

# Towards a New Christian Political Realism?

*The Amsterdam School of Philosophy and the  
Role of Religion in International Relations*



Simon Polinder



# **TOWARDS A NEW CHRISTIAN POLITICAL REALISM?**

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**Simon Polinder**

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VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT

## **TOWARDS A NEW CHRISTIAN POLITICAL REALISM?**

The Amsterdam School of Philosophy and the Role of Religion in International Relations

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dr. E.K. Wilson

*For  
my wife Harmke  
Emily  
Arthur*

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction: The Need for a New Religion Paradigm in International Relations and the Potential Contribution of the Amsterdam School of Philosophy

### 1.1. Statement of the Problem

It was during the Second World War, in 1943, that the renowned theologian Reinhold Niebuhr wrote a prayer for a church service. This prayer, which has become known as the Serenity Prayer, decorates many walls all over the world until today: 'God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.'<sup>1</sup> It is an example of how religion, even prayer, can have an impact on the world. Niebuhr made an impact through his writings on religion and international affairs, but also through his prayers. What should we think of this?

Since the last decade of the twentieth century, many scholars have begun to see religion play an increasingly important role in the world.<sup>2</sup> A clear landmark of this

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<sup>1</sup> Elisabeth Sifton, *The Serenity Prayer: Faith and Politics in Times of Peace and War* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2005).

<sup>2</sup> Attention has been paid to religion and international relations in the past, but not as extensively as since the 1990s. This is especially true of the relationship between religion and international relations theory. A counterexample is the organization that preceded the current Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs, called the Council on Religion and International Affairs (CRIA). It was founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1914, who held 'that the ethical principles of the major religions are relevant for the world's political, economic and social problems'. Kenneth W. Thompson, Jerald C. Brauer and Hans J. Morgenthau, *U.S. Policy in the Far East: Ideology, Religion & Superstition* (New

development is Samuel Huntington's article 'The Clash of Civilizations', which appeared in *Foreign Affairs* in 1993.<sup>3</sup> In this article, Huntington posited that the world was moving out of a Western-dominated phase based on Westphalian assumptions.<sup>4</sup> He argued that civilizations that are strongly shaped by religion would more and more come to influence international relations.<sup>5</sup> 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. When I say 'the first', I do not mean to suggest that religion has always been absent from IR theorizing (I will demonstrate the opposite later on in this dissertation) but that it has been perceived that way by mainstream IR.<sup>6</sup> With the latter, I also do not neglect the fact that there are attempts to engage with post-Western or post-American ways of IR.<sup>7</sup>

In the wake of Huntington, many other scholars have written about religion, international relations, and international relations theory, a trend that continues today. The result is that religion has almost become a field of study in its own right within IR or a sub-section like International Political Economy.<sup>8</sup> A clear example of this is the founding of a special section Religion and International Relations at the

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York: Council on Religion and International Affairs, 1968), back cover. The CRIA published a monthly journal devoted to religion and international affairs, called *Worldview*, from 1958 until 1985. The search engine of the archive can be found online. <http://worldview.carnegiecouncil.org/archive/worldview/archive.html> (accessed December 28, 2020). Other examples of attention to religion and international relations are the following publications: William C. Fletcher, *Religion and Soviet Foreign Policy 1945-1970* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973); Max Hayward and William C. Fletcher, eds., *Religion and the Soviet State: A Dilemma of Power* (New York, Washington and London: Praeger, 1969); Eric O. Hanson, *The Catholic Church in World Politics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987); Kenneth W. Thompson, *Religion and International Relations* (New York: Council for Christian Social Action, 1964); Jeffrey Rose and Michael Ignatieff, eds., *Religion and International Affairs* (Toronto: Anansi, 1968); Yaacov Ro'i, ed., *The USSR and the Muslim World: Issues in Domestic and Foreign Policy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1984) This is not an exhaustive list, but an indication that the topic of religion and world affairs was not completely nonexistent before the 1990s. For a systematic overview and a bibliography on religion and IR. Gregorio Bettiza, "Religion and International Relations," *Oxford Bibliographies* (2016); Vendulka Kubálková, "A 'Turn to Religion' in International Relations?" *Perspectives: Review of International Affairs* 17, no. 2 (2009): 28-41.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs* 72, no. 3 (1993). In 1996, the article resulted in a book. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).

<sup>4</sup> For a more detailed account of the Westphalian assumptions, see the introduction of Chapter 3.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 38, 54.

<sup>6</sup> The fact that IR was/is to a large extent an American social science, as Hofman already showed in the 1970s also determines what is mainstream IR. Stanley Hoffmann, "An American Social Science: International Relations," *Daedalus* 106, no. 3 (1977): 41-60.

<sup>7</sup> E.g. Barry Buzan and Ole Wæver, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); N. Deugd, M. E. Drent and P. M. E. Volten, eds., *Towards an Autonomous European IR Approach - Relevance and Strategy* (Groningen; Conference Proceedings; 4 and 5 October 2007).

<sup>8</sup> Thomas F. Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom: Why International Religious Liberty is Vital to American National Security* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 34. In this dissertation, 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.

International Studies Association in 2013. There are scholars that aim at studying and explaining religion in international relations, but there are also scholars that want to explain international relations by including religious factors. Of course, the first can be a stepping stone to the second goal, but that is not guaranteed. As long as the latter has not taken place, it could not be argued that religion has become part of IR, because religion has not been taken into consideration to explain international relations. In fact, it seems that the greatest challenge is not whether religion in international relations is accepted as an interesting, insightful topic to study, but to what extent IR theory should incorporate the factor religion. Many scholars have criticized the discipline of International Relations for ignoring the role of religion in international relations. These scholars claim that 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. This group of scholars, whom I call ‘religionists’, ‘paradigm challengers’ or ‘religion scholars’ for convenience, therefore urges that within IR more attention should be paid to the role of religion. Existing theories will have to be replaced or modified. 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 a 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.

Two books that illustrate this development are Scott Thomas’s *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations* (2005), and Nukhet Sandal and Jonathan Fox’s *Religion and International Relations Theory* (2013). Thomas’s book can be considered emblematic of the development of the field of religion and IR.<sup>9</sup> Thomas starts his book by describing three events: the Iranian Revolution, the Polish Revolution, and September 11. He shows that in each case, policymakers and practitioners were informed and guided by secular explanations. As a result, they overlooked religious aspects of international affairs and failed to address them adequately. For Thomas, this demonstrates the marginalization of religion and culture in international relations, with the return of religion therefore raising the following question:<sup>10</sup>

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.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Thomas’s book was preceded by an article in 2000. Scott M. Thomas, “Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously: The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Society,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 815-841.

<sup>10</sup> Scott M. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 1-12.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

Sandal and Fox's book tries to accommodate the multiple ways in which religion and world affairs interact by adapting IR to religion's role in the world. Their approach is,

to first develop a comprehensive list of ways in which religion can potentially influence international relations, then to take this list and examine whether and how each item can be integrated into an existing international relations paradigm. (...) It maintains the insights contained in the existing paradigm.<sup>12</sup>

The works of Huntington, Thomas, Sandal 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.<sup>13</sup> In the next section, I will set out the position of the religionists in more detail.

## 1.2. The Religionist Challenge: An Introduction

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.<sup>14</sup>

In the past, there have been various paradigm challengers in IR. Realism was a reaction to idealism, and social constructivism was an attack on neorealism, because it

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<sup>12</sup> Nukhet A. Sandal and Jonathan Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory: Interactions and Possibilities* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 5. In an earlier article Fox made it even more explicit: '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.' Jonathan Fox, "Integrating Religion into International Relations Theory," in *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics*, ed. Jeffrey Haynes (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 273. In their 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, *Religion in International Relations Theory*, 30.

<sup>13</sup> Within the confines of this research, only scholars or theorists who deal with religion and international relations and/or religion and IR theory are considered as 'religionist'. Scholars who write about religion in closely related fields such as the social and political sciences and not in International Relations per se are therefore excluded. E.g. Kenneth D. Wald and Clyde Wilcox, "Getting Religion: Has Political Science Rediscovered the Faith Factor?" *The American Political Science Review* 100, no. 4 (2006).

<sup>14</sup> Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 75, 76.

thought that important elements were left out.<sup>15</sup> 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.<sup>16</sup>

Since the 1990s, the scholars I call religionists have added a new topic to this list: religion.<sup>17</sup> 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. They challenge the IR paradigm on several fronts and hope to create a revolution within IR so that religion will be taken seriously. The 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:

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<sup>15</sup> There has been some criticism on the use of the term idealism. Lucian M. Ashworth, “Where are the Idealists in Interwar International Relations,” *Review of International Studies* 32, no. 2 (2006). Also, there is increasing unease with the view that the development of IR took place through debates. Schmidt states that: “This story of the field’s evolution is, in turn, often buttressed by the closely related account of the field evolving through a series of “great debates”, beginning with the disciplinary defining “great debate” between “idealists” and “realists” and extending perhaps to the latest debate today between “rationalists” and “reflectivists”. This particular construction of the field’s history tends to have the effect of making the present debate a matter that all serious students of IR must focus on while relegating previous debates to obscurity.” Brian C. Schmidt, “On the History and Historiography of International Relations,” in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE, 2013), 2.

<sup>16</sup> Jill Steans and others, *An Introduction to International Relations Theory. Perspectives and Themes*, third ed. (Harlow etc.: Pearson, 2010), 103-228.

<sup>17</sup> 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 Jouston, 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 Hoerber 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. Some religionists have criticized Huntington’s ‘clash of civilizations’, but that does not negate his agreement with the religionist position. E.g. Michael Barnett, “Another Great Awakening? International Relations Theory and Religion,” in *Religion and International Relations Theory*, ed. Jack L. Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 5; Jonathan Fox, “Clash of Civilizations or Clash of Religions: Which is a More Important Determinant of Ethnic Conflict?” *Ethnicities* 1, no. 3 (2001): 295; Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations* (New York, etc.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 115-135; Jonathan Fox, “Lessons on Religion and Conflict Resolution Based on Empirical Studies of Religion and Conflict,” *Proceedings of Conference Religion and Conflict Resolution* (2002): 34-36; Jeffrey Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion* (Harlow etc: Longman, 2007), 4-7; Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 24; Megan Shore, “Religious Conflict Resolution and the Case of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission,” in *Religion and Conflict Resolution: Christianity and South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission*, ed. Megan Shore (Farnham; Burlington: Ashgate, 2009), 13.

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.<sup>18</sup>

The way in which the religionists want to consider religion varies. There are religionists who do not offer alternatives, but other religionists 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.<sup>19</sup> However, the common ground can then be presented in the following main thesis that virtually always goes together with one or more subtheses.

Main thesis: *IR has to consider the role of religion in the world.*<sup>20</sup>

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.*

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<sup>18</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 48.

<sup>19</sup> Religionists who propose an alternative are, for example: Michael Barnett, Jonathan Fox, Patrick James, Peter Katzenstein, Vendulka Kubáľková, Ralph Pettman, John Rees, Nukhet Sandal, Jack Snyder and Scott Thomas. Examples of religionists that want to integrate it in existing approaches are Bech, Cho, Huntington, Katzenstein, Sandal, and Snyder. Emily Cochran Bech and Jack L. Snyder, "Conclusion: Religion's Contribution to International Relations Theory," in *Religion and International Relations Theory*, ed. Jack L. Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 204; Il Hyun Cho and Peter J. Katzenstein, "In the Service of State and Nation: Religion in East Asia," in *Religion and International Relations Theory*, ed. Jack L. Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 190; Jonathan Fox and Nukhet A. Sandal, "Toward Integrating Religion into International Relations Theory," *Zeitschrift Für Internationale Beziehungen* 17, no. 1 (2010): 157; Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 33-35, 37. I consider attempts that only focus on the integration of religion in IR theory without discussing the deficiencies of existing approaches also as religionist, because in all cases it is assumed that religion is currently not sufficiently dealt with in IR. Barnett, *Another Great Awakening?*, 105-110; Fox and Sandal, *Toward Integrating Religion into International Relations Theory*, 1-23; Peter J. Katzenstein, "Civilizational States, Secularisms, and Religions," in *Rethinking Secularism*, eds. Craig Calhoun, Marc Jurgensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (Oxford, New York, etc.: Oxford University Press, 2011), 145-162; Vendulka Kubáľková, "Towards an International Political Theology," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 675-704; Ralph Pettman, *Reason, Culture, Religion: The Metaphysics of World Politics* (New York, N.Y., etc.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 157-161; John A. Rees, *Religion in International Politics and Development: The World Bank and Faith Institutions* (Northampton: Edward Elgar, 2011); Nukhet A. Sandal and Patrick James, "Religion and International Relations Theory: Towards a Mutual Understanding," *European Journal of International Relations* 17, no. 3 (2011): 3-25; Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory* Jack L. Snyder, "Introduction," in *Religion and International Relations Theory*, ed. Jack L. Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 7-20.

<sup>20</sup> The sequence of the main thesis and the three subtheses is important. For example, Hanson is a religionist, but the larger part of his writings on religion is intended to show the applicability of his theoretical framework and not the validity of the main thesis. Eric O. Hanson, *Religion and Politics in the International System Today* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 123.

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, 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. Though the religionists subscribe to the main thesis, they may differ in the extent to which they support the subtheses.

As indicated earlier, this group of religionist thinkers is not entirely homogeneous and united; there is significant diversity among them. In the first place, the degree to which they contribute to the main claim differs. Some of the religionists belong to the group that is leading and dominating the debate, which includes Farr, Fox, Haynes, Patterson, Philpott, Thomas, Sandal, Sandler and Snyder.<sup>21</sup> By 'leading' and 'dominating' I mean that these scholars were the first in dealing with the topic, that the vast amount of literature comes from them and that others refer to them: you cannot discuss the topic without mentioning them. Other participants in the debate on religion and IR, whom I call the middle group, build upon the first set of scholars. I am thinking of Barnett, Chaplin, Gelot, Glazier, Hatzopoulos, Joustra, Kubáľková, Luoma-aho, Petitio, Saunders, Tibi and Wilson. Finally, there are those who primarily draw on the arguments provided by the others and try to make their own points based on the renewed attention for religion, for example by advocating a certain theoretical approach. Scholars in this group are Bernbaum, Cho, Fitzgerald, Hanson, Hehir, Katzenstein, Laustsen, Lynch, Pettman, Skillen and Waever.

In the second place, the religion scholars have different views about the way in which religion should have a place in IR. Vendulka Kubáľková advocates a radically alternative approach, namely International Political Theology, whereas Fox and Sandal try to integrate religion into the existing theories.<sup>22</sup> Most members of this religion group are located between these two extreme positions. The differences among the religionists often have to do with ontological and epistemological assumptions. Fox and Shmuel Sandler are more positivist-oriented. They expect that the integration of religion into international relations will follow in the manner in which nationalism and ethnicity have become accepted and, to a more or lesser extent, integrated as factors of importance

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<sup>21</sup> Huntington is also a religionist. As I stated earlier, the religious element of Huntington's argument about the clash of civilization has barely been taken seriously in earlier debates. That is why his role as a leader in the debate regarding religion in IR has been limited, even though he was one of the first. Categorizing him among the group of followers or copyists would therefore not do him justice. Instead, one could say that he holds an individual position.

<sup>22</sup> Kubáľková, *Towards an International Political Theology*.

in IR theories since the early 1990s. They expect that given the fact that global terrorism is so intertwined with religion, students of international relations will be compelled to study the impact of religion in the international arena. They consider religion's influence on international relations not a primary causal factor, but 'among the most important, and perhaps the most important, of intervening variables'. They also describe how religion could be integrated in constructivism, realism, and liberalism.<sup>23</sup> For Thomas, who wants to go beyond positivism and prefers an interpretivist approach, it would not help to add the religious factor to existing concepts of theories of international relations, because it easily leads to misclassification of religion as a variable like ideology or belief systems.<sup>24</sup>

Similar epistemological and ontological differences play a role when it comes to the understanding of what religion itself is. Most of the religionists, which includes some of the most prominent ones, justify their attention for religion based on religion's distinctive nature. These scholars see religion as *sui generis*, which means that religion is seen as an essentially distinct type among other human endeavors, such as politics, economics, and art. However, there is also a minority of religionists who do not see religion as *sui generis*. They argue that what should be scrutinized by IR is not religion as simply 'something out there' in the world, but the political impact of (using) religion.<sup>25</sup> This group finds it important to study history to avoid talking about religion as a fixed and universal phenomenon. The first group, however, is worried that historical work will dissolve the category of religion as if religion does not exist, because it is ultimately a construction. These two approaches seem to oppose each other, which would make it less plausible to present the religionists as a coherent group. However, as William Cavanaugh, who is not a religionist, points out elsewhere with respect to opposing approaches to the study of religion: '[W]e need not take such an approach. Religion does exist, but as a constructed category.'<sup>26</sup> In other words, it is possible to combine the two approaches. In that case, it is taken for granted that religion can be distinguished from other human endeavors, while considering that the category religion itself is constructed whether or not as a

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<sup>23</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 166, 169, 170-172, 178, 179.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 76.

<sup>25</sup> I base this distinction partly on William T. Cavanaugh, "What is Religion?" in *Religion and International Relations: A Primer for Research* (University of Notre Dame: Mellon Initiative on Religion Across the Disciplines, 2013), 56-67. Two typical examples of religionists who critically describe the way religion has been constructed are Hurd and Thomas. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "A Suspension of (Dis)Belief: The Secular-Religious Binary and the Study of International Relations," in *Rethinking Secularism*, eds. Craig Calhoun, Marc Jurgensmeyer and Jonathan VanAntwerpen (Oxford, New York, etc: Oxford University Press, 2011), 166-184. Thomas takes the definition of Alasdair MacIntyre as his starting point, meaning that religion should be seen as a type of social tradition that is part of a broader debate about the nature of the good within a particular community and that this debate cannot be separated from the specific cultural and social context, because it is part of that context. This definition differs from, for example, Weber and Geertz's understanding of religion, because it acknowledges that religious ideas, rules, norms, principles, and moral judgments are dependent on social life. They are not statements with which rational individuals can agree or disagree. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 88, 89.

<sup>26</sup> Cavanaugh, *What is Religion?*, 66.

result of political motives.

The assumption that religion, even though it is constructed, can be distinguished from other human activities is important for the claim that religion should be taken into account by IR theories. For that reason, quite a few religionists argue for religion's distinctiveness. This idea is primarily based on their conviction that religion concerns the ultimate, transcendent, or supernatural.<sup>27</sup> I will discuss this in more detail in Section 1.6. below.

The academic output of the religionists are mainly volumes and books. However, they have also published in major journals such as *Foreign Affairs*, *Annual Review of Political Science*, *World Politics*, and the *European Journal of International Relations*.<sup>28</sup> Other journals that have published articles are *Terrorism and Political Violence*, *International Theory*, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, and *Third World Quarterly*. Since 2003, there is also a special multidisciplinary and policy-oriented journal in which many religionists publish, called *The Review of Faith and International Affairs*, although the official impact of this journal, the so-called 'impact factor', in the overall academic literature is low. Its worldwide impact is however impressive. In 2018, according to the Annual Report of the Institute of Global Engagement, over 80.000 full-text articles were downloaded from the online archives.<sup>29</sup> Based on a search on the internet, it also seems that the religionists have been successful in introducing religion in the curricula of many universities in the United States, United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, continental Europe. They have also been able to establish various centers that are devoted to religion and international affairs. Besides that, they have been able to found a section Religion and International Relations (REL) at the International Studies Association, and the Standing Group Religion and Politics at the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR).<sup>30</sup>

### 1.3. Research Questions and Aims

This dissertation addresses the concern of the religionists by investigating in detail what their position entails and to what extent their statements are plausible. It does so by means of the following main research question: *To what extent could the claims of the*

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<sup>27</sup> For example: 'The unique explanatory power of religion comes from the distinctive relationship people have with religion and the otherworldly perspective it provides.' Rebecca A. Glazier, *Bringing Religion into International Relations: The Effects of Providential Beliefs on US Foreign Policy* (Ann Arbor: Proquest, 2011), 3

<sup>28</sup> These journals belong to the top 10 out of 161 journals in the category 'Political Science' and out of 85 journals in the category 'International Relations'.

<sup>29</sup> The Institute of Global Engagement, *2018 Annual Report*, 25.

<sup>30</sup> This overview is limited to the academic output that is strictly religionist. There is much more literature on religion and IR in general and much more information about centers and websites on religion and international affair. Bettiza, *Religion and International Relations*.

*religionists be substantiated and what would be the implications for IR theory if their claims are plausible indeed?* To answer this question in Part I, I first critically reconstruct the arguments and assumptions of these scholars by answering the first sub-question: *what does the position of the so-called religion scholars within IR exactly entail?* In Part II, I answer the second sub-question: *To what extent is this new group of scholars right in their criticism of two dominant theories, namely Hans Morgenthau's (1904-1980) classical realism and Kenneth Waltz's (1924-2013) neorealism, and do they have to be revised?* Do these theories in fact ignore religion and do they do so because of the reasons the advocates of religion in IR bring up? Moving over to Part III, I examine the implications for IR in my third sub-question: *What are the strengths and weaknesses of both positions, and to what extent could a so-called practice approach do justice to the challenge of the adherents of religion, while at the same time upholding insights of the realist school?* When answering each of these sub-questions, I will use insights derived from the Amsterdam School of Philosophy, also called Neo-Calvinist or Reformational Philosophy (more about it follows soon hereafter).

Thus this dissertation's twofold aim is: the critical reconstruction and evaluation of the debate between the religionists and mainstream IR and, secondly, furthering the debate by developing contours of an alternative approach.

## **1.4. Scientific and Societal Relevance**

There is a range of arguments that indicate the urgency of this research project. In the first place, the religionist criticism has the potential to change IR. The religion scholars make a strong statement in the sense that they criticize the adequacy of existing mainstream IR theories.<sup>31</sup> If true, their criticism could lead to a revision of prominent and influential theories. Until now, as far as I am aware, none of the IR theorists the religionists criticize have answered the critique.<sup>32</sup> Secondly, with more than fifty religionist scholars writing

<sup>31</sup> Eric Patterson even speaks of the fourth debate in IR. Eric Patterson, *Politics in a Religious World: Building a Religiously Informed Foreign Policy* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 15-34.

<sup>32</sup> IR theorist Robert Keohane is an exception when he says that 'the attacks of September 11 reveal that all mainstream theories of world politics are relentlessly secular with respect to motivation'. According to Keohane, these theories ignore the impact of religion, despite the fact that world-shaking political movements have so often been fueled by religious fervor. In the same article, he also writes: 'My argument is that our theories provide important components of an adequate post-September 11 conceptualization of world politics, but that we need to alter some of our assumptions in order to rearrange these components into a viable theoretical framework.' Robert O. Keohane, *Power and Governance in a Partially Globalized World* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), 272-273. Cf. *Ibid.*, 7. Keohane does not respond directly to the religionist complaint that IR neglects religion and also does also not have the ambition to proceed with researching religion: 'However, since I have few insights into religious motivations in world politics, I will leave this subject to those who are more qualified to address it.' *Ibid.*, 272. Another exception to the rule that none of the mainstream IR theorists have responded to the criticism, is the interview with 'soft' realist Robert Gilpin. In that interview, he says that religion 'is obviously extraordinarily important' today, because it relates to important aspects of the identity of individual and groups. He says that 'religion is certainly not extraneous; indeed, religion is becoming much more important'. Ken Booth

today, it would be irresponsible to neglect their arguments and position any longer. My unique contribution to this debate is that I reconstruct the religionist position and present them as one group that provides three arguments (the three subtheses) to change current IR theory on religion. Thirdly, academics in the field of IR might have a bias against religion and this could lead to partiality with respect to religion. This bias could be the result of the societal context of IR as a discipline, because this context is very Western and characterized by the separation and privatization of religion as distinct from politics. This should at least make Western academics cautious not to close the religionist point too quickly and easily.

The fourth reason to execute this research is that it adds a European or continental element to the current debate, because of my academic context as a researcher. This is important, because the debate on religion and IR is mainly an American debate, which is not surprising since IR as a discipline itself is still dominated by the United States. An illustration of the latter point is the article in the *Handbook of International Relations* in which Monica Duffy Toft writes on religion and IR. Most of it is American scholarship.<sup>33</sup> A European perspective has the potential to contribute to this debate, because Europe has a longer and different history than the United States in dealing with religious diversity. It has come from a time in history when it dominated many areas in the world and has moved to a postcolonial era, which has left it with clearly less direct influence. This development has affected the foreign policies of the various European countries. Mixed instruments, soft and normative power, instead of a mere reliance on military power, characterize its policies. The experience with religious diversity is also expressed in the different domestic arrangements of religion and politics in various European countries. There are state churches, privileged churches, and there are countries with a strict separation of church and state (*laïcité*).

In the fifth place, I have chosen to examine and evaluate the debate between the religionists and mainstream IR from the perspective of the Amsterdam School of Philosophy, which adds a new perspective. I have been influenced to do so, because of an article by Thomas, who has pointed out that neo-Calvinism provides fruitful insights to further the discussion on religion and IR theory. He states that neo-Calvinism with its early criticism on the Enlightenment project comes close to many post-positivist approaches. According to Thomas, it emphasizes the impossibility of the separation between facts and values. It argues that there is no objective conception of reality, but that we are always faced with competing world-and-life views through which people interact with the world. He also maintains that the attention of neo-Calvinism for theory

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and others, "Conversations in International Relations: Interview with Robert Gilpin," *International Relations* 19, no. 3 (2005): 361, 362.

<sup>33</sup> Monica Duffy Toft, "Religion and International Relations Theory," in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons, 2nd ed. (London: SAGE, 2013), 673-691.

as everyday social practice opens the door for new ways of theorizing religion in IR.<sup>34</sup>

In many ways, the current religion-international relations debate appears to be a repetition of previous debates. Whereas those previous debates for example concerned economics or ethnicity, the debate today is centered on religion. The debates therefore often share a similar character, as they ultimately always lead to discussions about ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Aided by some insights from the Amsterdam School of Philosophy, I would like to show how to further the debate on religion and IR.

Finally, existing attempts to deal with the challenge of the emergence of the religion paradigm are, in my view, not very successful or satisfactory. To illustrate my point, I will give two examples of such serious attempts. The approaches I have in mind are Sandal and Fox's book *Religion and International Relations* (2013), which I already mentioned, and Emily Cochran Bech and Jack Snyder's conclusion in the volume *Religion and International Relations Theory* (2013).<sup>35</sup> In order to demonstrate the shortcomings of these two approaches, I will discuss them in more detail.

Sandal and Fox aim to integrate the manifold manifestations of religion in the world into existing IR theories. They argue that religion plays a role in international affairs, but is still wrongly neglected in IR theories for various reasons, such as secularization theory, the Westphalian system, and positivist interpretations.<sup>36</sup> They continue with a comprehensive list of ways in which religion can potentially influence international relations. This list includes religious legitimacy, religious worldviews, religious states, non-state religious actors, transnational religious movements (including religious fundamentalist movements), transnational issues which intersect with religion (including human rights, proselytizing, holy places, family planning, and stem cell research), and religious identity.<sup>37</sup> From there, they try to integrate and accommodate religion in existing IR theories, which they feel should not be dismissed, even though they fail to adequately account for religion.<sup>38</sup>

Bech and Snyder's aim is to further the debate on religion and international relations (theory), because, for them, the focus on religion poses a challenge to conventional ways of thinking about international politics and to the theoretical debates in that field. The issues they put forward are whether religion is distinct from other belief systems, the relationship of religion with the state, and whether religion poses a challenge to traditional IR theories. They conclude in response to the first issue that theories that analyze secular and religious movements in a common framework have a greater explanatory potential than theoretical frameworks that focus solely on religious movements. In response to the

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<sup>34</sup> Scott M. Thomas, "Living Critically and Living Faithfully in the Global World of the Twenty-First Century," in *Christian Faith, Philosophy & International Relations: The Lamb and the Wolf*, eds. Simon Polinder and Govert J. Buijs (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2020), 73, 78, 79.

<sup>35</sup> Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*; Bech and Snyder, *Religion's Contribution*.

<sup>36</sup> Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*, 2, 3.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 4, 5, 11, 182.

second point, Bech and Snyder doubt whether religion's influence on states or impact through transnational channels warrants a reconsideration of existing IR approaches. Finally, they argue that despite the theoretical challenges that religion poses to IR theories, 'incorporating religion would in each case enhance the subtlety, accuracy, and power of these approaches rather than undermine them'.<sup>39</sup>

My criticism of the two approaches as described above is that they suffer from the same two flaws. In the first place, both fail to address the question of the criteria for expanding existing IR theories. They both tend to put the importance of religion first and adapt IR to it. Sandal and Fox take the significance and relevance of religious actors for granted. Bech and Snyder similarly take the so-called 'global resurgence of religion' to be a fact IR has to deal with. The following quotation from Sandal and Fox illustrates very clearly how IR's assumptions have to conform to the supposed importance of religion:

Whether in our efforts to account for religion's influence we remain true to the core of existing theories or have in effect created new ones is to our eyes a subjective question. It is also one that in our minds proves insignificant next to the imperative of providing a better understanding of what we believe to be a vitally important aspect of international relations.<sup>40</sup>

Secondly, both approaches assume that IR has to incorporate religion, but they fail to demonstrate whether, how and why IR theories currently neglect religion. Sandal and Fox, for example, mention some reasons for the neglect of religion, such as the Peace of Westphalia, positivism and secularization theory, but they do not illustrate how and in which cases these reasons actually explain the neglect of religion.<sup>41</sup> Snyder also assumes that IR neglects religion, but he mentions only one reason: that religion does not fit into the logic of the existing IR paradigms.<sup>42</sup> My reconstruction will not only explain in detail the reasons various religionists put forward to account for the neglect of religion in IR, but it also systematically reviews the various religious phenomena that the religionists put forward to draw attention to the role of religion in world affairs. This will allow my examination to be more comprehensive. In a sense, my research is also more exhaustive, because Fox, Sandal, and Bech and Snyder do not consider the possibility that IR does pay attention to religion after all. They fail to consider the probability that IR theories might have good reasons not to involve religion. My research looks into specific IR theories and tries to find out how they actually deal with religion, and what their considerations are with respect to religion and theory. More specifically, I will investigate the possibility that there are other considerations or reasons that explain the

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<sup>39</sup> Bech and Snyder, *Religion's Contribution*, 208.

<sup>40</sup> Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*, 181.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.* 2.

<sup>42</sup> Snyder, *Introduction*, 2.

dealings of these IR theorists with religion. How I will do so and where I will start is described below.

## 1.5. Methodology

According to Jonathon Moses and Torbjørn Knutsen, '[u]nderneath any given research design and choice of methods lies a researcher's (often implicit) understanding of the nature of the world and how it should be studied.'<sup>43</sup> Moses and Knutsen take methodology as something that is more basic, fundamental and comprehensive than method. Moses and Knutsen explain the difference between methodology and method as if methods are the tools and methodologies the well-equipped toolboxes. Take for example two different approaches to human health: the practice of the 'medical profession' and the 'homeopathic practitioners'. It is not difficult to understand that the two approaches imply different ways of understanding (and hence promoting) human health. It would be a problem when the medical bags of the scientific and homeopathic healers would be inadvertently switched. At the same time, there are tools that both of them use, although in different ways and for different objectives.<sup>44</sup> Method refers to certain research techniques or technical procedures in a discipline, while methodology denotes an investigation of the concepts, theories, and basic principles of reasoning on a subject. It functions on the level of philosophy of science.<sup>45</sup> In the sections on methodology and method, I make use of this distinction to set out how I executed my research. I will start with the methodological part.

### 1.5.1. A Critical Reconstruction

The first part of my research is a critical reconstruction of the religionist position. It summarizes, synthesizes and reconstructs the literature on religion and international relations (theory) of approximately the past two decades and presents it in an ordered fashion. That is necessary, because part of the reason why mainstream theorists do not respond to the criticism might be that there are too many different voices and arguments. Reading all the literature on religion and international relations (theory) leaves the reader confused, because there is no systematic and coherent argument, which makes it difficult to discuss the issue. In order to be able to analyze the religionists, 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 (I discuss this extensively in the section *Constructive Insights of the Amsterdam School*). Within the third level, I

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<sup>43</sup> Jonathon W. Moses and Torbjørn L. Knutsen, *Ways of Knowing. Competing Methodologies in Social and Political Research* (Basingstoke etc.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 2.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 6.

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*

To *reconstruct* the religionist position, I will make use of level one, two and three. In order to *analyze* the religionist position, I will also look at the possible role of worldview assumptions that influence the other levels. The same applies to my analysis of the IR theorists. 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 philosophical or a worldview nature. The fact that these levels cannot be separated also means that it is often helpful to involve this 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.

I take the distinction between the first, second, and the third level from Alexander Wendt. He argues that the first level, the empirical, is necessary to decide which theoretical concepts are best. He calls the second level the level of substantive or domain-specific questions. It 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 is about social theory: how we can explain or understand what is going on in the world. It 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.<sup>46</sup> The third level deals with the social embeddedness, ontology, epistemology and methodology.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 4-7.

<sup>47</sup> The idea that the third level is not only about ontology and epistemology, but also about methodology is taken from Victor van den Bersselaar. He also distinguishes a fourth one which he calls social philosophy and ethics, but that

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 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 questions: how is the object of inquiry to be investigated?<sup>48</sup>

With respect to the four levels as introduced above, I would like to underline the individual character of the different levels and, at the same time, their coherence. In other words, none of the levels can be reduced to any of the other levels and none of them can be viewed separately. To illustrate this, the worldview level concerns an overall vision on reality. Religious, secular, quasi-religious or ideological convictions play a role here. These convictions influence the philosophy of science level, but philosophy of science itself is concerned with the conditions under which science can be conducted, which is therefore a distinct level. It is one of the modes to look at reality. It is therefore important to keep in mind that the influence between the different levels is mutual. In other words, worldview convictions can influence the philosophy of science, but the same is true the other way around. Naturally, this is also true for the other levels.

Through my reconstruction of the religionist position and its stance regarding IR, I am able to discuss its arguments and respond to it from the perspective of IR. I reconstruct this debate in terms of Thomas Kuhn's philosophy of science as a 'paradigm challenge'. I am aware that Kuhn's work has met a lot of criticism. Kuhn has been criticized for not doing justice to the development of science, and because of his incommensurability thesis.<sup>49</sup> As I merely employ Kuhn's concept of paradigms to illustrate the dynamics of the debate, I will not discuss this criticism any further.<sup>50</sup>

I do not literally follow Kuhn, but I use his concept of a paradigm to frame the debate between current mainstream IR and the religionists, especially since Kuhn did not deem it possible to apply his ideas to the social sciences.<sup>51</sup> Kuhn initially used the term 'paradigm' in many different ways, but later he re-defined it as a 'network of shared conceptual assumptions' or a 'disciplinary matrix', the 'entire constellation of beliefs,

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category is not relevant to my research, which is why I refer to the fourth category as social and cultural embeddedness. Victor van den Bersselaar, *Wetenschapsfilosofie in veelvoud* (Bussum: Coutinho, 2003), 17.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>49</sup> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry 'Thomas Kuhn', online available at <https://plato.stanford.edu> (accessed December 28, 2020).

<sup>50</sup> It is for that same reason that I also will not discuss how his ideas differ from Karl Popper's (1902-1994) and the attempt made by Imre Lakatos (1922-1974) to align Popper's vision with Kuhn's.

<sup>51</sup> Schmidt, *History*, 10.

values, techniques, and so on, shared by the members of a given community'.<sup>52</sup> The thinking of a scientific community takes place within a 'paradigm' that governs what scientists are to make of recalcitrant experiences. It consists of a set of institutional practices that governs the conduct of science. It is based on deep commitments to a set of very broad assumptions whose falsity is almost unthinkable. When these assumptions are challenged, this will be seen either as a counter-example that demands amendment of the theory, or as an anomaly.<sup>53</sup> However, sometimes anomalies occur so often that a revolution begins and the old paradigm is replaced. My question is, rather straightforward: is this the case now within IR or can – and perhaps should – the anomalies still be accommodated within the old framework?

In order to do justice to the paradigm challengers and the IR theorists in reconstructing their respective positions, a hermeneutical approach is used. The main characteristic of a hermeneutical approach is that it tries to understand the subject of study from within, which is exactly what I do in reconstructing the position of the religionists: I present the arguments of the various religion scholars as much as possible in one coherent position trying to do justice to each of them individually. Similarly, my approach to the IR theorists is hermeneutical, because I try to understand the IR theorists from within. What I do concerning the IR theorists comes close to what Campbell Craig says, referring to Quentin Skinner, 'to understand Realist works by trying "to characterize what their authors were *doing* in writing them."<sup>54</sup> This approach is necessary, because I attempt to respond to the religionist criticism on their behalf. In being hermeneutical, I use various constructive ideas from the Amsterdam School of Philosophy, which I consider to be of great heuristic value. It provides tools for reflecting on the religious factor while at the same time acknowledging and accounting for its own religious *Sitz im Leben*. Especially the latter point distinguishes it from Critical Theory in IR, which draws attention to the presuppositions of scholars, their contexts and interests, but ignores the religious engagement or commitment that might be playing a role.<sup>55</sup>

Throughout the dissertation key insights from the Amsterdam School will be brought into the discussion. These ideas help to unravel and evaluate the various positions in the debate and they draw attention to dimensions that might otherwise have been overlooked. By addressing these ideas from the beginning, I pave the way for the introduction of an alternative approach from the Amsterdam School in Part III.

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<sup>52</sup> Moses and Knutsen, *Ways of Knowing*, 177; Peter K. Smith, "Philosophy of Science and Its Relevance for the Social Sciences," in *Research Training for Social Scientists: A Handbook for Postgraduate Researchers*, ed. Dawn Burton (London: SAGE Publications, 2000), 16.

<sup>53</sup> Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*, 59.

<sup>54</sup> Campbell Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and Waltz* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), xiii, xiv.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. Chris Brown, "'Turtles all the Way Down': Anti-Foundationalism, Critical Theory and International Relations," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 23, no. 2 (1994): 213-236.

### 1.5.2. Constructive Insights From the Amsterdam School of Philosophy

The analysis of the reconstruction of the religionists, and the confrontation with the realist school, will also take place from the perspective of what can be called the Amsterdam School of Philosophy, developed by a group of philosophers who since the late 1920s have aimed to find a new integration of Christian faith and academic inquiry.<sup>56</sup> As characterized by Bas Hengstmengel, this is a Christian philosophical approach in the tradition of Aurelius Augustine (354-430) and John Calvin (1509-1564).<sup>57</sup> In this dissertation, I will be using insights from the Amsterdam School of Philosophy to assess the debate on IR and religion.<sup>58</sup> 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 to conduct 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 be using throughout the dissertation, and which

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<sup>56</sup> The term ‘Amsterdam School’ was coined by Nicolas Wolterstorff (1932-) who belongs to the same Kuyperian tradition as the Amsterdam School. Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Until Justice and Peace Embrace* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 1983), 69, 72.

