synonym.
- Quasi-religious worldview: a worldview with similar characteristics as a religious worldview, but the transcendent reference point is at closer inspection rather immanent and the personal commitment is geared toward immanent realities.

- Political religion: is a quasi-religious worldview with public aspirations which aims at the transformation of society as a whole.
- Ideology: see 'Political religion'
- Political theology: sets of beliefs and/or (academic) ideas about the political which take into account viewpoints that emerge from either a religious worldview or from theology, without the political theologian necessarily committing himself to the transcendent beliefs of the religious worldview or theology (though this may be the case).
- Secularization: can be defined as (1) the diminishing influence of religion; (2) the differentiation between the religious and other spheres of life; (3) the denial of the necessity to refer to religion or revelation; and (4) the continuation of theology by other means.[8]

Notes

1 In this book, the study of international relations will follow the scholarly convention, in which the events taking place in the world will use the lower case (ir) or international relations, and the upper case (IR), or International Relations will refer to the scholarly study of the kinds of events, actors, activities, processes.
2 In another book, Sandal and Fox admit that religion has been acknowledged in some strands of classical realist thought, but their main position is that religion deserves more attention (Sandal and Fox 2013: 30).
3 Representative religionist scholars are Bassam Tibi, Michael Barnett, Emily Cochran Bech, John A. Bernbaum, Stanton Burnett, Jonathan Chaplin, Il Hyun Cho, Wade Clark Roof, Ken R. Dark, Michael C. Desch, Thomas F. Farr, Timothy Fitzgerald, Jonathan Fox, Ludwig Gelot, Rebecca A. Glazier, Eric. O. Hanson, Pavlos Hatzopoulos, Jeffrey Haynes, Kirstin Hasler, J. Bryan Hehir, Samuel Huntington, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, Patrick James, Robert Joustra, Peter J. Katzenstein, Berma Klein Goldewijk, Vendulka Kubálková, Carsten Bagge Laustsen, Mika Luoma-aho, Cecelia Lynch, Walter McDougall, Eric Patterson, Fabio Petito, Ralph Pettman, Daniel Philpott, John A. Rees, Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, Nukhet A. Sandal, Shmuel Sandler, Harold H. Saunders, Timothy Samuel Shah, Giorgi Shani, Mona, Kanwal Sheikh, Megan Shore, James W. Skillen, Jack Snyder, John F. Stack, John D. Stempel, Scott Thomas, J. Ann Tickner, Monica Duffy Toft, Ole Waever, Erin Wilson and Robert Wuthnow.
4 'Religionists' is not a usual term in International Relations. It is, however, an existing word. Most dictionaries define a religionist as someone who adheres to a religion, but also as a devoted or zealous person. This is not the way I would like to define the term 'religionists'. I use the term to denote a group of scholars who advocate for more attention to religion in IR.
5 The difference with Sandal and Fox's book (2013) is that they deal with more than one representative per school, which makes their conclusion more representative. My investigation of Morgenthau and Waltz is more in-depth.
6 The term 'Amsterdam School' was coined by Nicolas Wolterstorff (1932–) (Wolterstorff 1983: 69, 72).
7 I discuss these definitions extensively in my dissertation.
8 The first three elements are used most, but I also use the fourth one in this book.

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2 A Global Resurgence of Religion

Introduction

In this chapter, I set out the nature of the comeback of religion in the 1990s, also known as the so-called 'global resurgence of religion'. Whether there really has been a resurgence of religion or if it merely seemed that way because scholars started paying attention to it, is a topic of debate. I will contend that, ultimately, both options are true. There has been an actual change in the world and scholars have adapted their perception, making religion more visible.

Naturally, the global resurgence of religion did not happen overnight and can be seen as the result of other developments, in which the process of globalization has played a key role. Worldwide modernization made it possible for religions to manifest themselves all over the world. On the other hand, other religious groups resisted this modernization and looked for alternative ways to modernize and develop, while maintaining their cultural and religious identity. This is because modernization brought disappointment as well, as it did not come close to solving all problems. On top of that, the influence of modernity is often regarded as subversive to the dominant cultural and religious norms and values. As a result, people searched for alternative, more indigenous types of modernization. In many cases, this also led to fundamentalist movements that attempted to raise barriers against the harmful influences of modernity.

2.1 The Global Resurgence of Religion Further Defined

Thomas, one of the most prominent representatives of the religionists, defines the global resurgence of religion as follows:

> [T]he growing salience and persuasiveness of religion, i.e. the increasing importance of religious beliefs, practices and discourses in personal and public life, and the growing role of religious or religiously-related individuals, non-state groups, political parties, and communities, and organizations in domestic politics, and this is occurring in ways that have significant implications for international politics.
>
> (Thomas 2005: 26)

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Other writings show, however, that this definition should be made more specific. In the first place, it has to include a more specific timeline of the resurgence. Second, it is exclusively qualitative and makes no mention of a change in the number of believers worldwide. Third, it should include the notion that the visibility of the resurgence mainly concerns Islam. I will discuss each of these points in order to come up with a more representative definition of the global resurgence.

Regarding the first issue, there are scholars who argue that during the heyday of modernization theory, up until the late 1960s, religion was dormant, marginal, and not an observable part of people's lives. There is also a chart in one of their articles that describes the chronology of the religious resurgence that started in the 1960s. Moreover, one article explicitly states that the Six-Day War between Israel and Egypt in 1967 signifies the resurgence of religion (Philpott 2009: 190; Thomas 2005: 27; Thomas 2007: 25). Finally, scholars mention quite a few events that indicate that the global resurgence of religion took place from the 1960s onward. They refer to the secular nationalism among Arab Muslims and Hindu nationalist parties during the 1960s; the Second Vatican Council of 1962–1965, which yielded a new vision for social and political engagement in the Catholic Church and led to the 'third wave' of worldwide democratization; the Islamic resurgence during the 1970s and the 1980s, which was marked by the Iranian revolution of 1979; the emergence of Protestant fundamentalism and evangelicalism into the political arena of the United States in the early 1980s; developments in Brazil, Chile, and Central America in the 1970s and 1980s, where religious leaders and communities, often supported by the Roman Catholic Church, opposed authoritarian regimes; the South African Council of Churches led by Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu in their confrontation with apartheid during the 1980s; the local religious leaders and communities in the Philippines and South Korea which clashed with authoritarian regimes; and the emergence of many ethnoreligious conflicts after the break-up of the Soviet Union (Haynes 2004: 257, 258; Haynes 2006: 539; Hehir 2012: 15, 19; Philpott 2009: 190, 191; Philpott 2002: 83; Stack 2011: 20).

It seems accurate to date the start of the resurgence of religion in the 1960s. This does not imply that religion was absent before that time, only that its visibility and salience in world affairs has increased markedly since then. It is also important to keep in mind that although the resurgence of religion started in the 1960s, it was not until the 1990s that religion was picked up within IR.

With respect to the second point, it is possible to argue that the resurgence of religion is also about an increase in the number religious people. Farr, for example, quotes two leading demographers of religion who state that 'Demographic trends, coupled with conservative estimates of conversions and defections envision over 80 percent of the world's populations will continue to be affiliated to religions 200 years into the future' (Farr 2008: 38; Pew Research Center 2015). Others show that data on religious belief and practice support an increase of religion. They contend that religious people have a demographic

advantage in terms of higher birthrates in comparison to secular people. They also write that '[t]he proportion of people attached to the world's four biggest religions (Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism) rose from 67 percent in 1900 to 73 percent in 2005 and may reach 80 percent by 2050' (Farr 2008: 38; Patterson 2011: 6; Philpott 2009: 191, 192; Philpott 2002: 81, 82; Thomas 2010a: 508).[1]

The third issue concerns the role of the rise of radical Islam in the resurgence (Klein Goldewijk 2007: 26,27; Thomas 2000: 894; Thomas 2010a: 507–509).[2] Huntington states that the intensity and pervasiveness of the resurgence is stronger in Islamic communities. He sees the Islamic resurgence as a turning to Islam as a source of identity, meaning, stability, legitimacy, development, power, and hope. This resurgence includes, in his view, increased attention to religious observance, a proliferation of religious programming and publications; more emphasis on Islamic dress and values; the revitalization of Sufism (mysticism); an increase of Islam-oriented governments, organizations, laws, banks, social welfare services, and educational institutions; opposition to secular governments; and expanding efforts to create international solidarity among Islamic states and societies. The resurgence in Islam is, as Huntington states, an attempt to modernize without Westernizing. As a result of this resurgence, most rulers and governments have become aware of the strength of Islam and more sensitive and anxious about Islamic issues (Huntington 1996: 109–111).[3]

Thus, an adequate definition of the global resurgence of religion takes the 1960s as a starting date, accounts for the resurgence in the number of believers as well as the strength of their belief, and incorporates the specific character of Islamic resurgence. In order to do justice to these three points, I have amplified Thomas's definition of global resurgence of religion with which I started this section:

> [T]he growing salience and persuasiveness of religion since the 1960s, i.e. the increasing importance of religious beliefs, practices and discourses in personal and public life; the increasing number of religious or religiously-related individuals; and the growing role of non-state groups, political parties, communities, and organizations in domestic politics – most observably in Islamic countries –, and all this occurring in ways that have significant implications for international politics.
>
> (Thomas 2005: 26)

Although I inserted the sentence 'most observably in Islamic countries', I do not equate the global resurgence to a rise of religious (Islamic) fundamentalism (Haynes 2007: 197–201).[4] It is not without meaning that Thomas argues that 'the global resurgence of religion is also taking place throughout the world in countries with different religious and cultural traditions, including the non-Christian world religions – Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism' (Thomas 2010b: 5).

2.2 Different Lenses or a Different World?

Whereas some religionists see religion increasing in a numerical sense, others are critical of this statement and emphasize that religion appears to be back because scholars have started paying attention to it.[5] They often refer to the sociologist Peter Berger, one of the most famous advocates of secularization theory in the 1960s, to illustrate this process. Berger stated, in 1999, that the world was 'as furiously religious as it ever was and in some places more so than ever' (Berger 1999: 2). Based on that, some religionists maintain that religion has always been part of politics and society in developing countries, but that social scientists and IR scholars are just now beginning to grapple with it. As they argue, the current resurgence of religion is not something new, but just a moment in a cycle of religious manifestations. Their conclusion is that, using the words of Berger, the phenomenon to be explained 'is not Iranian mullahs, but American university professors' (Farr 2008: 34; Fox and Sandler 2004: 20; Fox 2009: 276; Philpott 2002: 83; Philpott 2009: 190, 191; Thomas 2005: 27, 28).[6] As a result of this, some scholars tend to use the newfound academic interest in religion to discredit an actual increase of religion in the world since the 1960s. I think, however, that it would prove helpful to the understanding of the global resurgence of religion to consider both approaches as complementary. It is reasonable to assume that the awakening of scholars from their secularist slumber has 'made' the resurgence to a certain degree. However, the resurgence cannot solely be explained by the awakening of scholars: *something* must have woken them in the first place.

In their attempt to explain the resurgence of religion, Thomas and Hurd posit that the return of religion indicates that states and faith communities are refashioning and renegotiating the social boundaries between the sacred and the secular, or religion and politics. It is a controversy over how metaphysics, ethics, politics, and the state relate to each other. They also call it a 'restructuring of religion' (Hurd 2008, 135–137; Thomas 2005: 26, 27).[7] In this vision, the return of religion is primarily a readjustment of the existing relations between the religious and the secular. Although there are scholars who suggest that this description tends to explain away the idea that there is 'more' religion, I think it is very plausible to maintain both visions. Most scholars appear to agree that both processes are compatible and interrelated: the restructuring of religion might lead to 'more' religion, and 'more' religion might evoke the renegotiation of the boundaries between religion and politics.

The fact that the global resurgence is both a matter of shifting perceptions and actual changes is also apparent in the discussion about the role of Islam. As some religionist scholars point out, the global resurgence is also a 'creation' of the political theology of radical Islam, which receives a lot of attention making it more visible. It is important to realize that the revival of political Islam receives a lot of attention, yet it concerns Muslims who are in a minority position along the spectrum of Muslim political theology. Their political theology contains two crucial elements. In the first place, divine law is superior to

secular law and might supersede it. This means that it lacks the typical separation of church and state prevalent in the Western world, although this may vary in reality for pragmatic reasons. Second, this political theology contains a mythic longing for the supranational ideal of a pan-Islamic unity among the faithful as it existed in the glorious past. Many Islamists even go a step further and envision a single Islamic state encompassing the Islamic world and eventually the entire world. This means in practice that Islamists cross national borders to bring Islamic societies under the authority of divine law, *sharia*, because they believe Islamic states are corrupt, inefficient, and influenced by Western secular ideologies. The result of this political theology is the clash of two transnational ideologies: on the one hand, the secular Western Westphalian system; on the other, radical Islamic revivalists who oppose the Westphalian order and attempt to replace secular order with divine order, the nation-state with an Islamic system, and democracy with an Islamic notion of consultation (Fox and Sandler 2004: 90–104; Huntington 1996: 109, 110; Klein Goldewijk 2007: 23; Philpott 2002: 83–86, 89; Shani 2009: 310; Thomas 1999: 15, 16, 18, 20; Tibi 2000: 843–859).[8] A consequence of this clash is that religion suddenly becomes a lot more visible, which contributes to the idea that there is a resurgence of religion. In the words of José Casanova, religion went public and gained, thereby, publicity (Casanova 1994: 3). Apparently, there is a tangible motivation to pay more attention to religion.

2.3 Globalization Facilitated the Global Resurgence of Religion

The resurgence of religion could become a global phenomenon because of the globalization process since the 1960s. Jan Aart Scholte maintains that globalization started around the 1960s: 'Globalization did not figure continually, comprehensively, intensely, and with rapidly increasing frequency in the lives of a large proportion of humanity until around the 1960s' (Scholte 2001; 17). This matches the starting date of the global resurgence of religion (Shani 2009: 311; see also Gelot 2013: 127).

It is possible to discern a series of processes through which globalization facilitated the global resurgence of religion: liberalization, deterritorialization, internationalization, universalization, and modernization.[9] The first, liberalization, means that government-imposed restrictions on the movement of people and goods between countries are removed in order to create an open world economy. In the case of religion, this implies that globalization has reduced the relative power of the secular state – especially via economic restructuring programs which often necessitated less expenditure money on public services in developing countries. The undermining of the capacity of the state to impose its secular view on the nation, to the exclusion of other identities, allowed for the (re)emergence of pre-national identities based on religion or ethnicity.

Deterritorialization, then, describes a process whereby territorial places, distances, and borders lose some of their previously overriding influence. This process has forced policymakers to deal with external and domestic

developments simultaneously. Porous national borders have created space for the reassertion of transnational religious identities (Shani 2009: 311).

The third process, internationalization, describes an intensification of cross-border activities and interdependence between countries. This aspect of globalization has helped to create and expand ethnic and religious diaspora communities around the world. Religious diaspora communities are one of the most significant types of non-state groups in world politics in the twenty-first century. Another example of this kind of globalization is al-Qaeda using informal networks of Islamic finance (called the *hawala* network) to move money around the world (Thomas 2005: 30, 31).

The fourth phenomenon that facilitated the global resurgence of religion is universalization, which implies that objects and experiences are spread to people in all corners of the world. In the case of religion, this means the global proliferation of various, and sometimes competing, religious ideas, which makes religious and social differences increasingly visible and leads to more cultural and religious pluralism. Examples of the growing cultural and religious pluralism are new religious movements like the Falun Gong and Pentecostalism, which have millions of followers all over the world and shape global cultural, religious, and political landscapes, and missionaries from Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity who are coming from the South to the North and aim at the re-evangelization of Europe and America. The result of this increasing cultural and religious pluralism is that many people live in communities with mosques, synagogues, and temples, being friends, colleagues, or classmates of the worshippers. The process of universalization is facilitated by the revolution in information and communication technology. The internet has allowed more religious people and groups to publish and publicize more widely, organize more effectively, and maintain contact with fellow believers (including displaced ones) across boundaries in new and important ways (Bech & Snyder 2011: 201; Haynes 2007: 80,81; Shani 2009: 311, 312; Thomas 2005: 30,31).

The final process is modernization, or phrased differently, the global diffusion of modernity. Modernity is here defined as the commitment to a new and 'scientific' way of thinking which breaks with traditional ideas and doctrines and aims for a more rational method to deal with the problems of nature, human life, and society. Stephen Toulmin says that this process started around the 1630s when scientific inquiries became 'rational' thanks to Galileo in astronomy and mechanics, and to Descartes in logic and epistemology. Thirty years later, this commitment to rationality was extended into the practical realm, when European political and diplomatic systems were reorganized on the basis of nations. From then on, the warrant for the exercise of power by a sovereign monarch was based less on an inherited feudal title than on the will of the people who consented to his rule. Toulmin reasons that when this became the acknowledged basis of state authority, politics could also be analyzed in more 'rational' terms (Gelot 2009: 4; Pettman 2004: 2, 15; Toulmin 1992: 9, 10). Modernization is the process wherein a society develops from a rural and

agrarian one to a secular urban and industrial one. It places a great emphasis on the individual, specialization, and industrialization. Society is no longer ruled by traditional religious beliefs but rational scientific principles (Britannica Encyclopedia 2021).

The global diffusion of modernity enabled the resurgence of religion in various ways (Fox and Sandler 2004: 2, 12–14, 38, 84–86, 110–113).[10] Modernization, for example, has allowed both the state and religious institutions to increase their spheres of influence, because modern political means can mobilize the masses, which leads to more clashes between religious and secular groups. In addition to that, modern communications technology has helped religious groups to export their views over the globe and enabled them to mobilize and organize themselves through the media and internet, political lobby, use of the courts, and links with political parties. Many religious fundamentalists use modern communications, propaganda, and organizational techniques to resist secularism. Sometimes they also mobilize women in order to further their cause, which shows that it is incorrect to perceive fundamentalism simply as a return to the past. The global diffusion of modernity also made the resurgence possible, because the freedom, in many modern societies, to select one's own religion led to an increase of religiosity. The demolition of religious monopolies led to a 'free market' of religions and made it easier and more attractive for people to make a choice for religion.

2.4 Globalization Enabled the Global Diffusion of Modernity Which 'Caused' a Religious Backlash

The global spread of modernity 'caused' a religious backlash and as a result created a resurgence of religion.[11] A religious backlash is a countermovement which provides an alternative home to people who feel deserted because of the secularizing influence of Western modernity. This does not mean that the religious resurgence can be equated to the religious backlash. The global diffusion of modernity includes the spread of Western cultural norms and values, such as equal rights for women, which are often, for example, contrary to the prevailing mores in traditional Islamic states. The incorporation of those norms in international law through the UN and Western states presents a challenge to societies and individuals who disagree with them on religious grounds – which makes religion more visible.

There are six possible ways to account for this religious backlash. The first is that it results from people who have become disillusioned by the failure of the modernization process in the Third World, which was based on the assumption that universal progress and reason would solve all human problems. A second viewpoint addresses the fact that modernization promotes economic development, urbanization, modern social institutions, pluralism, growing rates of literacy and education as well as advancements in science and technology. These phenomena are based on secular ideologies which reduce the world to rational, scientific, and technological manifestations while leaving out or

privatizing religion. This leads to a fragmentation of people's worldview, creates a sense of insecurity and sometimes also socio-economic marginalization, undermining traditional communities, traditional lifestyles, community values, and morality, and replacing the authority of religion with a modern society based on secular principles. Many people rejected these foreign ideologies and embraced their indigenous, and therefore more legitimate traditions, which has led to a revival of religion. A good example of the latter is the pressure of international institutions like the United Nations and Western states regarding family planning. When this implies the use of contraceptives and abortion, several religions will oppose this. This opposition not only concerns states, but also actors such as the Catholic Church, factions within US politics, and Islamic organizations.

According to a third viewpoint, modern state-building in developing countries created ethnically exclusive governments and ethnic-based policies which often overlapped with religious ones and reinforced the religious identity. Fourth, mainstream religious organizations became more secular when they, through their elites, became intertwined with the establishment. The latter wanted to partake in religion but without too many restrictions. In response to that development, more religious organizations emerged. Then, fifth, many non-Western countries have found an alternative to the dominant secular narrative of modernity. They embrace the idea of multiple modernities, that is, multiple paths for being modern applicable to the different cultural and religious traditions in the developing world seeking to gain economic prosperity without losing their own cultural and moral values.

The final factor considering the backlash is that religious fundamentalist groups became motivated to support religious educational institutions to preserve religious values, identities, and communities in the face of modernity. They reject modern distinctions between the private and the public and try to base the morality of more intimate zones like marriage, child-rearing, and sex on their religion. They often use charity work with the poor and disadvantaged to gain goodwill. These fundamentalist movements are especially successful in so-called failed states because they provide an answer to the failures of modernity and therefore attract people who feel deserted by the modern political and economic system.[12]

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the global resurgence of religion. I also presented a definition that does justice to the various interpretations and encompasses a qualitative and quantitative understanding of the resurgence. There remains, however, a weak spot in the definition, implied in the sentence 'all this occurring in ways that have significant implications for international politics'. Religionists do not make clear what they mean by 'significant'. When is religion considered to be significantly present enough to be taken seriously? The answer to this question depends on the framework used to assess the significance

of particular events. As it stands now, the significance of religion becomes a rather subjective matter, which may be strongly influenced by both academic and pre-scientific presuppositions.

I also discussed whether the resurgence of religion is a result of the fact that academics are paying more attention to it, thereby 'creating' the very resurgence. Likewise, I have discussed whether the resurgence is not 'merely' a matter of increased visibility, as opposed to an actual resurgence of religion. Eventually, I argued that these viewpoints are not mutually exclusive, and that, ultimately, it does not matter whether religion has actually increased or has become more visible: in both cases, the new visibility of religion calls for IR theory to take it seriously. The fact that the global resurgence can be seen as partly the result of the academics' awakening from their secular slumber while the resurgence, at the same time, also involves a restructuring of religion's position in society, cautions us to exaggerate neither the global resurgence nor the secularization of IR.

There is a variety of explanations for the resurgence of religion, but it is clear that the process of globalization, involving the global diffusion of modernity which 'caused' a religious backlash led to the global resurgence of religion. Each of these developments partly explains what the global resurgence of religion is about, but together they provide a clear overview of processes that have contributed to it.

Notes

1 There are other sources that present evidence in favor of a global resurgence of religion as an increase in the number of believers (Bouma 2007: 187–202; Johnson & Grim 2013: 11,12; Kaufmann 2011; Moghadam 2003; Toft, Philpott and Shah 2011).
2 For an overview of Islamic, Christian, Jewish, and Hindu fundamentalism, see Haynes (2007: 203–220).
3 Huntington even goes so far as to compare the Islamic resurgence with the Reformation, because both movements aimed at a fundamental and comprehensive reform of all parts of society.
4 It is important to define religious fundamentalism and to distinguish between the popular and academic use of the term. Haynes gives an extensive treatment of this phenomenon in his book (Haynes 2007: 197–201). He defines religious fundamentalists as follows: (1) fundamentalists fear that their religious way of life is threatened by secular or alien influences; (2) they want to create traditional and less modern(ized) societies; (3) as a result, they advocate changing laws, morality, social norms and, in some cases, domestic and/or international political configurations based on their religious principles; (4) many are willing to compete with ruling regimes when these regimes appear to intrude and harm education, gender relations and employment policy that are fundamental to a religiously appropriate society; and (5) in some cases, they might actively oppose co-religionists believed to be excessively lax in upholding their religious duties. This also applies to followers of rival or opposing religions when they are considered to be misguided, evil, or even satanic.
5 In a review of various books on religion and IR, Haynes critically examines the term resurgence of religion. He refers to Norris and Inglehart's thesis that secularization is still occurring because religion is losing its social and political significance as a consequence of modernization, except where there is a lack of existential

security as is often the case in developing countries. Given the fact that the population growth rates in most developing countries are higher than in most developed countries, the absolute number of people who look primarily to religion to deal with their existential problems is growing (Haynes 2006: 536). For examples of similar religious 'resurgences', see Haynes (2004: 452; Haynes 2006: 539–541). Thomas strongly disagrees with the existential security thesis of Norris and Inglehart and makes that very clear in his article (Thomas 2007). For more views and arguments on the interpretation of the 'resurgence of religion', see Haynes (2007: 19–23; Lynch 2011: 108; Sahliyeh 1990: 1–44). In a more recent article, Inglehart argues that research indicates that religion has been declining since 2007 (Inglehart 2020).

6 There are good reasons to believe that religion was already present, but was only recently discovered by academics, if we look at recent literature that draws attention to the role of religion in the past (e.g. Anderson 1994; Inboden 2008; Kirby 2003; Muehlenbeck 2012; Preston 2012).

7 An example of this situation is China where religious devotion is expanding among Chinese Protestants and Catholics, and religious beliefs are tenaciously held among Buddhists of Tibet and the Uighur Muslims of Xingjian Province on the country's northwest borders (Farr 2008: 36). In her recent book, Hurd further explains why it can be harmful to treat religion as a self-evident category in foreign policymaking (Hurd 2017).

8 Gelot nuances the description of the global resurgence in terms of nostalgia and traditionalism. He points out that it also could be seen as a purely religious return to the essentials of the Islamic teachings or, in the words of Peter Berger, 'an impressive revival of emphatically *religious* commitment' (Gelot 2009: 36, 37). Philpott gives more examples of radical revivalists and also provides more information on the theological background and the emergence of this phenomenon (Philpott 2002: 86–92).

9 Scholte distinguishes five usages of the term globalization, which I employ to describe the various ways in which religionists notice the influence of globalization on religion (Scholte 2001: 14). For a more extensive overview of the different kinds of globalization (political, economic, cultural, technological) and a discussion about the moment it started, see Haynes (2007: 65–77).

10 From here to the end of Section 2.4 (except my concluding remarks), the text is based on Fox and Sandler (2004: 2, 12–14, 38, 84–86, 110–113). It can, however, also be found in the following literature: Barnett (2011: 2, 3), Bech and Snyder (2011: 201), Farr (2008: 34, 35), Fox (2006: 6, 7) Fox and Sandler (2004: 2, 12), Gelot (2013: 129, 135, 146), Haynes (2004: 461), Haynes (2006: 538, 539), Haynes (2007: 23, 24, 160, 161, 195–198), Huntington (1996: 116), Laustsen and Waever (2003: 147, Patterson (2011: 8), Rudolph (1997: 1), Shore (2009: 22), Thomas (1999: 5), and Thomas (2005: 11, 45).

11 Fox and Sandler speak of a causal relationship, whereas Haynes is more cautious about a direct causal relationship. He says that although clearly societies do not necessarily secularize as they modernize, there is no simple explanation for all extant examples. On the other hand, Haynes argues, processes of modernization around the world conjoined a second development, namely that many people lost their faith in secular ideologies of progressive change, such as socialism and communism, and even perhaps secular democracy itself and the belief that the state will be able to deliver on the proclaimed developmental goals (Fox and Sandler 2004: 2, 12; Haynes 2004: 46, 460).

12 For a more detailed overview of the causes and characteristics of failed states, see Haynes (2007: 175–178).

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3 Religion Is Virtually Everywhere

Introduction

Religion's revival since the 1960s should have rung a bell among IR theorists. However, it was not until the 1990s that religion became a topic of interest for academic IR theorists and policymakers. Since then, a lot of scholars have tried to demonstrate or 'prove' the overall presence of religion in world affairs. This chapter will provide an overview of religion's presence in the world by using different levels: the individual level (e.g. government leaders, policymakers, and diplomats who are directly or indirectly influenced by religious considerations); the national or state and societal level (religiously inspired social organizations or political parties, or governments related to a particular religion); the transnational level (missionary activities, religious terrorism, non-governmental organizations such as World Vision, World Conference of Religion and Peace or Opus Dei); and the international, or also called world or global, level (the Holy See with established diplomatic relations in 168 countries).[1] As with the distinction between the empirical, domain-specific, and the philosophical, these levels can be distinguished from each other theoretically, but in practice, they cannot be separated. This extensive and varied presence of religion in the world is the empirical evidence for the religionists' insistence that religion's role in the world should be taken seriously by IR. In other words, it describes the empirical basis of the paradigm challenge and supports the first subthesis that religion is actually everywhere.

3.1 Individual Level: People's Worldviews, Norms, and Beliefs Influence Public and Political Life

Religion plays a role on the individual level, influencing the behavior and life of individual human beings, and through them of groups, as a source of values, worldviews, identities, belief systems, norms, or (providential) beliefs. When important individuals, such as politicians, foreign policy officials, state leaders, religious leaders, diplomats, and terrorists are being influenced by religion and act through institutions or groups, religion may become part of

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public and political life. Besides this, religion can bring together groups of people with similar convictions or religious identities. This can have a twofold effect: a shared identity can produce a sense of psychological affinity and feelings of responsibility for other members of the same religion. However, it can also produce a sense of psychological distance toward members of other religions. As a result, different religious identities can become a source of international conflict (Bech & Snyder 2011: 205; Bernbaum 2010: 132; Burnett 1994: 299; Dark 1999; Farr 2008: 35; Fox & Sandler 2004: 17; Fox & Sandler 2006: 2, 8; Haynes 2007: 160; Haynes 2009: 194; Sandal & Fox 2013: 28, 29; Stack 2011: 26, 28; Stempel 2000: 6; Thomas 1999: 1, 4, 5, 10; Thomas 2005: 36).[2]

The norms and beliefs influencing individuals may be of a religious nature in either a direct or indirect manner. Some norms and beliefs are explicitly religious or theological and others 'just' have a religious background or origin. In practice, it is often difficult to distinguish between the one from the other. Religion can have a direct influence in the form of doctrine or theology because religious doctrines can be used either to justify actions or to seek guidance for a proper way to deal with a given situation. An example of direct influence is when religious ideas like holy war and cosmic or religious warfare are used by religious terrorists who seek a cosmic or transcendent justification rather than only political, social, or economic objectives (Fox & Sandler 2006: 2, 3; Thomas 2005: 142, 147). Religion has an indirect influence when Western countries regard certain values, like life and human rights, as sacred when they intervene on humanitarian grounds, a conception of what is sacred that is, in fact, constituted in a religious way. Another example of indirect influence is the Westphalian principles of sovereignty and non-intervention, which are the foundation of international law today and were influenced by religious considerations from the Reformation. The same kind of indirect influence is visible in the present-day criteria for just war which were originally developed by the Christian thinker Augustine. Finally, the fact that several United Nations documents include the right of freedom to worship and assembly, and freedom to maintain places of worship, is also the result of indirect religious influence (Barnett 2011: 96–102; Fox & Sandler 2004: 54, 55, 109; Laustsen & Waever 2003: 174; Philpott 2000: 206–245).

3.2 National Level: Religion Influences the State, Political Society, and Civil Society

To set out how religion plays a role at the national level, I use the distinction between the state, political society, and civil society: the state can be affiliated with a religious institution; religious organizations seek to ally themselves with political parties or movements; and religious actors try to change the status quo through their influence in civil society (Bech & Snyder 2011: 205; Kubálková 2000: 679).[3] Not always as clear-cut as they seem, these distinctions nevertheless give an impression of the various degrees in which religion exerts influence

Examples of the influence of religion on the state are the intermingling of the Muslim authorities with state power in Iran and the domination of powerful political forces in other Muslim-majority countries, like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Pakistan, and Indonesia. There is also a study on 177 states which shows that, between 1990 and 2008, of these states, 23.1 percent had an official religion and 24.8 percent supported one religion more than others. Examples of the influence of religion on the political society are the Christian Democratic parties that have dominated much of the political landscape in Western Europe since the Second World War; the Russian Orthodox Church, which pushes for state intolerance toward foreign Protestant missionaries; the rise of the Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, or Indian People's Party) since 1990 and its attempt to control the Indian government (Bech & Snyder 2011: 205; Farr 2008: 36; Sandal & Fox 2013: 17; Stempel 2000: 8).[4]

Indications of the increasing influence of religious actors on civil society are Islamic groups playing an important role in the shaping of Iraq's future; the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church on the democracy in Russia; the fact that in Asian countries like Vietnam, Laos and North Korea, the ruling elite see religion as a threat; increasing conflicts between Christians and Muslims in Sub-Saharan Africa; and the way in which Pentecostal movements are challenging the monopoly of the Roman Catholic Church in Latin America (Farr 2008: 36, 37).

Religious actors that influence civil society are often called sub-state or sub-national actors. Many religious sub-state actors belong to larger umbrella organizations representing certain denominations or national religious institutions. Depending on the church–state relationship in a country, these organizations are sometimes funded by the state. Examples of umbrella organizations are the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, the Muslim Council of Great Britain, and the French Protestant Federation (Thomas 2005: 100).[5]

Religionists differ about the impact of religion on the various levels. Some argue that the greatest influence of religion on international politics is through domestic politics at the national level (e.g. religion's influence on decisions to intervene in conflicts in other states). Others warn against ascribing too much influence to religion in the formation of foreign policy. Because national interest and security are still dominant objectives in foreign politics, it is difficult to assess the impact of the religious factor. Foreign policies of all countries are also influenced by the interaction between their overall power and the prevailing international environment (Fox & Sandler 2004: 168; Haynes 2009: 295).

3.3 Transnational Level: Religious Terrorism, Soft Power, and NGOs

Studying religious manifestations at a non-state level also includes the transnational level. The transnational is about the 'Interactions and coalitions across state boundaries that involve such diverse nongovernmental actors as multinational corporations and banks, church groups, and terrorist networks' (Viotti & Kauppi 1998: 498). It is an important level because here religion traditionally

plays a role and presents an implicit challenge to state borders due to the increase of the number of secular and religious transnational non-state actors from a few thousands in the early 1970s to an estimated 25,000 active organizations in the early 2000s. Another element is that transnational religious actors often have their origins outside traditional state policymaking circles. Islam and Christianity were geographically extensive transnational religious communities before the modern international system came into being (Fox & Sandler 2004: 83, 84; Haynes 2007: 44, 129).

There are many examples of religious manifestations at the transnational level. The first distinction highlighted here is between religion (1) in transnational religious activities; and religion (2) as ideas, soft power, and non-governmental organizations. There are three transnational activities that are specifically religious: religious fundamentalism, religious terrorism, and proselytizing. The first tries to take over states to further its agenda which is often transnational. Fundamentalists' most successful strategy is exercising influence on the belief systems of policymakers who are influential on the government. Ultimately, the influence of religious fundamentalists depends on their ability to convert the population, and they thrive especially when the masses are dislocated by a rapid and uneven economic and cultural modernization and disillusioned with its outcome. The success of fundamentalists does, however, in general not last for long, because after having exploited the unease they often fail to deliver solutions to the problems (Fox & Sandler 2004: 87–89).

The second transnational activity, religious terrorism, has become a dominant form of terrorism since the early 1980s. Many of these (mostly Islamist) terrorist groups challenge the state and want to remake the world around them (Fox & Sandler 2004: 104, 105). And third, there is proselytizing. Religions such as Christianity, Islam, and Buddhism have universalistic aspirations and sometimes are competing for converts. This proselytizing could lead to clashes between transnational movements and in some cases also to revolts against the influence of foreigners in order to protect the indigenous culture. In response to such activities, states create rules or laws to control proselytizing (Fox & Sandler 2004: 108, 109).

As I have indicated, religion also plays a role in transnational relations through ideas, as soft power, and non-governmental organizations. Transnational religious ideas, actors, or institutions can challenge the position of the state and become a source of conflict. This is especially true in post-colonial states with borders that do not correspond with pre-existing ethnic or clan boundaries. As a result, the societies in these states continue to see religion as an important basis of social identity which leads to strong religions in weak states, which can threaten the stability of domestic and international order.

The issue of ideas in international relations – also described as transnational ideas or transnational belief systems – applies to people in different countries who hold the same worldview, belief system, or conception of morality, or who believe in particular international laws or norms, in which religion's influence can be rather strong. Examples of religious and secular transnational

ideas or belief systems are feminism, Marxism, secularist views of modernization, radical Islamist views of the West, as well as the support of human rights and anti-slavery. Some transnational ideas aim at the establishment of multi-ethnic or multinational states, such as Pan-Islamism or Pan-Africanism. Transnational ideas are often embodied by transnational actors or institutions that try to find acceptance for these ideas in international relations. Examples are the Anti-Slavery Society, the Catholic Church, and the Muslim Brotherhood (Fox & Sandler 2004: 45–47; Haynes 2009: 45; Skillen 2010: 94–107; Stempel 2000: 6; Thomas 2005: 106, 107).

Another manifestation of religion in transnational relations is through soft power. Soft power refers to the capability of a political body to influence other entities, directly or indirectly, through cultural or ideological influence and encouragement (Haynes 2009: 40–46; Thomas 1999: 7). So-called transnational ideational communities are a form of soft power. These communities are inspired by religion and culture as a transnational idea for the development of transnational civil society. The deep commitment of these communities to the well-being of their members is a form of power because in conflicts the strength of communities will depend on the attractiveness of the ideas that bind people together. Examples of religious ideational communities are Muslims, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Eastern religions (Farr 2008: 37, 38; Haynes 2009: 130–132; Stack 2011: 20; Thomas 1999: 11, 12).

Finally, religion is present in the transnational domain through non-state or non-governmental actors. For most people, this is perhaps the first thing that comes to mind when transnational affairs are at issue. Non-state actors can be categorized as sub-state actors, transnational actors, and Inter-Governmental Organizations (IGOs). Since the sub-state actor has been described in the previous section on the national level, here the categories of transnational actors and IGO's will be discussed.

Of the large variety of transnational actors only International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) will be treated, by way of illustration. INGOs can be divided into advocacy, service-providing, and pastoral INGOs. To start with the latter, pastoral INGOs fulfill the more spiritual functions of religion. Examples are the Sufi Brotherhood, Opus Dei, Focolare, Campus Crusade for Christ, and the Muslim Brotherhood. Service-providing INGOs are involved in disaster relief and development assistance. Examples are CARE, World Vision and Save the Children. Advocacy INGOs promote particular causes on a global level like peace, human rights, environmentalism, and international development. Examples of advocacy INGOs are the World Conference of Religion and Peace, the Parliament of World's Religions, The World Council of Churches, Hans Küng's Global Ethics Foundation, Pax Christi, the International Network of Engaged Buddhists (INEB), Christian Solidarity International, the International Justice Mission, the Tikkun Community, and the Council on Faith and International Affairs (Thomas 2005: 100–102).[6]

IGOs, then, are characterized by the fact that their members are national governments. There is only one IGO that could be called religious, which is the

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) (formerly called the Organisation of Islamic Conference). This organization represents the idea of the *ummah* – the unity of the Islamic world, which transcends the nation-state. The OIC sometimes conceives of the British Commonwealth and the European Union as Christian clubs. The OIC makes an impact, because it shapes the interactions between states, and influences world opinion by providing a platform for national and transnational actors (Thomas 2005: 104).

3.4 International Level: Legitimacy and The Holy See

Most religionists appear to assume that religion ultimately has the most impact on international relations through the national level. However, this is difficult to analyze, as opinions regarding this are quite indistinct and may have been influenced by a state-centric approach to international affairs. In order to be able to say something about the degree of impact that makes sense, it is important to have a clear idea of the way in which religion manifests itself on the international level, also called the relations between states in the international system. That is the aim of this section.

The presence of religion in international politics is almost as varied as it is at the transnational level. The following classification to elucidate religion's role in international politics is used: (1) religion as an intermestic policy issue; (2) as an international actor; (3) as a form of legitimacy; and (4) as a defining element of clashing civilizations.

When religion's role in domestic society or on a national level starts to affect international relations too, it becomes an 'intermestic' policy issue, that is, it symbolizes the merger of domestic and international politics. This happens, for example, when social, economic, or political actors influence the domestic and foreign policy of the state and the wider context in which they operate. This is often the case when global religious communities and subcultures start complicating multifaith relations in the West. One could think of the uproar among British Muslims when the fatwa on Salman Rushdie was pronounced, as well as other controversies about freedom of speech, religious tolerance, and blasphemy (Thomas 2005: 34).

Religion is an international actor when it acts like a state in international relations with a clear religious purpose. The most well-known example of course is the Roman Catholic Church, which is both a transnational actor, because of its transnational organization, and an international actor, since the Holy See has diplomatic relations with about 168 countries (Barbato & Joustra 2017).[7] Because of the sovereign status of the Vatican city-state, the Catholic Church can also legitimately participate in UN conferences on human rights, women, and population policy, and influence the deliberations and final resolutions more than other, non-state, actors (Thomas 2000: 104, 105; Thomas 1999: 9).[8] One could say that no other religion has reached a higher level of effectiveness in diplomatic relations than the Roman Catholic Church (Stempel 2000: 7, 8).[9]

The third aspect of religion's role in international affairs is the legitimacy actors derive from it. Religious legitimacy is here to be understood as 'the normative belief by an actor that a rule or institution ought to be obeyed' (Fox & Sandler 2004: 35). Such legitimacy can be used by the state, elites, and non-governmental organizations to convince policymakers and populations both in their own country and in foreign nations that a specific cause is legitimate. Religious legitimacy is a different policy tool than military and economic power because the state does not have a monopoly on its use (Fox & Sandler 2004: 35, 36, 43, 44, 171).

Religion has always functioned as a source of legitimacy. Kings and rulers in the past tried to use religion as a social and political power to integrate and implement their policies and to legitimate their reign (Fox & Sandler 2006: 3; Shore 2009: 14). This easily led to politicized religion and religionized politics (Roof 1991: 1; Wuthnow 1991: 1). Even today religion is often, though not exclusively, used as a source of legitimacy for the state and its policymakers. A survey of 177 states points out that most of these states engage in religious issues and legislate religion. Although this does not necessarily imply that states control or explicitly support religion, it nevertheless reveals that states use religion to legitimize state policies or fear religion's power and influence (Sandal & Fox 2013: 16). When states encourage nationalism, democracy, and humanitarian values such as peace and justice, they often legitimate this on the basis of religious values (Thomas 2010: 190; Fox & Sandler 2004: 35, 43, 50, 51, 176). Another example is the religious imagery of America as the 'new Israel' or 'new Jerusalem', together with the idea that the US functions as a 'city on the hill' and as a beacon for other countries (Stempel 2000: 6).

It is important to distinguish between religion as a legitimizing factor, used for other goals, and actions that are primarily religious and have a religious goal, although it is often very difficult to see the difference. This is not to say that religion could be reduced to something else and is 'just' functioning as a kind of window dressing. Even when politicians 'play the religion card', because involving religion finds resonance among the masses they are targeting, it does still play a role (Fox & Sandler 2006: 7, 8). It is not unlikely, moreover, that religion and secular motivations sometimes go hand in hand. States can have *realpolitik* reasons for giving aid to people in need, but this does not alter the fact that most religions consider charity a virtue (Fox & Sandler 2004: 163).

Fourth, religion plays a role at the international level when it functions as the principal defining characteristic of civilizations. Huntington uses various arguments to support this point. When civilizations clash, religion comes to dominate as the most meaningful identity of civilizations. Practically speaking, religion is the broadest community to which a group in a conflict can appeal. From a psychological perspective, religion provides the strongest justification for a struggle against outside threats (Huntington 1996: 41, 42, 47, 253, 267).[10] Further, millennia of human history have shown that religion may divide people profoundly and reinforce the frequency, intensity, and violence of fault-line wars (Huntington 1996: 254).[11] Concrete examples of the latter mechanism are conflicts portrayed by Islamic fundamentalist groups as genuine wars between civilizations: they called Western troops that invaded Iraq 'crusaders' and

'Zionists', and named the war 'a war of the West' against Islam. The latter was reinforced by President Bush's rhetorical invocation of God, which suggested that this was a religious war (Huntington 1996: 249). Finally, Huntington underlines that the frictions between Islam and the West, for various reasons, have increased markedly in the late twentieth century. He believes these frictions will only increase in the future, whereas the conflict between liberal democracy and Marxist–Leninism is 'only a fleeting and superficial historical phenomenon compared to the continuing and deeply conflictual relation between Islam and Christianity' (Huntington 1996: 209). And he underpins this with telling parallels: both are monotheistic, universalistic, and missionary religions claiming to possess the true faith; they cherish parallel concepts of 'jihad' and 'crusade'; and, together with Judaism, they have a teleological view of history (Huntington 1996: 211).

Conclusion

To strengthen the challenge of IR by the religionists, I have presented their extensive empirical evidence for the role of religion in the world. I used four distinct, but related levels to structure all the manifold ways in which religion is present in the world.

- individual level (government leaders, policymakers, and diplomats who are directly or indirectly shaped by religious considerations)
- national level (via religiously inspired civil society organizations or political parties, or by governments that explicitly commit themselves to a particular (state) religion);
- transnational level (missionary activities, religious terrorism, non-governmental organizations such as World Vision, World Conference of Religion and Peace or Opus Dei);
- international level (the Holy See with diplomatic relations in 168 countries).

The religionists think that religion's presence at all levels challenges IR because the latter neglects religion altogether. However, stating that religion is present at all levels does not indicate how much impact religion precisely has. Even after the presentation of all the empirical evidence, it remains difficult to assess how much actual weight should be ascribed to religion in comparison to other factors. It simply shows that religion is actually out there, but does not provide enough theoretical interpretation. Besides that, the impact religion has might vary according to the level on which it plays a role and also to what extent it has a public significance. Proselytizing, for example, definitely leads to 'more' religion, but it only becomes relevant for international relations if the 'converts' start to apply their religion to public and political affairs. The fact that some states have a (in)formal state religion, does not have much significance for theorizing about religion and international relations when politicians and political parties do not act on the basis of it. Religion is everywhere, but in the context of the field of study, not all religion is of relevance.

In my view, this lack of clarity unfortunately weakens the claim of the religionists. This is further complicated by the fact that most of the religionists seem to assume that religion is something that can be studied as an isolated phenomenon which can be distinguished from 'secular' or non-religious activities. In practice, however, religion often overlaps with many so-called secular activities which makes the distinction less clear-cut or even blurred. Also, the question of what is secular and religious is often an object of discussion, and the outcome is often a reflection of the existing power configurations (Gunning & Jackson 2011: 369–388).

The religionists are not very outspoken on this point, but they appear to believe that religion has the greatest impact on the national level, while it challenges IR most on the transnational level. Religion at the national level is often intertwined with national interests and security issues which are shaped by the international power configuration in which civilizations are principally defined by religion. The possible consequence is that religion becomes a legitimizing factor. This makes it difficult to specify the exact impact of religion, but it potentially remains the greatest on the national level. Though the impact of religion might be strongest at the national level, the religionists challenge IR most at the transnational level. In the first place, this is because mainstream IR tends to take the state within the international system as its starting point and therefore sidelines or neglects the transnational level, and, second, religion organizes itself often transnationally and therefore challenges existing state borders which it often predates.

Notes

1 I follow Viotti and Kauppi here (Viotti & Kauppi 2012: 9, 10). Thomas also discusses religion on various levels, but I do not find the distinctions he makes satisfactory. Many issues that he discusses on the global level are transnational phenomena. For that reason, I have included the transnational level and not the global level (Thomas 2005: 28–37). The religionist scholar Vendulka Kubálková also makes the distinction between different levels. Although I describe the individual level, I do not distinguish between the public domain and the private domain, as Kubálková does. By the latter, she means the religiosity or spirituality of individuals (Kubálková 2000: 679). This distinction would not be very helpful for a description of religion in international affairs, because it is a very Western distinction; the assumption that someone can be religious in private without any public expression would be hard to understand from a non-Western perspective. Haynes offers an overview of the relationship between religion and international relations by focusing on countries and regions. The disadvantage of that approach is that it does not provide general descriptions that are also applicable outside that specific region or case (Haynes 2007: 233–427). For the same reason, I do not include historical examples showing the importance of religion, because it would be difficult to generalize them. Some scholars would argue that the international level does not exist anymore, but that it has been replaced by an interconnected global system in which states and nations are only one of the actors. I do not want to go into that discussion here, because I do not use the levels of analysis to explain religion, but as a tool to order the manifold manifestations of religion in the world as the religionists describe them.

2 Providential beliefs are based on the belief in a divine plan and the idea that believers have a role to play in carrying out the plan (Glazier 2011: 21, 22). Glazier extensively describes how providential beliefs influence American Presidents and their foreign policy. She also gives examples of influential individuals or groups who were religiously inspired and 'made' history (Glazier 2011: 5–8) Wilson has analyzed six State of the Union addresses of American Presidents and observed numerous religious references (Wilson 2012: 147–179).
3 Haynes makes a distinction between non-state actors which can operate nationally and internationally and state-related actors which are closely linked to governments (Haynes 2007: 34, 35).
4 I do not locate the influence of Christian Democratic parties in Europe at the international level but at the national level. Although all Christian Democratic parties share basic principles, their specific and practical political standpoints and electoral bases are still national. For more information on Christian Democracy and its influence on the formation of the European Union, see Farr (2008: 35–37; Thomas 2005: 167–171; Thomas 2010: 190).
5 Thomas writes that religious organizations that influence civil society can have various names: civil society organizations, nongovernmental organizations, private voluntary organizations (PVOs), or nonprofit organizations. These actors can be domestic interest groups or pressure groups that want to influence the domestic or foreign policy of the state. They all belong to the so-called third sector, a place between the first sector (the state) and the second sector (the market) (Thomas 2005: 99).
6 Today, the Council on Faith and International Affairs is called the Center on Faith and International Affairs.
7 The Review of Faith & International Affairs devoted a special issue to the Catholic Church as an international actor (Barbato & Joustra 2017).
8 Haynes mentions the Catholic Church as a transnational non-state actor (Haynes 2007: 45). For a discussion on the Catholic Church and its role on a systemic, international, national, and local level, see Hehir (2006: 93–116).
9 For more information on how the Catholic Church, as a transnational actor, challenges the state-centric Westphalian order, see Shani (2009: 312–315). For a more extensive description of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church, see Haynes (2007: 136–143).
10 Huntington does not distinguish between civilization and culture, because he sees civilization as a 'culture writ large' (Huntington 1996: 41). I have decided to discuss Huntington at the international level, because, as Richard Rubenstein and Jarle Crocker argue, his civilizational approach relies on the same assumptions of political realism. It sees politics as a struggle for power between coherent but essentially isolated units, which seek to advance their own interests in an anarchic setting. The difference is, Rubenstein and Crocker say, that Huntington replaces the nation-state with the concept of civilizations (Rubenstein & Crocker 1994: 115).
11 Fault-line wars are communal conflicts between states or groups of different civilizations turned violent (Huntington 1996: 252).