<sup>57</sup> Bas Hengstmengel, *Denken met het hart. Christelijke filosofie in de traditie van Augustinus en Calvijn* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 2015).

<sup>58</sup> There have been earlier attempts to reflect on IR from the perspective of the Amsterdam School of Philosophy. A very early article is from James W. Skillen, “Unity and Diversity Among States. A Critique of Assumptions in the Study of International Relations,” *Pro Rege* 8, no. 1 (1979). A less explicit contribution is the book by Jonathan Chaplin and Robert Joustra, eds., *God and Global Order: The Power of Religion in American Foreign Policy* (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010). More recently Govert Buijs and I have published a volume which contains a variety of articles that relates the Amsterdam School of Philosophy to international affairs. Topics include the role of faith and religion in Abraham Kuyper’s foreign politics, the nature of the EU, religious freedom, security studies. Simon Polinder and Govert J. Buijs, *Christian Faith, Philosophy & International Relations: The Lamb and the Wolf* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2020).

will result into the contours of an alternative approach to religion and international relations. 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 scholars 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.’<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup> The Amsterdam School considers the worldview level important, as it relates to people’s overall vision on reality, which is nearly always of great influence on the way they conduct science.

The religionists often blame the political realists for ignoring public religion due to their secularist-coloured glasses, and present arguments to support this on the empirical, domain-specific, and philosophy of science level. By including the worldview level, I show that the religionists themselves are not free of bias regarding their worldview, and I demonstrate that Morgenthau and Waltz’s political realism is built upon political-theological ideas which make them cautious to involve religion in theorizing international relations.

Including the worldview level in the analysis of academic debates is of great heuristic value, as it uncovers important assumptions that are often held back, because they would not be regarded as ‘scientific’. This thought is derived from the conviction of the Amsterdam School that science is one of the modes through which human beings can acquire knowledge of the world. Scientific knowledge is absolutely taken seriously by the Amsterdam School, but this knowledge always needs to be related to the fullness of human experience. Scientific knowledge and theory can be compared to a country map, which can never be used to identify a landscape. In other words, theories and science offer clarification, but scientists always need to ask themselves how this relates to the everyday experience. A state leader could be well-versed in every theory on international politics, but the success of his policy ultimately depends on the degree to which he is

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<sup>59</sup> Buijs and Polinder, “*Christian Philosophical Reflections and Shalom-Searching Wisdom*,” in *Christian Faith, Philosophy & International Relations: The Lamb and the Wolf*, eds. Simon Polinder and Govert J. Buijs (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2020), 314.

<sup>60</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 57-59. See also, Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*, 13, 14.

able to align these theories and insights to the everyday experience of international politics.

The consequence of this assumption is that religious beliefs in doing science, but also in doing politics, cannot be dismissed out of hand for a lack of 'scientific evidence'. The Amsterdam School is more likely to plead with the scientific community for more care in their statements regarding faith, religion, and the existence of unobservables which can only be seen in their effects, because everyday experience shows that a majority of the world population adheres to a religion. The consequences of assuming that only science using the natural science methods can gather reliable knowledge regarding the role of religion in IR are evident. If science is considered the only reliable objective source of reality, while religion belongs to the subjective realm, the possibility that religion is denied or overlooked in the study of international politics is seriously present. However, if one pleads for science to relate to the fullness of human experience, as the Amsterdam School does, and it appears that the majority of the world adheres to a religion, it is reasonable to expect that IR theories at the very least clarify the manner in which they regard religion.

## 1.6. Definition of Concepts

### *Worldview*

In this dissertation, I define a worldview as: 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. This ultimate commitment is a disposition of the human heart that transcends or precedes rationality. Beliefs can be argued for rationally.<sup>61</sup> The two are related because adhering to certain beliefs without having faith or trust is incomplete and vice versa. A worldview comprises both: it is a set of beliefs, which can be rationally argued for, but this is grounded in an ultimate commitment.<sup>62</sup> The Amsterdam School assumes that human beings, scholars and state leaders included, have a worldview, how inarticulated or unconscious it might be.<sup>63</sup> The consequence is that many IR theories are influenced by worldview elements of these scholars and international politics and policies by the worldviews of states leaders. A worldview is similar to a paradigm or an image. A worldview can influence and shape a paradigm or image, but distinguishes itself because of the ultimate trust that is involved.

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<sup>61</sup> Willem J. Ouweneel, *Wijs met de wetenschap. Inleiding tot een christelijke wetenschapsleer* (Heerenveen: Jongbloed, 1997), 21.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 69, 70.

## Religion

In this dissertation, various parties are given the stage: the religionists, the realists Morgenthau and Waltz, and myself as author using the insights of the Amsterdam School. These parties all use terms that may be subject to different interpretations. That is why I want to elaborate on the concept of religion.<sup>64</sup> Besides that, I will pay attention to what the religionists consider distinctive about religion.

My definition of religion is a working definition, and of a pragmatic nature, which implies that it does not look for 'the truth', but is functional in the context of this dissertation with a view to the people that will be confronted with it: IR theorists and the religionists.<sup>65</sup> The working definition that I take as a starting point comes from Daniel Philpott, who defines religion as:

A set of beliefs about the ultimate ground of existence, that which is unconditioned, not itself created or caused, and the communities and practices that form around these beliefs.<sup>66</sup>

On the basis of some ideas from the Amsterdam School, I would like to amplify and modify this definition.<sup>67</sup> I do this in two respects: (1) that of personal commitment (2) and of the transcendent references.

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<sup>64</sup> In this dissertation, I do not engage in the debate on a general definition of religion. An impression of these debates can be found in the following literature: James A. Beckford, *Social Theory and Religion* (Cambridge, U.K.; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 12-29; Windson L. King, "Religion," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, Second ed., Vol. 11 (Detroit: Macmillan, 2005), 7692-7695; Gregory Alles D., "Religion," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Lindsay Jones, Second ed., Vol. 11 (Detroit: Macmillan, 2005), 7702-7705; Yme Kuiper, "Debatten en definitives. Antropologen en sociologen over religie," in *Handboek Religie in Nederland: Perspectief - Overzicht - Debat*, ed. Meerten Borg ter (Zoetermeer: Meinema, 2008), 26-48; Jan Platvoet and Arie L. Molendijk, eds., *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion: Contexts, Concepts, and Contests* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999).

<sup>65</sup> Arie L. Molendijk, "Introduction," in *The Pragmatics of Defining Religion: Contexts, Concepts, and Contests*, eds. Jan Platvoet and Arie L. Molendijk (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 1999), 10. Yme Kuiper states that for present-day anthropologists and sociologists, the choice for a substantial or functional approach of religion is determined by the theoretical or explanatory goals of a certain research. In his view, definitions are meant to create a certain focus in research. Definitions are not judged by their truthfulness, but by their usefulness. Kuiper, *Debatten en definitives*, 34. Cf. Molendijk, *Introduction*, 9. Kuiper refers to the sociologist of religion Danièle Hervieu-Leger who states that a definition of religion is a tool and that searching for a definition of religion outside a specific research domain is barely relevant. Kuiper, *Debatten en definitives*, 45, 46. This also agrees with Hurd, Klein Goldewijk and Thomas's statement that there is no universal definition of religion that can be applied to all cultures. Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 33-37; Berma Klein Goldewijk, "Resurgence of Religion, International Relations and Development Cooperation," in *Religion, International Relations and Development Cooperation*, ed. Berma Klein Goldewijk (Wageningen: Wageningen Academic Publishers, 2007), 32, 33; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 24.

<sup>66</sup> Daniel Philpott, "The Challenge of September 11 to Secularism in International Relations," *World Politics* 55, no. 1 (2002): 68. Philpott has been inspired by Roy Clouser for this definition. He defines religious belief as 'a belief in something as divine per se no matter how that is further described, where 'divine per se' means having unconditionally non-dependent reality'. Roy A. Clouser, *The Myth of Religious Neutrality: An Essay on the Hidden Role of Religious Belief in Theories*, rev. ed. (Notre Dame, IN.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 23.

<sup>67</sup> I am inspired here by Andrew Basden who writes about religion at the website *Dooyeweerd Pages*, online available at <http://kgsvr.net/dooy/religion.html> (accessed December 28, 2020) His interpretation of Dooyeweerd might be open to discussion, but his distinctions are useful here.

As I set out above, the Amsterdam School believes that all human beings have, sometimes unconsciously, a worldview and that this includes a personal, existential commitment. Philpott's definition lacks the personal commitment or the ultimate trust element that is involved. If this is left out, religion becomes easily reduced to a set of beliefs. The definition rightfully acknowledges that religious people act, behave and live on the basis of their worldview. Religion is about religious activities, prayer, meditation, worship, rituals, etc. These beliefs and activities can be studied, debated and its relevance for international relations can be discussed. This means that religion can be studied as an independent human activity that distinguishes itself from other activities. However, Philpott's definition does not take sufficiently into account religion's possible pervasiveness and omnipresence in other spheres of life. Religion often – though not necessarily – influences everything in life. Including this, prevents religion from becoming an isolated human activity with respect to other spheres of life, like the social, economic, ethical or moral and political.

I, therefore, suggest to add: 'to which someone is personally committed' and 'and follow from'.<sup>68</sup> In order to avoid extensive discussion about philosophy of religion or theology, I also propose to remove the phrase: 'that which is unconditioned, not itself created'. That leads to the following 'first amendment' of the Philpott-definition:

The personal commitment to a set of beliefs about the ultimate ground of existence, and the communities and practices that form around and follow from these beliefs.<sup>69</sup>

A second problem refers to the term 'ultimate'. Philpott understands 'the ultimate ground of existence' as characteristic of religion. For him this also implies a reference to transcendence. Regarding ideologies, he states that ideologies are not primarily concerned with the ultimate ground of existence. Elsewhere, he states that: 'Political ideologies – Marxism, fascism, nationalism, and liberalism – channel loyalties toward an object other than God.'<sup>70</sup> This leads, however, to confusion, because it eliminates the useful distinction I made earlier in reference to the concept of 'worldview' which can be either religious or secular. In Philpott's definition this is somehow obliterated. As a result, the definition of religion as introduced has to be modified again. I make the distinction between ultimate and transcendence despite the fact that religionists often use the two terms in one breath. Thomas Farr speaks about religion as 'a thirst for transcendence', and suggests that people naturally seek to know ultimate, transcendent

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<sup>68</sup> The element of the personal or existential involvement of the human heart also comes to the fore in the definition of Robert Crawford. He proposed this definition after studying the major religions and reviewing other definitions: 'Religion is a belief in God, who is the unconditioned ground of all things, and in spiritual beings, resulting in personal experience of salvation or enlightenment, communities, scriptures, rituals, and a way of life.' Robert Crawford, *What is Religion?* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 201.

<sup>69</sup> Philpott, *The Challenge of September 11*, 68.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

truths about the origin, meaning, and destiny of their lives. Walter McDougall writes about transcendent religious motivations, 'divine providence', and the 'mandate of heaven' as characteristics of religion. Jeffrey Haynes mentions ultimate beings, beliefs and practices, transcendence and the supernatural when he discusses a definition of religion. John Bernbaum states that ignoring religion means ignoring spiritual and moral dimensions and transcendental values. Eric Patterson defines religion as 'an organized, shared set of beliefs and practices founded on reverence for a supernatural power(s) or in the teachings of a spiritual leader'.<sup>71</sup> All these definitions show that the religionists variously use the terms transcendence, ultimate and supernatural without making much distinction. In order to make clear that religion concerns a transcendent reference point, I have added that to the definition.

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.<sup>72</sup>

In my opinion, this definition is useful for this dissertation because it is sufficiently representative for the religionists and the way IR theorists Morgenthau and Waltz understand religion. When Morgenthau writes about religion in international politics, his understanding of religion agrees with it, because he refers to religion as a human attitude that is guided by a transcendent or supernatural reality or the belief in another world. Religion differs from ideology because of this transcendent or supernatural reference point, according to Morgenthau.<sup>73</sup> Waltz does not define religion, but the way he writes about religion comes close to Morgenthau's. He refers to religion as something that deals with primary and ultimate causes and infinite aspirations. Most of Waltz's descriptions are about the Christian religion. These two considerations clarify that Waltz's writings about religion correspond to the definition I propose, so the definition can be used to deal with Waltz as well.

I consider this definition representative of the religionists as a group for various reasons. In the first place, this definition takes a center position. Its emphasis on a set of beliefs leans towards a *sui generis* approach to religion, while its reference to the communities and practices that are formed around these beliefs acknowledges the constructed side of religion. Secondly, the definition includes religionist descriptions of religion that are limited to one or more primary world religions, which together

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<sup>71</sup> John A. Bernbaum, "Getting Russia Right," in *God and Global Order: The Power of Religion in American Foreign Policy*, eds. Jonathan Chaplin and Robert Joustra (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010), 130-134; Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 21, 22; Jeffrey Haynes, "Religion and International Relations in the 21st Century: Conflict or Co-Operation?" *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (2006): 538; Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 12; Walter A. McDougall, "Introduction," *Orbis* 42, no. 2 (1998): 160; Patterson, *Politics in a Religious World*, 5.

<sup>72</sup> Philpott, *The Challenge of September 11*, 68.

<sup>73</sup> I discuss this in more detail in Section 6.1.

comprise about 77 percent of the world's population. Next, the definition includes religionist definitions that characterize religion by faith, because it emphasizes the personal or existential commitment to religion, its practices and beliefs.<sup>74</sup> In the fourth place, the definition distinguishes between religion as a perspective or life orientation and religion as an institution, community or practice. That complies with a religionist distinction between religion and religions, which implies that religion is an alternative way of looking at the world – also called spirituality –, while religions are materially existing institutions and practices. Believers would often argue that their institutional religion is in accordance with the design as revealed to them, but this does not exclude the possibility that religions are also socially constructed and shaped by human action. This point largely agrees with another one, namely that this definition recognizes that religion is not only a set of beliefs, but also a community of believers formed around these beliefs, as some religionists emphasize.<sup>75</sup>

Above, I presented a working definition of religion. That means that whenever religionists state that IR theory should incorporate religion, they actually refer to religion as defined above. When I write that political realists pay attention to religion on an empirical level, I refer to religion as defined above. However, that does not mean that all elements from the definition are given equal consideration. When religionists state that certain religious ideas are followed on an international level, they talk about a different aspect of religion than when they describe the role of religious NGOs. I do not use the term religion when it comes to the religious worldviews of political leaders or IR theorists. At that moment, I make use of the term worldview. When Morgenthau distinguishes between religiosity and religion, then both fall under the definition as proposed above. The same goes for the use of terms like transcendence and metaphysics. When Morgenthau pleads for openness regarding the transcendence, I interpret that as

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<sup>74</sup> Stanton Burnett, "Implications for the Foreign Policy Community," in *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, eds. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 286; Jonathan Chaplin and Robert Joustra, "Introduction," in *God and Global Order: The Power of Religion in American Foreign Policy*, eds. Jonathan Chaplin and Robert Joustra (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010), 12, 13; Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 2, 176; Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 12-18; J. Bryan Hehir, "The Old Church and the New Europe: Charting the Changes," in *Religion in an Expanding Europe*, eds. Timothy A. Byrnes and Peter J. Katzenstein (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 92-116; Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*; Kubáľková, *Towards an International Political Theology*, 682, 694-696; Carsten Bagge Laustsen and Ole Waever, "In Defense of Religion: Sacred Referent Objects for Securitization," in *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile*, eds. Pavlos Hatzopoulos and Fabio Petito (New York, N.Y., etc.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 152-154; Rees, *Religion in International Politics and Development: The World Bank and Faith Institutions*, xv-xviii; Harold H. Saunders, "Relational Realism: Toward a New Political Paradigm," in *Religion and Security. The New Nexus in International Relations*, eds. Robert A. Seiple and Dennis Hoover (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), 165, 166; James W. Skillen, "Three Zionisms in the Shaping of American Foreign Policy," in *God and Global Order: The Power of Religion in American Foreign Policy*, eds. Jonathan Chaplin and Robert Joustra (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010), 87-109; Bassam Tibi, "Post-Bipolar Order in Crisis: The Challenge of Politicised Islam," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 843, 844.

<sup>75</sup> Kubáľková, *Towards an International Political Theology*, 694, 695; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 22-24.

the presence of religion in his ideas.

### ***Religion's Distinctiveness***

As I already stated, the religionists are convinced that the transcendent aspect of religion is the basis of its distinctiveness. According to them, this is expressed in three different ways: (1) religion is an autonomous social organization; (2) religion is a specific motivator; and (3) there is a difference between religion and ideology.

The first way in which religion's distinctiveness manifests itself in the modern political system, according to the paradigm challengers, is through its autonomous position in comparison to other social organizations that political scientists study, such as political parties, legislatures, courts, unions, nationalist movements, lobbies, nongovernmental organizations and international organizations. This follows from the fact that religion's right to exist is distinct from the political order. While politics is primarily defined by its principles of legitimacy, structure, policies or pursuits, religions are communities and practices oriented around beliefs regarding the ultimate ground of existence. The idea that religion's right to exist is derived from the ultimate ground of existence and not from 'earthly' institutions makes its involvement in politics conditional. It does not have to justify its legitimacy and authority within the existing political structures. In international relations, this conditionality of religion is strengthened by the fact that religion predates the Westphalian system of nation-states and that its organization is often transnational.<sup>76</sup>

The religion scholars maintain that the second characteristic of religion's distinctive nature is its motivational power. They argue that religion, more than any other belief system, is able to encourage its adherents to look beyond the physical world. The religionists state that people who believe that their goals are divinely inspired can be less susceptible to earthly discouragements than people who strive for temporal goals. It can lead, for example, to an attitude in which the promise of eternal life outweighs earthly consequences like prison or death.<sup>77</sup> Religion's motivational power is also the product of religious leaders' and organizations' often long-standing and influential presence on the ground, as well as a well-developed infrastructure that often includes sophisticated communication networks with local, national, and international offices. These thinkers point out that as a result, religions can effectively bestow legitimacy on particular speakers and provide messages that resonate with their followers.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Daniel Philpott, "Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?" *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 (2009): 192, 193. Stack also holds this view and explains the difference between ethnicity and religion. John F. Stack, "The Religious Challenge to International Relations Theory," in *Religion, Identity, and Global Governance: Ideas, Evidence and Practice*, ed. Patrick James (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 29, 30.

<sup>77</sup> Bech and Snyder, *Religion's Contribution*, 204; Glazier, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 3; Monica Duffy Toft, "Religion and Civil Wars: Next Steps?" in *Religion and International Relations: A Primer for Research* (University of Notre Dame: Mellon Initiative on Religion Across the Disciplines, 2013), 142, 143.

<sup>78</sup> Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 162; Shore, *Religious Conflict Resolution*, 24. For the

The third distinctive characteristic of religion is, according to the religionists, that religion differs from ideology. In the past it was common to analyze conflicts as a clash of ideologies, but that no longer suffices. Since the end of the Cold War, the roots of conflicts are increasingly related to culture and identity, deep human grievances are often expressed in the language of religious extremism, and religious freedom is sometimes used to cloak an agenda that is harmful towards others.<sup>79</sup> The existing theoretical frameworks require amendments in order to comprehend this new situation. It is no longer sufficient to analyze this new situation from a framework that only considers ideologies. Religion is different from political ideology according to these religionists, because religion is about the transcendent or ultimate ground of existence, while political ideologies, 'though they surely inspire people to worship, kill, die, idolize, and genuflect, do not in their essential forms encompass beliefs about the ultimate ground of existence'.<sup>80</sup> According to these religionists, religion, as distinct from ideology, focuses on questions regarding life and meaning, including transcendence and life beyond the natural realm.<sup>81</sup> I will discuss this further shortly hereafter.

### ***Religious, Secular, Quasi-Religious Worldviews***

A worldview can be religious, secular or quasi-religious. A religious worldview is a worldview (beliefs plus personal commitment) based on a transcendent reference point. A (religious) worldview can remain private, but it can also become public which means that it leaves the private sphere and that it thrusts itself into the public arena of moral and political contestations, the public sphere. José Casanova calls this public religion.<sup>82</sup> When the religionists state that religion is everywhere, they mostly refer to public religion. The global resurgence of religion in that sense is a global resurgence of public religion, or more adequately, religions becoming public globally. In the dissertation, I do not use the adjective 'public' or the distinction between private and public. If I use it, it is to clarify a specific meaning. A secular worldview is a worldview without any transcendent reference point. It is a naturalistic worldview. It assumes a self-enclosed, immanent reality in which something is considered as ultimate reality. Often the term 'naturalism' is used as a synonym, where the processes that are studied by the natural sciences are seen as ultimate.<sup>83</sup> A quasi-religious worldview is a worldview with similar

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role of faith-based actors in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 178-186.

<sup>79</sup> Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 35; Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 52; Laustsen and Waever, *In Defense of Religion*, 147; Saunders, *Relational Realism*, 163.

<sup>80</sup> Philpott, *The Challenge of September 11*, 68; John D. Stempel, *Faith, Diplomacy and the International System* (Leicester: University of Leicester, Centre for the Study of Diplomacy, 2000), 8; Scott M. Thomas, "Religion and International Conflict," in *Religion and International Relations*, ed. Ken R. Dark (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), 1-3.

<sup>81</sup> McDougall, *Introduction*, 160; Philpott, *The Challenge of September 11*, 68; Erin K. Wilson, *After Secularism: Rethinking Religion in Global Politics* (Basingstoke, Hampshire, UK; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 70.

<sup>82</sup> José Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

<sup>83</sup> Cf. D. M. Armstrong, "Naturalism, Materialism and First Philosophy," *Philosophia Reformata* 8 (1978): 261-276.

characteristics as a religious worldview. There might be references to a transcendent reality, but its ultimate goal is this immanent world. The ultimate reality can seem to be transcendent but at closer inspection is rather immanent and the personal commitment is geared toward immanent realities.

### ***Political Religion and Ideology***

A political religion is a quasi-religious worldview with public aspirations which aims at the transformation of society as a whole.<sup>84</sup> It is similar to an ideology.<sup>85</sup> An ideology or political religion and religion can overlap quite a lot. Their goals can align and encompass all of life. At the same time, religious characteristics can be identified in secular ideologies, and religions can play an ideological role as well. The prayers and rituals of religion might be different from a substantial point of view, but in a functional sense, secular ideologies can have activities or rituals that resemble religious ones.<sup>86</sup> But does that mean that we can conclude that when ideologies or political religions influence international relations, religion influences them as well? No, because these are not the same. Yes, because ‘it reminds us that religion does not allow itself to be easily banished from society, and that, where this is tried, it returns in unpredictable and perverted forms’.<sup>87</sup>

### ***Theology***

There are many definitions of theology and also discussion about the proper definition of it. In this dissertation the term also plays a role, but it is beyond the scope of this book to offer an extensive discussion of the perfect definition. I define theology as thinking about faith in God.<sup>88</sup> Theology is different from religious studies in the sense that it presupposes a participatory perspective and that the theologian is a believer.<sup>89</sup> Theology differs from a religious worldview in the sense that theology thinks about the beliefs and commitments of people that hold a certain worldview. When political science uses or relies on theology, it becomes political theology. As said, political theology does not require a personal commitment.

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<sup>84</sup> Hans Maier, “Political Religion: A Concept and its Limitations,” *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 8, no. 1 (2007): 5-12.

<sup>85</sup> I am aware that the term ‘ideology’ can be used in a much more ‘neutral’ way, as just any framework of political ideas. I follow here the more weighty usage that originates in Marx, and refers to a more or less distorted idea of reality with repressive or even totalitarian implications. Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry ‘Law and Ideology’, online available at <https://plato.stanford.edu> (accessed December 28, 2020).

<sup>86</sup> A functionalist approach of religion differs from a substantivist approach, because the former emphasizes what religions do, while the latter is more interested in the content (the beliefs) of religion. William H. Swatos, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion and Society* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: AltaMira Press, 1998), 130, 131.

<sup>87</sup> Maier, *Political Religion*, 15.

<sup>88</sup> Cornelis van der Kooi and Gijbert van den Brink, *Christian Dogmatics: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids: Wim B. Eerdmans, 2017), 2.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

### ***Political Theology***

Political theology is about sets of beliefs that emerge from either a religious worldview or theology concerning the political sphere. Political theology comes close to a religious worldview, because it consists of religious beliefs or sets of ideas meaning that these beliefs are related to a transcendent reference point. It differs from a religious worldview, because it does not necessarily involve a personal commitment. It has a public face though, because it holds ideas about the political, or more specifically in this context, the (international) political sphere.<sup>90</sup> It plays a role on the worldview level, but it has an impact on the other levels: the philosophical, domain-specific and empirical.

### ***Sociotheology***

A concept that combines religious worldviews and public religion in its analysis is the so-called sociotheological approach. Sociotheology is an approach which takes the theologically informed or religious worldviews of people or groups seriously as factor in explaining behavior and developments in international relations (without the researcher committing himself to a religious or theological point of view).<sup>91</sup>

### ***Sacred***

The religionists and political realists often equate the term ‘sacred’ with religion and they use it over against ‘secular’. There are, however, also instances when they use it to describe ‘sacred’ elements in secular or quasi-religious worldviews. I use the term ‘sacred’ similarly, because religious as well as secular or quasi-religious worldviews can hold certain things sacred.

### ***Secularization***

In this dissertation, I use the term secularization quite often. Broadly speaking, there are four usages of the term.<sup>92</sup> The religionists understand it – and this agrees with the way it is commonly used – as a diminishing influence of religion. This can be the result of declining religious practice and communities, the differentiation between religion and other spheres of society (political, cultural, economic), or the intentional efforts of

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<sup>90</sup> According to Guilhot, political theology can be defined as ‘a challenge, on the basis of the idea of revelation, to rationalist pretenses to the self-justification, self-foundation and teleological meaning of the political’. Nicolas Guilhot, “American Katechon: When Political Theology Became International Relations Theory,” *Constellations* 17, no. 2 (2010): 225. Guilhot uses a specific definition of political theology. A more general definition would be Lila’s definition that political theology it is the ‘discourse about political authority based on a revealed divine nexus’. Michael Kessler, “Introduction: Political Theology in a Plural Context,” in *Political Theology for a Plural Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1. Kessler gives a nice overview of various definitions. *Ibid.*, 1-4.

<sup>91</sup> Marc Jurgensmeyer and Mona Kanwal Sheikh, “A Sociotheological Approach to Understanding Religious Violence,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Religion and Violence*, eds. Michael Jerryson, Marc Jurgensmeyer and Margo Kitts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 620-643.

<sup>92</sup> I make use of Philpott’s various descriptions of the secular and secularization. Philpott, *Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?*, 183.

regimes to suppress or to marginalize religion (often called secularism). The second use of the term is – as Morgenthau sees it – secularization as the differentiation between the religious and other spheres of life. This does not mean a decline of religion’s influence. Others (a.o. Ludwig Gelot) have described this as a kind of secularization within Christianity, for example what happened during the Protestant Reformation.<sup>93</sup> It is therefore secularization within a theological discourse and legitimized by it. The third way secularization is used is as the denial of the necessity of a transcendent reference point for politics, science and ethics. This is the kind of secularization that Morgenthau finds worrisome. The fourth one, which I find in Waltz’s theory, is secularization like Marin Terpstra defines it, namely that theology continues by other means (he partly bases this on Carl Schmitt).<sup>94</sup> For example, theological frameworks or concepts are applied to immanent realms (e.g. the political) without necessarily referring to its theological origin.

### **Science**

Thus far I have used the term science without clarifying it, so I will define it here. This is not easy, however, given the following observation.

“[S]cience” remains a notion to conjure with in the field of IR; it is a veritable “rhetorical commonplace”, which is available for deployment within all kinds of controversies. And a powerful resource it is, too: charging that a piece of work is not “scientific” carries immensely negative connotations, both because of the field-specific history I have sketched here and because of the broader cultural prestige enjoyed by “science”.<sup>95</sup>

Science, especially in the Anglo-Saxon world, is often understood as knowledge about the natural world that is the result of systematic experiments and tests. I use the term science in a broader sense meaning that it also includes the acquirement of knowledge about the social world. The methodologies and methods may vary. Some scholars might attempt to develop theories according to the standards of the natural sciences, while others are content with, as Hedley Bull’s calls it, science understood as a ‘coherent, precise, and orderly body of knowledge, and (...) consistent with the philosophical foundations of modern science.’<sup>96</sup> Or in the words of Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, there are scholars who aim at explanation and scholars who favour understanding.<sup>97</sup> The difference between the two, according to Patrick Jackson, is that the latter assumes

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<sup>93</sup> See Section 3.4.

<sup>94</sup> Marin Terpstra, *Democratie als cultus. Over politiek en religie* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2011), 11.

<sup>95</sup> Patrick Thaddeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and its Implications for the Study of World Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 9.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>97</sup> Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*.

that the objects of knowledge have the capacity for self-reflection.<sup>98</sup> In line with the Amsterdam School, I consider science one of the modes to acquire knowledge about the world. Intuition, religion, philosophy and the arts are also sources of knowledge. Scientific knowledge is not a superior, but another kind of knowledge and the acquirement and valuation of this knowledge cannot be separated, though distinguished, from other kinds of knowledge.<sup>99</sup> When I use the term science without further explanation it is meant as set out above. I will indicate when I refer to a narrow understanding of science meaning that it is modeled after the natural sciences. I will do so only when this difference is relevant for a proper understanding of the text.

### ***International Relations***

Another term that needs clarification within the context of this research is the term ‘international relations’, because many religionists use the term without defining it. Besides that, the term ‘international’ implies that world politics is simply or primarily about relations among nation-states, but that is not what the religionists want to say, especially because religion is so prominent at the transnational level. In this dissertation, I define ‘international relations’ as all political, social, economic, cultural and other interactions between states and non-state actors.<sup>100</sup> As the definition shows international relations comprises different spheres, like economics, law, culture and politics. It is remarkable that religion is not mentioned separately. There are two possible explanations for this: either religion is taken as part of social or cultural relations or it is taken as irrelevant.

Some IR theorists make a distinction between theories of foreign policy and theories of international relations, or limit their theory of international relations to international politics. Given that foreign policy and international politics are, strictly speaking, subfields of IR, I assume that both fields are included when the religionists use the term international relations.<sup>101</sup> Also, many scholars do not always distinguish between international politics and international relations, while the latter has a much broader meaning. In this dissertation, I only distinguish between these two terms if the distinction is relevant.

When it comes to the term ‘international relations theory’, it appears that many religionists use this without specifying which theories they are referring to. My conclusion is that the religionists’ main target is IR as it has been constructed since the Second World War. I base this, on the one hand, on the few religion scholars that make this explicit in their writing. On the other hand, it is quite common to refer to

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<sup>98</sup> Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations*, 158.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 23.

<sup>100</sup> I take this mainly from Viotti and Kauppi. Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, 5th ed. (Boston etc.: Allyn and Bacon, 2012), 454.

<sup>101</sup> Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham, *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations* (London: Penguin Books, 1998), 274, 275.

International Relations as a field of study in its own right as it emerged in the period after the Second World War.<sup>102</sup> For that reason, I focus exclusively on the theories that have been developed since then.

- **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 where the ultimate reality seems to be transcendent but at closer inspection is 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'
- **Theology:** systematic, often academic, thinking about the belief in God and its implications as done by representatives of religious communities (who usually consider themselves as believer), so it involves an insider perspective.

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<sup>102</sup> The emergence of International Relations as a field of study in its own right is often dated in the aftermath of the First World War. Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations*, 16; Torbjørn L. Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory*, 2nd ed. (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1997), 211; Evans and Newnham, *The Penguin Dictionary*, 275; Steans and others, *An Introduction to International Relations Theory*, 1. I think it is accurate to regard the publication of Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations* in 1948 as the landmark for the beginning of IR. In the second edition that appeared shortly after the Second World War in 1954, Morgenthau wrote: 'This book purports to present a theory of international politics'. Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 6th ed. (New York etc.: Knopf, 1985), 3.

- 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).
- Sociotheology: an approach which takes the theologically informed or religious worldviews of people or groups seriously as explanatory factor in explaining behavior and developments in international relations.
- Sacred: refers to the religious realm or to religious elements in secular or quasi-religious worldviews, ideologies or political religions.
- Secularization: (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.
- Science: a coherent, precise, and orderly body of knowledge about the (social and natural) world.
- International relations: all political, social, economic, cultural and other interactions between states and non-state actors.

## 1.7. Method

Since I make a distinction between methodology and method, I would like to proceed by discussing the more technical part of my research and the ‘tools’ I have used to execute my research. In order to assess the validity of the religion scholars in IR, I had to select a few theories and find out to what extent the religionists are correct or not. I decided to confront their position with key mainstream IR thinkers, the already mentioned Morgenthau and Waltz, through an in-depth investigation of their writings and theorizing. More precisely, I decided to find out to what extent these thinkers actually neglect religion and whether this can be explained by the reasons the religionists bring up. I have selected these theorists, because they represent a mainstream school of thought in IR: realism (neorealism and classical realism).<sup>103</sup> I have chosen Hans Morgenthau as the main representative of classical realism and Kenneth Waltz

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<sup>103</sup> I use the term ‘school of thought’ for the realist tradition, but I use the term ‘theory’ – though the term is essentially contested – when I refer to the individual theories of Morgenthau and Waltz.

as the main neorealist thinker.<sup>104</sup> My choice for the realist school is primarily based on the fact that most religionist criticism is targeted at classical realism and neorealism. Other schools of thought are either barely a topic of discussion or object of criticism, or this criticism mirrors that of classical realism and neorealism. For example, Thomas states that pluralists of the English School emphasize the changing nature of military and economic power, which requires a broader concept of international security. He concludes that this includes human rights, energy, and natural resources, but that culture and religion are not taken into account. He also contends that pluralists' emphasis on the state as the main actor in international relations, globalization, and economic interdependence makes it difficult to include religious non-state actors.<sup>105</sup> Another example is the way Fox and Sandler write about Marxism. They state: 'It goes without saying that Marxism and neo-Marxism, a family of paradigms that competed with the others discussed here, also assumed religion to be irrelevant.' And '[T]his body of theory recognizes economics as the only motivating force in politics, including international relations. Marxists consider it [religion, SP] a false consciousness and the opiate of the masses.'<sup>106</sup> Another reason to choose for the realist school of thought is that dealing

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<sup>104</sup> The difference with Sandal and Fox 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 and thorough.

<sup>105</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 58.

<sup>106</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 30, 170. In their treatment of world-systems theory, the religionists limit themselves to general statements. Stempel, for example, limits his judgment to the statement that world-system theories have been alienated from the importance of religion, because of their focus on the material aspects of life. They leave no room for the spiritual and charismatic elements, and favor rational choice theories in order to create a predictable universe. Stempel, *Faith, Diplomacy and the International System*, 2. Roof and Robert Wuthnow write about epistemological assumptions, a distinct Marxist bias, which implies that economic, political, and material explanations are favored, while cultural and religious institutions, beliefs and considerations are ignored and seen as epiphenomenal. Wade Clark Roof, "Introduction," in *World Order and Religion*, ed. Wade Clark Roof (Albany: SUNY Press, 1991), 3; Robert Wuthnow, "International Realities: Bringing the Global Picture into Focus," in *World Order and Religion*, ed. Wade Clark Roof (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 21; Robert Wuthnow, "Understanding Religion and Politics," *Daedalus* 120, no. 3 (1991): 6. Wuthnow asserts that world-system theory has often focused on the question of how short-term changes in the world-economy may affect the stability of religious institutions. *Ibid.*, 6. Again, these examples show that, in the few instances that liberal and Marxist theories are addressed, the criticism is very general and shallow. I did not include neoliberalism explicitly because insofar as the religionists criticize neoliberalism, their criticism mirrors that of neorealism, which is understandable because neoliberalism shares the ontological and epistemological assumptions of neorealism. In the few instances that liberalism is discussed, it often equates or confuses neoliberalism and neorealism. Thomas states, for example, that the absence of religion can also be explained by the rationalist principles that are independent from social and historical context and provide the basis for the positivist approaches in international relations theory, namely neorealism and neoliberalism. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 59; Thomas, *Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously*, 825, 826. At another place, Thomas maintains that neoliberalism shares the statist view and the materialist conception of state interests with neorealism, but it focuses on a different aspect of international anarchy. Its concern is how international anarchy influences the possibility of states to reach and keep agreements on issues of common interests. The reason that neoliberals neglect religion and culture is because economic interdependence and globalization are the main determinants and these factors are taken as a top-down explanation for the behavior of states. The fact that people share a common culture or civilization does not make much difference in the explanation of states, because they react in a rational, functional way. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 66. Philpott, another prominent religionist, writes: 'Liberalism, whether classical or contemporary, has deservedly come to

with classical realism and neorealism conveniently illustrates the general development of mainstream IR during the second half of the twentieth century. I deal with classical realism and neorealism separately, because both theories are mostly treated and criticized separately by the religion scholars. Besides that, as I will set out in the chapter on Waltz, neorealism and classical realism differ on various points, which affects the way they deal with religion.