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4 The 'Religion-Blindness' of the Old Paradigm

The Dominance of the Westphalian System

Introduction

The story as told by most of the religionists and the one that is still common in IR is that the Peace of Westphalia of 1648 was a major turning point in Western history and the Christian unity that was present until then. Before 1648, the Catholic Church influenced many matters which we would now describe as secular. Even though the Holy Roman Emperor also exercised authority over the affairs of the church, the prevailing view is that during the Investiture Controversy of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries the balance had shifted in favor of the pope. The Peace of Westphalia broke with this situation as a result of two developments: the Reformation and the Thirty Years' War. The Reformation not only led to a division between Protestants and Catholics, but also to changes in social structures, political organization, trade, and technological and military power. Protestantism further contributed to a social, economic and political order based on rationality, progress, and individualism, and thus paved the way for capitalism, liberalism, modern science, and religious pluralism. The Thirty Years' War is very often seen as the last and most devastating of the great wars of religion in Europe prior to 1648. The Peace of Westphalia responded to these religious wars with two important principles, namely *cujus regio, ejus religio* (the ruler determines the religion of his realm), and the principle *rex est imperator in regno suo* (the king rules in his own realm).

In the view of the religionists, IR theories such as realism and neorealism interpret these principles as the state's right to discipline, marginalize, nationalize or privatize religion in domestic and international affairs, and to 'secularize' the international order. This is based on the idea that peace, social order and cohesion, religious freedom, and pluralism only could exist if religion was disciplined by the state to be fundamentally liberal and Protestant. Realists and neorealists often echo Thomas Hobbes's (1588–1679) phrasing that God gave way to the great Leviathan (the sovereign state), to which modern man owes his peace and security. The state can play this role, because secular nationalism and national identity transcend religion and religious identity. In this view, politics with reference to religion is seen as the biggest threat to the security of the state. Realists and neorealists claim that the privatization or

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marginalization of religion required that it be separated from, and then subordinated to, the affairs of state. They assume that the secular is the norm which should not be disturbed by religious considerations. Consequently, as (neo) realists see it, states give primacy to military and security power interests and downplay the role of ideas and non-material interests as secondary and therefore negligible. It is no surprise that these ideas allowed realism and neorealism to develop a bias regarding the role of contemporary religion. As a result of the increasing role of the United States as a superpower, IR has been dominated by scholars from Northern America and the assumptions of realism and neorealism became widespread (Hoffman 1977: 41–60; cf. Smith 2000: 374).

However, the Peace of Westphalia also allows for an alternative interpretation, that is to say, as an accommodation between religion and the state with regard to their respective spheres of influence, namely the spiritual realm of the church and the temporal order of society. According to the dominant interpretation in (neo)realism, religion was marginalized and controlled by political power; the second interpretation sees the Westphalian system as opening the way to religious freedom and hence to a new, even public (if not strictly political) role (Barnett 2011: 93; Cho & Katzenstein 2011: 168; Farr 2008: 34; Fox & Sandler 2006: 6; Gelot 2009: 9–11; Gelot 2013: 17, 153; Hatzopoulos & Petito 2003: 1, 2; Haynes 2004: 451; Haynes 2007: 104, 105; Hehir 2012: 16; Laustsen & Waever 2003: 148; McDougall 1998: 160; Sandal & James 2011: 1–3; Shah & Philpott 2011: 29, 30; Shani 2009: 308–310; Sheikh & Waever 2012: 275; Stack 2011: 25; Thomas 2000: 823; Thomas 2005: 54, 55; Wilson 2012: 55). In this chapter, both views will be discussed.[1]

The chapter starts with describing the Westphalian assumptions that have been adopted by realism and neorealism and are said to have specifically led to the neglect of religion: the overemphasis of the role of the state and the national interest of the state is power. It might look that the sections hereafter reflect my own position, but that is not the case. I just present the religionist position.

4.1 The Overemphasis on the State

In religionist literature, one of the recurring criticisms of (neo)realism is that they overemphasize the role of the state. This is expressed in two ways. In the first place, realism and neorealism assume that states are autonomous and independent units that are not under any higher authority, and that they are the highest and most central actor in the world. The assumption that the state is the central actor in international relations seems to lead to the neglect of religion for a number of reasons. To begin with, it denies the existence of the transnational level, even though IR scholars have been arguing for transnational relations since the 1970s. The transnational level often turns out to be the level where religious and also non-religious actors play important roles, especially in the twentieth century. Besides that, some developing countries do not have a well-developed nation-state. It is then wrongly assumed that there is a state that represents a particular nation while, in fact, there are

several nations with different interests that often run along religious lines. Finally, by looking at the role of states, realism and neorealism ignore the influence of its important leaders, such as Ayatollah Khomeini, the Pope or US Presidents, and their religious values.

Besides the fact that state centrality leads to the neglect of religion, the assumption that the state is the central actor appears no longer adequate. Nowadays the influence of the state mainly concerns politics and the military. In economy and communications, multinational corporations determine what should be done. In addition, since the end of the Cold War, the governmental impact on the distribution of money, ideas, technology, goods, and people has decreased. At the same time, however, the influence of religion only increased. Harold Saunders therefore states with respect to the role of religion: 'Until we get our basic assumptions about how the world works – our paradigm – straight, we will not meet the challenges of this new century' (Saunders 2004: 165).

In the second place, realism and neorealism's overemphasis of the state is expressed in the fact that they ignore the domestic domain and treat the state like a black box. Realists do not view the domestic circumstances of other states and the internal policies of their governments as a major factor in foreign policy decisions. Internal developments, realists have traditionally argued, are poor guides to the external behavior of governments. For that reason, realists only consider the beliefs and actions of religious individuals and communities relevant if they drive the policy decisions of governments or help to understand the levers of power.

As a result of this stance, realists and neorealists overlook important and influential phenomena. For example, realists tend to view the Cold War as a great power struggle and not so much as an ideological struggle between communism and freedom or capitalism. They also overlook that US internationalism and hegemony after the Second World War was very much based on domestic attitudes, religious beliefs, civil religion and political ideology. For example, the so-called 'Christian realists' were very influential in articulating and implementing a type of ecumenical Protestantism that shaped US foreign policy after the Second World War.

The two assumptions – state centrality and the state as a black box – are strengthened in neorealism, because of its holism. In this context, this refers to a top-down or structural approach to social inquiry that seeks to explain individual actors by a larger whole or by the structural and material forces of the system. The religionists observe this holism in neorealism, because this theory characteristically explains international politics through the structure of the international system – and it does not see religion as a part of that system.[2]

Neorealism emphasizes the rationality of states as unitary actors in making policy choices, and it provides a functional and structural explanation of international behavior primarily based on balance-of-power calculations. Neorealists focus on how the distribution of hard power affects the decisions of states; they explain states' decisions to join alliances or international organizations as rational and functional responses to threats. Such an approach does

not leave room for any kind of spirituality in international politics, because the structure of the international system is largely defined by the distribution of (state) power. Neorealists maintain that religious groups, movements, ideas and beliefs, international regimes, and international institutions play no role in achieving order at the international level.

4.2 The National Interest of the State Is Power

Realism assumes that states are rationally self-interested and pursue material interests in order to prevail in anarchic competition. In this self-help situation, power – understood as military and economic capability – and national security are understood to be the chief rational interests of states. International politics, in this perspective, is an arena of power politics in which the major powers (the United States, European Union, Russia, China) and well-armed potential spoilers (North Korea, Iran) are the main analytical units. As a result, it does not matter to realism and neorealism whether or not individual humans and groups identify with a religious faith, because for realists the struggle for power, prestige, and resources remains constant, and therefore ideational factors like religion, culture, and ideology generally do not matter for foreign policy analysis.

4.3 Westphalia as the Starting Point of the Privatization of Religion

Realism and neorealism identify the emergence of the Westphalian state and the development of the national interest defined as power with the decline of religion. In the pages hereafter, I set out each of these developments in more detail.

4.3.1 The Rise of the State Implies Secularization of the State

Fox and Sandler aptly describe how (neo)realism sees the state formation process. The overall picture is that the state formation process since the Peace of Westphalia went together with the decline of religious influence. In this process four developments can be distinguished. The first step is that the divine legitimacy of the monarch's right to rule shifted to a situation in which the monarch became considered the highest secular authority within the state. Next we see the emergence of popular sovereignty, based on the thought of John Locke (1632–1704) and Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), which circumscribed monarchical powers by the will of the people. As a result, monarchs could no longer claim absolute or divinely ordained legitimacy. In the nineteenth century, nationalism and ethnicity became issues of concern, due to the decline of the monarchical system, the rise of self-rule, and the coexistence of multiple ethnic groups within individual states. Even though the identities of many ethnic groups were based on religious heritage, international norms required states to be founded on a national basis, and not on a religious one. Finally, the nation-state transformed ethno-religious cultural communities (nations) into new political–territorial constructs (states).

These systems of authority were considered secular because national legitimacy was now based on the sovereignty of the people and not God. However, that does not mean that religion was completely gone, because American and European states still developed religious features in their systems, namely civil religion and a linkage of religion with ethno-national heritage and identity (Fox & Sandler 2004: 22–26).

This picture of the history of the state Fox and Sandler present emphasizes that each step in the state's growth marked a corresponding decline in the influence of religion. It shows that the state-centrism in realism and neorealism is interwoven with the idea that the influence of religion has disappeared, and explains that they do not see any difference between religion and ideology.

4.3.2 The Narrative of the Secularization of the National Interest

A similar development has taken place regarding the understanding of the national interest defined as power, although religionists seem to have different opinions about this issue. I will present the majority's point of view by illustrating Daniel Philpott and John Stack's stance.[3]

According to Philpott and Stack, thinkers such as Niccolò Machiavelli (1469–1527), Hobbes, and, to some extent, Cardinal de Richelieu (1585–1642) rejected traditional Christianity as the foundation for political order. In that vein, realists approach the state as a distinct political entity with its own logic or reason (*raison d'état*). Its *telos* was no longer Thomas Aquinas's (1225–1274) common good, a state of justice and peace in which a whole array of virtues were safeguarded, but the mere security of the body. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, exemplars of this strain of realist thought Klemens von Metternich (1773–1859) and the German chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1815–1898) acted upon the political realist assumption that the state aims at security and that the balance of power is the primary – if not the only – way to overcome power struggles in international politics.

This political realism was reaffirmed as the foundation of modern international relations during the Cold War era by the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, political theorist Hans Morgenthau, and realist diplomat Henry Kissinger. Even Niebuhr, who was called a Christian realist, was skeptical that state action could be properly understood as motivated by deep religious concerns. He observed that any attempt by states to seriously pursue a religious or transcendent ideal in a world of power would come to naught. Niebuhr therefore counseled leaders to act according to a calculation of the lesser of two evils. Eventually, Philpott maintains, almost every realist subscribes to the statement that states should place their own security and survival first, even when this conflicts with an obligation that is rooted in a rationally discernible common morality (Philpott 2002: 78–80; Philpott 2009: 190; Stack 2011: 26).

Characteristic of Morgenthau is his realist principle that states want to preserve their security and therefore strive for relative military power. He sharply distinguishes between personal morality and the higher moral duty of the

statesman to safeguard the state from the competing interests of other states. The development of successful foreign policies demands, in this view, that decision-makers set personal moral and religious beliefs aside in their formulation and execution of policy (Stack 2011: 25, 26). Morgenthau sees morality as something that disturbs the normal flow of international politics and the balance of power. Morality in international relations, Morgenthau states, tends to become universalistic, because each nation sees its own morality as binding for all humanity. Morgenthau considered this a reversion to the politics and morality of tribalism and religious wars:

> [C]arrying their idols before them, the nationalistic masses of our time meet in the international arena, each group convinced that it executes the mandate of history, (…) and that it fulfills a sacred mission ordained by Providence, however defined. Little do they know that they meet under an empty sky from which the gods have departed.
>
> (Glazier 2011: 3; Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 274)

On the basis of this narrative, Philpott and most other religionists think that realism and neorealism are too secular to really understand what role religion plays in the world since September 11.

4.4 An Alternative Reading: Westphalia as the Birth of Religious Freedom

The alternative interpretation disagrees with realism and neorealism's interpretation that Westphalia marks the moment that Europe separated church and state, religion became marginalized or privatized, and a prosperous new era began. Instead, it states that modernity was not atheistic or anti-religious. It claims that modernity sought not to eliminate religion, but rather to support and develop a new view on religion and its place in human life (Gelot 2013: 151). For that reason, the Westphalian settlement is seen as an accommodation between religion and the state that grants the liberty to practice religion as constitutive of human dignity and fosters religious freedom (Farr 2008: 49; McDougall 1998: 161, 162; Patterson 2011: 20). The influence of religion was reconfigured, but it did not decline.

For that reason, the religionists argue that there is a more accurate interpretation of secularization called the neosecularization theory. According to this approach, secularization is a process which transfers the latent and manifest functions of institutions or social structures in which legitimacy is based on a supernaturalist frame of reference, to (often new) institutions operating according to empirical, rational, and pragmatic criteria. It is a shift in the institutional location of religion (Gelot 2013: 24). Patterson describes this shift, referring to Casanova, as the end of the notion of a mono-religious Europe, binding governments to new national churches: Catholic France, Anglican England, Lutheran Sweden, and the like (Patterson 2011: 20). During this process the secular was theologically legitimized and gained autonomy since the natural

became separated from the supernatural from the twelfth century onward. At the same time, however, the secular was sacralized, because it remained part of God's plan. This is also what happened with the Protestant Reformation, during which Christian prelates continued to affirm the divine legitimacy of rulers, even as they set about firmly grounding politics in secular terms. In other words, the secular foundation of politics was made possible by the political theology of the Reformation: 'no Reformation, no Westphalia' (Philpott 2013: 206). This political theology revived and strengthened Augustine's distinction between the 'city of God' and the 'city of man'. Augustine's theology distinguished between two separate spheres of influence: the spiritual realm, which is the site of the relationship between Christ and the believer's soul led by the church; and the temporal order of secular society, which is governed by state-appointed civil magistrates and which prescribes sovereignty to the state. Contrary to what is thought in realism and neorealism, the secular did not develop as an independent, universal, and objective sphere distinct from religion. Instead, the secular emerged from the sacred core of Christianity. It was based on Western historical and philosophical traditions which were instigated by passages in Christian scripture and Christian theology (Gelot 2013: 7, 32, 151; Hurd 2008: 25, 30, 31, 33, 39, 47, 152; Philpott 2000: 222–224).[4]

On the basis of this secularization within Christianity, two other variants developed over time.[5] In the first case, secular politics became modeled after the church and secularized theological dogmas became the basis of political theories. Hobbes's Leviathan is a perfect illustration of this secularization process because it replaced God as the ultimate condition, and the origin of its own existence, with the state. In other words, the modern state was modeled after previous religious practices and theological concepts. Theology is continued by other means and theological ideas are applied to politics without necessarily referring to its theological origin. The second variant is that religious themes and symbols are reviving within the modern political order. They manifest themselves as immanent religions or quasi-religious worldviews. Here, the religionists refer to the German-born American political philosopher Eric Voegelin's reasoning that the modern state's subversion of the bond between God and secular authority had not led to the disappearance of the transcendental-divine idea of the *corpus mysticum Christi*. They cite Voegelin that 'when God has become invisible behind the world, then the things of the world become new gods', or, as Voegelin also has it, '[t]he state (…) is at the same time a Church, with the sovereign as head of the Church, immediately under God' (Luoma-aho 2009: 299). Philosophers began to sacralize the world on immanent and secular grounds, while a new kind of secular eschatology emerged. Humankind and nature were both infused with attributes and powers that were previously ascribed to God. Through the use of reason and the experimental method, justification, redemption and even heaven could be realized. This whole process of secularization turned the emerging secularism into a 'theological discourse in its own right', as the religionists frame it (Gelot 2013: 7, 8, 151, 152; Luoma-aho 2009: 298, 299, 306; Luoma-aho 2012: 26).

The two opposite interpretations strongly resemble the two types of secularization as discerned by Elizabeth Hurd. She distinguishes between two forms of secularism: laicism and Judeo-Christian secularism. According to her analysis, the first assumes that religious belief and practice will decline or be even eliminated. Laicism sees itself as free from ideology and neutral with respect to the religion–politics melee. This form of secularism structures the perception of religion in the world conceptualizing each manifestation of religion as fundamentalism: a negative social force directed against science, rationality, and secularism – in short, a force against modernity itself. The resurgence of religion, Hurd writes, is seen as a manifestation of deeper social, economic, or political grievances. The other form of secularism she distinguishes sees the Judeo-Christian tradition as the unique and inimitable foundation of secular public order. Although it differentiates between the temporal and the religious spheres, it does not assume or promote a decline or privatization of religion. Representatives of this position, such as Bernard Lewis and Huntington, defend the separation of the religious and the political as profoundly Christian. Hurd quotes Lewis:

> Separation of church and state was derided in the past by Muslims when they said this is a Christian remedy for a Christian disease. It doesn't apply to us or to our world. Lately, I think some of them are beginning to reconsider that, and to concede that perhaps they may have caught a Christian disease and would therefore be well advised to try a Christian remedy.
>
> (Hurd 2012: 44)

As Hurd claims, Judeo-Christian secularism perceives the resurgence of religion as a demonstration of the moral, religious, and political incommensurability of different civilizations, and the natural relationship between Judeo-Christianity and secular democracy (Hurd 2008: 42, 136, 138–140). It is clear that current IR, according to this divide, is based on laicism, whereas religionists and their neosecularization theory are closer to Judeo-Christian secularism.

Conclusion

According to the religionists, there are a number of domain-specific assumptions that lead to a bias with regard to religion. The main reason is that IR is based on Westphalian assumptions: the idea that the state is the central actor, that the national interest is defined as power, and that the domestic domain is seen as irrelevant. These ideas are strengthened by the belief that the Westphalian system is the moment that religion was sidelined, marginalized, or privatized because it threatens public order. As a result, the Cold War was analyzed and interpreted as a competition between two secular ideologies. Religious conflicts or phenomena were analyzed within this secular framework, thereby overlooking the role of religion.

The religionists not only argue that these assumptions are no longer true because the world has changed, but they also present an alternative view of this

process. They also see Westphalia as a secularization process but appreciate it differently. They call this approach neosecularization theory, which understands secularization as a change of the institutional place of religion. Secularization does not mean that there are fewer believers or that religion plays a less prominent role in the public domain. Rather, religion has taken on a different shape. Whereas previously the legitimacy of social institutions depended on a supernatural framework, today they are legitimized by empirical and rational criteria. These criteria, however, came into being within a religious or a Christian context and as such they are still indebted to it. The secular is such a category: it presupposes the use of language in which the religious and any references to it are absent, but it does not mean that it is hostile toward religion. The religionists do not develop this neosecularization theory further in relation to the role of the state and the national interest, but it is not difficult to imagine that they see this as a more religion-friendly development than current IR trends. With this theoretical framework, religion does not have to be at odds with the state, the national interest, security, or power.

Notes

1 Sections 4.1 and 4.2 are based on the following literature, except for the explanatory notes and notes with references to the quotations. (Burnett 1994: 293, 299; Farr 2008: 55–57; Farr 2012: 277; Fox & Sandler 2004: 27–29, 167–169; Hasler 2013: 137, 138, 140, 141; Hanson 2006: 5; Haynes 2007: 31, 32, 36; Haynes 2011: 263; Hehir 2012: 17; Huntington 1996: 34, 35, 174, 175; Hurd 2008: 32, 100, 101; Patterson 2011: 66, 67, 69, 70; Philpott 2002: 70–76, 79, 80; Philpott 2009: 185, 187–189; Rudolph 1997a: 1, 4; Rudolph 1997b: 244, 256; Sandal & Fox 2013: 31, 32, 37, 41; Saunders 2004: 164, 165; Shah & Philpott 2011: 24–59; Shani 2009: 308–310; Shore 2009: 11, 12; Stack 2011: 25, 26; Thiel & Maslanik 2017: 2; Thomas 2005: 54–56, 64–66, 151, 156, 157; Wilson 2012: 29, 31, 55).
2 Thomas has another interpretation of neorealism. He sees neorealism as a methodological individualist approach (Thomas 2005: 67, 68). I will come back to this in Chapter 8.
3 Sandal and Fox state that, historically, realism was less hostile towards religion than Philpott claims. They point out that Machiavelli certainly did pay attention to the (instrumental) role of religion, and considered Christianity to be of key importance for the stability and progress of society. According to him, religion required scrupulous attention, but eventually had to be judged for the 'impact on the causes of men's actions, not from its truth' (Sandal & Fox 2013: 31). According to Sandal and Fox, Machiavelli thought that 'politics should not be guided by pure moral considerations' (Sandal & Fox 2013: 31). He recognized the importance of religion but also warned for its interference in the political sphere. Sandal and Fox call this pragmatic secularism. Hobbes later joined Machiavelli's line of thought, in that realism did not want to prescribe a purely religious or moral order, though it acknowledged religion as a force capable of influencing the anarchic world (Sandal & Fox 2013: 31, 32).
4 Philpott also states in this article that besides the intrinsic relation between protestant theology and sovereignty, there was also a historical and causal connection. Each system that had experienced a reformation crisis also obtained an interest in a system of sovereign states (Philpott 2013: 207).
5 Gelot describes this as three secularization acts titled respectively as 'Medieval Origins', 'Hobbes' Sacred Politics', and 'The Enlightenment' (Gelot 2013: 41–123).

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5 The Dominance of Naturalism in the Genesis of the Old Paradigm

Introduction

There are good reasons to claim that historically religion or theology has had a huge influence on the emergence and development of IR as a discipline. However, as IR developed it was remarkably successful in hiding this background and becoming more and more secular, and even naturalistic; meaning that IR became increasingly modeled after the natural sciences. This development in itself may have been a major factor in the neglect of religion as an element of human, social, and political reality, the religionists claim. This development already started with the Enlightenment and impacted the vision that religion would eventually disappear, as the modernization and secularization theory states. Positivism, materialism, and reductionism are all attributing to the disappearance of religion, according to the religionists. I will be discussing these themes extensively, on the basis of the four levels introduced in Chapter 1: the social and cultural embeddedness, ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

5.1 Social and Cultural Embeddedness: Influence of Enlightenment Thinking

Religionists claim that the Enlightenment had a major impact on IR, and caused religion to currently be ignored in IR theories. The religionist Farr emphasizes that it was the French Enlightenment, in combination with the Scientific Revolution, which radically transformed the relationship between faith and reason. Farr and the religionists in general refer to so-called more radical Enlightenment thinking and they do not address more moderate lines of thought (e.g. Scottish Enlightenment), which were also religion-critical but sought reform and renewal of the Christian faith. This somehow one-sided and 'dark' representation of the Enlightenment nevertheless helps to get a sharp picture of the religionist view.[1] Before the Enlightenment, Farr states, the prevailing view was Augustine's: 'No one believes anything unless one first thought it believable (…) Everything that is believed is believed after being preceded by thought' (Farr 2008: 49). In short, faith preceded the empirical

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observation. The Enlightenment broke with this long marriage between faith and reason, relegating faith to the realm of (private) superstition. This was the result of the growing confidence in the empirical methods of science, which fed a conviction among elites that the claims of religion were not only unprovable but entirely subjective.

The Scientific Revolution and the French Enlightenment not only subordinated faith to reason; they also transformed the meaning of reason and rationality. Largely due to Immanuel Kant (1724–1804), modern reason became identified with mathematics and the scientific method, implying that only truths that are the result of empirical research are knowable. This was a radical break with the past: from the ancient Greeks onward, philosophers had sought truths that were knowable despite not being scientifically verifiable. With the Enlightenment, human rationality became the sole arbiter of truth, and knowledge based on faith and intuition became seen as inferior. Many Western intellectuals considered the separation of religion and rationality, and the privatization of religion complete by the twentieth century (Farr 2008: 49–51; Gelot 2009: 41; Stack 2011: 22, 23; cf. Shore 2009: 12).

As a result of Enlightenment thinking, IR primarily views religion as dangerous, violent, intolerant, and properly kept private. The darkest representation even views believers as psychologically disturbed and primed to be intolerant and violent. Religious leaders influence the masses and institutionalize their beliefs so that they are able to treat non-believers as heretics who have to be either submitted or eliminated. That is what makes religion inherently dangerous. Religion is equally dangerous when it makes people patient and passive in cases of injustice, or into romanticists, ignorant and backward in the face of knowledge and progress. It is against the background of these ideas that IR theories have been developed and applied.

Another way in which the Enlightenment has influenced IR is that religious knowledge is undervalued and considered of secondary importance. This can be illustrated by the influence exerted within IR by Max Weber's (1864–1920) categorization of different forms of rationality. Weber considered religion a form of value rationality, which leads to action for ethical, aesthetical, and religious purposes. This form of knowledge differs from procedural knowledge, or in Weber's words 'formal rationality', which is based on a rational calculation of the best ways to achieve preferred objectives. In IR terms, this means that religion is at most a form of soft power and therefore inferior to 'hard' military or economic power. The realists' predilection for hard power leads them to relegate religion to, at best, a secondary role in their analysis of international affairs (Gelot 2009: 15; Lynch 2003: 56; Thomas 2005: 108–110).

In addition, the influence of the Enlightenment becomes visible in IR in that religion is often reduced to a set of rules and replaced by morality. This started with Kant, who anchored rational religion in the law of morality rather than in ecclesiastical faith. He did this by combining the Augustinian command model of morality with a shift from the Christian God to the individual moral subject (Hurd 2012: 25–27, 36; cf. Shore 2009: 13).

5.1.1 The Dominance of Modernization and Secularization Theory

The Enlightenment ideas about religion strongly influenced the modernization and secularization theory. The founding generation of sociologists were mostly European, and thus intellectual heirs of Enlightenment ideas such as that religion is standing in the way of progress, that new social arrangements compete with the status quo, including traditional religions, and that reason and science challenge the authority of religion's influence on people's minds and consciousness.

This assumption was not limited to academic scholarship because most (if not all) Westerners, especially those from the United States, were socialized with the idea that church and state are separate and that it is wrong for governments to endorse any religion. The fact that IR is the most Western (that is, Enlightenment-informed) variant of the social sciences explains why the subscription of IR to modernization and secularization theory has led to the neglect of religion.

The modernization theory was the dominant paradigm among Western political scientists from the late 1950s through the mid-1970s. The sociological analog, called secularization theory, focuses exclusively on religion and remained dominant in sociology until the early 1990s. Modernization theory posits that modern processes like economic development, urbanization, modern social institutions, pluralism, growing rates of literacy and education, as well as advancements in science and technology in Western and non-Western societies, would inevitably lead to the diminishing of pre-modern factors like ethnicity and religion in politics and society. Modernization theory assumes that secularization is an inherent part of modernization (Desch 2013: 17–19; Farr 2008 47, 48; Fox & Sandler 2004: 10, 11, 16, 17, 20, 163; Gelot 2013: 11, 12; Haynes 2009: 193; Haynes 2007: 7–10; Kubálková 2000: 700; Kubálková 2006: 140; Stack 2011: 25; Thomas 2005: 51–53).

According to the religionists, IR subscribes to modernization and secularization theory, even though in political science and sociology a reassessment took place (Fox & Sandler 2004: 15). This reassessment would have been well-justified for IR too because the applicability and validity of modernization and secularization theory have turned out to be flawed. Its applicability can be questioned because, as scholars of non-Western societies have objected, what modernization theory considers 'modern' now appears conspicuously Western. The theory's validity can also be questioned: contrary to its predictions, the number of religious people is increasing, while the number of non-religious people is decreasing. Besides that, religion has recently been more at issue in wars than it has been in the past (Fox & Sandler 2004: 10, 18, 19; Thomas 2005: 51, 53).

That IR still reasons from the assumptions of modernization and secularization theory appears from various facts. Even after Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*, most debates did not touch upon his argument about the role of religion, which demonstrates IR's commitment to modernization and

secularization theory. IR still accepts the secular liberal and laicist beliefs that modernization and economic development will diminish the appeal of religion. It assumes that religion is an impediment to the scientific management of domestic and international affairs according to the Westphalian system. It believes that neorealist theory is right in its assumption that anarchy creates like units and that all states will become liberal states. Realists expand the liberal assumption that modernity will create a global culture of tolerance and respect, limiting the possibility of war and providing the basis for international order (Barnett 2011: 95; Cho & Katzenstein 2011: 171; Desch 2013: 21–23; Gelot 2013: 12; Hurd 2008: 32; Laustsen & Waever 2003: 148; Sheikh & Waever 2012: 275; Thomas 2000a: 52, 53; Wilson 2012: 3; see also Shore 2009: 22).

5.2 Ontological Consequences: Materialism

The consequences of the worldview of the Enlightenment as described above becomes visible through the way in which IR theory deals with religion on an ontological level. According to the religionists, IR is based on the ontological assumption of materialism, which means that observable reality is seen as a reflection of material causes. Religion, ideas, and ideology are epiphenomenal factors that are the result of basic material, economic, or technological forces in society, and therefore have no independent explanatory power (Thomas 2005: 62).

Realism and neorealism assume that states have fixed interests and that the international structure is defined by material attributes, distribution of power, military capability, natural resources, technology, and geography. (Religious) rules and norms are seen by realism and neorealism as contingent and reducible to material factors, so religion is not taken into account (Haynes 2007: 40–42, 428, 429; Hurd 2012: 38, 39; Katzenstein 2011: 146, 147). They consider religions epiphenomenal, while material factors like states and the distribution of power are easier to theorize about. This is not the same as stating that power should be measured in a material sense only, as some scholars argue, because Morgenthau clearly admitted that the content of power and the manner of its use are determined by the political and cultural environment. This conception of power by Morgenthau also includes charismatic or psychological power. This shows that softer notions of power are not excluded, though (neo)realists prefer material factors to theorize about (Barnett 2011: 94; Sandal & Fox 2013: 37, 41). The bottom line is that, from a theoretical point of view, preference is given to material causes. This is also because it is easier to work with quantifiable material factors. The result is that non-material issues, like religion, are taken into account insofar as they contribute to the realization of material factors.

5.3 The Impact of Positivist Epistemology

The Enlightenment's limiting of the realm of reason to what can be known according to the scientific method is reflected in the epistemological assumptions of realism and neorealism, which are all strongly positivistic. This implies

that a maximum of explanatory power is to be pursued, primarily and preferably in mathematically framed hypotheses; rationality exists independently of context; and the applied scientific concepts must be secular.

5.3.1 Positivism's Longing for Explanatory Power and Belief in Context-Independent Rationality

IR scholars are often frustrated by interpretative theories' lack of predictive power. In order to overcome this, and because of the influence of the Enlightenment and especially nineteenth- and twentieth-century positivism, realism does not make a distinction between studying an unconscious world of atoms, a range of mountains, or the conscious world of human beings. Realism tries to imitate the physical sciences in 'the building of theoretical and manageable machines' – and to match the physical sciences' levels of certitude and social prestige. As a consequence, Waltz leaves culture (and therefore religion) out of his theory of neorealism for the sake of parsimony. Religion simply does not strike him as being sufficiently relevant to merit inclusion in a universal predictive theory of IR (Burnett 1994: 297; Pettman 2004: 32; Snyder 2011: 7; Thomas 2005: 73).

As a result of the desire for theory and explanation, there has emerged a gap between the practice of international politics and what realism as a theory says about it. This discrepancy between theory and practice is particularly apparent in relation to the question of whether power is the ultimate aim and whether states are the most central actors in international politics. Morgenthau, apparently, pays lip service to the acknowledgment that there are ultimate aims in international politics beyond the immediate aim of power, because, in his theory, power has become the ultimate aim and religion does not play a role in it. This shows that realism is not realistic – it does not describe the world as it actually is, including religion's continuing important role. As a result, American diplomats raised in the Enlightenment secularism of the realist school are unprepared to see the spiritual aspects of problems and solutions. As regards the centrality of the state, it seems that this assumption does not fit the nation-states as we know them outside the theoretical machine. Though Morgenthau saw this problem, he ultimately dismissed it (Hehir 2004: 14; Burnett 1994: 293, 297–298).[2]

> The supranational forces, such as universal religion, humanitarianism, cosmopolitanism, and all the other personal ties, institutions, and organizations that bind individuals together across national boundaries, are infinitely weaker today than the forces that unite peoples within a particular national boundary and separate them from the rest of humanity.
>
> (Burnett 1994: 297, 298; Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 350)

The foregoing reasoning makes clear that realism and neorealism want to develop theories with great explanatory power. This is the result of positivism, which does not make a clear distinction between the social world and the world

of physics. Unfortunately, the application of this positivist idea to IR leads to a gap between the theory (which omits religion) and the world (in which religion plays an important role).

Besides the fact that positivism longs for explanatory power, it also believes in a rationality that exists independent of context. Neorealism subscribes to this view. Neorealism understands rationality as independent of social and historical context, as well as any specific understanding of human nature or purpose (or 'flourishing'). This has limited the idea of what good theories are in the first place, and restricted the attention paid to ideational factors like ideas, passions, aspirations, ideals, ideologies, belief systems, norms, and collective identities (Skillen 2010: 88; Thomas 2000b: 825, 826; Thomas 2005: 59, 60, 158).

5.3.2 The Secularizing Impact of Positivism and Behavioralism

Positivism led to the secularization of the impact of religion on IR, because religious concepts in IR became detached from the rest, sometimes suppressed, or replaced by new areligious concepts (Barnett 2011: 105; Hatzopoulos & Petito 2003: 6, 12–14). Religion and ethics in fact did play a role in the field of International Relations. This changed, however, when positivism and behavioralism made their impact on the study of political science in the United States.[3] This was driven, among other reasons, by the United States' search for the most reliable knowledge to defeat the Soviet Union during the Cold War. In this context, positivism became applied to the study of world affairs, thus 'scientizing' the discipline. This process led to the behavioral revolution, and the application of concepts, theories, and techniques of the social sciences to world politics (Pettman 2004: 2). The disappearance of the initial religious influence and the dominance of positivism have resulted in a difference between classical and current rationalist IR, in that the latter is much more optimistic about the possibilities of knowledge and the rationality of practice (Laustsen & Waever 2003: 171).

The original religious influence on IR can be described from a functional and substantial perspective. From a functional perspective, it could be argued that the existing view in IR closely resembles the way in which religion, anthropologically defined, perceives and understands the world. For example, most representations of the state in history personify the state with bodily metaphors (cf. Paul's *Epistle to the Ephesians*). Another example is the way in which the models and myths common to IR, such as the Westphalian system, resemble myths and models that are utilized by religion.

With regard to substance, there are two ways in which religion has impacted IR: internally, through theology, and externally, through the application of various ethical traditions. The external, and most familiar, influence of religion on IR took place when various ethical traditions were applied to international relations issues. The fact that the application of ethical traditions from the outside was their most common way to relate religion and international affairs further demonstrates the generally assumed a-religiosity of IR.

The internal influence through theology – also called the religiosity, theology of IR – still pervades the existing discourse of IR, and explains why many present-day concepts have a religious connotation. As one of the religionists argues, in the history of ideas, the 'modern' is only a recent concept. Until 200 years ago, religions provided the dominant way of thinking, so many (postmodern) concepts and ideas have their roots in religious thinking. The stress on identity, for instance, the 'insider's perspective', and the distinction between the inside and the outside have always been central to religion. Another example is the focus on consciousness instead of the outward appearances in phenomenology, which it derives from the preoccupation of religion with inner meaning. The same applies to hermeneutics, which originated in the schools of theology. Most tellingly for IR, so-called secular political systems represent themselves as identical to God's omnipotence over humankind. In modern times, this happened when the doctrine of state sovereignty became sacrosanct, and the political world was seen as a pantheon of states. This refers to Carl Schmitt (1888-1985) that the concept of state sovereignty shares similarities with belief in God.

Another more specific influence of theology on IR took place when the Protestant theologian Reinhold Niebuhr introduced the ideas of Augustine – and his interpretation of it – into IR. The theological ideas from Augustine included the idea of sin, the limits of human nature, human knowledge and politics, and the likelihood of irony or tragedy in political outcomes. These Augustinian ideas have also influenced Morgenthau. The tragic element of human action comes back in Morgenthau's argument that the constellation of interests among actors and the drive for power will inevitably lead to sin. The idea that human knowledge is limited, which is derived from the belief that only God has full knowledge, can be found in the basic separation of the transcendent and the actual in Morgenthau's thinking. Niebuhr's Christian-inspired realism influenced not only Morgenthau but a whole postwar generation of scholars and politicians (Fox & Sandler 2004: 33; Kubálková 2000: 681; Laustsen & Waever 2003: 170, 171; Luoma-aho 2009: 298, 306; Luoma-aho 2012: x, 2, 51, 88; Thomas 2005: 57; see also Rengger 2013: 141–144).

The fact that this religious influence disappeared is the result of the fact that a religious and a positivist view were considered irreconcilable on ontological grounds, namely in what each view acknowledges as 'real'. While a religious view assumes the existence of a transcendental reality, this is difficult to accept for positivists, because this reality cannot be described in ordinary or scholarly language or subjected to scientific tests. Positivism holds religion in contrast with reason and not to be taken seriously. IR in the United States is still committed to this positivist scientific course. Even when Keohane wrote that the attacks of September 11 revealed the secular bias of mainstream theories of world politics, he did not overcome his positivism – for he suggested studying religion within a synthesis of existing approaches such as classical realism, liberal institutionalism, and constructivism. These are approaches which the religionists often label as positivist and rationalist frameworks. As such, these theories cannot do more than de-legitimize 'irrational' religion by forcing it

into their secular categories, even if they treat it as culture or identity (Barnett 2011: 95; Kubálková 2000: 677, 680–683, 685: Kubálková 2006: 141, 142; Thomas 2005: 93–96; Tickner 2009: 224; Wilson 2012: 59).

There are religionists who admit that Waltz, in his book *Man, the State, and War*, acknowledges the historical relevance of religion. They argue, however, that Waltz's emphasis on the development of religion into secular values leads to the neglect of religion in the analysis of contemporary international politics (Wilson 2012: 69). The religionists, in conclusion, consider it ironic that the influence of religion on realism led to the separation of religion and politics and the neglect of religion's role in the pursuit of power and survival in the international system. This happened not because of religion's irrelevance to IR, but because of a secularist bias within realist theory (Wilson 2012: 32, 54–56).

5.4 Reductionist Tendencies

In the rare cases that (neo)realists discuss religion, it is often not dealt with appropriately, because classical realists and neorealists tend to diminish the significance of religion. According to the religionists, this is because realism and neorealism reduce religion. This happens in two ways. In the first place, religion in IR is framed in a dualistic way. The result is that the institutional, individual, and irrational aspects of religion are privileged, while religion's ideational, communal, and rational aspects are subordinated. In the second place, religion is reduced to ideology.

To start with the first kind of reductionism, this is the result of secularism, which promotes a dualistic model in which religion is either institutional or ideational, rational or irrational, individual or communal. The use of this either/or model enables the separation, subordination, and exclusion of the communal, rational, and ideational aspects of religion and the characterization of religion as primarily institutional, individual, and irrational (Wilson 2012: 61, 63, 64).

Religion is reduced to its institutional aspect when it is treated as a non-state actor, epistemic community, civilization, part of the societal or political sector, or a nongovernmental or transnational movement such as terrorism. From the perspective of rational choice, religion appears exclusively as an organization rather than a significantly different *Weltanschauung*. The institutional approach could be ascribed to the Judeo-Christian experience that has influenced Western secularism because institutions play a less prominent role in other religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism.

The reduction of religion to its irrational elements occurs when religion is addressed as a fundamentalist, extreme, radical, or militant phenomenon instead of a normal part of the political process. Depicting religion as something irrational reinforces the necessity of separating religion and politics because irrational influences disturb political stability and could create chaos in public life. That means that religion must be relegated to the private sphere for the sake of social cohesion. This understanding of religion, however, is

inadequate, because not all public religions can be reduced to anti-modern fundamentalism. There are some forms of public religions that are, in Casanova's words, 'counterfactual normative critiques of dominant historical trends, in many respects similar to the classical, republican, and feminist critiques' (Shore 2009: 23; Thomas 2005: 44).

The reduction of religion to its ideational and individual aspects happens when religion is not defined as a community of believers but as a body of ideas. In the 'political myth of liberalism', this redefinition of religion is necessary in order to legitimate the transfer of ultimate loyalty from religion to the state. The 'political myth of liberalism' implies that, over time, religion has become the value-laden domain of the affective, the irrational, of violence and intolerance, the unnatural, and the non-democratic, while laicism represents what is public, neutral, and value-free. It is the modern secular state that has to save people from the horrors of modern wars of religion (Thomas 2010: 195).[4] When religion is redefined as an individual phenomenon, it becomes easier to separate politics and religion. This separation easily becomes privatization, because politics is exclusively concerned with public goods. Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) played an important role in the creation of this myth because he shifted from a social understanding of religion to a definition of religion as a set of privately held beliefs. Thus Grotius insulated ethics from theology, which helped to overcome the conflicts resulting from religious pluralism among the states in Europe.

Approaching religion as a set of beliefs is reductionist, and does not describe the way religion has been lived in non-Western countries. In addition, the liberal definition is historically contingent, because it defines religion from the perspective of the secular and the secular is not a universal phenomenon. Finally, the liberal definition does not do justice to the religious wars of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in which people defended a sacred notion of community (as defined by religion), not a set of beliefs. Defining religion as a set of beliefs, religionists argue, is a typically modern – and historically inaccurate – reading of religion (Fox & Sandler 2004: 9; Fox 2007: 47; Hurd 2008: 33, 36, 37; Kubálková 2000: 682, 683: Kubálková 2006: 141, 142; Laustsen & Waever 2003: 151, 169; Shore 2009: 23; Thomas 2000b: 838; Thomas 2005: 22–26; Wilson 2012: 64, 65; see also Hassner 2013: 73).

Realism and neorealism reduce religion to an irrational, individual, and institutional phenomenon. In realism, all three forms of reduction are present in the work of Morgenthau, especially the assumption that religion is inherently irrational, as in his assertion that '[t]he passions of the religious wars yielded to the rationalism and the skeptical moderation of the Enlightenment' (Wilson 2012: 71). Elsewhere, Morgenthau also seems to emphasize religion's irrationality when he argues that traditional religions have been made obsolete by people's ability to rely on themselves rather than on divine intervention. This realism considers religion inherently irrational and ordinarily productive of 'passion', and little else explains why realism only takes religion into account as a lever of power or as an ideology similar to fascism, communism,

liberalism, or capitalism. In this view, actors use such ideologies to conceal the reality of the power struggle that is the basis of international politics (Farr 2008: 61; Farr 2012: 279, 280; Wilson 2012: 70, 71).

The same reductionist thought has been adopted by neorealism. Neorealist theory also has the underlying assumption that religion, though it is considered historically significant, is a private, irrational, and individual matter, and not relevant to the analysis of contemporary international politics (Wilson 2012: 69).

The tendency within IR to reduce religion to ideology is the result of the influence of the Cold War paradigm. During the Cold War, the two secular ideologies of liberalism (capitalism plus democracy) and communism competed with each other. Within this paradigm, international politics and the associated conflicts were analyzed and interpreted as a competition between these two secular ideologies. Because religious conflicts or symptoms were analyzed within this framework, the role of religion was overlooked. This is ironic because IR claims to account for the whole world, but in fact, it appears very much a product of its Western origins and perspective (Fox & Sandler 2004: 20, 21; Tibi 2000: 843).[5]

Conclusion

This chapter has been devoted to the naturalism that is present in IR and leads to the neglect of religion. This naturalism is the result of certain Enlightenment thinking which led to the separation of faith and reason. Subsequently, religion was reduced to an irrational form of knowledge consisting of moral rules, and reason was narrowed to that which can be (naturally) scientifically known. As a result, religion became increasingly marginalized and privatized. According to the religionists, this is reflected in IR, as religion is only considered significant as a form of soft power, inferior to hard power such as military and economic power. Similar developments took place because of the influence of modernization and secularization theory, positivism, materialism, and reductionism in approaching religion.

One point I would like to dwell on more is the secularization of the concepts. Many concepts within IR were of theological origin, but the influence of positivism and behavioralism meant that theological concepts had to give way to social scientific concepts and methods. According to the religionists, this has led to less attention being paid to religion. A notable matter is the religionist perception of the Christian realist Niebuhr and the classical realist Morgenthau. In the previous chapter, I observed that they were both classified as IR theorists who would consider Westphalia as the privatization of religion. In short, as advocates of the secular Westphalian system. However, in the present chapter, I find that Morgenthau and Niebuhr were being described as IR theorists who, in the past, influenced IR theories from religious or theological starting points. The religionists find this ironic and attribute the fact that religion is being ignored in the current IR to a secular bias. So there is a remarkable

ambivalence with respect to their valuation of Niebuhr and Morgenthau. As I suggested before, it would be helpful to view Niebuhr and Morgenthau from the viewpoint of neosecularization theory, because it could show that their secularism is a theologically prompted secularism, and not necessarily an expression of animosity against religion. In the chapters hereafter, I will aim to demonstrate that this perspective does more justice to Niebuhr and Morgenthau.

Noteworthy, is the 'irreconcilable ontological difference' the religionists see between positivism and religion. This seems to imply that one cannot simultaneously have a religious belief and be a positivist – in my view, a rather strange idea. I propose to make a distinction between positivism as a scientific position and the possible worldview related to it. This would mean that people can adhere to a positivist view on theory and at the same time acknowledge the fact that science is not the only source of access to knowledge about reality. For that reason, the religionists need arguments of a more philosophy of science nature to dismiss positivism.

Notes

1 Today, historians recognize that the overwhelming majority of the Enlighteners were interested in finding a balanced relationship between reason and faith and that only a small fraction was anti-religious (Lehner 2018: 22).
2 Burnett draws attention to the fact that Morgenthau revised many other elements of this chapter in later editions, but that he left this passage without change (Burnett 305: fn. 25).
3 Behavioralism is a quantified approach to explain and predict political behavior which emerged in the 1930s. It is modeled after the natural sciences and claims to be objective and neutral.
4 Thomas wonders why killing to defend religion is categorically worse than killing to defend the modern state. He poses this question, on the one hand, to draw attention to the commonly accepted hegemony of the state and on the other hand, to make the point that the (alleged) 'religious wars' of early modern Europe were no more violent than the 'secular wars' of modern Europe (Thomas 2010: 195).
5 Religion was not completely absent from this conflict; for example, President Eisenhower saw and employed religion as a strong force against communism (Inboden 2008: 257–309; Sandal & Fox 2013: 49). Thomas points out that Martin Wight gave a theological interpretation of the Cold War by depicting it as a conflict between two apostasies: liberalism as the apostasy of Christianity and communism as the apostasy of Russian Orthodox Christianity (Thomas 2010: 199–201).

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6 Religion in Morgenthau's Classical Realism

'It Is the Theology'

Introduction

The preceding chapters have been devoted to the position of the religionists. They make a strong claim that religion should be integrated into IR, but that there are many assumptions that prevent IR from doing so. Of all IR theories, classical realism and neorealism are criticized the most by the religionists. For that reason, the following chapters will be devoted to Morgenthau and Waltz.

In this chapter, I will argue that religion plays a cooperative role in Morgenthau's theorizing. To understand that I discuss his view on science and political theory, his political–philosophical concept of the autonomy of the political, and his political theology. Before I do that I first set out how I interpret Morgenthau. My starting point is that Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations*, more specifically his six realist principles in the first chapter of his book, can be considered as an overview of his classical realism. Even then the question remains how certain passages have to be interpreted in light of other writings. That is why I also include other publications by Morgenthau in my representation of his classical realism. In the second part of the chapter, I indicate what makes Morgenthau hesitant toward giving religion a central role in his theory.

6.1 *Politics Among Nations* as the Centerpiece of Morgenthau's Classical Realism

I base my description of Morgenthau's classical realism mainly on Morgenthau's *magnum opus, Politics Among Nations*, which he first published in 1948 (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985). Morgenthau starts all its later editions with the sentence: 'This book purports to present a theory of international politics' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 3). His second chapter starts with the sentence:

> This book has two purposes. The first is to detect and understand the forces that determine political relations among nations, and second to comprehend the ways in which those forces act upon each other and upon international political relations and institutions.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 3, 18)

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Morgenthau's research assistant Kenneth Thompson who completed the sixth edition of *Politics Among Nations* after Morgenthau's death, states that Morgenthau himself took it for granted that most discussions about his philosophy considered this book as a summation of his worldview. He also argues that Morgenthau considered *Politics Among Nations* as a book apart from his other works. This appears from the fact that his two other books, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics* and *The Purpose of American Politics*, lack any reference to *Politics Among Nations* (Thompson 1999: 19; Lang 2004: 3 fn. 8).

Another reason to focus on *Politics Among Nations* to describe and understand Morgenthau's classical realism is that Morgenthau worked on the book for most of his academic life, with the result that it reflects most of his thinking and discussions he had with others, most importantly his students and his research assistant Thompson. The latter states that 'It would be no exaggeration to say his classroom experiences were trial runs for the final draft of *Politics*. He took his students' questions very much to heart' (Thompson 1999: 21). According to Christoph Frei, who wrote an intellectual biography about Morgenthau, there is no document that reflects Morgenthau's theorizing better than *Politics Among Nations*. Frei argues that Morgenthau announced the book as early as 1933 and kept renewing the announcement in the years after. In 1937, Morgenthau already wrote: 'The project occupies myself since the beginning of my scientific activities, that is to say since 1927' (Frei 2001: 208). In 1938, he wrote: 'The project I hope to realize with the aid of a fellowship I have been working on since 1927, and all my preceding publications touch one or another of the problems with which this project deals' (Frei 2001: 209). In the preface of this second volume, Morgenthau stated that 'When this book was written in 1947, it summarized an intellectual experience of twenty years' (Frei 2001: 210).

Finally, *Politics Among Nations* has been the 'field's most influential textbook' and one of the key books on most literature lists at American universities for decades (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985). As a result, *Politics Among Nations* has become a book through which people, the religionists too, primarily know about and understand Morgenthau's classical realism.

The fact that I take *Politics Among Nations* as the basis to describe Morgenthau's classical realism, does not mean that I will leave his other books and writings out. I will involve these, but always in relationship to *Politics Among Nations* as the summation of Morgenthau's worldview. That is also why I use the sixth edition of Politics Among Nations, because in this version Thompson introduced 'wherever possible fragments of Morgenthau's own writings' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: vi).