The reconstruction of the religionists took place in the following way. After collecting the available literature on religion, international relations and IR, I started to search for explicit references or writings on religion and international relations. I did this on the three levels as indicated: What is the role of religion (empirical level), how can that role be explained (subject-specific level of IR), and what are the deeper assumptions about religion, science, God, and theory that play a role (philosophical level)? In order to discover the empirical role of religion, I scanned the religionist documents and books on specific terms and notions that could reveal more about the way they see religion. The most central were explicit religious notions such as: 'religion', 'god', 'faith', 'transcendence', 'belief', and 'metaphysics'. But I also looked for words I knew (or came to know during my reading) that could be related to the topic of religion and international relations, like 'ethics', 'morality', 'secularity', 'culture', 'conflict', 'ideology', 'peace-making', 'social justice', 'political leaders', 'ideas', 'civil religion', 'church-state relations', 'non-governmental organizations', 'human rights', 'faith-based diplomacy', 'religious terrorism', 'theocratic states' and 'fundamentalism'. To find out what role religion plays in IR theory, I looked for terms like 'Westphalia', 'modernity', 'Enlightenment', 'modernization theory', 'positivism', 'materialism', 'nation-state', 'invention of religion', 'complexity of religion', 'dominance of (neo)realism', 'religiosity of political scientists'. In order to map the ideas religionists have regarding the philosophy of science level, I searched for keywords like 'theory', 'religion', 'science', 'God'. Similarly, to the list that was given earlier, this list with words developed gradually, because there was a constant motion between the list of concepts, the literature I studied and the distinction of the three levels. Some terms recurred on a frequent basis, while other terms were

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enjoy great prestige, as has realism, as an explanation of war, trade, and diverse forms of conflict and cooperation. But it does not help us to understand events seemingly wrought by religion.' Philpott, *The Challenge of September 11*, 80, 81. There are clear differences between neorealism and neoliberalism regarding the possibilities for international cooperation under anarchy, but the question is whether that is relevant for the selection of theories. Waltz, for example, argues that liberal institutionalism is not a distinct theory. Lamy, Keohane and Nye argue that neorealists and neoliberals share a great deal of their epistemology and ontology, and claim that institutional theory is a 'half-sibling of neorealism'. David A. Baldwin, "Neoliberalism, Neorealism, and World Politics," in *Neorealism and Neoliberalism: The Contemporary Debate*, ed. David A. Baldwin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 4-8; Keohane, *Power and Governance*, 6; Steven L. Lamy, "Contemporary Mainstream Approaches: Neo-Realism and Neo-Liberalism," in *The Globalization of World Politics: An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. John Baylis, Steve Smith and Patricia Owens, 4th ed. (Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press, 2008), 133, 134; Kenneth N. Waltz, "Neorealism: Confusion and Criticisms," *Journal of Politics and Society* 15, no. 1 (2004): 5. Despite the differences between neorealism and neoliberalism, I consider it conclusive to focus on the theoretical core of neoliberalism as present in neorealism.

only mentioned once by an author, sometimes not even specifically related to IR. There were also terms such as ‘positivism’, ‘Enlightenment’, ‘materialism’, ‘modernity’, ‘modernization theory’, which ultimately fit the third level better than the second. In short, I have changed the classification on more than one occasion in order to represent the position of the religionists as robust and accurately as possible, the results of which are described below.

I have studied the primary literature of Morgenthau and Waltz for their thoughts, ideas, or other matters that could reveal their position regarding religion. In doing so, I often used the same search terms as mentioned above. Many articles or books were subjected to an integral study to comprehend and represent, where possible, their theories in their entirety. When necessary, I used secondary literature, but my focus was on the primary works and my understanding of them.

## **1.8. Schematic Outline of the Dissertation**

This dissertation consists of an introduction and three parts. Below, I present a diagram of the topics in every part and a very brief summary of their conclusions (see Figure 1.1). I provide this overview to make it easier for the reader to understand the structure and argumentation of the dissertation. In Chapter 9, a much more elaborate diagram can be found that summarizes the entire dissertation. Decisive in this are the three parts of the dissertation that are dedicated to, respectively, the religionists, the political realists, and a concluding part in which I present an alternative approach: the Normative Practice Approach. Also, the entire dissertation follows the line of the four different levels: the empirical, the domain-specific, the philosophy of science, and the worldview level.

In Part I, I present the position of the religionists. I dedicate a chapter to every statement. Chapter 2 concerns the empirical statement, Chapter 3 the domain-specific statement, and Chapter 4 the philosophy of science subthesis. My goal is to present the religionists as accurately as possible. Naturally, I will give my own perspective on their position and what I think could be improved. I will use separate sections and the conclusions for this. I also evaluate the religionist position in the conclusion of Part I.

Then, in Part II, I will check whether the claim of the religionists as presented in Part I is correct. I start with Morgenthau’s classical realism. In Chapter 5, I elaborate on what exactly his classical realist theory entails and I will show that his theory can only be understood properly when accounting for the worldview level. This is because there are all sorts of Augustinian political-theological convictions at play on this level that color his theory. In Chapter 6, I will then systematically address every statement of the religionists to see to which degree they are right.

I approach Waltz in a similar manner. In Chapter 7, I will explain what his neorealism entails exactly and I will show that he too is strongly influenced by political-theological

ideas. In Chapter 8, I will then assess the religionists' criticism. In the concluding part of Part II, I will then evaluate the input of the political realists.

Part III contains two chapters. In Chapter 9, I will draw up the balance, evaluate the religionist and political realist positions, and diagnose the debate. From that diagnosis, I present an alternative in Chapter 10, namely the Normative Practice Approach as developed by the Amsterdam School of Philosophy. Since this approach combines insights from the religionists, the Amsterdam School, Waltz and Morgenthau's realism and Niebuhr's Christian realism, I call this a new Christian realism.<sup>107</sup> It stands in the tradition of Morgenthau's classical realism and Waltz's neorealism. It accepts the demand for theory, but it is critical of the rigidity of neorealism. It is called a Christian realism, because it agrees with the worldview of Christian realism and the Amsterdam School.

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<sup>107</sup> I became inspired by this, because of a review of Patterson on the volume Buijs and I edited. Eric Patterson, "New Christian Realism from the Amsterdam School," *Providence* (March 2, 2020).

	<b>PART I</b>	<b>PART II</b>		<b>PART III</b>	
<b>Levels</b>	<b>Religionists</b> (Ch. 2-4)	<b>Classical Realism</b> (Morgenthau) (Ch. 5, 6)	<b>Neorealism</b> (Waltz) (Ch. 6, 7)	<b>Balance, Evaluation, Diagnosis</b> (Ch. 9)	<b>Normative Practice Approach</b> (Ch. 10)
<b>Empirical</b>	Religion is everywhere in the world and IR should not ignore it (Ch. 2)	Perceives the role of religion, is aware of the varieties found within religion, but he does not explicitly strive for incorporating it (Ch. 6)	Notices role of religion, but limited to Christian religion (Ch. 8)	All of them are more or less aware of religion in the world, but relevance of religion is unclear (Ch. 9)	Open to various dimensions of reality, including religious one (Ch. 10)
<b>Domain-specific</b>	IR has a bias acknowledging the significance of religion, because its study of international relations has been heavily influenced by Westphalian assumptions (Ch. 3)	Deals with religion as a possible factor, but does not grant it a significant place, because of an ideal-typical theory and autonomy of the political (Ch. 5, 6)	Only allows a few factors to play a role in his theory and this causes religion to be left out and holds on to autonomy of the (international) political sphere (Ch. 7, 8)	Political realists limit theorizing to (international) political sphere and religion's relevance depends on that: object of explanation is not always clear (Ch. 9)	Keen eye for diversity of factors and different spheres with their own <i>teloi</i> (Ch. 10)
<b>Philosophy of Science</b> -Social embeddedness -Ontology -Epistemology -Methodology	The 'old paradigm' suffers from philosophical limitations that make it difficult to take religion into account (Ch. 4)	Actively creates openness to religious or theological ideas (Ch. 5, 6)	Is open to the fact that in theory formation, pre-scientific intuitions or theological ideas play a role (Ch. 7, 8)	All of them acknowledge role of normativity in theorizing, but realists also emphasize necessity of theory (Ch. 9)	Meaningful and diverse reality which makes theorizing possible; theorizing is always normative and empirical (Ch. 10)
<b>Worldview</b> (political theology)	Seem to be optimistic about contribution and possibilities of involving religion (Conclusion Part I)	Introduces political-theological ideas of an Augustinian nature (Ch. 5)	Augustinian ideas have been secularized in order to 'save' realism (Ch. 7)	Worldview level should be involved in debate, because of heuristic value (Ch. 9)	Brings in Christian worldview (Ch. 10)

**Figure 1.1. Schematic overview of dissertation**



# Part I

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A Critical Reconstruction of the  
Paradigm Challenge

## Part I: A Critical Reconstruction of the Paradigm Challenge

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 by 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.<sup>108</sup> President Ahmadinejad from Iran concluded his United Nations speech in 2005 by asking God to hasten the appearance of the twelfth imam Mahdi (ninth century), as he would rid the world of injustice.<sup>109</sup> In 2008, Ahmadinejad claimed that imam Mahdi supported the daily operations of his government.<sup>110</sup> The fact that Ahmadinejad reserved funds for the return of the twelfth 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.<sup>111</sup>

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 for 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, policymakers have become convinced that the role of religion in international affairs cannot and should not be ignored. As was brought forward by former U.S. Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright:

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.<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Carter M. Yang, "Religion Plays Big Role in Bush Presidency," *ABC News* (January 7, 2006).

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> Greg Bruno, "Religion and Politics in Iran," *Council on Foreign Relations* (June 19, 2008).

<sup>111</sup> Jack Jenkins, "How Has Religion Played a Role in Trump's Presidency?," *America: The Jesuit Review* (August 24, 2020)

<sup>112</sup> Madeleine Korbel Albright, *The Mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and World Affairs* (New York: HarperCollins, 2006), 9, 10.

Scholars too started to discover that the role of religion in international affairs could not be underestimated. As I mentioned in the introductory chapter, one of the first people who wrote on this topic was Huntington in his 1993 article ‘The clash of civilizations’, which he later turned into a best-selling book.<sup>113</sup> 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.

After Huntington, numerous other books from both policymakers and scholars appeared on the topic of religion and international affairs. The undertone in every one of these publications was astonishment: how could we have collectively overlooked religion? The role of the IR domain also became a topic of discussion. In most cases, the answer was discouraging. 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 representatives of the existing paradigm were challenged to critically examine its validity and legitimacy. It is this paradigm challenge that is at the core of this dissertation. In Chapter 2, I will describe how religion made some sort of worldwide comeback since the 1960s. The pivotal question is whether these religious phenomena arose overnight or had been there for a longer time and then suddenly became visible? Can we indeed speak of a worldwide revival of religion and if so, what does this mean and how did it occur? In the same chapter, I will also show where and how religion manifests itself in present times. I will discuss how, according to the religionists, religiously inspired individuals exert influence on public and political life. Because religion directly influences the state, and more indirectly, the political sphere and civil society organizations, I will also describe how religion exerts influence on a national level. Traditionally, religion has had a unique role in the transnational domain and therefore posed a challenge to states, and I will describe this in detail. Finally, the international perspective enters the discussion. This section considers, for example, the influence of religion as the origin of a state’s identity. However, it also focuses on the fact that religion could start as a domestic phenomenon and then suddenly turn into an international issue.

In Chapter 3, I will illustrate how, on the domain-specific level, the so-called Westphalian system with its assumptions of the central role of the state and power as a national interest, the neglect of the domestic domain, and the privatization of religion, ensured that IR became ‘blind’ to religion. I will also discuss the religion advocates’ proposal for an alternative interpretation of the Westphalian model based on so-called neosecularization theory, which considers the Westphalian model to be a reconfirmation of Augustine’s distinction between the religious and the political. This makes the Westphalian model an expression of a political theology on its own.

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<sup>113</sup> Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations?*, 22-49; Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*.

Chapter 4 elaborates on the philosophical and scientific obstacles of IR that resulted in religion's fading away. Topics of discussion in this chapter are the influence of the Enlightenment and the theory of modernization and secularization, materialism, positivism, and reductionism. I consciously decided on this order, because the arguments on the empirical and domain-specific levels are the most accurate and easiest to verify. The philosophy of science critique is of a more general nature, which makes it harder to 'test', as I will do in the second part of this dissertation. Whether the empirical or domain-specific arguments hold up or whether it will be more about the philosophical and scientific presuppositions should become apparent in part two of this dissertation.

The chapter layout as illustrated above is based on three separate yet related lines of argumentation. The first entails the view that religion plays such an important role in the world that IR cannot ignore it (subthesis 1). This is the central theme of Chapter 2. The second line of argument asserts that IR as a discipline has a bias against acknowledging the significance of religion because of its self-selected object of study, which is heavily influenced by the Westphalian system (subthesis 2). As mentioned, Chapter 3 will deal with this argument. The third line of argument claims that the 'old paradigm' suffers from methodological and philosophical limitations making it difficult to take religion into account. This charge will lead us, in Chapter 4, to discussing the methodological and philosophical framework implied in mainstream IR theories (subthesis 3).

After this reconstruction of the so-called religion paradigm, I will end this first part taking stock of the religionist position and offering a diagnosis. For this, I will use the different insights I derived from the Amsterdam School of Philosophy. After this clarification phase, I will conclude with a sketch of the contours of the alternative religion paradigm that the religionists seem to propose. I will illustrate that they strive for a religion-sensitive approach, which is more of an understanding than an explanatory nature, and leaves room for non-state actors, normative considerations, and an understanding of religion in its cultural broadness and variety. It remains to be seen whether these contours require a completely new paradigm, as suggested by Kubáľková (see Chapter 1), or that a revision of the current paradigm will suffice, as Fox and Sandal have claimed. The answer to that question should become apparent in the conclusions of the second part of this book.

It is important for the reader to take note of the fact that I try to present the religionist position as convincingly and representative as possible. To achieve that goal, I have written this Part I from the perspective of a religionist whom, while engaged in a conversation with his fellow-religionists, describes what exactly it is that they stand for. I am therefore describing the position of the religionists from the inside out. This means that every person I reference is a religionist. Whenever this is not the case, I will say so explicitly. In some cases, I have chosen to mention religionists explicitly, because they take a crucial standpoint in certain matters. Now and again, I will take off my religionist hat and contemplate on the material presented thus far in an evaluating and

assessing manner. This happens in special sections entitled 'evaluative comments' or 'critical comments' and in the conclusions of each chapter.



# Chapter 2

## The Empirical Base of the Paradigm Challenge: 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 current debates. 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. All of these developments contributed to the increasingly visible and tangible presence of religion from the 1960s until the present day.

Another question concerns the presence of religion in international affairs. To describe this, I make use of the various levels of analysis as common in IR: the individual, national, transnational and international level. The description of the global resurgence

of religion as well as the role of religion on the various levels, together support the first subthesis that religion is present everywhere and needs to be taken into consideration by IR.

## 2.1. The Global Resurgence of Religion Further Defined

Thomas, one of most prominent representatives of the paradigm challenge, 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.<sup>114</sup>

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. Secondly, it is exclusively qualitative and makes no mention of a change in the number of believers worldwide. Thirdly, 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 starts in the 1960s. Moreover, one article explicitly states that the Six Day War between Israel and Egypt in 1967 signifies the resurgence of religion.<sup>115</sup> Finally, scholars mention quite a few events that indicate that the global resurgence of religion took place from the 1960s onwards. 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,

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<sup>114</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 26.

<sup>115</sup> Philpott, *Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?*, 190; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 27; Scott M. Thomas, "Outwitting the Developed Countries? Existential Insecurity and the Global Resurgence of Religion," *Journal of International Affairs* 61, no. 1 (2007): 25.

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.<sup>116</sup>

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 of 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.'<sup>117</sup> 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.'<sup>118</sup>

The third issue concerns the role of the rise of radical Islam in the resurgence.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Jeffrey Haynes, "Religion and International Relations: What are the Issues?" *International Politics* 41 (2004): 457, 458; Haynes, *Religion and International Relations in the 21st Century*, 539; J. Bryan Hehir, "Why Religion? Why Now?" in *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, eds. Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan and Monica Duffy Toft (Oxford, New York, etc: Oxford University Press, 2012), 15, 19; Philpott, *Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?*, 190, 191; Philpott, *The Challenge of September 11*, 83; Stack, *Religious Challenge*, 20.

<sup>117</sup> Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 38. See also, Pew Research Center, *The Future of World Religions: Population Growth Projections 2010-2050*, (2 April, 2015).

<sup>118</sup> Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 38; Patterson, *Politics in a Religious World*, 6; Philpott, *Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?*, 191, 192; Philpott, *The Challenge of September 11*, 81, 82; Scott M. Thomas, "Living Critically and 'Living Faithfully' in a Global Age: Justice, Emancipation and the Political Theology of International Relations," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 2 (2010): 508. There are other, also non-religionist, sources that present evidence in favor of a global resurgence of religion as an increase of the number of believers. Gary D. Bouma, "Religious Resurgence, Conflict and the Transformation of Boundaries," in *Religion, Globalization and Culture*, eds. Peter Beyer and Lori G. Beaman (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2007), 187-202; Todd M. Johnson and Brian J. Grim, *The World's Religions in Figures: An Introduction to International Religious Demography* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 11, 12; Eric P. Kaufmann, *Shall the Religious Inherit the Earth?: Demography and Politics in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Profile, 2011); Assaf Moghadam, *A Global Resurgence of Religion* (Weatherhead Center for International Affairs: Harvard University, 2003); Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott and Timothy Samuel Shah, *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics* (New York: Norton, 2011); Johnson and Grim, *The World's Religions in Figures*, 11, 12.

<sup>119</sup> Klein Goldewijk, *Resurgence of Religion*, 26, 27; Scott M. Thomas, "Review Section: Religion and International Relations," *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000): 894; Thomas, *Living Critically and 'Living*

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, 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, 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.<sup>120</sup>

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.<sup>121</sup>

Although I inserted the sentence 'most observably in Islamic countries', I do not equate the global resurgence to a rise of religious (Islamic) fundamentalism.<sup>122</sup> It is

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*Faithfully in a Global Age*, 507-509. For an overview of Islamic, Christian, Jewish and Hindu fundamentalism. Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 203-220.

<sup>120</sup> Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 109-111. Huntington even goes so far to compare the Islamic resurgence with the Reformation, because both movements aimed at a fundamental and comprehensive reform of all parts of society.

<sup>121</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 26.

<sup>122</sup> 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, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 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.

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.’<sup>123</sup>

## 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.<sup>124</sup> 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.’<sup>125</sup> Based on that, some religionist thinkers 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’.<sup>126</sup> As a result of this, some scholars tend to use the newfound academic

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<sup>123</sup> Scott M. Thomas, “Religion and Global Security,” *Quaderni Di Relazioni Internazionali. Semestrale Dell'Istituto Per Gli Studi Di Politica Internazionale*, no. 12 (2010): 5.

<sup>124</sup> 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, *Religion and International Relations in the 21st Century*, 536. For examples of similar religious ‘resurgences’. Haynes, *Religion and International Relations: What are the Issues?*, 452; Haynes, *Religion and International Relations in the 21st Century*, 539-541. Thomas strongly disagrees with the existential security thesis of Norris and Inglehart and makes that very clear in his article. Thomas, *Outwitting the Developed Countries?* For more views and arguments on the interpretation of the ‘resurgence of religion’. Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 19-23; Cecelia Lynch, “Religion, Identity, and the ‘War on Terror’: Insights from Religious Humanitarianism,” in *Religion, Identity, and Global Governance: Ideas, Evidence, and Practice*, ed. Patrick James (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 108; Emile F. Sahliyah, ed., *Religious Resurgence and Politics in the Contemporary World* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 1-44. In a more recent article Inglehart argues that research indicates that religion is declining since 2007. Ronald F. Inglehart, “Giving Up on God. The Global Decline of Religion,” *Foreign Affairs*, (September/October, 2020).

<sup>125</sup> Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, DC: Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999), 2.

<sup>126</sup> Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 34; Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 20; Fox, *Integrating Religion into International Relations Theory*, 276; Philpott, *Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?*, 190, 191; Philpott, *The Challenge of September 11*, 83; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 27, 28. 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. John Anderson, *Religion, State and Politics in the Soviet Union and*

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.

The 'contradiction' illustrated above shows that the religionists have a variety of ontological and epistemological starting points. In Chapter 1, I described this as the difference between the more positivist religionists and the more interpretivist scholars – a difference which becomes clear once again regarding the following points.

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'.<sup>127</sup> 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 next phenomenon. As some 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. Secondly, this political theology contains a mythic longing for the supranational ideal of a pan-

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*Successor States* (Cambridge, UK; Cambridge University Press, 1994); William Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy, 1945-1960: The Soul of Containment* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008); Dianne Kirby, *Religion and the Cold War* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2003); Philip E. Muehlenbeck, ed., *Religion and the Cold War: A Global Perspective* (Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press, 2012); Andrew Preston, *Sword of the Spirit, Shield of Faith: Religion in American War and Diplomacy* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012).

<sup>127</sup> Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 135-137; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 26, 27. 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 Xinjiang Province on the country's northwest borders. Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 36. In her recent book Hurd further explains why it can be harmful to treat religion as a self-evident category in foreign policymaking. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *Beyond Religious Freedom: The New Global Politics of Religion* (New Jersey and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2017).

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.<sup>128</sup> As I will demonstrate later the two opposite ideologies might be less a matter of ‘secular’ versus ‘religious’, because the ‘secular’ order is itself partly the result of certain political-theological ideas.<sup>129</sup>

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 Casanova, religion went public and gained, thereby, publicity.<sup>130</sup> Apparently, there is a tangible motivation to pay more attention to religion, that is to say, religion manifests itself more emphatically. I would like to conclude that the world is not only viewed through different lenses, but that the world itself has changed just as well.

### **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, who does not belong to the paradigm challengers, 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.’ This matches the starting date identified by the religionists for the global resurgence of religion.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 90-104; Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 109, 110; Philpott, *The Challenge of September 11*, 83-86, 89; Klein Goldewijk, *Resurgence of Religion*, 23; Giorgio Shani, “Transnational Religious Actors and International Relations,” in *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics*, ed. Jeffrey Haynes (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 310; Toft, Philpott and Shah, *God’s Century*, 9, 27; Thomas, *Religion and International Conflict*, 15, 16, 18, 20; Tibi, *Post-Bipolar Order in Crisis*, 843-859. Gelot nuances the description of the global resurgence in terms of nostalgia and traditionalism. He points out that it also could be seen as purely religious return to the essentials of the Islamic teachings or, in the words of Peter Berger, ‘an impressive revival of emphatically *religious* commitment’. Ludwig M. Gelot, *Religion and International Politics: Beyond Westphalia and the Clash of Civilizations* (Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 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, *The Challenge of September 11*, 86-92.

<sup>129</sup> See Section 3.4 and Chapter 5 and 6.

<sup>130</sup> Casanova, *Public Religions*, 3.

<sup>131</sup> Jan Aart Scholte, “The Globalization of World Politics,” in *The Globalization of World Politics. An Introduction to International Relations*, eds. John Baylis and Steve Smith, 2nd ed. (Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press, 2001), 17;

It is possible to discern a series of processes through which globalization facilitated the global resurgence of religion: liberalization, deterritorialization, internationalization, universalization, and modernization.<sup>132</sup> 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.<sup>133</sup>

Deterritorialization, then, describes a process whereby territorial place, distances and borders lose some of their previously overriding influence. This process has forced policymakers to deal with external and domestic developments simultaneously, because porous national borders have created space for the reassertion of transnational religious identities.<sup>134</sup>

The third process is internationalization, which 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.<sup>135</sup>

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 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

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Shani, *Religious Actors*, 311. Gelot also takes globalization as a process that spread from the 1960s onwards. Ludwig M. Gelot, *On the Theological Origins of International Politics* (Saarbrücken: LAP Lambert Academic Publishing, 2013), 127.

<sup>132</sup> Scholte distinguishes five usages of the term globalization, which I employ to describe the various ways in which the religionists notice the influence of globalization on religion. Scholte, *The Globalization of World Politics*, 14. For a more extensive overview of the different kinds of globalization (political, economic, cultural, technological) and a discussion about the moment it started. Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 65-77.

<sup>133</sup> Shani, *Religious Actors*, 311.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>135</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 30, 31.

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.<sup>136</sup>

The next 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 broke with traditional ideas and doctrines, and aimed for a more rational method to deal with the problems of nature, human life and society. Stephen Toulmin, who is not a religionist, 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.<sup>137</sup>

The global diffusion of modernity enabled the resurgence of religion in various ways.<sup>138</sup> 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

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<sup>136</sup> Bech and Snyder, *Religion's Contribution*, 201; Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 80, 81; Shani, *Religious Actors*, 311, 312; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 30, 31.

<sup>137</sup> Gelot, *Religion and International Politics: Beyond Westphalia and the Clash of Civilizations*, 4; Pettman, *Reason, Culture, Religion*, 2, 15. I have used Stephen Toulmin's take on modernity to amplify the somewhat poor definitions of modernity by the religionists. Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (New York, N.Y.: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 9, 10.

<sup>138</sup> From here to the end of Section 2.4 (except my concluding remarks), the text is based on Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 2, 12-14, 38, 84-86, 110-113. It can, however, also be found in the following literature. Barnett, *Another Great Awakening?*, 2, 3; Bech and Snyder, *Religion's Contribution*, 201; Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 34, 35; Jonathan Fox, "The Multiple Impacts of Religion on International Relations: Perceptions and Reality," *Politique Étrangère*, no. 4 (2006): 6, 7, online available at <https://www.cairn-int.info/journal-politique-etrangere-2006-4-page-1059.htm> (accessed December 28, 2020); Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 2, 12; Gelot, *Theological Origins*, 129, 135, 146; Haynes, *What are the Issues?*, 461; Haynes, *Religion and International Relations in the 21st Century*, 538, 539; Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 23, 24, 160, 161, 195-198; Susanne Hoerber Rudolph, "Introduction: Religion, States, and Transnational Civil Society," in *Transnational Religion and Fading States*, eds. Susanne Hoerber Rudolph and James P. Piscatori (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), 1; Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 116; Laustsen and Waever, *In Defense of Religion*, 147; Patterson, *Politics in a Religious World*, 8; Shore, *Religious Conflict Resolution*, 22; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 11, 45; Thomas, *Religion and International Conflict*, 5.

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 society's, 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**

In this section, I depict how the process of modernization 'caused' a religious backlash and as a result created a resurgence of religion.<sup>139</sup> 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 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. Though an official common definition of the religious backlash is lacking, it seems that it best can be described as a countermovement which provides an alternative home to people who feel deserted because of the secularizing influence of Western modernity.

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

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<sup>139</sup> 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, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 2, 12; Haynes, *What are the Issues?*, 460, 46.

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 U.S. 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. Fourthly, 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, fifthly, 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 appropriate 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.<sup>140</sup>

### **2.4.1. Evaluative Comments**

In the preceding sections, 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'. Religion scholars do not make clear what they mean by 'significant'. When is religion considered to be significantly present

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<sup>140</sup> For a more detailed overview of the causes and characteristics of failed states. Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 175-178.

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.

I have also elucidated that globalization, the global diffusion of modernity, and the religious backlash have 'caused' the global resurgence of religion. Each of these developments partly explains what the global resurgence of religion is about, and together they provide a clear overview of which processes have contributed to it.

## **2.5. The Empirical Base of the Paradigm Challenge: 'Religion Is Ubiquitous'**

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 section will provide an overview of religion's presence in the world by using different levels: the individual level (for instance, 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).<sup>141</sup> In IR

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<sup>141</sup> I follow Viotti and Kauppi here. Viotti and Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, 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, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 28-37. The religionist IR scholar Vendulka Kubáľková 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 Kubáľková does. By the latter she means the religiosity or spirituality of individuals. Kubáľková, *Towards an International Political Theology*, 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

the international level is often called the international system. 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 forms the empirical evidence for the religionists' insistence that religion's role in the world should be taken seriously by IR. In other word, it describes the empirical basis of the paradigm challenge and supports the first subthesis that religion is actually everywhere.

### **2.5.1. 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 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 towards members of other religions. As a result, different religious identities can become a source of international conflict.<sup>142</sup>

The norms and beliefs influencing individuals may be of a religious nature in an either 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

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that approach is that it does not provide general descriptions that are also applicable outside that specific region or case. Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 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.

<sup>142</sup> Bech and Snyder, *Religion's Contribution*, 205; Bernbaum, *Getting Russia Right*, 132; Burnett, *Implications for the Foreign Policy Community*, 299; Ken R. Dark, *Religion and International Relations* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), vii; Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 35, Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 17; Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, "The Question of Religion and World Politics," in *Religion in World Conflict* (London etc.: Routledge, 2006), 2, 8; Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 160; Jeffrey Haynes, "Religion and Foreign Policy," in *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics*, ed. Jeffrey Haynes (London; New York: Routledge, 2009), 194; Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*, 28, 29; Stack, *Religious Challenge*, 26, 28; Stempel, *Faith, Diplomacy and the International System*, 6; Thomas, *Religion and International Conflict*, 1, 4, 5, 10; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 36. 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, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 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. *Ibid.*, 5-8. Wilson has analyzed six State of the Union addresses of American Presidents and observed numerous religious references. Wilson, *After Secularism*, 147-179.

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.<sup>143</sup> 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 are 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.<sup>144</sup>

### **2.5.2. 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.<sup>145</sup> 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 towards foreign Protestant missionaries; the

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<sup>143</sup> Fox and Sandler, *The Question of Religion*, 2, 3; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 142, 147.

<sup>144</sup> Barnett, *Another Great Awakening?*, 96-102; Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 54, 55, 109; Laustsen and Waever, *In Defense of Religion*, 174; Daniel Philpott, "The Religious Roots of Modern IR," *World Politics* 52, no. January (2000): 206-245.

<sup>145</sup> Bech and Snyder, *Religion's Contribution*, 205; Kubáľková, *Towards an International Political Theology*, 679. Haynes just makes a distinction between non-state actors which can operate nationally and internationally and state-related actors which are closely linked to governments. Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 34, 35.

rise of the Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, or Indian People's Party) since 1990 and its attempt to control the Indian government.<sup>146</sup>

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.<sup>147</sup>

Religious actors that influence civil society are often called sub-state or subnational 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.<sup>148</sup>

Religionist scholars 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, the national level (for instance, religion's influence on decisions to intervene in domestic 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.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Bech and Snyder, *Religion's Contribution*, 205; Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 36; Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*, 17; Stempel, *Faith, Diplomacy and the International System*, 8. 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. Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 35-37; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 167-171; Scott M. Thomas, "Response: Reading Religion Rightly: The 'Clash of Apostasies' Amidst the Global Resurgence of Religion," in *God and Global Order: The Power of Religion in American Foreign Policy*, eds. Jonathan Chaplin and Robert Jousra (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2010), 190.

<sup>147</sup> Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 36, 37.

<sup>148</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 99, 100. 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). *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>149</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 168; Haynes, *Religion and Foreign Policy*, 295.

### 2.5.3. Transnational Level: Religion Influences Transnational Relations

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.'<sup>150</sup> 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 thousand 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.<sup>151</sup>

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 nongovernmental 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.<sup>152</sup>

The second transnational activity is religious terrorism, which has become the 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.<sup>153</sup> And thirdly, 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.<sup>154</sup>

As I have indicated, religion also plays a role in transnational relations through ideas, as soft power, and nongovernmental organizations. Transnational religious ideas, actors

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<sup>150</sup> Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond*, 3rd ed. (Boston etc.: Allyn and Bacon, 1998), 498.

<sup>151</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 83, 84; Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 44, 129.

<sup>152</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 87-89.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, 104, 105.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 108, 109.

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.<sup>155</sup>

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.<sup>156</sup> 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.<sup>157</sup>

Finally, religion is present in the transnational domain through non-state or nongovernmental 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 Inter-Governmental Organizations will be discussed respectively.

Of the large variety of transnational actors only International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGO) will be treated, by way of illustration. INGOs can be divided

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 45-47; Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 45; Skillen, *Three Zionisms*, 94-107; Stempel, *Faith, Diplomacy and the International System*, 6; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 106, 107.

<sup>156</sup> Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 40-46; Thomas, *Religion and International Conflict*, 7.

<sup>157</sup> Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 37, 38; Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 130-132; Stack, *Religious Challenge*, 20; Thomas, *Religion and International Conflict*, 11, 12.

into advocacy, service-providing, and pastoral INGOs. To start with the latter, pastoral INGOs fulfil 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 INGO's 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.<sup>158</sup>

Inter-Governmental Organizations, 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 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 and coalitions of national and transnational actors.<sup>159</sup>

#### **2.5.4. International Level: Religion Impacts International Relations**

Most religionist scholars 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

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<sup>158</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 100-102. Today the Council on Faith and International Affairs is called the Center on Faith and International Affairs.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

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.<sup>160</sup>

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.<sup>161</sup> 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.<sup>162</sup> One could say that no other religion has reached a higher level of effectiveness in diplomatic relations than the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>163</sup>

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'.<sup>164</sup> Such legitimacy can be used by the state, elites, and nongovernmental 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 (e.g. the World Council of Churches in the fall of South Africa's apartheid government).<sup>165</sup>

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.<sup>166</sup> This easily led to politicized religion and religionized politics.<sup>167</sup> 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

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>161</sup> The Review of Faith & International Affairs devoted a special issue to the Catholic Church as an international actor. Mariano Barbato and Robert Joustra, "Popes on the Rise: The Modern Papacy in World Affairs," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 15, no. 4 (2017).

<sup>162</sup> Thomas, *Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously*, 104, 105; Thomas, *Religion and International Conflict*, 9. Haynes mentions the Catholic Church as a transnational non-state actor. Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 45. For a discussion on the Catholic Church and its role on a systemic, international, national and local level. Hehir, *The Old Church and the New Europe*, 93-116.

<sup>163</sup> Stempel, *Faith, Diplomacy and the International System*, 7, 8 For more information on how the Catholic Church as transnational actor challenges the state-centric Westphalian order. Shani, *Religious Actors*, 312-315. For a more extensive description of the influence of the Roman Catholic Church. Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 136-143.

<sup>164</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 35.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid., 35, 36, 43, 44, 171.

<sup>166</sup> Fox and Sandler, *The Question of Religion*, 3; Shore, *Religious Conflict Resolution*, 14.

<sup>167</sup> Roof, *Introduction*, 1; Wuthnow, *Understanding Religion and Politics*, 1.

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 all states use religion to legitimize state policies or fear religion's power and influence.<sup>168</sup> When states encourage nationalism, democracy, and humanitarian values such as peace and justice, they often legitimate this on the basis of religious values.<sup>169</sup> 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.<sup>170</sup>

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.<sup>171</sup> 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.<sup>172</sup>

Religion, fourthly, 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.<sup>173</sup> Further, millennia of human history have shown that religion may divide people profoundly and reinforce the frequency, intensity and violence of fault-line wars.<sup>174</sup> 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

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<sup>168</sup> Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*, 16.

<sup>169</sup> Thomas, *Response: Reading Religion Rightly*, 190; Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 35, 43, 50, 51, 176.

<sup>170</sup> Stempel, *Faith, Diplomacy and the International System*, 6.

<sup>171</sup> Fox and Sandler, *The Question of Religion*, 7, 8.

<sup>172</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 163.

<sup>173</sup> Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 42, 47, 253, 267. Huntington does not distinguish between civilization and culture, because he sees civilization as a 'culture writ large'. *Ibid.*, 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. Richard E. Rubenstein and Jarle Crocker, "Challenging Huntington," *Foreign Policy* Autumn, no. 96 (1994): 115.

<sup>174</sup> Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 254. Fault-line wars are communal conflicts between states or groups of different civilizations turned violent. *Ibid.*, 252.

latter was reinforced by President Bush's rhetorical invocation of God, which suggested that this was a religious war.<sup>175</sup> And 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.'<sup>176</sup> 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.<sup>177</sup>

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have presented the empirical reasons why the religionists claim that there has been a global resurgence of religion since the 1960s, especially in Islamic countries. My conclusion is that this resurgence is partly brought about by some real changes in the world, yet is also 'caused' by the attention that academics have paid to it. In both cases, the global resurgence of religion challenges IR to review its theories. To strengthen the challenge, I have introduced an empirical viewpoint to depict the role religion plays at the individual, national, transnational, and international level – an eye-opener indeed to the manifold ways in which religion is present in the world.

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. 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 sufficient 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

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid., 209.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., 211.

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 paradigm challengers. 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 what is secular and religious is often object of discussion and the outcome often a reflection of the existing power configurations.<sup>178</sup>

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. 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, secondly, religion organizes itself often transnationally and therefore challenges existing state borders which it often predates.

In the second part of this book, it will be my task to find out whether the IR theorists were aware of the global resurgence of religion at all, and if so, in what terms they would write about it. Were they aware of the greater visibility of the political theology of radical Islam? Did they relate the globalization process to a resurgence of religion? Have they been aware of a religious backlash that contributed to the resurgence?

It will also be my task to examine to what extent the IR theorists actually pay attention to religion at the individual, national, transnational, and international level. With respect to the individual level, I will especially look into the influence of religious norms and beliefs and identities. Norms and beliefs influence individuals directly in the form of doctrines or theology (e.g. holy war) or indirectly when individuals are influenced by religiously constituted ideas (e.g. just war, principle of non-intervention, Westphalian sovereignty, religious freedom as presented in UN documents). Identities can be shaped through values and worldviews and affect important individuals, groups and institutions.

When it comes to the national level, I will in particular focus on the influence of religion on the state level, political society (e.g. religious political parties), and civil

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<sup>178</sup> Jeroen Gunning and Richard Jackson, "What's so 'Religious' about 'Religious Terrorism'?" *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 4, no. 3 (2011): 369-388.

society (religious civil society actors). Regarding the transnational level, I will examine to what extent the IR theorists pay attention to religious transnational activities (religious fundamentalism, religious terrorism, and proselytizing) and the transnational role of religion in the form of ideas, soft power and non-governmental organizations. The international level will be addressed by assessing to what extent IR theorists are aware of religion's role as intermestic policy issue, international actor, provider of legitimacy, and a defining aspect of civilizations.

Based on the outcome of my assessment, I will be able to define to what extent the claim that IR has to consider religion's role in the world can be supported by the first subthesis that religion is ubiquitous.

For many scholars and policymakers, learning about the overwhelming amount of religious expressions leads to the question of why IR has ignored them for so long. What is going on with IR that religion has systematically landed outside its field of view? There are numerous possible answers to this question. Some point to countless domain-specific assumptions within IR that could explain why religion is being ignored. Others take it a step further and attribute it to the effect of IR's secular philosophical and scientific presuppositions. I will discuss this topic in more detail in the following chapters.



# Chapter 3

## 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.<sup>179</sup> 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

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<sup>179</sup> This story has become contested more recently. Benjamin de Carvalho, Harvard Leira and John M. Hobson, “The Big Bangs of IR: The Myths that Your Teachers Still Tell You about 1648 and 1919,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39, no. 3 (2011): 735–758.

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 marginalization of religion required that it be separated from, and then subordinated to, the affairs of state.<sup>180</sup> 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.<sup>181</sup>

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.<sup>182</sup> In this chapter I will compare both visions.

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<sup>180</sup> The subordination of religion to politics also has to do with a changing understanding of the meaning of 'the religious' and the 'secular'. Wilson refers to Charles Taylor and José Casanova to describe this process: "To begin with, the dyad is merely descriptive, highlighting two 'dimensions of existence'. Over time, however, the 'secular' half of the dyad shifts. The 'secular' comes to refer to the 'immanent sphere' while the religious refers to the transcendental realm. From there, the 'secular' comes to refer to what is 'real' and the 'religious' to what is invented or imagined until finally the 'secular' refers to the institutions we really require to live in 'this world', and the 'religious' or 'ecclesial' to optional extras that often disturb the course of this-worldly life. Through this series of historical shifts in meaning, religion becomes subordinated to the secular. It is thus an exclusionary dualism, a dualism that establishes 'antagonistic bipolar opposites' and then elevates one unit while excluding the other." Wilson, *After Secularism*, 31.