6.1.1 Politics Among Nations *and the Six Principles of Political Realism*

Within *Politics Among Nations*, I consider the first chapter as foundational for the whole book and all of Morgenthau's other works. One important reason is that Morgenthau added this as the first chapter to his second edition in order

to respond to some of the criticism of his work and it remained the first chapter of his book in all later editions (Lang 2004: 3). According to Robert Gilpin, this happened because Morgenthau realized when he moved to Chicago that if he wanted to make an impact, he would have to learn and write about social science, as the social sciences were very dominant there (Cristol 2009: 238–244; Jørgensen 2010; 87, 88). Another consideration is that others also interpret the six principles with that understanding. (Borgeryd 1998: 101; Chatterjee 2010: 19, 20; Devetak, Burke & George 2012: 40; Donnelly 2000: 35; Elman & Jensen 2014: 34; Jørgensen 2010: 87; Rösch 2015: 97; Rosenthal 1991: 2, 4; Viotti & Kauppi 2012: 51; Williams, Wright & Evans 1995: 192).

The risk of presenting Morgenthau's classical realism on the basis of his six principles is that his classical realism becomes interpreted too narrowly and that it would not do justice to the 'subtlety and depth of his thinking on politics', as Anthony Lang correctly states (Lang 2004: 3). For this reason, I will also involve Morgenthau's other writings when interpreting his six principles.

6.1.2 Morgenthau's Realism: A Theory or Set of Assumptions?

My presentation of Morgenthau's classical realism is based on the assumption that Morgenthau is much more a political philosopher and practical thinker rather than a theorist. Morgenthau put his most important assumptions and theoretical principles in his *Politics Among Nations*, but he never presented a coherent and consistent theory. Large parts of his work are about practical foreign policy issues, while other parts are more philosophical. Although much of his work is about theory and the task of political science, he himself never developed a full-blown theory. It might even be hard to call his six realist principles an embryonic theory, as Waltz likes to do, because most of his writings are of a political–philosophical nature. Morgenthau's principles provide a loose framework, a way of seeing the world. It is a set of assumptions about the human person and society (Rosenthal 1991: 7). Morgenthau's six realist principles are an attempt to formulate some guiding principles, informed by realist political philosophy and history for the practice of international politics (Craig 2003: 110).

By doing so, as Waltz points out, Morgenthau did not distinguish between foreign policy and international politics (Waltz 2008: 71). The fact that Morgenthau himself uses the term 'theory' and that he writes much about the function and meaning of political theory does not diminish the fact that his classical realism is a set of assumptions rather than a theory. Rosenthal refers to Michael Smith who states that 'realism was more than a theory: it was an expression of a set of beliefs' (Rosenthal 1991: xviii). That Morgenthau used the term theory, should be seen against the background of his time and the attempt to secure room for an alternative theory, against positivism and behavioralism (Guilhot 2011: 129, 132). I will use the term theory in this chapter but in a much broader meaning, namely as a coherent set of ideas, principles, or assumptions.

6.1.3 Different Morgenthaus?

Scholars differ on how to read and interpret Morgenthau's classical realism. In 2009, Duncan Bell stated that

> there is little agreement on the character of his political vision. We now have almost as many Morgenthaus as there are interpreters of him, and he has been presented as everything from an arch-conservative to a critical theorist.
>
> (Bell 2010: 8)

I do not think that things are as bad as Bell claims here, but I do see that Morgenthau is interpreted in different ways, or that people perceive different Morgenthaus. There are scholars who argue that Morgenthau's classical realism was not consistent over time and that there are two Morgenthaus: a conservative and realist, and an idealist and progressive (Craig 2003: viii, 116; Frei 2001: 212; Jervis 1994: 871).

I agree that Morgenthau's writings indeed give the impression that he becomes more idealistic and normative in later years, but I disagree that this justifies the conclusion that his thinking has fundamentally changed. In my view, there is one Morgenthau who developed some basic assumptions about international politics. These assumptions did not change fundamentally over time, but the context in which he operated changed to such an extent during his life that he was challenged to emphasize certain aspects of his theory over others depending on the context (see also Keaney 2006).

Campbell states that Morgenthau tried to integrate his new understanding of international politics into his old framework. Campbell states that this does not mean that he is embracing the idealist or utopian way of thinking. He argues, instead, that the prospect of nuclear war led Morgenthau to a merging of idealist and realist approaches. The reason for this was social pressure, which was lacking before, but could now generate political pressure to make a world state possible (Craig 2003: 109). In other words, Morgenthau does not embrace the liberal and optimistic view that states, because of enlightened self-interest will create international organizations or a world state. On the contrary, it is because of an external threat and the will to survive that there is sufficient social pressure to propose a world state. So, Morgenthau sticks to his realist assumptions but adjusts these in light of security threats on a planetary scale.[1]

This means that it does not do justice to state that there are two classical realist theories of Morgenthau. It would be more precise to argue that there is a realist and a more idealist Morgenthau, but that both elements are integral to his classical realism. In the words of Murray, Morgenthau's realism offers a coherent approach which retains a commitment to moral universalism, while recognizing the essential location of morality within community. Its core is to reconcile the ideal and real in international politics (Murray 1997: 200, 201). It is often the context that makes his idealism or realism come to the forefront.[2]

6.1.4 The Relevance of the Sequence of the Six Principles

In the second edition of *Politics Among Nations*, Morgenthau called his position on international politics realism. His standpoint as a realist must be seen over against the other school, called idealism at the time. The latter's point of departure was, Morgenthau writes, the conviction that a rational and moral order based on universally abstract principles can be realized in the here and now. It believes in the essential goodness and the infinite possibility of change of human nature. It blames the social order, social institutions, the depravity of certain groups, or isolated individuals for not following rational standards, and it relies on education reform and the scarce use of force for the realization of its goals. Realism starts from the opposite perspective and states that the world is imperfect and that improvement of the world will only be possible by taking into account these imperfect forces. Moral principles will never be fully realized and can only be approximated through the balancing of interests. Realism takes history as guidance more than abstract principles and sees the lesser evil as a more realistic goal than the absolute good (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 3, 4).

Morgenthau introduces the six principles as the tenets of his political realism. I believe that the sequence of the principles is important because it starts with the principle that there are objective laws which have their roots in human nature, and then the book continues to explain what the rational principle in politics is, according to realism. So, Morgenthau first wants to argue for the existence of objective laws which are rational before he outlines the rationality of the political domain. This principle of interest defined as power, connects 'reason trying to understand international politics and the facts to be understood' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 5). He then moves on to the third principle in which he argues that this core principle is universally valid, but that the actual content of interest depends on the political and cultural context (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 10, 11). After establishing and securing that politics is a separate sphere, which can be distinguished from the ethical, religious, economic, and aesthetical spheres in the third principle, Morgenthau decides to address morality in the fourth principle (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 5, 12). In his fourth principle, he discusses the tension between the moral command and successful political action and argues that this tension should not be obliterated. He defends the application of universal moral principles, but also that they have to be filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 12). In the fifth principle, after Morgenthau defended the relevance of universal moral laws, he argues against the identification of the universal moral law with the aspirations of states. Morgenthau closes his argument with the sixth principle, which resembles the start of his argument in which he defines realism against idealism. He argues that political realism is different from other approaches regarding intellectual and moral matters. Different in intellect, because political realism maintains the autonomy of the political which is characterized by interests and

defined as power. Morally, because political realism does subordinate the standards of other spheres, like the moral and religious spheres, to the standards of the political sphere (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 13, 14). Like with the first principle, Morgenthau grounds this on his view on human nature (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 16). This shows that the beginning and the end of his argument are closely related, but it also shows that each principle presupposes the preceding one. For this reason, I think we should interpret the principles accordingly, which also means that the sequence reveals an order of importance.

6.2 Religion as a Cooperative Factor in Morgenthau's Classical Realism

The way in which Morgenthau writes and 'theorizes' about religion can best be characterized as cooperative. Religion is not central to international relations, but it is one of the factors and if it plays a role it is a cooperative one. By cooperating factor, I mean that it can influence or color the course of events, like Morgenthau says about the images of the world. These are created by ideas and often serve as switches that determine the course certain interests and their subsequent actions take (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 11)

The fact that Morgenthau sees religion this way is the result of a couple of decisions and assumptions. He distinguishes between (1) religiosity and religion, paying attention to the first, but barely to the latter; (2) between proper and improper or distorted religion (also called ideologies and political religion); (3) religion and morality, paying most attention to the latter. In addition to that, he holds a scientific–philosophical, political–philosophical, and political–theological view that leads to a reluctant position on involving religion.

6.2.1 Religion, Religiosity, Proper and Improper Religion, and Religion and Morality

To understand the role of religion in Morgenthau's classical realism properly, it is important to understand that Morgenthau distinguishes between religion and religiosity, proper and improper religion, and religion and morality.

Morgenthau makes a distinction between religion and religiosity.[3] The second term carries a broad connotation for him, while the first has more to do with the institutional formation of this religiosity. He sees religions like Judaism, Christianity, or Hinduism as particular manifestations of a broader religious awareness called religiosity. What Morgenthau means by religiosity appears from a passage in the book *Essay on Lincoln's Faith and Politics*.

> The issue that precedes all others both in time and importance is that of religion. When we speak here of religion we have in mind not only membership in a particular religious organization or observance of religious

> practices or professions of faith in a particular religious dogma. What we have in mind is primarily a religious attitude that recognizes the insufficiency of man as a finite being and seeks to orientate itself through some transcendent guidance, so that man can come to terms with himself, his fellowmen, and the universe. Religion is here conceived as a universal human attitude, with which believers, atheists, and agnostics alike approach themselves, their fellowmen, and the universe and of which the historic religions, religious organizations, and religious observances are but particular manifestations.
>
> (Thompson, Morgenthau & Hein 1983: 6)

In this quote, Morgenthau describes religiosity as 'a religious attitude that recognizes the insufficiency of man as a finite being and seeks to orientate itself through some transcendent guidance, so that man can come to terms with himself, his fellowmen, and the universe'. In another place, he describes it as 'the awareness of his dependence upon a will and a power which are beyond his understanding and control' (Morgenthau 1962k: 60). Morgenthau sees religiosity as something universal which is shared by all human beings.

Morgenthau seems to prefer a religiosity like President Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865). He appreciated especially the way Lincoln dealt with the religious claims both parties made during the Civil War (1861–1865). He therefore cites how President Lincoln replied to a petition of a delegation of Presbyterian ministers in 1862, called *Emancipation Memorial Presented by Chicago Christians of All Denominations*.

> The subject presented in the memorial is one upon which I have thought much for weeks past and I might even say for months. I am approached with the most opposite opinions and advice and that by religious men, who are equally certain that they represent the Divine will. I am sure that either the one or the other class is mistaken in that belief and perhaps in some respects both. I hope it will not be irreverent for me to say that if it is probable that God would reveal his will to others, on a point so connected with my duty, it might be supposed he would reveal it directly to me; for, unless I am more deceived in myself than I often am, it is my earnest desire to know the will of Providence in this matter. *And if I can learn what it is I will do it!* These are not, however, the days of miracles, and I suppose it will be granted that I am not to expect a direct revelation. I must study the plain physical facts of the case, ascertain what is possible and learn what appears to be wise and right.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 278; Morgenthau 1979: 8; Thompson, Morgenthau & Hein 1983: 10, 11)

His appreciation for Lincoln appears also in another passage in which he describes Lincoln's position in the Civil War. It seems that here his own position agrees with Lincoln's view.

> The most mortal men, such as Lincoln, could do was to work to the best of their ability toward the end which they expected to be the design of the higher power: the restoration of the Union. God governs the world according to his own designs which can neither be known nor influenced by man. Thus in one sense man is a forlorn actor on the stage of the world; for he does not know the nature of the plot and the outcome of the play written by an inaccessible author. But he is also a confident and self-sufficient actor; for he knows that there is a script, however unknown and unknowable its content, and he can do no more than act out what he believes the script to require.
>
> (Thompson, Morgenthau & Hein 1983: 15, 16)

Morgenthau suggests that perhaps the best way to act is according to this political morality (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 278). Morgenthau clearly was not blind to religion in an individual's life, but he also does not assign much weight to it. Morgenthau writes about the necessity of this attitude of religiosity much more than about religion as an actor.

Morgenthau distinguishes between proper and improper religion. The first functions in a similar way as metaphysical philosophy by opening human consciousness to the mysteries of the world (Morgenthau 1972: 66). Morgenthau calls this otherworldly religion, because it is based on religious faith and its truth cannot be tested by experiment (Morgenthau 1962b: 253). It is peculiar to religion that it believes in the existence of another world which is not subjected to empirical tests because it is superior to the world of the senses (Morgenthau 1962d: 20). Religion paints a picture of the empirically unknown with its own proper means (Morgenthau 1972: 64).

Proper religion can easily become improper or distorted. Whereas religiosity is the fruit of experience which is 'transformed into intellectual and moral awareness by mind of conscience', religion has the temptation of eclectic idolatry which is 'often blasphemous in man's self-identification with the deity' (Morgenthau 1962k: 62). This happens, according to Morgenthau, when religion becomes political religion. In this improper variant, religion constructs the empirically known through its own images and signs. It then easily becomes ideology, because it conceals a reality that is already empirically known (Morgenthau 1972: 64). The fact that religion so often plays an ideological role has to be attributed to the nature of politics according to Morgenthau. In the context of politics, religion easily turns into political religion. The validity of political religion depends on its success in the here and now. Morgenthau sketches the difference between genuine religion and ideology when he compares Christianity and Marxism (Morgenthau 1962b: 253; Morgenthau 1969: 38, 39). In another place, Morgenthau also makes a difference between genuine religion and political religion when he writes about Nazism.

> In sum, naziism is less political philosophy than a political religion. It has in Hitler its savior, S.A., S.S., and party its sacred orders, in *Mein Kampf* its bible, in the immutable twenty-five points of the party program its catechism, in the racial community its mystical body. It has its miracles and rituals, its apostles, martyrs, its claim to acceptance not from the truthfulness of its suppositions, which is verifiable by experience, but from authority, and, furthermore, that its claims to acceptance is absolute and not subject to critical doubt. It differs from genuine religion in that its manipulators are not supposed to believe in it, that it constantly changes according to the exigencies of the political situation, and, finally and most important, that its avowed objective it not to establish relationships between the individual and supernatural forces, but to establish and perpetuate the political power of a self-appointed elite over the masses of humanity.
>
> (Morgenthau 1962l: 228, 229)

Morgenthau shows that Nazism displays many features of a religion, but it is a political religion, not a genuine religion. Morgenthau distinguishes religion from ideology by referring to religion's transcendent reference point and to the immanent role of religion in political religion. This explains why Morgenthau at another place warns against a religion that loses its transcendent reference point and 'its concern for truth and sin and joins other social forces in justifying, strengthening, and improving society' and becomes an 'organized social activity and the public demonstration of official piety, permeated with doubt and disbelief' (Morgenthau 1958: 3; Morgenthau 1982: 228). As said, Morgenthau very often writes about ideologies, much more than about religions in their proper form.

Morgenthau often writes about morality in relation to international politics. Although it is possible to have a view of morality without a religious perspective, there are reasons to assume that Morgenthau relates the two. In 1979, Morgenthau delivered a lecture under the title *Human Rights and Foreign Policy* as part of a series of lectures on morality and foreign policy. This series was organized by the *Council on Religion and International Affairs*.[4] In that lecture, Morgenthau acknowledges the importance of religion as a foundation of human rights:

> I personally believe that it is impossible to postulate a plausible moral code without a theological foundation. But how you formulate that foundation is a difficult theological question. I do not believe that you can postulate, for instance, the dignity of human life or the sacredness of human life without a theological foundation.
>
> (Morgenthau 1979: 10)

This means that Morgenthau relates morality and religion. However, in his survey about his six realist principles, he sets out that ethics or morality is a

different sphere than the religious sphere. They do not, however, exclude each other. When Morgenthau writes about morality, he sees it as something that is founded on or derived from religion, but he still sees them as two separate spheres, which means that people can agree on moral issues without sharing their theological or religious foundation (cf. Gustafson 2007: 95).

To conclude, most writings of Morgenthau are about religiosity, morality, and the distorted forms of religion, such as political religion and ideologies. That does not mean that it plays a large role in his theorizing and that it has to do with other considerations as I will set out hereafter.

6.2.2 Philosophy of Science: View on Political Theory

The first principle of Morgenthau's political realism is that politics is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature, which have not changed since the classical philosophers. Morgenthau states that in order to improve society, it is first necessary to understand the laws by which society lives (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 4). The existence of objective laws makes it possible to develop a rational theory and to distinguish between truth and opinion (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 4). Morgenthau objects to the view of modern science as value-free and neutral; students at the university still expect that they will be provided with knowledge that helps them understand their own existence in relation to the world (Morgenthau 1972: 15, 16). He states that science without any transcendent reference point is what is left to the scholar (Morgenthau 1972: 18). The result is a multiplicity of truths and a focus on factual and quantitative knowledge (Morgenthau 1972: 21).

Morgenthau holds that political science must be based 'upon a total world-view – religious, poetic, as well as philosophic in nature – the validity of which it must take for granted' (Morgenthau 1962c: 41). A theory is 'a system of empirically verifiable, general truths, sought for their own sake' (Morgenthau 1959: 16). He distinguishes the knowledge that is produced in this way from practical knowledge, which is interested in truth with direct practical relevance, common sense, which is particular and unsystematic, and philosophy, which is not necessarily empirically verifiable (Morgenthau 1962c: 44). Most of his writings are, however, on political theory, which means that his understanding of theory, with respect to the social and political sphere, differs from his more general definition of a theory.

There are three elements which characterize Morgenthau's view on political theory. First, Morgenthau believes in the existence of objective and rational truths in political matters and does not want to fall prey to relativism. According to Morgenthau, 'we must be able to learn from political insights of a Jeremiah, a Kautilya, a Plato, a Bodin, or a Hobbes', because history is philosophy taught by example, says Thucydides (460–400 BC) (Morgenthau 1959: 18, 19; Morgenthau 1962i: 336). He agrees that the idea of relativism is justified, as long as it is acknowledged that each fact is part of a unique historical context and that the political scientist is part of a social reality which

determines his view (Morgenthau 1962c: 36). With regard to the historical context, Morgenthau warns the scientist not to take theory too absolute, because then it easily becomes a metaphysical system that imposes some coherent intellectual scheme upon reality. However, by means of his own rationality, the political scientist is able to trace the rationality of political processes. That makes it possible for a theory of politics to become 'a rationally ordered summary of all the rational elements which the observer has found in the subject matter' (Morgenthau 1959: 20, 21).

Second, one of the difficulties of an adequate understanding of the nature of politics, as Morgenthau notices, is that events are unique on one hand, but also very similar, because they are manifestations of social forces (Morgenthau & Thompson1985: 20). Morgenthau nevertheless believes that it is possible to develop a rational theory that reflects these objective laws, be it imperfect and one-sided (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 4). A political theory should, therefore, present a rationally consistent system, which takes account of the contingencies without allowing them to spoil its rationality (Morgenthau 1962g: 1). Morgenthau calls the essence of politics rational, over against the contingent facts of political reality. His position is that the more politics follows its own rationality the better it will function. A theory of politics should therefore paint the rational essence of the political sphere. Morgenthau uses the word painting because there will always be a difference between reality itself and the theory. He compares it with a photograph and a painted portrait. A photograph shows everything that can be seen with the naked eye. But a photograph cannot show the essence of the subject, that is the task of the painting.

Morgenthau holds that the essence a rational theory tries to grasp reflects the one-sidedness of objective laws. The one-sidedness of the law must be combined with other empirical laws in order to complement it (Turner & Mazur 2009: 489). A theory can ascertain facts but has to give them meaning through reason. For example, we can find out what statesmen have done, and we also might find out what their objectives were, but we also need a rational map to give meaning to the facts (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 4, 5). So, rational laws and empirical research are complementary in Morgenthau's view, and a political theory contains both. Robert Jervis summarizes it as follows:

> As both a detached scholar and a passionate observer of world politics, Morgenthau sought to have his general philosophy guide his views on specific issues and yet to remain open enough to allow his observations of the wisdom and folly – usually the latter – around him alter some of his most deeply-held beliefs.
>
> (Jervis 1994: 853)

The first point mentioned above supports the idea that Morgenthau's theory has a universal applicability. The second point helps him to ground his idea of the national interest of power as the guiding principle of the political sphere. The third idea comes together in his ideal-typical approach.

6.2.2.1 Ideal Types: Empirical, but Normative

In the third place, the fact that objective laws are one-sided and must be complemented by empirical research means that political theory is always normative. To understand this, it helps to take into consideration that Morgenthau subscribes to Weber's ideal-typical understanding of theory, as George Mazur and Stephen Turner point out (Turner & Mazur 2009: 490; Morgenthau 1984: 7). According to them, Weber sees ideal-types as: 'conceptual forms, idealizations, which selectively present some aspects of social life, particularly social action, for the purpose of making them more fully intelligible by redescribing them in terms of clarified concepts' (Turner & Mazur 2009: 490). It means that Morgenthau, in studying politics, selects some elements and describes them by means of concepts, which makes social actions intelligible and understandable.

The ideal-typical approach of Morgenthau can create confusion. According to Jaap Nobel, Morgenthau presents two realities: the essential world on which his pure theory is founded and the actual world on which his political practice is based. This dichotomy is also visible in his book *Politics Among Nations*, Nobel states. On the one hand, Morgenthau claims to have a theory which is empirical, but on the other hand, he labels it as essential when it disagrees with empirical evidence. The consequence of this position, Nobel argues, is that political practice as described in the second part of *Politics Among Nations* does not agree with the rationality that Morgenthau postulated in the first part (Nobel 1985: 86).

This apparent contradiction can be explained by the application of ideal-types. An ideal-typical approach means that the theoretical construct, the theory, is more rational than reality itself: it does correspond to reality as a painting does to a photograph (Turner & Mazur 2009: 488, 490). This makes it possible, as Mazur and Turner state, that Morgenthau believes that there are laws governing international politics and that his interpretative social theory lends rationality to the actions of the statesman (Turner & Mazur 2009: 488). That can give the impression that this rationality differs from the way in which Morgenthau describes political practices because it is a difference between the theory, which is an abstraction of reality, and the empirical observation of daily political practices. Morgenthau responded to this criticism when he wrote that this is not an argument against his theory presented here, that actual foreign policy does not or cannot live up to it, because the intention of *Politics Among Nations* is to present a rational theory of international politics (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 10). Besides that, Morgenthau also argues that the 'one-eyed rationality' of political theory has to be supplemented with the moral wisdom of the statesman (Morgenthau 1965: 9, 10). For example, when the statesman believes that a certain truth will be upheld forever, he or she should realize that circumstances may vary infinitely (Morgenthau 1965: 220, 221). They should also be aware that they can lack an objective view of history, because of pride based upon intellect, goodness, or a collectivity he or she belongs to, for example (Morgenthau 1962i: 334).

The ideal-typical approach of Morgenthau also sheds light on the role of normativity in his view of theory. The one-sidedness of the law (that it is ideal-typical) allows for contingencies and systematic irrationalities, which makes theorizing normative, because it can never be completely objective (Morgenthau 1959: 17, 18; Morgenthau 1962c: 49; Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 10; Turner & Mazur 2009: 490). Morgenthau based this on his argument that the greatness of the scholar follows from his or her ability to know what ought to be known. Following certain norms, the scholar shows what moral standards are guiding him or her. Science and reason that do not acknowledge their social and moral roots, make room for all kinds of ideology (Morgenthau 1965: 166, 167).

This also holds for statesmen and foreign policy, Morgenthau argues. When a statesman believes that a certain truth will be upheld forever, he or she should realize that circumstances may vary infinitely (Morgenthau 1965: 220, 221). State leaders should be able to supplement the 'one-eyed rationality' of political theory with their moral wisdom (Morgenthau 1965: 9, 10). Political realism is aware of the gap between good – that is rational – foreign policy and how it actually is. For that reason, Morgenthau argues, foreign policy should also be rational in view of its own moral and practical purposes (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 10).

Morgenthau's view on theory and normativity come together in political realism, because as a rational theory of international politics, it reflects objective laws, although they are one-sided and imperfect. The existing objective laws can only be accessed through the understanding of statesmen (Turner & Mazur 2009: 492, 493). That means that political realism will always be a combination of a rational principle, its interpretation, and its application in a political policy. According to Morgenthau, such a rational principle functions as some type of hypothesis that needs to prove itself and give meaning to the facts of international politics in confrontation with the actual facts. According to Morgenthau, the rational principle for international politics is the national interest defined as power (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 5). This principle is neither the direct result of the facts of international politics, nor the result of theory, but is based on the assumption that the statesman thinks and acts in terms of interest defined as power, confirmed by history (Turner & Mazur 2009: 492).

Morgenthau's view on science and political theory coming together in his ideal-typical approach leads to the secondary role of religion. Morgenthau sees his theory as a reflection on supposed objective rational laws. Morgenthau also distinguishes different spheres, including a political, religious, economic, and moral sphere. He believes that a political theory should limit itself to the political sphere and try to expose its rationality. It must not allow this rationality to be clouded by the rationality of other spheres. That explains why the next section is about another reason why religion is secondary in Morgenthau's thought.

6.2.3 Political Philosophy: Autonomy of the Political

The autonomy of the political, the sixth principle of Morgenthau, means that the political should be respected as a sphere on its own in relation to economics, ethics, aesthetics and religion. The principle of the autonomy of the political makes political realism different from other schools of thought.

> Real man is a composite of 'economic man,' 'political man,' 'moral man', 'religious man,' etc. A man who was nothing but 'political man' would be a beast, for he would be completely lacking in moral restraints. A man who was nothing but 'moral man' would be a fool, for he would be completely lacking in prudence. A man who was nothing but 'religious man' would be a saint, for he would be completely lacking worldly desires.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 16)

By stating that politics is an autonomous sphere, Morgenthau wants to distinguish it from other domains of action, like economics, law, or religion. Through the concept of spheres, he also makes it possible to limit and give focus to the study of the political realm.

> Without such a concept a theory of politics, international or domestic, would be altogether impossible, for without it we could not distinguish between political and nonpolitical facts, nor could we bring at least a measure of systemic order to the political sphere.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 5)

Political science should deal with political man, abstract it from the other aspects of man as if it were the only aspect of man, and apply the standards of thought that are appropriate (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 16). It is for theoretical reasons that the observer has to distinguish between politics and other social spheres. For example, economics is centered upon the concept of interest, defined as wealth, and in the same way, politics is characterized by its concept of interest defined as power, the second principle of Morgenthau. That does not mean that only power determines the political sphere, but the concept of national interest defined as power, provides the observer with a rational and timeless concept to approach his object of study. It gives intellectual discipline to the observer and infuses rational order into the subject matter of politics, making a theoretical understanding of politics possible. Besides that, it provides the actor, the statesman, with rational discipline in action and an overview of the conditions for successful action which leads to continuity in foreign policy (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 5; Morgenthau 1962c: 48). Political realism guarantees the autonomy of the political sphere against the moral or legal sphere. The moralist asks whether his policy is in accord with moral principles, whereas the political realist asks: 'how does this policy affect the power of the nation?' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 13, 14).

According to Michael Williams, the specificity of the political sphere lies in power as an interest in itself. It is lacking any concrete interest except the pursuit of power. Other spheres, on the contrary, have concrete interests. In economics, for example, the interest is material gain, but the fact that the political does not have a specific interest makes it unique compared to other spheres. It is the sphere where the fundamental meanings and values of social life are contested and determined (Williams 2004: 643, 644).

Morgenthau wants to maintain the autonomy of the political sphere and wants to assign the religious and moral spheres their proper place and function. This does not mean that Morgenthau discards the standards of the other spheres, or that he denies the actual influence of standards from other spheres. It is for theoretical reasons that he wants to deal with each sphere on its own terms. The difference with other approaches is that the political realist will not subordinate political standards to standards from other spheres, but the other way around. Morgenthau refers here in particular to the legalistic–moralistic approach to international politics (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 14, 16). Economic, legal, and moral concerns are considered, but the first and foremost consideration is the political dimension. Realism wants its own territory or sphere wherein political considerations are to be supreme (Rosenthal 1991: 6).

The use of the term sphere in this principle comes from Weber. Morgenthau defines a sphere like Weber does, as 'a domain or action which is intelligible in terms of the consequences of actions and value-choices' (Turner & Mazur 2009: 493). There are different spheres, such as the moral, religious, economic, and legal spheres. These spheres are formed over the course of history by human choice and action, and are as such, the historically and naturally given structure within which value-choices are possible and intelligible. The various spheres and the values involved, conflict and interpenetrate each other, which makes it impossible to develop a predictive theory. Within each sphere, values play a role, but these values are derived values, and not necessarily ultimate values, because the latter belong to the otherworldly realm. Although some people will consider the nation-state as their ultimate value, most of them take political order as a means to an ultimate end (Turner & Mazur 2009: 494).

6.2.3.1 The Rationality of the Political Sphere: National Interest Defined As Power

Morgenthau believes that, although the circumstances have changed over time, the essence of foreign policy has not changed; moreover, it is possible to develop a distinct theoretical understanding of international relations that is true regardless of time and place (Morgenthau 1952: 4; Morgenthau 1962a: 47; Morgenthau 1962c: 167). The essence, according to him, is that when a nation becomes confronted with another hostile nation its foremost and moral duty is to take care of its own interests, because no other nation will do this (Morgenthau 1952: 4; Morgenthau & Thompson 1982: v). History has shown that it is reasonable to assume that statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 5). The

United States has, from the beginning of its history, held two guiding objectives: its security in the Western hemisphere and the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe (Morgenthau 1952: 4, 5; Thompson, Brauer, & Morgenthau, 1968: 25).

Morgenthau defines power as a human being's control over the minds and actions of others. By political power he thinks of 'the mutual relations of control among the holders of political authority and between the latter and the people at large' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 32). Morgenthau explicitly states that interests can be material and ideal, as power can be physical or psychological; however, he also says that the actions of man are directly dominated by their interests and not ideals. That does not mean that ideals do not play a role at all. He asserts that the images of the world, which are created by ideas, often serve as switches that determine the course certain interests and their subsequent actions take (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 11).

According to Morgenthau, the principle of the national interest defined as power makes it possible to retrace and anticipate the steps a state leader has taken or will take in the political scene. Through this principle, we might even be able to understand the thoughts and actions of a statesman better than he does himself. The national interest defined as power, helps us to understand why American, British, or Russian foreign policy appears to us as an intelligible and rational continuum (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 5). But what about all these foreign policies that did not follow this rational and objective principle? Morgenthau admits that elements such as personality, prejudice, subjective preference, and weaknesses of intellect will deflect foreign policies from their rational course. A theory of foreign policy should, however, try to abstract from these irrational elements and paint a picture that presents the rational element, to be found in experience, without its contingent elements. Morgenthau is open to the idea that there are deviations from rationality which might appear as contingent or irrational, but which may be elements in a coherent system of irrationality. He suggests that it would be worth exploring the possibility of developing a theory of irrational politics (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 7).

Another reason for Morgenthau to come up with the principle of national interest defined as power, is that it makes it possible to set politics apart as an autonomous sphere of action which can be distinguished from other spheres such as ethics, aesthetics, or religion. Without such a concept, it would be impossible to come to a theory of politics and bring 'at least a measure of systemic order to the political sphere' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 5).

Morgenthau also points out that focusing on the national interest defined as power prevents one from two fallacies: the concern with motives and ideological preferences (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 5). In Morgenthau's view, it is not very fruitful to study the motives and intentions of statesmen, because these motives are very difficult to observe and history does not show a necessary relationship between the good motives of a statesman and the quality of his foreign policy. Although good motives can restrain explicitly bad policies,

they are not a guarantee for successful and moral foreign policy (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 5, 6). A realist theory will also distinguish between the foreign policies of a statesman and his personal political and philosophic ideas. Although politicians will present their foreign policy in terms of their personal convictions or in terms of their philosophical and political sympathies, the first cannot be deduced to the latter (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 6, 7). Statesmen must distinguish between their personal wishes and the interests of the state. As Morgenthau says, 'He will distinguish with Lincoln between his "official duty" which is to protect the national interest and his "personal wish" which is to see universal moral values realized throughout the world' (Morgenthau 1962n: 110; Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 7).

Morgenthau supports this position by the argument that human beings have the right to judge their fellow creatures by some moral standard. It would, however, be unacceptable when they would act upon that judgment. According to Morgenthau, the same rule applies to nations. States that would act upon their judgment fail to acknowledge how corrupt judgment on matters political can be. They overlook the narrow limits within which nations have to apply moral standards, and they close their eyes to their primary responsibility: to take care of the interest and survival of their own nation (Morgenthau 1962m: 280, 281).

The interest defined as power is an objective key concept, which is universally valid. His argument is, through Weber, that interests directly dominate the actions of men. It depends, however, on the particular period of history and the political and cultural context that determines which interests hold sway (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 10, 11). The result is that Morgenthau maintains that the goals that are pursued by nations in their foreign policies, run the whole gamut of objectives any nation has ever pursued or might pursue. Morgenthau writes that the content of the concept of power may comprise anything that establishes and maintains control of man, be it physically or psychologically, be it disciplined by moral ends by institutions like those in Western democracies or even when it is untamed and barbaric (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 11; cf. Knutsen 1997: 242).

Thus, on the one hand, Morgenthau says that interest defined as power is universally valid, and on the other hand he recognizes the influence of time and place. The way this unfolds becomes apparent when Morgenthau differentiates between the role played by interests in the domestic and the international domain. Morgenthau distinguishes between the domestic and international realms but sees both domains as expressions of the political sphere. International politics is part of political science's general theory of politics (Morgenthau 1959: 16). Morgenthau, nevertheless, acknowledges that power and morality play different roles in the domestic and international realms.

Morgenthau describes the difference between the domestic and the international spheres as follows. In domestic politics, the government or the state is the embodiment of the values of the community and the object of the ultimate loyalty of its members; it is an integrated society (Morgenthau 1959: 23).

International society differs from the domestic domain, as becomes prevalent in the relationship between national interest, morality, and power. In the first place, on the domestic level, the interests to which power attaches itself are as varied as the members of society, while in international society power belongs to the interests of a nation. Second, the political attention to particular interests of citizens in domestic society can vary, but in international politics, the interests of nations, the survival of the country, and its identity are constant over time. Third, the interests of citizens in domestic society are part of a larger transcendent, comprehensive social interest that defines and limits its pursuit, while in international relations, national interests as a part of a larger transcendent entity barely exist (Morgenthau 1959: 26–28). In short, there is no principal difference between the domestic and the international political domain, because in both cases the political domain is determined by power. There is a gradual difference because the actors and the role of morality are different in the domestic realm; citizens are part of a larger transcendent whole which barely exists in international relations.

Though Morgenthau distinguishes between domestic politics and international politics, he does not explicitly separate the one from the other. That is understandable because most of his theorizing is about foreign policy, which takes place between the domestic and international realms. This also explains the role of morality in relation to national interest and power. He could relativize morality on the basis of an analysis of international politics, which lacks a transcendent whole; however, that is impossible from the perspective of domestic politics in an integrated society based on shared transcendent values. Foreign politics comes about in the interaction between the international realm and domestic politics.

Morgenthau distinguishes between the domestic and international realms, but that he approaches both of them from the perspective of the political sphere becomes clear from the way he characterizes international politics. The first step he makes is that he basically understands international relations as international politics. He argues that, in this period of history, in this culture, for practical and theoretical reasons, the international sphere can best be understood through international politics (Morgenthau 1959: 15, 16). For Morgenthau, international relations consist of collective and individual relations, which affect each other and transcend national boundaries. International relations are political relations, characterized by the aspirations for power (Morgenthau 1962f: 167; Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 37).

These aspirations can manifest themselves in three ways: to keep, to increase, or to demonstrate one's power. These three manifestations relate to three styles of policy, namely: status quo policy, imperialism, and the policy of prestige. The clashes between these various styles characterize international relations (Morgenthau 1962f: 168; Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 52, 53).[5] International politics, Morgenthau argues, 'like all politics', is a struggle for power and 'a continuing effort to maintain and to increase the power of one's own nation and to keep in check or reduce the power of other nations' (Morgenthau &

Thompson 1985: 31; Morgenthau 1948: 80). Although all kinds of other aims can play a role, the immediate aim in international politics is power.

> Statesmen and peoples may ultimately seeks freedom, security, prosperity, or power itself. They may define their goals in terms of a religious, philosophic, economic, or social ideal. They may hope that this ideal will materialize through nonpolitical means, such as technical co-operation with other nations or international organizations. But whenever they strive to realize their goal by means of international politics, they do so by striving for power. The Crusaders wanted to free the holy places from domination by the Infidels; Woodrow Wilson wanted to make the world safe for democracy; the Nazis wanted to open Eastern Europe to German colonization, to dominate Europe, and to conquer the world. Since they all chose power to achieve these ends, they were actors on the scene of international politics.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 31)

According to Morgenthau, the fact that power politics is the distinguishing element of international politics is a universal given which can be confirmed by history and experience. Even if anthropologists could show that people free from aspirations for power exist, they would not be able to demonstrate whether it holds when those people operate under the condition of international politics (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 37, 38). The consequence of this standpoint is that many activities of states are not of a political nature. Examples of such undertakings are legal, economic, humanitarian, or cultural activities (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 31, 32).

Although Morgenthau, in his time, came to the conclusion that international relations were mainly political, that would not always be the case. Morgenthau himself realized that the relationship between national interests and the nation-state is subject to change. Times could come when the nation-state would be replaced by a larger unit with a different character (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 12). Morgenthau warns of the human temptation to take the contingent events of their time as a perennial phenomenon (Morgenthau 1962h: 1). For that reason, he argues that the current connection between interest and the nation-state is a product of history, which is therefore bound to disappear in the course of history (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 12). Morgenthau's former assistant Thompson says that Morgenthau was concerned that his view of national interest would be interpreted too narrowly. In the past, national interest was often associated with the nation. But since the 1970s, Morgenthau was aware that certain interests, like the threat of nuclear war, the population explosion, the environment, and world hunger, could no longer be solved by the nation-state and required an international system (Morgenthau & Thompson 1982: v).

Morgenthau's third principle seems to serve the purpose of explaining that the national interest defined as power may be a universal principle to

understanding international politics. It should however, always be applied carefully, taking context into consideration, especially when sudden, unexpected circumstances arise (Rosenthal 1991: 5). That Morgenthau limits international relations to international politics, 'in this period of history, in this culture, for practical and theoretical reasons', has consequences. Cultural, legal, and religious considerations will always be secondary to the primary principle, namely interest defined as power. I write 'always', but this only applies when Morgenthau interprets and defines international relations as international politics. Morgenthau seems to be open to the fact that in another period of history in another culture international relations might be something other than international politics.

6.2.3.2 The Relative Autonomy of the Political: Politics and Morality

Morgenthau maintains the autonomy of the political while taking into account the other spheres. That is why I call it a relative autonomy. This becomes clear in Morgenthau's dealing with morality. Morgenthau argues for the morality of the national interest very strongly in the book *In Defense of the National Interest*.

> Self-preservation both for the individual and for societies is, however, not only a biological and psychological necessity but, in the absence of an overriding moral obligation, a moral duty as well. (…) A foreign policy derived from the national interest is in fact morally superior to a foreign policy inspired by universal moral principles.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1982: 38, 39)

According to Rosenthal, the national interest defined as power, was not meant to exclude moral principles but to show what has priority. Morgenthau acknowledges the normative element of realism, but he subordinates it to the more immediate power considerations (Rosenthal 1991: 5). The way Morgenthau relates the moral and political spheres is an example of how he would relate the religious sphere to the political.

Critics often interpret Morgenthau's insistence on the importance of power as if he endorses axioms like 'Might makes right' (Lebow 2003: 216). Against this view, Murray states that Morgenthau adopts an Augustinian, rather than a Hobbesian–Machiavellian, framework because Morgenthau's political realism reconciles the imperatives of morality and national survival. Morgenthau holds that the national interest must be protected, but it must always be subjected to strict moral limitations (Murray 1996). Mollov argues that Morgenthau acknowledges that when there is power, it also implies that there is justice and that man is an animal longing for power but also a creature with a moral purpose (Mollov 1998: 103, 104). Rosenthal formulates this with respect to Morgenthau as follows: the realist lives primarily in the 'twilight zone' where ethics and politics meet (Rosenthal 1991: 7). Besides that, in his

fourth principle, Morgenthau explicitly states that '[b]oth individual and state must judge political action by universal moral principles, such as that of liberty' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 12). Instead of trying to label Morgenthau's realism as either power politics or moral politics, it would be more adequate to characterize his view as tragic. He is aware of the fact that power does not ultimately suffice, but that international politics cannot do without it. As Richard Lebow points out, for Morgenthau

> moral principles can never be fully realized, but only approximated through the ever temporary balance of interests and equally precarious management of conflicts. A wise statesman 'aims at achievement of the lesser evil rather than of the absolute good.' 'Power', Morgenthau acknowledged, 'is a crude and unreliable method of limiting the aspirations for power on the international scene,' but the balance of power may be a good *short-term* strategy for preserving the peace.
>
> (Lebow 2003: 244; cf. Russell 1990: 150, 160, 164–167, 170)

According to Morgenthau, statesmen must often choose between different moral principles. The question of which principles should take precedence depends on the context. It is for this reason that Morgenthau once stated, in 'extreme and striking terms', that it is impossible to be a successful politician and a good Christian (Morgenthau 1962e: 102). Morgenthau distinguishes between pure ethics and political ethics. Pure ethics can judge actions by their conformity with moral law, but political ethics must judge actions by their consequences in the real world. To illustrate the importance of this point, Morgenthau refers to the statement 'that if events proved him wrong, "ten angels swearing I was right would make no difference"' (Rosenthal 1991: 5, 6).

The fact that Morgenthau takes the moral significance of politics seriously, leaves us with the question as to how this works in practice. For this reason, Morgenthau introduces, as it were, a few ground rules. In the first place, time and place, or in other words, context, should be taken very seriously. Morality functions differently in different situations. He distinguishes three ways in which morality could relate to power: morality can limit power; morality can approve of power; and morality may serve power. In a civilized political community, these three functions function well, but in the international sphere the strongest moral force is the nation-state, and as a result, international morality is much weaker. As a result, states tend to equate their morality with international morality: morality becomes ideology and theory becomes ideology. That might explain why, according to Morgenthau, there are so many ideologies and so few theories (Morgenthau 1959: 26–28).

The fact that Morgenthau ascribes such importance to context should not be seen as relativism as if morality is a relative thing and meaning depends on the context. Morgenthau asks then, how it is possible that we still understand the moral relevance of the Ten Commandments, the moral ideas of Plato, Blaise Pascal (1623–1662), Buddha, and Thomas Aquinas, while they originated

in totally different contexts? The answer is that what all human beings have in common is that they are moral beings. Civilized human beings differ from barbarians because they make the right moral judgments. They share with each other and with Socrates, the Greek tragedians, the biblical prophets, and the great moralists of all ages, the belief in the sanctity of the moral law. This morality is required for the flourishing of humankind's transcendent orientations (Morgenthau 1982: 357, 358). Great human beings in history have devoted themselves to transcendent purposes. They revealed the truth of Scripture that 'He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it' (Morgenthau 1982: 358).

The second ground rule is that political realism does not want to obliterate the tension between morality and politics. In Morgenthau's view, there has to remain a difference, or even a tension, between politics and morality, because removing that tension would obscure both. Morality might look less exacting and politics more moral than they are (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 12). Morgenthau makes this very clear in his article *The Demands of Prudence*. That is why I quote him at length.

> An unbridgeable gulf separates the demands of Christian ethics from the way man is compelled by his natural aspirations to act. That conflict is fore-ordained by the nature of Christian ethics and the nature of man. Christian ethics demands love, humility, the abnegation of self; man as a natural creature seeks the aggrandizement of self through pride and power. It is the tragedy of man that he is incapable, by dint of his nature, to do what Christian ethics demands of him. It is the guilt of man that he is unwilling, by dint of his corruption, to do what he could do to meet the demands of Christian ethics. The best man is capable of is to be guided by the vision of a life lived in compliance with the Christian code and to narrow the gap between his conduct and that code. The closing of that gap through complete harmony between the demands of Christian ethics and man's conduct is not a problem for ethics but for theology. Only divine grace can establish that harmony in another world. What is true of man in general applies with particular force to political man. For the natural aspirations proper to the political sphere – and there is no difference in kind between domestic and international politics – contravene by definition the demands of Christian ethics. No compromise is possible between the great commandment of Christian ethics, 'Love Thy Neighbor As Thyself,' and the great commandment of politics, 'Use Thy Neighbor As Means To The Ends Of Thy Power.' It is *a priori* impossible for political man to be at the same time a good politician – complying with the rules of political conduct – and to be a good Christian – complying with the demands of Christian ethics. In the measure that he tries to be the one he must cease to be the other
>
> (Morgenthau 1960: 6)

Morgenthau moves on to criticize people who want to bridge the incompatibility of this gap. There are people who 'liberalize' Christian ethics by watering down its demands and suggest that the Gospel did not mean what it obviously said. He calls this the escape of the Pharisees. Others, whom he calls sophists, try to overcome the gap based on the assumption that man is naturally good, and his actions are naturally moral. This is at the root of political ideologies when the sophists attempt to make peace with the demands of Christian ethics without having to forego man's natural aspirations. Morgenthau advocates that the best way to deal with the opposition between the moral demand, and his natural and political aspirations, is to accept the strategy of the lesser evil (Morgenthau 1960: 6).

The third rule to deal with the tension between morality and politics is that it requires prudence. Prudence is necessary to weigh the demand for successful political action and compliance with the moral law. Morgenthau calls it the supreme virtue in politics. Prudence is the watchword of realism (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 12; Rosenthal 1991: 5).

Morgenthau wants to keep a tension between morality and politics. When that disappears it would obscure both: morality might look less exacting and politics more moral because it becomes ideology. That is why Morgenthau devotes his fifth principle to the danger that nations identify their aspirations with the moral law.

> There is a world of difference between the belief that all nations stand under the judgment of God, inscrutable to the human mind, and the blasphemous conviction that God is always on one's side and that what one wills oneself cannot fail to be willed by God also.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 13)

According to Morgenthau, the principle of the national interest defined as power, saves countries from self-righteousness and from messianic intentions in international politics. Realism pierces the veil and shows that all countries eventually act according to the underlying principles of the national interest defined as power. It therefore offers a good foundation to make political judgments (Rosenthal 1991: 6). Morgenthau calls it the sin of pride or idolatry when nations equate their nationalism and the counsels of Providence, against which the Greek tragedians and biblical prophets have warned (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 13).

States are tempted to equate their foreign policies with universal morality. This happens not by ignorance or misjudgment, but by *hubris* and pride. As a result, they overlook the possibilities of their power and forget prudence and morality (Morgenthau 1962j: 325, 326). If such a nation wins a war, it does not think that the modern arms or the number of troops caused their victory, but it imagines that Providence, be it a personal divinity or the logic of history, provided for the success of the morally superior nation. Such an attitude easily

develops into the idea that this inherent superiority compels the nation to reform the world according to its standards (Morgenthau 1962j: 326). For Morgenthau, the United States deals with the attitude as described. The United States has formed a certain utopian moral image of itself and judges other states in the light of that image. States that oppose these moral standards are automatically selfish and immoral (Morgenthau & Thompson 1982: 93).

The principle of the national interest defined as power, would be a remedy against this 'moral excess and political folly', Morgenthau argues (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 13). When every state would adhere to this principle and judge other states accordingly, they would judge each other like they judge themselves, and they would respect each other's national interest in pursuing policies and would protect and promote their own: 'Moderation in policy cannot fail to reflect the moderation of moral judgment' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 13).

Morgenthau argues like a theologian when he talks about the judgment of God and the impossibility of equating the moral law with the aspirations of nations. In other words, he takes a theological position on God and human beings and argues that this theological view does not justify the equation of the moral law with the aspiration of a particular country. This is a clear indication that Morgenthau's classical realism is shaped by theological ideas. That is why I will discuss his political theology in the next section.

6.2.4 Political Theology: 'Augustinian Moments' in Morgenthau's Classical Realism

Morgenthau's worldview contains ideas about human nature, history, and ethics, which are built on theological ideas. These ideas shape his classical realism and his dealing with religion. For that reason, I will set out these political–theological ideas concerning the human person, ethics, and history and then discuss how this shaped his theory.

It should be said that Morgenthau himself did not write much about theology. This does not mean, however, that it does not play a role. The problem is, however, as with Waltz, that he did not actively reflect on it even though some of his vocabulary and core ideas are indebted to theology. In order to fully understand Morgenthau's political realism, it is important to draw attention to these ideas. For example, Morgenthau never used the term *katechon*, but the idea is presupposed in his political theology. That is why I write about the hidden theology of Morgenthau's classical realism.

According to Nicolas Guilhot, Morgenthau's political theology challenges rationalist conceptions of politics, and the enlightened assumption of liberal modernity that politics can be freed from religion (Guilhot 2010: 226). For example, Morgenthau assumes that there is a transcendent reality and that knowledge regarding reality cannot only be garnered through science (the ratio) but also by means of philosophy and religion. For Morgenthau science, religion, and philosophy are equal reactions to the shock of wonderment.

Morgenthau makes a principal distinction between the human reality on the one hand and the transcendent or divine reality on the other, even though they influence each other. This vision correlates with Morgenthau's view on human beings, their limited capabilities, but also the tendency to cross the boundaries of their knowledge (in science) and capabilities (in politics), due to *hubris*. According to Morgenthau, 'Western man has eaten from the apple of knowledge and wants to be more than he actually is. He wants to become like God. But the tragedy is that his condition does not allow for his aspirations' (Morgenthau 1972: 8, 9). In another place, Morgenthau writes that in the Western world, the sinfulness of man is conceived as necessarily connected with the order of the world. The result of that is that there is no inevitable progress toward the good, but an undecided conflict between good and evil (Morgenthau 1965: 204–206). This vision, in turn, has consequences for Morgenthau's view on time and history. Morgenthau assumes that human time or history is surrounded by God's time. The destination of history will eventually not be realized by people but by God.