<sup>181</sup> Hoffmann, *An American Social Science*, 41-60. Cf. Steve Smith, "The Discipline of International Relations: Still an American Social Science?" *British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 2, no. 3 (2000): 374.

<sup>182</sup> Barnett, *Another Great Awakening?*, 93; Cho and Katzenstein, *In the Service of State and Nation*, 168; Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 34; Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler, eds., *Religion in World Conflict* (London etc.: Routledge, 2006), 6; Gelot, *Religion and International Politics: Beyond Westphalia and the Clash of Civilizations*, 9-11; Gelot, *Theological Origins*, 17, 153; Pavlos Hatzopoulos and Fabio Petito, *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile* (New York, N.Y., etc.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 1, 2; Haynes, *What are the Issues?*, 451; Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 107, 108; Hehir, *Why Religion? Why Now?*, 16; Laustsen and Waever, *In Defense of*

I will start by presenting the subject-specific assumptions that have led to the disregard of religion, as distinct from the empirical (Chapter 2) and the philosophy of science level (Chapter 4). The subject-specific level deals with the two assumptions that have become part of IR theories and apply primarily to the social domain of international relations. I will illustrate how, according to the religionists, the dominant interpretation of Westphalia has influenced the perception of the formation and development of these two assumptions, namely the national interest and the role of the state. This will clarify how the interpretation of the Westphalian system influences the interpretation of the subsequent history. I will then present an alternative interpretation of the Westphalian settlement, but before doing so, I briefly elucidate the terms ‘Peace of Westphalia’, ‘Westphalian system’ or ‘Westphalian settlement’.<sup>183</sup>

According to Philpott, the Westphalian system is based on five characteristics: (1) the supreme authority of the sovereign state within a territory; (2) the proscription of intervention to change relations between religion and politics in other countries; (3) separation between religious and political power, or more specifically church and state, which implies that governments do not promote the welfare of religion in general and also not the preferential treatment of one religion over another; (4) subordination of religion to the authority of the state; (5) and the rise of nationality as a source of identity.<sup>184</sup> This Westphalian settlement expanded to the non-Western world through

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*Religion*, 148; McDougall, *Introduction*, 160; Timothy Samuel Shah and Daniel Philpott, “The Fall and Rise of Religion in Religion and International Relations: History and Theory,” in *Religion and International Relations Theory*, ed. Jack L. Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 29, 30; Sandal and James, *Religion and International Relations Theory*, 1-3; Shani, *Religious Actors*, 308-310; Stack, *Religious Challenge*, 25; Thomas, *Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously*, 823; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 54, 55; Mona Kanwal Sheikh and Ole Waeber, “Western Secularisms: Variations in a Doctrine and its Practice,” in *Thinking International Relations Differently*, eds. Arlene B. Tickner and David L. Blaney (New York: Routledge, 2012), 275; Wilson, *After Secularism*, 55.

<sup>183</sup> The sections 3.1 and 3.2. are based on the following literature, except for the explanatory notes and notes with references to the quotations. Burnett, *Implications for the Foreign Policy Community*, 293, 299; Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 55-57; Thomas F. Farr, “The Intellectual Sources of Diplomacy’s Religion Deficit,” *Oxford Journal of Law and Religion* 1, no. 1 (2012): 277; Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 27-29, 167-169; Kirstin Hasler, “International Relations Theory and Nationalism: Any Room for Religion?” in *Religion and International Relations: A Primer for Research* (University of Notre Dame: Mellon Initiative on Religion Across the Disciplines, 2013), 137, 138, 140, 141; Hanson, *Religion and Politics*, 5; Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 31, 32, 36; Jeffrey Haynes, *Religion, Politics and International Relations: Selected Essays* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2011), 263; Hehir, *Why Religion? Why Now?*, 17; Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 34, 35, 174, 175; Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 32, 100, 101; Patterson, *Politics in a Religious World*, 66, 67, 69, 70; Philpott, *The Challenge of September 11*, 70-76, 79, 80; Philpott, *Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?*, 185, 187-189; Rudolph, *Introduction: Religion, States, and Transnational Civil Society*, 1, 4; Susanne Hoerber Rudolph, “Dehomogenizing Religious Formations,” in *Transnational Religion and Fading States*, eds. Susanne Hoerber Rudolph and James P. Piscatori (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1997), 244, 256; Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*, 31, 32, 37, 41; Saunders, *Relational Realism*, 164, 165; Shah and Philpott, *The Fall and Rise of Religion in International Relations: History and Theory*, 24-59; Shani, *Religious Actors*, 308-310; Shore, *Religious Conflict Resolution*, 11, 12; Stack, *Religious Challenge*, 25, 26; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 54-56, 64-66, 151, 156, 157; Wilson, *After Secularism*, 29, 31, 55.

<sup>184</sup> This means in practice that Westphalia also marked the decrease of religious authorities’ temporal prerogatives, such

imperialism, colonialism, and decolonization. Later, the Westphalian system became embodied in the United Nations and formed an embryonic international society. As a result, the Westphalian system became the basis of IR theories after the Second World War.

This chapter will feature an examination of realism and neorealism, two theories, as stated before, that have largely influenced International Relations. I will outline 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.

### **3.1. The Overemphasis on the State**

In religionist literature, one of the recurring criticisms of (neo)realism is that realism and neorealism 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.<sup>185</sup> As I have shown in the preceding chapter, 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 U.S. 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

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as holding temporal office, raising taxes, or controlling large tracts of land.

<sup>185</sup> Markus Thiel and Jeffrey Maslanik, "Transnational Actors," in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2.

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.'<sup>186</sup>

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 U.S. 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 U.S. 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.<sup>187</sup>

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,

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<sup>186</sup> Saunders, *Relational Realism*, 165.

<sup>187</sup> Thomas has another interpretation of neorealism. He sees neorealism as a methodological individualist approach. He defines methodological individualism as a bottom-up approach. It takes individuals or social units as the determiners of the structure of relations in the social system, the social structure of domestic society, or the basic structure of relations between states. The choices that these units or individuals make are considered to be rational. This methodological individualism leads to the assumption that the objective and external conditions of international relations create like units that become more homogeneous in their interests and behavior regarding security, which neorealists consider the primary interest of all states. As a result, religionists conclude, neorealists consider issues of identity (e.g. ethnicity, religion or gender) unimportant in international relations. Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 67, 68. I will come back to this in Part II of this dissertation.

ideas and beliefs, international regimes, and international institutions play no role in achieving order at the international level.

### **3.2. The National Interest of the State Is Power**

Realism and neorealism do not merely assume that the state is a central actor in international relations, they also assume the state to be focused on power. By centralizing power, the role of religion is disregarded. This assumption is a consequence of the idea that there is no higher authority than the state, and that states are in an overall anarchic situation, because an overarching authority is lacking. Realism also 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. Foreign policies are therefore based on analyses of military strength, technological capacity, possession of weapons of mass destruction, and economic robustness.

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.

So realism and neorealism tend to not give much attention to important forces in international politics, such as the role of spirituality, culture, and institutions; the norms, needs, aspirations, values, and interests of individuals; religiously derived norms enshrined in international law; religiously motivated humanitarian action; and diaspora groups (for example, the Israel lobby in the U.S.). They tend to overlook that states have the ability to export their religious ideals and thus may attempt to influence international (moral) standards, for example, regarding gender issues, blasphemy or apostasy. Some states find it blasphemous to subordinate their religious ideals to power considerations, which makes cooperation with such states difficult. All these aspects are overlooked when power is considered leading for the national interest.

### **3.3. Westphalia as the Starting Point of the Privatization of Religion**

In the preceding I have argued that adhering to these two Westphalian assumptions may lead to a neglect of religion. However, these domain-specific assumptions do not

by definition lead to the neglect of religion on their own merit. Nevertheless this may happen as a result of the dominant idea that the Westphalian system goes hand in hand with marginalization and privatization of religion.<sup>188</sup> More specifically, this interpretation of Westphalia are the reason that these two major IR theories, realism and neorealism subsequently 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.

### **3.3.1. 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, according to the (neo)realists. 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. These sovereign monarchs became identified with their ability to protect the security of the state against enemies from without and disorder from within. Both Hobbes and Jean Bodin (1530-1596) provided the theoretical underpinning for these processes.

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; the resultant marginalization of religion continued to increase with the gradual democratization of the state. A new relationship between state and church emerged, and the state became more powerful both internally and externally, because security and not a shared religion increasingly formed the basis for alliances.

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. Religionists refer to this as the secularization of the international order, and note that it intensified with the formal acceptance of the right to self-determination at the Versailles Peace Conference of 1919.

Finally, the emergence of the nation-state as a polity paved the way for a new dimension of the concept of national interest. The nation-state transformed ethno-religious cultural communities (nations) into new political-territorial constructs (states). Statehood became the basis of a nation's ability to control its territory and to

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<sup>188</sup> Some scholars only state that realism and/or neorealism subscribe to an extreme interpretation of Westphalia, while in other cases they refer to IR in general. I limit myself to realism and neorealism, and do not want to extend their claims to IR in general, though I am aware that other IR theories sometimes follow realism in this interpretation of Westphalia.

act internationally. 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, respectively civil religion and a linkage of religion with ethno-national heritage and identity. This led to a certain ambiguity, because the 'national interest' acquired a new meaning, namely to provide security, while the nation also had to take into account the fulfillment of historical aspirations which were often influenced by its religious identity. The way in which states dealt with this varied among states. For example, Christianity and Islam in the Middle Ages and, later, the French revolutionaries, the Nazis, and the Bolsheviks all defined their foreign policies in missionary terms. The school of realism hardly saw any difference between religious or ideological missionaries.<sup>189</sup>

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 religious and ideology.

### **3.3.2. 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 first present the majority's point of view by illustrating Philpott and Stack's stance. I will then show how Fox and Sandal add some nuance to the debate.

According to Philpott and John Stack, thinkers such as Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527), Hobbes, and to some extent Cardinal 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 century, 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

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<sup>189</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 22-26.

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.<sup>190</sup>

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 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.<sup>191</sup> 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.<sup>192</sup>

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.

Philpott's representation differs from Sandal and Fox's view. They 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'.<sup>193</sup> According to Sandal and Fox, Machiavelli thought that 'politics should not be guided by pure moral considerations'.<sup>194</sup> 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

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<sup>190</sup> Philpott, *The Challenge of September 11*, 78-80; Philpott, *Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?*, 190; Stack, *Religious Challenge*, 26.

<sup>191</sup> Stack, *Religious Challenge*, 25, 26.

<sup>192</sup> Glazier, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 3. Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 274.

<sup>193</sup> Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*, 31.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

prescribe a purely religious or moral order, though it acknowledged religion as a force capable of influencing the anarchic world.<sup>195</sup> Theories such as realism and neorealism also adhere to this way of thinking. In these theories, religion is often seen as an aspect of state power, a set of superstitions useful to states for strengthening national morale, maintaining order, and acquiring legitimacy.<sup>196</sup> As a result, realists and neorealists tend to neglect the role of religion, because the political sphere has freed itself from religion over time.

Philpott, along with most religionists, refers to this process as secularization, and does not appear to welcome it, as it could lead to biased theories regarding the role of religion in today's world. As I mentioned earlier, there are also religionists who claim that realists like Machiavelli, Hobbes and Morgenthau were not necessarily hostile towards religion, but, instead, thought that a proper explanation of politics could not benefit from religion's interference. This adds nuance to Philpott's position to some degree, but the bottom line remains that religionists are of the opinion that religion was not given the consideration it required.

### **3.4. An Alternative Reading: Westphalia as the Birth of Religious Freedom**

The religionists state that the general interpretation of the Westphalian within IR is not only disputable, but also dangerous, because it leads to binary and superior thinking based on Western categories that fail to do justice to the reality in many non-Western countries. On top of that, there is a possible alternative interpretation of Westphalia. In this interpretation, Westphalia is regarded as the birth of religious freedom and therefore does not herald the privatization and marginalization of religion. To the contrary, religious freedom has been safeguarded ever since. When history is examined through this perspective, it could provide a different perspective regarding the state and the definition of national interest.

The common interpretation of Westphalia in (neo)realism promotes a kind of secularism with an either/or model and a dialectical way of thinking: something is either religious or secular, but cannot be both. For example, the public sphere is secular and cannot be religious, and religious ideas are irreconcilable with the secular aspirations of the state. By clearly distinguishing what is secular from what is religious, it becomes easier to separate the sacred from (secular) politics, and subordinate it.<sup>197</sup> However, the secular is definitely not a neutral concept but in fact structures the way scholars perceive the role of religion in world affairs. It leads, for example, to the view that the West

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<sup>195</sup> Ibid., 31, 32.

<sup>196</sup> Gelot, *Theological Origins*, 18.

<sup>197</sup> Wilson, *After Secularism*, 64; McDougall, *Introduction*, 162, 163.

is superior to the rest of the world, because it builds its policies on ‘neutral’ reason and not on religion. It could lead to foreign policymaking in which secular democracy and religious theocracy are considered as the only two forms of political order, and in which case Islam is seen as the representative of the non-secular and the irrational. Examples of these mechanisms mentioned by the religionists are the possible accession of Turkey to the EU or the relationship between the United States and Iran.<sup>198</sup> For the religionists, the prevailing interpretation of Westphalia within IR – in practice, within realism and neorealism – relies on the anti-religious and anticlerical assumptions of the secularization thesis as first developed by eighteenth-century thinkers such as Voltaire and David Hume.<sup>199</sup>

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.<sup>200</sup> 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.<sup>201</sup> 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.<sup>202</sup> 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.<sup>203</sup> During this process the secular was theologically legitimized and gained autonomy, since the natural became separated from the supernatural from the twelfth century onwards. 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

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<sup>198</sup> Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 49, 141, 149.

<sup>199</sup> Gelot, *Theological Origins*, 11, 12.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.

<sup>201</sup> Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 49; McDougall, *Introduction*, 161, 162; Patterson, *Politics in a Religious World*, 20. Bech and Snyder are an exception to the other religion proponents when they argue that despite political realism’s distinction between the divine realm and the realm of temporal power, religion has not been completely insulated. Bech and Snyder, *Religion’s Contribution*, 207.

<sup>202</sup> Gelot, *Theological Origins*, 24.

<sup>203</sup> Patterson, *Politics in a Religious World*, 20.

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’.<sup>204</sup> 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.<sup>205</sup>

On the basis of this secularization within Christianity, two other variants developed over time.<sup>206</sup> 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. This is what I described in Chapter 1 as theology that is continued by other means and theological ideas that 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’.<sup>207</sup> 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

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<sup>204</sup> Philpott, *The Religious Roots of Modern IR*, 206.

<sup>205</sup> Gelot, *Theological Origins*, 7, 32, 151; Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 25, 30, 31, 33, 39, 47, 152; Philpott, *The Religious Roots of Modern IR*, 222-224. 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. Daniel Philpott, “The Religious Roots of International Relations Theory,” in *Religion and International Relations: A Primer for Research* (University of Notre Dame: Mellon Initiative on Religion Across the Disciplines, 2013), 207.

<sup>206</sup> Gelot describes this as three secularization acts entitled respectively as ‘Medieval Origins’, ‘Hobbes’ Sacred Politics’ and ‘The Enlightenment’. Gelot, *Theological Origins*, 41-123.

<sup>207</sup> Mika Luoma-aho, “Political Theology, Anthropomorphism, and Person-hood of the State: The Religion of IR,” *International Political Sociology* 3, no. 3 (2009): 299.

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.<sup>208</sup>

This interpretation of Western history is fundamentally different from the interpretation of classical realism and neorealism. The latter consider religion and secular politics to be two opposing movements, according to the religionists. The alternative interpretation of Westphalia emphasizes that the appearance of religion is changing, and that 'secular' politics exists by virtue of a religious or theological embedding.

The two opposite interpretations strongly resemble the two types of secularization of 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.<sup>209</sup>

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.<sup>210</sup> 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.

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<sup>208</sup> Gelot, *Theological Origins*, 7, 8, 151, 152; Luoma-aho, *Political Theology*, 298, 299, 306; Mika Luoma-aho, *God and International Relations: Christian Theology and World Politics* (New York; London: Continuum, 2012), 26.

<sup>209</sup> Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "The Politics of Secularism," in *Rethinking Religion and World Affairs*, eds. Timothy Samuel Shah, Alfred Stepan and Monica Duffy Toft (Oxford, New York, etc: Oxford University Press, 2012), 44.

<sup>210</sup> Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 42, 136, 138-140.

## Conclusion

In this chapter I have illustrated how, according to the religion scholars, the Westphalian system promoted a systematic disregard of religion in the domain of International Relations. I have discussed the two domain-specific assumptions that contribute to this. The religion proponents strengthen their position by not only criticizing the Westphalian presuppositions regarding the state and the national interest, but also by arguing that these assumptions are no longer valid on their own.

I then argued that the interpretation of Westphalia largely determines how the formation of state-centrism and the national interest defined as power is perceived, namely as an increasing secularization and marginalization of religion. According to the religionists, the role of the state and the national interest are considered completely secular in IR. In other words, religion does not play a role in the formation of the state, and does not influence the definition of the national interest. Religion has become a private affair, inferior to the state, because it threatens public peace. Secularization equals privatization, but also implies the subjugation of religion to the state. This does not necessarily mean that the number of believers is declining; it is merely concerned with the public influence of religion.

The religion proponents have presented an alternative, called the neosecularization theory. In this theory, secularization is regarded as a shift of the institutional position of religion. It does not mean that there are fewer believers, nor does it suggest that the public significance of religion has declined, except in its traditional forms. It means that religion occurs in a different way. Whereas previously the legitimacy of certain social institutions was determined by a supernatural framework, nowadays empirical, rational criteria apply. However, these criteria were formed within a religious, theological, or Christian background, and in that sense, they are still dependent on that background. The 'secular' is therefore a domain in which concepts and language are used that no longer refer to religion, without a hostile stance towards religion is being taken.

As I indicated above, the two views of secularization strongly resemble the two opposite forms of secularism presented by Hurd: laicism and Judeo-Christian secularism. The first form of secularism assumes that religious belief and practice will decline or be eliminated. It sees itself as neutral and free from ideology, and understands religion as a threat to science, rationality and secularism. Judeo-Christian secularism, in contrast, emphasizes that the secular cannot be thought separate from the Judeo-Christian tradition, because it is its foundation. It sees the separation of the religious and the political as profoundly Christian.

It is a pity, in my understanding, that the followers of the alternative approach to Westphalia have not elaborated on its consequences for the way in which they perceive the role of the state and define the national interest of the state. This is partly due to the fact that the alternative reading of Westphalia is not a broadly shared idea among

the religionists yet. I think this is also because religionists inherently struggle with the assumptions of realism, as these assumptions leave no room for religion and cannot be valid in light of the developments in the world. If neosecularization theory, I imagine, would be applied to classical realism religionists struggle with, this could lead to a positive recognition; now it is given a place in the privatization story of Westphalia. For example, it could clarify that the definition of the national interest as power entails a separation of the political and religious spheres, with the latter being mainly Christian and embodied in the church. These are political processes of emancipation from religious influence, not an anti-religious and hostile reaction to religion or the church per se. In this vision, religion is recognized as implicitly present in many different ways and on different levels in political institutions and arrangements.

In the above representation of current realism, religion and politics are presented as two competing realms which should not interfere with one another. Instead of thinking in contradictions, though, it might be beneficial to think in terms of simultaneous developments. For example, one could recognize that although the pursuit of power is a deciding factor in the political domain, ultimately politics should strive for higher, moral goals. The Amsterdam School distinguishes between conditioning, qualifying, and founding matters. So IR theory that would take religion seriously might acknowledge that striving for power is a foundational principle for the national interest, but that this search for power should be qualified by moral goals. Similarly, and perfectly in line with previous statements about historical political traditions, one could acknowledge religion's conditioning role in helping to resist brutal striving for power and contribute to peace and stability in international relations. I will elaborate on this in the third part of this dissertation.

In Part II, I will examine the degree to which the presented assumptions regarding the Westphalian can explain the disregard of religion, specifically in the case of Morgenthau and Waltz. I will investigate whether both Morgenthau and Waltz support the two assumptions (the assumption regarding 'holism' will only be tested in Waltz's case), and I will seek to determine which Westphalian interpretation forms the basis of their theorizing. But, I will first set out in more detail what philosophy of science issues play a role in IR, according to the religionists, and how this affects the view of (neo) realism on religion. That is what the next chapter is about.



# Chapter 4

## 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 modelled after the natural sciences. Apart from the factors analyzed in earlier chapters, 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.

In this chapter, 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. When it comes to social and cultural embeddedness, religionists state that IR as a discipline is strongly stamped by the Western context. Both the Enlightenment with its emphasis on the separation of faith and reason, and the restriction of reason to the rationality of the natural sciences, and the resulting modernization and secularization theory caused religion to disappear from the scholars' radar. With respect to the ontological and epistemological levels, the religion scholars find that IR often uses a materialistic ontology as a starting point, together with a positivist epistemology, with corresponding consequences. A scientific theory based on the assumption that the world is ultimately composed of material matters, and that religion is nothing more than a reflection of this, forms a receptive soil for a bias against religion. The same applies to the positivist view that social reality can be approached as the natural world, and that explanatory power is the determining factor for proper theory formation. Similar to the case of Westphalia, a different perspective is possible

here. As I described earlier, the religionists emphasize that in the early period of the field of IR, attention indeed was paid to religion and ethics when contemplating international politics.

With regard to the methodology of IR, the advocates of the religion paradigm criticize the tendency for reductionism of religion. This creates a one-sided picture of religion as something irrational, individual, and institutional, while other important aspects of religion are overlooked.

In the following sections, I will elaborate on these four aspects more or less in sync with the religionist discourse, and providing intermediate evaluations and critical comments where necessary

## **4.1. Social and Cultural Embeddedness: Influence of Enlightenment Thinking**

For the sake of clarity, I start this section with a general definition of the Enlightenment. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* characterizes the Enlightenment as a 'tremendous intellectual and scientific progress of the age (...) also because of the expectation of the age that philosophy (in the broad sense of the time, which includes the natural and social sciences) would dramatically improve human life'.<sup>211</sup> The encyclopedia sees the Enlightenment as:

[H]aving its primary origin in the scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries, because the rise of the new science progressively undermines not only the ancient geocentric conception of the cosmos, but also the set of presuppositions that had served to constrain and guide philosophical inquiry in the earlier times. The dramatic success of the new science in explaining the natural world promotes philosophy from a handmaiden of theology, constrained by its purposes and methods, to an independent force with the power and authority to challenge the old and construct the new, in the realms both of theory and practice, on the basis of its own principles.<sup>212</sup>

The 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 has been 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-

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<sup>211</sup> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry 'Enlightenment', online available at <https://plato.stanford.edu> (accessed December 28, 2020).

<sup>212</sup> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy entry 'Enlightenment'.

sided and ‘dark’ representation of the Enlightenment nevertheless helps to get a sharp picture of the religionist view. 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.’<sup>213</sup> In short, faith preceded the empirical 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 to be seen as inferior.

From this perspective, one can understand Peter Gay’s claim, not a religionist himself, that the core meaning of the Enlightenment is the rise of modern paganism, because French Enlightenment philosophers believed that ‘[Christianity’s] central myth was incredible, its dogma a conflation of rustic superstitions, its sacred book an incoherent collection of primitive tales, its church a cohort of servile fanatics as long as they were out of power and of despotic fanatics once they had gained control.’<sup>214</sup> As a result, many Western intellectuals considered the separation of religion and rationality, and the privatization of religion complete by the twentieth century.<sup>215</sup>

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

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<sup>213</sup> Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 49.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, 50, 51.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, 49-51; Gelot, *Religion and International Politics: Beyond Westphalia and the Clash of Civilizations*, 41; Stack, *Religious Challenge*, 22, 23. Cf. Shore, *Religious Conflict Resolution*, 12. It should be noted that Ulrich Lehner states that this picture of Gay has changed dramatically. Today, historians recognize that the overwhelming majority of the Enlightenment thinkers was interested in finding a balanced relationship between reasons and faith and that only a small fraction was anti-religious. Ulrich L. Lehner, *Catholic Enlightenment: The Forgotten History of a Global Movement*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 22.

theories have been developed and applied.

Another way in which the Enlightenment has influenced IR is that religious knowledge is undervalued and considered as 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.<sup>216</sup>

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. Kant thus paved the way for laicist and Judeo-Christian secularism, which are both present in IR.

Laicism bases its public morality upon a singular conception of reason, which considers theology in public life as dangerous sectarianism. It emphasizes the distinctions between public and private, secular and sacred, mundane and metaphysical. Judeo-Christian secularism, meanwhile, takes from Kant the idea that Christianity comes closest to his version of 'universal rational religion'.<sup>217</sup> In both forms of secularism, religion is understood as a set of rules and largely replaced by morality. The problem is that a definition of religion as a set of beliefs or rules does not do justice to the communal aspect of religion, which makes it a distorted approach to religion.

In summary, the replacement of religion by morality, the idea that religion is dangerous, and that religion is of secondary importance are the result of the changing views, in the Enlightenment, on the relationship between faith and reason, and the meaning and reach of reason. On these views, religion was something that should remain private, because it could become violent, intolerant and dangerous if it played a role in the public and political realm.

#### **4.1.1. 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,

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<sup>216</sup> Gelot, *Religion and International Politics: Beyond Westphalia and the Clash of Civilizations*, 15; Cecelia Lynch, "Dogma, Praxis, and Religious Perspectives on Multiculturalism," in *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile*, eds. Pavlos Hatzopoulos and Fabio Petito (New York, N.Y., etc.: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 56; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 108-110.

<sup>217</sup> Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 25-27, 36. Cf. Shore, *Religious Conflict Resolution*, 13.

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.

The majority of the most important Western social thinkers shared the belief that an age of enlightenment would replace religion as the basis for understanding the world. 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 – Kubálková explicitly uses the indication American or North-American – explains why the subscription of IR to modernization and secularization theory has led to the neglect of religion.

Before I move on, I would like to highlight the religionists' understanding of modernization and secularization theory. Although modernization theory is different from secularization theory, I will follow the religionists in their use of the term 'modernization and secularization theory' indicating that it comprises both. The modernization theory was the dominant paradigm among Western political scientists from the later 1950s through the mid-1970s. The sociological analogue, 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; this secularization could either be a decline or a rationalization of religion. An example of the latter is Enlightenment deism, with its belief in a supreme being whose existence can be known not by Scripture but by reason.

The societal consequences of modernization are, according to modernization theory, that secular institutions take over functions that were traditionally executed by religious ones, and that religion is no longer necessary to maintain social order in society. Religious social norms are replaced by technical, rational and empirical criteria; psychiatrists, psychologists, anthropologists and sociologists replace priests and ministers; and the state wants to base its policies on rational and scientific principles.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> Michael C. Desch, "The Coming Reformation of Religion in International Affairs? the Demise of the Secularization Thesis and the Rise of New Thinking about Religion," in *Religion and International Relations: A Primer for Research* (University of Notre Dame: Mellon Initiative on Religion Across the Disciplines, 2013), 17-19; Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 47, 48; Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 10, 11, 16, 17, 20, 163; Gelot, *Theological Origins*, 11, 12; Haynes, *Religion and Foreign Policy*, 193; Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 7-10; Kubálková, *Towards an International Political Theology*, 700; Vendulka Kubálková, "International

According to the religionists, IR subscribes to modernization and secularization theory, even though in political science and sociology a reassessment took place.<sup>219</sup> This reassessment would have been well-justified for IR too, because the applicability and validity of modernization and secularization theory has 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.<sup>220</sup>

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.<sup>221</sup>

#### 4.1.2. Evaluative Comments

The religionists argue that the Enlightenment ideas induced the neglect of religion. In my view, however, the fact that religion is of secondary importance, that it is reduced to a set of rules and considered dangerous, does not have to lead to discard of the study of religion, or to negligence of religion within IR. After all, one can still try to understand something ‘irrational’ by means of rational theories, not least because religion plays such an important role in everyday life. I want to stress the latter, as it highlights that the Enlightenment not only entailed a changing scientific worldview, but just as well involved cultural, social, and philosophical and ethical components. The Enlightenment contains worldview elements, because many radical thinkers during the Enlightenment

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Political Theology,” *Brown Journal of World Affairs* 12, no. 2 (2006): 140; Stack, *Religious Challenge*, 25; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 51-53.

<sup>219</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 15.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, 10, 18, 19; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 51, 53.

<sup>221</sup> Barnett, *Another Great Awakening?*, 95; Cho and Katzenstein, *In the Service of State and Nation*, 171; Desch, *The Coming Reformation?*, 21-23; Gelot, *Theological Origins*, 12; Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 32; Laustsen and Waever, *In Defense of Religion*, 148; Sheikh and Waever, *Western Secularisms*, 275; Scott M. Thomas, “Religious Resurgence, Postmodernism, and World Politics,” in *Religion and Global Order*, eds. John L. Esposito and Michael Watson (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2000), 52, 53; Wilson, *After Secularism*, 3. See also, Shore, *Religious Conflict Resolution*, 22.

were influenced by their own ideological preferences: they ‘believed’ that religion, certain forms at least, was harmful and should be privatized. This can be detected in the modernization and secularization theory, because not only the facts played a role, but also the ‘belief’ (and wish) that religion would disappear. This is why it took a long time before it was widely accepted that the secularization theory only partly applied.

Pairing the Enlightenment style of thinking with a great ‘faith’ in the modernization and secularization theory has engendered a situation in which religion is seen as the irrational pendant of reason, likely to disappear over time. In that context, it becomes understandable – though not necessarily justified – that IR scholars no longer take religion seriously into account.

## 4.2. Ontological Consequences: Materialism

The consequences of the worldview of the Enlightenment as described above becomes visible in 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.<sup>222</sup>

The consequences of the scientific-philosophical view on the subject-specific level are – as was illustrated in the former chapter – that 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.<sup>223</sup> As a result of materialist premises, realism and neorealism also ascribe little explanatory power to religion. 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.<sup>224</sup> The bottom line is that, from a theoretical point of view, preference is given to

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<sup>222</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 62.

<sup>223</sup> Haynes, *An Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 40–42, 428, 429; Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism*, 38, 39; Katzenstein, *Civilizational States*, 146, 147.

<sup>224</sup> Barnett, *Another Great Awakening?*, 94; Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*, 37, 41.

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.

#### **4.2.1. Critical Comments**

The religionists suggest that IR theory assumes that reality is made up of matter, and that as a result IR theories do not deal with religion. This would mean that IR theorists are making claims about reality as a whole, which is more than science can warrant. This is called ontological naturalism, which refers to a philosophical position that contains a pre-scientific assumption or belief about the totality of reality that does not follow from scientific research as such. One could say that IR theorists are not that philosophical, and just 'work' from the assumption that reality is made up of matter. Yet even this methodological naturalism is not neutral, as the American philosopher of religion of the Amsterdam School, Alvin Plantinga, has argued. He refers to Augustine in a similar way as the religionists do, as explained in the section on the Enlightenment, by saying that science is not religiously neutral. Plantinga argues in favor of a 'level playing field' meaning that a so-called Augustinian science is considered as valid as a science based on methodological naturalism, because neither of them is neutral.<sup>225</sup>

### **4.3. 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 positivist. 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. Before I discuss each of these points in more detail, I first set out which definition of positivism is used in the context of this research.

I derive this definition from Thomas, who identifies positivism by the following characteristics. First, positivism holds that there is a unity of science and a single logic of explanation. There is only one reality in the physical and social worlds, and therefore the methodology of scientific investigation is the same for both worlds. Second, facts can be separated from values because, as with the physical world, there exists something external and independent from theories or interpretations in the social world. Third, positivism assumes that, like the physical world, the social world is governed by general laws and patterns that can be discovered empirically.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Alvin Plantinga, "Methodological Naturalism? Philosophical Analysis," *Origins and Design* 18, no. 1 (1996); Alvin Plantinga, "Methodological Naturalism? Part 2: Philosophical Analysis," *Origins and Design* 18, no. 2 (1997).

<sup>226</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 60, 61. Thomas's definition agrees with Steve Smith's definition. Smith

### 4.3.1. 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 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> 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's neorealism 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 as to merit inclusion in a universal predictive theory of IR.<sup>227</sup>

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 whether power is the ultimate aim and whether states are the most central actors in international politics. Morgenthau, apparently, pays lip service to the acknowledgement 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 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.<sup>228</sup>

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distinguishes between three chronological variants of positivism. The one that Thomas defines is based on much of the literature of international relations since the 1950s. The only difference is that Smith adds a fourth characteristic, namely a 'tremendous reliance on the belief that it is empirical validation or falsification that is the hallmark of "real" enquiry'. Viotti and Kauppi, *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond*, 40-42. Thomas sometimes equates rationalism with positivism while at other moments he seems to consider positivism as one of the assumptions of rationalism. Pettman gives a more extensive treatment of positivism, rationalism, either with a capital 'P' or 'R', and its limitations. Pettman, *Reason, Culture, Religion*, 1-11.

<sup>227</sup> Burnett, *Implications for the Foreign Policy Community*, 297; Pettman, *Reason, Culture, Religion*, 32; Snyder, *Introduction*, 7; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 73. Tickner is an exception to most religionists with her observation that Morgenthau felt uncomfortable with secular rationalism and positivism and its assumption that the laws of the natural world also apply to the social world. She states that Morgenthau acknowledged that secular rationalism and positivism overlook the emotional and spiritual side of man, and the laws of the natural world are unable to provide a reason for man's existence. Tickner nevertheless holds that Morgenthau fell prey to secular reasoning by making a distinction between emotion and rationality. Ann J. Tickner, "On Taking Religious Worldviews Seriously," in *Power, Interdependence, and Nonstate Actors in World Politics*, eds. Helen V. Milner and Andrew Moravcsik (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009), 232, 233.

<sup>228</sup> J. Bryan Hehir, "Religion, Realism, and Just Intervention," in *Liberty and Power. A Dialogue on Religion and U.S.*

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.<sup>229</sup>

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.<sup>230</sup>

#### **4.3.2. 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.<sup>231</sup> 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.<sup>232</sup> 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.<sup>233</sup> 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

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*Foreign Policy in an Unjust World* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2004), 14; Burnett, *Implications for the Foreign Policy Community*, 293, 297-298. 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. *Ibid.*, 305 fn. 25.

<sup>229</sup> *Ibid.*, 297-298. Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 350.

<sup>230</sup> Skillen, *Three Zionisms*, 88; Thomas, *Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously*, 825, 826; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 59, 60, 158.

<sup>231</sup> Barnett, *Another Great Awakening?*, 105; Hatzopoulos and Petito, *The Return from Exile*, 6, 12-14.

<sup>232</sup> Behavioralism is a quantified approach to explain and predict political behavior which emerged in the 1930s. It is modelled after the natural sciences and claims to be objective and neutral.

<sup>233</sup> Pettman, *Reason, Culture, Religion*, 2.

of knowledge and the rationality of practice.<sup>234</sup>

The original religious influence on IR can be described from a functional and a 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 two hundred 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 that the concept of state sovereignty shares similarity 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

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<sup>234</sup> Laustsen and Waever, *In Defense of Religion*, 171.

the actual in Morgenthau's thinking. Niebuhr's Christian-inspired realism influenced not only Morgenthau, but a whole postwar generation of scholars and politicians.<sup>235</sup>

The fact that this religious influence disappeared is the result of the fact that a religious and a positivist view were considered as 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. 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.<sup>236</sup>

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.<sup>237</sup> 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.<sup>238</sup>

### 4.3.3. Evaluative Comments

In the preceding section I presented the religionist assessment of positivism's impact on how theories should look like, the meaning of rationality, and the impact of theological and religious ideas on concepts and theories within IR. Positivism not only disregards

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<sup>235</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 33; Kubáľková, *Towards an International Political Theory*, 681; Luoma-aho, *Political Theory*, 298, 306; Luoma-aho, *God and International Relations*, x, 2, 51, 88; Laustsen and Waever, *In Defense of Religion*, 170, 171; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 57. See also Nicholas Rengger, "On Theology and International Relations: World Politics Beyond the Empty Sky," *International Relations* 27, no. 2 (2013): 141-144.

<sup>236</sup> Barnett, *Another Great Awakening?*; 95; Wilson, *After Secularism*, 59; Kubáľková, *Towards an International Political Theory*, 677, 680-683, 685; Kubáľková, *International Political Theory*, 141, 142; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 93-96; Tickner, *On Taking Religious Worldviews Seriously*, 224; Wilson, *After Secularism*, 59. It seems that the religionists sometimes extend the definition of positivism I presented at the beginning of this section by including more logical positivist elements, such as the strict belief that only statements that could be falsified or verified are cognitively meaningful. Viotti and Kauppi, *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond*, 40.

<sup>237</sup> Wilson, *After Secularism*, 69.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, 32, 54-56.

interpretative theorizing, but it also neglects the significance of the context in which so-called rational actors operate. It therefore pushes IR to overlook the constitutive and formative role of religion on the behavior of actors. This tendency is strengthened by the fact that positivism disregards religious or theological explanations in favor of secular ones. And neglecting the influence of religion results in IR's bias against the role of religion in the world.

It is striking that the religionists with respect to positivism, represent Niebuhr and Morgenthau as less secular than as discussed in Chapter 3. This is partly caused by the fact that some religionists are more critical about Niebuhr and Morgenthau than others. Nevertheless, the relatively arbitrary dealing with Niebuhr and Morgenthau is a good additional incentive to extensively discuss these thinkers in the next part of this dissertation.

Furthermore, I have drawn attention to the irony the religionists detected in the fact that the influence of 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. They attribute this to 'a secularist bias within realist theory'. It seems as if the religionists find it impossible that a decision is made on religious grounds to separate the influence of the political sphere from the religious sphere. Yet this is the case here. I mentioned this earlier as well, when discussing the Westphalian assumptions such as the role of the state and power as the national interest. According to the neosecularization theory, it is possible that secularization is not an anti-religious movement but a movement within religion, in this case Christian religion. Of course it is still possible to disagree with it, but this would require religious arguments, or in this case political-theological arguments. If one leaves the rhetoric 'secular-versus-religious' aside, this could lead to a more positive valuation of the emancipation of the political aspect in realism than the religionists adhere to.