> Religiously founded justice will fully reveal itself only in the other world when, according to Christian dogma, at the Last Judgment God will separate the just from the unjust. Justice will then be done, it must be noted, not only because God is Love, but also because He is omniscient, knowing all the hidden facts that bear upon the decision, and because He is all-powerful, being able to make justice prevail in fact.
>
> (Morgenthau 1974: 167)

The concept *katechon* plays a central role in this vision. Guilhot explains that the word *katechon* refers to the second epistle of Paul to the Thessalonians wherein Paul seeks to curb the eschatological enthusiasm of the local Christians, which threatens to disrupt public order. *Katechon* is often translated as 'restrainer', 'delayer', or 'withholder' and functions as the mundane force that delays the arrival of the Antichrist, the lawless one that would precede the return of Christ (Guilhot 2010: 234). *Katechon*, in fact, delays the establishment of the kingdom of God by fighting chaos and maintaining order until the day comes which makes history possible; it does not want to bring the kingdom of God in a progressive or teleological sense. This political theology makes it possible to have a de-theologized form of politics, because it embodies a politics that does not want to accomplish eschatological goals. It provides a sort of middle-range theory by avoiding the illusion of both absolute perfection and absolute evil and puts politics on realistic grounds that make it immune to utopian cues. This so-called third position is at the heart of the realist position about morality and politics (Guilhot 2010: 235).

The concept *katechon* therefore has an ambiguous side. It prevents the Antichrist, the radical evil, but it also prevents the *parousia*, the second coming of the Messiah. In that sense, it maintains evil: it restrains evil by tolerating it. To understand this better, it helps to look at Carl Schmitt's vision of history. It

is not without reason that I introduce Schmitt here, because Morgenthau wrote his dissertation on Schmitt's concept of the political. Schmitt wonders how it is possible that eschatological belief on the one hand, and historical consciousness and political action on the other, can ever go together. If you really expect the end to be near, it takes away any meaning from history, leading to an eschatological paralysis of which there are many historical examples. But for Schmitt, the *katechon* is precisely the force that has to keep off this eschatological paralysis. He states that the *katechon* functions as a bridge between an eschatological vision and a political understanding of history. According to Schmitt, the *katechon* is necessary as some sort of gatekeeper to safeguard a political form of historical consciousness while at the same time maintaining an eschatological perspective (even if it is only to intensify the consciousness of the danger of such a perspective) (Lievens 2017: 18–20).

> That is exactly the role the *katechon* fulfills, as a force restraining the end and making relative evil possible by suppressing its radical counterpart. The *katechon* is thus the gatekeeper between a profane and political understanding of history on the one hand and the dangerous illusion of salvation through the final struggle of humanity on the other. It is the bridge between eschatology and historical conscience. It is the minimal rest of an eschatological vision needed to keep history and theology apart and to maintain an open and profane understanding of history. The image of the *katechon* is very ambiguous, however. Although it only makes sense within an eschatological view on history, it functions in such a way as to keep off the detrimental effects of eschatological ideas on human political affairs. Indeed, the *katechon* is what makes the political as such possible. Its polemical aim is to ward off the idea that humans can definitively judge over the world, history, and morality and announce the end of history. The political is conditional on such a refusal of the theologization of history.
>
> (Lievens 2017: 20)

Epp states that the acceptance of the lesser evil to prevent apparently greater ones, is a distinctive Augustinian idea which the realists often express in words like 'love', 'responsibility', 'justice', and 'order' (Epp 1991: 16).

It is not without reason that Morgenthau's realism is presented as an alternative to idealism and that he is critical of liberal Protestantism as regards its beliefs of progress, perpetual peace, or the unification of humankind as something that can be achieved in history. Morgenthau believes that hostility cannot be eliminated from this mundane world, which is bound to remain juxtaposed (Guilhot 2010: 233, 234). With this political theology, Morgenthau's realism created a bulwark against the moral self-sufficiency which characterized political modernity with its worrying replacement of politics with technology, a fundamental indifference for values, and the deficiency to make political

judgments. The realist insists on concrete situations, the material dimensions of power, and the limited nature of political aims, and avoids a simplistic view of politics by emphasizing its finite nature, but makes it possible to make political decisions even in the absence of absolute justifications (Guilhot 2010: 247).

Morgenthau's political theology affects a number of issues, such as the role of the state, the autonomy of the political, the separation between religion and politics, and the role of (the balance of) power. Morgenthau's political theology holds that the sovereignty of the state is essentially defined by its transcendent relation to the law and that the state can never be truly neutral. A state that is completely contained within the rule of law is a fully secularized state because it operates on the basis of concepts whose theological roots are concealed by a positivist legal ideology. To prevent the secularization of the state, Morgenthau opposes a strict separation between religion and politics, because a strict separation would mean that the political would come to an end. It implies that the state would become a fully secularized body that sees itself as self-grounding, and which would deny that its legitimacy is ultimately based on revelation and not reason. It is against this theological background that Morgenthau argues for the autonomy of the political and the central role of the state because his political theology provides a foundation for the legitimacy of concrete territorial ordering. The autonomy of the political is premised on the historical constitution of a territorial order which is distinct from, but closely related to, the moral order as developed in Western Christendom and the ecclesial institutions of Christianity. When secularization proceeds, the state no longer sees itself in relation to this Christian and moral background and it conflates its own interests with morality as liberalism doess. Because of this, Morgenthau sees the autonomy of the political and the state as legitimate holders of this autonomy, as a historical counterforce to chaos and the historical unfolding of secularization (Guilhot 2010: 234).

The political theology behind realism also explains why Morgenthau argues for a balance of power. He sees it as a way to restrain attempts that try to accomplish eschatological goals; moreover, it maintains order and prevents chaos. The possible absence of a *katechon* in international politics was one of Morgenthau's concerns (Guilhot 2010: 235, 236). It is important to realize that the balance of power was seen by Morgenthau as a principle that could flourish within the Western European context with a shared moral horizon, 'moral climate', 'moral standards of conduct', values which placed limitations on warfare, and disconnected state interests from issues of morality (Guilhot 2010: 237, 241). This means that the concept of the balance of power cannot easily be applied to any other situation, because it comes from a very specific, and maybe historically unique, European situation (Guilhot 2010: 237). When this moral horizon disappears and states detach politics from its religious background, it will give rise to nationalism which comes close to 'an expansive religion', and a force with 'many messianic facets' (Guilhot 2010: 242).

> carrying their idols before them, the nationalistic masses of our time meet in the international arena, each group convinced that it executes the mandate of history, that it does for humanity what it seems to do for itself, and that it fulfils a sacred mission by ordained providence, however defined.
>
> (Guilhot 2010: 243)

The root cause of the emergence of this messianic nationalism was, according to Morgenthau, secularization. Morgenthau's critique of liberalism internationalism is a critique of radical secularization which leads to moral abstractions, legal globalism, and humanitarianism (Guilhot 2010: 243).

6.3 Morgenthau's Classical Realism Evaluated

After the preceding outline of Morgenthau's dealing with religion, I would like to evaluate Morgenthau's classical realism. Since this book explicitly introduced the insights of the Amsterdam School of Philosophy and these insights play a role in the practice approach I will propose in the final chapter, I involve this perspective here.

Morgenthau pays attention to the fact that science is not neutral. In stronger terms, Morgenthau argues that science cannot do without a transcendent reference. Science is therefore not neutral because it has convictions that cannot be separated from a scholar's scientific activities. As I showed above, Morgenthau states that science and reason that do not acknowledge their social and moral roots make room for all kinds of ideology that human beings want to invoke (Morgenthau 1965: 166, 167). That is what the Amsterdam School also stands for. The Amsterdam School of Philosophy therefore urges scholars and scientists to reflect actively on their deeper convictions and assumptions and to be open about it, because that furthers scholarly debate and research. Proper science is not afraid to bring these assumptions to the fore so that they can be discussed and criticized. This core idea certainly has relevance for IR and religion. If scholars are not religiously neutral in their theorizing, this will have an impact on the way in which they approach this object of study (cf. Jackson 2011: 190). Morgenthau and the Amsterdam School would agree that it is better to be explicit regarding someone's prescientific presuppositions than to suggest that they are not present, while indeed having an influence. Morgenthau has a keen eye for the fact that politics and science often portray a religious zeal in the realization of their objectives, under the guise of so-called rationality and objectivity. Religious presuppositions can play a role according to Morgenthau, because eventually, philosophy, science, and religion are equal reactions to the shock of wonderment and the knowledge garnered by one is not by definition more or less valuable than the other. According to Mollov, Morgenthau holds that political science must be based 'upon a total world view – religious, poetic, as well as philosophic in

nature – the validity of which it must take for granted' (Mollov 2002: 4). With this, Morgenthau concurs with the Amsterdam School, which raises awareness for the role of worldviews and the role that religion can play in this.

As I have shown earlier, Morgenthau's statements on science can also be applied to his own thought process. Many aspects of Morgenthau's theorizing are of a pre-scientific nature. His worldview is based on the idea that all people answer to their religious impulse, the effects of this may vary, but he starts his thoughts on the assumption that people are deeply religiously motivated. Here too, there is a lot of resemblance with the Amsterdam School, because it states that theory is somehow related to presuppositions concerning the question of what is seen as 'ultimate' (cf. Tillich 2009). This means that there is no theorizing that is religiously neutral; the default option is that theorizing is not neutral and always influenced by deeper convictions: there is no place from nowhere nor can someone claim to have a God's eye point of view.

The second point in which Morgenthau closely resembles the Amsterdam School is regarding his distinction between the different realms. According to the Amsterdam School, there is a reality outside of ourselves – it exists independently of our thoughts (Hengstmengel 2015: 198). The ontological basis of this reality is that it is meaningful and diverse. The assumption of a meaningful reality leads to the idea that humans have the task of finding and interpreting this meaning – which is a challenge in itself. Not only has the diversity just mentioned an ontological basis: a state 'is' not a business firm nor a family, a school 'is' not a hospital, mass media 'is' not a recreational park, and so on. Moreover, they all have different 'qualifications' or *teloi* that can be studied empirically, but can also guide action within these various domains or 'sovereign' spheres. The sovereignty of the various spheres also prevents the political from being subjected to the religious or moral sphere, as often is the case with political religions, and vice versa. These ideas are very similar to Morgenthau's ideas about various spheres with their own rationality and the autonomy of it.

Furthermore, Morgenthau assumes that theories are always normative and empirical and that the normativity of certain realms cannot be ignored, as the Amsterdam School emphasizes as well. The Amsterdam School sees the normative and empirical as much deeper intertwined than what Hume famously identified as the 'is-ought' fallacy can account for. Reality is diverse and, thus, made up of various aspects, economic, social, juridical, biological, religious, and so on, and cannot be reduced to one of these aspects. These aspects are not solely constructions of the mind but are aspects of reality itself that relate to possibilities of human experience (Hengstmengel 2015: 148, 150). The Amsterdam Philosophers see reality as meaningful, as actually 'out there' and not as something entirely constructed by humans. The puzzle for scholars is to find out the difference between these two and to be aware that what they study is a construction of the human mind as well as something that reality reveals. There is a world that exists independently of our perception, but our cognitive abilities are attuned to the world (Hengstmengel 2015: 198).

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have set out how I interpret Morgenthau's theory. I paid attention not only to his theory of international politics but also to his view on theory. Morgenthau has an ideal-typical view of theory. This means that Morgenthau assumes separate realms, thereby marking the territory of his theorizing, and leaving other issues out. Politics is regarded as a different realm than that of law, religion, or aesthetics. Within each of these realms, a certain rationality can be distinguished that determines the characteristics of the realm at hand. Consequently, the study and analysis of the rationality of the political realm is then separated from the study of the other realms. A second consequence of Morgenthau's choice for an ideal-typical approach is that it strengthens his assumption of the autonomy of politics. Finally, an ideal-typical theory is both normative and empirical, but the line between these two is not always clear: what is political theory and what is the result of empirical observation? In Morgenthau's case, it is not always clear where exactly this line is, because he claims that his political theoretical foundations come from his observations and interpretation of reality. This becomes clear when he states that politics is characterized by the principle of the national interest defined as power. Morgenthau regards this as inevitable because theorizing always involves the observer with his or her values and presuppositions.

On the basis of his political theology, Morgenthau is very concerned that the autonomy of politics will be affected. That makes Morgenthau reticent regarding the involvement of religious actors.

Besides the scientific–philosophical and the political–philosophical points, I have also made the claim that Morgenthau cherishes a number of theological assumptions of an Augustinian nature. The most important note that appears here, is Morgenthau's emphasis on the *saeculum*, the time in which people are up until the *eschaton*. Morgenthau finds it important, when thinking of international politics, that the idea of the completion or fulfillment of history will not be realized by mankind is kept alive. When this realization is missing, this leads to an absolutization of the *saeculum*: all redemption must take place here and now. This is what is defined as secularization according to Morgenthau. A transcendent reality or a God above history and time is no longer taken into account. According to him, this leads to utopic expectations regarding the possibilities of achieving perfect justice and peace in this life. That is why the notion of the *katechon* is so important. It is the resilient force that ensures that chaos due to secularization will not dominate. Morgenthau relates this to the autonomy of politics and the state as a preventer and counterforce. Ethics will therefore always be ethics for this interim, and an average solution in light of the eventually redeemed state toward which humanity is heading.

Notes

1 Kamminga argues the same way regarding Waltz and the possibility of social neorealism (Kamminga 2007).
2 For a more extensive discussion, see Polinder (2019: 144–148).

3 Mollov argues that Morgenthau was not an observant Jew *per se*, but that there is evidence that he was aware of the 'spiritual side' of his Jewish existence. Mollov also states that Morgenthau respected the Jewish tradition and performed Jewish rituals at various times in his life (Mollov 1998: 95).
4 Morgenthau was for almost 40 years a member of the board of trustees of the Council on Religion and International Affairs (CRIA), a non-governmental organization, which describes itself as 'an independent, non-sectarian organization, founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1914. The Council believes that the ethical principles of the major religions are relevant to the world's political, economic, and social problems' (Mollov 2002: 59; Thompson, Brauer & Morgenthau 1968). The CRIA later became the well-known Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs.
5 For an explanation of these three types of foreign policy, see Morgenthau and Thompson (1985: 53–100).

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7 An Assessment of the Religionists' Claim

Morgenthau's Classical Realism

Introduction

Very few publications explicitly deal with the role of religion and theology in classical realism, and more specifically Morgenthau's realism.[1] This chapter will clarify whether the religionists are correct in their claims that IR theory unjustifiably ignores religion. This assessment knows a limitation in that the religionists do not often support their claims with references to specific writings of Morgenthau. On the other hand, it is sometimes quite easy to disprove the religionists, because there are specific writings of Morgenthau that clarify the issue at stake immediately.

In this chapter, I want to illustrate the role that religion plays for Morgenthau on the multiple levels discussed earlier, namely the empirical, the subject-specific, and the philosophy of science level. For every subthesis, I will describe what Morgenthau has said on the topic. In my reconstruction of the religionists, each of the theses has been subdivided and these subdivisions have been further divided. It is impossible to always retrace Morgenthau's thoughts on the matter in detail. That is why, for every statement, I will indicate the elements that I have analyzed. Although most criticism put forward by the religionists involves IR in general, and sometimes more specifically classical realism, at times Morgenthau's ideas or quotes are discussed more concretely. In such cases, I will point this out.

7.1 Empirical Thesis: Morgenthau's Sensitivity to Religion

Based on his theory, not only his six principles but also his other writings, Morgenthau was sensitive to religion on the individual, national, transnational, and international levels. This is surprising since Morgenthau does not refer to anything similar to what the religionists call a global resurgence of religion. Jodok Troy links Morgenthau's statements about the power of religiosity with the global resurgence of religion by quoting him:

> it is naive to believe that religious faith can be recaptured by a conscious act of will, as though the increasingly disenchanted structure of our moral universe could simply be rolled back by an organized campaign among intellectuals.
>
> (Troy 2008: 215)

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Troy suggests that Morgenthau would judge the current global resurgence similarly. That would mean that the resurgence will not be able to bring an enchanted structure back. In other words, it is not something that will change much.

7.1.1 Individual Level: Morgenthau's Appreciation of Lincoln's Religiosity

There are a couple of examples that give an indication of Morgenthau's awareness of religion's role in the life of politicians. He writes, for example, that President Ngo Dinh Diem (1901–1963) of Vietnam is a practicing Roman Catholic, who does not so much rely on his Christian faith, but more on the Confucian worldview as the foundation of his political thinking and regime (Morgenthau 1965a: 21). Another example Morgenthau gives is President William McKinley (1843–1901), who declared that his decision to annex the Philippines was the result of his prayers to God. According to his own testimony, one night he prayed to God and asked for divine guidance. In the morning he heard the voice of God telling him to annex the Philippines (Thompson, Brauer & Morgenthau 1968: 57; Morgenthau & Thompson 1982: 23). Morgenthau does not condemn this behavior but rather finds it a totally inadequate basis for foreign policy. Such behavior could happen in the times of the Puritans and Calvinists in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, because then 'they represented a spiritual and moral reality' (Thompson, Brauer & Morgenthau 1968: 57). The world of today is different, because of a contrast between religious and moral ideology and the political realm (Thompson, Brauer & Morgenthau 1968: 57). Morgenthau argues that this intermingling of the political and the religious realm has not been absent in his age. According to Morgenthau, political and military leaders sometimes feel the need for divine inspiration. It is the experience of insecurity that gives leaders the need for confirmation that what they are doing is in accordance with a higher power which will ultimately decide in their favor (Thompson, Morgenthau & Hein 1983: 9, 10).

Morgenthau further mentions the role of religion in the foreign policy decision-making of Albert J. Beveridge (1862–1927), who was a senator from Indiana. He said in the Senate on January 9, 1990:

> He [God] has given us the spirit of progress to overwhelm the forces of reaction throughout the earth. He has made us adept in government that we may administer government among savage and senile peoples. Where it not for such a force as this the world would relapse into barbarism and night. And all of our race He has marked the American people as His chosen nation to finally lead in the regeneration of the world. This is the divine mission of America, and it holds for us all the profit, all the glory, all the happiness possible to man. We are trustees of the world's progress, guardians of its righteous peace.
>
> (Morgenthau 1969: 80, 81)

One of Morgenthau's greatest examples is President Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865). He appreciated especially the way Lincoln dealt with the religious claims both parties made during the Civil War (1861–1865). He therefore cites how President Lincoln several times (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 278; Morgenthau 1979: 8; Thompson, Morgenthau & Hein 1983: 10, 11, 15, 16).

7.1.2 National Level: Religion as Challenger and Changer

It is beyond doubt for Morgenthau that religion plays a role, if only because historically religion has always been present and, in the case of America, churches have always been closely involved with the state. Morgenthau's reflections on the role of religion on the national level have two sides. On the one hand, it becomes clear that religion can have influence and bring about change, not only through ideas but also because the close ties between church and state are often used by the state to legitimize its actions. On the other hand, religion also functions as a challenger, especially when political regimes are involved. I will start to set out religion's role as a changer.

Morgenthau draws attention to the fact that many ideas that play a role in American culture and politics have religious origins or can only be understood in relation to religion. In his lectures on *The Politics of Aristotle*, he argues that modern egalitarianism is tributary to religion. The religious idea that all people are created in the image of God implies that they all are children of God and therefore equal in the sight of God (Lang 2004: 38). For the same reason, Morgenthau calls 'humanity' a Christian concept which changed the ideas of the ancient world, because it acknowledges all people as children of God (Lang 2004: 99). Another example he mentions is the freedom of speech. Morgenthau explains that this principle, although now accepted as a natural right for everybody within American society, originated as a principle by which religious and political minority groups secured their freedom from intervention by the state (Morgenthau 1965b: 55, 56).

Morgenthau, in the second place, describes that religion can have an influence on politics through its, often historically grown, relationship with the church. One way in which this takes place is in theocracy because it claims to have the monopoly of the truth (Morgenthau 1958: 1, 2). History has known such political systems, especially of a theocratic nature, and these systems were completely stable over long periods and completely self-contained in their conception of justice (Morgenthau 1974: 170). Morgenthau mentions how the immigrants from Europe came to America with the belief in an objective order that had to be realized in America. Some described that order in religious terms, others did so in secular terms. It was inspired by the English High Church on the one hand and the teaching of the Romans and the French Encyclopedists on the other hand (Morgenthau 1982: 15).

The third example of religion's influence is that churches strive for political power in order to survive, while empires use religion to justify their existence and their policies in the vocabulary of morality and divine Providence. This use of religion to gain legitimacy is common to all politics, Morgenthau states. It

is an inevitable weapon in the hands of politicians striving for power. By means of religion, they seek to prove that their aims are nobler than political reality suggests (Morgenthau 1962a: 107, 108).

Religion functions as a challenger when it opposes political regimes like totalitarianism. The example Morgenthau gives is the confrontation between Christ and Pontius Pilate.

> Christ, the non-democrat, says, 'I am the King of the Jews.' And that's it. You don't have to put that to a democratic test. And Pontius Pilate, the relativist, asks the people, 'Whom do you want, Barrabas or Jesus of Nazareth?' And the majority decides. The opinion hasn't been unanimous that the decision was correct but that is democracy.
>
> (Lang 2004: 86)

Morgenthau wants to show that democracy must be able to criticize the inclination of the political system to see itself as the highest power and truth. A totalitarian system cannot live with such a democracy and that often leads to the persecution of religious minorities for political reasons. Morgenthau describes how the persecution of the early Christians took place for exactly this reason. They were revolutionaries, because they defended the idea that the Roman Emperor was not a godhead, but was subjected to another, higher power. The same holds for the Jewish minorities in the Soviet Union and other places (Morgenthau 1962b: 18).

7.1.3 Transnational Level: Civilizations and the Role of Religion

The transnational level has only been a theme in IR since the end of the Cold War. In that respect, it is not surprising that Morgenthau does not use the term transnational. Yet that does not mean that he did not think about it. I will illustrate this with two examples. First of all, Morgenthau describes how civilizations play a role on a transnational level and discusses the role of religion on this level. Second, Morgenthau writes about a transnational religious community, namely the Quakers.

Morgenthau describes civilization as a community of people sharing certain moral principles, fundamental religious beliefs, and a common way of life.[2] He argues that in the Western world, such a civilization has existed throughout modern history, if not since the end of the ancient world. He maintains that the Western world is not only a geographical but also a cultural and moral unity despite temporary exceptions such as the religious wars at the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century and the Napoleonic Wars at the turn of the nineteenth century. Because of the unity of the Western world, political writers of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries spoke of 'the family of nations'. As in all families, there were quarrels within the family of nations. Yet there was something stronger than all conflicts, something that kept the ambitions and rivalries of nations within certain bounds, which was

the consciousness of a unity overriding all disruptive tendencies: the unity of Western civilization itself (Morgenthau & Thompson 1982: 60).

In another place, Morgenthau discusses the relationship between religion and civilization more explicitly in his article on Toynbee's *The Study of History*. He then states:

> If we assume that only religious civilization is worthy of the name, it cannot be hard to demonstrate that the flowering of civilization depends on religious faith. Yet if we give to civilization its common secular meaning, it can hardly be open to doubt that from Plato to Kant, from Sophocles to Dostoevski, from Michelangelo to Rodin, the weakening of religious faith and the flowering of civilization not only coincide in time but also are organically interconnected. It is true that these great achievements of civilizations owe their greatness to the religious experience of mystery, tragedy and guilt.
>
> (Morgenthau 1962c: 61)

Morgenthau also writes about the religious transnational community of the Quakers. In a foreword to a volume with the title *Quaker Ways in Foreign Policy*, he praises the Quakers for not shying away from the inevitable conflict between Christian teaching and human action. He also admires the way they try to overcome this discrepancy through action rather than through imposing dogma on the political domain. He finds the Quakers' attempts 'moving', especially because 'in their convictions, achievements, and sufferings the Quakers bear witness to the teachings of Christianity, in their failures they bear witness to the insuperable stubbornness of the human condition' (Morgenthau 1962d: 375, 376).[3] Not surprisingly, Morgenthau finds their pacifist stance not realistic. Though it may provide a satisfying solution to some situations, it eschews the consequences of political life. The Quakers' advocacy of pacifism looks like the decision of hermits to go into the woods and pray there for the rest of their lives, Morgenthau states (Lang 2004: 93). Although Morgenthau does not discuss the relevance of this transnational religious community, the attention that he pays to it, shows, at least, that he knew about such groups.

7.1.4 International Level: Political Religion, Diplomacy, Human Rights, Nationalism, and Ideology

Morgenthau sees religion playing a role on the international level in many ways: in political religions, ideologies, nationalism, etc. Morgenthau sees the conflict between the Soviet Union and the United States as a conflict between two different political religions, between two mutually exclusive ways of life, moral systems, political philosophies, and institutions (Morgenthau 1962e: 62). In Morgenthau's view, Bolshevism is the most 'elaborate' and 'most sophisticated' political religion because it strives for the realization of its historic and sacred mission aimed at universal salvation to remake the world in its own image (Morgenthau &

Thompson 1982: 62; Morgenthau 1962f: 253; Morgenthau 1962g: 142). Political religion differs from otherworldly religions which are based on religious faith. The truth of the latter cannot be tested by experiment, while the validity of political religion depends on its success in the here and now. According to Morgenthau, Marxism has been falsified by experience (Morgenthau 1962f: 253).

Although Morgenthau does not use the phrase 'faith-based diplomacy' as it is currently understood, one of his rules for effective diplomacy in his book *Politics Among Nations* is that diplomacy must be divested of the crusading spirit (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 584).[4] Morgenthau means that diplomacy must be aware of the fact that religious doctrines are articles of faith that people do not believe on rational grounds, but by virtue of their membership of a church or community. A religious doctrine is a metaphysical assertion of a certain abstract principle, Morgenthau states. Absolute and abstract principles are dangerous because they do not fit the conditioned and relative nature of human reality (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 585). For Morgenthau, the truth of this statement can be shown by the Thirty Years' War during which Catholics and Protestants tried to impose their own religion upon the rest of the world. It took many years of bloodshed before the two religions could agree to live together in mutual tolerance. According to Morgenthau, the wars of religion of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have been taken over by the conflict between the two political religions of his time. The question is whether they will learn from the lessons of the Thirty Years' War, namely that a foreign policy should not claim that it follows from universal political religion. Peace will only have a chance from a moral consensus based on common values and convictions (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 586).

Morgenthau describes how nationalism sometimes looks like religion in a functional sense. He distinguishes two forms of nationalism. The first took place in the nineteenth century and was aimed at freeing the nation from domination by other states. This strive was rightfully recognized by other states (Morgenthau 1948: 155). The nationalism of the twentieth century differs from this struggle for independence because it takes the nation as a starting point of a universal mission to impose its standards of action upon all other nations (Morgenthau 1948: 156; Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 351). This kind of nationalism, as expressed in fascism, Nazism, and Marxism, believes in the chosen nation, which implies that one nation is unique and superior to all others (Morgenthau 1962f: 252). This nationalism has become a nationalistic universalism and displays features of an expansive religion that wants to convert other nations to its standards. It will not unify the world but lead to religious wars in which traditional religion may be involved too (Morgenthau 1949: 148). He writes,

> It is a secular religion, universal in its interpretation of the nature and destiny of man and in its Messianic promise of salvation for all mankind. A particular nation will bear its torch at any particular time, but in principle any nation can.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 351, 352)

Finally, Morgenthau sees that religion often functions like ideology, because religion too can easily become a means to cloud the real issue at stake. What Morgenthau writes about ideology indicates how, in his view, religion could function. He would, however, describe this form of religion as improper; a distortion of religion in the form of ideology. Morgenthau describes an ideology as 'any system of thought which rationalizes or justifies a particular social position' (Morgenthau 1978: 117). The reason that ideology and politics are narrowly intertwined is the result of the nature of politics (Morgenthau 1978: 119). In the first place, ideology is a very effective means to raise the national morale and overrule the rival nation with it (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 104). Second, a human being holds power and is at the same time the object of political power. This ambiguous position reveals itself in the way he or she justifies and rationalizes his or her own drive for power and the strive for power of the other (Morgenthau 1978: 118; Morgenthau 1965b: 155). It would be impossible for a nation to say frankly that it wants more power because then it will find itself at a great disadvantage in the struggle for power (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 103, 104). A state that succeeds in convincing its rival that what it wants is something different than power has already won a substantial part of the battle (Morgenthau 1978: 119). This happened when the United States tended to take communism more seriously as a political ideology than the communist government itself because the communists saw communism as an ideological means for the traditional imperialism of Russia (Morgenthau 1969: 148).

The function of ideology to justify one's position in politics is also what religion can provide. However, in the end, Morgenthau states, it is not ideology or the military, but the visible virtues and vices of the philosophy that prove the superiority of the political system (Morgenthau 1969: 243). A conflict between two different philosophies or moral systems for its control over the consciences and actions of humankind has the advantage that both systems are able to prove their strength. The validity of the ethics of humility and self-denial of the Sermon on the Mount over against the ethics of self-advancement and power of Western society is put to test. Such a test should make clear its strength in relation to foreign policy, supranational ethics, and the ethics of nationalism (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 269). It seems that Morgenthau opens space for proper religion here, because, as I wrote earlier, proper religion functions in a similar way as metaphysical philosophy. This means that Morgenthau is aware of the impact of distorted, improper religion as well as the influence of proper religion.

7.2 Evaluation of the Empirical Thesis

It is clear from the preceding sections that Morgenthau knew about the role of religion in the world. Although he is not very explicit about the importance that should be ascribed to it – as will become clear in the section on the domain-specific level –, he pays attention to it. Another way to evaluate the importance

he ascribes to it is by weighing how much attention he pays to religion in comparison to other factors and issues. In that case, the conclusion should be that religion is not a major but rather a minor issue.

The question is how relevant it is that Morgenthau 'missed' the global resurgence of religion while he shows to be aware of religion's presence on all four levels. I would argue that the fact that Morgenthau did not seem to be aware of a so-called religious resurgence, but nevertheless pays attention to religion on all four levels, shows his sensitivity to religion anyway. Something else that supports this is that Morgenthau is not negative about the role religion might play in foreign policy, though he distinguishes between, for example, the way in which McKinley and Lincoln incorporated religion, and between the use of proper and improper religion. Morgenthau, in short, was attentive to religion though not very extensively. Whether he has missed important religious issues or factors in his time, or whether his level of attention does not meet the religionist standard is difficult to decide, also because the religionists did not provide a way to measure or evaluate this. The bottom line, however, is that the religionists are not correct that Morgenthau ignores religion.

7.3 Domain-Specific Level: Morgenthau's View on Westphalia and Its Assumptions

The fact that Morgenthau did pay attention to religion in his reflections on international affairs, makes it all the more interesting to know how he deals with religion on the domain-specific level. In this section, I want to look into Morgenthau's interpretation of Westphalia, and into the importance of the resulting assumptions for the attention to religion, such as the central role of the state and the national interest defined as power.

7.3.1 Disenchantment and Westphalia: The Need for Religion in an 'Empty Transcendent Space'

Morgenthau did not write explicitly about his interpretation of Westphalia. In his *Politics Among Nations*, he states that the Treaty of Westphalia brought the religious wars to an end and that it made the territorial state the cornerstone of the modern state system. He also describes, although without reference to the Westphalian Treaty, how the transition of the Middle Ages to the modern period of history was accompanied by a move from a feudal system into a territorial state, while the monarch no longer shared authority with the feudal lords and the church within the state territory (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 293, 294). As I mentioned above, Morgenthau describes the wars of religion as a violent time during which people tried to impose their own religion upon the rest of the world. According to Morgenthau, what happened in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is reflected in the conflict between the two political religions in his time. Will they learn from the lessons of the Thirty

Years' War? Morgenthau states that one of the lessons learned is that foreign policy should not define its objectives in terms of a world-embracing political religion and that peace-preserving diplomacy only will have a chance to grow when a moral consensus emerging from shared convictions and values has developed (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 586).

Morgenthau does not say that the lesson is that religion should be privatized, for which the religionists blame him. Morgenthau strongly leans on Weber regarding his view on secularization. With Weber, Morgenthau would rather speak of disenchantment than secularization. Morgenthau recognizes that a unifying worldview is becoming increasingly rare in the West, giving way to a differentiation of numerous clashing value spheres. Mihaela Neacsu states that Morgenthau in one of his early unpublished IR lectures which he held in 1946 points to

> the breakdown of universal religion and universal humanism, arguing that the 'universal ties' which bind men together have become 'weaker and weaker', and that while looking at the moral principles which shape human conduct, one can notice that 'the strength of non- or anti-universal allegiance is greater today than it was at any time in the history of Western civilization'.[5]
>
> (Neacsu 2009: 71)

In this world, Morgenthau says, it is downright dangerous for a nation to claim that morality is on its side and to devise foreign policies based on that. Instead of an overarching metaphysical whole, there are now competing value spheres, each with its own rationality. The political sphere thus cannot simply follow the rationality of the moral or religious sphere. Morgenthau, however, does not believe this to be the end of the role of metaphysics. On the contrary, he stresses the importance of a transcendent reference point and warns against all sorts of alternative systems that are supposed to bring meaning. I will come back to this later in this chapter, in the section on philosophy of science.

It seems that Morgenthau comes close to the neosecularization theory of the religionists, namely that Westphalia signified the separation of spheres, thus reviving the Augustinian political theology of the city of man and the city of God. I am not sure, however, whether Morgenthau would label Westphalia as the birth of religious freedom, as the religionists do. Another point of agreement between Morgenthau and the religionists is that they both emphasize that the Westphalian settlement and the emergence of different spheres cannot be separated from the (Christian) cultural context in which it emerged. In that sense, Morgenthau's position is closer to Hurd's Judeo-Christian secularism than to her laicism (see Chapter 4). If this conclusion is correct, this raises the question of whether this affects the way in which Morgenthau sees the state and the national interest.

7.3.2 Morgenthau on the Importance of the State and Statesmen

Morgenthau attributes an important role to the state, the statesmen, and lesser so to religion. To start with the first, Morgenthau is clear about the fact that he has always focused on statesmen in his theorizing. In that sense, I do not understand the criticism put forward by religionists that Morgenthau treats the state as a black box without caring for things that happen within the state. Morgenthau's theory, above all, is a theory of foreign policy, and not just a theory that discusses the system and the interactions between states, as is the case with Waltz. Morgenthau knew and theorized about the impact individuals, such as state leaders, and societal factors could have on the state, as I have shown in the section on the empirical thesis. In his *Politics Among Nations*, he also states, in his first realist principle, that theory consists of ascertaining facts and that 'we can find out what statesmen have actually done, and from the foreseeable consequences of their acts we can surmise what their objectives might have been' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 4, 5). The focus of this theorizing should be that 'we put ourselves in the position of the statesman who must meet a certain problem of foreign policy under certain circumstances' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 4, 5). One of the outcomes is Morgenthau's idea of the national interest defined as power, that is to say, it gives intellectual discipline to the observer, infuses rational order into the subject matter of politics, and makes a theoretical understanding of politics possible. Besides that, it provides the actor, the statesman, with rational discipline in action which leads to continuity in foreign policy (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 5). In this way, Morgenthau does not only theorize about statesmen, but shows that they are the aim of his theorizing.

The religionists argue that Morgenthau's overemphasis on the state could be strongly defined by the Cold War paradigm of two competing secular ideologies. This might have blinded or distorted Morgenthau's view on religion. It is interesting to notice, however, that it is not that easy, because Morgenthau has a sharp eye for the role of religion – though distorted – in this power conflict. Morgenthau writes that the East and the West share certain characteristics of political religion, either in the name of 'people's democracy' or under the banner of the Wilsonian credo 'to make the world safe for democracy' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1982: 63).[6] Morgenthau illustrates this point by presenting the 1848 text written by Karl Marx (1818–1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820–1895) which he has slightly modified. The text could have just as well been written by an admirer of the Soviet Union as by one of the United States. It shows the affinity between communism and capitalism in their economic aspirations and achievements (Morgenthau 1982: 158–166). For that reason, Morgenthau is also very critical of the influence of religion on America's foreign policy. He points to the fact that the Manifest Destiny, as 'the most typical ideology of American foreign policy', was couched in terms of the quasi-theological conception that divine Providence has reserved the North American continent for pioneers (Morgenthau 1978: 120).[7] He often criticizes the tendency to equate

American society with the ultimate goal of mankind. The idea that the United States was created by Providence has too many similarities with the Marxist idea that mankind moves toward a classless society and that all Marxists have the duty to advance the goal of socialism (Thompson, Brauer & Morgenthau 1968: 58). Morgenthau says about it:

> The history of the formulation of the national purpose, in America as elsewhere, is the story of bad theology and absurd metaphysics of phony theories and fraudulent science, of crude rationalizations and vulgar delusions of grandeur.
>
> (Morgenthau 1982: 7)

Morgenthau believes that, in his time, the state was the central actor, but he nuances this by saying that it is possible for a time to arrive in which a different entity becomes important. It seems that he acknowledges the urgency of this in his later work when the nation-state fails when tackling transnational problems (see Chapter 6). This shows that Morgenthau was willing to address and incorporate empirical developments in his theorizing. That opens the possibility for Morgenthau to be also interested in religion as a factor which has to be dealt with internationally.[8]

7.3.3 The Context- and Time Dependency of the National Interest

What applies to the state, in a way also applies to the national interest. Morgenthau views this as an important characteristic of the international politics of his time, but this characteristic can change over time. Morgenthau also holds, however, that there is a timeless aspect to international politics, namely the conflict of interests. This aspect can be denied, but that is what Morgenthau warns against in his sixth principle regarding the autonomy of the political. Below I will lay out that (1) Morgenthau indeed defines the national interest as power in his time, yet is open to the fact that this depends on time and place; (2) Morgenthau does not discard morality, even though he emphasizes the importance of national interest and survival, and (3) Morgenthau assumes the autonomy of the political and therefore grants religion a derived function.

In the first place, the religionists are correct that Morgenthau assumes that international relations has its own logic, namely the reason of state, which is the security and survival of the state. The religionists are also right that Morgenthau derives this from his view on human nature and the will to power (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 4).[9] It is, however, not taken for granted that Morgenthau relates the interest defined as power to the state. Morgenthau certainly applies the interest defined as power to the nation-state, but he draws this idea from the practice of politics which is characterized by interest defined as power. As I stated in the section before, Morgenthau realizes that in his time interest defined as power and the nation-state were closely related, but he also acknowledged that this could disappear in the course of history. Moreover, Morgenthau does not hold the view that interest defined as power is something fixed once and for

all, although he considers interests as the essence of politics unaffected by the circumstances of time and place (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 10, 11). This means that the content of interests can vary and is not limited to power. In short, Morgenthau relates the national interest to the state and defines it as power, yet recognizes that this might change depending on the time and situation. This means, in my view, that religion also has a chance to play a more prominent role in the future when it becomes a matter of interest.

Second, the principle of the interest defined as power does not imply that Morgenthau discards morality. The religionists specifically make this argument and suggest that discarding morality would also imply discarding religion. However, Morgenthau has often been misunderstood on this point. Critics often interpret Morgenthau's insistence that power is important in all political relationships as if he endorses axioms like 'might makes right' (Lebow 2003: 216). Mollov argues that Morgenthau acknowledges that when there is power, there is justice as well, and that man is both an animal longing for power and a creature with a moral purpose (Mollov 1998: 103, 104; Mollov 2002: 52). Besides that, Morgenthau sees the strive for power and the strive for love coming from the same source in the human soul. He considers them both as attempts to overcome loneliness (Mollov 1998: 97).

> Nobody who disparages the perennial importance of power in human existence and human society can do justice to the other great force which determines human existence and human life and society, and that is the element of love. It may be surprising to some of you that I would correlate in a discussion such as this the problem of power with the problem of love… And no political society can exist for any length of time in any harmonious and stable way which does not take into consideration both the desire for power and the desire for love.
>
> (Mollov 1998: 98)

According to Morgenthau, empirical evidence that power and love come from the same source in the political realm is that all governments and dictators attempt to appear as the servants of the people (Mollov 1998: 97). Morgenthau's view on politics has been labeled as tragic because he knows that power does not suffice ultimately, but that international politics cannot do without it. As I quoted earlier on, Morgenthau holds that moral principles can only be approximated and that power is a crude and unreliable method to limit the aspirations for power and the balance of power as a good short-term strategy. The fact that Morgenthau is critical of international morality does not mean that he discards it. As I have shown in the preceding chapter, Morgenthau holds that morality functions differently in different situations. Political realism, Morgenthau says in his fifth principle, refuses to identify the moral aspirations of particular nations and the moral laws that govern the universe: 'To know that nations are subject to the moral law is one thing, while to pretend to know with certainty what is good and evil in the relations among states is quite

another' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 13). Morgenthau's purpose is not to discard religion or morality but to show that its role in international politics is different from other situations. Another important element in Morgenthau's theorizing is that he separates the political sphere from the moral and the religious, but that 'does not imply disregard for the existence and importance of these other modes of thought. It rather implies that each should be assigned its proper sphere and function' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 16).

> That is to say, if I want to understand 'religious man,' I must for the time being abstract from the other aspects of human nature and deal with its religious aspect as if it were the only one. Furthermore, I must apply to the religious sphere the standards of thought appropriate to it, always remaining aware of the existence of other standards and their actual influence upon the religious qualities of man. What is true for this facet of human nature is true of all the others.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 16)

In other words, the differentiation of spheres limits the role of religion and morality but does not discard them. One could even say that Morgenthau also defends the autonomy of the religious and moral sphere against the political.

The religionist Philpott is therefore correct when he states that, in Morgenthau's theorizing, national interest is no longer a religious or moral goal, but the security and survival of the state. Philpott is, however, not correct that the influence of Nietzsche leads to relativism on transcendent truths in Morgenthau's theorizing. Philpott suggests that in the following quote:

> Implied in Morgenthau's Nietzscheanism is the death of religion, metaphysics, and the ability of reason to grasp objective, transcendent truth. In international relations these would no longer be considered the ends of states.
>
> (Philpott 2002: 79; cf. Philpott 2009: 190)

Neacsu adopts a different position, to which I consent. According to her, Morgenthau's

> endorsement of Nietzsche's diagnosis of the 'death of God' does not mean that he succumbs to a relativism which denies the existence of any transcendental source of values whatsoever. On the contrary, the dangers implied by the continuous erosion of morality will preoccupy Morgenthau throughout his life. According to the present interpretation, Morgenthau gains from Nietzsche an awareness of a certain kind of relativism, one which takes into account historical and cultural variations. Nevertheless, Morgenthau still rates Judaeo-Christian and Kantian moral values highly, and he also regards the consolidation of a universal realm of values favourably.[10]
>
> (Neacsu 2009: 53)

Philpott is not right in putting Morgenthau's position against a religious or moral position. The latter just emphasizes the importance of the national interest defined as power and warns against the subversion of the political sphere by other modes of thought (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 16). In his *Politics Among Nations*, he states:

> Political realism does not require, nor does it condone, indifference to political ideals and moral principles, but it requires indeed a sharp distinction between the desirable and the possible – between what is desirable everywhere and at all times what is possible under concrete circumstances of time and place.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 7)

Morgenthau even goes a step further by declaring national survival a moral principle. He literally states, as I quoted earlier:

> Yet while the individual has a moral right to sacrifice himself in defense of such a moral principle, the state has no right to let its moral approbation of the infringement of liberty get in the way of successful political action, itself inspired by the moral principle of national survival.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 12)

According to Mollov, Morgenthau once said to his students, during a talk on the decline of religion, that religion is a crucial foundation of life, and that he was critical about the fact that 'modern man didn't take religion seriously enough' (Mollov 2014: 29).

Third, Morgenthau's thinking is strongly shaped by his assumption of the autonomy of the political. The consequence of this assumption for theorizing on religion is that Morgenthau acknowledges that religion is an important factor which interferes in the political sphere. The political, however, is determined and characterized by its focus on the principle of interest defined as power. Morgenthau acknowledges that this ideal-typical approach is one-sided and has to be supplemented by other insights, yet it adds to an intelligible understanding of the political. From a political perspective, hence, religion is always subordinated to the political, which is qualified by its power element. An example of this attitude is Morgenthau's view on whether the defense of human rights should be one of the targets of foreign policy. He states that this would come into conflict with the basic interest of the state and that it would be impossible to be consistent in defending human rights (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 277). At another place, Morgenthau states that when certain developments, for instance in the political system, become of great importance during a particular period, political science is tempted to include this subject immediately in its curriculum. Not everything which is important at a certain moment, however, is always theoretically relevant (Morgenthau 1962h: 50).

I imagine that Morgenthau would have responded in the same way when it comes to religion.

But, clearly, this does not suggest that religion is and will be irrelevant at all times. In his lecture *The Politics of Aristotle*, Morgenthau maintains that the question of what is politically relevant depends on the historical period and culture (Lang 2004: 44). He explicitly mentions that religion has been regarded as politically relevant in some countries – the disenfranchisement of Catholics in Great Britain and of Jews in most countries (Lang 2004: 42). Morgenthau's theory keeps open the possibility that religion becomes more important in particular periods.

7.3.4 Evaluation of the Domain-Specific Thesis

It appears that Morgenthau subscribes to a couple of Westphalian assumptions, but that these assumptions do not necessarily lead to the neglect of religion. Morgenthau does not subscribe to the assumption that Westphalia implies the privatization of religion. Morgenthau admits that there is a process of disenchantment going on, but he stresses the ever-present importance of a transcendent reference point. The latter has become harder after the spheres are differentiated: every sphere has its own autonomy and central values that cannot be circumvented. The religious or moral has not become irrelevant, but it has to relate to the autonomy of the political sphere. Westphalia, thus, is rather a new relation between the religious and the political than the starting point of a linear development in which religion is increasingly marginalized while the political becomes more important. In fact, the distinction between these different spheres can be regarded as a revival of the distinction between the religious and the political as introduced by Augustine.

The fact that Morgenthau does not subscribe to the interpretation of the religionists also becomes apparent from his view on the role of the state and the national interest, which is much less secular than the religionists say. According to Morgenthau, state leaders must often choose between different moral principles. The question of which principles should have precedence often depends on the context.

Morgenthau argues that human beings have the right to judge their fellow creatures by some moral standard. It would, however, be unacceptable when they would act upon their judgment. According to Morgenthau, the same rule applies to nations.

7.4 Philosophy of Science: How the Religionists Understood Morgenthau Wrongly

In the previous chapter, regarding the third, scientific–philosophical level, I made a distinction between the social and cultural embeddedness, ontology, epistemology, and methodology. In this section, I will use that same structure.

7.4.1 Social and Cultural Embeddedness: Influence of Enlightenment Thinking

Morgenthau was very critical of the Enlightenment. Mollov says: 'At the philosophical core of Morgenthau's approach to international politics is his rejection of enlightenment assumptions which stressed man's inherent rationality and goodness, and the possibility of easy progress in human affairs' (Mollov 2002: 92). It is not correct that Morgenthau broke with the idea that faith and reason are on equal footing and that he relegated religion to the private and subjective sphere.

In the first place, Morgenthau is aware of the conflict between faith and reason. He writes that religion easily transgresses its boundaries when it compels human reason to accept its images and signs as empirical knowledge. He also writes that there is an existential conflict between science and religion: science only accepts as truth what is empirically proven and religion rejects the empirically proven if it contradicts revealed truth. When a scientific truth contradicts a religious one, it puts into question the truth of religion altogether (Morgenthau 1972: 63, 64). Morgenthau clearly aims to separate science and religion, because he wants to safeguard the one against the other. He explicitly states that religion transgresses its boundaries and discredits itself when it tries to compel human reason to accept constructions of the unknown as empirical knowledge. This could be seen as a restriction of reason since religion does not fall within its scope, as the religionists claim, but one could also state that Morgenthau frees religion from the standards of science.

It is true that Morgenthau's theorizing is more often about ethics and morality than religion, but this is not the result of his attempt to replace religion with morality and no more does he reduce religion to a set of rules. In his writings, Morgenthau pays attention to ethics and morality, but also to religious communities and churches. The fact that he mostly deals with ethics and morality does not mean that he discards religion because in Morgenthau's writings religion and morality are related. He does not replace religion with morality, nor reduces religion to a set of rules.

Instead of considering religion a dangerous thing which has to be privatized, Morgenthau regrets the absence of transcendence and the privatization of religion. As I have extensively discussed in the previous chapter, Morgenthau is worried about the sciences and politics of his day because of their lack of a transcendent point of reference. He also criticizes the fact that ethics had been relegated to the private sphere of religion.

> Where ethics is still recognized as an independent sphere, it is relegated to religion, a private domain such as family or art, where man may satisfy his emotional needs.
>
> (Morgenthau 1965b: 15–17)

I also set out that Morgenthau considered philosophy, science, and religion as three equally valid responses to the shock of wonderment which only differ in

their outward manifestation. Morgenthau sees them as distinct activities which emerge from the same source. Although there can be tensions or competition between the different spheres, Morgenthau does not *a priori* choose the one over the other.

Morgenthau's position with respect to religion and science comes close to his position on religion and politics. It sometimes depends on the audience and the context of what position he takes. Contrary to the positivists, he would argue in favor of religion, but had his audience been liberal Protestants in the Wilsonian sense, he would have defended the autonomy of the political and warned against the influence of religion. The bottom line is, however, that he appreciates the necessity and value of religion, but within limits and respecting the autonomy of other spheres. This might not go as far as the religionists would like to see it, but it at least shows that they are not correct in that Morgenthau sees religion as a danger which calls for privatization. As such, Morgenthau does not subscribe to laicist secularism as Hurd describes it.

Certainly, Morgenthau, reproached for this by the religionists, takes religious knowledge as a form of value rationality, which leads to action for ethical, aesthetic, and religious purposes. However, that does not lead to him degrading religion. On the contrary, Morgenthau writes that a religious reflection upon empirical reality is no less valid than secularized science. He states that religious reflection upon the empirical world is a branch of science, different from secularized science only in the unifying systematic point of view and its terminology. An example of this approach is the political theory as developed in the Catholic Middle Ages. Its ideas about politics were the result of a theoretical reflection from a theological point of view. The political philosophies of Augustine and Hobbes differ in the wording, but not so much in the understanding of politics, Morgenthau states. Morgenthau also states that the opposition between religion and science is false. He has noted that some modern political theories whose assumptions belong to metaphysical philosophy and whose methods belong to empirical science are in truth ideologies whose profane terminology hides a religious type of thinking (Morgenthau, 1972: 65).

When it comes to the supposed influence of modernization and secularization theory, it appears that Morgenthau acknowledges the descriptive fact that traditional religion is disappearing. He argues, though, that this does not apply to the human religious impulse and underlines that transcendent values and religiosity remain vital for the flourishing of human beings and civilization. I address this issue explicitly since this is one of the reproaches of the religionists. Morgenthau's awareness of the disappearance of religion appears when he writes about a period of history in which religious institutions and dogmas have lost their persuasiveness. He also speaks about the death of God. Morgenthau makes clear, however, that the traditional images and signs are no longer able to evoke the mysteries of the world to the human consciousness, but that does not mean that the longing of consciousness for union with those mysteries has disappeared too. According to Morgenthau, the religious impulse is at work wherever people seek union with the world by becoming conscious of its

mysteries. The religious impulse is at work in genuine scientific thinking that is moved by the shock of wonderment. In that movement, religion, philosophy, and science are one, because they all approach the mysteries to understand them by way of conceptual construction. Even though they use different concepts, this does not affect the substance of the concepts.