#### **4.4. 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.<sup>239</sup>

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.'<sup>240</sup>

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.<sup>241</sup> When religion

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid., 61, 63, 64. The religionists also mention the functionalist approach to religion as a form of reductionism, because it posits that any manifestation of religion in society is, in reality, some other force using religion. The Marxist argument that 'religion is the opiate of the masses' is a classic example of this way of thinking, Fox and Sandler maintain. Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 178. Another form of reductionism that the religionists discuss is simplification. This often happens in quantitative studies, if they do not leave out religion entirely. An important reason for this simplification is that scholars find religion hard to measure. This can be the result of lack of expertise, because there are seldom people that are experts in IR and religion, or because a truly accurate measure of religion would involve reading the minds of political actors to know their motivations. While this is impossible, most researchers choose not to measure religion at all, or include religion in a simplistic and therefore reductionist way. Ibid., 32; McDougall, *Introduction*, 160. Fox and Sandler discuss a quantitative approach to religion and international relations. Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 172-176.

<sup>240</sup> Shore, *Religious Conflict Resolution*, 23; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 44.

<sup>241</sup> 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'

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 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 century, 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.<sup>242</sup>

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.'<sup>243</sup> 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.<sup>244</sup>

The same reductionist thought has been adopted by neorealism. Neorealist theory

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of modern Europe. Thomas, *Response: Reading Religion Rightly*, 195.

<sup>242</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 9; Jonathan Fox, "Religious Discrimination: A World Survey," *Journal of International Affairs* 61, no. 1 (2007): 47; Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 33, 36, 37; Kubáľková, *Towards an International Political Theology*, 682, 683; Kubáľková, *International Political Theology*, 141, 142; Laustsen and Waever, *In Defense of Religion*, 151, 169; Shore, *Religious Conflict Resolution*, 23; Thomas, *Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously*, 838; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 22-26; Wilson, *After Secularism*, 64, 65. See also, Ron E. Hassner, "Religion as a Variable," in *Religion and International Relations: A Primer for Research* (University of Notre Dame: Mellon Initiative on Religion Across the Disciplines, 2013), 73. Religious communities, Laustsen and Waever argue, cannot be equated with other identity-based communities, because religious discourse does not defend identity or community, but the true faith and the ability to worship the right gods in the right way for the purpose of salvation. Laustsen and Waever, *In Defense of Religion*, 151, 152.

<sup>243</sup> Wilson, *After Secularism*, 71.

<sup>244</sup> Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 61; Farr, *The Intellectual Sources of Diplomacy's Religion Deficit*, 279, 280; Wilson, *After Secularism*, 70, 71.

also has the underlying assumption 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.<sup>245</sup>

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.<sup>246</sup>

According to the religionists, the reductionism of IR makes a significant impact when religion is seen as something irrational, individual or institutional. Although many religions have irrational, individual and institutional aspects, reducing religion to these aspects does not do justice to other elements, such as the communal, the rational and ideational. When the latter elements of religion are overlooked, it will lead to a distorted picture of religion in the world. That is also the case when religion is reduced to ideology as was the case during the Cold War, and is still the case to the extent that IR is stamped by this paradigm.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have explained that, according to the religionists, the 'old paradigm' suffers from philosophical limitations that make it difficult to take religion into account. I demonstrated that this relates to the paradigm's social and cultural embeddedness (Enlightenment and modernization and secularization theory), ontology (materialism), epistemology (positivism), and methodology (reductionism).

It is striking that the religion scholars appear less critical on the paradigm's assumptions than I found them to be in the previous chapter. Most presuppositions are criticized because they lead to ignoring religion. The religionists, in fact, only criticize the influence of the modernization and secularization theory because this in itself can no longer be maintained. In other cases, they only criticize the assumptions because they lead to a bias against religion. This creates the impression that the religionists mostly

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<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 69.

<sup>246</sup> Fox and Sandler, *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 20, 21; Tibi, *Post-Bipolar Order in Crisis*, 843. Religion was not completely absent from this conflict; for example, President Eisenhower saw and employed religion as a strong force against communism. Inboden, *Religion and American Foreign Policy*, 257-309; Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*, 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, *Response: Reading Religion Rightly*, 199-201.

disagree with certain assumptions because they are not satisfied with their consequences for religion in IR theory. As I contended in the previous chapter, this weakens the stance of the religionists. As a result, the complete burden of proof lies with the question why religion is so important (first subthesis) that this should lead to the alteration of IR's domain-specific assumptions (second subthesis) and philosophical starting points (third subthesis). I stated before that I believe the religionists did not succeed in convincingly showing that religion is important and distinctive to such an extent that it should lead to an alteration of IR theories.

A second 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 found out that Morgenthau and Niebuhr were being described as IR theorists who, in the past, influenced IR theories from religious or theological starting points. The religion scholars 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 second part of this dissertation, I will aim at demonstrating that this perspective does more justice to Niebuhr and Morgenthau.

Noteworthy, furthermore, 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 religion scholars need arguments of a more philosophy of science nature to dismiss positivism.

The distinction between a scientific theory or stance and a worldview also clarifies the description of the influence of the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment opinion that religion is something irrational does not mean that you cannot or should not study it. If such a conclusion would nonetheless be drawn (as is the case in modernization and secularization theory), it shows that the Enlightenment was not only a changing view on reason, but also a new conception of reality of a more ideological nature. If the Enlightenment as a worldview is distinguished from its views on religion, religion can still be taken seriously in a scientific way and be studied. In that case the Enlightenment need not lead to ignoring religion.

In the next part of this book, I will examine whether the issues I outlined in the

previous chapters apply to the cases of Morgenthau and Waltz. I will study their work, and ask the question of whether they were actually influenced by the Enlightenment and the modernization and secularization theory. In addition, I will research to what extent they subscribe to the materialist and positivist assumptions outlined above (in case of the assumption about the context-independent rationality this is only 'tested' on Waltz because the religionists do not accuse Morgenthau of this), and conclude by discussing possible reductionist tendencies regarding religion. All this will result in my assessment of the religion scholars' critique of IR, and Morgenthau and Waltz in particular.





# **Conclusion Part I**

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Contours of a New Paradigm?

## **Conclusion Part I: Contours of a New Paradigm?**

What has the reconstruction of the critique of the old religion paradigm brought us so far? And do we already observe the contours of a new paradigm?

I aimed to display the position of the religionist scholars as convincingly as possible, and in such a way that their claim would effectively stand a chance in the field of current IR theories. This was a sometimes difficult task, because the religion scholars are not always accurate when referring to IR theories, and tend to formulate their criticism in a quite general manner. I have shown that differences between religionists can be detected, but rather as a unity in diversity. Ultimately, the differences between the religion scholars and mainstream IR are greater than the differences between religionists. But how convincing is the position of the religionists if we take the whole picture in consideration? I will evaluate this on different levels.

When it comes to the main thesis that IR should consider religion's role in the world, it is important to realize that the religionists argue that IR theories should take religion more seriously and that it would be helpful to study the role of religion in international relations more thoroughly to support this integration. In other words, they do not only maintain that the establishment of religion and IR as a new subfield in IR is necessary, but also that this subfield should be instrumental to bringing religion in IR theory. Some religionists argue more strongly for the emergence of the subfield, while others are more focused on the integration in IR theory. In the latter case, most religionists want to add religion as a factor to explain international relations better, but sometimes there are also religionists that want to look at international relations through a religious perspective. This sometimes leads to a confusion what role religion is allowed to play in a scientific theory. I will discuss this more extensively in Chapter 9. In this dissertation I have drawn attention to the religious perspective through the introduction of the worldview level. Scholars have a worldview and this can be of a religious, quasi-religious or secular nature. In the next part, I will demonstrate that Morgenthau and Waltz's worldview contains certain political-theological views that influence their theorizing.

When looking at the empirical level, I come to the conclusion that the religion scholars assume a strong position, since they use numerous examples to show that religion plays a role in the world, which cannot be ignored by IR theory. They show they have an eye for the fact that religion is an undeniable aspect of reality, which also applies to international affairs. Their position simultaneously possesses a weakness. At an empirical level, the religion scholars are unable to explain why religion, in comparison with other factors, such as economy, power, military, demography, nationalism, etc., should be incorporated into IR theories. Their main point is to make clear that religion is present almost everywhere, but, in my opinion, they do not succeed in clarifying what exactly sets religion apart, other than that it concerns the transcendental. They are also unable to clarify to what extent religion should be integrated in IR. For that

reason, I have inserted a table of the various degrees in which the integration can take place at the end of this section. Also, some religion scholars want to add religion to the existing 'variables', whereas others strive for a completely new theory. In short, the religion scholars definitely have a point on the empirical level, but they are lacking persuasive power when talking about the theoretical relevance of religion if they want to convince current IR theory. If adding religion as a variable is not sufficient and a whole new theory is needed, the religionists involve so many potential points of disagreement that a long, very long debate is waiting and the result of it (for foreign policymakers) uncertain.

On the subject-specific level, I notice that the religion scholars do not just criticize the Westphalian assumptions because they lead to ignoring religion, but also because these assumptions themselves are not, or no longer, sustainable. They even propose an alternative interpretation of the assertion that Westphalia entails the privatization of religion. This double form of criticism strengthens their position, since it avoids the impression that they only criticize the sustainability of certain assumptions because of disregarding religion.

The image is tilting on the philosophy of science level. The religion scholars come up with interesting points that could explain why religion is being ignored, but they only assess the modernization and secularization theory as no longer valid in itself. This makes their argumentation vulnerable, because why would certain assumptions have to be modified? That is only possible if the empirical necessity is convincingly shown, and, for instance, if certain assumptions on the subject-specific level that result from philosophy of science standpoints are no longer sustainable. The religionists, unfortunately, do not really clarify how subject-specific assumptions necessarily result from philosophy of science assumptions. In short, the religion scholars could significantly strengthen their stance. Nevertheless, I believe that currently sufficient material is present, partly because of my reconstruction, to examine to which extent their position holds up with respect to realism and neorealism.

On the worldview level, I pointed out that the religionists reproach IR theory to be led by pre-scientific assumptions, but they are not free from this either. The religionists seem to refer to the influence of pre-scientific religious, and political assumptions when criticizing mainstream IR for its one-sided emphasis on religion's irrational and individual aspects. They attribute this to the 'political myth' of liberalism which approaches religion as the domain of the emotional, irrational, violent, and intolerant where the state has to intervene to ensure peace and prevent religious violence. The term 'myth' can either refer to something that is not based on science-backed facts or to a larger story that is used to give meaning and coherence to a society. In both cases, the political myth serves as a worldview or pre-scientific belief, conviction or goal, the religionists make clear. The religionist Thomas points out that there is not only a liberal 'creation myth' present in IR theory, but also a liberal secular eschatology. In his view, (neo)realism believes and hopes

that anarchy creates like unites and that all states will become liberal states. As a result, a global culture of tolerance and respect will emerge limiting the possibility of war.<sup>247</sup>

On the other hand, I see indications for the influence of worldview preferences with the religion scholars themselves too. They seem to display a certain *a priori* enthusiasm about the resurgence of religion, using this to address the secularity of the IR field. It is known that many religion scholars have a Christian background. Sometimes I have the impression that this makes them negligent when it comes to criticism on certain theories, and makes them inclined to generalize theories and forgo distinctions between theories such as classical realism and neorealism.

Worldview assumptions also seem to play a role in the discussion about the definition of religion and the global resurgence of religion. When it comes to defining religion, there are scholars who hesitate to accept the fact that there is something like a supernatural being which exists independently of human beings. To what extent do they reject this because of theological or even personal convictions? And why do others stick to this notion in defining religion and make the supernatural so important? Do they want to be able to distinguish religion from ideology? Another issue is the definition of the global resurgence of religion. The fact that scholars suggest that the resurgence of religion is not empirically verifiable – it being primarily the result of scholars' awakening – reveals an ontological or epistemological position that remains implicit in the debate. Is religion something that only exists in the minds of people, or does it also involve beliefs or behavior which can be mapped out? When we look at the term resurgence itself, there are various cases in which it seems to be equated with the return of God in some way.<sup>248</sup> It should be noted here that this confusion is also inherent to the phenomenon religion itself, because as I set out in Chapter 1 religion is often a matter of personal conviction. Nevertheless, it would reinforce the position of the religionist scholars if they not only uncovered the worldview assumptions in IR theory, but also would be conscious and explicit about their own starting points. This could definitely further the debate. I am aware that this is not very easy. Scholars would possibly deny that they have deeper commitments, let alone that these commitments influence their academic work. This

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<sup>247</sup> I take the idea of liberal eschatology from Thomas. Personal correspondence in 2018.

<sup>248</sup> I take this from Fitzgerald. Lecture of James L. Cox, 'Religion without God: Methodological Agnosticism and the Future of Religious Studies', *The Hibbert Lecture* (Edinburgh: Herriot-Watt University 2003), 4-6; Timothy Fitzgerald, *Religion and Politics in International Relations: The Modern Myth* (New York: Continuum, 2011), 35, 101, 102, 157-168, 177-184, 207-232. See also, Timothy Fitzgerald, *The Ideology of Religious Studies* (New York [NY]: Oxford University Press, 2000), 54-71. There are a few book titles that give the impression that some religionists confuse religion with God. Chaplin and Joustra, *God and Global Order: The Power of Religion in American Foreign Policy*; Luoma-aho, *God and International Relations*; Timothy Samuel Shah and Monica Duffy Toft, "God is Winning: Religion in Global Politics," in *Blind Spot: When Journalists Don't Get Religion*, eds. Paul A. Marshall, Lela Gilbert and Roberta Green (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Toft, Philpott and Shah, *God's Century*.

can definitely be the case. I think that, in particular when the topic is religion, exploring this worldview dimension might be helpful. The statement that someone does not have ultimate commitments or does not have pre-scientific assumptions that influence his or her work, is itself already worthy to discuss.

Based on my evaluation of the four levels mentioned above, I believe that the religionists have a strong position, which is mainly because the sum of the different levels leads to an integral form of criticism. At the same time, the religionists, in my perception, have shortcomings on two crucial points: first, they have no clear view on theory and consequently how to 'measure' religion, and second, they are unable to deal with the fact that a Christian thinker like Niebuhr emphasizes the separation of religion and international politics, while they strive for integration. This latter point demonstrates that the religionists assume that if someone is religious, he or she would be in favor of religion's involvement in politics or in favor of 'more' religion. That is, however, not necessarily the case. It can also be that someone is reluctant to involve religion, because of political-theological reasons, as we will see in the next part. I will first discuss the integral criticism and then the two points of critique.

Establishing that religionists provide integral criticism was mainly due to my reconstruction; yet it was present in their thinking in principle. The religion scholars themselves do not clearly distinguish the philosophical, the domain-specific and empirical levels in their argument, let alone that they identify the correlations between these three levels. However, as I have indicated, the various levels are related to each other, because decisions on the philosophy of science level often influence assumptions within the specific field of IR. There is a strong link between, for example, a positivist conception of theory and materialism on the one hand, and state centrism on the other hand. When the ideal is to develop the simplest possible theory with maximum explanatory power, and at the same time it is assumed that, in the end, everything is a reflection of material factors, then it is understandable that this leads to a kind of realism in which non-state actors are ignored, let alone their ideological or religious motives.

In short, the criticism of the religion scholars relates to different interconnected levels. They show that ideally no contrast exists between the empirical experience and the scientific view, nor between the domain-specific assumptions and the philosophy of science. For example, the religion advocates criticize the positivist assumption that rationality exists independently of context, and that theories should have a maximum of explanatory power. They argue that theories are flawed if the historical appearance of certain factors is not taken into account. They criticize striving for maximum explanatory power because it creates a gap between theory and practice, as in for instance, the assumption that the state is the central actor. This simply does not match the image of the nation-state as we have it outside the theoretical 'machine'. In other words, the religionists bring in the concrete and direct, that is, historical and policymaking experience which contradicts the theoretical way mainstream IR deals with international

affairs. According to the religion scholars, an ideal theory would avoid a gap between the direct experience and the theoretical assumption. The fact that the religionists not only criticize the lack of religion and what causes religion to be ignored, but that they also criticize these assumptions itself, makes their criticism a strong, integral form of criticism.

My criticism is that religionists lack a clear view on theory, which becomes apparent when it concerns religion. According to the Amsterdam School of Philosophy, it is important to seriously acknowledge the fact that reality is diverse, and that, in order to avoid reductionism, one has to account for multiple factors. The religion paradigm scholars, in fact, follow this in the extreme. As the encyclopedic presentation of religion's role highlighted, religion is almost everywhere. The challenge is to make sense of all this in a theoretical way, because if religion is everywhere, it can easily be nowhere.

This brings me to my other point, which is that the religionists do not know how to handle the fact that there is little attention for religion in the field of International Relations, despite the influence of religion and theology. They call it ironic that a Christian realist and theologian like Reinhold Niebuhr is reluctant to pay much attention to religion in politics. This is an understandable reaction, as they must see Niebuhr as a kindred spirit, since he is a Christian and a theologian, someone, therefore, you could expect to be 'enthusiastic' about religion. Niebuhr, however, reaches different conclusions than they do. His religious worldview, or political theology as I call it, makes him cautious to connect religion and international politics.

As mentioned at the beginning of this evaluative section, I would also like to address the question: what are the contours of the new paradigm that the religion adherents have in mind? Yet the problem is that the religionists are not very clear in this respect. Some do have clear ideas about this, but they all differ in various ways. As I already illustrated in Chapter 1, the spectrum varies from Fox and Sandal who pursue the integration of religion in existing theories, to Kubálková who advocates a new subdomain called International Political Theology. Nevertheless, on the basis of the analyses given above, it seems to be possible to give a tentative outline of the new paradigm as they have it in mind. I see the following key elements:

Empirical level:

- (a) As the name suggests, the religion paradigm explicitly wants to give attention to the role of religion on different levels, namely the individual, transnational, national, and international level.
- (b) It can be expected that they will include the fact that religion is often about groups of people and communities of faith, especially in non-Western religions.

Domain-specific level:

- (c) It will do so by asking attention in theorizing for more factors than the state.
- (d) Because it advocates a different interpretation of Westphalia, it will seek a less secular definition of the national interest.

Philosophy of science level:

- (e) The new paradigm will be based on a more interpretive theory, in which there is room for the historical context (epistemological issue).
- (f) This also includes a different approach to religion, in which the binary oppositions as outlined above will be transcended (methodological issue).
- (g) In addition, they will argue that the role of religion in the public debate is often rational, and rather similar to the contributions of other beliefs (methodological matter).
- (h) Finally, they will emphasize that religion is often not about institutions, but about practices and supporting ideas to which people of faith adhere (methodological issue).

Whether this, ultimately, will result in a whole new paradigm, a revision of the existing paradigm, or still something else remains to be seen. Religionists have reached no conclusion on this. In addition, it is helpful to also take note of the arguments of thinkers from the 'old' paradigm, as I will do in the next part. I would like to maintain the possibility that no adjustment is needed, or that there is enough room within the existing theories to take religion seriously. It may also well be that the Amsterdam School of Philosophy provides important elements for an approach which does justice to both paradigms.

Since I will assess the plausibility of the religionist position in the next section, it is important to know what I will be assessing, because the religionists sometimes have different views on what it means to incorporate religion or to what extent Westphalia leads to the neglect of religion. Besides that, the outcome of the assessment of Morgenthau and Waltz might not simply be a matter of 'yes' or 'no', but more 'to what extent'. For that reason, I have set out below what are the options with respect to the outcomes of the assessment (see Figure I.1).

	<b>View on IR</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Medium</b>	<b>Maximum</b>
<b>Empirical</b>	Religion is not perceived or not taken seriously enough	Religion is not consciously ignored	Religion is perceived	Religion is observed in all its variety
<b>Domain-specific</b>	Westphalian assumptions lead to a bias regarding religion	No assumptions actively exclude religion	Religion is considered as a factor	Religion is included as a factor
<b>Philosophy of science</b>	Social and cultural context, ontology, epistemology, and methodology block the view on religion	No assumptions actively, although perhaps indirectly, exclude religion	Principal openness to religious or theological influence	Among others, based on religious or theological presuppositions
<b>Worldview</b>	Secularism influences scholars' view on the world	No presupposed negative stance on influence of worldview	Openness to the influence of one's worldview	Active involvement of worldviews

**Figure I.1. Assessment outcomes**





# Part II

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In Defense of the Old Paradigm:  
'Augustinian Moments' in IR

## Part II: In Defense of the Old Paradigm: ‘Augustinian Moments’ in IR

In the preceding part, I have set out what has been called the ‘religious turn’ in IR.<sup>249</sup> Now the claims, statements, and underlying arguments that form the basis for the paradigm challenge have been made clear; the question is to what extent are they valid? Examining that is the aim of this second part. It answers the second research question: To what extent is this new group of scholars right in their criticism of two dominant theories, namely classical realism and neorealism? The answer to this question will be presented with respect to Morgenthau (Chapter 6) and Waltz (Chapter 8). My conclusion will be that the position of the religionists is based on insufficient argumentation. A majority of the arguments put forward by religionists to support the empirical, domain-specific and philosophical subtheses do not apply to Morgenthau’s case, and a slightly smaller section of the arguments do not apply to Waltz’s neorealism. There are various reasons for this, but the most important one is that they overlook the influence of the fourth level, the worldview level. It appears that Morgenthau and Waltz subscribe to important Augustinian political-theological ideas and that their theories cannot be properly understood if these ideas are ignored. In other words, I ‘test’ Morgenthau’s and Waltz’s dealing with the ‘religious turn’ by tapping into the ‘theological turn’ in IR.<sup>250</sup>

What are these so-called Augustinian political-theological ideas, or ‘Augustinian moments’? What I mean is that the theological ideas of Augustine have affected the way Morgenthau and Waltz look at the world. This influence is caused by the way in which Reinhold Niebuhr rejuvenated the central ideas of Augustine and applied them to social and (international) political issues. In 1953, Niebuhr published an essay in which he described the distinctiveness of Augustine’s realism.<sup>251</sup> In his intellectual autobiography, he stated:

I am, however, surprised to note in retrospect how late I was in studying the thought of Augustine carefully. The matter is surprising because the thought of this theologian was to answer so many of my unanswered questions and to emancipate me finally from the notion that the Christian faith was in some way identical with the moral idealism of the past century.<sup>252</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> I take this from Scott M. Thomas, “The Religious Turn Reconsidered,” *Critical Studies on Security* 4, no. 3 (2016): 319-326.

<sup>250</sup> See William Bain, “Anarchical Society as Christian Political Theology,” in *Anarchical Society at 40: Contemporary Challenges and Prospects*, eds. Hidemi Suganami, Madeline Carr and Adam R. C. Humphreys (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 59-74; Gelot, *Theological Origins*; Vassilios Paipais, “Political Theologies of the International: The Continued Relevance of Theology in International Relations,” *Journal of International Relations and Development* 22, no. 2 (2019); Seán Molloy, *Kant’s International Relations: The Political Theology of Perpetual Peace*. (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2019); Jodok Troy, ed., *Religion and the Realist Tradition: From Political Theology to International Relations Theory and Back* (London; New York: Routledge, 2014).

<sup>251</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, “Augustine’s Political Realism,” in *Religion and Foreign Affairs: Essential Readings*, eds. Dennis Hoover and Douglas Johnston (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2012), 97-108.

<sup>252</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, “Intellectual Autobiography,” in *Reinhold Niebuhr: His Religious, Social, and Political Thought*, ed.

Niebuhr considered Augustine ‘by universal acknowledgement, the first great realist in western history’.<sup>253</sup>

There are scholars who see a comparable influence of Augustine on Morgenthau, although I think this probably went mainly through Niebuhr.<sup>254</sup> Torbjørn Knutsen writes that ‘Morgenthau drew out the International Relations implications of Niebuhr’s writings.’<sup>255</sup> There are also differences regarding the manner in which Niebuhr processes Augustine’s ideas and the way in which Morgenthau and Waltz do, because it seems that Niebuhr’s Christian realism is quite different from that of Morgenthau.<sup>256</sup> In Chapter 9, I will shortly discuss some differences between Morgenthau and Niebuhr in more detail.

A lot less has been written regarding the influence of Niebuhr on Waltz, in contrast to the relationship between Morgenthau and Waltz. An exception is an article by Menno Kamminga, in which he argues that Niebuhr’s influence on Waltz is much larger than he himself claims and is usually assumed in IR theory.<sup>257</sup> In Chapter 7, I will elaborate on this, because I believe that the continuity between classical political realism and neorealism is much larger than the discontinuity. Moreover, Waltz cannot be properly understood if the Augustinian moments are not taken into consideration. To give an example. If one reads the following paraphrase from Augustine from his major work *The City of God*, it is not difficult to see the similarities with Waltz’s way of reasoning.

The city of man, for all the width of its expansion throughout the world and for all the depth of its differences in this place and that, is a single community. The simple truth is that the bond of a common nature makes all human beings one. Nevertheless, each individual in this community is driven by his passions to pursue his private purposes. Unfortunately, the objects of these purposes are such that no one person (let alone, the world community) can ever be wholly satisfied. The

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Charles W. Kegley (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock Publishers, 2009), 9.

<sup>253</sup> Niebuhr, *Augustine’s Political Realism*, 98. I came across this quote, and the preceding one, here. Gianni Dessi, “Reinhold Niebuhr and the Political Realism of Saint Augustine,” *30Days*, no. 4 (2003), online available [http://www.30giorni.it/articoli\\_id\\_779\\_l3.htm](http://www.30giorni.it/articoli_id_779_l3.htm) (accessed December 28, 2020).

<sup>254</sup> Willem Boerma, “Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971),” in *The Oxford Guide to the Historical Reception of Augustine*, eds. Karla Pollmann and Willemien Otten (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 1448-1450; Roger I. Epp, *The Augustinian Moment in International Politics: Niebuhr, Butterfield, Wight and the Reclaiming of a Tradition* (Aberystwyth: University College of Wales, 1991), 13; Alastair J. H. Murray, “The Moral Politics of Hans Morgenthau,” *The Review of Politics* 58, no. 1 (1996): 81-107; Alastair J. H. Murray, *Reconstructing Realism. Between Power Politics and Cosmopolitan Ethics* (Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1997), 47-69; Daniel Rice, “Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau: A Friendship with Contrasting Shades of Realism,” *Journal of American Studies* 42, no. 2 (2008): 255-265; Bettina Dahl Soendergaard, “The Political Realism of Augustine and Morgenthau: Issues of Man, God and Just War,” *Turkish Journal of International Relations* 7, no. 4 (2008).

<sup>255</sup> Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory*, 241.

<sup>256</sup> Soendergaard, *The Political Realism of Augustine and Morgenthau*; Rice, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau*, 266-289.

<sup>257</sup> Menno R. Kamminga, “Structure and Sin: The Niebuhrian Roots of Waltz’s Neorealist Theory of International Politics,” *Philica*, no. 109 (2012), <http://hdl.handle.net/11370/a3b12640-fd67-40a7-885e-c2505a9ae6af> (accessed December 28, 2020).

reason for this is that nothing but Absolute being can satisfy human nature. The result is that the city of man remains in a chronic condition of civil war.<sup>258</sup>

Epp argues that there are three themes in which Augustine's influence can be found in political realism: history, human nature and ethics.<sup>259</sup> I will shortly discuss these three themes, because it illustrates the manner in which Augustinian moments are visible in political realism.<sup>260</sup> The fact that this Augustinian influence is generally unrecognized is caused by the often one-sided interpretation of political realism after the Second World War through the lens of the political realism of Machiavelli and Hobbes. However, as Alastair Murray notes, an Augustinian reading next to existing interpretations of Morgenthau offer the necessary missing pieces of the puzzle.<sup>261</sup>

I have chosen to describe these three themes of history, human nature and ethics based on Niebuhr's statements on the topic, because he translated Augustine's ideas to International Relations. That means that I follow Niebuhr's interpretation of Augustine and his translation of Augustine's political realism to international politics. I do not discuss or assess to what extent Niebuhr does fully justice to Augustine.<sup>262</sup> In the following chapters, I will describe the Augustinian themes in relation to Morgenthau and Waltz, who themselves do not account for their theological inspiration. Morgenthau once said in a faculty-club conversation that he did not need all the 'metaphysical' stuff 'Reinie' needed to come to a similar point.<sup>263</sup>

According to Roger Epp, Augustinian political realism views history in a classical Christian way. In that vision, the concept *eschaton* plays a large role, which is an anticipated moment when the full meaning of life and history will be disclosed and presumptive human attempts at utopian culmination brought down. The *telos* of history lies beyond the temporal process. The consequence of this for politics is that for human problems no more than proximate solutions are available.<sup>264</sup>

When it comes to human nature, the notion of sin plays an important role. Sin in the Augustinian tradition is not a defect of human nature, but a theological category, a rebellion against God in the form of inordinate love of self which has social implications.<sup>265</sup> As a result of this, political power is ambiguous because it can be a remedy or an occasion for sin. According to Epp, the Augustinian notion of sin has a

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<sup>258</sup> Aurelius Augustine, *The City of God*, trans. Marcus Dods (New York: Modern Library, 1950), Book XVIII, Chapter 2. I took this from Epp, *The Augustinian Moment in International Politics*, 1. It should be noted that Epp gives quite a loose paraphrase of Augustine here.

<sup>259</sup> Ibid. Epp also shows the influence on Augustine on the English School.

<sup>260</sup> Ibid., 1.

<sup>261</sup> Murray, *The Moral Politics of Hans Morgenthau*, 106. Murray also shows why other works fall short. Ibid., 81-83. Epp even talks about the reclaiming of a tradition. Epp, *The Augustinian Moment in International Politics*, front page.

<sup>262</sup> I point at some different interpretations of Augustine in Section 9.3.5.

<sup>263</sup> Rice, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau*, 266 fn. 40.

<sup>264</sup> Epp, *The Augustinian Moment in International Politics*, 9.

<sup>265</sup> Ibid., 11, 12.

critical purpose, because it challenges all signs of self-righteousness. Besides that, it also leads to realism, because a sense of the universality of sin and the partiality of human vision could enable a 'decent justice' to emerge.<sup>266</sup>

Ethics in an Augustinian sense as introduced by Niebuhr has everything to do with justice, order, and love. Love is the impossible possibility which was most fully exemplified in Jesus Christ. This sacrificial, non-resistant love is the principle of criticism under which every scheme of justice stands. Justice is the approximation of brotherhood under the conditions of sin which takes various forms in different times and places and requires some sort of balance of power. This would, however, always be in a dialectical tension with the ideal of love, because justice without the pull of love would degenerate into mere order. This does not mean that order is not important because order is needed to approximate justice, but order without justice could not long endure.<sup>267</sup>

I started this section with the claim that Augustinian elements can be found in Morgenthau's and Waltz's political realism which bring to light that their theories build on theological concepts. This does not mean, however, that the following chapters will primarily deal with this theological influence. The main purpose of Part II is to analyze the degree to which religionists are correct in claiming that realism has ignored religion, and to map the ways in which religion plays a role in political realism. As illustrated above, to explain realism's dealing with religion a few political-theological notes inspired by Augustine should be taken into account. That is why Part II has the following structure. I will start with a chapter in which I describe Morgenthau's classical realism as I view it, based on his works. Naturally, I will also converse with other scholars, but my primary source is Morgenthau's own work (Chapter 5). I present my interpretation of his theory in a separate chapter before I describe the degree to which he takes religion seriously in the subsequent chapter (Chapter 6). I will do the same regarding Waltz (Chapter 7 and 8). In these chapters, I will also show how the theological influence of Augustine, as already introduced briefly above, becomes apparent in their theorizing.

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<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>267</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, 17.



# Chapter 5

## The Hidden Theology of Morgenthau's Classical Realism

### Introduction

Theology and Morgenthau. That is not a very obvious combination. In my view, however, Morgenthau cannot be understood correctly without taking theology seriously. This is because Morgenthau's classical realism is strongly influenced by theological ideas, and one needs to take these ideas into account to understand his theory of international politics. Not in the least because it appears that Morgenthau's hidden theology accounts for the way he deals with religion.<sup>268</sup> Because of the important role that theology plays in Morgenthau's theory, I start this chapter with a section in which I describe his political theology.

To what extent do religionists justice to Morgenthau's classical realism? The religionist's references to Morgenthau are often very general, using terms like 'realism' or 'realists', and they seldom refer to specific books or literature. They do not provide a clear picture of their understanding of Morgenthau's theory. Because of this, I pay extensive attention to the way I understand Morgenthau's classical realism and the sources I use.

I interpret Morgenthau's theorizing through the lens of his six principles of political realism. My starting point is that Morgenthau's *Politics Among Nations*, more specifically his six realist principles in Chapter 1, can be considered as an overview of his classical realism. Even then the question remains how certain passages have to be interpreted in

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<sup>268</sup> That means that I position Morgenthau in line with Murray. He argues that the conventional opinion is that realism is an amoral or immoral approach to international politics. Current revisionist literature has sought to overcome this, but they tend to interpret realism – including Morgenthau – as incoherent. Murray shows on the basis of the study of historical texts that realism is a coherent and unified tradition of political ethics, and argues for an alternative reading of realism, namely that of Augustine and the tradition of Christian realism, instead of the traditional reading which includes Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes. Murray, *Reconstructing Realism*, 11-13. Williams explains the background of the renewed attention for realism and Morgenthau. Michael C. Williams, "Introduction," in *Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau in International Relations*, ed. Michael C. Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5-9.

light of other writings. That is why I also include other publications by Morgenthau in my representation of his classical realism.

Next, I explain why it is justified to primarily base Morgenthau's classical realism on his *Politics Among Nations*, and within that work, his six principles. Then I will argue that Morgenthau's classical realism is more a set of assumptions than a theory in the strict scholarly sense of the word. Subsequently, I will illustrate that Morgenthau's classical realism forms a consistent whole and that there is no such thing as two Morgenthaus: a young realist and an older idealist. Before I elaborate on the six principles of Morgenthau's realism, I will argue that the order of the six principles is not arbitrary, because one flows naturally from the other and they all presuppose one another.

## 5.1. 'Augustinian Moments' in Morgenthau's Classical Realism

In Chapter 1, I set out that IR theories are mostly composed of an empirical, domain-specific and philosophical level. I also stated, however, that there is a fourth level, the worldview level, which often influences the other levels. This is clearly visible in Morgenthau's theory and his theory of international politics cannot be understood properly if this worldview level is not taken seriously. My claim is that Morgenthau's worldview contains ideas about human nature, history and ethics, which are built on theological ideas. The exclusion of Morgenthau's political theology and the corresponding Augustinian elements leads to an imbalanced and incomplete vision on Morgenthau's classical realism and on the role of religion, which I will discuss in the following chapter. For that reason, I will start this chapter with these political-theological ideas concerning the human person, ethics and history and then discuss how this shaped his theory.<sup>269</sup>

It should be said that Morgenthau himself did not write much about theology. As I quoted earlier, he once said that he did not need all the 'metaphysical' stuff 'Reinie' needed to come to a similar point. 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 did not use the term *katechon*, but the idea is presupposed in his political theology. In this first section, I will provide a picture of the hidden theology of Morgenthau's classical realism. It is 'hidden', because Morgenthau himself did not pay much attention to it. However, to understand Morgenthau correctly we need this missing piece of the puzzle in order to have a clear picture of his thinking. Since it is a hidden theology, my sketch will be based on some writings of Morgenthau,

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<sup>269</sup> In the introduction to Part II, I maintained that the influence of Augustine on Morgenthau took place mainly through Niebuhr. I will discuss this in Chapter 6 in more detail when I deal with the religionist argument that the influence of theology has vanished over time.

but mainly on secondary sources.

As said, the Augustinian moments in Morgenthau become part of his theory by way of his political theology. 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.<sup>270</sup> 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. As I will explain later in this chapter, 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 vision 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.'<sup>271</sup> 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.<sup>272</sup> 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.<sup>273</sup>

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 with '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.<sup>274</sup> *Katechon*, in fact, delays the establishment of

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<sup>270</sup> Guilhot, *American Katechon*, 226 .

<sup>271</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Science: Servant or Master?* (New York: New American Library, 1972), 8, 9.

<sup>272</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965), 204-206.

<sup>273</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "Justice and Power," *Social Research* 41 (Spring, 1974): 167.

<sup>274</sup> Guilhot, *American Katechon*, 234.

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.<sup>275</sup>

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 on 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).<sup>276</sup>

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.<sup>277</sup>

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<sup>275</sup> Ibid., 235.

<sup>276</sup> Matthias Lievens, "Carl Schmitt's Concept of History," in *The Oxford Handbook of Carl Schmitt*, eds. Jens Meierhenrich and Oliver Simons (Corby: Oxford University Press, 2017), 18-20.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., 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'.<sup>278</sup> As I will explain later, Morgenthau takes the moral significance of politics seriously, but wants to be realistic about the application of moral principles. For this reason, he introduces three rules, namely that context should be taken seriously, that the tension between morality and politics should be kept in place, and that practical wisdom, or prudence, is required to deal with this tension. It is not without reason that Morgenthau's realism is presented as an alternative to idealism and that he is critical about 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.<sup>279</sup> 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. It avoids a simplistic view of politics by emphasizing its finite nature, but creates room to make political decisions even in the absence of absolute justifications.<sup>280</sup>

Morgenthau's political theology effects 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 does; secularization would give rise to political

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<sup>278</sup> Epp, *The Augustinian Moment in International Politics*, 16.

<sup>279</sup> Guilhot, *American Katechon*, 233, 234.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, 247.

religions. Because of this, Morgenthau sees the autonomy of the political and the state as legitimate holder of this autonomy, as a historical counterforce to chaos and the historical unfolding of secularization.<sup>281</sup>

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.<sup>282</sup> 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.<sup>283</sup> 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.<sup>284</sup> 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'.<sup>285</sup>

[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, that it does for humanity what it seems to do for itself, and that it fulfils a sacred mission by ordained providence, however defined.<sup>286</sup>

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.<sup>287</sup>

## **5.2. *Politics Among Nations* as the Centerpiece of Morgenthau's Classical Realism**

Before I describe Morgenthau's political realism in more detail, I would like to explain why I base my description of Morgenthau's classical realism mainly on Morgenthau's

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<sup>281</sup> Ibid., 234.

<sup>282</sup> Ibid., 235, 236.

<sup>283</sup> Ibid., 237, 241.

<sup>284</sup> Ibid., 237.

<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 242.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., 243.

*magnum opus*, *Politics Among Nations*, which he first published in 1948.<sup>288</sup> Morgenthau starts all its later editions with the sentence: ‘This book purports to present a theory of international politics’.<sup>289</sup> Chapter 2 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.’<sup>290</sup> 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*.<sup>291</sup>

Another reason to focus on *Politics Among Nations* to describe and understand Morgenthau’s classical realism is that Morgenthau worked on the book for the 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. Thompson 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.’<sup>292</sup> 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.’<sup>293</sup> 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.’<sup>294</sup> 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.’<sup>295</sup>

Lastly, *Politics Among Nations* has been the ‘field’s most influential textbook’ and

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<sup>288</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*.

<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, 3, 18.