Although Morgenthau acknowledges that in his time the norms and values inspired by religion have become disintegrated, he often emphasizes the importance of transcendent values. America, Morgenthau writes, is in dire need of transcendent values, of ideals that are not invoked just rhetorically, but are taken seriously as ultimate goals (Frei 2001: 214; Morgenthau 1972: 65, 66).[11] At another place, Morgenthau states in response to Toynbee that a return to religious faith to save Western civilization might have been successful in the past, but not in this age in which truth has been reduced to science and religion has declined (Morgenthau 1962c: 54, 59, 62). Distinguishing between religion and religiosity, Morgenthau suggests that the lack of religiosity may well have led to the failures of the modern age. The decline of religiosity shows that humankind has been losing the awareness that it depends on a will and power which are beyond its understanding and control. According to Morgenthau, this 'irreligious self-glorification' leaves out mystery, tragedy, and guilt, which are important for human flourishing (Morgenthau 1962c: 60).

7.4.2 Ontology: Morgenthau's Supposed Materialism

Considering Morgenthau often emphasizes the ideological function of religion in order to uncover the real interests, I can see why the religionists think Morgenthau reduces religion to material capabilities. This could give the impression that he overlooks or reduces religion. I think it is more accurate to argue that Morgenthau prioritizes, rather than reduces, interests. In his view, ideas, ideology, or religion color the way in which interests (either material or ideal) should be understood.

> Interests (material and ideal), not ideas, dominate directly the actions of men. Yet the 'images of the world' created by these ideas have very often served as switches determining the tracks on which the dynamism of interests kept actions moving.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 11)

This prioritizing of interests does not just follow from the demand for theory and finding the rationality of particular spheres, but also from the empirical observation that people are directly moved by interests and indirectly by ideas. Empirical observations and theoretical notions coincide here.

Morgenthau states that interests can be material or ideal. He writes that the goals pursued by nations in their foreign policies run the whole gamut any nation has ever pursued or might pursue. Morgenthau also says – as some of the religionists admit – that the concept of power may comprise anything that

establishes and maintains the control of man over man, be it physically or psychologically (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 11). Knutsen even interprets the latter as power being a product of material and spiritual factors (Knutsen 1997: 242). The religionists nevertheless claim realism theorizes about material factors primarily. I challenge that position on the same grounds as I did before because Morgenthau's theorizing is not only shaped by the wish to select variables but also by empirical observations. This means that both the demand for strong theory and the empirical relevance determine what Morgenthau takes into account (cf. Keohane 2000: 127, 128; Wendt 2000: 167).

7.4.3 Epistemology: Morgenthau's Critique on Positivism

When reading Morgenthau's first principle, you may indeed get the impression that he is a positivist: 'Political realism, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 4; Rosenthal 1991: 4). That might also explain why religionists blame him for being a positivist and claim that he ignores religion. But is that correct? Morgenthau's. characterizes positivism, or rationalism, as follows:

> First, that the rationally right and the ethically good are identical. Second, that the rationally right action is of necessity the successful one. Third, that education leads man to the rationally right, hence, good and successful, action. Fourth, that the laws of reason, as applied to the social sphere, are universal in their application.
>
> (Morgenthau 1965b: 13)

At another place, Morgenthau writes about the last point that man thinks he will master reality as the natural sciences mastered the blind forces of nature (Morgenthau 1972: 30). This definition agrees with the way the religionists write about it. Morgenthau rejects the view that science is value-free and neutral, as human beings have their presuppositions and evaluative standpoints from which they understand the world. In the next section, I will set out that Morgenthau is not striving for explanatory power and hence neglecting religion, nor secularizing the role of religion and therefore neglecting religion.[12]

7.4.3.1 Why Morgenthau's Ideal-Typical Theory Is Not Positivist

The religionists are correct that Morgenthau's view on theory explains why he deals with religion as of secondary importance. They are not correct, however, that his ideal-typical theorizing is positivist and that explanatory power is his goal. I base this on the following: (1) the rational part of Morgenthau's theorizing sometimes seems to be positivist, but should be seen in relation to the empirical part of his thinking; (2) it is not because of positivist assumptions that Morgenthau aims at explanatory power; and (3) Morgenthau criticizes positivism because of its mismatch between theory and practice.

I understand the religionists' stance because of the ambiguity in Morgenthau's thinking. When the focus is on the more rational part of Morgenthau's theorizing, the religionists have a point that it looks positivist. However, to do justice to Morgenthau, the focus should be on his rational as well as his empirical considerations. The ambiguity in Morgenthau's thinking sometimes gives the impression that he is primarily a rational thinker, while at other moments he is more of an empirical and practical thinker. When the religionists argue that his rational part does not allow for religion, it is not difficult to find evidence that he pays much attention to religion in his writings. When they criticize Morgenthau for not paying attention to religion sufficiently, it is not difficult to find theoretical or rational considerations to defend Morgenthau's position. My view is that both elements are integral to Morgenthau's thinking and that this ambiguity is not a weakness but, instead, a strength because the continuous move between the rational principles and empirical data shows the willingness to be accurate and open in his theorizing. Morgenthau tries to disclose the rational principles behind actual developments and is willing to adjust his theoretical assumptions when there is reason to do so. Troy, referring to Scheuerman, argues that the classical realist tradition is open to changing its theoretical framework (Troy 2014: 5). Morgenthau did not subscribe to scientism and was certainly not a positivist. His theorizing has a certain flexibility and therefore it was able to encompass it all: individuals, the responsibilities of leadership, the national character of states, real human beings, and also religion (Kubálková & Luoma-Aho 2014: 156).

Next, Morgenthau does not aim at explanatory power because of positivist assumptions. Morgenthau defines a theory in general as 'a system of empirically verifiable, general truths, sought for their own sake' (Morgenthau 1959: 16). He distinguishes this knowledge from practical knowledge, which is interested in truth with direct practical relevance, common-sense knowledge, which is particular and unsystematic, and philosophy, which is not necessarily empirically verifiable (Morgenthau 1962h: 44). Most of his writings are, however, on political theory and this shows that his understanding of theory with respect to the social and political sphere differs from his more general definition of a theory. With respect to political theory, he believes that there is rationality which can be rationally ordered by the observer. Such a theory must allow for contingencies, without spoiling its rationality. Theorizing takes place through ideal types, 'conceptual forms, idealizations, which selectively present some aspects of social life, particularly social action, for the purpose of making them more fully intelligible by redescribing them in terms of clarified concepts' (Turner & Mazur 2009: 490). The ideal-typical approach starts from the assumption that there are objective laws, but that theories are one-sided because they have to be supplemented with empirical laws (Turner & Mazur 2009: 489). This demonstrates that for Morgenthau it is the subject at stake, and it is not explanatory power *per se* that comes first. And this approach is definitely not based on positivist assumptions. As I have already shown in this

section, Morgenthau also thinks that theorizing always involves the observer with his or her values and presuppositions. In addition, Morgenthau believes that there is not a single logic of explanation for the social and natural world. Thus, the religionists are not correct that Morgenthau, either as a result of positivist assumptions or separate from it, strives for explanatory power in a natural scientific fashion.

The religionists, finally, argue that, because of his longing for explanatory power, Morgenthau's theorizing does not reflect the practice of international politics. They state that this discrepancy between theory and practice is particularly apparent in relation to the question of whether power is the ultimate aim – or states the most central actors – in international politics. They note that Morgenthau acknowledges that there are ultimate aims in international politics beyond the immediate aim of power. The religionists, however, consider this lip service, because, in Morgenthau's theory, power has become the ultimate aim and religion does not play a role in it. To the religionists, this shows that realism is not realistic: it does not describe the world as it actually is, namely as a world in which religion continues to matter a great deal. As a result, American diplomats raised in the Enlightenment secularism of the realist school are unprepared to recognize the spiritual aspects of problems and solutions. Furthermore, the religionists maintain that the state-centric assumption seems not to fit the nation-states as we know them outside the theoretical machine. Though Morgenthau saw the problem, he ultimately dismissed it, according to the religionists (see Chapter 5).

I agree with point of the religionists about the state-centrism of Morgenthau, but I disagree with the reasoning of the religionists that this is because of his positivist 'theoretical machine'. Morgenthau criticized positivism on the exact point the religionists are criticizing him. Morgenthau rejects the idea that social problems can be addressed and solved through the methods of the natural sciences. He argues that positivism and its belief in progress have proved to mismatch our experience. According to Morgenthau, the increase in knowledge has led to physical danger, social disintegration, and metaphysical doubt. The current revolt against science, society, and politics-as-usual is the result of the shocking paradox that man can master nature, yet unable to control the results of that mastery.

> [A]nd this very inability to make meaningful distinctions makes science the slave rather than the master of its subject, and man the victim rather than the beneficiary of knowledge. (…) By surrendering himself to the world through action, man gives to the dual question posed by politics, the empirical and the metaphysical, no answer at all or at best an incomplete and insufficient one.
>
> (Morgenthau 1972: 47, 48)

Morgenthau further argues that rationalistic positivism is fascinated by the success of the exact sciences in the empirical world. It conceives science as

systematic, theoretical knowledge of what is empirically knowable. It sees the universe composed of objects, some already known, others not yet known, but something that will be known in the future depending upon the progress of science. This conception of science lacks the tension between the finiteness of our knowledge and the infinity both of our desire to know the universe. Morgenthau admits that scientific progress consists of the progressive penetration of the mysteries of the universe. He criticizes, however, 'the implicit expectations of the total triumph of science not only unraveling one mystery after the other but banishing mystery itself from the consciousness of man' (Morgenthau 1972: 62, 63).

In addition to the preceding rebuttal, it is true that Morgenthau considered national interest defined as power as the defining principle of international politics in his time. It is, however, not correct to label Morgenthau's statement that there are ultimate aims in international politics beyond the immediate aim of power as lip service. There are many places where Morgenthau acknowledges the importance and necessity of a transcendent reference point and the importance of morality and ethics, as I have demonstrated throughout this chapter and will continue to do so in the next section. Besides that, Morgenthau's theorizing is open to empirical data showing that the state is no longer the central actor or that interest is defined as power. Morgenthau's theory is one-sided because it has to be combined with other empirical laws. If empirical data point at religion as a factor of importance or shows that the state is no longer the central actor, Morgenthau's thinking is open to such findings to the extent that theory requires the elimination of elements that do not belong to its rational scheme. That makes a theory as such more rational than political reality (Morgenthau 1962i: 1). A theory has to ascertain facts and give them meaning through reason (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 4). The validity of a theory depends on the extent to which it broadens and deepens the understanding of what is to be known (Morgenthau 1962h: 46). It has to meet two criteria: do the facts agree with the interpretation of the theory and is the theory consistent within itself (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 3)? The consequence of the fact that Morgenthau has to eliminate elements that do not belong to its rational scheme is that religion possibly will lose out in the rational scheme that the national interest is defined as power. By contrast, the fact that Morgenthau holds that theorizing is always normative and has to be complemented by the moral wisdom of the statesman, allows for the influence of religion insofar as it affects statesmen and scholars.

The above considerations make clear that Morgenthau is not in favor of positivism nor of explanatory power *per se* (cf. Rösch 2011: 132; Troy 2014: 1; Behr & Rösch 2014: 14). That makes it difficult, if not impossible, to maintain that he neglects religion because of adherence to positivism. However, the religionists are correct that they point at Morgenthau's view on theory because as I set out earlier, his ideal-typical theory leads to dealing with religion as of secondary importance.

7.4.3.2 The Impact of Christian Theology on Morgenthau's Classical Realism

The religionists argue that secularization leads to the neglect of religion in IR. They base this on two points, first that there was a religious or theological influence on IR that has disappeared because of positivism; and, second, that the diminishing religious influence on IR also implies less attention to religion in IR.

The first point is difficult to argue for, because, as discussed in the preceding section, Morgenthau was critical rather than positive about positivism. Morgenthau criticizes rationalism, or positivism, because of its philosophical and ethical monism, while he holds a dualistic view of morality, implying that humankind is subject to an external transcendent concept. He compares it with Moses coming down from Mount Sinai with the law being confronted by the people of Israel and the worship of the golden calf (Lang 2004: 92). The ethical monism of rationalism sees evil as the absence of good or even as the absence of reason. But this way of thinking contradicts Western thought in which God is challenged by the devil. In this view, there is no inevitable progress toward the good, but undecided conflict between good and evil (Morgenthau 1965b: 204–206). This view on morality deviates from the positivist stance toward morality.

For Morgenthau, all human beings have in common that they are moral beings. Civilized men differ from the barbarians because they make the right moral judgment. They share with each other and with Socrates, the Greek tragedians, the biblical prophets, and the great moralists of all ages what is meant by the sanctity of the moral law. This morality is required for the flourishing of mankind's transcendent orientations (Morgenthau 1982: 357, 358). Great people in history have devoted themselves to transcendent purposes. They revealed the truth of Scripture that 'He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loses his life for my sake shall find it' (Morgenthau 1982: 358).

Regarding the second point, it is true that at the formation of International Relations, there was a religious or even a theological perspective that shaped many thinkers of international relations. The influence of theology came from Christianity as well as Judaism. The influence of Judaism is closely related to the fact that Morgenthau himself was a Jew. The fact that, as Mollov states, Judaism combines people and faith explains why Morgenthau's Jewishness moves him to deal with anti-Semitism, the cultural and intellectual offshoots of Judaism, the Soviet Jewry movement, Israel, and formal religious theology and practice (Mollov 2014: 21, 22). Explicit theological statements come to the fore, for instance, when Morgenthau criticizes the Soviet Union for singling out the Jews for repression. He then stresses that

> 'the prophets of the Old Testament' subjected 'the rulers of Israel to the moral standards of the other world. [The prophetic tradition of Judaism] has endeavored, in the Biblical phrase, "to speak truth to power," and thereby remind the powers-that-be of a higher law to which they are subject'.
>
> (Mollov 2014: 27)

At another place, Morgenthau emphasizes that

> the mission of the Prophets such as Isaiah and Amos is to 'give voice to the power which the king (political powers) are subject, and threaten them with petition and punishment if they do not submit themselves to the superior power'.
>
> (Mollov 2014: 28)

In an unpublished essay titled *The Significance of Being Alone*, Morgenthau traces the biblical antecedents of man's self-doubt and his efforts to overcome the mystery of existence to the book of Genesis. Morgenthau takes the description of the creation of mankind as a starting point for his theoretical reflection on the ambitions of man as a political animal. He then writes that God is perfection and goodness, wisdom and power and that man is imperfect, but that he has a vision of perfection. Mankind is searching restlessly for this perfection, but acquires a sense of tragedy and guilt because he recognizes that there is a gap between what he is and what he should be. It is because of man's *hubris* that he oversteps the bounds of his nature, but the tragedy is that he must labor in vain until the end of time, trying and failing (Russell 1990: 74, 75). These explicit theological references show that the theological perspective is still present in Morgenthau's thinking.

Regarding the influence of Christian theology, it was Reinhold Niebuhr who influenced Morgenthau's thinking substantially. Morgenthau and Niebuhr met at the University of Chicago for the first time. He wrote about their meeting: 'Niebuhr is here for six weeks (…) and he is, of course, a tremendous hit' (Frei 2001: 110 fn. 70; cf. Mollov 1998: 95, 96, 102; Mollov 2014; 30). Frei says that although they came from different experiences and traditions in terms of direct formative influences, they quickly discovered common ground. Morgenthau said that 'Reinie and I come out about the same on politics' (Frei 2001: 110). At another place, he says:

> Again it is probably by virtue of the similarity between the development of my own thought and that of Niebuhr's with regard to this fundamental problem that I can speak with a certain degree of confidence in trying to interpret the position of Niebuhr. (…) Let me say in conclusion that I have always considered Reinhold Niebuhr the greatest living political philosopher of America, perhaps the only creative political philosopher since Calhoun.[13]
>
> (Morgenthau 1962a: 106, 107, 109)

To his students, Morgenthau said that a theologian like Reinhold Niebuhr has made the greatest contemporary contribution to the understanding of basic political problems. To Niebuhr's widow Ursula he wrote shortly after Niebuhr's death in 1971: 'the man whose mind and soul I owe so much' (Mollov 2002: 49). According to Frei, Morgenthau used Niebuhr's language to introduce his

German intellectual heritage in an unobjectionable manner in America. Some people have, as a result of this, overemphasized the influence of Niebuhr. Some claim that Niebuhr provided the anthropological foundation for Morgenthau's political theory, while others argue that Morgenthau used Niebuhr's insights in a secularized way.[14] Morgenthau himself said that

> You are indeed right in surmising that Reinhold Niebuhr's writings have made a profound impression on me. They have confirmed certain conclusions at which I arrived independently and have contributed to deepening and stimulating my thinking.
>
> (Frei 2001: 112)

The fact that Morgenthau was already 40 years old when he started to read Niebuhr, also points to the idea that Niebuhr confirmed ideas which he had already developed (Frei 2001: 112). When Morgenthau was asked, in 1976, by a journal to indicate the ten books that meant most to him, he not only included the collected works of Nietzsche but also Niebuhr's book *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (Frei 2001: 113).[15]

Besides relating ethics and morality to the study of international relations, Morgenthau's approach to international relations was clearly influenced by theological ideas. This aspect of Morgenthau is often overlooked by conventional wisdom that Morgenthau utilizes a Machiavellian–Hobbesian framework. This 'wisdom' overlooks the transcendental aspects of his Judeo-Christian-oriented theory (Troy 2014: 4). The above argument seems to contradict that there has been a diminishing influence of theology. That is true, but there is also another aspect namely that Morgenthau was less intrinsically connected to and less existentially influenced by the Christian faith, even though he uses theological concepts. For example, Niebuhr speaks of redemption while Morgenthau uses the term tragedy. From that perspective, there is a diminishing influence, but this is not such an influence that it would lead to a fundamentally different political theology and therefore to a significantly different treatment of religion in IR theory. To the religionists I would like to say that it is not a diminishing influence of religion or theology, but a different political theology which is cautious to involve religion in politics. One might consider this a secularizing move, but it is secularization within a theological discourse and legitimized by it.

7.4.4 Methodology: Reductionism in Morgenthau's Approach to Religion?

There is evidence that Morgenthau addresses both the ideational and institutional, the rational and irrational, and the individual and communal aspects of religion. Let me start with the institutional and the ideational dimensions of religion. As explained in the preceding chapter, Morgenthau makes a distinction between religion and religiosity. He understands religions like Judaism, Christianity, or Hinduism as particular manifestations of a broader religious

awareness called religiosity. They can be considered as institutional expressions of this religiosityreligion. The ideational dimension of religion comes to the fore in Morgenthau's idea that religiosity is based on the idea that mankind depends upon a will and a power which are beyond its understanding and control. Another ideational expression of religion Morgenthau identifies is the existence of religious practices or faith in a particular religious dogma (Thompson, Morgenthau & Hein 1983: 6).

Regarding the rational and irrational, Morgenthau points to the rational side of religion, because he sees religiosity as an experience which is transformed into intellectual awareness (Morgenthau 1962c: 61, 62). As I have set out earlier, it is also important to understand that Morgenthau wants to keep in place the autonomy of religion. He criticizes the identification of the ethical and the scientific with the religious. Science and religion are separate actions in response to the religious experience of the shock of wonderment. From that perspective, there is no difference between the activities people perform in church and the activities of a scientist. Morgenthau says that a religious reflection upon empirical reality does not yield validity to secularized science (see Section 5.3.1 and 6.2.1).

Finally, Morgenthau addresses the individual as well as the collective aspect of religion. In the section on Morgenthau's definition of religion, I quote Morgenthau when he writes that he has in mind not only the membership of a particular religious organization, observance of religious practices, or professions of faith in a religious dogma. He distinguishes this from a religious attitude that recognizes the insufficiency of human beings as finite beings seeking orientation through some transcendent guidance so that they can come to terms with themselves, their fellowmen, and the universe. Morgenthau emphasizes that religion is a universal human attitude and that the historic religions and their religious organizations are but particular manifestations of it.

7.5 Evaluation of the Philosophy of Science Thesis

While the religionists were correct on various issues regarding the empirical thesis and the domain-specific thesis, this is hardly the case for the scientific–philosophical statement. It appears that the religionists often claim that Morgenthau said the opposite of what he actually said, which is particularly true for his view on the Enlightenment, the modernization theory, ontology, epistemology, and methodology. As I argued earlier, this can only be the result of a superficial reading of his works; the 'real' Morgenthau is quite different from the Morgenthau described in religionist literature. In a large number of cases, Morgenthau could even strengthen the position of the religionists with his criticism of positivism and the Enlightenment. Regarding his view on theory, I believe that Morgenthau challenges religionists to reflect on the exact requirements and the scope of a theory of IR and religion. He himself has various clear conceptions about this and I think religionists can find common ground there.

Conclusion

I conclude that the religionists' criticism of Morgenthau that he neglects religion for many reasons barely applies. Morgenthau perceives the role of religion, he is aware of the varieties found within religion, but he does not explicitly strive for incorporating it. On a domain-specific level, there are no assumptions that actively contribute to religion's neglect. But Morgenthau also does not actively incorporate religion as a factor. This might be too little for the religionists, but if he takes religion insufficiently into account, he at least explains it. On the philosophy of science level, it appears that Morgenthau actively creates openness to religious or theological ideas. On certain points, as I explained in Chapter 6, Morgenthau also introduces theological notions of an Augustinian nature. The influence of these Augustinian ideas must not be underestimated, because it leads to the ironic situation that Morgenthau – partly relying on theological considerations – is cautious to separate religion too much from the political on the one hand, and fearful to separate religion and politics too little on the other hand.

How is it possible that the religionists' assessment of Morgenthau differs so much from mine? I believe there are a couple of reasons for this. First, it could be that the religionists are not sufficiently aware of the fact, as Shireen Hunter points out, that during Morgenthau's writing, it was all about ideologies like nationalism, socialism and liberalism. That would justify the relative neglect of religion or the fact that Morgenthau often thought about religion in its ideologized form (Hunter 2017: 223). Second, the religionists are not specific enough in their criticism of realism. I have chosen Morgenthau to verify their position, which, however, turned out to have the opposite effect. In short, it would have been better if the paradigm challengers had been more specific in their criticism: What do they mean exactly with realism, and to which thinkers and which books do they refer? In addition, they did not study Morgenthau thoroughly enough, as appears from the few references to Morgenthau's writings. It seems to me that the religionists too often rely on particular textbook representations of Morgenthau's classical realism which do not do justice to it. Morgenthau would not always recognize the realism in which he is still revered, albeit perfunctorily, as a founding father (Kubálková and Luoma-Aho 2014: 148, 149). Kubálková and Mika Luoma-Aho even go so far as to state that 'The works of major figures of the Anglo-American IR discipline showing Judeo-Christian influences have been suppressed or excluded from the discipline's history' (Kubálková and Luoma-Aho 2014: 146). This is quite crucial because taking note of these influences would have shown that it is also for political–theological reasons that Morgenthau is cautious to involve religion too much. Since I have brought this hidden theology to the surface, the religionists should think about how they relate to it and the way Morgenthau applies it in his theorizing. Besides that the religionists have overlooked theology, they have missed aspects of Morgenthau's theorizing which are quite crucial to understanding the place religion has in his writings. In my view, the points Morgenthau puts

forward should be taken seriously by the religionists. He challenges the religionists to think about the necessity of theory, the autonomy of the political, and the conception of international relations as international politics.

Notes

1 The few exceptions are Epp (1991), Sandal and Fox (2013), and Troy (2014).
2 In the chapter on the religionists (Chapter 3), I place civilizations on the international level while in the case of Morgenthau, I deal with it in the context of the transnational level. The difference is that Huntington deals with civilizations as if they were nation-states, while Morgenthau does not. For that reason, I place Huntington's description on the international level and Morgenthau's on the transnational.
3 This comes from a preface of this book (Byrd 1960). Quakers are members of a Christian group called the Society of Friends or Friends Church that stresses the guidance of the Holy Spirit, rejects outward rites and an ordained ministry, and one that has a long tradition of actively working for peace and opposing war.
4 'Faith-based diplomacy, while conceptually new to the field of international relations, is a form of Track II (unofficial) diplomacy that integrates the dynamics of religious faith with the conduct of international peacemaking. As such, it is more about reconciliation than it is conflict resolution. The peace that it pursues is not the mere absence of conflict but rather a restoration of healthy and respectful relationships between the parties. While faith based intermediaries believe that diplomacy and the international system should be morally grounded (as do many secularists), they also understand the need for pragmatism in their pursuit of reconciliation' (Johnston & Cox 2003: 15; cf. Troy 2008: 214).
5 Neacsu refers here to unpublished materials from the archives.
6 This comes close to the point of Thomas who – inspired by Wight – refers to the Cold War as a rivalry of apostasies (Chapter 5).
7 Manifest Destiny is the belief that American expansion westward and southward was inevitable, just, and divinely ordained.
8 Although I do not subscribe to Campbell's characterization that Morgenthau and Niebuhr committed 'a form of intellectual suicide', he correctly points out that Morgenthau adjusted (I would say that he emphasized other elements of) his theoretical principles in light of new developments (Craig 2003: 116).
9 Craig writes that 'It was this understanding, [that deterrence can't last out the necessary timespan, SP] grasped dimly and gradually by Niebuhr and Morgenthau, that led them to "instruct" the public about the dangers of accepting the perpetuation of international anarchy, and, correspondingly to let go their earlier belief that a world state was neither desirable nor possible' (Craig 2003: viii).
10 For an explanation of Morgenthau's tension between nihilism and morality in a disenchanted world (Neacsu 2009: 33, 34; Mollov 2002: 33–35).
11 In another place, Morgenthau relativizes the particular wording of the transcendent values: 'We will not delve here into the specific content of these values; it is only their function that we consider significant in this context.' 'It is irrelevant to this discussion whether theological or secular terms were used to formulate them' (Frei 2001: 214).
12 I do not assess whether Morgenthau believes in context-independent rationality, because the religionists only criticize neorealism for it.
13 On the same pages, Morgenthau also praises how Niebuhr discovered the autonomy of the political sphere.
14 Frei states that it was not so much a matter of secularizing Niebuhr, but of rephrasing Nietzsche with slightly religious overtones (Frei 2001: 111, 189).

15 For examples of how Morgenthau's thoughts and phrasings agree with Niebuhr (Frei 2001: 56, 58). How Niebuhr has acted as a 'conduit' or as a 'Christian catalyst' for evoking Judaic themes in Morgenthau's thinking and how he functioned as a Judaic mentor (Frei 2001: 79, 91, 92, 109, 110, 115).

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8 Religion in Waltz's Neorealism

'It Is the Theory'

Introduction

These are what Kenneth Waltz is sometimes called in mainstream IR: 'The most important international relations theorist of the past half century', 'the pre-eminent international relations theorist of the post-World War II era', 'the pre-eminent theorist of international politics of his generation', and 'the King of Thought' (Booth 2009: 179). Besides the fact that Waltz is one of the most prominent theorists in IR, the founder and main representative of neorealism, he also has been criticized by many religionists as a malefactor for the neglect of religion.

In the preceding chapter, the role of religion in Morgenthau's theory was discussed. This chapter is devoted to the work of Waltz who belongs to the realist tradition but developed it further. A lot of continuity can be found between both theories because Waltz and Morgenthau can both be categorized under the school of political realism. At the same time, there is a discontinuity at play.

The thread that runs through this chapter is my view of Waltz's neorealism as an attempt to salvage whatever can be salvaged from the ideas of political realism, within the confines of the requirements set for scientific theories (cf. Kamminga 2012). In the first place, he had to relate himself to the theological inspiration of Niebuhr and Morgenthau's realism. Second, he also had to deal with the requirements of science. If the two elements mentioned above are overlooked, Waltz's theory in general, but in particular his dealing with religion, cannot properly be understood.

I start this chapter by describing Waltz's theory. After that, I set out that to understand Waltz's dealing with religion one has to understand his scientific–philosophical, his philosophical-political point about the autonomy of the political, and finally his political theological assumptions.

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8.1 Waltz's Theory of International Politics: Political Realism in a Scientific Coat[1]

Waltz's neorealism is mainly based on two books: *Man, the State, and War* (1959) and *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Therefore, I will give an introduction to both books in this section. Although more of Waltz's writings are consulted, I consider his theory of international politics, as it is expounded in the second book, as his core position.[2] However, to understand his theory fully, it is necessary to involve his other writings, because they shed light on some of the assumptions that are made in his theory of international politics.

My starting point is that neorealism is an attempt to preserve as much political realism as possible within the scientific discourse of IR at that time. In that attempt, there is continuity and discontinuity. Neorealism basically preserves classical realist thought and most of its political–philosophical assumptions, yet does so in a more scientific fashion. As Jervis phrases, it 'is developed with much more rigor and analytical power' (Jervis 1994: 858).[3] Hall argues:

> Waltz recognised early on that classical realism was problematic. In particular, the philosophical [I would say the theological, SP] anthropology on which it was based was impossible to prove or disprove – it rested simply on inherited beliefs about human nature that, to his mind, lacked scientific credibility. The 'evidence' on which it was based was not a systematic body of evidence and analysis, but rather sets of religious or philosophical speculations. As such, Waltz was convinced, it would not stand as a theory.
>
> (Hall 2013)

Waltz's theory of international politics is a product of political theory on the one hand and a certain type of philosophy of science on the other. It is important here to clarify that Waltz uses the term political theory for political philosophy and that he considered a 'real' theory a theory that is able to explain (Waltz 1979: 6). His theory of international politics is a combination of classical realist political theory (political philosophy) and philosophy of science ideas about explanatory theory. When I use the term theory of international politics or political theory I refer to his theory and political philosophy.

According to Waltz, neorealism improves classical realism, because it develops a theory of international politics as a distinct domain. According to Waltz, Morgenthau presented elements of a political theory but not a theory of international politics. Morgenthau singled out salient facts and constructed causal analysis around them. He wanted to paint a picture of foreign policy that would present its rational essence; therefore, Morgenthau was engaged in a gigantic struggle with the facts to find an explanatory principle. He developed concepts like national interest and interest defined as power, but like other realists, he failed to take the decisive step to a recognizable theory.

Morgenthau maintained, for example, the autonomy of politics but did not apply this concept to international politics. Morgenthau confused the problem of explaining foreign policy with the problem of developing a theory of international politics. This was the result of Morgenthau's basic assumption that the international political domain cannot be marked off from other domains to construct a theory of international politics (Waltz 2008b: 71). He therefore saw explanations of foreign policy as explanations of international politics and vice versa, argues Waltz (Waltz 1979: 122).

8.1.1 Three Images: Man, the State, and the International System

In his book *Man, the State, and War*, Waltz provides a causal explanation for war.[4] He distinguishes three levels or 'images' of analysis: the individual, the state and society, and the international system. The term 'image' is important here, for 'it suggests that one forms a picture in the mind; it suggests that one views the world in a certain way' (Waltz 1959: ix). The distinction between the three images should be seen as a foundation for his later book, *Theory of International Politics*, which aims to explain international politics. According to Waltz, the first image focuses on human nature as the cause of war, because war occurs as a result of selfishness, misdirected aggressive impulses, and stupidity (Waltz 1959: 16). Optimists and pessimists agree in diagnosing the basic cause of war as human nature and behavior, but they disagree in their answers on whether human nature can be changed to bring peace (Waltz 1959: 39).

According to the second image, human nature cannot be the single determinant; psychology must be complemented by the findings of sociology, which means that the internal organization of states is important. That is what the second image is about. But how does war occur in the second image? An example of how the internal organization of the state influences the external behavior of the state is when states try to overcome internal defects or internal strife by making war, with the assumption that a common enemy will bring internal peace (Waltz 1959: 80, 81). Examples of internal defects that bring war can range from the form of government to the lack of natural frontiers that are necessary for its security (Waltz 1959: 82, 83). The question then is what form of government or state is needed to overcome the cause of war. According to Waltz, Marx found the answer in the ownership of the means of production, Kant in abstract principles of rights, and Woodrow Wilson in terms of national self-determination and modern democratic organization. All these solutions have the idea in common that reform of the state will lead to world peace. Peace has not occurred yet, because there is not enough democracy or socialism (Waltz 1959: 83, 84).

Waltz criticizes these approaches because they rely on a generalization of one pattern of state and society to bring peace to the world. It is true that bad states may lead to war, but the opposite of this statement, that good states lead to peace in the world, is doubtful. The second image deals with the same

difficulty as the first image because men make societies, but societies also make men. That also applies to the third image, because in international relations, the actions of states make up the substance of international relations but also are determined by the international political environment (Waltz 1959: 122, 123). That is what the third image is about. Waltz describes the third image as follows, using the story from *Discourse on Inequality* of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778) (Rousseau 1755: Part II)

> Assume that five men who have acquired a rudimentary ability to speak and to understand each other happen to come together at a time when all of them suffer from hunger. The hunger of each of them will be satisfied by the fifth part of a stag, so they 'agree' to cooperate in a project to trap one. But also the hunger of any one of them will be satisfied by a hare, so, as a hare comes within reach, one of them grabs it. The defector obtains the means of satisfying his hunger but in doing so permits the stag to escape. His immediate interest prevails over consideration for his fellows.
>
> (Waltz 1959: 167, 168)

Waltz's conclusion is that in cooperative action, one cannot rely on others. While Benedict de Spinoza (1632–1677) linked conflict causally to man's imperfect reason, Rousseau counters this analysis with the idea that the sources of conflict are in the nature of social activity (Waltz 1959: 168). That is also how Waltz thinks about it. That means that the tension between the immediate interest of man and the general interest should be resolved by the unilateral action of one man. Reason would tell him that his long-term interest is that cooperative action benefits all the participants. But reason also tells him that if he forgets the hare, the man next to him might leave his post to chase it, leaving him with nothing. To create harmony in this so-called anarchic situation requires not only perfect rationality but also the certainty that others act purely rationally. Waltz concludes that Spinoza is right that the rationality of human beings is important and Rousseau that different social contexts shape different conditions for mankind and, therefore, different behavior (Waltz 1959: 169, 170). In the stag-hunt example, the behavior of the rabbit snatcher was rational from his point of view, but from the perspective of the group, it was arbitrary and capricious (Waltz 1959: 183).

Waltz describes two possible solutions to create harmony. Either impose an effective control on the separate and imperfect states or remove states from the sphere of the accidental, that is, define the good state as so perfect that it will no longer be particular. Kant tried to compromise by making states good enough to obey a set of laws to which they have volunteered their assent. Rousseau, however, emphasized the particular nature of the good state, which means that states always provoke other states. In Rousseau's view, the bloodiest stage of history was the period that preceded the establishment of society. Now, the states of Europe are at the same stage in the establishment of an international society, Waltz states (Waltz 1959: 182–184).

For Rousseau, the cause of the deviant behavior of the states is the international system. It is the general structure that permits states to exist and behave in a specific way. It is not possible to eliminate the cause of war without altering the structure of the state (Waltz 1959: 184). Is Kant's idea of a voluntary federation a good idea? According to Rousseau, this would be desirable, but only when it unites states in the same way as it unites individuals within a state. But that is not possible, because a federation does not have the power to enforce the rules. The states of Europe are in a condition of balance sufficiently fine to prevent the control of one over the other. From that perspective, a federation is a utopia (Waltz 1959: 185, 186). The application of this to international politics means that war occurs because there is nothing to prevent it. However, this does not explain why certain wars occur, because we know that war may occur at any moment. The reason that state A attacks state B cannot be explained by the structure of the state system. That depends on a number of special circumstances: location, size, power, interest, type of government, past history, and tradition. These reasons are the immediate causes of war and are a result of images one and two. States are motivated to attack each other or to defend themselves, by the reason and/or passion of the people involved. As said earlier, this does not mean that improving men or states eliminates war, because such reasoning does not take the international environment into account: Why can and should some states improve while others continue to follow their way?

The three images make clear that it is impossible to reduce the cause of war to just one cause. The increased propensity to peace of some participants in international politics may increase the likelihood of war: when the Western democracies became more inclined to peace, Hitler became more aggressive (Waltz 1959: 232, 233).

As said, *Man, the State, and War* is the foundation of *Theory of International Politics*, because although the first and the second images describe the forces that are at stake in world politics, it is impossible to assess their importance or predict their results without the third image (Waltz 1959: 238). Stated differently, the first and the second image are the immediate causes and the third image is the underlying cause.[5] For this reason, the main focus of *Theory of International Politics* is the third level.[6]

8.1.2 A Theory of International Politics: A Systemic Approach

Waltz clearly defines his view on theory at the domain-specific level, while Morgenthau uses a number of principles that permeate all his work. That does not take away the fact that Waltz's theory also contains empirical and philosophy of science elements that I include in my analysis.

Contrary to the first book which is mainly about war, *Theory of International Politics* is about international politics. In this book, Waltz wonders how it is that the nature of international politics seems to be constant. For him, the explanation of this continuity cannot only be found at the level of the state (Waltz 1979:

67, 68). Instead, he tries to develop a theory of international politics based on the international system.

Waltz starts his book from the basic point that international relations theories can be divided into two groups: those that see causes at the level of individual states and those that see them operating at the systemic level. He calls the former reductionist and the latter systemic. Reductionist theories explain the whole by analyzing the attributes and the interactions of the units. Waltz takes as an example John A. Hobson (1858–1940) and Vladimir Lenin (1870–1924) who took the domestic economic situation to explain imperialism in international politics (Waltz 1979: 18, 19). Many present-day reductionist theories fail to explain politics because they leave out the causes on the systemic level. Removing the causes on the level of the units removes the symptoms, but not the cause. The statement: 'he is a troublemaker' is not the same as 'he makes trouble'. The attributes of actors do not explain why they act in that way. On the system level, a set of factors determines the outcomes of the interactions between states (Waltz 1979: 60, 61). Waltz finds that none of the existing systems theories are real systems theory. In fact, they are all reductionist. Hans Morgenthau, Morton Kaplan, Richard Rosecrance, Stanley Hoffmann, and David Singer have failed to develop a real system theory (Waltz 1979: 45). They do not start from a clear understanding of what a system is, and they all end up with a system that is the result of the interacting units (Waltz 1979, 38–78).[7]

For Waltz, a systemic explanation of international relations is constituted by a system that comprises two elements: a structure and a set of interacting units. These two elements should not be confused (Waltz 1979: 39, 40). Both the unit and the structure are theoretical concepts; they do not exist in reality. It is the arrangement of the parts within the system and the principle of the arrangement that define the structure. Economists are concerned with the nature of the market and not with the personalities of managers. In the same way, the effects of the situation on the behavior of actors are explained by omitting the motives of the individuals, and the interactions among them, from the analysis. Following the sociologist Émile Durkheim, Waltz argues that any political structure is defined by three elements: the principles by which the parts are arranged, the characteristics of the units, and the distribution of capabilities across the units (Waltz 1979: 80–82). The political scientist Hans Mouritzen speaks about these elements as layers, whereby the lowest layer concerns the arranging principles of the parts, and the highest layer the distribution of capabilities among the system's units (Mouritzen 1997: 69).

The first characteristic is about the way in which units are ordered. The international system has two ordering principles: hierarchy and anarchy.[8] These principles differ because hierarchy means that the units stand in a legally and constitutionally organized relationship. Anarchy is a system where none of the formal power relations is at work; it is a system of self-help (Waltz 1979: 88–93).[9] Many people think of anarchy as a disorganizing principle, but it is a principle that tells how the major units of the realm relate to each other (Kreisler 2003: 3). The second characteristic refers to the functions of units. In

contrast to domestic politics, the international system does not involve units that perform different functions. The units are all states with the same functions. That does not mean that only states play a role, but they are the primary units. All states share the same attribute, namely sovereignty, being independent and autonomous with respect to other states (Waltz 1979: 93–97). Waltz uses Durkheim's distinction between mechanical and organic societies, and examples of, respectively, the international and the domestic sphere. Waltz describes mechanical societies as societies that 'have their own needs and interests, but they do not interact through their special characteristics in such a way as to become entangled in one another's affairs and dependent on one another's efforts' (Waltz 1986: 323). Organic societies are societies that promote the sharpening of individual talents and skills. Parts of them depend on others for services and supplies that they cannot provide for themselves (Waltz 1986: 324). The third element of structures is the distribution of capabilities among the units. The distribution of the capabilities changes, although all international systems are anarchical and all units are functionally interchangeable. This means that states stand in a relative position to each other. The focus is not on the ideologies or beliefs of the leaders, or the alliances and interactions, but on the relative power situation. A change in the distribution of capabilities results in a changing power configuration, and the international system determines the behavior of its units by virtue of its anarchical structure. The structure and units set the situation in which all the units exist. The change of the structure determines the interactions between the units (Waltz 1979: 107–110).

For Waltz, agents and agencies act, but systems as a whole do not. The actions of the agents are affected by the structure of the system. This seems to be circular reasoning, but Waltz explains how these effects are produced: through the socialization of the actors and through competition among them. By the process of socialization, Waltz means that two actors can create a condition that cannot be controlled either by decisions or by individual acts. The behavior of a pair cannot be apprehended by taking a unilateral view of each of them, because their interrelations have made them parts of a system. It is the same mechanism when individuals become a members of a group because the group puts them in possession of a collective mind, which makes them feel, think, and act in a manner quite different to what they would feel, and think when they are alone. The characteristics of group behavior result partly from the qualities of its members and in another part from the characteristics their interactions produce (Waltz 1979: 75, 76). However, that does not mean that people are doomed to live according to the structure of the system because virtuosity, skills, and determination can help to transcend the structural constraints of the system (Waltz 1986: 344).

The other way in which structures have an effect is through competition because it generates order. Competition spurs the actors to accommodate their ways to the socially most acceptable and successful practices. Waltz uses Adam Smith's theory to explain how competition works whereby firms are assumed

to be maximizing units. Some firms may not even try to maximize, others do. Competitive systems are regulated, so to speak, by the 'rationality' of the more successful competitors. Here, rationality means only that some do better than others (Waltz 1979: 76, 77).

According to Waltz, the existence of anarchy and the fact that units strive for survival lead to a balance of power politics (Waltz 1979: 121). Waltz's core message is that when a state does not see to its own survival, its existence will be in danger. He is, therefore, very skeptical about states that aim at higher goals, such as freedom and justice. When Waltz mentions the word freedom as a possible goal of the state, he immediately adds 'that if freedom is wanted, insecurity must be accepted' (Waltz 1979: 112). He also discusses the relationship between might and right. He then states that 'if might decides, then bloody struggles over right can more easily be avoided' (Waltz 1979: 112). Waltz suggests that it is irrational to fight for the right, while might decides. In sum, Waltz's theory teaches the important and prevailing role of power but does not give much guidance for the use of power, besides that it should serve the survival of the state.

In Waltz's view, international relations are the result of power relations, which can be multipolar or bipolar. Proponents of a multipolar system believe that five dominant powers are more stable than a bipolar system, which is a situation where two powers balance each other. Waltz argues that a bipolar system is more stable because they are focused on each other and know each other very well. Its balance is based on a zero-sum game; the gain of one is the loss of the other. This mutual control leads to tensions and crises but prevents the great powers from attempting to overrule the other (Waltz 1979: 172–176). At the time that Waltz wrote his book *Theory of International Politics*, the United States and the Soviet Union had not had any direct military confrontation, and, would not have any, until the end of the Cold War and many years after it. Waltz rejects the liberal assumption that more interdependence leads to more stability. For him, interdependence also 'raises the prospect of occasional conflict. The fiercest civil wars and the bloodiest international ones are fought within arenas populated by highly similar people whose affairs are closely knit' (Waltz 1979: 138). Waltz illustrates his argument with the interdependency of Germany and the other European countries before the First World War, which did not prevent the outbreak of the war.

Bipolarity is also more appropriate for dealing with international problems such as pollution, poverty, and the proliferation of nuclear weapons. Because of anarchy, solutions must be found at the state level. International organizations will not work because each state will try to dominate or control the organization at stake, which will be an invitation to prepare for a world civil war. A bipolar system works better, because 'the greater the relative size of a unit the more it identifies its own interest with the interest of the system' and 'the smaller the number of great powers, and the wider the disparities between the few most powerful states and the many others, the more likely the former are to act for the sake of the system' (Waltz 1979: 198).

8.1.3 Classical Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory: Continuity and Discontinuity

When Waltz was developing his theory in the 1960s and 1970s, the classical realists were pushed out of the theoretical mainstream by behavioralists, systems analysts, game theorists, neofunctionalists, and institutionalists. Through his theory, Waltz brought a lot of political–realist ideas back to the discussion. Hall, in an article titled *Kenneth Waltz: The Man Who Saved Realism*, even calls 'Waltz's greatest legacy to IR (…) his revival – indeed, his resurrection – of realism' (Hall 2013).

As said earlier, there are differences and similarities between Waltz and classical realism. The continuity is that Waltz distinguishes between the various levels. Morgenthau did this already when it comes to personal ethics of someone and the political ethics of the state leader, but it has older papers. Niebuhr makes a clear distinction between how people relate to each other on an individual level and on a group level. Niebuhr argues that in a relationship between two individuals, people can sacrifice their own interests for the interests of the other through *agape* love, which helps them to transcend their own egoistic motives by imagining themselves in someone else's situation. For Niebuhr, this becomes much harder among groups because collective egoism can barely be transcended. Within the nation-state, it is the government that can transcend the selfishness of groups and try to achieve justice, although it cannot enforce *agape* love. On the international level of nation-states, where an overarching supranational authority is lacking, it is already an accomplishment when states balance each other's struggle for power and prevent the dominance of one state over the other. For Niebuhr, the derived norm of the balance of power was a very important normative notion, which could only be overlooked by state leaders at their own peril (Niebuhr 1940: 26, 27, 78; 1941b: 85–94, 275, 276; 1960: 257–277).

Another similarity is that Waltz, like Morgenthau, attempts to maintain the autonomy of the political domain. He does this on the basis of substantive and theoretical considerations. Substantively, Waltz, like Morgenthau, assumes that the domestic domain has a different character than the international domain. In the international domain, the lack of supranational authority leads to anarchy: every state aims to strengthen its relative position of power. Like Morgenthau, Waltz has a tragic conception of international politics. States can strive for all kinds of things, such as freedom and justice, but if they ignore the desire to survive, they will be overruled by other countries. Therefore, Waltz sees the distribution of power between states as the most important explanation of their behavior. Where Morgenthau warns against the self-deification of states, Waltz warns against striving for a better world without regard for the selfishness and *hubris* of people as expressed in the behavior of states. The theoretical basis for the autonomy of the political results from the fact that Waltz restricts himself to international politics and thus does not develop a

theory for foreign policy. That means that many properties of state are not taken into account, because Waltz formulates a theory of the international system. By approaching international politics as a system with interacting units and a structure, neorealism establishes the autonomy of international politics. Critics often point out that logically many factors other than power, such as the governmental form or national ideology, should be considered. However, adding elements of practical importance and describing the rich variety and wondrous complexity of international life would go at the cost of developing a theory. For Waltz, theory is not a statement about everything that is important or of practical interest in international political life, but necessarily a rather slender explanatory construct. Waltz more radically than Morgenthau opts for a theory that meets scientific requirements such as explanatory power and simplicity. It is for theoretical reasons (e.g. parsimony) that Waltz decides to limit his theory of international politics to the international domain. For Waltz, the structure of the system is defined by the power distribution across nations, and this power distribution dominates considerations of ideology (Waltz 2008b: 73–76). The result is that religion, more than in the case of Morgenthau, is *de facto* absent in his theory.

The difference between classical realism and neorealism is that for realists, the world consists of interacting states. Neorealists hold that interacting states can only adequately be studied by distinguishing between structural and unit-level causes and effects. For realists, causes run in one direction from the interacting units to international outcomes, while neorealists also take into account the influence of the structure on the behavior of the units. Neorealism is more deductive and realism more inductive (Waltz 2008b: 76–78).

For many realists, the drive for power is located in human nature. Morgenthau was aware that the struggle for power can be explained without the evil born in human beings, as there is a competition for scarce goods where no one functions as arbiter. He nevertheless pulled more toward the drive for power as the root of conflict than to the chance conditions under which struggles for power occur. Based on that, Morgenthau considered the drive for power of nations as an objective law that has its roots in human nature. Waltz's neorealism, on the contrary, sees power not as an end in itself, but as something of which states can have too little or too much. Weakness may invite attacks from stronger states, while strength may prompt other states to an increase of arms. In crucial situations, the ultimate concern for states is not power but security (Waltz 2008b: 78, 79).

Finally, for realists, anarchy is a condition with which different states, with different governments, characters of rules, and types of ideology have to cope. For neorealists, the anarchical structure makes that states can be considered like units. Factors on the unit or structural level merely affect and do not determine the outcomes. It depends on the internal and external circumstances whether structures and states bear more or less causal weight (Waltz 2008b: 79, 80).

8.2 The Disappearance of Religion in Waltz's Neorealism

Religion plays *de facto* no role in Waltz's theory because he limits his theory to the international system. The result is that all places where religion plays a role – and Waltz is aware of this – are left out. The choice to limit his theory of international politics to the international system is based on and further supported by three considerations: his view on theory, the autonomy of the political, and his political theology. These three considerations reinforce each other. Waltz's view on theory helps him to justify his focus on the international, and his idea of the autonomy of the political strengthens his plea to focus on politics.[10] The autonomy of the political is in turn supported by his political theology. I think it is important to set out his considerations in more detail because it shows that Waltz does not leave religion out of his theory out of hostility toward religion or a kind or rigid secularism. On the contrary, it is partly for theological reasons that he is hesitant to involve religion.

8.2.1 Philosophy of Science: 'Clothes Make the Man': Waltz's View on Scientific Theories

There is a saying: 'clothes make the man'. I think that is the case with Waltz's neorealism because he wraps his ideas in a very scientific coat. According to Waltz, a theoretical notion may be a concept, such as force, or an assumption. However, a theoretical notion does not explain or predict anything; it finds its justification in the success of the theories that employ them. A theory, though related to the world is not the same as the world, because explanatory power is gained by abstracting from reality. Otherwise, it would remain only descriptive and it would not become explanatory. Waltz maintains that a theory or a model is never congruent with reality, because theories are mediators between reality and the observer (Waltz 1979: 5–7, see also 65, 115). He says: 'If we could directly apprehend the world that interests us, we would have no need for theory' (Waltz 1979: 5). Waltz states that his definition of a theory corresponds to the definition that is used in the natural sciences and in some of the social sciences, such as economics. It does not correspond with a philosophical interpretation, like much of traditional political theory. The reason for Waltz's preference for theories with explanatory power comes from the desire to control, or at least, to know if control is possible (Waltz 1979: 6).

Although Waltz prefers an explanatory approach modeled after the natural sciences, he does not disregard other more interpretative approaches. The latter are important because they point to a variety of ideas and concepts that may be needed to recognize different phenomena that are part of a greater, coherent whole (Waltz 1979: 9). While natural scientists look for simplicity, elemental units, and elegant theories, students of international politics complicate their studies and claim to identify more and more variables (Waltz 1979: 68). Although high regard for systematic theory is often coupled with disdain for more interpretative political philosophy, Waltz, on the contrary, finds history

and political philosophy very important (Waltz 1959: 52; Halliday and Rosenberg 2000: 373, 382, 386). An important contribution of political philosophy is that it helps to discover how the images entertained by different people lead them to select, filter, and interpret data in different ways (Waltz 1959: 60, 61). A theory, on the other hand, intends to identify why the range of expected outcomes falls within certain limits and why certain patterns of behavior recur. Such a theory has elegance when its explanations and predictions are general. A theory of international politics will explain why wars recur and will indicate some of the conditions that make war more or less likely, but it is not able to predict the outbreak of particular wars (Waltz 1979: 69). Such a realist theory is better at saying what will happen than saying when it will happen because international political theory deals with the pressure of structures on states, and not with how states will respond (Waltz 2008d: 213; Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 378). Although Waltz maintains that the emphasis of theory is not prediction but explanation, he also says that a theory indicates what actors will try to do and what will happen to them if they do not manage to do it (Kreisler 2003: 2; Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 377).

> A theory is an instrument used to explain 'the real world' and perhaps to make some predictions about it. In using the instrument, all sorts of information, along with a lot of good judgment, is needed. Theories don't predict, people do.
>
> (Waltz 2004: 3)

Waltz claims that his theory is modeled after the natural sciences and that it is not prescriptive. Waltz argues that you cannot go directly from theory to application (Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 385). As he writes in the final sentence of his book, his theory is not about how to manage the world, but about describing 'how the possibility that great power will constructively manage international affairs varies as systems change' (Waltz 1979: 210). Waltz claims that he does not describe the world one might want, but the world as it is likely to become, irrespective of what anybody may want (Waltz 1993: 189). By emphasizing the fact that his theory is not normative, Waltz was able – in the words of Campbell – to maintain 'realism as a more rigorous, descriptive, and potentially theoretical field of inquiry' (Craig 2003: 136).[11] In my own words, Waltz needs the above view on theory to stay within the confines of the sciences of his days and uses it to save as much as possible of political realist philosophy. But that is not the only reason, Waltz also has a very limited and modest view of science and what scientific theories are able to do. That is also a political realist assumption because political realists are skeptical of all too high expectations of the sciences to explain and solve societal problems.

When the view of Waltz on theory and science is overlooked, it leads to misunderstandings, such as Waltz being a materialist which therefore neglects religion. Wendt describes Waltz's theory often as a materialist theory, or in one place, as an implicit materialist theory. Wendt mentions the latter possibility

because Waltz does not defend materialism nor argues that ideas do not matter. He suggests that because of the evolutionary pressures in a self-help system, perceptions or ideas will tend to reflect the reality of who has the material power to hurt whom. This finally leads, according to Wendt, to an equation of the international structure with the distribution of the material capabilities (Fearon & Wendt 2002: 59). Wendt also says that his problem with Waltz's theory is its materialism because he thinks that ideas should have greater explanatory power (Wendt & Friedheim 1995: 692; Wendt 1999: 184).

Wendt's depiction of Waltz as a materialist is not accurate because Waltz is not a hidden or an implicit materialist, but an *a posteriori* materialist. He assumes *a posteriori* that material capabilities are more important than ideas because he concludes on empirical grounds that the behavior of states in anarchy can better be explained by their material capabilities than their mutual perception of each other. He argues that how you help yourself in a self-help situation depends on the resources you can dispose of and the situation you are in (Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 382).[12] This means that ideas and ideologies can play a role, especially on the unit level, but they are not strong enough to have explanatory power at the structural level. It is the wish for explanatory power that has been overlooked by Wendt because Waltz does not disregard non-material factors solely because they are non-material. He also does not equate the international structure with the distribution of material capabilities, but he *explains* the international structure by it. Wendt says that one debate is about what structure the international system is made of, and the other about what explanatory difference it makes (Wendt & Friedheim 1995: 692). In my view, the explanatory difference is the most important question for Waltz, and that leads him to consider matter as more important than ideas. Wendt's comment applies here: 'this question is ultimately an empirical one' (Wendt 1992a: 423).

Despite the difference with Wendt, I agree with religionists that the outcome is practically the same: religion disappears. However, since a scientific theory is very limited and does not prescribe what a state leader should do, it is still possible that a state leader takes religion seriously in his policymaking.

8.2.2 Political Philosophy: Absolutizing the Autonomy of the Political

Waltz supports the idea of the autonomy of the political. The fact that Waltz takes international politics as a domain in its own right is not just a prerequisite to make his theory possible, but also an important assumption since he distinguishes politics as a separate realm. The idea of international politics as an autonomous domain is a strong realist assumption, which is already present in Morgenthau. Waltz takes it as an important prerequisite to think of international politics as a domain and a subject matter that could be studied in its own right (Kreisler 2003: 2). Like in Morgenthau's sphere approach, Waltz's view on theory strengthens this political–philosophical assumption. The consequence is that he absolutizes the autonomy of the political in contrast to Niebuhr and Morgenthau who still saw room for interaction with other spheres.

For Waltz, a theory marks out a domain to which it applies and shows how it can be conceived of as an autonomous realm (Waltz 1996: 54). Waltz takes this idea from economics where the physiocrats asked the question: 'What it is that we can have theory about?' and they drew a picture of economics because one has to have a notion of a domain for that activity (Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 385; Schouten 2011: 9). In order to maintain the autonomy of the political, Waltz criticizes liberals that want the politics out of politics and plead for a laissez-faire state that would confine its activities to catching criminals and enforcing contracts (Waltz 2008c: 199).

The political–philosophical idea of the autonomy of the political, certainly in its absolutized form, leads to the disappearance of religion. This is not to say that it is out of disregard of religion itself, because as set out in the chapter on Morgenthau (Chapter 6) already and will do in the next section, the idea of the autonomy of the political is inspired by political–theological assumptions.

8.2.3 Political Theology: From Niebuhr to Spinoza: The Augustinian Roots of Waltz's Neorealism

As with Morgenthau, Waltz did not write much about the influence of theology on his theory. My view is, however, that Waltz's theory cannot fully and adequately be understood if this relationship is left out. For that reason, I will demonstrate how Waltz has been influenced by Augustinian ideas through Niebuhr, but also that Waltz prefers Spinoza and secularizes his theory as a result. This secularization is necessary to make realism acceptable as a scientific theory. This secularization can best be understood as if theology continues by other means (Terpstra 2011: 11). In other words, Waltz leaves the theology behind and uses other means to make his point. He does not need the 'metaphysical stuff' that Augustine and Niebuhr needed to come to a similar point (Rice 2008: 266 fn. 40). Because Waltz is more radical than Morgenthau was, the question of whether he can do so without any consequences will be discussed at the end of the chapter.

8.2.3.1 The Political Theology of Neorealism: Augustine and Niebuhr

In the introduction of *Man, the State, and War*, Waltz writes on the question of the cause of evil and the theological answer to this question.

> Why does God, if he is all-knowing and all-powerful, permit the existence of evil? So asks the simple Huron in Voltaire's tale, and thereby confounds the learned men of the church. The theodicy problem in its secular version – man's explanation to himself of the existence of evil – is as intriguing and as perplexing. Disease and pestilence, bigotry and rape, theft and murder, pillage and war, appear as constants in world history. Why is this so? Can one explain war and malevolence in the same way? (…) Our miseries are ineluctably the product of our natures. The root of

> all evil is man, and thus he himself is the root of the specific evil, war. This estimate of cause, widespread and firmly held by many as article of faith, has been immensely influential. It is the conviction of St. Augustine and Luther, of Malthus and Jonathan Swift, of Dean Inge and Reinhold Niebuhr. In secular terms, with men defined as beings of intermixed reason and passion in whom passion repeatedly triumphs, the belief has informed the philosophy, including the political philosophy, of Spinoza.[13]
>
> (Waltz 1959: 3)

In Chapter 2, he refers to Reinhold Niebuhr and what the Christian tradition says about the root of evil.

> They [utopians, SP] have assumed that progress moves in a straight line, ever upward, whereas in fact each advance in knowledge, each innovation in technique, contains within itself the potentiality of evil as well as of good. Man widens his control over nature, but the very instruments that promise security from cold and hunger, a lessening of labor and an increase of leisure, enable some men to enslave or destroy others. (…) Man is a finite being with infinite aspirations, a pigmy who thinks himself a giant. Out of his self-interest, he develops economic and political theories and attempts to pass them off as universal systems: he is born and reared in insecurity and seeks to make himself absolute secure; he is a man but thinks himself a god. The seat of evil is the self, and the quality of evil can be defined in terms of pride. This view is, of course, much older than Niebuhr. Within the Christian tradition, it is stated in classic terms by St. Augustine. Outside that tradition, it is elaborated in the philosophy of Spinoza.
>
> (Waltz 1959: 21)

Later, Waltz writes about the explanation of Augustine and the shift taking place in the philosophy of Spinoza.

> Each man does seek his own interest, but, unfortunately, not according to the dictates of reason. This St. Augustine had explained by original sin, the act that accounts for the fact that human reason and will are both defective. In Spinoza's philosophy this religious explanation becomes a proposition in logic and psychology. (…) That men are defective then becomes an empirical datum requiring no explanation from outside; indeed there can be no more explanation from outside, for God has become nature.
>
> (Waltz 1959: 23, 24)

Later on, Waltz quotes Niebuhr again.

> Niebuhr explicitly distinguished primary from secondary causes. 'All purely political or economic solutions of the problem of justice and peace deal with the specific and secondary causes of conflict and injustice,' he

> declares. 'All purely religious solutions deal with the ultimate and primary causes.' Although proponents of one kind of solution often exclude the other, both kinds are necessary. Niebuhr makes clear, for example, in his criticism of Augustine, that a realistic understanding of Christian tenets requires that men concern themselves with degrees of merit in social and political institutions. None can be perfect, but the imperfections of democracy are infinitely preferable to the imperfections of totalitarianism.
>
> (Waltz 1959: 32, 33)

If one looks at these quotes, one will see that both Augustine and Niebuhr's theological ideas played a role in Waltz's thinking.[14] This does not mean that he also agrees with these ideas. In an interview in 2007, Waltz responded to the interviewer:

> You talk about the first image? Those are reflections of course about other people's ideas. But, yeah, it makes a certain – I don't believe in any – in other words, we have become atheists. But by then at graduate school, I was an atheist. I was certainly influenced by a really rigorous Lutheran upbringing. (…) Even though the religious content in the long run did not take on. It was still a useful regiment to go through.
>
> (Beyer 2015: 33)

It is not fully clear what he exactly means here, but we cannot take for granted that Waltz also subscribes to these ideas personally or as an academic. It shows that he is somehow reluctant to use these theological ideas as a basis for this theorizing, but it also demonstrates that there has been influence of this (Lutheran) tradition. The latter confirms my claim that these ideas have shaped his thinking and that he has secularized them. For now, I would like to show to what extent Waltz's theory is indebted to these ideas.

For example, the quotes above contain ideas about human nature, ethics, and history of a clear Augustinian nature. When Waltz writes 'Our miseries are ineluctably the product of our natures. The root of all evil is man, and thus he himself is the root of the specific evil, war', he summarizes the political realist view on human nature. In another quote, Waltz resists a utopian approach from a Christian vision of history, in which the eventual destination of history will not be decided by men, but by God Himself. 'They [utopians, SP] have assumed that progress moves in a straight line, ever upward'. Instead, Waltz states that 'in fact each advance in knowledge, each innovation in technique, contains within itself the potentiality of evil as well as of good'. He contributes this to the fact that a human being is a finite being with infinite desires, with a tendency to regard itself as a god. This results in a middle-range ethics, because 'a realistic understanding of Christian tenets requires that men concern themselves with degrees of merit in social and political institutions. None can be perfect, but the imperfections of democracy are infinitely preferable to the imperfections of totalitarianism' (Waltz 1959: 33). Waltz also states in *Man,*

the State, and War that perfect earthly justice is impossible, and that it is about the approximation of a little more justice or freedom and seeking to avoid politics that lead to a little less of it (Waltz 1959: 33).

These quotes clearly show the Augustinian nature of Waltz's writings here. It is my claim that these ideas, similarly to Morgenthau's, led to a political theology in which the role of the state is central, and survival by power is seen as the central principle, resulting in the balance of power as an instrument to prevent worse.[15] Waltz argues for these political realist ideas in his other writings but without any reference to Niebuhr and Augustine. That is because he secularized these assumptions and cut off this normative element. How he secularized it will be discussed in the next section.

8.2.3.2 Conservation through Secularization: From Niebuhr to Spinoza

The debt to Augustine and Niebuhr, or to theology in broader terms, has become invisible because Waltz does not want to base his theory on a theological explanation. In his writings, Waltz discusses Niebuhr, but also Spinoza.[16] Waltz says that in the first chapter of *Man, the State, and War*: 'There was a lot of Spinoza in the original, which doesn't appeal much to students of international relations' (Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 372). At the same time, Waltz states that Niebuhr (and Morgenthau) had a 'tremendous influence' on him and that he 'developed a special fondness for Niebuhr' (Waltz 2008a).

> Reinhold Niebuhr, a theologian who in the last twenty-five years has written as many words of wisdom on problems of international politics as have any of the academic specialists in that subject, has criticized utopians, Liberal and Marxist alike, with frequency and telling effect.
>
> (Waltz 1959: 20)

Immediately after these positive words about Niebuhr, Waltz uses four pages to set out how the religious explanation of Niebuhr and others differs from Spinoza's secular explanation (Waltz 1959: 23–26). It seems, therefore, that Waltz wants to show how the secular explanation of Spinoza is able to replace a theological or a religious one.[17] That Waltz prefers Spinoza over Niebuhr appears from the fact that he later refers to Spinoza as representative of the first image (Waltz 1959: 161, 162; Hawley 2020: 7, 8). Consequently, I assume that Waltz follows Spinoza in his thinking that 'God has become nature' (*Deus sive Natura*). This also has implications for the explanation of evil. In earlier (Christian) theological thought (see Augustine), evil was explained by the concept of original sin. In Spinoza's philosophy, this religious explanation becomes a proposition in logic and psychology:

> That men are defective then becomes an empirical datum requiring no explanation from outside; indeed there can be no explanation from outside, for God has become nature.
>
> (Waltz 1959: 23, 24)

The fact that Waltz follows Spinoza in his conclusion that God has become nature, does not mean that Waltz draws the conclusion that God does not exist or that religion is something superfluous. He just takes the Spinozist assumption as a given for his explanation of human behavior. When Waltz states that Niebuhr had a tremendous influence on him this means that he has taken his ideas. This does not imply that he also subscribes to Niebuhr's theological perspective.[18] Waltz, for example, admits that his preference for balanced power instead of concentrated power is partly based on Niebuhr (Waltz 1986: 341). The latter derived his ideas about power from his view on egoism, pride, or, in theological terms, the original sin of human beings. As a theorist, though, Waltz does not use 'original sin' in order to explain his position. Therefore, Waltz's position could be described as methodological agnosticism or methodological naturalism: he aims at a scientific explanation that leaves out religious or theological concepts. This is not a neutral position. Both methodological agnosticism and naturalism contain a view on science that does not follow from science itself: is a pre-scientific assumption.[19]

Guilhot argues that Waltz secularized his theory because IR theory became part of the social sciences and was influenced by the behavioral revolution. Through Waltz, the anthropological and theological assumptions of realism became an immanent feature of the world system. Waltz secularizes realist thought but in such a way that he preserves its core hypotheses (Guilhot 2010: 247, 248). Guilhot writes that Waltz's *Man, the State, and War* signaled the end of the theological moment, because the link between political order and the destiny of man was severed, and the theological underpinnings of international relations theory were cut off from the new science of international relations. Waltz removed the need for an explicit theodicy by decoupling the question of war from the metaphysical question about evil and human nature. Guilhot calls this secularization, which he considers a rather complex, non-linear mechanism of transfer, translation, and anamorphosis of religious patterns (Guilhot 2010: 224, 225. Cf. Brown 2009: 265, 266; Paipais 2019: 364–388). I call this the continuation of theology by other means. This sounds more positive than Guilhot's indication of 'anamorphosis', and this might depend on the perspective from which I evaluate it. I will illustrate this with an example of this secularization.

One of the main contributions of political realism is that it creates room for the idea that human beings have a destructive side. This view is a remedy against all too utopian thinking. Waltz preserves the pessimistic view of human nature of realism by limiting his theory to the third level. The defining characteristic of this level is its anarchy. As a result, states have to rely on their own power in order to survive (Schouten 2011: 6). As Kamminga argues, the third level in Waltz's theory is a non-religious argument for the original sin of the theologians Augustine and Reinhold Niebuhr. Similarly, his assumption about states striving for security and survival is a transformation of Niebuhr's idea of the collective pride of nations (Kamminga 2012).[20] As a result of Waltz's theory, this political realist idea has become very influential in IR theory. Did Waltz provide a full description of the behavior of states? No, he did not, but he did provide a theoretical explanation of them. Did Waltz do justice to the

completeness of Augustine and Niebuhr's theological view on politics and the behavior of states? No, he did not, but he at least provided a scientific theory. Might Waltz have lost something important in his secularization move? I will come back to this later in this chapter.

8.2.3.3 Waltz's Indebtedness to Theology

The fact that Waltz replaces a religious explanation with a secular one, does not take away that he is indebted to theology. This indebtedness cannot be a surprise for those who know Waltz's view on theories. In *Theory of International Politics*, Waltz says that theories are made creatively by means of intuition and ideas. If I interpret this statement in light of what philosopher Karl Popper (1902–1994) writes, and to whom Waltz often refers, it means that these intuitions and ideas can also be religious:

> The fact that value judgments influence my proposals does not mean that I am making the mistake of which I have accused the positivists – that of trying to kill metaphysics by calling it names. I do not even go so far as to assert that metaphysics has no value for empirical science. For it cannot be denied that along with metaphysical ideas which have obstructed the advance of science there have been others – such as speculative atomism – which have aided it. And looking at the matter from the psychological angle, I am inclined to think that scientific discovery is impossible without faith in ideas which are of a purely speculative kind, and sometimes even quite hazy; a faith which is completely unwarranted from the point of view of science, and which, to that extent, is 'metaphysical'.
>
> (Popper 1972: 38)

For Popper scientific discovery is possible through faith in ideas which might be speculative or unwarranted from the point of view of science and to that extent metaphysical. In Waltz's case, there are such 'speculative' ideas which have inspired his theory. Kamminga states that

> Whereas Waltz insists that theory is to be built 'creatively' from a 'brilliant intuition' or 'creative idea', and so is 'artifice', the doctrine of original sin entails the foundational 'creative' assumption for his neorealism to work. 'Original sin' cannot claim conclusive proof – although Niebuhr suggested strong empirical evidence for this 'obvious fact' – but it should be no problem for Waltz to 'see' a sin-constituted human nature without being able to prove its existence. Presuming its presence gives him the ultimate explanation of international-political action.
>
> (Kamminga 2012)

Another assumption that shows the relationship between Waltz's theorizing and theological presuppositions is the orderer he assumes. In chapter 5 of

Theory of International Politics, Waltz introduces philosopher and economist Adam Smith (1723–1790) to explain how there can be order without an orderer because Smith's theory describes how order is spontaneously formed from the self-interested acts and interactions of individual units. According to Waltz, states within the international system function in the same way: no state intends to participate in the formation of a structure, but ultimately states are constrained by the structure that results from their individual striving for security. The co-action of the units creates a structure that transcends the egoism of the individual states. Waltz does not mention Smith's use of the notion 'the invisible hand'. According to economist Bob Goudzwaard, the 'invisible hand' can best be seen as the deistic version of God's Providence, because in the book *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Smith states:

> by acting according to the dictates of our moral faculties, we necessarily pursue the most effectual means of promoting the happiness of mankind, and may therefore be said in some sense to co-operate with the Deity and to advance, as far as in our power, the Plan of the Providence.
> (Goudzwaard 1997: 22; Smith 1759: Part III, chapter 5)

The notion of the 'invisible hand' refers to a metaphysical presupposition (Manenschijn 1979: 285). Waltz has cut this presupposition from his theory and that is legitimate, but it means that his theory presupposes elements which are not mentioned. That means that his theory of international politics is, strictly speaking, not religiously neutral because there seems to be a metaphysical or religious assumption present that is not articulated (see also Bain 2020: 159–184).

My point is that the example of the orderer and the influence of theological ideas through Niebuhr show that Waltz's theory is indebted to religious or theological ideas. I point this out, because Waltz does not account very explicitly for this influence though he also does not hide it (Waltz 1986: 341). The fact that Waltz aims at a scientific explanation of international politics, does not mean that his theory is cut off from theological assumptions. By shining light on these theological influences, it becomes clearer what Waltz is aiming at: he wants to save the core principles of political realism. These principles are, however, built on theological or religious assumptions and that is not acceptable within the sciences of his day. For that reason, Waltz has to secularize them in order to conserve them.

It is important to draw attention to the influence of theology on Waltz's thinking because it forms the foundation for the realist political theology of Waltz's neorealism. This political theology contains views on human nature, history, and ethics. The common thread of this political theology is a reluctance toward involving religion, as set out in the chapter on Morgenthau (Chapter 6). To understand this, it might be helpful to think about a phrase of Niebuhr that Ruurd Veldhuis refers to: 'it is the first duty of a Christian in politics to have no specific Christian Politics' (Veldhuis 1975: 115). The reason for this is not only because it can easily lead to moralism, and the idea that

certain policies are expressions of God's divine will, but also because it runs against Christian Augustinian theology itself, which has always emphasized that redemption does not come from politics. Political realism has emphasized that the political or the state should be a restrainer (*katechon*) that prevents religions and ideologies from furthering their earthly goals through state power. This means that realism takes religion and theology seriously and therefore treats it cautiously in relation to political power.

8.3 Waltz's Neorealism Evaluated

After the preceding description of Waltz's thinking, I would like to evaluate Waltz's neorealism on various issues thereby involving the perspective of the Amsterdam School of Philosophy.

Waltz claims that his theory of international politics is limited to the system level, the third level. He argues that his theory does not include political philosophy. He even introduced different terms to make that possible: political philosophy became political theory and his neorealist theory was a theory similar to theories in the natural sciences and economics. I did not focus on his third-level theory only, but I have laid out his indebtedness to classical realism, his ideas about the first and second image, and his inspiration from theology. Waltz wants to leave all of that behind to construct a theory about the structure of the system which explains international politics. His theory is not a prescriptive one. He also claims that it is not a normative theory.

Even though his attempt to have a non-prescriptive theory is praiseworthy, I think he failed in keeping up with it. In Waltz's view, a theory isolates a domain of reality so as to make it more intelligible, while policymaking has to deal with complex interwoven phenomena that require contextual analysis. In this way, Waltz clearly defines the function and scope of a theory in relation to a policymaking analysis. This prevents easy conclusions about the applicability of scientific theories. In my view, it is worthwhile to distinguish between a scientific theory and the application of that theory in policymaking; however, the two cannot be separated too strictly since people will always draw conclusions from general scientific explanations. According to Jervis, Waltz himself came into trouble with his own theory, regarding the Vietnam War. Waltz's theory did neither explain nor prescribe an intervention in Vietnam. According to Jervis, Waltz incorporated this aberrant behavior in the form of an argument that states tend to overreact to conflicts in the peripheries of a bipolar world (Jervis 1994: 859, 860). On another occasion, Waltz was not completely consistent, says Campbell, because in the discussion on nuclear weapons, Waltz seems to weigh policy more than theoretical consistency. Placing before himself a choice between philosophical consistency and a program for great-power peace, in 1981, Waltz decisively opted for the latter (Craig 2003: 164). This quote put forward by Campbell reveals that Waltz, at this point, was no longer the disinterested observer and theorist, but felt involved (Craig 2003: 167; see also, Waltz & Fearon 2012: 5).

> …all the parties in a serious crisis have an overriding incentive to ask themselves one question: How can we get out of this mess without nuclear weapons exploding?
>
> (Waltz 1990: 740)

Waltz aims at an empirical theory and not a normative theory. He warns his readers not to extrapolate from his observations of how things *are* to what they *ought* to be. His theory only explains what will happen if the role of power is not taken seriously, so he claims (Waltz 2008a; see also Jackson & Sorensen 2007: 79). This does not mean that Waltz denies that there is normative influence. He acknowledges his indebtedness to classical realist thought but he separates his theory from this and gives his theory a more scientific basis. However, he cannot do without these normative presuppositions and he selectively invokes them to defend his theory. For example, he argues on the one hand that, theoretically speaking, the object of study must be isolated, and on the other, that, from a realist point of view, the political should be treated as a distinct domain with its own logic. The drawback of this is that when people refute the empirical evidence that supports his view that international politics is about survival, Waltz can turn to the philosophy of science and argue that you must leave some issues out for theoretical purposes. Mouritzen even states that, as a result of this, Waltz's theory is extremely difficult to test, because almost everything in the world seems to be left out from his theory. However, by invoking selective parts of his philosophy of science, it is extremely easy for Waltz to defend the theory (Mouritzen 1997: 77). So, even though Waltz's theory is not a normative theory, it is a theory which cannot do without normative elements.

Waltz's contribution to IR is that he challenges scholars to choose between various factors, and he limits the domain in which theorizing is possible. A theory becomes stronger when it is clear what the object of explanation is and what characterizes it in comparison to other domains. Waltz definitely contributed to this. As every positive also has a negative, the consequence of this is that Waltz leaves out many factors and therefore explains a lot about little. It is impressive how rational and well-structured Waltz's approach to international politics is, but at the same time, he leaves many issues out; his strict limitation leading to explanatory power weakens the richness of his explanation. I side here with Jean Bethke Elshtain, who was a student of Waltz, that 'all levels must be in play if one is to craft a compelling explanatory framework' (Elshtain 2009: 289).[21] Notice that she uses the word 'compelling'. That is exactly what is lacking in Waltz's neorealism: it is a strong theory, but not compelling as an explanatory framework.[22]

Waltz strictly limits his theory to the political domain. He does not indicate how other factors such as economics, culture, law, and religion are related to the power structure of international politics. What does this mean? Does he consider religion to be totally irrelevant or is its influence still strong and comparable with economics? If we want to understand the role of religion in

relation to international politics, it would be helpful if a theory could identify how the political relates to other important domains.

I have the impression that Waltz leaves the international political domain too much, in the words of Thompson, 'to Caesar alone' (Thompson 1964: 7). Or is that what Waltz aims at? Maintaining the autonomy of the political? Is that still what we should be aiming at a few decades later, with the so-called global resurgence of religion that has taken place since the 1960s? These questions are so important and penetrating that I conclude that there is a challenge for the religionist to incorporate religion based on a clear view of the function and scope of theory. At the same time, however, Waltz's neorealism insufficiently accounts for the way it deals with religion, partly because it is not very clear about its hidden theological assumptions and how this translates into the theory of international politics. When Waltz would be clearer about this, he would do a great favor not only to the political realist tradition but also to the debate on religion and IR, possibly solving the supposed 'irony' that Christian religion or theology might be a reason not to incorporate religion.

Was Waltz's secularization of the theological underpinnings of classical realism worth it? Murray is quite negative about this development because neorealism 'abandons the core of realism, the concern to reconcile the ideal and real in international politics', and 'it cuts theory off from any concern with the normative' (Murray 1997: 8, 9, 201). Epp also uses terms with a negative connotation such as the triumph of 'a narrow, scientific conception', and 'marginalizing the Augustinian tradition' (Epp 1990: iii). I am more positive about Waltz's contribution to political realism than Epp and Murray, given the scientific context he was in. It is beyond all doubt that Waltz has made an enormous impact on IR theory and has been successful in keeping political realist issues on the agenda. One could think of issues such as the limited possibilities of a scientific theory, the perennial problem of anarchy, the survival motive of states, the inevitability of power, the important role of the state, the importance of singling out a certain domain to theorize about, and the role of prescientific intuitions in theorizing. It is quite a success and an accomplishment that Waltz has been able to keep these undeniable political realist assumptions on the agenda of IR theory, and he definitely challenges the religionists to face these issues when criticizing Waltz for his neglect of religion.

At the same time, however, when reading Waltz as the secularized variant of Niebuhr, it also becomes clear that there is something lost. For example, I demonstrated above how Waltz's distinction between the behavior of individuals and groups closely resembles Niebuhr's ideas about the (im)possibility of *agape* love between individual human beings and groups. Waltz's argument is, however, of a different nature: he uses concepts from economic theory instead of theological ones. When he argues that virtuosity, skills, and determination can help to transcend the structural constraints of the systems, he uses other words than Niebuhr who would also use terms such as love and redemption to overcome the sinfulness of the system. This raises the question of whether the explicit use of theological terms and notions makes Niebuhr's realism more

hopeful. Or, in other words, is Waltz's neorealism more pessimistic because he cuts off theology? In Waltz's theory, it is a good thing when states try to balance each other and prevent mutual dominance (Mearsheimer 2009: 253, 254). Niebuhr would accept the strive for a balance of power, but he would always criticize it from the point of *agape* love. There is no doubt, that Waltz would be in favor of positive change or greater harmony between states, but he wants to be realistic; therefore the power element in politics should not be overlooked. He repeatedly emphasizes that change and progress in international politics are only possible when the power element is taken into consideration. Dangerous and ineffective politics are often the result of idealist thinking that overlooks the necessity of power.[23] But why is Waltz so concerned about the (im)possibility of change and progress? That is because he is normatively involved and it would be interesting if he would have reflected more on that because then, these assumptions could have been part of closer scrutiny.

Especially since religion has come to the forefront, it might not be necessary to shy away from the theological assumptions that inform political theory. I am not saying that Waltz does so, because he admits certain preferences, and invokes Popper to justify the influence of intuitive, creative ideas and theorizing. However, Waltz seems to find it necessary to leave out or translate the theological part, while I think it is helpful to show the IR discipline, that the discipline itself has religious or even theological roots. According to the Amsterdam School, it helps to put this into the open and to avoid the idea that there is a neutral scientific theory of international relations because many theories on international relations are indebted to certain worldview assumptions.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that Waltz's neorealism is the combination of classical realist thought and neorealist theory. I have argued that Waltz's neorealism should be interpreted as an attempt to conserve as much of the political realism philosophy as possible within the dominant scholarly discourse of IR in his days.

I gave an introduction to Waltz's *Man, the State, and War* and his book *Theory of International Politics*. Waltz decides to focus his theorizing on the system. The result is that religion disappears from his theory. Although he shows to be aware of the role of religion on the individual and national level, he has to leave it out because of his aim to have a theory with explanatory power. Besides that, Waltz wants to maintain the autonomy of the political. However, he absolutizes this to such an extent that his theory only deals with the security and survival of states. Waltz is aware that state leaders take into account many different considerations; however, these belong to the national level. At the international level, these considerations are overruled by the will to survive and are considered too insignificant by Waltz to incorporate into a theory with as much explanatory power as possible.

As is the case for Morgenthau, we can find Augustinian moments in Waltz's theorizing, although less explicitly, because he theorizes within smaller margins than Morgenthau does. These Augustinian moments surface in his political–philosophical and eventually in his theoretical foundations, such as the importance of the state, the autonomy of politics, and the inevitability of power. Waltz thus basically shares Morgenthau's political theology with regard to mankind, history, and ethics. As a result, Waltz resists the pursuit of perfect earthly peace. As with Morgenthau, this leads to a moderate ethic in which striving for a little more justice and freedom is preferable to politics which leads to a little less of each. The only difference is that Waltz further secularizes this political theology. Instead of going back to Niebuhr, he prefers the psychological explanation of human behavior by Spinoza. In this way, he cuts off the connection to theology and provides his theory with a more scientific (that is, less theological) basis. However, I see this as secularization where theology is continued by other means. Waltz's theory is ultimately faithful to the political theology of political realism and to the other assumptions of political realism, such as his modest conception of the capability of science and his belief that science is not value-free. This all leads to the ironic situation that Waltz, because of the influence of a religious thinker like Niebuhr, is cautious about involving religion.

Notes

1 Parts of this chapter have also been published in Polinder (2019).
2 Waltz himself says that 'strictly speaking, *Man, the State, and War* did not present a theory of international politics. It did, however, lay the foundation for one' (Waltz 1979: ix).
3 Sandal and James approvingly cite Keohane that neorealism preserves the core assumptions of the theory (Sandal and James 2011: 12).
4 For this overview, I also used an excerpt of Viotti and Kauppi (Viotti & Kauppi 1998: 130–144).
5 This is a phrase of the interviewer which Waltz confirms (Kreisler 2003: 3).
6 For this overview, I also used a summary presented by Hollis and Smith (Hollis & Smith 1991b: 105–110).
7 There has been some debate on whether Waltz is a holist or a methodological individualist. In other words, does Waltz use a top-down or a structural approach to social inquiry, one that seeks to explain individual actors by a larger whole? Or, does Waltz use a bottom-up approach, and does he take individual actors or social units as the determiners of the structure of the system? IR theorist Wendt characterizes Waltz as a methodological individualist (Wendt 1991: 384, 388, 389; see also Wendt 1987: 339, 341, 342; Wendt 1992b: 183). Wendt argues that in Waltz's theory, the characteristics of the structure are built out of the ontologically primitive attributes of states because the distribution of capabilities is a function of state attributes. Also, the fact that the system is competitive and dominated by power politics is the result of states that are egoistic about their security. This makes the state ontologically prior to the structure of the system and thus methodologically individualistic (Wendt 1991: 388, 389). I agree with Smith and Hollis who, on the contrary, argue that Waltz can be read in two different ways, but they are convinced that their holist interpretation of Waltz is more accurate (Waltz 1979, 90; Hollis & Smith 1991a:

400). I will not repeat their argument here fully, but lift out their main point that structure plays an independent role in Waltz's theory. A specific quote which they take from Waltz shows this clearly:

> From the coactions of the like units emerges a structure that affects and constrains all of them. Once formed, a market becomes a force in itself, and a force that the constitutive units acting singly or in small number cannot control.
>
> (Hollis & Smith 1991a: 401)

Wendt argues that structure in Waltz's theory should be seen as given external constraints on the actions of states, rather than as conditions of possibility for state action (Wendt 1987 342). In my view, Waltz's theory describes how the structure conditions the behavior of the units, and shapes the behavior and the outcomes (Schouten 2011: 7).

8 'The term "anarchy" comes to us from the Greek, meaning, literally, absence of government or rule (*arche*). In popular discourse, "anarchy" often suggests chaos or violent disorder. But the absence of hierarchical order need not lead to a Hobbesian war of all against all' (Donnelly 2000: 81).

9 According to Waltz, a 'self-help system is one in which those who do not help themselves, or who do so less effectively than other, will fail to prosper, will lay themselves open to dangers, will suffer' (Waltz 1979: 118).

10 Mouritzen argues that the move from *Man, the State, and War* to *Theory of International Politics* with its exclusive focus on the third level is more the result of a scientific orientation than a substantial move (Mouritzen 1997: 69, 71, 72).

11 Descriptive should here be understood as contrary to normative.

12 It is strange that Wendt overlooks this argument, because he writes, and agrees with Waltz, that a structural approach is likely to yield a higher explanatory return. So, he knows that explanatory power is a key argument for Waltz (Wendt 1999: 184).

13 It is interesting to see how Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man. A Christian Interpretation* starts in the same way (Niebuhr 1941a).

14 In an interview with Harry Keisler, Waltz says that he had very interesting kitchen conversations about the interpretation of Augustine which he enjoyed immensely when he was at Oberlin College with Eward Lewis who was an expert in medieval thought (Kreisler 2003: 1).

15 Guilhot states that the idea of the *katechon* gave a theological coating to the question of the balance of power after 1945 because each historical epoch has a *katechon* (Guilhot 2010: 235).

16 I follow Waltz in his description of Spinoza's thinking as secular, and I consider Waltz's description of Spinoza's idea that God has become nature as a secularizing move.

17 Kamminga points out that Niebuhr criticized Spinoza because he expresses the modern culture's confidence in both nature and reason and fails to understand that human egotism has the power to defy both nature and reason (Kamminga 2012).

18 Kamminga argues that Waltz's neorealism strongly relies on certain theological notions of Niebuhr's Christian realism (Kamminga 2012).

19 For more on this, see Polinder (2021: 106).

20 Kamminga argues in this article convincingly that Waltz's attempt to bypass Niebuhr's theological account does not suffice. This underscores my argument that Waltz has other reasons to leave theology behind namely to meet the criteria for theorizing according to the social science standards.

21 Elsthain was introduced to Augustine's political realism through her teacher Kenneth Waltz and the writings of Niebuhr (Gregory 2018: 179).

22 It is interesting to note that Elshtain draws this conclusion with respect to how gender could be integrated into IR theory because the discussion of gender and IR

has many similarities with the religion and IR discussion. She also admits that it is quite obvious that women and gender play a role in global affairs, like religion, and therefore the question is similar to religion: 'Is gender a definitive or causal factor in international relations beyond those empirical considerations above, considerations that may increase problems and tensions within nation-states and in relations between them?' (Elshtain 2009: 290).

23 This explains why the neorealist John Mearsheimer argues strongly against critical theory, which Wendt, to a certain extent, defends (Mearsheimer 1994/1995: 14, 15, 37–47; Wendt 1995: 71–81).

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9 An Assessment of the Religionists' Claim
Waltz's Neorealism

Introduction

In this chapter, I will answer the question of to what extent the religionist position appears to be correct in confrontation with Waltz's neorealism and what consequences this has for their claim that IR should incorporate religion. This chapter, therefore, has the same structure as the chapter on Morgenthau (Chapter 7) and the religionist's claim. I will assess the validity of the empirical, the domain-specific, and the philosophy of science thesis.

Such an assessment would not make sense if the religionists would understand religion differently than Waltz. Because of the fact that Waltz writes about religion as being Christianity, his understanding of religion agrees with the definition of the religionists. Not unimportant is the fact that Waltz distinguishes religion from ideology and ethnicity in the same way as Morgenthau and the religionists.

The overall argument of this chapter is that the religionists are correct on a few points, but that in many other cases, the situation is more nuanced or not applicable. This is the result of the sometimes-general statements the religionists make regarding IR or realism in particular.

9.1 Empirical Thesis: Waltz's Reflections on Christianity and Religion

Waltz has scarcely written about religion, let alone about the role of religion in international relations. At places where I would expect references to religion because of the religious context, he does not pay attention to it at all (cf. Waltz 1981: 55, 56). In the book *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons*, he discusses Iran, Egypt, Israel, and Palestine without mentioning or referring to religion. He presupposes that these states act rationally and that they make their decisions based on cost–benefit analyses (Sagan & Waltz 1995: 12, 13, 16). He only writes about religion in his book *Man, the State, and War* and in some other places. I have copied the relevant passages to make clear how and against what background Waltz writes about religion. These passages are quoted in full length,

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not only because there are not many, but an integral reading of the passages is helpful to understand Waltz's thinking on religion.

Waltz writes the following about religion in the lives of individuals when he discusses the influence of religious and material forces.

> Often with those who expect an improvement in human behavior to bring peace to the world, the influence of social-political institutions is buried under the conviction that individual behavior is determined more by religious-spiritual inspiration than by material circumstance.
>
> (Waltz 1959a: 40)

In a debate on nuclear weapons and Iran in which Waltz participated, the moderator puts forward that the Cold War was a conflict between reasonably stable, secular regimes oriented toward their material interests. Iran, however, is not governed by material interests and physical survival, but by religious zealots. Waltz doubts this view on the Cold War because the Soviet Union and China were not seen as stable and predictable at that time. Retrospectively, it is striking how responsibly they acted when a nuclear war became possible, which confirms his idea that everyone who had these weapons behaved as anyone else would do. Waltz, therefore, states the following with respect to religiously inspired people.

> I don't think that many religiously-oriented people act in ways that will result in the massacre of thousands of people. I think people are people. I don't think heavenly rewards motivate very many people. So I don't worry about those who have nuclear weapons.
>
> (Sagan, Waltz & Richard 2007: 142, 143)

In chapter 6 of *Man, the State, and War*, which deals with the international level though one also could say that this is about the domestic level, Waltz writes about the influence of religion on society.

> To allow in my calculation for the irrational acts of others can lead to no determinate solutions, but to attempt to act on a rational calculation without making such allowance may lead to my own undoing. The latter argument is reflected in Rousseau's comments on the proposition that a 'people of true Christians would form the most perfect society imaginable.' In the first place he points out that such a society 'would not be a society of men.' Moreover, he says: 'For the state to be peaceable and for harmony to be maintained, *all* the citizens *without exception* would have to be [equally] good Christians; if by ill hap there should be a single self-seeker or hypocrite… he would certainly get the better of his pious compatriots'.
>
> (Waltz 1959a: 169)

In the conclusion, he comes back to this issue.

> It is likewise true, reverting to the first two images, that without the imperfections of the separate states there would not be wars, just as it is true that a society of perfectly rational beings, or of perfect Christians, would never know violent conflict. These statements are, unfortunately, as trivial as they are true
>
> (Waltz 1959a: 228, 229)

In the book on conflict in world politics, Waltz refers to the differences between religious and ethnic divisions on the one hand and political and ideological differences on the other.

> Conflict with South Vietnam and between the two Germanies and the two Koreas turns on political and ideological differences, in contrast to the strong religious and ethnic divisions of the Middle East.
>
> (Waltz 1971: 464)

In an article referring to the terrorist attacks of September 11, Waltz again writes about the continuity of international politics.

> Why, one may wonder, does the prospect of terror not change the basic facts of international politics? All states – whether authoritarian or democratic, traditional or modern, religious or secular – fear being their targets. Governments prize stability, and most of all prize the continuation of their regimes.
>
> (Waltz 2008a: 250)

Waltz's writings show that he is not blind to the role of religion in social and political affairs, but he limits his description to the individual, national, and, depending on the interpretation of the third quote above, the international levels. He does not refer to religion on the transnational level.

Waltz does not refer to what the religionists call the global resurgence of religion. Contrary to Morgenthau, who passed away much earlier than Waltz, he does not mention it at all. That makes it more interesting to find out what role religion plays in Waltz's neorealism. That is what the next section on the domain-specific level is about.

9.2 Domain-Specific Level: Waltz on Westphalia and Its Assumptions

Waltz did not write about Westphalia explicitly. It is, however, possible to see to what extent he ascribes to the so-called Westphalian assumptions, as the religionists put forward. In this section on the domain-specific thesis, I will describe in what way Waltz has been influenced by the standard interpretation

of the Westphalian distinction between religion and politics. After that, I will deal with Waltz's view on the state, his assumption that states aim at survival, and the possible influence of the Cold War context on his theorizing.

9.2.1 Westphalia and the Emergence of the Political

The religionists claim that according to neorealism Westphalia marks the moment that Europe separated church and state, religion became marginalized or privatized, and a prosperous new era began. This is quite a statement and difficult to verify because Waltz did not write about it explicitly.

Another idea of the religionists seems more relevant here, namely that the Westphalian assumptions about the primacy, centrality, and the reason of the state are typically developed in the West and have shaped the common understanding of religion and politics, either in the form of Judeo-Christian secularism, or laicism, as Hurd calls it. This means that the political sphere was emancipated from the religious sphere. Politics was no longer defined by religion but became autonomous and was treated as something with its own logic. The fact that Waltz takes international politics as a domain in its own right is not just a prerequisite to make his theory possible, but also a substantial, secular, Western idea, because he distinguishes between religion and politics as two different spheres. Waltz's idea of international politics as an autonomous domain is a strong realist assumption, which is already present in Morgenthau. Realism has incorporated this idea, and Waltz takes it as an important prerequisite to think of international politics as a domain and a subject matter that could be studied in its own right (Kreisler 2003: 2). The assumption that religion and politics can analytically be distinguished and separately theorized, makes it possible for Waltz to leave religion out and limit his theory to the political.

That the Western assumption regarding the political and religious sphere shapes how Waltz sees the rest of the world, appears from his statement that he believes his theory of international politics applies to the whole world. He admits that he decided to leave Africa out, though he states that the notion of anarchy also applies to Africa (Schouten 2001: 13). So, there is a Westphalian influence on Waltz's theorizing. The question is, however, whether this can be ascribed to Westphalia exclusively, since according to Waltz international politics has not changed fundamentally for millennia (Waltz 1979: 66).

9.2.2 Waltz on the Central Role of the State and the Ideology of Interdependence and Globalization

In Waltz's theory, the state is indeed considered the main actor in international politics (Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 379). The adjective 'main' is important here, because Waltz knows that other actors play a role, but for theoretical purposes, he must decide which are the most important. According to Waltz, in order to count as a state, there has to be a certain level of

self-consciousness as to being a political entity and a certain level of competence to be able to fight each other (Schouten 2001: 14). Waltz holds that all states are characterized by the same attribute, namely sovereignty, and by being independent and autonomous with respect to other states (Waltz 1979: 93–97). During an interview, when Waltz is confronted with the question of how transnational terrorist groups should be treated in international politics with respect to nuclear weapons, his answer reveals his state-centric approach. He emphasizes that states should do everything possible to prevent nuclear weapons from getting into the hands of terrorist groups. He also admits, however, that terrorist groups are very difficult to address, because deterrence, a typical state-centric approach, would not work. Another case which reveals his state-centric approach is his argument that if terrorist groups had received nuclear weapons from Saddam Hussein, he would have been punished for it (Kreisler 2003: 6).

In the chapter on Morgenthau (Chapter 6), I have argued that Morgenthau's preference for the state is related to his political theology that the state makes politics possible, and as such, is a bulwark against secularization. I have also pointed out that there is much continuity between neorealism and classical realism, and that Waltz wants to preserve realist thought. It is possible that Waltz's defense of the enduring relevance of the state has been inspired by the aforementioned idea that there should be room for politics and the state which could function as a *katechon*. I make this point because there is a striking similarity between the way in which Waltz warns against the reduction of the political sphere to economics or military issues and what Morgenthau would call the 'subversion of the political by other modes of thought'. It may be that Waltz's critique on interdependence and globalization is inspired by the same conviction, namely that it neglects the state and the political.

The argument that the world of the twentieth and twenty-first century is an interdependent or, as it has been called later, a globalized world which undermines the state as the main actor does not convince Waltz. He argues that the fact that states that adapt easily to technological innovation and economic changes have a considerable advantage in the world economy, shows that international politics remains international. Given that global or world politics has not yet taken over national politics, the twenty-first century will be a century of the nation-state (Waltz 2008b: 236). Besides that, he argues that the interdependence between nations now should be compared with interdependence earlier on in history. The comparison leads Waltz to the conclusion that, in most ways, the level of interdependence of 1910 has not been exceeded. Even financial markets, of which one can say that they truly have become global, were at the turn of the previous century as integrated as they are now (Waltz 2008b: 233). Waltz also points to the fact that states perform essential political, socio-economic functions, and no other organizations appear as competitors to them. States foster institutions that make internal peace and prosperity possible. The state has proven to be the best organization for keeping peace and fostering the conditions of economic well-being, as examples of fading states

show. Economic markets and economic interests cannot perform the functions of government (Waltz 2008b: 238). Waltz refutes the argument that the world is increasingly ruled by markets because he observes that the main difference between international politics now and earlier is their growing inequality in the distribution of capabilities and not their increased interdependence. These inequalities do not enhance economic forces but the political role of countries, because politics prevails over the economy as usual (Waltz 2008b: 243).

This brings us to another important criticism that Waltz puts forward, namely that interdependence appears to most of the world as Americanization Kreisler 2003: 4). In fact, globalization is not global but mainly limited to Northern countries (Waltz 2008b: 323). Waltz describes interdependence as an ideology used by the Americans to camouflage the great leverage the United States has in international politics, suggesting that rich and poor, and strong and weak states are similarly dependent on each other. Interdependence suggests a situation of equal dependence of parties on each other, while much of international as well as national politics are about inequalities. The use of the term interdependence emphasizes the low fungibility of power and blunts the effects of inequality (Waltz 2008c: 205). The term interdependence has been used in American discourse as a leveling ideology to obscure inequalities of national capabilities (Waltz 1974: 13). For Waltz, high inequality means low interdependence, meaning that some states are highly independent and other states are highly dependent on those states that have greater economic and military power (Schouten 2001: 13). Even during the Cold War, there was no interdependence: the United States and the Soviet Union scarcely traded with one another. Interdependence was only a factor with military issues, but that is because, in a situation of self-help, the risk of damage is what counts (Kreisler 2003: 4). Waltz rejects the liberal assumption that more interdependence leads to more stability. As I set out in the previous chapter, for him, interdependence also raises the prospect of occasional conflict.

Waltz's argument that interdependence is used to hide the real power inequalities also applies to the existence of international institutions, because international institutions are created by the more powerful states and survive in their original form as long as they serve the major interests of their creators (Waltz 2008c: 213). Weaker states, on the contrary, have greater difficulties to fashion institutes that serve their own ends, especially with respect to security issues (Waltz 2008c: 209). The NATO is a good example of an international institution that is created and maintained by stronger states to serve their interests (Waltz 2008c: 208).

It is noteworthy that Waltz not only takes interdependence as a confusing vogue word but that he does the same with transnationalism (Waltz 1974: 17). Waltz's criticism of the use of the term interdependence runs parallel with his criticism of transnationalism. This is important because the increasing relevance of religious actors is often ascribed to the rise of transnational phenomena. The fact that Waltz only includes states in his theory leads to the exclusion of many religious political leaders and transnational, non-state actors.

9.2.3 'Nothing Beyond the Survival Motive Is Theoretically Relevant': Waltz on State's Interests

Waltz is very outspoken about the fact that states strive for survival through power or security. The religionists consider this an important assumption because it leads to the neglect of spiritual forces, religious ideals, motivation, and action in neorealism. The religionists are correct on this point, though it would be too strong to state that Waltz discards morality and that he does the same to religion. It is true that in the theory of Waltz, the religious identity of a state would not make a difference, because states in general strive for survival through security. This is the consequence of Waltz's theoretical limitation. Waltz concludes in his book *Man, the State, and War* that, without the third image, it is impossible to assess the importance, or predict the results, of forces on the individual or domestic level (Waltz 1959a: 238). From a theoretical perspective, it is the international system that best explains the outcome of international politics. The international level is distinct from the individual and state levels, because of anarchy, which creates a situation of self-help, whereby power is the most important means for the survival or security of the state. From this theoretical perspective, it is not relevant what the ideologies or beliefs of the leaders are, because it is all about the relative power situation.