<sup>291</sup> Kenneth W. Thompson, “The Writing of *Politics Among Nations*: Its Sources and Its Origins,” *International Studies Notes* 24, no. 1 (1999): 19. Thompson has been the coeditor of all editions of *Politics Among Nations* following the second edition. Anthony F. Lang, ed., *Political Theory and International Affairs. Hans J. Morgenthau on Aristotle’s the Politics* (Westport; London: Praeger, 2004), 3 fn. 8.

<sup>292</sup> Thompson, *The Writing of Politics Among Nations*, 21.

<sup>293</sup> Christoph Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 208.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 210.

one of the key books on most literature lists at American universities for decades.<sup>296</sup> 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. Taking *Politics Among Nations* as starting point in this chapter creates a common frame of reference which makes it easier to discuss the validity of the religionist position.

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'.<sup>297</sup>

### **5.2.1. *Politics Among Nations* and the Six Principles of Political Realism**

Within *Politics Among Nations*, I consider Chapter 1 as foundational for the whole book and all 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.<sup>298</sup> According to a leading realist, 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.<sup>299</sup> Another consideration is that other scholars also interpret the six principles as foundational.<sup>300</sup>

The risk of presenting Morgenthau's classical realism on the basis of his six principles

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<sup>296</sup> M. Benjamin Mollov, *Power and Transcendence. Hans J. Morgenthau and the Jewish Experience* (Lanham, Md.: Lexington Books, 2002), 4. When *Politics Among Nations* was published it was officially adopted as textbook for foreign policy courses and international relations by Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia, Notre Dame. Within a couple of months, it was adopted by ninety more colleges throughout the United States. It was a bestseller in the nonfiction category at the University of Chicago. Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 73

<sup>297</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, vi.

<sup>298</sup> Lang, *Hans J. Morgenthau on Aristotle's the Politics*, 3.

<sup>299</sup> Knud Erik Jørgensen, *International Relations Theory: A New Introduction* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 87, 88; Jonathan Cristol, "Morgenthau vs. Morgenthau? 'The Six Principles of Political Realism' in Context," *American Foreign Policy Interests* 31, no. 4 (2009): 238-244.

<sup>300</sup> Anna J. Borgeryd, *Managing Intercollective Conflict: Prevailing Structures and Global Challenges* (Umeå, Sweden: University of Umeå, 1998), 101; Aneek Chatterjee, *International Relations Today: Concepts and Applications*. (India: Pearson, 2010), 19, 20; Richard Devetak, Anthony Burke and Jim George, *An Introduction to International Relations*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 40; Jack Donnelly, *Realism and International Relations* (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 35; Colin Elman and Michael A. Jensen, *Realism Reader* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2014), 34; Jørgensen, *International Relations Theory*, 87; Felix J. Rösch, *Power, Knowledge, and Dissent in Morgenthau's Worldview* (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 97; Joel H. Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists: Political Realism, Responsible Power, and American Culture in the Nuclear Age* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 2, 4; Viotti and Kauppi, *International Relations Theory*, 51; Howard Williams, Moorhead Wright and Tony Evans, *A Reader in International Relations and Political Theory* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1995), 192.

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.<sup>301</sup> For this reason, I will also involve Morgenthau’s other writings when interpreting his six principles, but I will stick to the six principles as the starting point. I will also use the six principles to structure my presentation of Morgenthau’s classical realism, because I believe that the sequence of the principles represent an important structure which is crucial to understand Morgenthau’s classical realism adequately.

### **5.2.2. 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.<sup>302</sup> 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.<sup>303</sup> By doing so, as Waltz correctly points out, Morgenthau did not distinguish between foreign policy and international politics.<sup>304</sup> 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.’<sup>305</sup> 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, over against positivism and behavioralism.<sup>306</sup> I will use the term theory in this chapter but understood in a much broader meaning, namely as a coherent set of ideas, principles or assumptions.

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<sup>301</sup> Lang, *Hans J. Morgenthau on Aristotle’s the Politics*, 3.

<sup>302</sup> Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 7.

<sup>303</sup> Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan*, 110.

<sup>304</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, “Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory,” in *Realism and International Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 71.

<sup>305</sup> Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, xviii.

<sup>306</sup> Nicolas Guilhot, “The Realist Gambit: Postwar American Political Science and the Birth of IR Theory,” in *The Invention of International Relations Theory. Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the 1954 Conference on Theory*, ed. Nicolas Guilhot (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 129, 132.

### 5.2.3. Different Morgenthau?

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

[T]here is little agreement on the character of his political vision. We now have almost as many Morgenthau as there are interpreters of him, and he has been presented as everything from an arch-conservative to a critical theorist.<sup>307</sup>

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 Morgenthau. There are scholars who argue that Morgenthau's classical realism was not consistent over time and that there are two Morgenthau: a conservative and realist, and an idealist and progressive.<sup>308</sup>

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 aspect of his theory over others depending on the context.<sup>309</sup> I would like to support this argument with the view of Campbell and Frei on this.

Campbell states that Morgenthau tried to integrate his new understanding of international politics into his old framework. Campbell correctly 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.<sup>310</sup> 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.<sup>311</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> Duncan Bell, "Introduction: Under an Empty Sky - Realism and Political Theory," in *Political Thought and International Relations: Variations on a Realist Theme*, ed. Duncan Bell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 8.

<sup>308</sup> Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan*, viii, 116; Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 212; Robert Jervis, "Hans Morgenthau, Realism, and the Scientific Study of International Politics," *Social Research* 61, no. 4 (Winter, 1994): 871.

<sup>309</sup> See also, Brian A. Keaney, *The Realism of Hans Morgenthau*, Graduate Thesis (Tampa: University of South Florida, 2006).

<sup>310</sup> Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan*, 109.

<sup>311</sup> Kamminga argues the same way regarding Waltz and the possibility of social neorealism. Menno R. Kamminga, "Social Neorealism: An Etzionian 'I&We' Communitarian Upgrading of Waltz's Theory of International Politics," *Philica*, no. 109 (2007), online available at <http://hdl.handle.net/11370/3736bf13-969d-4ef7-83b1-526e60d965bb>

On the page where Frei points out that Morgenthau suddenly seems to switch positions, he also points out that Morgenthau had developed certain ideas during his earlier German years, which he brought forward later in the American context. Frei argues that *The Purpose of American Politics* is a continuation of Morgenthau's idealist past, because Morgenthau had developed the system of transcendent idealism thirty years earlier. Frei especially refers to Morgenthau's well-known dualism, meaning that the *is* had to be confronted with the *ought to be*. Morgenthau already wrote about this in 1937 in an essay with the title *Kann in unserer Zeit eine objective Moralordnung aufgestellt werden?*. Frei even goes so far as to state that what Morgenthau wrote in *The Purpose of American Politics*, was just a continuation of what he had written in earlier manuscripts in the 1930s. He resumes his old polemic against a secular ethics that does not take into account the absolute, a transcendent order of the good, the true and beautiful. The only difference is that his enemies are not Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) or Ernst Jünger (1895-1998), a German conservative writer who wrote *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*, but the government and the people of the United States, Frei states.

Another interesting similarity between Morgenthau in the 30s and 60s is that Morgenthau is not very interested in the specific content of ultimate values, because these would depend on the particular circumstances of that time and place. His main purpose is to defend the meaning and relevance of transcendent values as such. 'Plato's ideas, the moral law in the Bible, the various expressions of the natural law tradition, these are all historically and socially conditioned approximations to a timeless normative reality', Morgenthau maintains.<sup>312</sup> 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.<sup>313</sup> It is often the context that makes his idealism or realism come to the forefront. The following considerations sustain this point.

In the first place, as William Scheuerman points out, at the time of Morgenthau political scientists in the United States increasingly tended to separate normative and empirical concerns and as a result they ran off with the empirical realist and tried to develop empirically testable hypotheses. The result was that Morgenthau was interpreted as a power-politics advocate, who as Kenneth Waltz argues later, failed to develop a value-free and scientific theory of international politics. The result was, as Scheuerman

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(accessed December 28, 2020).

<sup>312</sup> Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 212-214, 216. Further evidence that there is continuity between the early and later Morgenthau appears from the fact that Morgenthau drew heavily on his unpublished manuscript *On the Origins of the Political in the Nature of Man* from the 1930s for his book *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* during his time at the University of Chicago (1944-1945). *Ibid.*, 125, 129.

<sup>313</sup> Murray, *Reconstructing Realism*, 200, 201.

sets out, that Morgenthau became the ‘unhappy founding father of an influential, but normatively numb Realist research paradigm’.<sup>314</sup> Scheuerman argues that Morgenthau always has been an uneasy realist, he only adopted the label realism quite late in his career. It was only in the second edition of *Politics Among Nations* and in his *In Defense of the National Interest* (1951) that he labeled his thinking as realist. Scheuerman also writes that political theory in the US was a different discipline compared to empirical IR.<sup>315</sup>

Secondly, Morgenthau was not just a political philosopher, his aim was also to detect and analyze the underlying reasoning of decision-makers: to eliminate ‘faulty modes of thinking’ and to influence American political thought.<sup>316</sup> This is also reflected in Morgenthau’s writings, Frei argues. In all Morgenthau’s works since 1948, which include the two monographs *In Defense of the National Interest* (1951) and *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* (1969), hundreds of articles, and lecture notes, Morgenthau is commenting on American foreign policy issues.<sup>317</sup>

Morgenthau’s dual role as theorist and commentator on foreign policy has two consequences. It forced Morgenthau to reflect on the practical consequences of his theorizing and it also forced him to change his position sometimes. Frei points out that when Morgenthau became aware that Washington elites were more than willing to play the power game on the basis of political realism, he became deeply concerned by the one-sided emphasis on military might. He wrote: ‘We seem to have learned our lesson now’ and he became convinced that a corrective from the opposite direction was needed.<sup>318</sup> So, Morgenthau became aware of the consequences his political realism had in policymaking circles, in other words, there was a growing discrepancy between what Morgenthau propounded and others implemented. When Morgenthau tried to correct this, many thought that Morgenthau had changed, but the difference was in policy not in his theory.<sup>319</sup> In other words, Morgenthau could emphasize other elements of his theory to correct one-sided policymaking, but this does not mean that he changed his theory.

The other consequence of the fact that Morgenthau philosophized about international politics, but also commented on foreign policy, was that Morgenthau had to balance between his wish for theoretical consistency and his responsibility for good foreign policy. The outcome of this process could be interpreted as an inconsistency of his theoretical assumptions or as an adjustment of it. Campbell illustrates this with

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<sup>314</sup> William E. Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2009), 102. Scheuerman adds that Morgenthau’s ‘own proclivity for making sweeping empirical claims invited one-sided interpretations of his thinking’. *Ibid.*, 102.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 6.

<sup>316</sup> Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 217. See also, Thompson, *The Writing of Politics Among Nations*, 21.

<sup>317</sup> Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 216, 217.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.*, 211.

<sup>319</sup> Keaney, *The Realism of Hans Morgenthau*, 78, 79.

Morgenthau's position on the world state. He argues that Morgenthau was not against a world state, but in 1948, he did not believe a world state was realistic in a world dominated by the United States and the Soviet Union.

Taking his role as public intellectual seriously, Morgenthau concluded that it was necessary to emphasize this opinion to his more idealistic compatriots, to focus intensively upon the impossibility of world government, lest they become enchanted with world government, pursue it in lieu of a balance of power, and end up committed to a toothless international organization vulnerable to the domination of a cynical and militaristic state.<sup>320</sup>

It was the context which made that Morgenthau argued against a world state. He saw Stalin's Soviet Union as a cynical and poor partner in working towards global government. The fact that the possibilities were so low and the risks of failure high, made his notion of the world state, as put forward in *Politics Among Nations*, speculation; even though it logically followed from his argumentation as the chapter titled 'The World State' shows.<sup>321</sup>

Finally, Morgenthau's theorizing has a flexibility and an ability to adapt to new situations without sacrificing its basics.<sup>322</sup> The consequence is, however, that Morgenthau's application of his theory to new situations could be interpreted as a change of his theory. As I already explained, it was not so much a change of his theory, but rather that Morgenthau saw the result of his theorizing and wanted to correct this by emphasizing other aspects of his thinking. In that sense, it helps to see Morgenthau, as Scheuerman proposes, as an 'uneasy realist'.

Unsatisfied with conventional interpretations of the tradition and its intellectual forerunners and at times unsure whether his work should even be described as a contribution to it. To his enormous credit, he at least occasionally acknowledged that Realism, as generally conceived, was poorly suited to some of the novel challenges of our times. Although this exegesis will surprise many readers, it offers not only a more accurate, but also a theoretically more fruitful, interpretation of Morgenthau's far-flung and admittedly sometimes tension-ridden writings.<sup>323</sup>

In this section, I have argued why I will base my presentation of Morgenthau's classical realism on his six principles in the first place. I have also maintained that I consider *Politics Among Nations* as its primary interpreter, and his remaining writings as supplementary. I

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<sup>320</sup> Campbell Craig, "Hans Morgenthau and the World State Revisited," in *Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau in International Relations*, ed. Michael C. Williams (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 197.

<sup>321</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>322</sup> Keaney, *The Realism of Hans Morgenthau*, 52. Cf. Vendulka Kubáľková and Mika Luoma-Aho, "Religion and the Realist Tradition of International Relations in a Constructed World," in *Religion and the Realist Tradition: From Political Theology to International Relations Theory and Back*, ed. Jodok Troy (London; New York: Routledge, 2014), 156.

<sup>323</sup> Scheuerman, *Hans Morgenthau*, 6.

have also set out that there is one Morgenthau with one theory, although he emphasizes various elements of his theory depending on the context, audience, and time. In the next section, I will set out the relevance of the sequence of Morgenthau's six principles.

#### **5.2.4. 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 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 a guidance more than abstract principles and sees the lesser evil as a more realistic goal than the absolute good.<sup>324</sup>

Morgenthau introduces 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'.<sup>325</sup> 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.<sup>326</sup> 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.<sup>327</sup> 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.<sup>328</sup> In the

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<sup>324</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 3, 4.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, 10, 11.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, 12.

<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

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 comes close to 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. Intellectually, 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.<sup>329</sup> Like with the first principle, Morgenthau grounds this on his view on human nature.<sup>330</sup> 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.

### **5.3. Principle 1: A Rational Theory Based on Objective Laws Rooted in Human Nature**

Guilhot holds that realism should be seen as an attempt to secure a space for an alternative vision of politics and statesmanship over against positivism and behavioralism, and to create space for a vision on politics that challenges the liberal view that science could subdue political conflict. In this position, it is not only important to look at political theology, but also at theory and method.<sup>331</sup> That is why it is important to start with Morgenthau's view on theory.

The first principle of 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. For Morgenthau, human beings are born in chains, but they want to be free from political domination. However, man not only wants to be free, he also wants to reign. This ambivalence of man is the perennial condition of politics.<sup>332</sup> Morgenthau states that in order to improve society it is first necessary to understand the laws by which society lives.<sup>333</sup> The existence of objective laws makes it possible to develop a rational theory and to distinguish between truth and opinion.<sup>334</sup> The principle that there are objective laws and the possibility of a rational theory is based on a couple of assumptions regarding science and political theory, which I will address in more detail hereafter.

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<sup>329</sup> Ibid., 13, 14.

<sup>330</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>331</sup> Guilhot, *The Realist Gambit*, 129, 132.

<sup>332</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Intellectual and Moral Dilemma of Politics," in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 11, 12.

<sup>333</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 4.

<sup>334</sup> Ibid., 4.

### 5.3.1. Science, Philosophy and Religion

Morgenthau sees science as an activity that is similar to philosophy and religion. All three activities are the result of a response to the same shock of wonderment.<sup>335</sup> 'Wonderment is the condition in which reason finds itself in the face of the unforeseen and hence the unintelligible.'<sup>336</sup> According to Morgenthau, mankind wants to know all there is, but it is limited by empirical reality. This experience is accompanied by feelings of suffering, because it shows the dualism between mankind and the world which cannot be overcome. As a result, it longs for more consciousness, but more consciousness leads to more suffering. Mankind feels in danger as long as he is not completely conscious of the world. This experience belongs to the existence of human beings and the attempt to seek union with the world is the result of a religious impulse, Morgenthau states. This religious impulse is also at work in genuine scientific thinking, which wants to unravel the mysteries of the universe. Religion, philosophy and science are one in this movement, they only differ in the outward manifestation.<sup>337</sup> From that perspective, there is no difference between the activities people can perform in the church and the activities of a scientist.<sup>338</sup> This means that Morgenthau sees religion at work in the impulse that pushes human beings to do science, religion, or philosophy, but that he also sees religion as a specific human activity different from science and philosophy.

The scientific approach is the most modern and popular response, because 'science is the attempt to make experience conscious in reason in a theoretically valid way'.<sup>339</sup> The fact that people try to answer the shock of wonderment through science is 'deeply rooted in the religious experience of post-ancient Western man. 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.'<sup>340</sup> However, based on the development of the sciences, human beings think they will be able to control and master reality.<sup>341</sup>

The move from a scientific question to a philosophic and religious one is easily made, Morgenthau states. Science is the systematic understanding of what is empirically known. The more scientists try to uncover the unknown, the more they realize how much will remain unknown. Philosophy tries to understand the empirically unknown by means of conceptual abstractions.<sup>342</sup> Religion does something similar, but it makes use of symbols, parables and stories. It uses images and signs 'that project the empirical

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<sup>335</sup> Morgenthau, *Science*, 60.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 25.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, 65-67.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, 1, 2.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, 8, 9.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*, 61, 62.

world into the unknown'.<sup>343</sup> However, there is a fundamental difference between religion and science. The former will be tempted to reject science when it contradicts revealed truths, while the latter will reject religious truth when it contradicts empirical reality.<sup>344</sup>

Morgenthau was worried about the science of his day. He argues that, as a result of the disintegration of the norms and values inspired by religion, science has lost a transcendent reference point and does not see the importance of such a point. The advantage of a transcendent reference point, is that it decides what is worth knowing.<sup>345</sup> This value system has been replaced by a value system which pretends to find the truth through science, while it replaces the knowledge given through religion, art, and philosophy.<sup>346</sup> It is the result of the emancipation of the social sciences from the metaphysical systems which made the social world subjects of metaphysics and ethical postulates.<sup>347</sup> The social sciences focus on the collection of factual information, but overlook the fact that science starts with understanding this data.<sup>348</sup> Morgenthau argues that the objects of study of the social sciences were originally tied to valuative standpoints. For example, economics was approached from the valuative standpoint of an increase in wealth.<sup>349</sup> Each student's thoughts and actions are determined by his presuppositions and his perspective: 'He is a political philosopher before he is a political scientist'.<sup>350</sup> Presuppositions are the result of a total worldview, which is religious, poetic, or philosophical in nature.<sup>351</sup> 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.<sup>352</sup> He states that science without any transcendent reference point is what is left to the scholar.<sup>353</sup> The result is a multiplicity of truths and a focus on factual and quantitative knowledge.<sup>354</sup>

The fact that Morgenthau sees philosophy, science, and religion as three different responses to the same shock of wonderment, which he ascribes to a basic religious impulse of man, shows three things. In the first place, he acknowledges that the religious impulse is existential to all human beings. Secondly, he views religious knowledge as

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<sup>343</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>345</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>346</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>347</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "The State of Political Science," in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 19.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>349</sup> Stephen P. Turner and George Mazur, "Morgenthau as a Weberian Methodologist," *European Journal of International Relations* 15, no. 3 (2009): 487.

<sup>350</sup> Morgenthau, *The State of Political Science*, 31.

<sup>351</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Commitments of Political Science," in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 41.

<sup>352</sup> Morgenthau, *Science*, 15, 16.

<sup>353</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>354</sup> Ibid., 21.

equally important and valuable as scientific knowledge. Finally, when it comes to science, Morgenthau argues that science cannot be separated from religion. On the contrary, science needs a transcendent reference point, which religion or philosophy can provide.

### 5.3.2. The Scope of Political Theory

What does Morgenthau's view on science mean in understanding his own theory? Does his view on science apply to his own theory? According to Ben Mollov, Morgenthau holds that political science must be based 'upon a total worldview – religious, poetic, as well as philosophic in nature – the validity of which it must take for granted'.<sup>355</sup> Morgenthau defines a theory in general as 'a system of empirically verifiable, general truths, sought for their own sake'.<sup>356</sup> 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.<sup>357</sup> 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 of all, he believes in the existence of objective truth in political matters. Secondly, he assumes that a theory has a rational and an empirical side. Thirdly, he considers theorizing always normative.

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).<sup>358</sup> 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.<sup>359</sup> 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'.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>355</sup> Mollov, *Power and Transcendence*, 4.

<sup>356</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Nature and Limits of a Theory of International Relations," in *Theoretical Aspects of International Relations*, ed. William T. R. Fox (Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), 16.

<sup>357</sup> Morgenthau, *The Commitments of Political Science*, 44.

<sup>358</sup> Morgenthau, *Nature and Limits*, 18, 19; Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Military Displacement of Politics," in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 336.

<sup>359</sup> Morgenthau, *The Commitments of Political Science*, 36.

<sup>360</sup> Morgenthau, *Nature and Limits*, 20, 21.

Secondly, 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.<sup>361</sup> Morgenthau nevertheless believes that it is possible to develop a rational theory that reflects these objective laws, be it imperfect and one-sided.<sup>362</sup> A political theory should, therefore, present a rationally consistent system, which takes account of the contingencies without allowing them to spoil its rationality.<sup>363</sup> 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.<sup>364</sup> 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.<sup>365</sup> 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.'<sup>366</sup>

### 5.3.3. 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.<sup>367</sup> According to them Weber sees ideal-types as: 'conceptual forms, idealizations, which selectively

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<sup>361</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 20.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>363</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "Introduction," in *The Restoration of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 1.

<sup>364</sup> Turner and Mazur, *Morgenthau as a Weberian Methodologist*, 489.

<sup>365</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 4, 5.

<sup>366</sup> Jervis, *Hans Morgenthau*, 853.

<sup>367</sup> Turner and Mazur, *Morgenthau as a Weberian Methodologist*, 490; Hans J. Morgenthau, "Fragment of an Intellectual Autobiography," in *Truth and Tragedy. A Tribute to Hans J. Morgenthau*, eds. Kenneth W. Thompson and Robert John Myers (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Books, 1984), 7.

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'.<sup>368</sup> That 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 the 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.<sup>369</sup>

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.<sup>370</sup> 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.<sup>371</sup> 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.<sup>372</sup> Besides that, Morgenthau also argues that the 'one-eyed rationality' of political theory has to be supplemented with the moral wisdom of the statesman.<sup>373</sup> For example, when the statesman believes that a certain truth will be upheld forever, he or she should realize that circumstances may vary infinitely.<sup>374</sup> 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 too.<sup>375</sup>

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

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<sup>368</sup> Turner and Mazur, *Morgenthau as a Weberian Methodologist*, 490.

<sup>369</sup> Jaap W. Nobel, *De utopie van het realisme. De machtsstheorie van Hans J. Morgenthau en de kritiek op het Amerikaanse in de Koude Oorlog* (Amsterdam: Jan Mets, 1985), 86.

<sup>370</sup> Turner and Mazur, *Morgenthau as a Weberian Methodologist*, 488, 490.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, 488.

<sup>372</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 10.

<sup>373</sup> Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*, 9, 10.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, 220, 221.

<sup>375</sup> Morgenthau, *The Military Displacement of Politics*, 334.

contingencies and systematic irrationalities, which makes theorizing normative, because it can never be completely objective.<sup>376</sup> Morgenthau bases 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.<sup>377</sup>

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.<sup>378</sup> State leaders should be able to supplement the 'one-eyed rationality' of political theory with their moral wisdom.<sup>379</sup> 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.<sup>380</sup>

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.<sup>381</sup> That means that political realism will always be a combination of a rational principle, its interpretation and 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.<sup>382</sup> 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.<sup>383</sup> This brings us to the second principle of political realism as formulated by Morgenthau.

## 5.4. Principle 2: National Interest Defined as Power

Morgenthau believes that, although the circumstances and the manifestations have changed over time, the essence of foreign policy has not changed; moreover, that it is

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<sup>376</sup> Morgenthau, *Nature and Limits*, 17, 18; Morgenthau, *The Commitments of Political Science*, 49; Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 10; Turner and Mazur, *Morgenthau as a Weberian Methodologist*, 490.

<sup>377</sup> Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*, 166, 167.

<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, 220, 221.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, 9, 10.

<sup>380</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 10.

<sup>381</sup> Turner and Mazur, *Morgenthau as a Weberian Methodologist*, 492, 493.

<sup>382</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 5.

<sup>383</sup> Turner and Mazur, *Morgenthau as a Weberian Methodologist*, 492.

possible to develop a distinct theoretical understanding of international relations that is true regardless of time and place.<sup>384</sup> 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.<sup>385</sup> History has shown that it is reasonable to assume that statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power.<sup>386</sup> The United States have, from the beginning of their history, held two guiding objectives: its security in the Western hemisphere and the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe.<sup>387</sup>

Morgenthau defines power as human being's control over the minds and action 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.'<sup>388</sup> 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.<sup>389</sup>

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.<sup>390</sup> 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 and 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

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<sup>384</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "What is the National Interest of the United States?" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 282, (July, 1952): 4; Morgenthau, *The Commitments of Political Science*, 47; Hans J. Morgenthau, "Separation of Powers," in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 167.

<sup>385</sup> Morgenthau, *What is the National Interest of the United States?*, 4; Hans J. Morgenthau and Kenneth W. Thompson, *In Defense of the National Interest: A Critical Examination of American Foreign Policy* (Washington, D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), v.

<sup>386</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 5.

<sup>387</sup> Morgenthau, *What is the National Interest of the United States?*, 4, 5; Thompson, Brauer and Morgenthau, *U.S. Policy in the Far East*, 25.

<sup>388</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 32. Morgenthau continues with an explanation of the various forms of power, namely power and influence, power and force, useable and unusable power, and legitimate and illegitimate power. *Ibid.*, 33, 34. See also, Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 125-127.

<sup>389</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 11. Knutsen says the following about Morgenthau's understanding of power: 'The 'arch-realists' saw power as a product of material and spiritual factors – as a product'. Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory*, 242.

<sup>390</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 5.

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 to explore the possibility of developing a theory of irrational politics.<sup>391</sup>

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'.<sup>392</sup>

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.<sup>393</sup> 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.<sup>394</sup> 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.<sup>395</sup> Statesmen must distinguish between their personal wishes and the interest 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.'<sup>396</sup>

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.<sup>397</sup>

This does not mean that morality does not play a role. Morgenthau argues for the morality of the national interest very strongly in the book *In Defense of the National*

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<sup>391</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>392</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>393</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>394</sup> Ibid., 5, 6.

<sup>395</sup> Ibid., 6, 7.

<sup>396</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Problem of the National Interest," in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 110; Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 7.

<sup>397</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "Neutrality and Neutralism," in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 280, 281.

## *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.<sup>398</sup>

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.<sup>399</sup>

## **5.5. Principle 3. The Universality and Limitations of the National Interest**

The third realist principle holds that interest defined as power is an objective key concept, which is universally valid, although its meaning depends on the political and cultural context.<sup>400</sup> 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.<sup>401</sup> Morgenthau argues that interests are the essence of politics and that this is not influenced by time and place. 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.<sup>402</sup> 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. As with interests, the content of power and the manner of its use are determined by the political and cultural environment. 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

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<sup>398</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *In Defense of the National Interest*, 38, 39.

<sup>399</sup> Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 5.

<sup>400</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 10, 11.

<sup>401</sup> Michael C. Williams, "Why Ideas Matter in International Relations: Hans Morgenthau, Classical Realism and the Moral Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 58, no. 4 (2004): 643, 644.

<sup>402</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 10, 11.

those in Western democracies or even when it is untamed and barbaric.<sup>403</sup> 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 realm, but sees both domains as expressions of the political sphere. International politics is part of political science's general theory of politics.<sup>404</sup> Morgenthau nevertheless, acknowledges that power and morality play a different role in the domestic and international realm.

Morgenthau describes the difference between the domestic and the international sphere 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.<sup>405</sup> 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. Secondly, the political attention to particular interests of citizens in domestic society can vary, but in international politics the interest of nations, the survival of the country, and its identity are constant over time. Thirdly, 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.<sup>406</sup> 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 the domestic politics and international politics, he does not explicitly separate the one from the other.<sup>407</sup> 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

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<sup>403</sup> Ibid., 11. Cf. Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory*, 242.

<sup>404</sup> Morgenthau, *Nature and Limits*, 16.

<sup>405</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid., 26-28.

<sup>407</sup> Murray states that Morgenthau did not accept a categorical divide between domestic and international politics. Nor did he consider theories of international politics as distinct from broader traditions of political philosophy, and he drew extensively upon, not only Aristotle, but also figures including Edmund Burke, the Federalists, and contemporary thinkers such as Hanna Arendt. Michael C. Williams, *Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau in International Relations* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 11.

politics in an integrated society based on shared transcendent values. Foreign politics comes about in the interaction between the international realm and domestic politics.

That 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.<sup>408</sup> 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.<sup>409</sup>

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.<sup>410</sup> 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'.<sup>411</sup> Although all kinds of other aims can play a role, the immediate aim in international politics is power.

Statesmen and peoples may ultimately seek 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.<sup>412</sup>

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

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<sup>408</sup> Morgenthau, *Nature and Limits*, 15, 16.

<sup>409</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "International Relations," in *The Restoration of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 167; Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 37.

<sup>410</sup> Morgenthau, *International Relations*, 168; Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 52, 53; For an explanation of these three types of foreign policy, *Ibid.*, 53-100.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, 31; Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Twilight of International Morality," *Ethics* 58, no. 2 (1948): 80.

<sup>412</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 31.

people operate under the condition of international politics.<sup>413</sup> 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.<sup>414</sup>

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 relation 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.<sup>415</sup> Morgenthau warns for the human temptation to take the contingent events of their time as a perennial phenomenon.<sup>416</sup> 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.<sup>417</sup> 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.<sup>418</sup>

Morgenthau's third principle seems to serve the purpose to explain that the national interest defined as power may be a universal principle to understand international politics. It should however, always be applied carefully, taking context into consideration, especially when sudden, unexpected circumstances arise.<sup>419</sup> 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.

## 5.6. Principle 4. The Morality of Politics

The fourth principle holds that realism takes the moral significance of politics for granted, but what does that mean precisely? Morgenthau is often misunderstood on the

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<sup>413</sup> Ibid., 37, 38.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., 31, 32.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>416</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "Introduction," in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 1.

<sup>417</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 12.

<sup>418</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *In Defense of the National Interest*, v.

<sup>419</sup> Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 5.

role of morality in his theory. Critics often interpret Morgenthau's insistence that power is important in all political relationships, as him endorsing axioms like 'might makes right'.<sup>420</sup> 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 the national survival. Morgenthau holds that the national interest must be protected, but it must always be subjected to strict moral limitations.<sup>421</sup> 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.<sup>422</sup> Rosenthal formulates this with respect to Morgenthau as follows: the realist lives primarily in the 'twilight zone' where ethics and politics meet.<sup>423</sup> 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'.<sup>424</sup> 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.<sup>425</sup>

According to Morgenthau, statesmen must often choose between different moral principles. The question 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.<sup>426</sup> Morgenthau

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<sup>420</sup> Richard Ned Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics: Ethics, Interests, and Orders* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 216.

<sup>421</sup> Murray, *The Moral Politics of Hans Morgenthau*. Soendergaard also states that Morgenthau and Augustine share a political realist view based on the nature of man, but she also points out that they differ on the moral purpose of the state leader. She argues that this follows from their different views on peace. Soendergaard, *The Political Realism of Augustine and Morgenthau*.

<sup>422</sup> M. Benjamin Mollov, "Power and Spirituality in the Thoughts of Hans J. Morgenthau," *Jewish Political Studies Review* 10, no. 1-2 (1998): 103, 104.

<sup>423</sup> Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 7.

<sup>424</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 12.

<sup>425</sup> Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics*, 244. Cf. Greg Russell, *Hans J. Morgenthau and the Ethics of American Statecraft* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 150, 160, 164-167, 170.

<sup>426</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Influence of Reinhold Niebuhr in American Political Life and Thought," in *Reinhold Niebuhr: A Prophetic Voice in Our Time*, ed. Harold R. Landon (Greenwich: Seabury Press, 1962), 102.

distinguishes between pure ethics and political ethics. Pure ethics can judge actions by its conformity with moral law, but political ethics must judge actions by its 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.”’<sup>427</sup>

### 5.6.1. Three Ground Rules for Political Realism

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.<sup>428</sup> Another well-known example that Morgenthau uses to illustrate the importance of context, is the difference between the individual and the state.<sup>429</sup>

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. (...) Yet while the individual has a moral right to sacrifice himself in defense of such a moral principle [of liberty, SP], 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.<sup>430</sup>

For Morgenthau, the confusion about the application of moral principles begins with each social relationship. Even in a relationship between two human beings, sin cannot be ruled out. He or she can try to minimize it, but it is inevitably found in social relations. There is always egotism, selfishness, and pride present, while the Judeo-Christian ethic teaches us to respect human beings as an end in themselves. What is true for individual social relations, becomes the more pregnant in the behavior between states, because the mitigating circumstances of the domestic sphere are lacking.<sup>431</sup> That means that

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<sup>427</sup> Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 5, 6.

<sup>428</sup> Morgenthau, *Nature and Limits*, 26-28.

<sup>429</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 12.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>431</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, “The Moral Dilemma of Political Action,” in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 319; Morgenthau and Thompson, *In Defense of the National Interest*, 36.

the substance of the moral principle remains. The only thing that statesmen can do is change the social environment in which the moral value has to be implemented.<sup>432</sup> Morgenthau takes ethics very seriously, but he also explains that it cannot be applied directly to the political sphere.

The fact that Morgenthau ascribes such an 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 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 the barbarian, because they make 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.<sup>433</sup> 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.'<sup>434</sup>

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.<sup>435</sup> 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

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<sup>432</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "Diplomacy," in *The Restoration of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 200.

<sup>433</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *The Purpose of American Politics* (Washington D.C.: University Press of America, 1982), 357, 358.

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

<sup>435</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 12.

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.<sup>436</sup>

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.<sup>437</sup>

Morgenthau knows that morality and politics in theory should be distinguished, but that it is impossible to separate the two from each other in political practice. Gaining political legitimacy through morality is an inevitable weapon in the hands of politicians striving for power. By means of religion, they try to suggest that their aims are more noble than political reality suggests.<sup>438</sup> According to Morgenthau, the mutual influence is not always proportional: ‘Typically, it is politics and imperium as its more dynamic manifestation that transform and corrupt morality and religion, and it is much rarer for morality and religion to reform and spiritualize politics and imperium.’<sup>439</sup>

Morgenthau wants the tension, or dualism, between morality and politics to remain, and he argues against ethical monism.

No society can escape for any length of time the consequences of that dialectic [between power and justice, SP]. Even the ‘band of robbers’ with which St. Augustine equates a government without justice, that is devoid of that particular Augustinian justice, would have to comply with certain rules recognized as just by its members.<sup>440</sup>

Morgenthau writes that, in his time, ethics was relegated to the private sphere of religion. He is very critical about this development. Where traditional ethics was founded on

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<sup>436</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, “The Demands of Prudence,” *Worldview* (June, 1960): 6.

<sup>437</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>438</sup> Morgenthau, *The Influence of Reinhold Niebuhr*, 107, 108.

<sup>439</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, “The Intellectual and Moral Dilemma of Politics,” in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 14.

<sup>440</sup> Morgenthau, *Justice and Power*, 171.

the distinction and strict separation between the normative and the empirical, the rationalization of ethics removed this distinction. Morgenthau ascribes the start of this development to Kant's formalization of the ethical imperative, ending with Comte's identification of ethical rule and scientific law. He described the consequences of this development as follows.

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. The dual morality of the age has here one of its roots. Yet, this private domain where normative ethics may still find refuge is regarded as a residue from a pre-scientific age, which will not survive the coming age of science. With the coming of this age, normative ethics and religion itself will disappear, to be replaced by rational science. (...) Whereas, the good of traditional ethics can be achieved only through a struggle within the soul of man or through an act of divine grace, scientific ethics leads man toward perfection through the mere intellectual process of learning what is reasonable and good. Yet, in opposition to the platonic remembrance of the distinction between good and evil, which, like the principles of mathematics, is pre-existent in the human soul, the ethical perfection of utilitarian rationalism consists simply in acquiring the empirical knowledge of how certain effects are co-ordinated with certain actions, that is, what good, in utilitarian terms, to expect from certain actions.<sup>441</sup>

Morgenthau is concerned about this modern development, because the equation of ethics with science leads to the idea that all success and progress is automatically moral.<sup>442</sup> The consequences for the social and political sphere are that successful action will be seen as the equivalent of moral action.<sup>443</sup> The fact that ethics becomes perceived as something that will disappear over time leads to the idea that politics stands on its own. Ethics, then, becomes an obstacle for the fuller realization of the state. The idea that politics can be inspired and moved by the belief in rational force was clearly expressed in the foreign policy approach of President Wilson, according to Morgenthau. But it is also visible in liberal Protestantism and modern Catholicism when they portray the established government as the embodiment of the divine will. Totalitarianism does the same thing but the other way around. It fits the ethical principles into the existing political reality, so that all what the state does seems to be in accordance with ethics.<sup>444</sup>

Morgenthau criticizes rationalism, also called positivism, because of its philosophical and ethical monism. Morgenthau holds a dualistic view of morality, which means that human beings are subject to an external transcendent concept imposed on him. He compares it with Moses coming down from Sinai with the law, confronted with the

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<sup>441</sup> Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*, 15-17.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, 13, 169.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*, 173-175.

people of Israel and their worship of the golden calf.<sup>445</sup> The ethical monism of rationalism sees evil as the absence of good or even as the absence of reason. This way of thinking contradicts rational Western thought, in which God is challenged by the devil and the sinfulness of man is conceived as necessarily connected with the order of the world. In this view, there is no inevitable progress toward the good, but undecided conflict between good and evil.<sup>446</sup> Morgenthau states that this worldview is based upon three experiences. First, in the contemplative experience, mankind perceives an ongoing struggle between good and evil, reason and passion, life and death, peace and war. Second, in his active experience, he observes how his good intentions result in evil. Third, in his intellectual experience, he undergoes the discrepancy between the mysteries of the world and the way he understands the world, without ever reaching the point where he knows all questions or understands the meaning of life.<sup>447</sup>

The third ground 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.<sup>448</sup>

## 5.7. Principle 5. Nation Between God and Idol

With the fifth principle, Morgenthau makes clear that political realism does not allow for the identification of the moral law with the aspiration of any particular nation.