> Beyond the survival motive, the aims of states may be endlessly varied; they may range from the ambition to conquer the world to the desire merely to be left alone. Survival is the prerequisite to achieving any goals that states may have, other that the goal of promoting the own disappearance as political entities.
>
> (Waltz 1979: 91, 92)[1]

For Waltz, the reason of state is survival through security, or in other words, when a state acts according to its national interest, it wants to assure its own security (Waltz 1974: 26). That does not mean that Waltz is not aware of the fact that states can be religiously or normatively motivated because in various places he pays attention to the conflict between survival and other goals. Since the bottom line of his theory is that the security of the state overrules normative concerns, it is irrational to fight for right while might decides. In other words, it would be irrational to follow religious ideals like freedom, justice, and equality while overlooking the security issue. To Waltz, the one thing governments share – millenarian, Islamic, or whatever they may be like – is that they almost surely want to stay in power. That explains why deterrence works, independent of the kind of country, government, or ruler (Kreisler 2003: 6).

This view of Waltz explains why the religionists justifiably say that he treats the state as a black box. The term 'treat' is important here because he knows and sees that the foreign policies of states are shaped by internal affairs but he decides to treat states as black boxes and focuses on the structure of the system. The latter is necessary to have a theory with explanatory power. Contrary

to a classical realist, he does not consider the beliefs and actions of religious individuals and communities relevant, because he limits his theorizing to the structural level.

9.2.4 Did the Cold War Context Lead to a Secular Neorealism?

Waltz distinguishes religion from ideology and ethnicity. It is, therefore, more accurate to argue that topics like ideology and religion disappear in his theory entirely because one of Waltz's theoretical assumptions is that all states act in the same way. From the theoretical perspective of the third level, states act according to the same logic, namely the national interest defined as survival through power. That is why Waltz is able to say, '[T]he difference between the United States and the Soviet Union has been less in their behaviors than in their ideologies. Each sought to make other countries over in its own image' (Waltz 2008c: 169). One could say that religion and ideology are treated the same way in Waltz's theory, but that is not because he defines them similarly. For Waltz, there is a good historical and theoretical basis for the statement that in international politics there is not a direct correspondence between the attributes (these include beliefs and ideologies) of the actors and the outcomes that their interactions produce (Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 379). The only argument that could be made is that the dominance of ideology during the Cold War, together with the realist emphasis on the ideological distortions of religion, influenced Waltz's idea that religion hinders a rational assessment of world politics. This is hard to prove though.

9.2.5 It Is Not Holism, but the Limited Scope of Waltz's Theory

I agree that Waltz neglects religion but not necessarily because of holism. It is because of his view on theory and his decision to focus on the system level. I will set out this argument again because his reasoning really challenges the religionists.

In the first place, it is important to realize that Waltz acknowledges that an ideal theory provides an explanation which includes the unit and structural level as well as political and economic matters (Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 379, 380).[2] However, nobody has figured out how to do so. Waltz agrees that a theory of foreign policy should take the unit level very seriously, but he wants to present a theory of international politics. Besides that, the task of theory, which is not the same as an analysis, is mainly to omit certain items and make bold simplifications. If theories do not select and omit, they are not theories; it is the same thing in the natural sciences (Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 379, 380; Waltz 1996: 56). Waltz nevertheless admits that there remains a theoretical challenge. He says the following about it:

> Our problem, recall, is that a neorealist theory of international politics explains how external forces shape states' behavior, but says nothing about the effects of internal forces. Under most circumstances, a theory of

> international politics is not sufficient, and cannot be made sufficient, for the making of unambiguous foreign-policy predictions. An international-political theory can explain states' behavior only when external pressures dominate the internal disposition of states, which seldom happens. When they do not, a theory of international politics needs help.
>
> (Waltz 1996: 57)

Waltz would prefer to have a theory including both levels. His quote also shows that his theory of international politics has a very limited scope and explains little. He suggests two ways to deal with this problem. The most satisfying way would be a single theory that explains the behavior of states, their interactions, and international outcomes. But so far, no one has constructed such a theory. The other possibility would be that someone fashions a theory including the external and internal politics. As long as such a theory does not exist, students of politics like in economics, have to deal with separate theories of internal and external politics (Waltz 1996: 57).

A clear example of how Waltz limits his explanation to the level of international politics is the way he deals with the question of whether the terrorist attacks of September 11 produced a strategic revolution or left the underlying conditions of international politics largely intact. His answer is that it contributed to the continuity of international politics. According to Waltz, the terrorist attacks did not change the three large developments that took place since the end of the Cold War. In the first place, the gross imbalance of power in the world. Instead, the effect of September 11 is that American power is enhanced and its military presence in the world extended. Second, the existence of nuclear weapons and its gradual spread to other countries. This does, however, not change the brute fact of international politics, because nuclear weapons govern the military relations of nations that have them. Moreover, the politics of America enhances the spread of nuclear weapons, because states feel threatened by the United States and know they can only deter them with nuclear weapons. Third, the prevalence of crises that plague the world and with which the United States is often involved. Terrorism does not change this basic fact of international politics. The politics of the United States rather adds crises to this list, because of threatening to attack states that harbor terrorists. In sum, terrorism is a response to changes in the political structure during the last decades. In the past, weak states and disaffected people could hope to play off one superpower against the other, but since the decline and disappearance of the Soviet Union these weak states are on their own and they lash out at the United States, as the agent and symbol of their suffering. So, the change in the structure of international politics explains the existence of terrorism and not the other way around. This leads to the ironic conclusion that terrorists contribute to the continuity of international politics (Waltz 2008a: 246–250). Waltz does not claim to provide a full explanation of terrorism in general, but a full explanation of terrorism within the limited scope of the structure of the international system.

In the second place, the structure in Waltz's theory should not be seen as an agent, because it only has a mediating function. His theory of international politics observes the effect of the environment on the acting units and how this environment affects the outcomes we are concerned with. It explains what happens on the level of structure and not on the level of units. This structure conditions the behavior of the units, it shapes the behavior and it shapes the outcomes (Schouten 2001: 7). Culture, personality traits, the character of political processes 'and all such matters are left aside'. Their omission does not imply their unimportance. They are omitted, because Waltz wants to find out the effects of structure on the process and vice versa (Waltz 1979: 82). The structure is a primitive selector that encourages certain behaviors and discourages others via the unit-based mechanisms of socialization and mutual competition (Mouritzen 1997: 73). It is important to notice here that Waltz focuses on the structure of the international system in order to account for the fact that the intentions of an act and its result are seldom identical, because of the person or object acted upon, and the conditioning influence of the environment. From the perspective of a realist political philosophy, politics is pre-eminently the realm of unintended and unexpected outcomes (Waltz 1974: 13). The structure is the mechanism that intervenes between individual actions and outcomes and produces unintended results (Mouritzen 1997: 73).

9.3 Evaluation of the Domain-Specific Thesis

Waltz does not write about the Westphalian system as the historical moment that marked the beginning of the privatization of religion, but he clearly distinguishes the international political realm as an autonomous domain, which reveals the influence of the Western (or should we say Augustinian?) distinction between religion and politics. The religionists are correct that Waltz takes the state as the central actor in international politics leaving religion out to make theorizing possible. However, it might be possible that – as in the case of Morgenthau – political–theological ideas about the state and its function as 'restrainer' (*katechon*) play a role here too. Waltz also gives an empirical argument that interdependence, globalization, and transnationalism are terms with an ideological function because the state remains the central actor in international politics.

The religionists have a point that the assumption that states aim at survival leaves religion out. This is, however, not because of an atheistic agenda or a secular mindset. Waltz strongly believes that a theory should leave things out that do not provide a simple, powerful explanation, and his conclusion is that the survival motive provides a stronger empirical and theoretical basis than morality or religion. Because Waltz shows that he is aware that religion is something different from ideology in the way he writes about it, there is no reason to believe that the Cold War context, with two competing, secular ideologies, has led him to neglect religion. Finally, although Waltz is a holist, this does not specifically explain his neglect of religion. It is his view that a theory of international politics has a very limited scope but has to give a full explanation.

9.4 Philosophy of Science: Not Everything of Waltz's Neorealism Is What It Seems

Waltz has also written about the philosophical foundations of his political theory. That is why it is not difficult to examine his works on philosophy of science issues. However, also in this case, it is not always possible to detect Waltz's exact view on the Enlightenment and the relationship between faith and reason, or modernization theory. For this reason, this 'assessment' is sometimes limited to statements like 'there is no indication to believe that…'. In other cases, it is quite clear that Waltz does not meet the picture that the religionists have drawn of him. Since there are also issues that are not in favor of the religionists *per se* but are not totally beside the truth either, the common thread is that the religionists definitely have a point, but they can learn a lot about the deeper reasons for the omission of religion in Waltz's theory of international politics.

9.4.1 Social and Cultural Embeddedness: Enlightenment Thinking and Modernization Theory

Because Waltz did not write about the Scientific Revolution and the French Enlightenment, it is only possible to assess their influence on his theory by looking at the way he sees reason and rationality, in relation to faith. Does he separate the two, does he subordinate the one to the other, and does he identify modern reason with mathematics and the scientific method?

Waltz wants to avoid a theological explanation of human behavior. I draw this conclusion from the way in which Waltz deals with the theologian Niebuhr and the 'secular' thinker Spinoza. His preference for the secular explanation of Spinoza reveals the influence of Enlightenment thinking because faith and science become separated and Waltz ascribes much value to rationality, empirical evidence, and the scientific method. Waltz, however, does not go that far that he only considers the results of empirical research 'real' knowledge and that he sees theological knowledge as subjective and irrational. Waltz maneuvers within the parameters of the scientific discourse in his day, but there are no indications that he subscribes to the radical enlightened assumptions – religion being violent, intolerant, subjective, and dangerous – such as the religionists blame him for.

The consequence of Waltz's separation between science and faith for theorizing on religion in the life of human beings, which has to be explained in secular vocabulary and according to the empirical method, is that religion as a factor is easily overlooked. The fact that religion is considered something unprovable and 'irrational' within a scientific theory, makes it plausible that, in competition with other factors, religion will not play a role in the final theory. There are no indications – as the religionists state – to think that Waltz considers religion as something dangerous, which should be privatized as the result of Enlightenment thinking. The same applies to the religionist idea that in

neorealism, religion is reduced to morality or a set of rules. Waltz's theory is clearly based on scientific knowledge and not on religious knowledge, although he acknowledges his indebtedness to it.

9.4.2 Ontology: Waltz as a Materialist?

The reason for the absence of religion, ideology, and ideas in Waltz's theory is not that Waltz has a materialist view of the world, at least not in an ontological sense. He is not a materialist in the sense that he would argue that nothing but matter exists. Waltz says the following about it:

> [E]ven when Stephen Hawking's fondest wish comes true and physicists come up with a theory of everything, that theory would not explain everything. It will explain most what goes on in daily life, but it will only provide, what physicist call, a full explanation of certain phenomena.
>
> (Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 383, 384)

Or differently said: 'theory is a picture of the world that one is concerned with – but it's not the whole world' (Schouten 2001: 4). It could be argued that Waltz ends up being a materialist in the sense that religion plays no role in his explanation of international politics, but the reason is not his *a priori* materialist assumption that material factors like power and military are more important. Waltz openly disagrees with the general assumption held by many people that realism means it is always military power that counts. Based on structural theory, he argues that, in the context of self-help, how you help yourself depends on the resources you can dispose of and the situation you are in (Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 382). If it were true that Waltz is a materialist in an ontological sense, he should not have taken seriously how certain ideological ideas influence and shape American foreign policy.

> A country's perceptions of international politics are not determined entirely by what the world is like. Its perceptions are also affected by the circumstances of its birth and development, by its experiences at home and abroad, by its public philosophy and national ideology. We have to understand how America sees the world in order to understand how it has acted, and is likely to act, in it.
>
> (Waltz 1974: 8, 9)

As this quote illustrates, Waltz is not a materialist *per se*: he sees the relevance and impact of immaterial factors. As a result of his emphasis on empirical evidence – his wish to select the most relevant factors – Waltz draws the conclusion that religion, ideas, and ideology play no determining role in international politics. He does not exclude these factors because of disdain, but simply because it is difficult to include them in an empirically based theory which needs to have strong explanatory power.

9.4.3 Epistemology: Positivism and Its Consequences for Theorizing Religion in IR

The religionists refer too easily to positivism as one of the reasons to explain the lack of religion in Waltz's theory. The reason for that is that Waltz only shares one characteristic of positivism, This is the idea that there is a unity of science and a single logic of explanation; the idea that reality is governed by general laws which can be discovered in the same way as in the natural sciences. Waltz does not subscribe to the positivist idea that facts can be separated from values as if the researcher is neutral. In various places, he criticizes positivism, as if facts would speak for themselves. He quotes Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) that 'The highest wisdom is to realize that every fact is already a theory' and states that theories are made creatively by means of intuition and ideas (Waltz 2008d: ix). The reason why students of politics should study the philosopher Imre Lakatos (1922–1974) is because his 'assaults crush the positivist ideas about how to evaluate theories that are accepted by most political scientists. He demolishes the notion that one can test theories by pitting them against facts' (Waltz 2008d: xi, xii). Waltz is quite clear about the idea that data does not interpret itself and that the social scientist is unavoidably subjective. The same difficulty plagues the natural scientist, because empirical verification in the social or in the natural sciences cannot produce certainty, given that tests are only conclusive with reference to the assumptions postulated. Waltz therefore quotes the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead (1861–1947) that 'induction presupposes metaphysics' (Waltz 1959b: 55, 57). This critique of Waltz on positivism does not take away his aim to develop an empirical theory. In his view, a theory could never be completely neutral, because there are always normative influences. That does not mean that a theory has to be normative. Developing an empirical theory remains his goal. The consequence is that he calls political philosophy political theory, but his theory is just a theory. That is also what distinguished Waltz from Morgenthau: he radicalizes the distinction between the normative and empirical.

Although Waltz cannot be considered a full-blown positivist, he nevertheless shows some of its characteristics. The question of when someone should be considered a positivist depends, of course, on the definition of positivism. That could explain why Waltz denies being a positivist, while others argue he is (Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 379, 386; Mouritzen 1997: 67). An important positivist idea that influences Waltz's theory, is his choice to theorize about international politics in analogy with the natural sciences. He builds this idea on the positivist assumption that there is a unity of science and a single logic of explanation, meaning that there is one reality out there and that the social and the natural world can be known in the same way. This is revealed from his realist ontology and his instrumentalist and pragmatic epistemology (Koningsveld 1980: 14, 15; Waltz 1979: 9). Mouritzen qualifies Waltz's ontological position as metaphysical realism, as labeled by Popper, because of the statement that a reality exists independently from our language and theories

about it (Mouritzen 1997: 70). Although Waltz acknowledges that the subject matters of social and natural sciences are profoundly different, this does not obliterate the possibility and the necessity to isolate a certain domain, to simplify the material, to concentrate on central tendencies, singling out the most important forces (Waltz 1979: 68). That presupposes that the social as well as the natural world can be dealt with in a similar way, meaning that this reality is essentially the same reality.

Waltz's epistemology is instrumentalist and pragmatic because reality can be explained through theories, which he defines as statements that explain collections or sets of laws pertaining to a particular behavior or phenomenon. These laws establish relations between variables. If the relation between variables A and B is invariant, the law is absolute. If the relation is constant, the relation has a high probability. A law is not simply built on relations, but also on repetition. The difference between laws and theories is that the first is about truth and the latter about explanatory power because theories explain laws. As set out in the previous chapter, Waltz aims at explanatory power because we need a theory to explain and possibly control the world.

As I set out in the previous chapter, Waltz does not disregard interpretative approaches. On the contrary, he values them, because they help to uncover the reasoning behind the behavior of people. Theory, in his view, indicates what you are likely to try to do and what will happen if you do not. This is a very modest understanding of theory. Waltz's natural science approach to international politics, because of his desire to control and wish for theoretical explanatory power, leads to the exclusion of various factors. However, as Waltz argues, that matters are omitted does not mean they are neglected (Waltz 2004: 3).

Waltz's strict definition of theory makes it possible to exclude everything which he considers as empirically incorrect and wrong, from a political philosophy point of view. The result is, as the religionists rightly point out, that there is a gap between theory and reality, and when diplomats apply this neorealism to international affairs, they leave religion out. Waltz would probably say, 'that is not my fault, because I have always made clear that my theory is not a theory for foreign policy and it does not prescribe what to do'.

A consequence of Waltz's empirical theory, modeled after the natural sciences, is that it is explanatory and not prescriptive. As I stated in the previous chapter, his theory is not about how to manage the world, but about describing 'how the possibility that great power will constructively manage international affairs varies as systems change' (Waltz 1979: 210). Waltz claims to describe and not prescribe, and that one cannot go directly from theory to application (Halliday & Rosenberg 2000: 385). With this standpoint, Waltz rejects the realist theoretical style but retains many significant markers of that tradition.

The book *Man, the State, and War* was built on a reading of classical European political philosophy but treated as a way to empirical, rather than normative, insights. Already in this period, Waltz was moving away from Morgenthau's style, which conflated the *is* and the *ought*. This made Waltz's

realism more acceptable to the mainstream social sciences with its emphasis on deduction and rationality and in that way placed realism on firmer ground in the academy (Snyder 2011: 65). I agree with Murray that neorealism in comparison with realism cuts off its concern with the moral, because it rules out the possibility of any standard externalities to the realities of international politics. But while Murray concludes that neorealism abandons the core of realism, my view is that Waltz radicalizes the autonomy of politics. Waltz also radicalizes the distinction between the empirical and the normative without accepting that they can be separated completely. This is in line with the attempts of earlier realists and acceptable to the scientific standards of his day (Murray 1997: 8, 9).

9.4.3.1 Context-Independent Rationality

Contrary to what the religionists state. Waltz denies a form of rationality independent from the context. In the first place, Waltz does not have a clear definition of rationality. He even said: 'I don't like the word rationality. I'll admit it' (Mearsheimer 2009: 241). His understanding of rationality as something dependent appears from the stag-hunt example, where he writes that the behavior of the rabbit snatcher was rational from his point of view, but from the perspective of the group, it was arbitrary and capricious (Waltz 1959a: 183). In analogy with Adam Smith's theory, Waltz also believes that rationality in international systems means that some states do better than others and that competition spurs the actors to accommodate their ways to the most acceptable and successful practices (Waltz 1979: 76, 77). In another place, Waltz argues that rationality can only be defined within narrow settings, for example, in game theory, where one can define under what conditions an actor is considered rational. One has to go back and forth between theory and what goes on in the real world; rationality separate from empirical reality does not exist (Schouten 2001: 8). According to international relations scholar Snyder, Waltz retains some of the realists' traditional ambivalence regarding rationality, namely that states and statesmen are not always rational in their strategic decisions and calculations. However, they are always constrained by the structure of the system, weeding out those who failed to get it right the first time through natural selection and socialization (Snyder 2011: 65). Besides this, it can simultaneously be true that people are not fully rational but that it is still feasible to derive valid propositions from the assumption that they are. According to Waltz, it would be rational if statesmen took the impact of the structure into account, but many do not. This makes his understanding of rationality context-dependent.

9.4.3.2 The Secularizing Impact of Positivism and Behavioralism

It is true that if one reads Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and then Waltz, the original theological contribution fades away, or theology is continued by other means. The question is whether it has disappeared because of positivism and

behavioralism. I have already argued that this is definitely not the case with Morgenthau. With respect to Waltz, I have set out that he is not a full-blown positivist, meaning that this cannot fully account for the disappearance of religion. When we read what Waltz writes about behavioralism, it becomes clear that he criticizes it for assuming that the behavioral sciences provide the opportunity to transform and control society by gathering more data, sharpening its tools as in the natural sciences. He calls the identification of knowledge with control a rationalist fallacy. Waltz therefore cites some people who pointed out the limitations of the social sciences on methodological and metaphysical grounds. Waltz suggests that behavioral scientists would become more modest and sensible in their contribution to peace if they would take account of the international political structure (Waltz 1959a: 58–60, 72, 73, 79). It is interesting that Waltz looks like a behavioralist with his choice of the natural science approach because he is also driven by the desire to control. The difference is, as I have pointed out with respect to materialism and positivism, that Waltz uses elements of the natural sciences approach without sharing all of its assumptions.[3] Waltz also argues that, contrary to his focus on the structural level, it is typically behavioral to locate the cause in acting or behaving units (Schouten 2001: 7). Waltz criticizes, in particular, the behavioralist idea that theories are the result of induction. With this standpoint, Waltz retains the realists' traditional disdain for a theoretical inductive strategy of inference, as practiced by some statistically minded behavioralist scholars (Schouten 2001: 4; Snyder 2011: 65; Waever 2011: 118). While inductivists build a theory of facts, Waltz argues that many of the great natural scientists built upon highly abstract and truly breathtaking generalizations. Theory, therefore, requires more abstraction and less history (Smith 1999: 94). So, behavioralism and positivism do not sufficiently explain the secularization of IR and the disappearance of ethics and theology. There are other reasons.

As I argued earlier on, Waltz wants to save as much as possible of the realist political philosophy, by adjusting himself to the dominant scientific discourse. I have also argued that Waltz's political realism is indebted to certain theological notions. He has, however, decided to translate this into secular concepts and vocabulary. The religionists are correct that this can be considered a secularizing move, but they portray this more negatively than I tend to do. They also define secularization differently. While they see secularization as the disappearance of religion's influence, I conclude that theology is continued by other means. The religionists also presume that when theology plays a role in the formation of the discipline of IR, religion will more easily be included as a factor of importance. This overlooks the possibility that theological ideas itself could be a reason to be careful with including religion. As I explained with respect to Morgenthau and Waltz, one of the goals of realism was to have a de-theologized form of politics, which does not want to accomplish eschatological goals and avoids the conflation of moral abstraction with political ends.

Both Morgenthau and Waltz preserve the distinction between the religious and the political, but at the same time want to avoid a strict separation, as if

politics can do without a metaphysical basis. Waltz does not make this argument explicitly, but his point that science and theories can only provide 'full explanations of less' reveals a political realist view on the limitations of science. Waltz's Popperian view on theory formation which leaves room for and acknowledges the influence of pre-scientific intuitions and creative ideas on theorizing is also in line with political realist thinking. The same goes for his appreciation of political philosophy, the interpretative sciences, and his critique on behavioralism.

9.4.4 Methodology: Theorizing Is Not the Same as Reducing

Religionists hold that neorealism subscribes to a secularism which promotes a dualistic understanding of religion. As a result, neorealist theory maintains that religion, though it is considered historically significant, is a private, irrational, and individual matter and not relevant for the analysis of contemporary international politics (Wilson 2012: 69). Based on the few writings of Waltz on religion, it is almost impossible to see this as a reason to explain the neglect of religion. Even when Waltz writes on religion, he does not reduce it to politics, economics, military action, fundamentalism, or a radical, militant extreme phenomenon, or understand it as a subcategory of something else like institutions, terrorism, society, or civilization. As far as he defines religion, he neither ignores the communal aspect of religion nor does he take it as a private set of dogmas or beliefs.

Another way to check the validity of the religionist argument is to answer the question whether it would be possible to fill in religion at places where ideology or terrorism is mentioned. In some cases, it seems so. It can, however, not be proven that this is intended reductionism; it seems to be a consequence of his theoretical preference for simple theories and his limitation to the third level. The fact that ideology, ideas, culture, and ethnicity all fall in the same category, because of Waltz's focus on the structure of the international system and his strict selection of factors, makes it impossible to know whether he would differentiate between the various phenomena. In conclusion, the argument that Waltz reduces religion does not hold, because this is what Waltz sees as the result of sound theorizing.

9.5 Evaluation of the Philosophy of Science Thesis

The question of whether the religionists are correct that Waltz has neglected religion because of the influence of the Enlightenment, materialism, positivism, and reductionism is difficult to answer. The answer is far more complicated than a simple 'yes' or 'no'. In many cases, it is not so much the direct influence of these factors that has led to the omission of religion, but rather the indirect influence of Waltz's theorizing. A superficial reading of Waltz's main articles and books might give the impression that he is a positivist, a materialist, a reductionist, and influenced by Enlightenment thinking. However, after

closer scrutiny, it appears that Waltz is not any of them *per se* and that his stance is better explained by considering his view on theory and the political realist ideas he wants to save. That is why I have paid so much attention to the reasoning behind his theorizing and why I have shed light on the role of realist political theory and the influence of theological ideas. I have also made clear that this latter point, as with Morgenthau, can also ('ironically') lead to caution, to involve religion too much, though a strict separation between religion and politics is impossible and undesirable. Waltz comes close to many religionists in taking seriously how theological ideas have inspired his theorizing. At the same time, he has strongly argued that the demand of theory forces him to leave religion out together with many other variables or factors.

Conclusion

Waltz is aware of the role of religion on the individual and national level, but he does not clearly describe how religion plays a role on the international level, and the transnational level is not even mentioned. Has Waltz neglected religion in his theory because of domain-specific reasons related to the Westphalian system and philosophy of science issues? Yes and no. Yes, Waltz is influenced by the Westphalian assumptions about the central role of the state, the reason of state, and the separation between religion and politics. Waltz also has taken over the Enlightenment idea of the separation between faith and reason, religion and science. It is understandable that, as a result, the religionists conclude that from the perspective of his theory, religion becomes relegated to the unprovable, the subjective, and the irrational domain. It is also correct that Waltz follows the positivist preference for the natural science method, leading to a strict empirical account of a limited number of factors that can be taken into account for the purpose of a theory with explanatory power.

However, there are several issues on which the religionists are mistaken or even incorrect. The argument about the Cold War period with two dominant secular ideologies does not clarify much. The point that Waltz's holism causes religion to be left out does not really explain the omission of religion. The philosophical argument that Waltz is a positivist turns out to be the opposite. Waltz differs more from positivism than he shares with it, or more strongly stated: Waltz rather criticizes positivism instead of supporting or embracing it. This also applies to the religionists' arguments on rationality, behavioralism, and materialism. The argument that Waltz holds a reductionist understanding of religion or sees religion as a set of ideas, does not apply either.

Waltz notices the role of religion, but he only refers to it a few times and mostly as Christian theology. He does not really discuss the various ways in which religion manifests itself. On the domain-specific level, there are no assumptions that actively neglect religion, but the fact that Waltz only allows a few factors to play a role in his theory causes religion to be left out. Waltz does not address the factor religion explicitly, but he explains why he omits certain factors and includes others. On the philosophy of science level, Waltz does not

hold assumptions that actively exclude religion. Waltz is open to the fact that in theory formation, pre-scientific intuitions can play a role, he also admits that the theologian Niebuhr inspired him, even though he did not actively discuss and reflect on this relationship.

My conclusion is that the religionist criticism that religion in Waltz's theory is lacking is correct, but they do not always provide the correct explanation for it. The lack of religion is not because Waltz consciously neglects religion, but because he does not use it to explain international politics. That is something different. He has theoretical and philosophical-political reasons to be cautious about involving religion. This leads me to the question: Why did the religionists, on so many issues, fail to understand the neglect of religion in neorealism?

There are several reasons for this. In the first place, they might not have studied Waltz thoroughly enough, they also might have based their knowledge of Waltz on the handbook representations of neorealism. In addition to that, they have not taken notice of the fact that Waltz's realist political theory and his philosophy of science explain why he leaves religion out. Waltz continues the realist criticism of positivism with its belief in progress through science. For Waltz, a scientific understanding of international politics is not a full, let alone, direct picture of the reality of international politics. It is an attempt to make this field intelligible under the *ceteris paribus* condition. Waltz's theory explains – no more, no less – why wars recur, why balances of power recurrently form, and why the bipolar distribution of power is more stable or more peaceful than a multipolar one (Snyder 2011: 66). All criticism of Waltz's theory only shows how limited a theory of international politics is when it wants to follow the scientific and political discourse, with its desire to control.

Notes

1 Note the resemblance with the quote from Morgenthau 'whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim (…)' (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 31).

2 Waltz discusses the issue of the structure and unit in many places. In response to Rosecrance, he argues that structural change begins in a system's units, and then, unit-level and structural causes interact (Waltz 1982; Waltz 2008c: 170). He states that there is a continuing interplay between the different images, even though, really the thrust of the analysis is for the third image (Kreisler 2003: 3). He refers to market theory which does not deal with characteristics of firms, in the same way international political theory does not include factors at the level of states (Waltz 1996: 56). He defends the purpose of theory:

> Moreover, to incorporate threat or the various motivations of states would infuse theories of international politics with unit-level factors. This would be something quite different from sharpening the concepts of an established theory. One cannot play with the concepts of a theory without transforming the theory into a different one.
>
> (Waltz 1996: 56)

He defends the continuity of international politics:

> Some people have hoped that changes in awareness and purpose, in the organization and ideology, of states would change the quality of international life. Over the centuries, states changed a lot, but the quality of international politics remained much the same.
>
> (Waltz 1979: 110)

3 Here, I disagree with Murray who argues that Waltz's emulation of the theoretical sophistication of the natural sciences finally leads to the adoption of their goals (Murray 1997: 8).

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10 Evaluation of the Debate between the Religionists and Political Realists and a New Christian Realism as Promising Perspective

Introduction

This dissertation began with the question raised by Thomas.

> Does religion need to be brought into the existing concepts, theories, or paradigms of international relations or are new ones required? A more disquieting suggestion is that what is required is a new concept of theory and what it is supposed to do in international relations.
>
> (Thomas 2005: 12)

I have explored various dimensions of this question by reconstructing the position of various religionists in Chapters 2–4. After that, I set out in the following chapters the role religion plays in Morgenthau and Waltz's political realism (Chapters 6 and 8) and to what extent the criticism regarding political realism is correct and subsequently sketched (Chapters 7 and 9). Based on that, it is also possible to draw up the balance and to identify the strong and weak points of the various positions. In the first section of this chapter, I will summarize how the religionists, Morgenthau, and Waltz thought about the empirical, domain-specific, and philosophy of science subtheses, respectively. I will also pay attention to the worldview level.

In the second part of the chapter, I will discuss to what extent a so-called practice approach could do justice to the challenge of the adherents of studying religion in IR, while at the same time upholding insights of the realist school. By combining these various perspectives, it becomes possible to develop the contours of a new Christian realism. This new Christian realism accepts the wisdom of the political realist tradition and the theoretical insights of neorealism, but it is critical of the rigidity of neorealism. It stands in the tradition of Morgenthau's classical realism and Waltz's neorealism because it takes the demand for theory seriously. It is called a Christian realism because it is in line with the worldview of Christian realism and the Amsterdam School.

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10.1 Drawing up the Balance: The Contributions of the Religionists and Political Realists

The scheme below consists of the useful input gathered from the discussion between the religionists and political realists (see Table 10.1). I explicitly use the term political realism when I refer to Morgenthau and Waltz because together they are sufficiently representative of political realism.

10.2 Strengths and Weaknesses of the Religionists and Political Realists: An Evaluation

I have clarified the views of the religionists, Morgenthau and Waltz regarding the role of religion on the empirical, domain-specific, philosophy of science and worldview level. Now it is time to evaluate the inputs of the discussion between the religionists and the political realists. In general, I consider something a strength if it furthers and clarifies the reflection on religion in international relations and how to theorize about it. I consider something a weakness if it further complicates or obstructs this reflection.

Regarding the empirical level, it is a strength of the religionists that they cherish an empirical transparency that allows them to see what is going on in the world and that they are prepared to match their theorizing accordingly. They also succeed in showing where and how religion manifests itself in international relations. Also, the religionists ask for attention to the underlying philosophy of science level of theorizing. By addressing the empirical, domain-specific, and philosophy of science aspects and their mutual influences, their criticism has an integral form. The religionists lack a clear vision of a theory that integrates three of these four levels: the empirical, domain-specific, and philosophy of science levels. There is also no consensus among the religionists regarding the degree to which religion should be integrated, and especially how. They also have trouble explaining why religion is so different compared to other factors that it must be integrated.

Religionists' criticism of existing theories has, unfortunately, also demonstrated their superficial knowledge of IR theory, at least of the work of Morgenthau and Waltz. Additionally, most proponents of the religious paradigm seem to be positive about the resurgence of religion in advance. It is to their credit that they not only criticize the proposed evidence for modernization and secularization theory but that they also present an alternative: neosecularization theory. This means that secularization is seen as a process within a religious, or Christian, context and in that sense is still indebted to this context.

The political realists have a clear vision of what a theory is supposed to do and what should or should not be included. Furthermore, they clearly base their theorizing on the philosophy of science. They also acknowledge their

Table 10.1 Overview of contributions of religionists and political realists

	Religionists	*Classical Realism*	*Neorealism*	*Balance*
Empirical				
–Global resurgence	Religion has manifested itself differently since the 1960s	Does not mention it	Does not mention it	–Political realists are aware of religion and pay some attention to it, but this is not much
–Individual	People's worldviews, norms, and beliefs influence public and political life	Shows to be aware of religion in the lives of politicians and statesmen	Mentions of a few examples of religion in the lives of individuals	–Political realists do not reflect on a global resurgence
–National	Religion influences the state, political society, and civil society	Has an eye for the role of religion as a changer and challenger on the national level	Is aware of religion on the national level	–The exact relevance of religious factors for international relations remains unclear
–Transnational	Religious actors influence transnational relations increasingly	Pays scant attention to religion on this level (civilizations)	Does not discuss religion on this level	
–International	Religion often plays a role in international politics as legitimizing factor.	Pays attention to religion in relation to human rights, diplomacy, nationalism, political religion	Mentions a few examples of the role of religion	

Domain-specific				
–State	State + non-governmental + domestic actors	–Primary focus on states, state leaders, and some domestic issues. –State as a bulwark against secularization	–States are central –Religion is an individual or state attribute, which is not part of the system level	–Neosecularization theory seems to be a representative view and they seem to share the same view on Westphalia
–National interest	Power, but also moral, religious, and spiritual goals	–National interest is time and context-dependent, but now defined as national power –National interest defined as power is moral in itself –Autonomy of the political	–States aim at survival, not religious goals, because of anarchy –Autonomy of the political	–Religionists want to involve all three levels in theorizing, while political realists focus on second and/or third level
–Interpretation Westphalia	Westphalia revives the Augustinian distinction between religion and politics	Disenchantment; transcendent reference point remains necessary	Seems not to deviate much from religionists	–Political realists emphasize the autonomy of the (international) political sphere and therefore central role of state leaders and not religion

(*Continued*)

Table 10.1 (Continued)

	Religionists	*Classical Realism*	*Neorealism*	*Balance*
Philosophy of Science				
–Social embeddedness (Enlightenment and modernization theory)	–Reason and faith can strengthen each other –Alternative view: neosecularization theory	–Three equal responses: religious, scientific, and philosophical –Traditional religions may disappear, but the religious impulse remains	–Prefers a scientific over a theological or religious explanation, but allows for the influence of religious or theological intuitions or ideas on theory formation –Goes along with the idea that a scientific explanation replaces a religious one	–All respect the contribution of religious perspective to theorizing –All understand religion in a similar way –They acknowledge the impossibility of neutrality in science –Political realists emphasize the importance of theory
–Ontology (materialism)	More attention to non-material factors	Ideas, ideology, or religion color the way in which interests (either material or ideal) should be understood	Is not a materialist *per se*, but *a posteriori* materialist	
–Epistemology (explanatory power, context-independent rationality, positivism, and behavioralism)	–More room for interpretative theory and attention to historical context	–Ideal–typical theory: empirical, but normative. –Religion and morality are different spheres of political –Valuative standpoints and presuppositions influence doing science –Rationality depends on time and context	–Prefers a psychological or social science explanation over a religious or theological explanation or account –Researcher is always subject to normative influences and theories too –Aims at parsimony –Rationality depends on time and context	
–Methodology (reductionism)	Religion as individual and communal, rational like other beliefs, ideational and institutional	Makes a distinction between religions and religiosity	Uses religion mainly as Christian religion	

Worldview (*political* theology)				
–Man	Not a particular view on human beings, but seem to be quite optimistic about religious man	The sinfulness of human beings is necessarily connected with the order of the world. The result is that there is no inevitable progress toward the good, but an undecided conflict between good and evil	Miseries are related to human nature: 'The root of all evil is man, and thus he himself is the root of the specific evil, war'	–All involve worldview elements in their theorizing, implicitly or explicitly –They differ on the relevance of this for incorporating religion in IR theory
–History	Not a particular view on history	–Morgenthau assumes that human time or history is surrounded by God's time. The destination of history will eventually not be realized by people, but by God; secularization denies this given –Notion of *katechon* makes politics possible	Non-utopian view on history, because the final destination of history will not be realized by human beings: 'each advance in knowledge, each innovation in technique, contains within itself the potentiality of evil as well as of good'	
–Ethics	Emphasis on relevance and necessity of religion for ethics and morality, but not a shared ethical perspective	Realist ethics by avoiding the illusion of both absolute perfection and absolute evil	Realist ethics: a perfect earthly justice is impossible, it is about the approximation of a little more justice or freedom and seeking to avoid politics that lead to a little less of it	

Source: Original *Creation*

indebtedness to political–philosophical and political–theological principles and do so in a comprehensible manner. The latter can also be a disadvantage because it is difficult to agree with the political realists when you disagree with their political–philosophical or political–theological principles. Their emphasis on the autonomy of the political can also prevent them from taking religion seriously as a power factor. They do not seem to be sufficiently aware that the autonomy of the political is a principle dependent on time and context, and that religious actors can exert influence on this. Is this principle still supported by religious communities or do political theorists maintain a stance which has become obsolete?

A disadvantage of Waltz's neorealism is that his theorizing assumes an almost rigid form. Waltz says a lot about a little, giving the impression that it no longer concerns the daily reality of people. Waltz also suggests having a theory that is empirical which is supported by his use of terms from the scientific discourse. However, at times he fails to resist the temptation to take a stance regarding the direction international politics should take.

Both Morgenthau and Waltz, although mainly the latter, take a big step by stating that they interpret international relations as international politics. That means that they primarily interpret the economic, cultural, religious, and legal relations between countries as international political relations. This gives the impression of reductionism, especially in the case of Waltz.

While Morgenthau regrets the loss of a transcendent reference point. Waltz clearly seems to favor a scientific explanation over a theological one. I do not think that the latter is necessary. The overview hereafter depicts the evaluation of both positions in a point-by-point manner.[1]

Strengths of religionists

- Empirical openness for what is going on in the world
- Demonstrate overwhelming empirical evidence for religion, especially at the transnational level
- Draw attention to deeper philosophical levels in the theorizing of IR theorists and possible biases
- Integral criticism on IR: empirical, domain-specific, and philosophy of science
- Suggestion for an alternative view on secularization

Weaknesses of religionists

- No clear view of the scope and function of the theory
- Unclear and divided about what is meant by integrating religion into IR theory
- Religion's distinctiveness unclear
- Seem to be prejudiced on the relevance of religion
- Many demonstrate insufficient knowledge of IR theory

Strengths of political realists

- Openness to the role of religious factors
- Clear view on function and scope of theory of international relations
- Integral theory
- Clear political–philosophical and political–theological assumptions
- View on secularization that agrees with religionists' (Morgenthau)

Weaknesses of political realists

- *De facto* not much attention to religious actors
- Rigid theorizing (in the case of Waltz) and reductionism
- Political theology might be too cautious to consider religion as a power factor
- Disagreement with other political–philosophical and political–theological assumptions makes finding common ground difficult
- Accepts and incorporates modernization and secularization theory too easily (Waltz)
- The use of scientific language cloaks the fact that his theory is normative and unavoidably prescriptive (Waltz)

10.3 A New Christian Realism: The Normative Practice Approach as a Promising Perspective

Working with the Normative Practice Approach (NPA) comes at a good time since practice theory has become a topic in International Relations for a few decades. This attention is not completely new, because elements of it were there for a longer period of time. An article from 2017 states that many studies and approaches, like constructivism, postpositivism, and critical theory, can be said to assume the same themes as practice theory (Cornut 2017: 2, 3). International Practice Theory (IPT) has now become an official term and field in IR. IPT is not a well-defined approach but represents a wide variety of approaches and themes. It offers an analytical framework to further the dialogue and exchange of different views on religion and international relations.

> Practice turners celebrate pluralism within PT and IR. For Adler and Pouliot, 'taking international practices seriously leads not to synthesis but to dialogue. Instead of interparadigmatic competition, subsumption, or even complementarity, the concept of practice promises cross-fertilization.' For Bueger and Gadinger, the trading zone metaphor provides an analytical framework to think about PT without downplaying the important disagreements about core issues that practice theorists have. In the trading zone, 'IR practitioners might continue to fundamentally disagree over the meaning of core concepts'. The pragmatic epistemology (…) provides a space for dialogue, eclecticism, exchange of different views, and cross-fertilization – not synthesis.
>
> (Cornut 2017: 12)

However, as it stands now, IPT does not pay much attention to religion (Lynch 2017: 16, 17). For that reason, I think that the practice perspective of the Amsterdam School can enrich IPT. The Amsterdam School in general and the NPA in particular have a sensitivity and attention to the role of religion in practices. Second, the NPA does not necessarily share the critical ontological and epistemological starting points of practice theory, which would make it more acceptable to classical realist or neorealist IR-scholars (Cornut 2017: 13).

Third, the NPA recognizes the reality that people will always tend to reach insights based on a theory that can direct their actions. NPA does not claim to provide a theory that is non-prescriptive as Waltz does. It is quite the opposite, the NPA was originally developed to direct actions and to properly balance between norms which are leading, supporting, or conditioning. It is therefore more like a theory in line with Morgenthau than with Waltz and can help government leaders and other actors in international affairs to direct their policies and decisions. It wants to bridge the gap between theorizing on international relations and the practice of international relations (cf. Cornut 2017: 20). It can therefore also contribute to a lot of religionist literature that is mainly targeted at the relevance of religion for international policy.

Fourth, the NPA is both normative and descriptive (or empirical) (Chaplin 2020: 44–47). It is normative in the sense that it recognizes that theorizing is not neutral but inspired and regulated by worldview presuppositions. The NPA is open about this and does not have to translate a theological anthropology to a more scientifically philosophical explanation of human behavior like Waltz and Morgenthau. The NPA also does not have to hide a political theology, because it holds a Christian view of the human condition which can be in dialogue with those with other worldview presuppositions. The NPA is descriptive or empirical because it continuously engages with the empirical and factual states of affairs (Chaplin 2020: 44).

Fifth, I have shown how important pre-scientific and worldview convictions are in the theorizing of the political realists and the religionists. Involving worldview assumptions makes the NPA open to critical theory. An example of a critical notion is that the religionists blame the so-called secularism of IR theory for wrongfully marginalizing and ignoring religious groups (Cornut 2017: 20, 21). Because of the involvement of worldviews, NPA comes close to what Bech and Snyder suggested, namely that a theory is needed that is able to comprehend the interaction and interpenetration between the religious realm and the realism of temporal power (Bech & Snyder 2011: 207). However, that does not mean that the NPA abandons the claim of science in the sense of objectivity. It assumes that the normativity it perceives is also recognizable by others, in the same way that Morgenthau thought that the rationality of certain realms can be discovered by others. This rationality can be the basis for a theory, but not in terms of causality. It does not allow to predict certain outcomes though it helps to grasp the multiple forces that produce specific outcomes (Cornut 2017: 8). This rationality does have to pass the empirical test, and must be applied depending on time and place. NPA also thinks that the

scientific distance and objectivity can be reached better due to her awareness of her normative starting points.

Sixth, the NPA is aware that the prescriptive part of the theory is based on the descriptive parts, but that these are two distinct matters. In that sense, the NPA can also be of service to scientists who want to view the world from a distance and do not wish to work on direct applications. Practice theory is 'an approach that provides new tools with which to think about international politics' (Cornut 2017: 21). That also explains why practice theory is linked by some to constructivism and critical analysis. Others see connections with realism, neoclassical realism, and the English school or poststructuralism (Cornut 2017: 10).

Seventh, the NPA offers the possibility to overcome the so-called structure–agency problem, and the levels of analysis problem from IR theory, because it offers both an analysis of the structures and of the acting actors (Cornut 2017: 12). Waltz makes a clear distinction between the actors, the states, and the structure of the system. He is of the opinion that this requires two different theories: one to explain the actions of the actor from within and one to explain the acting of the actors from the perspective of the system. With the NPA, it is possible to integrate both which makes it more compelling (although it may perhaps lead to a loss of explanatory power). My criticism of Waltz is that his theory explains a few things and leaves many issues out and therefore loses the connection to daily experience (a critical requirement from the Amsterdam School). Waltz's theory can, therefore, barely be used to develop good policies and to find out how to act in international politics. That does not mean Waltz's contribution is irrelevant. Elshtain, who calls herself fortunate to have been his student, writes that Waltz forces

> to ask the right sorts of questions, and to be clearheaded throughout. The criticisms one makes of his 'levels of analysis' show just how indebted one is to his work in the first place. As a critical tool helping us to weed out all sorts of nonsense, Waltz remains enormously relevant.
>
> (Elshtain 2009: 302)

The theoretical insights of Waltz's neorealism on the rationality of the international political domain can be integrated into the NPA with Morgenthau's search for practical wisdom for the state leaders and the 'hidden' virtuosity that Waltz expects from states to prevent anarchy. In other words, the NPA tries to combine scientific, rational insight, also called the 'high grounds' in some practice literature, and the 'swampy lowlands', the concrete situations in which policymakers, state leaders, and diplomats have to make day-to-day decisions (Buijs & Polinder 2020: 321, 322).[2] The NPA joins Morgenthau's ideal-typical manner of theorizing in which different realms are distinguished from one another. At the same time, the NPA does not join Waltz's, and to a lesser degree Morgenthau's, reductionism that international relations can only be regarded as international politics.

Finally, it is important that the NPA looks at the many different contexts in which practices occur. This is important because the context of the practice of international relations can vary a lot, and that is especially relevant in relation to religion because it has a different role regarding politics in different contexts.

10.4 Integrating Religion in International Relations: A Proposal

So far, I have discussed the advantages offered by the NPA in more abstract terms. In this part, I will set out what the NPA is about and make a first proposal for a practice approach to religion and international relations.[3] That gives an impression of the possibilities offered by the NPA in the debate on religion and international relations. Applying the NPA also requires making choices. As this is a first proposal, there is of course room for discussion, which I hope this will lead to. For now, it is my purpose to show that the NPA can play a heuristic and connecting role. It is not my intention here to present an exhaustive application of the NPA. That would require further study.

The NPA was originally developed by the philosophers Glas and Jochemsen for the practice of medicine. Later on, Henk Jochemsen and political philosopher Buijs also applied this approach to development cooperation (Buijs & Jochemsen 2001: 298–319; Jochemsen & Glas 1997: 64–99; Rademaker & Jochemsen 2018).[4] Recently, the NPA has been further developed and applied to various other domains, such as international cooperation in development, modern military operations, food systems, education, management, corporate communication, and security networks (Vries & Jochemsen 2019). The NPA combines the idea of a social practice as developed by Alasdair MacIntyre with the philosophy of Dooyeweerd. An important question that characterizes this approach is: What qualifies a certain activity as a type of practice? For example, what qualifies medicine and development cooperation as such? Is it possible to distinguish those spheres from other domains, and if so, what makes the difference, or in MacIntyre's words, what characterizes this practice? To answer that question, it is important to know how MacIntyre defines a practice.

> Any coherent and complex form of socially established cooperative human activity through which goods internal to that form of activity are realized in the course of trying to achieve those standards of excellence which are appropriate to, and partially definitive of, that form of activity, with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.
>
> (MacIntyre 2003:187)

This definition speaks about human activities that are socially established. These human activities are often part of institutions and consist of socially established patterns of actions. Human beings have to be initiated in this practice so that they understand the goal of that pattern and the rules that pertain to it (Jochemsen & Glas 1997: 67). In this definition, MacIntyre makes a

distinction between internal goods and external goods. The latter are goods that are contingently attached to the practice by the accidents of social circumstances, such as prestige, status, and money. Conversely, internal goods can only be acquired through participation in the practice for its own sake. Such goods can only be recognized by people who are trained in the practice and possess the virtues that are required to do the practice well (MacIntyre 2003: 188). Unlike MacIntyre, Jochemsen and Glas do not find the distinction between external and internal goods particularly clear or useful and prefer to speak of the aim or destiny of a practice, or its *telos*. They argue, a practice has a *telos* that determines how it unfolds. For example, although someone can play soccer to achieve financial gain, the game itself always forces the player to play well and win the game based on a good soccer strategy and the skills needed to play well (Jochemsen & Glas 1997: 67, 68).

Another element of MacIntyre's definition is the concept of standards of excellence. These are the rules that people have to follow in order to realize the *telos* of the practice. These rules can be explicit or implicit, such as so-called tacit knowledge. Glas and Jochemsen call these rules *constitutive* because they define and limit the practice. The more adequately they are applied the better its *telos* will be realized (Jochemsen & Glas 1997: 69).

Constitutive rules differ from *regulative* rules. Constitutive rules facilitate the realization of the *telos*. The interpretation and application of the constitutive rules depend on the regulative rules of the human person involved because the way people act in concrete situations depends on their worldview. In other words, the constitutive rules determine the structure of the practice, whereas the regulative rules determine the direction of its development. A practice can only be realized when it is guided by a point of reference that is based on an idea of the broader meaning and coherence of human actions. This idea regulates the performance and unfolding of the practice (Jochemsen & Glas 1997: 70–72). It is here that the worldview of the participants of the practice comes into play.

Jochemsen and Glas divide the constitutive side into three types of rules: qualifying, conditioning, and foundational (Figure 10.1) (Jochemsen & Glas 1997: 76). It is at this point that, next to MacIntyre, the philosophy of Dooyeweerd becomes relevant. Dooyeweerd's theory of modal aspects is based upon the idea that everything which is part of reality functions in various aspects or modalities of experience such as the social, economic, pistic (religious), or juridical, whereby each aspect of reality has its own most characteristic rules or norms. For example, according to Dooyeweerd's theory of modal aspects, it is impossible to reduce the economic aspect to the social or juridical aspect because each aspect has its own normativity and rules that are relevant in that sphere. For the economic aspect, the norm is, for example, frugality. A company can only function properly when it considers the costs of every product, so it cannot be run like a social enterprise or a charity. Because of the multiple normativity, Dooyeweerd's theory is very critical of forms of reductionism and it invites scholars to reflect on the variety of different norms that play a role in various practices.

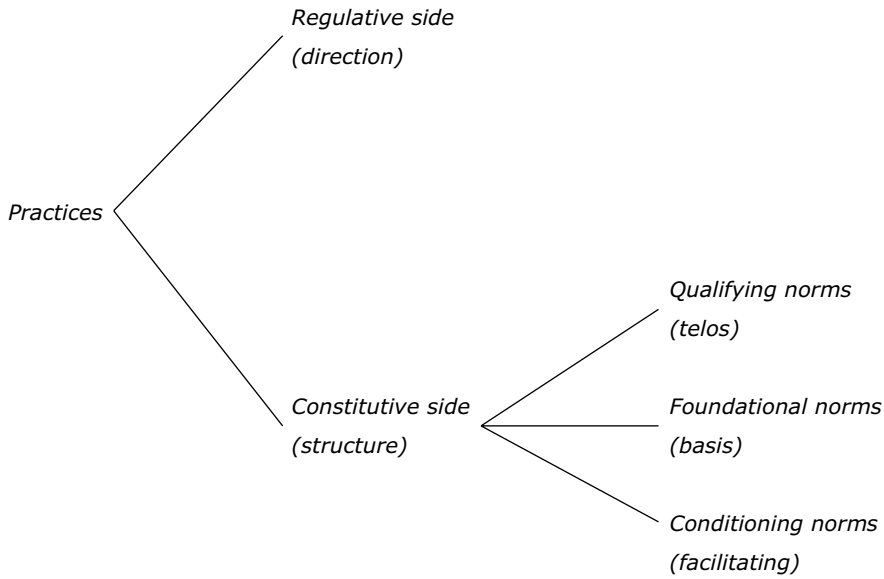

Figure 10.1 Overview of different sides and norms.

Source: Adapted from Jochemsen & Glas, 1997.

Additionally, for each thing or entity in reality, not all rules and aspects are equally relevant. Rules that belong to the qualifying aspect which define the *telos* of a specific practice are most important. The foundational aspect indicates on which rules the practice is based. The remaining aspects are conditional, meaning that they condition or shape the development of a practice indirectly (Jochemsen & Glas 1997: 73–75).

To illustrate the relationship between the qualifying, foundational, and conditioning aspects, I will use the example of Jan Hoogland. He uses the medical practice to make his point. The medical practice has as its *telos* to care for – and possibly cure – sick, wounded, or handicapped people. That is the core function of the practice and this practice is qualified by the ethical aspect. The practice of medicine, however, can only function properly if it has, among other things, a sustainable financial basis. In other words, the economic aspect is of great importance too, because it conditions or facilitates the functioning of the medicine practice. Since all practices are forms of 'cooperative human activities', they must be seen as founded in the formative aspects. It means that the practice involves historical and technical phenomena, such as documents, techniques, computers, methods of working and functioning, task descriptions, etc. These features belong to the practice and are an integral part of it. Distinguishing between the various aspects makes it possible to see how the various aspects can be of service to the qualifying function. A good practice always requires balanced attention to the diversity of norms that are at stake. This is called the simultaneous realization of norms (Hoogland 2019: 47).

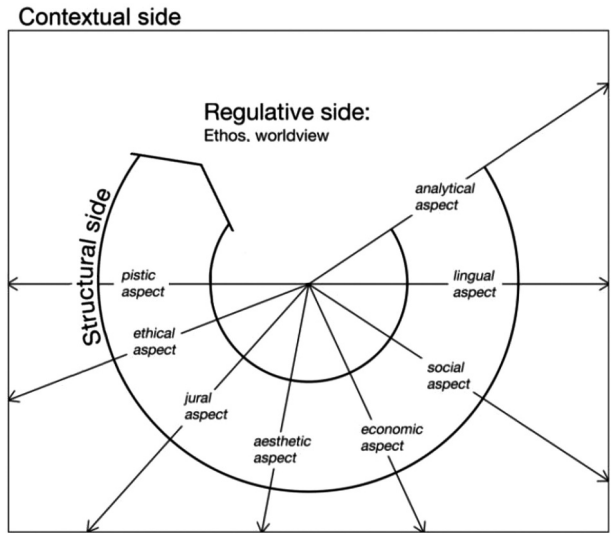

Figure 10.2 Normative practices have a structural side (circle), a regulative side (circular arrow), and a contextual side (outer square).

Source: Adapted from Rademaker, Corné J., 2020.

In my application of the NPA, I use the model Corné Rademaker developed with respect to the practice of development cooperation: a field of study which is close to the field of international relations. Rademaker developed a model in which he illustrates the relationship between the context of the practice, the regulative and the constitutive side (see Figure 10.2) (Rademaker 2020: 131).[5] In the next section, I will explore what each side is about with respect to the international relations practice and the role of religion. I will start to discuss the context of the practice of international relations. I situate the role of religious actors in a context of power politics and a domain dominated by the state. In the next section, I introduce the constitutive side of the practice and its qualifying, conditional, and foundational rules. In that section, I pay attention to the presence and relevance of ultimate concerns and the role of worldviews in the practice of international relations. After discussing the aspects of the constitutive side, I move to the regulative side and here I explicitly draw attention to the (religious) worldviews that the professionals of the international relations practice bring in.

10.4.1 Context of the Practice: Religious Actors among the Power Politics of States

Now I have set out what are various terms and concepts of NPA, the question is how this will work out with respect to the topic of religion and international relations. To clarify this, it is necessary to know the environment of the practice of international relations. In other words, what is the context of the practice of

international relations? Before I move on to that, an important question is what the object of the study is: is the object religion or international relations? I focus on the object of international relations. After all, the religionists criticize IR theories for their exclusion of religion. Also, the political realists Morgenthau and Waltz refer to international relations as their object of research. I want to continue this line.

That means that choices need to be made, which is where theory comes in. It is necessary and unavoidable. Necessary because it tells which facts of the world around are relevant. Without a theory, scholars will be swimming in information and data. Theory is also unavoidable because each scholar approaches his or her object of study from a particular point of view, perspective, or paradigm (Viotti & Kauppi 1998: 3). Morgenthau's classical realism is about foreign policy, while Waltz limits himself to international relations, or more specifically, international politics. With the NPA it is possible to overcome this opposition between Waltz and Morgenthau. Also, it is possible to combine the insights of Waltz's neorealism with those of Morgenthau and the religionists regarding the role of religion in the world.

The object of study is international relations. This can be defined as '[T]he total of political, social, economic, cultural and other interactions among states (and even non-state actors)' (Viotti & Kauppi 1998: 483). As this definition shows, there are various interactions possible between states and non-state actors, such as military, cultural, and religious. In other words, international relations is a practice itself but also consists of various other practices, such as economic, political, cultural, and religious practices. It is my aim to provide a framework which recognizes the variety of practices, but whose main focus is the practice of international relations. But what makes international relations a practice?

The answer is that it is international: it is a domain in which states and non-state actors operate by crossing borders. States and non-state actors participate in a domain in which a supranational authority is missing with enforcing power that can regulate the relations between states and non-state actors. That is a huge difference with the national domain. When cultural, religious, or political actors act within a nation-state, they are always subjected to and protected by the authority of the state. The moment these actors cross borders and enter the so-called international domain, they cannot rely on an authority similar to the state on a national level. The question in this chapter is how we can theorize about the domain of international relations and whether religion helps with this. That means that we have to know what this domain is about.

As I said, on the national level, there is often an institution that can act in a mediating or enforcing manner. As soon as relations become supranational, however, only treaties or intergovernmental institutions can exert influence, but the fundamental difference with domestic relations remains that there is no enforcing power. Even the UN Security Council cannot be regarded as such, because its enforcing power is often dependent on the power configurations of the participating states. That illustrates the point of the political realists that

the domain of international relations is strongly characterized by its political character. That is why in IR theory the domain of international relations is described as a situation of anarchy. As Waltz argues, the result of anarchy is that states are in a situation of self-help because there are no other states to rely upon for their survival. The fact that international relations are characterized by anarchy leading to a self-help situation wherein the relative power situation counts makes it plausible to understand international relations in the first place as international politics. Unsurprisingly, international politics is one of the most important sub-fields in International Relations (Evans & Newnham 1998: 274). This is a huge step, but it is a necessary step to make the international realm understandable. States, and non-state actors, are very much dependent on the power they have if they want to accomplish something in the international domain (Halliday 2001: 21–37).

So far, I have characterized the international relations practice as international politics. I also mentioned the main actors, namely state and non-state actors. But how are these actors related and what about the professionals of the practice? Since the NPA is an approach that aims at the professionals that shape the practice, I will discuss the role of professionals like state leaders and politicians when dealing with the regulative side of the practice. For now, I would like to draw attention to the context of the international relations practice and the relevant institutions through which the professional participates. Since this is a proposal and the focus is on religion in international relations, I do not provide an overview of all other possible relevant non-religious institutions. I explicitly use the term institution, because it is a much broader term and includes states as well as non-governmental actors and international organizations (Chaplin 2020: 53, 54). These institutions limit and enable people to act, but cannot be equated to what people do. Within the Amsterdam School, it has been acknowledged that institutions have a Janus face. They can contribute to human flourishing because institutions moderate and soften the capriciousness of individual actors. Institutions facilitate and encourage human cooperation (cf. liberal institutionalism). They can serve as a basis for trust within and between societies and contribute to 'chaos reduction'. This comes close to what I earlier on, in the chapter on Morgenthau (Chapter 6), referred to as the *katechontic* role of states. Institutions can be learning environments for new generations that enter the practice of international relations. However, institutions also have negative sides, because they can become self-indulgent or egoistic or even amoral: refusing to accept higher moral principles or rules (Buijs & Polinder 2020: 318).

As the religionists point out, the fact that religious institutions are often organized globally or transnationally and that they have their own infrastructure and authority structures gives them a certain level of independence and power to influence the international domain. The question is how much they weight and how they are related to the power politics dynamic.

Alexander Wendt attempts to answer this question. He points to the importance of culture and the influence that is exerted on the type of anarchy that

arises (Wendt 1999b: 249–251). Wendt distinguishes between three cultures of anarchy: a Hobbesian, Lockean, and a Kantian. Each of the cultures is characterized by a certain structure describing the shared ideas and configuring the positions of the subjects. The subject position in a Hobbesian culture is enemy, in a Lockean culture it is rival and in Kantian culture it is friend or ally. Enemies observe no limits toward each other. Rivals are competitors who will use violence to advance their interests but refrain from killing each other. Friends are allies who do not use violence to settle their disputes and they work together as teams against security threats (Wendt 1999b: 257, 258). The three cultures of anarchy can vary in the extent to which they internalize the culture of anarchy. This means that a Hobbesian logic can be generated by deeply shared ideas and Kantian logics by only weakly shared ones (Wendt 1999b: 254). Unfortunately, Wendt wrote nothing on the role of religion, but it is not difficult to imagine the perspective of the religionists' empirical stance that religion can influence the political situation characterized by anarchy through culture. Thomas, for example, has pointed out how the early English School drew attention to the role of culture and religion in international society (Thomas 2005: 94, 152–154). The question remains how large the influence of religion in each of the cultures of anarchy is and if it is possible to speak about a *social* practice – as MacIntyre sees it – in the case of a Hobbesian culture.

The religionists have extensively drawn attention to the various actors that are present in the international domain. Religious non-state actors not only shape the international relations practice, but they also have their own practices. Each of these practices has its own qualifying aspect. Churches, for example, have as their qualifying aspect the pistic, but as Rademaker argues, non-governmental organizations (in which we can include faith-based organizations) are qualified by the ethical aspect which has as its core value solidarity (Rademaker 2020: 144). In other words, there are differences between religious actors. That explains why many non-governmental organizations sometimes closely work together with governments, while religious organizations such as churches, mosques, synagogues, or temples do not.

Since the object of study is the practice of international relations, the question is to what extent religious actors influence the practice of international relations. Morgenthau and Waltz, and the religionists differ on this point. For Morgenthau and Waltz, the state is the central actor. The religionists criticize this and argue that individuals, especially when they unite themselves through for example transnational religious organizations, play an important role as well. It is worth it to let Wendt talk on this topic because he unites both views to a certain extent. Wendt sees the state as a central actor in international politics. He also acknowledges that a transnational community is developing. This transnational community is, however, more a community of financial capital and states than of people. Wendt does not think that globalization will lead to a cosmopolitan democracy consisting of individuals. He thinks that it will be a democracy of states which is more international than cosmopolitan (Wendt 1992: 424; Wendt 1996: 48; Wendt 1999a: 127, 129, 132). For Wendt, states are

still the primary medium through which the effects of other actors on the regulation of violence are channeled into the world system (Wendt 1999b: 9, 243).

Wendt's reasoning can be used as a starting point. Non-state actors, also religious ones, play a role in international relations, but they eventually need states to influence international relations. As Troy argues, non-state actors do not operate in a vacuum (Troy 2012: 49). As a consequence, the transnational level pointed at by the religionists is important, but it eventually comes down to what states do. So why not limit a theory to inter-state behavior? The behavior of states cannot be understood if the influence of transnational actors and non-state actors is not included. In other words, we need to include the first and second images of Waltz to understand how states shape the international domain. States are not billiard balls or black boxes, but – as Wendt states – they have intentionality: 'states are people too' (Wendt 1999b: 194). According to Wendt, the state has identities and interests whereby the second is not reducible to the first, because identities are about who and what actors are and interests are about what actors want (Wendt 1999b: 231). Wendt accepts that states are constituted by the international structure, but they are forming their interests and identities by interacting socially with each other (Wendt 1999b: 243–245). With this argument, Wendt includes the first and second levels which Waltz leaves out. As I said earlier, I think that is necessary to have a compelling theory.

Although it is important to acknowledge that states have identities, interests, and intentionality, this does not mean that the state and heads of state can be equated. State leaders (regulative side) have their own responsibility with respect to the state (context) and the formation of practice of international relations (constitutive side).

In short, the context of the international relations practice is one of power politics, rivalry, and competition. The principal actors of this practice are states and non-state actors. To the extent that states form intergovernmental organizations, these institutions also belong to the practice. Professionals participate in the practice of international relations through institutions and this way they facilitate the development of the international relations practice. The effectiveness of these practitioners largely depends on the extent to which they are able to exercise or influence the power configuration. That does not mean that power is the end, it is a means to strive for something else. For that reason, it is important, as the NPA does, to seek what the calling or moral purpose or *telos* is of the practice of international relations (Buijs & Polinder 2020: 318, 319). That is the question I will address in the next section.

10.4.2 Constitutive Side of the Practice: Power, Justice, and (Religious) Worldviews

I have argued that the context of the international relations practice is largely shaped by states and non-state actors which cannot do without power politics. What are the qualifying, foundational, and conditional rules of this international relations practice and what is its *telos*?

It is on this point that Dooyeweerd and Waltz differ. As Waltz has made clear, justice and right are the aims of power in national politics. In international politics bloody conflicts tend to be decided by might only and not so much by right. On a national level, the force of government is exercised in the name of right and justice. On the international level, there are no relations of authority and thus force is used to guarantee the survival of the state itself (Evans & Newnham 1998: 112). Morgenthau argues that national survival is a moral principle given the circumstances of international politics and the absence of a supranational government (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 12). In Waltz's thought, the goal of the political would be survival because, as he states:

> Beyond the survival motive, the aims of states may be endlessly varied; they may range from the ambition to conquer the world to the desire merely to be left alone. Survival is the prerequisite to achieving any goals that states may have, other than the goal of promoting the own disappearance as political entities.
>
> (Waltz 1979: 91)

One could object that the aim of states does not have to be the same as the *telos* of international relations as a practice. That is also the argument that Dooyeweerd makes. He acknowledges that the international realm differs from domestic politics. When discussing the United Nations, he calls it a voluntary association of individual states, qualifying the internal structure of it as an international public legal function and founding it in the historical international organization of power. Dooyeweerd contends that the United Nations' structure is similar to that of the state in the sense that it aims at justice. Yet, it lacks the institutional character of the latter including the monopolistic use of armed force and a territory. He adds that the juridical qualified principle of international public interest does not have the compulsory trait of a government, which can eventually impose an order (Dooyeweerd 1984: 600). He is aware of the fact that vital interests play a role in international relations. He writes that 'during the whole history of the modern system of states since the Westphalian Peace until the second world-war no great power has been prepared to have questions of really vital interest withdrawn from its own sovereign final decision' (Dooyeweerd 1984: 475). Dooyeweerd, however, does not draw the conclusion that the aim of international politics should be survival. In fact, he strongly rejects this notion:

> The Christian view of the State must never capitulate to a naturalistic theory of the 'raison d'État' elevating the 'sacred egotism' of the States to a kind of natural law in international relations. Such a theory is intrinsically false and contrary to the individuality structure of the States as well as to the basic structures of the international order. The internal vital law of the body politic is not a law of nature but bears a normative character. A State can never justify an absolutely selfish international policy of the

> strong hand with an appeal to its vital interests. God has not given the States such a structure that, with a kind of natural necessity, they are compelled to carry on a Kain's [sic] policy for the sake of self-preservation. Only a blind man does not see that the vital interests of the nations are in a great many ways mutually interwoven. It is not the political structure of national life but the sins of the nations that have caused the individualistic selfish power of the States to dominate international politics.
>
> (Dooyeweerd 1984: 476)

It is interesting to see how Dooyeweerd reasons in the same way as Niebuhr does. He acknowledges that vital interests play a role, but does not accept that egoistic self-interests are becoming the norm. He points to the mutual interwovenness of states and to the sins of the nations. In my own words, he does not accept that the selfish strive for power becomes seen as part of the structure of international relations.

The difference between Dooyeweerd and Waltz might be the result of Waltz's methodological agnosticism which does not allow for a religious or normative evaluation. Dooyeweerd clearly weighs international politics. Dooyeweerd's religious worldview presupposes a reality created by God whereby human beings are responsible for the development of this reality in accordance with the purpose of this creation order. In sum, Waltz is correct that from a theoretical point, power is what explains the behavior of states best. It is also understandable that Dooyeweerd argues that the vital interest of states ('sins of nations') cannot have the final say in international politics. The desire for justice is something that generally matters to states and he considers that a good thing, also from a Christian point of view.

I think that the NPA should integrate the theoretical insights of the political realists Morgenthau and Waltz about the importance of power and that states are striving for ideals and goals. It has to include justice as well as power, where justice is the qualifying function and power is the foundational function of international politics. In this view, politics is the sphere where power and justice come together. The difference between the domestic and the international domain is that, in the latter justice is less relevant and significant from a theoretical point of view than power, although the former is not absent. In other words, it is a gradual and not a principal difference between the national and international domain.

As Waltz has shown, the primary means by which states are able to survive in international relations is power. Dooyeweerd considers power to be the core value of the historical or formative aspect which means that this aspect is taken as the foundational aspect: it is primarily through the use of power that states are able to realize their security and survival. This power can have many forms, such as the techniques and skills that are used in international relations to execute power, like diplomacy, military power, building coalitions and alliances, or concluding treaties, (see also Hoogland 2019: 47; Jochemsen & Rademaker 2019: 263).

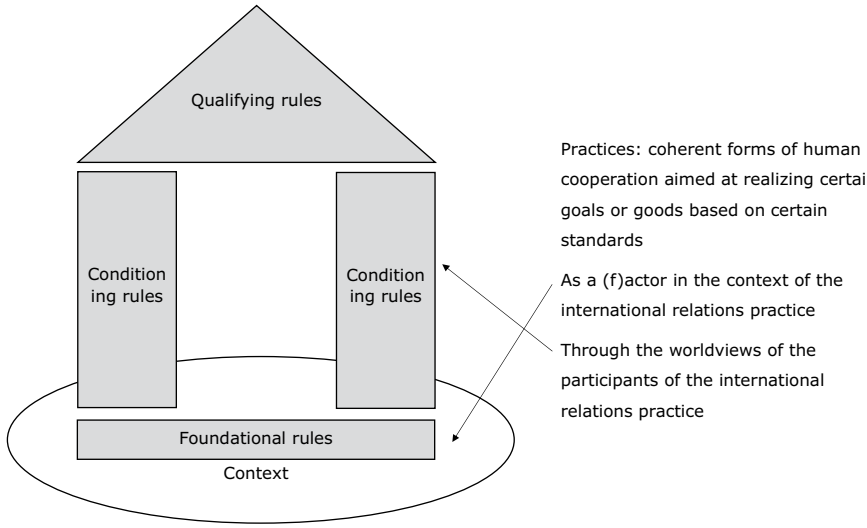

Figure 10.3 Religion in the international relations practice as a (f)actor and through the worldviews of the participants.

Source: Adapted from a presentation by Gerrit Glas.

10.4.3 The Conditioning Rules of the International Relations Practice: Beliefs and Worldviews

The way in which the foundational and qualifying rules are successively used depends on the conditioning aspects which do not qualify, but enable, guide, and limit the enfolding of the practice (Jochemsen & Glas 1997: 83). It is not helpful to explore all 13 aspects that Dooyeweerd differentiates and relate them to international politics here. I just touch upon a couple to point to the relevance of the conditioning aspects. Economics does not qualify or ground international relations, but economic relations limit or enable the unfolding of the practice of international relations. Economic relations between states can create interdependence and reduce the willingness to use power or to go to war, though Waltz would probably say the opposite. Economic relations, however, differ from juridical relations, as established in very different branches of international law. Another aspect is the ethical or moral one. The core value of this aspect is love, or care, because people can love their country and family members, and feel a moral obligation to people in need who live in other countries. Although ethics and morality play a role in international relations, they are not leading or foundational for international relations. It would not be workable if international relations would hold as its core function that everybody should love his or her neighbor, but that does not mean that this norm should be abolished; it still conditions the use of power. Dooyeweerd argues that

> It is an absolutely un-Christian thought that the commandment of temporal societal love of one's fellowmen is not valid in international intercourse between the nations organized in States. International relations are also subject to the moral law: they cannot be ruled by a purely egotistic principle. But the structure of the international norm of love is not identical with that of private moral intercourse between individual men. The moral relations between the States remain bound to the structural principle of international political relationships, which presupposes that of the body politic itself. The norm of love can never require a State to resign itself to a foreign attack on its independence and to deliver its own subjects to the violence of the usurper. The moral duties of a body politic cannot be measured according to private standards.
>
> (Dooyeweerd 1984: 476)

This agrees with Morgenthau's view as mentioned earlier that one should make a distinction between the moral obligations and possibilities of the state and individuals.

Besides the historical, economic, and juridical, Dooyeweerd also distinguished the pistical aspect – from the Greek word *pistis* which means faith or trust. Another term that I used earlier is ultimate commitment. These commitments can be of religious, secular, or quasi-religious nature and express themselves in someone's worldview. According to Dooyeweerd, the ultimate commitments that human beings have influence the way the other aspects are interpreted such as the biotic, ethical, juridical, and historical. When these ultimate commitments are based on a transcendent reference point – which makes them religious – one could call it a religious worldview. In other words, one of the conditioning aspects of the international relations practice concerns the role religious, secular, and quasi-religious worldviews play. It is important to be aware of the role these worldviews play in the unfolding of the practice of international relations. It is also important to distinguish between the various kinds of worldviews. Quasi-religious worldviews often look like a religious worldview but on closer scrutiny, it appears that they lack a transcendent reference point. The same is true for ideologies and political religions. Morgenthau, for example, significantly criticized the visions of humankind, history, and ethics he regarded as idealistic and utopic, which were commonplace in his time. The same could apply to our time in which the sacralizing of all kinds of social and political aspects occurs. These worldviews, in particular when they gain traction in the political process, should be criticized the same way the political realists did in their time (Gentile 2006: 13ff).

The religionists have pointed out that certain ideas or worldviews can play a role in international relations as transnational religious ideas, transnational belief systems, or transnational ideational communities (e.g. Muslims, Roman Catholics, Jews, and Eastern religions). These ideas or belief systems do not have to be religious, because there are also secular ones like Marxism and

feminism. These ideas can be embodied by transnational actors or institutions that try to find acceptance for these ideas in international relations, but that is not necessary. Examples the religionists put forward are the Anti-Slavery Society, the Catholic Church, and the Muslim Brotherhood. It is important to be aware of this when thinking about the practice of international relations and the role of religious worldviews. I mention this explicitly because the practitioners and professionals that shape the international relations practice can also adhere to these worldviews. That is why the next section deals with the regulative side of the practice.

By analyzing the international relations practice using the distinction between qualifying, foundational, and conditioning, we have become more aware of the normative structure of this practice (Hoogland 2019: 48). I have argued that the context of power politics makes religious actors dependent on the power resources at their disposal. I also pointed out that its actors are state and non-state actors, although the latter are strongly dependent on the state to have influence. I have also maintained that the international relations practice is qualified by justice, founded by power, and conditioned by – among others – ultimate commitments. That means, in short, that we know the rules that are constitutive for the game. As with chess, these rules enable and allow for a certain course of play that can lead to a draw or to the victory of one of the two players. The rules do not, however, provide us with concrete interpretations of the ideas and ideals of the actors who are active in this practice. They do not explain the actual course that an individual game of chess shows, because that depends on the players that shape the practice. They influence – not determine – the course of the game. Take, for example, two chess players. They both have their own motivation, style, preferences, and their own commitments, and that influences the way they play the game. That is what the regulative side is about (Hoogland 2019: 48–50).

Box 10.1 Religious actors and (religious) worldviews in the Russia–Ukraine War (Polinder, 2022)

The role of the Russian Orthodox Church and the role of Patriarch Kirill can be seen as part of the revival of religion. In response to the global spread of modernity, many religions have mobilized and manifested themselves more and more publicly. Religions mobilize and resist and sometimes offer an 'alternative home' for their adherents. They oppose the liberal views that modernity has forced upon them, such as same-sex marriage, equal rights for women and men, and the right to abortion. That is also what is happening in Russia.

If we would just look at religious actors in Russia, we would focus on the role of the Russian Orthodox Church and religious leaders like Patriarch Kirill. However, we would overlook the role of religion through the

worldviews of the practitioners of international relations practice, such as politicians, policymakers, and advocacy officers. The concept of worldview shows religious dynamics and complexities we would otherwise overlook.

For example, as I mentioned above, the resistance of the Russian Orthodox Church also contains an aversion to certain modern cultural influences. It does not do the situation justice to call it all religion, because sometimes there are also cultural or sociological considerations involved. The term worldview takes that into account. The use of the term worldview does also more justice to the fact that Europe and the United States do not have a neutral – non-religious – position. They also look and act from a certain worldview. In the case of President Putin is seems appropriate to state that he – under the influence of the Russian Orthodox Church – adheres to a quasi-religious worldview. It resembles a religious worldview in many ways (it also refers to transcendence), but ultimately the goal is immanent: the here and now. It functions as a political religion. That means that religion fulfills an ideological function in relation to Putin's political ambitions.

Religious or quasi-religious worldviews are a conditioning factor and influence the way President Putin makes his decisions. That means that the Russia–Ukraine war is not a religious conflict with a political component, but a political conflict with a religious component. President Putin is a state leader whose central responsibility is to serve the interests of his country. He has a different position in this than a terrorist who can sacrifice his own life for a higher ideal. Putin is a state leader. This means that he cannot simply apply his own apocalyptic views to politics, because he is restricted from deciding to risk the existence of his country. As Morgenthau puts it in his book *Politics Among Nations*: 'The individual may say for himself: 'fiat justitia, pereat mundus' (let justice be done, even if the world perish), but the state has no right to say so in the name of those who are in its care.' (Morgenthau and Thompson 1985, 12)

10.4.4 Regulative Side of the Practice: The Role of the Practitioners and Their (Religious) Worldviews

As I set out above earlier, the constitutive side of a practice is about its structure. The regulative side explains what moves people to participate in a practice and contribute to the development of it. The regulative side draws attention to the ideas and worldviews that guide and judge the interpretation and unfolding of the constitutive rules.

The crucial question is which actors are responsible for the realization of the regulative side. Since the NPA is about professional practices, I consider professionals who shape the international relations practice as the responsible ones. Thomas says, for example, that all people are responsible for the way the international relations practice manifests itself.

> People do not only 'use' theory to explain events in international relations (mainstream theory); all of us, as scholars, workers, bankers, as citizens, and students 'do' theory every day, every day all of us live out a theory of International Relations. In the way we 'act', the lifestyle choices we make, in what we consume, what we wear, how we travel, and so every day all of us live our 'the local politics of world politics'.
>
> (Thomas 2020: 73)

Thomas makes an interesting point here because there is a relationship between the everyday behavior of citizens, the way states behave, and the way the international relations practice unfolds. However, including ordinary people in the NPA would make theorizing impossible, because theorizing also means making distinctions. There is a professional and functional difference between citizens and practitioners. Ministers of foreign affairs, diplomats, and policymakers act in the international domain through institutions, including the state. The state leader has a professional responsibility to ensure that the state tries to strive for just relations, based on the position of power it has been given.

In this section, I will limit myself to the practitioners who participate in the international relations practice through the state. But there are many more practitioners. For example, people who work for religious organizations, faith-based organizations, or religious non-governmental organizations can also participate in international relations. Through their institutions, they condition the development of the international relations practice. This shows how the NPA takes into account the role of religion in a sophisticated way. The question remains still of how much influence should be attributed to the conditioning side of the practice. Since I present the contours of – no more and no less – an alternative approach I will not discuss this further here.

The Amsterdam School takes scientific knowledge very seriously, but always in relation to the fullness of human experience. Theories provide clarification, but scientists always should consider how this relates to the everyday experience. Similarly, a state leader could be an expert in all kinds of theories of international politics, but the success of his policies depends very much on his ability to use the theoretical insights in his daily politics and to weigh the different rules and norms of the practice. In this process, a practitioner is influenced by his personal beliefs or worldview to make decisions. That is not always that easy. It requires a specific competence, or a virtue such as prudence as Morgenthau calls it, to reconcile the political power principles with someone's personal worldview.

> There can be no political morality without prudence; that is, without consideration of the political consequences of seemingly moral action. Realism, then, considers prudence – the weighting of the consequences of alternative political actions – to be the supreme virtue in politics.
>
> (Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 12)

Morgenthau did not believe that the Christian religion could be of relevance here. He saw an inescapable discrepancy between the commands of Christian teaching. Christian ethics, and the requirements of political success.

> …it is impossible, if I may put it in somewhat extreme and striking terms, to be a successful politician and a good Christian.
>
> (Rice 2008: 276 fn. 71)

Niebuhr, in contrast, argued that it was possible to be a Christian in politics.

> I do not think we will sacrifice any value in the 'realist' approach to the political order (…) if we define the moral ambiguity of the political realm in terms which do not rob it of moral content.
>
> (Rice 2008: 276)

What both thinkers make clear is that the ideas and beliefs of the participants are relevant for the unfolding and realization of the practice. Morgenthau considers it impossible to combine a religious worldview with politics while Niebuhr considers it possible. Waltz also notices the responsibility of the participants in the development of the practice of international politics, because virtuosity, skills, and determination can help to transcend the structural anarchical constraints of the system (Waltz 1986: 344).

In contrast to Morgenthau's lower prudence, Kamminga pleads for higher prudence as the supreme virtue in international politics (Kamminga 2008: 7). This kind of prudence must accept the theoretical wisdom of cosmopolitan justice. The adjective cosmopolitan refers to the idea that principles should be accepted 'from a point of view in which each individual person's prospects are equally represented: "every human being has a global stature as the ultimate unit of moral concern"' (Kamminga 2008: 5). For Kamminga, this perspective is superior to the internationalist position because it takes the individual person as fundamental. It does not give privilege to contingent national states like the internationalist perspective does (Kamminga 2008: 6). Kamminga speaks about the theoretical wisdom of cosmopolitan justice because he does not ascribe direct political relevance to it. It functions as a pre-political perspective that gives a sense of direction (Kamminga 2008: 8). For that reason he introduces the term cosmopolitan pluralism which he sees as practical wisdom because it takes into account that cosmopolitan justice has to compete with order and survival and that it cannot be realized completely. The practical cosmopolitan will be a value pluralist (Kamminga 2008: 9).

According to Kamminga, the virtue of higher prudence has to meet the following requirements. First, leaders should pursue cosmopolitan civic education. Second, a leader should be willing to violate the core interests and values of his citizens for the purpose of cosmopolitan justice and willing to do more than their share even when others do not fulfill their obligations. Third, even if the strive for cosmopolitan justice violates core national interests, leaders

should do their best to find ways to fulfill justice be it on a lower level (Kamminga 2008: 12). Based on that we are able to describe the role of the practitioner in international politics as follows. I use an original passage of Morgenthau which was modified by Kamminga (Kamminga 2008: 12, 13; Morgenthau & Thompson 1985: 12).

> The practitioner of international politics takes a sense of direction from the principle of cosmopolitan justice and operate from the practical wisdom of cosmopolitan pluralism meaning that both individual and state must judge political action by cosmopolitan principles of justice. The individual may say for herself: 'Fiat justitia, pereat mundus (Let justice be done, even if the world perish),' but the state cannot do so, because the anarchical structure forces the state to respect the principle of self-help. For that reason, there can be no political morality without higher prudence – the weighting of the consequences of alternative political actions in the light of the ethical overridingness of cosmopolitan justice, thus for the world's citizens and future generations, and the deep specific concerns of its own citizens – to be the supreme virtue in politics. Ethics in the abstract, judges action by its conformity with cosmopolitan moral principles; political ethics judges action by its overall political consequences.
>
> (Kamminga 2008)

As said the regulative side directs the unfolding of the constitutive side (the structure) of the practice. The pistical aspect of the constitutive side of the practice conditions or facilitates the unfolding of the practice of international relations. The qualifying function of the international relations practice is justice through the means of power. The contextual side shows the possible actors that play a role in the international relations practice. For example, in the case of the global warming issue, there are many states and non-state actors of a religious (or faith-based) and secular nature involved. The constitutive side sheds light on the various aspects and norms – political, juridical, biotic, economic, and pistical – that play a role. These aspects condition or qualify – meaning that they limit and guide the unfolding of – the practice of international relations and its dealing with global warming. The pistical aspect draws our attention to the ultimate commitments and worldviews that play a role in dealing with the climate issue. These ultimate commitments could have been the result of religious faith, but they can also be a secular, quasi-religious, or ideological commitment to protect the earth and future generations. How do these commitments facilitate the international relations practice which is qualified by justice and founded by power? That is one of the questions that the practitioners of international relations practice have to deal with. The regulative side draws our attention to that question. The players of the practice are directing the unfolding of the practice and therefore the way in which the pistical, ethical, and political aspects are functioning. In this process, they are also influenced by their own (religious) worldviews. The consequence is that the outcome

of the negotiations and international cooperation on, for example, the climate change issue also depends on the worldview that the participants of the negotiations hold. What are their deeper ultimate commitments and beliefs? Do they hold a political theology? Is there room for hope or redemption in their worldview and acting? How do they see the practice of international relations? Do they approach it primarily as something political or do they also consider the social and cultural side of it? Is their worldview inspiring them to strive for cosmopolitan justice or does it privilege national interests? How do the participants in the debate weigh their religious principles, convictions, or values in relation to the requirements of political success? How prudent are they? [6]

As stated earlier, the state leader, minister of foreign affairs, or diplomat who is a player in this practice is in dire need of prudence, or more correctly, higher prudence. The state leader needs to consider acting rightly in a very complex context and situation which requires the virtue of moral discernment. Gustafson describes this moral discernment as the ability to discern what we are supposed to do and to see what is there. It is a certain sensitivity, insight, empathy, assessment, imagination, or appreciation. It concerns the ability to distinguish the relevant information from the irrelevant, and correct interpretations from wrong ones. To see the situation and all its relations and complexity, and to assess them accurately and fairly. Not only affection play a role in that, but reason as well. People with discernment have gained a certain intuition that leads to moral accuracy, wisdom, and convincing authenticity when they act (Gustafson 1974: 99–119). The NPA can be helpful here because it indicates the various dimensions that are at play. It requires the participant to reflect on his own convictions, commitments, and worldview and how it influences his participation in the practice of international relations. Earlier on, Buijs and I described this situation as follows:

> Each actor on each level has a certain power, but none is all-powerful. New issues may constantly arise, new constellations of power will be formed, new incidents may happen. Each player has to formulate long term goals and at the very same time act on a day-to-day basis. There is strategy and there are tactics. In soccer-terms: this is the actual game itself in all its unpredictability. Here one has to form relationships and coalitions, one has to compromise and find second-best or third-best solutions that nevertheless seem preferable to alternatives that are even worse. Everything comes together here: one's personality and its existential and psychological make-up, one's relation to the team and the club, one's ideals and strategic goals, etc. And yet, none of these is nearly sufficient for playing well. Non-discursive 'tacit' knowledge is part of it, as is experience (having been in the game for some time), as is constant on-the-job learning, as is constant training and bodily routines, as are sudden flashy moments of insight, etc. It is about intuitively thinking three steps ahead, while taking one step at a time. 'Craftsmanship' is called for. Here Machiavelli comes to mind, with his emphasis on *fortuna* – the wind

> of luck that may be supporting you from behind or come at you from adverse directions – and on *virtù* – the skills, the cleverness, even the shrewdness, the sense of timing that one may have (or lack) to deal with the vicissitudes of life. It becomes immediately clear that good intentions are not nearly enough to produce the good (and neither are evil intentions simply enough to produce evil). However, informed by a Christian tradition that knows of the 'affirmation of ordinary life' we should resist the temptation to look down upon the swamp, the low ground, and instead ascribe due respect to it, as part of creation, as the field when human responsibility is played out. Here is where the norms are 'positivized'. Here is where the rubber hits the road. But here we also stumble on what Martha Nussbaum has called the 'fragility of goodness'.
>
> (Buijs & Polinder 2020: 321, 322)

10.4.5 Religious Sensitivity and Literacy in Practice: Some Recommendations

How should practitioners of the international relations practice relate to religious actors and religious worldviews in such a mess of competing interests? There are a few guidelines that might be helpful.

In the first place, practitioners should be aware of the ambivalence of religion. Involving religious worldviews and religious actors does not solely indicate a positive contribution because religion can also have a negative influence. For example, according to Hunter, religion is most effective when used as an ideology; something the political realists are very critical about (Hunter 2017: 224). For that reason, the most adequate approach is to take the ambivalence of religion as a starting point (Appleby 2000). During the World Economic Forum in 2016, a document appeared that investigated all the different terrains where religion can play a role, like women's emancipation, international trade, the job market, and climate policy. For each of these topics, it is also investigated whether religion can be a limiting factor, or for that same reason, be a solution (Grim et al. 2016). The World Council of Churches published a document in 2013 in which they describe how religion and politics are related in all kinds of ways, sometimes destructive, but often very constructive as well (Raier 2013). Religion, like other factors in international relations, has a Janus face. It can be used as a political instrument to raise the masses, accuse or exclude others, but it can also play a role in dissolving conflicts and peacebuilding.

An example of the latter is the following. At a conference in September 2007, organized by the Royal Academy of The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought in Jordan, 138 Muslim leaders presented a letter. Its message: to declare that the love of God and the love of the neighbor is the common ground between Islam and Christianity (The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought 2007). A worldwide response from the side of Christianity appeared several months later. It was drafted by four scholars at Yale Divinity School's Center for Faith and Culture. About 300 Christian theologians and

leaders endorsed it (Attridge et al. 2007). Critics might hold that religious believers have a particular interest in suggesting that religion aims at mutual understanding and peaceful living together. However, there are also atheists who point out that a majority of the world population is religious and that problems of globalization, such as overpopulation, probably cannot be solved without constructive cooperation between the world religions (see, for example, Philipse 2004: 135). This 'overlapping consensus' shows that religious leaders can be of relevance for international policymaking.

Second, practitioners should cherish the distinction – not separation – between religion and politics. Not only because too much involvement of religious actors and religious worldviews in international politics could make international policy less effective, but also because it might corrupt religion itself. To start with the first one, religious ideals when directly applied to international affairs might be too idealistic, therefore unrealistic hence ineffective. International politics is often about the weighing and balancing of various interests, compromising, second-best solutions, and making dirty hands. The principle of the autonomy of politics is not meant to leave all religious, moral, and normative considerations aside, it is meant to protect the normativity of the political sphere itself. The InterAction Council states the following about it in *World Religions as a Factor in World Politics*:

> While religious movements can wield great positive influence in national politics, too often religion is exploited and abused by political leaders who take advantage of ignorance and sow seeds of insecurity to maintain power. The combination of ignorance, religion and nationalism creates a dangerous potential for war. This powerful dynamic between religion and politics has spurred international conflicts and supported oppressive regimes worldwide, including the disastrous occupation of and degenerating war in Iraq and Afghanistan, the entrenched conflict in Israel/Palestine, the long civil war in Sri Lanka, and new violence in Thailand. In reality, political decisions often contrast sharply with the religious doctrines they purport to invoke. Fundamentalism is not an essential attribute to any religion, but characteristic to many. Our task is to challenge religious leaders to prevent their religions from being misused, isolate the 'religious extremism' that is prone to political exploitation, and support and strengthen moderate religious movements.
>
> (Carlsson 2007)

Despite this gloomy tone, the same document also states that 'still many in the High-level Expert Group saw 'glimmers of hope' in the path moving forward' (Carlsson 2007).

In the third place, develop religious literacy. Religious actors and religious worldviews are not one and the same thing. Religion covers various manifold issues and features. This requires careful scrutiny. Instead of simply accepting

religion at face value, it requires studying what is 'religious' in a certain case. The easiest way is either to embrace religion or to reject it. That is what happened with the religionists and political realists. The religionists may be too quick and uncritical in taking religion seriously and involving it. Political realists tend to minimize religion's role due to the fear of confusing religion and politics. I would suggest recognizing that religion is an unmistakable part of reality, as well as political reality. The task is to look into it and try to find out what the 'religious' phenomenon is about. It is important to determine whether it is a constructive or destructive contribution and to discern how to keep both the political and religious spheres sound.

Fourth, practitioners should dare to weigh and decide whether religious actors or religious worldviews are sufficiently relevant to deal with in a particular situation. Too much focus on the religious dimension of a certain issue, especially when it appeals to their own religious worldview, might cloud their ability to see what is at stake. The primary goal of a practitioner of the international relations practice is to steer the practice through the means of power to more or a bit more justice. Religious worldviews and religious actors are important, but as the NPA shows, there are also cultural, social, and juridical rules that condition the practice.

I base this fourth recommendation, among other things, on the ideas of the political realists. And, on the fact that the religionists do not make convincingly clear how religion should be treated as a separate factor in IR theories. I would like to point to two other scholars here: Hunter and Maurits Berger. Hunter studied three cases in which religion plays a role: Russia's policy regarding the Yugoslav crisis, Turkey's policy toward the Bosnian War, and the European policy regarding Turkey's EU membership. Based on that, she concluded that security has played a decisive role in many cases, more than ideas, ideals, and identity (Hunter 2017: 223). In other words, it is hard power that overrules soft power. For Hunter religion plays a more indirect role through its shaping of the identities of various actors, their self-perceptions and worldviews, culture, and value systems (Hunter 2017: 225).

> Religion's role in shaping actors' behavior in specific cases is fairly limited or at any rate not decisive, especially when security concerns and significant political and economic interests are at stake.
>
> (Hunter 2017: 225)

Hunter maintains that the influence of religion takes place mainly through the international politics of the state (Hunter 2017: 225). Interestingly, many of her other descriptions of religion's role in international relations are similar to the religionists' ones. She describes religion's influence through domestic structures, civil society, public opinion, and political leaders. She points to the fact that religion can be an instrument for policy. However, her conclusion is that religion's influence remains limited in comparison to security issues, and political and economic interests (Hunter 2017: 226–228).

Berger too asked whether Islam is an important factor in international relations and concluded that it 'plays a relatively small role in international relations' (Berger 2010: 25). He comes to three observations:

> First, most issues in international relations involving Muslim countries involve not typical 'Islamic issues', but practical interests and power politics. Second, there is a Western tendency to 'Islamize' foreign politics and politics of Muslim counties – that is, to identity them as 'Islamic' by virtue of stemming from 'Islamic countries'. Third, while Islam may be very important for Muslim self-identity (and therefore, sometimes even be a catalysing factor of conflict), it is questionable whether it plays any role at all in *solving* international disputes, since these revolve ultimately around practical matters.
>
> (Berger 2010: 26)

Berger recognizes the reality of religion's presence but also indicates that it concerns a domestic role in many cases and that there are only a few cases in which Western states make it a part of the international domain. For example, he says that the focus on Islam is disruptive to a true understanding of international relations (Berger 2010: 33). Too much focus on religious arguments and too much attention to religious aspects can cloud a fair judgment of the real issue. In such cases, it is necessary to unwrap and deconstruct the role of religion (Berger 2010: 32). I differ with Berger whether this suffices. Berger claims that, as an outsider, one can never align oneself in a sincere manner with another person's religious convictions in international relations (Berger 2010: 32). But that is not required from outsiders, because religion is not entirely subjective or irrational. Many religious people are well-versed in arguing for their views reasonably and rationally.

Finally, practitioners should be aware of their own stance and their own worldview. Berger claims that the West has taken a secular and non-committal position regarding religion in the international domain. But in doing so, he joins a certain binary view of secular versus religious. I have shown though that, for example, the autonomy of the political is based on political–theological considerations. Berger argues to 'talk to them, but don't talk their talk' and he somehow pretends that Western secular people really know what it is about (Berger 2010: 33). I think that it would be better to be aware of the fact that the distinction between religion and politics is not a neutral stance, but inspired by Christian (Augustinian) ideas. Not because 'religion' or morality should not play a role, but because political issues have a different nature and deserve to be treated as political issues. Just as I encourage religionists and political theorists to be explicit about their political–theological or worldview starting points, the same applies to international politics. One need not talk like a theologian but one should recognize that political–theological considerations and worldviews play a role, also in the so-called 'secular' West. The trick is to know when and how you can address these worldview elements in the

mishmash of factors and actors that can play a role in certain matters (Audi 2000: 69–78).

Instead of Berger's stance in which religious discourse is ignored and deconstructed, I would plead for religious literacy to understand the language of the other person and possibly speak their language as well. Moral discernment is required as well to see everything at play in all its complexity. It is for a reason that the British Academy starts its report – consisting of a literature study and case studies – with the following statement:

> It is rarely easy to discern the complex ways in which religion permeates a conflict, but it is vital for those involved in this area of study and diplomacy to strive to do so if progress is to be made in understanding them. Finally, a word of caution: we must be careful not to give undue prominence to religion in all instances; it is not a major factor in every conflict and there is a risk that it can sometimes come to obscure more deeply rooted causes and motivations.
>
> (Silvestri & Mayall 2015: 2)

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have summarized the positions of the religionists and political realists and I have evaluated their strengths and weaknesses. After that, I proposed a practice approach to international relations based on ideas from the Amsterdam School. It combines the practice ideas developed by MacIntyre with the insights of Dooyeweerd. It leads to a practice-based theory which distinguishes between the context of the practice and the structural and regulative side of it. Within the structural side, it is possible to distinguish between conditioning, qualifying, and foundational norms. This distinction makes it possible to weigh the different aspects and norms that play a role without simplifying in such a way that the theory becomes reductionist. In this way, it integrates the explanatory power of Waltz's theory and the interpretative wisdom of the religionists. For example, the three different norms of a practice become visible in the definition of international relations as follows hereafter: international relations is about the political, social, economic, ethical, religious, cultural (conditioning), and other interactions among state (and even non-state) actors (context) which, because of anarchy, live in a situation of self-help. Therefore, they have to rely on the use of power (foundational) directed by justice (qualifying).

The practice of international relations is, however, not only a sum of conditioning, foundational and qualifying rules. It also has a sense of direction and state leaders and policymakers in particular have the responsibility to develop this practice in such a way that power is executed for the love of justice. Religious beliefs often play a role here, in the sense that state leaders and policymakers are influenced by their worldviews and presuppositions when they are acting in and shaping the practice of international relations.

The NPA combines the strengths of both political realists and religionists and tries to overcome their weaknesses. It overcomes the 'agnostic' view of Morgenthau and gives room for the faith commitment of Niebuhr's Christian realism. At the same time, it provides it with more solid scientific grounds by using practice theory. It does justice to the role of religious actors through the contextual side. It takes into account the role of religious, quasi-religious, and secular worldviews (ideologies) through the pistical aspect of the constitutive side of the international relations practice. It draws attention to the worldviews of the participating professionals that directs the development of the practice. It does not confuse theology with a scientific explanation but gives space to religious concepts in theorizing; navigates between explaining a little about much and explaining much about a little; relates the political domain with economic, juridical, ethical, and religious issues; avoids the suggestion of a neutral, value-free scientific approach and is open about its normativity; limits and characterizes the domain of investigation and selects and prioritizes the various factors; respects the distinction between a scientific theory and policymaking, therefore avoids drawing (over)simplified policy implications from a scientific theory. In sum, with the NPA, I have sketched the contours of a new Christian realism.

My proposal as presented above is tentative and a first step. There is much to improve and to add. From a theoretical perspective, for example, it is difficult to assess the importance of the different sides. Is the qualifying so decisive that the conditioning is completely subordinate? How decisive is structure, or the constitutive side, compared to the regulative side? Case studies to explore this further would be very helpful in this respect.

The main objection or counterargument that can be raised against the use of the NPA is its lack of theoretical explanatory power, which makes it an insufficiently serious alternative to, for example, Waltz's neorealist theory. I am prepared to accept that loss, because the NPA instead offers practitioners (a.o. state leaders and policymakers) more actual guidance in their daily work. Waltz's theory does not. Therefore, his theory is at risk of being applied to international issues, even though it is not intended for that. Also, the NPA justifiably integrates the omnipresence of religion as argued for by the religionists. However, more so than the religionists, it pays attention to religion's theoretical weight and relevance, as well as its limitations.

Notes

1 For a more extensive evaluation of the political realists and religionists, see Polinder (2021; 120–126, 272–275; 278–281).
2 The distinction between high grounds and lowlands comes from Schön (1991).
3 Parts of this have been published elsewhere (Polinder 2019: 263–282).
4 Jan Hoogland is co-author of the chapter I am referring to (Jochemsen & Glas 1997: 64–99).
5 I have adapted this model a little with permission of the author.
6 See, for example, the section 'Inspired Political Leaders' in Polinder and Buijs (2020: 151–208).

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Index

Pages in *italics* refer to figures, pages in **bold** refer to tables, and pages followed by "n" refer to notes.