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.<sup>449</sup>

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.<sup>450</sup> 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.<sup>451</sup>

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<sup>445</sup> Lang, *Hans J. Morgenthau on Aristotle's the Politics*, 92.

<sup>446</sup> Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*, 204-206.

<sup>447</sup> *Ibid.*, 206, 207.

<sup>448</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 12; Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 5.

<sup>449</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 13.

<sup>450</sup> Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 6.

<sup>451</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 13.

States are tempted to equate their foreign policies with universal morality. This happens not by ignorance or misjudgement, but by *hubris* and pride. As a result, they overlook the possibilities of their power and forget prudence and morality.<sup>452</sup> 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.<sup>453</sup> 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.<sup>454</sup>

The principle of the national interest defined as power, would be a remedy against this ‘moral excess and political folly’, Morgenthau argues.<sup>455</sup> 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’.<sup>456</sup>

It is striking that in the quote at the beginning of this section, Morgenthau argues like a theologian when he talks about the judgment of God and the impossibility to equate 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.

## 5.8. Principle 6. The Autonomy of the Political

This last principle about the autonomy of the political is central to Morgenthau’s theory.<sup>457</sup> For this reason, it is reflected in his second and third principle too. The autonomy of the political means that the political should be respected as a sphere on its own, unrelated to economics, ethics, aesthetics and religion. As set out earlier with respect to the second principle, the political sphere characterizes itself through interest

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<sup>452</sup> Morgenthau, *The Moral Dilemma of Political Action*, 325, 326.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>454</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *In Defense of the National Interest*, 93.

<sup>455</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 13.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

<sup>457</sup> Morgenthau is indebted to Carl Schmitt on the autonomy of the political, because he wrote his dissertation in response to Schmitt’s *Concept of The Political* and through this he also influenced Carl Schmitt, though Schmitt never publicly acknowledged this. William E. Scheurman, “Carl Schmitt and Morgenthau: Realism and Beyond,” in *Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans Morgenthau in International Relations*, ed. Michael C. Williams (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 62-64. On a personal level, Morgenthau did not like Schmitt very much. He called him the ‘most evil man alive’. Thompson, *The Writing of Politics Among Nations*, 19.

defined in terms of power.

The sixth principle sets out that political realism is different from other schools of thought with respect to intellectual and moral matters. Like in the first principle, Morgenthau reasons from his view of human nature.

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.<sup>458</sup>

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.<sup>459</sup>

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.<sup>460</sup> 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. That does not, however, 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.<sup>461</sup> 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?’<sup>462</sup>

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<sup>458</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 16.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>461</sup> *Ibid.*, 5, Morgenthau, *The Commitments of Political Science*, 48.

<sup>462</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 13, 14.

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 moral 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.<sup>463</sup> 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.<sup>464</sup>

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'.<sup>465</sup> There are different spheres, such as the moral, religious, economic, and legal sphere. 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.<sup>466</sup>

The fact that Morgenthau distinguishes between the religious and political sphere and wants to maintain the autonomy of the political is not only to make theorizing possible. It is also inspired by an Augustinian theology and view on history and ethics that wants to create room for the possibility to act politically knowing that the completion of history will not be realized by human beings. In the conclusion, I will address this a bit more.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have set out how I interpret Morgenthau's theory. I paid attention to his theory of international politics, but also to his view on theory. Morgenthau has an ideal-typical view on theory. This means that Morgenthau assumes separate realms,

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<sup>463</sup> Ibid., 14, 16.

<sup>464</sup> Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 6.

<sup>465</sup> Turner and Mazur, *Morgenthau as a Weberian Methodologist*, 493.

<sup>466</sup> Ibid., 494.

thereby marking the territory of his theorizing, and leaving other issues out. Politics are 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.

Besides the point about theory, I also wanted to make the claim that Morgenthau cherishes a number of theological assumptions of 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 fulfilment 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.<sup>467</sup> 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 to achieve 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 preventer and counter force. Ethics will therefore always be ethics for this interim, and an interim solution in light of the eventually redeemed state towards which humanity is heading.

In this conclusion, I also want to evaluate Morgenthau's classical realism from the viewpoint of the Amsterdam School. Some aspects stand out. First of all, 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.<sup>468</sup> That is exactly what the Amsterdam School also states. The Amsterdam School of Philosophy therefore urges scholars and scientists to reflect

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<sup>467</sup> See also, Herman Paul, *De slag om het hart. Over secularisatie van verlangen* (Utrecht: Boekencentrum, 2017), 43, 56.

<sup>468</sup> Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*, 166, 167.

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.<sup>469</sup> Morgenthau and the Amsterdam School would agree that it is better to be explicit regarding someone's pre-scientific 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 participate 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'.<sup>470</sup> With this, Morgenthau concurs with the Amsterdam School, which raises awareness for the role of world views 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'.<sup>471</sup> 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.<sup>472</sup> 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 to find and interpret 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

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<sup>469</sup> Cf. Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations*, 190.

<sup>470</sup> Mollov, *Power and Transcendence*, 4.

<sup>471</sup> Cf. Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: HarperOne, 2009).

<sup>472</sup> Hengstmengel, *Denken met het hart*, 198.

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.<sup>473</sup> 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.<sup>474</sup> 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.<sup>475</sup>

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<sup>473</sup> Cf. “Thus the default position is that international relations is an explanatory endeavor, concerned with the “is” of world politics not the “ought.” We find this segregation both unsustainable and unhelpful. All theories of international relations and global politics have important empirical *and* normative dimensions, and their deep interconnection is unavoidable.” Christian Reus-Smit and Snidal Duncan, “Between Utopia and Reality: The Practical Discourses of International Relations,” in *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Christian Reus-Smit and Snidal Duncan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 4.

<sup>474</sup> Hengstmengel, *Denken met het hart*, 148, 150.

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, 198.



# Chapter 6

## Religion in Morgenthau's Classical Realism: 'It Is the Theology!'

### Introduction

In the preceding chapter, I have demonstrated that Morgenthau's realism can only adequately be understood if his 'hidden' theology is taken into account. I have made that argument, because in this chapter I will show that to understand the way he deals with religion one needs to take Morgenthau's political theology seriously. Hence, 'it is the theology!'

Very few publications explicitly deal with the role of religion and theology in classical realism, and more specifically Morgenthau's realism.<sup>476</sup> For that reason I write this chapter in a way that it includes an overview of the role of religion in Morgenthau's realism. This representation will also 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 which 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. In the previous chapter, I have already shown the aspects that come into play for Morgenthau on a pre-scientific level: there are some Augustinian elements in Morgenthau's reasoning that influence his classical realism. I will conduct the assessment of the religionists according to the outlines in Chapter 1 of this book. 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

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<sup>476</sup> The few exceptions are Epp, *The Augustinian Moment in International Politics*; Sandal and Fox, *Religion in International Relations Theory*; Troy, *Religion and the Realist Tradition*.

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.

I will argue that the religionist position appears to be weak in confrontation with Morgenthau's theory, and that the religionists provide insufficient ground for their claim that IR theory should incorporate religion. On an empirical level, Morgenthau pays attention to religion but not to same extent as the religionists. I will also show that on the domain-specific level, Morgenthau is much closer to the religionist interpretation than they think. My analysis of Morgenthau's philosophy of science makes clear that he offers insightful ideas for the religionist position and barely meets the picture they have created of him. First, I will compare the religionist definition of religion with Morgenthau's. After that, I discuss the role religion plays on the empirical level, the subject-specific level and the philosophy of science level.

## **6.1. How Morgenthau Defines Religion: Religion and Religiosity**

How did Morgenthau view religion? With his Jewish roots, but assimilated in Christian Germany, Morgenthau makes a distinction between religion and religiosity.<sup>477</sup> The second term carries a broad connotation for him, while the first has more to do with the institutional formation of this religiosity. By holding on to this broad definition, Morgenthau perceives many forms in which religion appears. Simultaneously, he does not become too vague, or too general, because he also pays attention to the institutional form of religiosity. The question in this section is whether Morgenthau regards religion in a similar manner as the religionists do. I think their visions share enough similarities to allow for a comparison. First of all, Morgenthau defines religion as related to a transcendent reference point. Secondly, he makes a difference between religion and the communities and institutions that are based on it. Finally, he distinguishes religion from ideology. After presenting these three points, I will also pay attention to Morgenthau's understanding of morality and its relationship to religion. I will argue that Morgenthau closely relates morality to religion and that it is justified to refer to his writings about morality to show his attention for religion.

Morgenthau states that religion in a proper sense – which he distinguishes from the distortion of religion in the form of ideology – functions in a similar way as

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<sup>477</sup> 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, *Power and Spirituality*, 95.

metaphysical philosophy by opening human consciousness to the mysteries of the world.<sup>478</sup> Morgenthau calls this otherworldly religion, because it is based on religious faith and its truth cannot be tested by experiment.<sup>479</sup> 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.<sup>480</sup> Religion paints a picture of the empirically unknown with its own proper means.<sup>481</sup> At another place, Morgenthau calls this form of religion religiosity. What he means by that 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.<sup>482</sup>

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'. At another place he describes it as 'the awareness of his dependence upon a will and a power which are beyond his understanding and control'.<sup>483</sup> Morgenthau sees religiosity as something universal which is shared by all human beings. This understanding of religiosity comes very close to the part of the religionist definition which states that religion is about transcendent, ultimate or supernatural claims.

Secondly, in the quote above Morgenthau makes a distinction between religions and religiosity. He sees religions like Judaism, Christianity or Hinduism as particular manifestations of a broader religious awareness called religiosity. This agrees with the distinction in the religionist definition between the beliefs about the ultimate, transcendent or supernatural and the institutions and communities that are formed

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<sup>478</sup> Morgenthau, *Science*, 66.

<sup>479</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Tragedy of German-Jewish Liberalism," in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 253.

<sup>480</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "Death in the Nuclear Age," in *The Restoration of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 20.

<sup>481</sup> Morgenthau, *Science*, 64.

<sup>482</sup> Kenneth W. Thompson, Hans J. Morgenthau and David Hein, *Essays on Lincoln's Faith and Politics* (Lanham, New York and London: University Press of America, 1983), 6. Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Rediscovery of Imagination and Religion: Arnold Toynbee," in *The Restoration of American Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 54-62.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

around or based on these beliefs.<sup>484</sup>

In the third place, Morgenthau distinguishes between religion and ideology, or, as he calls it, religiosity or proper religion versus political or improper religion. 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’.<sup>485</sup> 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.<sup>486</sup> The fact that religion so often plays an ideological role has to be attributed to the nature of politics. Morgenthau often refers to this situation when he speaks of 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.<sup>487</sup>

The Christian can wait without a time limit for the Second Coming, for it has been divinely revealed that Christ will come again. His faith will survive delay as long as he believes in the revelation itself. The Communist cannot indefinitely maintain his faith in the “withering away of the state” and the coming of the classless society or in the triumph of Communism throughout the world; for these prophecies are subject to historical verification, not at the end of time but, if not here and now, certainly tomorrow or the day after. Thus Marxism-Leninism contains within itself the seeds of its own destruction; it becomes the victim of the self-same dialectic from which it deduced the inevitable doom of all historical phenomena. For the very scientific pretense of Marxism-Leninism makes the confrontation of the pseudoscientific dogma with empirical reality inevitable. Sophisticated arguments may stave off the confrontation for the time being, but the “science of society”, in contrast to an otherworldly religion, cannot evade the empirical “moment of truth” forever.<sup>488</sup>

As I have shown in the previous chapter, we can see the role that the *eschaton* plays in Morgenthau’s theory. As history will not be completed by mankind’s interventions, but by God, genuine religion such as Christianity does not exclusively focus on the here and now, while political religion and ideology do.<sup>489</sup> At another place, Morgenthau also makes a difference between genuine religion and political religion when he writes about Nazism.

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<sup>484</sup> Morgenthau’s distinction between religiosity and religions largely agrees with Kant’s approach of religion. Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, 34.

<sup>485</sup> Morgenthau, *The Rediscovery of Imagination and Religion*, 62.

<sup>486</sup> Morgenthau, *Science*, 64.

<sup>487</sup> Morgenthau, *The Tragedy of German-Jewish Liberalism*, 253.

<sup>488</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States* (New York: Praeger, 1969), 38, 39.

<sup>489</sup> See Section 5.1.

In sum, nazism 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 is 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.<sup>490</sup>

Morgenthau shows that Nazism displays many features of a religion, but it is a political religion, not a genuine religion. In both quotations, 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'.<sup>491</sup> The distinction that Morgenthau makes between religion and ideology comes close to the religionists' approach, because both acknowledge that there can be overlap and also maintain that religion, more than ideology, is about a transcendent or otherworldly reality. In sum, Morgenthau's understanding of religion is almost similar to the way in which the religionists see it.

As said before, 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*.<sup>492</sup> In that lecture, Morgenthau acknowledges the importance of religion as a foundation of human rights:

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<sup>490</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "Naziism," in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 228, 229.

<sup>491</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Dilemmas of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 3; Morgenthau, *The Purpose of American Politics*, 228.

<sup>492</sup> Morgenthau himself was for almost forty 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 'an independent, non-sectarian organization, founded by Andrew Carnegie in 1914. The Council subscribes to the thesis that the ethical principles of the major religions are relevant to the world's political, economic, and social problems'. Mollov, *Power and Transcendence*, 59; Thompson, Brauer and Morgenthau, *U.S. Policy in the Far East*, Back cover. The CRIA later became the well-known Carnegie Council for Ethics in International Affairs.

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.<sup>493</sup>

This means that Morgenthau relates morality and religion. However, in his survey about his six realist principles, he sets out that ethics or morality are a different sphere than the religious sphere.<sup>494</sup> 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.<sup>495</sup>

## 6.2. Morgenthau's Sensitivity to Religion

In the first part of this dissertation, I have set out the religionists' position. They argue that IR should incorporate religion, because it plays an important role in the world. This is an empirical argument. The question is whether Morgenthau indeed neglected the empirical role of religion. Based on his theory, not only his six principles but also his other writings, I will show that Morgenthau was sensitive to religion on the individual, national, transnational and international level. This is surprising since Morgenthau does not refer to anything similar to what the religionists call a global resurgence of religion. How can that be explained given the fact that Morgenthau writes about the role of religion in world affairs, as I will demonstrate hereafter? It could mean that the global resurgence of religion implied not so much a quantitative increase of religion, but much more a renewed (academic) interest in religion. This is not the general view of the religionists, but there are religionists that do take that position. It is also important to keep in mind that the religionists also point out that the resurgence of religion started in the 1960s, but that it was not until the 1990s before religion was picked up within IR. The global resurgence is a term they invented in retrospect. The fact that Morgenthau passed away in 1980 might explain why he never mentioned a global resurgence of religion. Although these considerations might soften the conclusion that Morgenthau did not know about a global resurgence, the fact remains that he never wrote about an increase in religiosity or something similar. Jodok Troy links Morgenthau's statements about the power of religiosity with the global resurgence of religion by quoting him:

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<sup>493</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Human Rights and Foreign Policy* (New York, N.Y.: Council on Religion and International Affairs, 1979), 10.

<sup>494</sup> I discuss this in more detail in the section on the influence of the Enlightenment.

<sup>495</sup> Cf. James Gustafson, "Say Something Theological!" in *Moral Discernment in the Christian Life: Essays in Theological Ethics*, eds. James M. Gustafson, Theodoor Adriaan Boer and Paul E. Capetz (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2007), 95.

[I]t 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.<sup>496</sup>

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 the sections below, I will show that Morgenthau drew attention to religion's role on the individual, national, transnational and international level. In the reconstruction of the religionists, I have used further subdivisions within these four levels, but I will not use them here, because this is not necessary to illustrate the correctness or incorrectness of the empirical statement.

### **6.2.1. Individual Level: Morgenthau's Appreciation of Lincoln's Religiosity**

Morgenthau writes at various places about the influence of religion on individuals, which is not surprising, because he focuses on state leaders in his theories. He seems to have a personal preference for the way in which Lincoln as a statesman expresses his religiosity. Below I will present some of his descriptions and go into more detail regarding his appreciation for Lincoln.

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.<sup>497</sup> 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.<sup>498</sup> 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 century, because then 'they represented a spiritual and moral reality'.<sup>499</sup> The world of today is different, because of a contrast between religious and moral ideology and the political realm.<sup>500</sup> 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 of a confirmation that what they are doing is in

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<sup>496</sup> Jodok Troy, "Faith-Based Diplomacy Under Examination," *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 3, no. 3 (2008): 215.

<sup>497</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, *Vietnam and the United States* (Washington: Public Affairs Press, 1965), 21.

<sup>498</sup> Thompson, Brauer and Morgenthau, *U.S. Policy in the Far East*, 57; Morgenthau and Thompson, *In Defense of the National Interest*, 23.

<sup>499</sup> Thompson, Brauer and Morgenthau, *U.S. Policy in the Far East*, 57.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*, 57.

accordance with a higher power which will ultimately decide in their favor.<sup>501</sup>

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.<sup>502</sup>

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 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.<sup>503</sup>

His appreciation for Lincoln appears also from 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

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<sup>501</sup> Thompson, Morgenthau and Hein, *Essays on Lincoln's Faith and Politics*, 9, 10.

<sup>502</sup> Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States*, 80, 81.

<sup>503</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 278; Morgenthau, *Human Rights and Foreign Policy*, 8; Thompson, Morgenthau and Hein, *Essays on Lincoln's Faith and Politics*, 10, 11.

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.<sup>504</sup>

Morgenthau suggests that perhaps the best way to act is according to this political morality.<sup>505</sup> The three examples and Morgenthau's preference for Lincoln's approach towards religion show that Morgenthau clearly was not blind for religion the lives of individual politicians, but he also does not assign much weight to it.

### **6.2.2. National Level: Religion as Challenger and Change Agent**

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 change agent.

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.<sup>506</sup> 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.<sup>507</sup> Another example he mentions is the freedom of speech. Morgenthau explains that this principle, although now accepted as 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.<sup>508</sup>

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.<sup>509</sup> History has known such political systems, especially of a theocratic nature, and

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<sup>504</sup> Ibid., 15, 16.

<sup>505</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 278.

<sup>506</sup> Lang, *Hans J. Morgenthau on Aristotle's the Politics*, 38.

<sup>507</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>508</sup> Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*, 55, 56.

<sup>509</sup> Morgenthau, *Dilemmas of Politics*, 1, 2.

these systems were completely stable over long periods and completely self-contained in their conception of justice.<sup>510</sup> 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.<sup>511</sup>

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.<sup>512</sup>

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.<sup>513</sup>

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 challenged 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.<sup>514</sup>

### **6.2.3. Transnational Level: Civilizations and the Constitutive 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.

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<sup>510</sup> Morgenthau, *Justice and Power*, 170.

<sup>511</sup> Morgenthau, *The Purpose of American Politics*, 15.

<sup>512</sup> Morgenthau, *The Influence of Reinhold Niebuhr*, 107, 108.

<sup>513</sup> Lang, *Hans J. Morgenthau on Aristotle's the Politics*, 86.

<sup>514</sup> Morgenthau, *The Intellectual and Moral Dilemma of Politics*, 18.

First of all, Morgenthau describes how civilizations play a role on a transnational level and discusses the role of religion on this level. Secondly, Morgenthau writes about a transnational religious community, namely the Quakers.

Morgenthau describes a civilization as a community of people sharing certain moral principles, fundamental religious beliefs and a common way of life.<sup>515</sup> 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.<sup>516</sup> Morgenthau approvingly quotes the historian Edward Gibbon (1737-1794) that even the French Revolution

cannot essentially injure our general state of happiness, the system of arts, and laws, and manners, which so advantageously distinguish, above the rest of mankind, the Europeans and their colonies... The abuses of tyranny are restrained by the mutual influence of fear and shame; republics have acquired order and stability; monarchies have imbibed the principles of freedom, or, at least, of moderation; and some sense of honour and justice is introduced into the most defective constitutions by the general manners of the times.<sup>517</sup>

At 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.<sup>518</sup>

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<sup>515</sup> In the first chapter on the religionists (Chapter 2), 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.

<sup>516</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *In Defense of the National Interest*, 60.

<sup>517</sup> *Ibid.*, 61.

<sup>518</sup> Morgenthau, *The Rediscovery of Imagination and Religion*, 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'.<sup>519</sup> 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.<sup>520</sup> 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.

#### **6.2.4. 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, and nationalism, etc. This closely resembles the position of the religionists, who claim that religion is virtually everywhere.

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.<sup>521</sup> In Morgenthau's view, Bolshevism is the most 'elaborate' and 'most sophisticated' political religion, because it strives for realization of its historic and sacred mission aimed at universal salvation to remake the world in its own image.<sup>522</sup> 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.<sup>523</sup>

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<sup>519</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "Christian Ethics and Political Action," in *The Decline of Democratic Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 375, 376. This comes from a preface of this book: Robert O. Byrd, *Quaker Ways in Foreign Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 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 that has a long tradition of actively working for peace and opposing war. Encyclopedia Britannica entry 'Quaker', online available at <http://www.britannica.com> (accessed December 28, 2020).

<sup>520</sup> Lang, *Hans J. Morgenthau on Aristotle's the Politics*, 93.

<sup>521</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Foreign Policy of the United States," in *The Impasse of American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 62.

<sup>522</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *In Defense of the National Interest*, 62; Morgenthau, *The Tragedy of German-Jewish Liberalism*, 253; Hans J. Morgenthau, "The Fortieth Anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution," in *The Impasse of American Foreign Policy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962), 142.

<sup>523</sup> Morgenthau, *The Tragedy of German-Jewish Liberalism*, 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.<sup>524</sup> 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.<sup>525</sup> 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 century 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.<sup>526</sup>

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.<sup>527</sup> The nationalism of the twentieth century differs from this struggle of independence, because it takes the nation as a starting point of a universal mission to impose its standards of action upon all other nations.<sup>528</sup> 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.<sup>529</sup> 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 leads to religious wars in which traditional religion may be involved

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<sup>524</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 584. ‘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.’ Douglas Johnston and Brian Cox, “Faith-Based Diplomacy and Preventive Engagement,” in *Faith-Based Diplomacy: Trumping Realpolitik* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 15. Cf. Troy, *Faith-Based Diplomacy Under Examination*, 214.

<sup>525</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 585.

<sup>526</sup> *Ibid.*, 586.

<sup>527</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, “World Politics in the Mid-Twentieth Century,” *The Review of Politics* 10, no. 2 (1948): 155.

<sup>528</sup> *Ibid.*, 156; Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 351.

<sup>529</sup> Morgenthau, *The Tragedy of German-Jewish Liberalism*, 252.

too.<sup>530</sup> 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.’<sup>531</sup>

Finally, Morgenthau sees that religion often functions like ideology, because religion too can easily become a means to cloud the real issue at stake. This agrees with what I wrote about the legitimizing function of religion in the section about religion on the national level. 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 defines ideology as Karl Mannheim does in his book *Ideology and Utopia*.

[T]he term denotes that we are sceptical of the ideas and representations advanced by our opponent. They are regarded as more or less conscious disguises of the real nature of a situation, the true recognition of which would not be in accord with his interests. This distortion ranges all the way from conscious lies to half-conscious and unwitting disguises; from calculated attempts to dupe others to self-deception.<sup>532</sup>

At another place, he describes an ideology as ‘any system of thought which rationalizes or justifies a particular social position.’<sup>533</sup> The reason that ideology and politics are narrowly intertwined is the result of the nature of politics.<sup>534</sup> In the first place, ideology is a very effective means to raise the national morale and overrule the rival nation with it.<sup>535</sup> Secondly, 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.<sup>536</sup> 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.<sup>537</sup> 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.<sup>538</sup> 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.<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>530</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, “Review: [Untitled],” *Ethics* 59, no. 2 (1949): 148.

<sup>531</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 351, 352.

<sup>532</sup> *Ibid.*, 101 fn. 1.

<sup>533</sup> Hans J. Morgenthau, “The Organic Relationship between Ideology and Political Reality,” in *Ideology and Foreign Policy: A Global Perspective*, ed. George Schwab (New York: Cyrco Press, 1978), 117.

<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

<sup>535</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 104.

<sup>536</sup> Morgenthau, *Organic relationship*, 118; Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*, 155.

<sup>537</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 103, 104.

<sup>538</sup> Morgenthau, *Organic relationship*, 119.

<sup>539</sup> Morgenthau, *A New Foreign Policy for the United States*, 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.<sup>540</sup> 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.<sup>541</sup> 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.<sup>542</sup>

### 6.3. 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.

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<sup>540</sup> Ibid., 243.

<sup>541</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 269.

<sup>542</sup> See Section 6.1.

## 6.4. 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. I will argue that Morgenthau's reasoning regarding the Westphalian is closer to the interpretation of the religionists. Then I will show that Morgenthau is a lot less secular and much richer in his reasoning than the religionists would have us believe.

### 6.4.1. 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 did no longer share authority with the feudal lords and the church within the state territory.<sup>543</sup> 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 century 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.<sup>544</sup>

Morgenthau does not say that the lesson is that religion should be privatized, for which the religionists blame him. He problematizes the presence of a moral consensus, which has to do with his view on secularization. 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.<sup>545</sup> Mihaela Neacsu states that Morgenthau in one of his early

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<sup>543</sup> Ibid., 293, 294.

<sup>544</sup> Ibid., 586.

<sup>545</sup> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, entry 'Weber', online available at <https://plato.stanford.edu> (accessed December 28, 2020).

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”.<sup>546</sup>

Neacsu refers to various phrases in various books that Morgenthau uses to describe this development: ‘man is a creature who has “lost its animal innocence and security”’, ‘the attacks “upon the very foundations of Western civilization”, which have left “the received systems of thought empty of content and, in any event, without conviction”, ‘a secular age, which has lost “faith in individual immortality in another world and is aware of the impending doom of the world through which it tries to perpetuate itself here and now”, is left “without a remedy”, and that “once it has become aware of its condition, it must despair”’. ‘In this age, men live in a threatening world, plagued by an “unprecedented increase in physical danger, social disintegration, and metaphysical doubt”’, ‘the “hopeless impotence of universal ethics”’, ‘the “empty transcendent space”’.<sup>547</sup> In this world, Morgenthau says, it is downright dangerous for a nation to claim that morality is on your 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 do religionists. 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. If this conclusion is correct, this raises the question whether this affects the way in which Morgenthau sees the state and the national interest.

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<sup>546</sup> Mihaela Neacsu, *Hans J. Morgenthau’s Theory of International Relations. Disenchantment and Re-Enchantment* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 71. Neacsu refers here to unpublished materials from the archives.

<sup>547</sup> *Ibid.*, 71, 72.

#### 6.4.2. 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'.<sup>548</sup> 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'.<sup>549</sup> 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.<sup>550</sup> In this way, Morgenthau does not only theorize about statesman, but they even are the aim of his theorizing.

The religionists argue that Morgenthau's overemphasis of 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'.<sup>551</sup> 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.<sup>552</sup> For that reason, Morgenthau is also very critical of the influence of religion on America's foreign policy. He points at the fact that the Manifest Destiny, as 'the most typical ideology of American foreign policy',

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<sup>548</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 4, 5.

<sup>549</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 5.

<sup>550</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>551</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *In Defense of the National Interest*, 63. This comes close to the point of Thomas who – inspired by Wight – refers to the Cold War as a rivalry of apostasies (Chapter 4).

<sup>552</sup> Morgenthau, *The Purpose of American Politics*, 158-166.

was couched in terms of the quasi-theological conception that divine Providence has reserved the North American continent for pioneers.<sup>553</sup> 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.<sup>554</sup> 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.<sup>555</sup>

Instead of neglecting religion and framing the conflict as one between two secular ideologies, Morgenthau points out that religion plays an important role in this conflict, and he does not shy away from calling this distorted religion or bad theology and absurd metaphysics, discriminating thus between good and bad religion.

That Morgenthau nevertheless pays more attention to the states and statesmen than to religion, is the result of theoretical and political-theological considerations. As I set out earlier, Morgenthau distinguishes between the domestic and the international sphere. The consequence of this distinction is that religion becomes less important in the international sphere, in which it is all about the national state, its survival, and not about something like a transcendent whole that defines and limits the pursuit of the state. The chance that religion overcomes these dominant forces and plays a significant role is much smaller than in the domestic realm. In addition to this, Morgenthau approaches international relations as international politics.<sup>556</sup> That means that cultural, juridical, and economic relations and religious relations are taken into consideration in so far as they are relevant for the political sphere.

The fact that Morgenthau distinguishes between spheres is a result of his ideal-typical approach. Consequentially, Morgenthau has to select the relevant actors in the international political sphere, of which the state is a prominent one, much more so than religion. Religion being a separate sphere can influence other spheres, such as the political, by interpenetrating it or through shaping ultimate values of which other values in these spheres are derived. The distinction between ultimate and derived values and between various spheres limits the possibility that religion is taken into account in theorizing about the international political sphere.

This does not mean that Morgenthau excludes religion *a priori*. Morgenthau believes

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<sup>553</sup> Morgenthau, *Organic relationship*, 120. Manifest Destiny is the belief that American expansion westward and southward was inevitable, just, and divinely ordained.

<sup>554</sup> Thompson, Brauer and Morgenthau, *U.S. Policy in the Far East*, 58.

<sup>555</sup> Morgenthau, *The Purpose of American Politics*, 7.

<sup>556</sup> For an extensive discussion of this topic, see the section on the Third Realist Principle of Chapter 5.

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.<sup>557</sup> 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.<sup>558</sup> In short, for Morgenthau it is a fact that the state plays an important role, but this does not prevent religion from being taken into consideration by him. He recognizes that empirical developments might lead to a change of his theoretical principles, which means that he is open for religion. At the same time his distinction between the domestic and the international and the use of the concept of sphere limits the role religion could play in his theorizing about international politics.

There is, however, also a political-theological reason that Morgenthau grants the state such a central role. As I have shown in the previous chapter, Morgenthau attributes an important role to the state due to political-theological considerations. He regards it as an important bulwark against secularization.<sup>559</sup> The religionists claim that Morgenthau's view on the state prevents religion from being taken into consideration. But Morgenthau has theological reasons to defend the central role of the state. So, one could say that his political-theological ideas leads 'paradoxically' to less attention for religion and more attention for the state. In that sense, the religionists are correct when they say that his assumption about the state marginalizes religion, but they overlook that political theology plays an indirect role in support of the state. The question remains whether this marginalization is a bad thing, looking at the arguments given above.

#### **6.4.3. 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.

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<sup>557</sup> See Chapter 5, the section on the Third Realist Principle.

<sup>558</sup> 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, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan*, 116.

<sup>559</sup> See Section 5.1.

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.<sup>560</sup> 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 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.<sup>561</sup> 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.

Secondly, 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'.<sup>562</sup> 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.<sup>563</sup> 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.<sup>564</sup>

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

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<sup>560</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 4. Cf. 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, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan*, viii

<sup>561</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 10, 11.

<sup>562</sup> Lebow, *The Tragic Vision of Politics*, 216.

<sup>563</sup> Mollov, *Power and Spirituality*, 103, 104; Mollov, *Power and Transcendence*, 52. Mollov takes this quote from the archives on Morgenthau.

<sup>564</sup> Mollov, *Power and Spirituality*, 97.

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.<sup>565</sup>

According to Morgenthau, empirical evidence that power and love are coming from the same source in the political realm is that all governments and dictators attempt to appear as the servant of the people.<sup>566</sup> 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 a good short-term strategy. The fact that Morgenthau is critical on 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.<sup>567</sup> 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.'<sup>568</sup> 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'.<sup>569</sup>

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.<sup>570</sup>

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 over 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

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<sup>565</sup> Ibid., 98.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>567</sup> See Chapter 5, section 'Three Playing Rules for Political Realism'.

<sup>568</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 13.

<sup>569</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>570</sup> Ibid., 16.

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.<sup>571</sup>

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.<sup>572</sup>

Philpott is not right in putting Morgenthau's position over against a religious or moral position. As 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.<sup>573</sup> 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.<sup>574</sup>

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

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.<sup>575</sup>

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<sup>571</sup> Philpott, *The Challenge of September 11*, 79. Cf. Philpott, *Has the Study of Global Politics Found Religion?*, 190.

<sup>572</sup> Neacsu, *Hans J. Morgenthau's Theory of International Relations*, 53. For an explanation of Morgenthau's tension between nihilism and morality in a disenchanted world. Ibid., 33, 34; Mollov, *Power and Transcendence*, 33-35.

<sup>573</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 16.

<sup>574</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>575</sup> Ibid., 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'.<sup>576</sup>

Thirdly, 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.<sup>577</sup> 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.<sup>578</sup> 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 be will irrelevant for all times. In his lectures *The Politics of Aristotle*, Morgenthau maintains that the question of what is politically relevant depends on the historical period and culture.<sup>579</sup> 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.<sup>580</sup> Morgenthau's theory keeps open the possibility that religion becomes more important in particular periods.

My conclusion is that Morgenthau defines the national interest as power, but that he does not discard morality and religion. Nor does he limit the national interest as power to the nation-state forever or exclude the possibility that instead of power something else might be the interest of politics at some point. Finally, his idea of the autonomy of the political means that the religious and moral spheres are secondary to the political sphere, but it does not follow that he discards them. He tries to give religion and morality their right place in relation to the political sphere.

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<sup>576</sup> M. Benjamin Mollov, "The Influence of the Jewish Experience on the Liberal Realism of Hans J. Morgenthau," in *Religion and the Realist Tradition: From Political Theology to International Relations Theory and Back*, ed. Jodok Troy (London; NY: Routledge, 2014), 29.

<sup>577</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 277.

<sup>578</sup> Morgenthau, *The Commitments of Political Science*, 50.

<sup>579</sup> Lang, *Hans J. Morgenthau on Aristotle's the Politics*, 44.

<sup>580</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

#### 6.4.4. Evaluation of the Domain-Specific Thesis

In this evaluative part, the question to be answered is to what extent Morgenthau's theorizing has a Westphalian bias. It appears that Morgenthau subscribes to a couple of Westphalian assumptions, but that these assumptions do not necessarily lead to the neglect of religion. In the first place, because 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 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. Regarding the first, it is true that Morgenthau pays more attention to states and statesmen than to religion, but he does not completely ignore it: he attributes their own place and function to the different spheres. Relying on theoretical and political-theological considerations, his position seems to be that it is justified for states to play a central role in his time, and for religion to play a supporting role. One could suggest that religious convictions still play a role in politics through the statesmen. That is true, but this state leader should abide by the 'law' for states in international politics. Ignoring that principle would lead to inefficient and even immoral politics. It does not mean that moral or religious convictions should not play a role at all, since Morgenthau was well aware of the significance of religion and morality with respect to the state and national interest. He concludes, however, that these two should be distinguished in theory, though it is impossible to separate the two in political practice.

According to Morgenthau, state leaders must often choose between different moral principles. The question which principles should have precedence often depends on the context. It is for that reason that Morgenthau once stated, in 'extreme and striking terms', that it is impossible to be a successful politician and a good Christian.<sup>581</sup> Statesmen have to distinguish between their personal wishes and the interest 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'.<sup>582</sup> Evidence for the position of Morgenthau follows from his

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<sup>581</sup> Morgenthau, *The Influence of Reinhold Niebuhr*, 102.

<sup>582</sup> Morgenthau, *The Problem of the National Interest*, 110; Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 7.

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 their judgment. According to Morgenthau, the same rule applies to nations. States that would act upon their judgment fail to acknowledge how corrupt judgment on political matters can be. They overlook the narrow limits within which nations have to apply moral standards and close their eyes to the primary responsibility to take care of their own interest and survival.<sup>583</sup> As I quoted earlier, Morgenthau argues strongly for the morality of national interest 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.<sup>584</sup>

The latter point is especially relevant for political actors who are always tempted – not by ignorance or misjudgment, but by *hubris* and pride as taught by the Greek tragedians and biblical prophets – to overlook the possibilities of their power and forget prudence and morality.<sup>585</sup> If such a nation wins a war it does not think that modern arms or the number of troops have brought this about, 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 this standard.<sup>586</sup> For Morgenthau, the United States has developed this very attitude. The United States has formed a 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.<sup>587</sup>

My conclusion regarding the domain-specific thesis is that it does not generally apply. Morgenthau does not ignore religion, but distinguishes it from other phenomenon based on theoretical and political-theoretical considerations. One should note, however, that Morgenthau did this in his time, and he is open to the idea that other times and contexts can lead to other choices.

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<sup>583</sup> Morgenthau, *Neutrality and Neutralism*, 280, 281.

<sup>584</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *In Defense of the National Interest*, 38, 39.

<sup>585</sup> Morgenthau, *The Moral Dilemma of Political Action*, 325, 326.

<sup>586</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>587</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *In Defense of the National Interest*, 93.

## 6.5. 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. For every aspect, I will discuss the various elements that the religionists have introduced. During the discussion of the social and cultural embeddedness, I will detail the influence of the Enlightenment and the role of modernization and secularization theory. I will present Morgenthau's stance on the relationship between faith and reason, the value he attributes to religion, and the degree to which he reduces religion to morality. The ontological section will mainly revolve around the presence of reductionism in Morgenthau's approach towards religion. My arguments will show that the religionists have misunderstood Morgenthau on numerous issues, sometimes even interpreting his words in the exact opposite manner.

### 6.5.1. Social and Cultural Embeddedness: Influence of Enlightenment Thinking

The religionists ascribe the way Morgenthau deals with faith, reason and religion to the influence of the Enlightenment, but 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.'<sup>588</sup> The religionists argue that the Enlightenment broke with the idea that faith and reason are on equal footing and relegated religion to the private and subjective sphere. They ascribe this process to the growing confidence in the empirical sciences. Morgenthau, they argue, was influenced by this Enlightenment view.

That is not correct, however. 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.<sup>589</sup> 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

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<sup>588</sup> Mollov, *Power and Transcendence*, 92.

<sup>589</sup> Morgenthau, *Science*, 63, 64.

frees religion from the standards of science. He tries to avoid that religion becomes subordinated to science and vice versa. Moreover, as I have shown in the preceding chapter and will further discuss in the section on positivism, Morgenthau strongly criticizes the claims of the empirical sciences of his day, which agrees with the point of the religionists that the Enlightenment view was the result of the growing confidence of the empirical sciences. The religionists, therefore, incorrectly argue that Morgenthau has been influenced by Enlightenment ideas and as a result separated religion and reason. If the religionists are wrong about this, the question is if they are wrong about the influence of the Enlightenment on Morgenthau's assumptions regarding religion as well. For example, they claim that Morgenthau replaces religion with morality; that he regards religion as something dangerous that should be privatized; and that he regards religion as secondary. Below, I will address each of these points.

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 phenomenon 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.<sup>590</sup>

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.<sup>591</sup>

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 what position he takes. Over against 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.

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<sup>590</sup> See Chapter 5, the section on Principle 1.

<sup>591</sup> Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*, 15-17.

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, aesthetical 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 philosophy 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.<sup>592</sup>

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, 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

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<sup>592</sup> Morgenthau, *Science*, 65.

values, of ideals that are not invoked just rhetorically, but are taken seriously as ultimate goals.<sup>593</sup> 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.<sup>594</sup> 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.<sup>595</sup>

The fact that Morgenthau notices the decline of the relevance of traditional religion does not lead him to do away with religion at all. On the contrary, he argues that the religious impulse, though in different forms, remains present in human endeavors to unravel the mysteries of life. Morgenthau also emphasizes the importance of transcendent values to set ultimate goals and the necessity of religiosity. As I set out earlier, Morgenthau disagrees with people who leave religion and morality out of their approach to social issues and think they can do without religion and morality. The religionists, in conclusion, have understood Morgenthau wrongly on the issue of modernization and secularization theory.

### **6.5.2. 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.<sup>596</sup>

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<sup>593</sup> Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 214; Morgenthau, *Science*, 65, 66. At 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, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 214.

<sup>594</sup> Morgenthau, *The Rediscovery of Imagination and Religion*, 54, 59, 62.

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*, 60. It is not clear whether Morgenthau reviews the whole twelve-volume magnum opus or one of its parts. The latter appears to be most likely, because the original review of Morgenthau dates from 1955 and *The Study of History* was just finished in 1961.

<sup>596</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 11. Morgenthau quotes this directly from Max Weber.

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.<sup>597</sup> Knutsen even interprets the latter as power being a product of material and spiritual factors.<sup>598</sup> 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.<sup>599</sup>

### 6.5.3. Epistemology: Morgenthau's Critique on Positivism

When reading Morgenthau's first principle, one 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'.<sup>600</sup> That might also explain why religionists blame him for being a positivist and claim that he ignores religion. But is that correct? Before discussing this in more detail, I examine the religionists' definition of positivism. The religionists identify positivism by three characteristics. In the first place, positivism holds that there is a unity of science and a single logic of explanation. There is only one reality in the physical and social worlds, and therefore the methodology of scientific investigation is the same for both worlds. Secondly, facts can be separated from values because, as with the physical world, there exists something external and independent from theories or interpretations in the social world. And thirdly, positivism assumes that, like the physical world, the social world is governed by general laws and patterns that can be discovered empirically.<sup>601</sup> This definition of positivism largely agrees with Morgenthau's. He characterizes positivism, or rationalism, as follows:

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<sup>597</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>598</sup> Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory*, 242.

<sup>599</sup> Cf. Robert O. Keohane, "Ideas Part-Way Down," *Review of International Studies* 26, no. 1 (2000): 127, 128; Alexander Wendt, "On the Via Media: A Response to the Critics," *Review of International Studies* 26, no. 1 (2000): 167.

<sup>600</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 4; Rosenthal, *Righteous Realists*, 4.

<sup>601</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 60, 61. Thomas's definition also agrees with Steve Smith's definition. The only difference is that Smith adds a fourth characteristic, namely a 'tremendous reliance on the belief that it is empirical validation or falsification that is the hallmark of "real" enquiry'. Viotti and Kauppi, *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond*, 40-42. Thomas sometimes equates rationalism with positivism while at other moments he seems to consider positivism as one of the assumptions of rationalism. Pettman gives a more extensive treatment of positivism, or rationalism, either with a capital 'P' or 'R', and its limitations. Pettman, *Reason, Culture, Religion*, 1-11.

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.<sup>602</sup>

The equation of the ethical and the rational agrees with the second point of the religionist definition that there is an external world which exists independently from our interpretations of the world. The fourth characteristic agrees with the first and third point of the religionists. At another place, Morgenthau writes about this fourth point that man thinks he will master reality as the natural sciences mastered the blind forces of nature.<sup>603</sup> With respect to the separation of facts and values, I wrote earlier that 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. This already shows that Morgenthau cannot be considered a positivist on all points. In the next section, I will argue that Morgenthau is not a positivist on the other points either. I will set out that he is not striving for explanatory power and hence neglecting religion, nor secularizing the role of religion and therefore neglecting religion.<sup>604</sup>

### **6.5.3.1. Why Morgenthau's Ideal-Typical Theory Is not Positivist**

The religionists claim that realism wants 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).

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.<sup>605</sup> 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

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<sup>602</sup> Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*, 13.

<sup>603</sup> Morgenthau, *Science*, 30.

<sup>604</sup> I do not assess whether Morgenthau believes in context-independent rationality, because the religionists only criticize neorealism for it.

<sup>605</sup> That does exclude the possibility that the religionists are correct in their criticism with respect to current mainstream IR theory. Kukalkova and Luoma-aho point out that an important survey called TRIP provides strong evidence that among IR analysts in the United States there is little epistemological diversity, because American IR scholars share a strong and growing commitment to positivism. Kubálková and Luoma-Aho, *Religion and the Realist Tradition*, 147.

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. And 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.<sup>606</sup> 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.<sup>607</sup>

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'.<sup>608</sup> 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.<sup>609</sup> 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'.<sup>610</sup> 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

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<sup>606</sup> Jodok Troy, "Getting Theory? Realism and the Study of Religion in International Relations," in *Religion and the Realist Tradition: From Political Theology to International Relations Theory and Back*, ed. Jodok Troy (London; New York: Routledge, 2014), 5.

<sup>607</sup> Kubálková and Luoma-Aho, *Religion and the Realist Tradition*, 156.

<sup>608</sup> Morgenthau, *Nature and Limits*, 16.

<sup>609</sup> Morgenthau, *The Commitments of Political Science*, 44.

<sup>610</sup> Turner and Mazur, *Morgenthau as a Weberian Methodologist*, 490.

laws.<sup>611</sup> 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 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.<sup>612</sup>

I agree on the state-centrism to a certain extent as I set out in earlier in this chapter.<sup>613</sup> I disagree, however, 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 of 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

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<sup>611</sup> Ibid., 489.

<sup>612</sup> See Section 4.3.1.

<sup>613</sup> See Section 6.5.2.

by politics, the empirical and the metaphysical, no answer at all or at best an incomplete and insufficient one.<sup>614</sup>

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 in 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'.<sup>615</sup>

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.<sup>616</sup> A theory has to ascertain facts and give them meaning through reason.<sup>617</sup> The validity of a theory depends on the extent to which it broadens and deepens the understanding of what is to be known.<sup>618</sup> It has to meet two criteria: do the facts agree with the interpretation of the theory and is the theory consistent within itself?<sup>619</sup> 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

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<sup>614</sup> Morgenthau, *Science*, 47, 48.

<sup>615</sup> *Ibid.*, 62, 63.

<sup>616</sup> Morgenthau, "Introduction," in *The Restoration of American Politics*, 1.

<sup>617</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 4.

<sup>618</sup> Morgenthau, *The Commitments of Political Science*, 46.

<sup>619</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 3.

religion on the worldviews of statesmen and scholars.

The above considerations make clear that Morgenthau is not in favor of positivism nor of explanatory power per se.<sup>620</sup> 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. The fact that the religionists are wrong about positivism and explanatory power can be ascribed to their one-sided interpretation of Morgenthau's thinking and their focus on his rational assumptions. If the religionists took into account that Morgenthau's thinking includes his empirical observations, they could conclude that Morgenthau would have been willing to evaluate the accuracy of his theoretical assumptions in light of the global resurgence of religion and the actual role religion plays in the world.

### **6.5.3.2. *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 which has disappeared because of positivism; and, second, that the diminishing religious influence on IR also implies less attention for 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 with the people of Israel and the worship of the golden calf.<sup>621</sup> 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.<sup>622</sup> This view on morality deviates from the positivist stance towards morality.

Moreover, Morgenthau has paid considerable attention to the role of ethics and morality. His fourth principle of international politics explicitly states that: 'Political realism is aware of the moral significance of political action. It is also aware of the ineluctable tension between the moral command and the requirements of successful

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<sup>620</sup> Cf. Felix J. Rösch, *Hans J. Morgenthau: The 'Marginal' Man in International Relations. A 'Weltanschauungsanalyse'* (PhD thesis, Newcastle University, 2011), 132; Troy, *Getting Theory?*, 1; Hartmut Behr and Felix J. Rösch, "The Ethics of Anti-Hubris in the Political Philosophy of International Relations: Hans J. Morgenthau," in *Religion and the Realist Tradition: From Political Theology to International Relations Theory and Back*, ed. Jodok Troy (London; New York: Routledge, 2014), 14.

<sup>621</sup> Lang, *Hans J. Morgenthau on Aristotle's the Politics*, 92.

<sup>622</sup> Morgenthau, *Scientific Man Versus Power Politics*, 204-206.

political action'.<sup>623</sup> At the same time he accounts for his political realism by distinguishing between ethics and political ethics, as I quoted earlier on.<sup>624</sup> Morgenthau takes ethics very seriously, but he also explains that it cannot be applied directly to the political sphere. It is not to be conceived as relativism that Morgenthau ascribes such an importance to the context, as if morality were a relative thing whose meaning depends on the context. In the preceding chapter, I referred to Morgenthau's question of how it is possible that we still understand the moral relevance of the Ten Commandments and the moral ideas of Plato, Pascal, Buddha and Aquinas, while they all originated in totally different contexts.

The answer of Morgenthau is that 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.<sup>625</sup> 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.'<sup>626</sup>

The statement of the religionists that Morgenthau secularized the religious or theological influence and therefore neglected religion in his theorizing is not correct. Morgenthau criticized positivism for its ethical monism meaning that it equates the normative and empirical. On top of that, morality and ethics have a central place in Morgenthau's thinking; even his fourth political realist principle is devoted to it. And he rejects the idea that morality is a relative thing. However, even if positivism was not the reason that a religious perspective disappeared in the case of Morgenthau, it is still possible that secularization took place. That leads to the second point of the religionists that the diminishing impact of religion in IR also implies less attention for religion. The religionists base this on the fact that IR theory has been influenced by theology (internally) and ethics (externally) in the past, but that this disappeared over time. 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. With respect to the diminishing influence of ethics, I refer to the earlier sections in which I set out that Morgenthau still involved ethics and morality in his thinking, and applied ethics and morality to IR. Regarding the influence of theology, this came from Christianity as well as Judaism. The influence from 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-

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<sup>623</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 12.

<sup>624</sup> See Section 5.6.1.

<sup>625</sup> Morgenthau, *The Purpose of American Politics*, 357, 358.

<sup>626</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

Semitism, the cultural and intellectual offshoots of Judaism, the Soviet Jewry movement, Israel and formal religious theology and practice.<sup>627</sup> 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 moral 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.”<sup>628</sup>

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.”<sup>629</sup>

In an unpublished essay entitled *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 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 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.<sup>630</sup> 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’.<sup>631</sup> 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’.<sup>632</sup> At another place he says:

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<sup>627</sup> Mollov, *Jewish Experience*, 21, 22.

<sup>628</sup> *Ibid.*, 27. Mollov takes this quote and the quote hereafter from the archives on Morgenthau. I do not have access to it.

<sup>629</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>630</sup> Russell, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 74, 75.

<sup>631</sup> Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 110 fn. 70. Cf. Mollov, *Power and Spirituality*, 95, 96, 102; Mollov, *Jewish Experience*, 30.

<sup>632</sup> Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 110.

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.<sup>633</sup>

To his students, Morgenthau said that a theologian like 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'.<sup>634</sup> 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 to Morgenthau's political theory, others argue that Morgenthau used Niebuhr's insights in a secularized way.<sup>635</sup> 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.<sup>636</sup>

The fact that Morgenthau was already forty years old when he started to read Niebuhr, also points to the idea that Niebuhr confirmed ideas which he had already developed.<sup>637</sup> 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*.<sup>638</sup>

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

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<sup>633</sup> Morgenthau, *The Influence of Reinhold Niebuhr*, 106, 107, 109. On the same pages Morgenthau also praises how Niebuhr discovered the autonomy of the political sphere.

<sup>634</sup> Mollov, *Power and Transcendence*, 49.

<sup>635</sup> Frei states that it was not so much a matter of secularizing Niebuhr, but of rephrasing Nietzsche with slightly religious overtones. Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau*, 111, 189. Earlier in this chapter, I criticized Philpott for ascribing to much influence to Nietzsche when it comes to metaphysics. I think that the question to what extent Morgenthau has been influenced by Nietzsche also depends which parts of Nietzsche's thinking someone is referring to.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>637</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>638</sup> *Ibid.*, 113. For examples of how Morgenthau's thought and phrasings agree with Niebuhr: *Ibid.*, 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. *Ibid.*, 79, 91, 92, 109, 110, 115.

the transcendental aspects of his Judeo-Christian-oriented theory.<sup>639</sup> The above argument seems to contradict that there has been a diminishing influence of theology. That is true, but there is also another aspect which I will deal with in Chapter 9 more extensively, 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 fundamental different political theology and therefore to a significant 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.

#### **6.5.4. Methodology: Reductionism in Morgenthau's Approach of Religion?**

The statement that Morgenthau reduces religion to an irrational, individual or institutional phenomenon is difficult to reconcile with several of Morgenthau's writings on religion. Before I move on to these writings, I first want to challenge the interpretation of Morgenthau's text on which the religionist Erin Wilson bases her point that Morgenthau reduces religion. In my view, Wilson does not do justice to Morgenthau. She states that irrationality is a prominent characteristic of religion in Morgenthau's work and supports this with a quote from Morgenthau: 'The passions of the religious wars yielded to the rationalism and the skeptical moderation of the Enlightenment.'<sup>640</sup> She then concludes that 'this implies a belief in the irrationality of religion as well as linking religion to emotions (passions)'.<sup>641</sup> I think this conclusion cannot be drawn on the basis of this quote. Morgenthau does not equate or reduce the religious wars to wars of passions, but he argues that during the religious wars 'passions', 'national hatreds', 'collective enmities', 'egotistical motives' played a role and could be 'nourished by principles of any kind'. He wants to emphasize the collective or national scale of the clashes that took place. The Enlightenment with its rationalism and skeptical moderation has recognized these facts, and then international politics turned into a 'sport for princes' who play by the same rules and with the same limited stakes, according to Morgenthau.<sup>642</sup> Wilson also refers to another sentence of Morgenthau to support her claim that he sees religion as inherently irrational.<sup>643</sup> She does not quote it directly, but it should be about this sentence: 'The age of the machine, which has sprung from man's self-sufficient mind, has instilled in modern man the confidence that he can save himself

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<sup>639</sup> Troy, *Getting Theory?*, 4.

<sup>640</sup> Wilson, *After Secularism*, 71.

<sup>641</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>642</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 240.

<sup>643</sup> Wilson, *After Secularism*, 71.

by his own unaided efforts here and now. Thus the traditional religions with the negation of that confidence and relying upon divine intervention, have become bloodless images of themselves'.<sup>644</sup> In the first place, I wonder, what is irrational in this description of religion? People relying on divine intervention? Morgenthau indeed places religion over against the spirit of the modern scientific age, but that does not imply he sees religion as irrational. In addition, Morgenthau's description does not mean that he conceives of religion this way, it rather is an observation of how religion manifested itself during those days. Consequently, it is not possible to hold to the opinion that Morgenthau sees religion as irrational based on these sentences.

Also, there is evidence that he 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 beginning of this chapter, Morgenthau makes a distinction between religions 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 religion. 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.<sup>645</sup>

Regarding the rational and irrational, Morgenthau points at the rational side of religion, because he sees religiosity as an experience which is transformed into intellectual awareness.<sup>646</sup> 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 in validity to secularized science.<sup>647</sup>

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

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<sup>644</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 412.

<sup>645</sup> Thompson, Morgenthau and Hein, *Essays on Lincoln's Faith and Politics*, 6.

<sup>646</sup> Morgenthau, *The Rediscovery of Imagination and Religion*, 61, 62.

<sup>647</sup> See Section 5.3.1 and 6.5.1.

emphasizes that religion is a universal human attitude, and that the historic religions and their religious organizations are but particular manifestations of it.

Morgenthau's thinking, to conclude, does not give reason to claim that he reduces religion to an irrational, individual or institutional phenomenon. It not only appears that this idea is based on an incorrect interpretation of certain passages in Morgenthau's writing, but it also turns out that Morgenthau was well aware of the other aspects of religion.

## **6.6. 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 on 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**

In this conclusion, I aim at combining the results of both this chapter and the previous chapter. First of all, I will recall the steps taken in the Chapters 5 and 6, followed by a short summary of the role of religion in Morgenthau's classical realism. Then I will explain how it is possible for the religionists to be so wrong about Morgenthau. Finally, I will make a diagnosis in which I compare some elements to the ideas of the Amsterdam School.

In this chapter, I have investigated to what degree the subtheses of the religionists to support their claim apply to Morgenthau's realism. To make this possible, I presented my interpretation of Morgenthau's classical realism in Chapter 5, clarifying in this manner my assessment of the religionist position. In that chapter, I maintained that Morgenthau's realism can only be adequately understood when his view on theory and his political theology are taken into account.

The religionists believe that IR should give religion a place in its theories. This claim is based on three subtheses, and the validity of the claim, obviously, depends on the maintainability of these subtheses. The first thesis holds that Morgenthau's realism pays no attention to religion. The second thesis involves the degree to which Morgenthau is influenced by the Westphalian system and consequently biased, leading him to ignoring religion within the domain of international relations. It is possible that someone may pay attention to religion, yet still ignore it when explaining or understanding international politics. The same applies to the third thesis. Recognizing religion and even regarding it as an important factor does not automatically imply including it in an analysis based on philosophy of science grounds. The question therefore is not necessarily whether religion plays a role on the domain-specific or scientific-philosophical level, but to what degree the assumptions and ideas within these levels prevent religion from playing a role in theory at all.

I conclude that the religionists' criticism of Morgenthau that he neglects religion for many reasons barely applies. The question then is to what degree Morgenthau adheres to the religionist demand to integrate religion. As the religionists are not really clear on this issue, I indicated at the end of Part I that they consider both a minimal variant and an optimal scenario to which IR should adhere. In Morgenthau's case, I see the following. 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 5, 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.<sup>648</sup> Secondly, the religionists are not specific enough in their criticism on realism. I have chosen Morgenthau to verify their position, which, however, turned out to have an opposite effect. In short, it would have been better if the paradigm challengers had been more specific in their criticism: what

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<sup>648</sup> Shireen Hunter, *God on our Side: Religion in International Affairs* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 223.

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.<sup>649</sup> 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'.<sup>650</sup> This is quite crucial, because taking note of these influences would have shown that it is 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 how they relate to them and the way Morgenthau applies them in his theorizing.

Besides that the religionists have overlooked theology, they have – partly as a result of this – missed aspects of Morgenthau's theorizing which are quite crucial to understand the place religion has in his writings. I will briefly recall these assumptions hereafter. And finally, there is a certain ambiguity in Morgenthau's theorizing which makes it difficult to grasp how he would have dealt with religion today. This ambiguity is caused by the fact that Morgenthau's thinking has a rational and an empirical side and the exact weighing of both elements in light of the present role of religion in the world is difficult. It is my impression that the religionists have focused mainly on the rational side of Morgenthau's theory. I have included Morgenthau's more empirical contributions too.

Morgenthau gradually distinguishes international relations, as characterized by international politics, from the domestic domain. Morgenthau distinguishes different spheres, each having something characteristic that separates it from other spheres. The consequence of this is that Morgenthau distinguishes between the political, the religious and the moral sphere. Morgenthau, furthermore, wants to safeguard the autonomy of the political. This means that politics should not be reduced to one of the other spheres, like the economic, religious or moral sphere. The consequence is that religion is not central to his theory of international politics, but has meaning in so far as it relates to the political sphere, so its role is always indirect. And finally, we have to bear in mind that his theoretical approach is ideal-typical, that is to say, a simplification in order to find the rationality of a certain phenomenon. Religion, although it can be important, is not part of the political rationality which is national interest defined as power. Each of these assumptions in Morgenthau's theory, then, interacts with and strengthens one another, because his view on theory influences his understanding of international relations as international politics, and his assumption about spheres strengthens his ideas about the autonomy of politics. Thus, even though Morgenthau is aware of religion's role he does

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<sup>649</sup> Kubálková and Luoma-Aho, *Religion and the Realist Tradition*, 148, 149.

<sup>650</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

not give it a place in his theorizing about international politics.

Nevertheless, the fact that the religionists are erroneous in their explanation of Morgenthau's approach to religion, together with their overlooking of the three assumptions just mentioned, does not give an answer to how Morgenthau's dealing with religion should be appreciated. Does Morgenthau offer something of use for the religionists? In my view, the three 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.

In the previous chapter, I referred to the many similarities of Morgenthau's thinking with the Amsterdam School. Related to that, I would like to stress that Morgenthau recognizes that religion was losing significance in its traditional form, but that he assumes that the religious impulse remains active. There will always be a need for transcendence, although its shape may vary. Morgenthau looks beyond the superficial image that people attribute to traditional religions. Also, it is interesting that Morgenthau dares to make a distinction between various religious expressions and make value judgements on them. That is an important point also being practiced by the Amsterdam School. Dooyeweerd also made a distinction between the different ground motives of humanist, Catholic, and Protestant persuasions. He eventually concluded that the ground motive of creation, the fall of man, and redemption is the most accurate and realistic. I do not know if Morgenthau would support that statement, but they do share the opinion that a worldview in which there is no room for redemption and tragedy or where all bets are on the *saeculum* as the place where it must be realized, is inferior to a worldview which acknowledges the possibility of redemption.



# Chapter 7

## Waltz's Neorealism: Political Realism in a Scientific Coat<sup>651</sup>

### Introduction

'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'.<sup>652</sup> This is what Kenneth Waltz is sometimes called in mainstream IR. 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 malefactor for the neglect of religion.

In the preceding chapter, the role of religion in Morgenthau's theory was discussed. It turned out that the religionists have overlooked important elements of Morgenthau's theory and that many of their reasons do not adequately explain the absence of religion in his theory. This chapter is devoted to the work of Waltz who belongs to the realist tradition but developed it further. He introduced a theory of international politics based on realist thought and on the criteria for a good theory. In Waltz's view, a theory of international politics should limit itself to the systemic level of analysis and should not be based upon the foreign policies of states or an analysis of human nature. Through this strict scientific approach modeled after the natural sciences, he makes realism more acceptable as a scientific theory.

A lot of continuity can be found between both theories, because Waltz and Morgenthau can both be seen as belonging to the the school political realism. At the same time, there is a discontinuity at play. The thread that runs through this chapter

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<sup>651</sup> Parts of this chapter have also been published in Simon Polinder, "A Practice-Based Theory to Explain Religion in International Relations," in *The Future of Creation Order: Order Among Humans: Humanities, Social Science and Normative Practices*, eds. Govert J. Buijs and Annet K. Mosher, Vol. 2 (Heidelberg/Berlin: Springer Verlag, 2019).

<sup>652</sup> Ken Booth, "Introduction," *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009): 179.

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.<sup>653</sup> When Waltz was developing his theory in the 1960s and 70s the classical realists were pushed out of the theoretical mainstream by behavioralists, systems analysts, game theorists, neo-functionalists, 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'.<sup>654</sup> My claim is that Waltz's neorealism has to be seen as an attempt to save as much of political realism as possible. To comply with the requirements of science that were decisive in his time, Waltz had to make a number of radical choices that have consequences. In the first place, he has to relate himself to the theological inspiration of Niebuhr and Morgenthau's realism. Secondly, he also had to deal with the requirements of science. That is why this chapter starts to set out how Waltz deals with this theological heritage. It also explains why the next chapter has in its title 'it is the theory'. If the two elements as mentioned are overlooked, Waltz's theory in general, but in particular his dealing with religion cannot properly be understood.

In this chapter, I will illustrate how Waltz relates to the theological or Augustinian influences within political realism that I presented earlier in the chapters on Morgenthau. I will also set out his theory of international politics. In the subsequent chapter, I will show the consequences this has for the way in which Waltz deals with religion. This chapter and the subsequent chapter therefore have a similar focus and structure as the chapters on Morgenthau's realism.

I start this chapter by showing that there is substantial theological influence on Waltz's theorizing. After that, I discuss the large degree of continuity between Morgenthau and Waltz. I also set out how they differ. The difference between both thinkers becomes apparent regarding the concept of theory: what is a scientific theory, what requirements should it adhere to, and what does it mean for theorizing on international politics? In the conclusion, I address the strengths of Waltz's theory, but also some of its weaknesses.

## **7.1. 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

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<sup>653</sup> Cf. Kamminga, *Structure and Sin*.

<sup>654</sup> Ian Hall, "Kenneth Waltz: The Man Who Saved Realism," *E-International Relations* (June 24, 2013)

prefers Benedictus de Spinoza (1632-1677) and secularizes his theory as a result. This secularization is necessary to make realism acceptable as a scientific theory. I find it important to emphasize that this secularization, as with Morgenthau, is not a secularization out of hostility towards religion. In Waltz's case, he deems it necessary to save realist political thought and be acceptable to the standards of science. It seems a kind of secularization as if theology continues by other means.<sup>655</sup> 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. Because Waltz is more radical than Morgenthau was, the question whether he can do so without any consequences will be discussed in the conclusion of the chapter and in Chapter 9. I will now move on start with a few quotes from Waltz about theology, Augustine, and Niebuhr.

### **7.1.1. The Influence of Christian Theology: 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.<sup>656</sup>

In Chapter 2, he refers to 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

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<sup>655</sup> Terpstra, *Democratie als cultus*, 11.

<sup>656</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Man, the State and War. A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 3. It is interesting to see how Reinhold Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man. A Christian Interpretation* starts in the same way.

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.<sup>657</sup>

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.<sup>658</sup>

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.<sup>659</sup>

If one looks at these quotes, one will see that both Augustine and Niebuhr's theological ideas played a role in Waltz's thinking.<sup>660</sup> This does not mean that he also agrees with these ideas. In an interview in 2007, Waltz responded to the interviewer:

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<sup>657</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>658</sup> Ibid., 23, 24.

<sup>659</sup> Ibid., 32, 33.

<sup>660</sup> 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 Edward Lewis who was an expert in medieval thought. Harry Keisler, "Theory and International Politics. Conversation with Kenneth N. Waltz." *Institute of International Studies, UC Berkeley* (2003): 1, online available at <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people3/Waltz/waltz-con0.html> (accessed December 28, 2020).

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.<sup>661</sup>

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 (more about this in the next section). 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 on 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 that to the fact that a human being is a finite being with infinite desires, with a tendency to regard itself as a god. With this, Waltz puts to paper what I illustrated in the introduction of Part II, namely that history is the site of human freedom as well as finitude, creativity, and destruction, renewal and tragedy, and that there are 'endless possibilities' for the development of human capacities and social organization, but that this may also be an instrument of chaos, as well as of order. 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'.<sup>662</sup> 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.<sup>663</sup>

These quotes clearly show the Augustinian nature of Waltz's writings here. It is my claim that these ideas, similarly to Morgenthau, 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

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<sup>661</sup> Anna Cornelia Beyer, *Kenneth Waltz's Life and Thought: An Interview* (n.p.: Lulu.com, 2015), 33.

<sup>662</sup> Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 33.

<sup>663</sup> *Ibid.*, 33.

in the balance of power as an instrument to prevent worse.<sup>664</sup> 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.

### 7.1.2. 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.<sup>665</sup> 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.’<sup>666</sup> 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’.<sup>667</sup>

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.<sup>668</sup>

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.<sup>669</sup> It seems, therefore, that Waltz wants to show how the secular explanation of Spinoza is able to replace a theological or a religious one.<sup>670</sup> That Waltz prefers Spinoza over Niebuhr appears from the fact that he later refers to Spinoza as representative of the first image.<sup>671</sup> 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:

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<sup>664</sup> 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, *American Katechon*, 235. See also Section 5.1.

<sup>665</sup> 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.

<sup>666</sup> Fred Halliday and Justin Rosenberg (2000), “Interview with Ken Waltz,” 372.

<sup>667</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, “Q&A Session,” *Conference The King of Thought: Theory, Subject, and Waltz* (Aberystwyth, 2008), online available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y-gNRkjFKII> (accessed December 29, 2020).

<sup>668</sup> Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 20.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.*, 23-26.

<sup>670</sup> 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, *Structure and Sin*.

<sup>671</sup> Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 161, 162. See also William M. Hawley, “Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis,” *The European Legacy* 25, no. 7-8 (2020): 7, 8.

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.<sup>672</sup>

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, as the religionists accuse him of saying. 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.<sup>673</sup> Waltz, for example, admits that his preference for balanced power instead of concentrated power is partly based on Niebuhr.<sup>674</sup> The latter derived his ideas about power from his view on the 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. In Chapter 4, I discussed this position already shortly and concluded that 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.

Guilhot argues that Waltz secularizes 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.<sup>675</sup> Guilhot writes that Waltz's *Man, the State, and War* signalled 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's 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.<sup>676</sup> I called this earlier on the continuation of theology by other means. This sounds more positive than Guilhot's indication 'anamorphosis', and this might depend on the perspective from which I evaluate it. I will illustrate this with an example

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<sup>672</sup> Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 23, 24.

<sup>673</sup> Kamminga argues that Waltz's neorealism strongly relies on certain theological notions of Niebuhr's Christian realism. Kamminga, *Structure and Sin*.

<sup>674</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "Reflections on Theory of International Politics: A Response to My Critics," in *Neorealism and its Critics*, ed. Robert O. Keohane (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), 341.

<sup>675</sup> Guilhot, *American Katechon*, 247, 248.

<sup>676</sup> *Ibid.*, 224, 225. Cf. Chris Brown, "Structural Realism, Classical Realism and Human Nature," *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009): 265, 266; Vassilios Paipais, "First Image Revisited: Human Nature, Original Sin and International Relations," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 22, no. 2 (2019): 364–388.

of this secularization.

One of the main contributions of political realism is that it creates room for the destructive side of humankind which is a good remedy for all too utopian thinking. Waltz preserves the pessimistic view on human nature of realism by limiting his theory to the third level (more about this follows later in this chapter). The defining characteristic of this level is its anarchy. As a result, states have to rely on their own power in order to survive.<sup>677</sup> 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.<sup>678</sup> 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? Yes, I think so. I will come back to this later in the conclusion of this chapter and in Chapter 9 when I compare Morgenthau and Niebuhr. However, given the possibilities of the sciences in his day, he has saved a lot of political realism.

### 7.1.3. Waltz's Indebtedness to Theology

The fact that Waltz replaces a religious explanation by 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

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<sup>677</sup> P. Schouten, "Theory Talk#40: Kenneth Waltz - the Physiocrat of International Politics," *Theory Talks* (2001): 6, online available at <http://www.theory-talks.org/2011/06/theory-talk-40.html> (accessed December 28, 2020). Brown links Waltz to the righteous realists, the Augustinian strand of thought identified by, among others, Joel Rosenthal and Alastair Murray, because of his scientific, non-metaphysical application of the Augustinian ideas about human sin as the root of evil. Brown, *Structural Realism*, 265. Cf. Neta C. Crawford, "Human Nature and World Politics: Rethinking 'Man'," *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009): 273-276.

<sup>678</sup> Kamminga argues 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. Kamminga, *Structure and Sin*.

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.”<sup>679</sup>

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.<sup>680</sup>

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’.<sup>681</sup> As this quote, the notion of the ‘invisible hand’ refers to a metaphysical presupposition.<sup>682</sup> Waltz has

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<sup>679</sup> Karl R. Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (London: Hutchinson, 1972), 38.

<sup>680</sup> Kamminga, *Structure and Sin*.

<sup>681</sup> Bob Goudzwaard, *Capitalism and Progress. A Diagnosis of Western Society* (United Kingdom: Paternoster Press, 1997), 22. Adam Smith, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Part III, Chapter 5.

<sup>682</sup> Gerrit Manenschijs, *Moraal en eigenbelang bij Thomas Hobbes en Adam Smith* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1979), 285.

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.<sup>683</sup>

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.<sup>684</sup> 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!

The question is, was it worth it, what is lost and what is gained from what he has done? 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'.<sup>685</sup> Epp also uses terms with a negative connotation such as the triumph of 'a narrow, scientific conception', and 'marginalizing the Augustinian tradition'.<sup>686</sup> For now, I would like to state that I am more positive about Waltz' contribution to political realism than Epp and Murray, given the scientific context he was in.

## 7.2. Waltz's Theory of International Politics: Classical Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory

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'.<sup>687</sup> 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

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<sup>683</sup> See also William Bain, *Political Theology of International Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020), 159-184.

<sup>684</sup> Waltz, *Reflections on Theory of International Politics*, 341.

<sup>685</sup> Murray, *Reconstructing Realism*, 8, 9, 201.

<sup>686</sup> Roger I. Epp, *Power Politics and the Civitas Terrena: The Augustinian Sources of Anglo-American Thought in International Relations* (Kingston, Ontario: Queen's University, 1990), iii.

<sup>687</sup> Jervis, *Hans Morgenthau*, 858. Sandal and James approvingly cite Keohane that neorealism preserves the core assumptions of the theory. Sandal and James, *Religion and International Relations Theory*, 12.

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.<sup>688</sup>

As the title of this section already indicates, Waltz’s theory of international politics is composed of classical realist thought and neorealist theory, or to say it in different words, his theory 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 used the term political theory for political philosophy, and that he considered a ‘real’ theory a theory that is able to explain.<sup>689</sup> His theory of international politics (as he set out in *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.

On the other side, 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 in taking 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.<sup>690</sup> He therefore saw explanations of foreign policy as explanations of international politics and vice versa, argues Waltz.<sup>691</sup>

Neorealism differs from realism on four points, writes Waltz. First, neorealism distinguishes between factors which are external or internal to the political system and isolates the one from the other to deal with them intellectually. 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

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<sup>688</sup> Hall, *Kenneth Waltz: The Man Who Saved Realism*.

<sup>689</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Boston, Mass, etc.: McGraw-Hill, 1979), 6. See also Section 7.2.3.

<sup>690</sup> Waltz, *Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory*, 71.

<sup>691</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 122.

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. For Waltz, the structure of the system is defined by the power distribution across nations, and this power distribution dominates considerations of ideology.<sup>692</sup> Second, while 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.<sup>693</sup> Third, 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 of scarce goods where no one functions as arbiter. He nevertheless pulled more towards 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 a useful means 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.<sup>694</sup> Fourth, for realists, anarchy is a condition with which different states, with different governments, character of rules, and types of ideology have to cope. Because of the anarchical structure states can be seen as 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.<sup>695</sup>

Unlike Morgenthau, Waltz is very clear regarding the domain of his theory. In Morgenthau's case, his six principles and his further work were regarded to be his theory, whereas Waltz clearly put his 1979 book in the center. That is because Waltz, even more so than Morgenthau, has a clearly defined 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. Partly in this chapter, but also in the next one when I evaluate the religionist position.

In this section, I lay out what Waltz's theory of international politics is about and how I understand it. I start, therefore, with an introduction to Waltz's main theoretical works

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<sup>692</sup> Waltz, *Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory*, 73-76.

<sup>693</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-78.

<sup>694</sup> *Ibid.*, 78, 79.

<sup>695</sup> *Ibid.*, 79, 80.

*Man, the State and War* (1959) and *Theory of International Politics* (1979). Although all Waltz's writings are consulted, I consider his theory of international politics, as it is expounded in the second book, as his core position.<sup>696</sup> However, to understand his theory fully, it is necessary to involve his other writings, because they shed light on some of his assumptions that are made in his theory of international politics.

### **7.2.1. Three Images: Man, the State, and the International System**

In his book *Man, the State and War*, Waltz provides a causal explanation for war.<sup>697</sup> 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'.<sup>698</sup> 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.<sup>699</sup> 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.<sup>700</sup>

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, in the assumption that a common enemy will bring internal peace.<sup>701</sup> 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.<sup>702</sup> 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.<sup>703</sup>

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<sup>696</sup> 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, *Man, the State and War*, ix.

<sup>697</sup> For this overview I also used an excerpt of Viotti and Kauppi, *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond*, 130-144.

<sup>698</sup> Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, ix.

<sup>699</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>700</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>701</sup> *Ibid.*, 80, 81.

<sup>702</sup> *Ibid.*, 82, 83.

<sup>703</sup> *Ibid.*, 83, 84.

Waltz criticizes these approaches because they rely on a generalization of one pattern of state and society to bring peace in 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.<sup>704</sup> That is what the third image is about. Waltz describes the third image as follows, using the story from Rousseau's *Discourse on Inequality*.

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.<sup>705</sup>

Waltz's conclusion is that in cooperative action, one cannot rely on others. While Spinoza 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.<sup>706</sup> 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.<sup>707</sup> 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.<sup>708</sup>

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

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<sup>704</sup> Ibid., 122, 123.

<sup>705</sup> Ibid., 167, 168; Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality*, (1755): Part II.

<sup>706</sup> Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 168.

<sup>707</sup> Ibid., 169, 170.

<sup>708</sup> Ibid., 183.

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 maintains.<sup>709</sup>

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.<sup>710</sup> 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.<sup>711</sup> 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 from 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 for war and are a result of image 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.<sup>712</sup>

As said, *Man, the State and War* is the foundation of *Theory of International Politics*, because although the first and the second image 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.<sup>713</sup> Stated differently, the first and the second image are the immediate causes and the third image is the underlying cause.<sup>714</sup> For this reason, the main focus of *Theory of International Politics* is the third level.<sup>715</sup>

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<sup>709</sup> Ibid., 182-184.

<sup>710</sup> Ibid., 184.

<sup>711</sup> Ibid., 185, 186.

<sup>712</sup> Ibid., 232, 233.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid., 238.

<sup>714</sup> This is a phrase of the interviewer which Waltz confirms. Kreisler, *Theory and International Politics*, 3.

<sup>715</sup> For this overview I also used a summary presented by Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International*

### 7.2.2. A Theory of International Politics: A Systemic Approach

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.<sup>716</sup> 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 example John A. Hobson (1858-1940) and Vladimir Lenin (1870-1924) who took the domestic economic situation to explain imperialism in international politics.<sup>717</sup> 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.<sup>718</sup> 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.<sup>719</sup> 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.<sup>720</sup> 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.<sup>721</sup> 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.<sup>722</sup>

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*Relations*, 105-110.

<sup>716</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 67, 68.

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*, 18, 19.

<sup>718</sup> *Ibid.*, 60, 61.

<sup>719</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

<sup>720</sup> *Ibid.*, 38-78.

<sup>721</sup> *Ibid.*, 39, 40.

<sup>722</sup> *Ibid.*, 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.<sup>723</sup>

The first characteristic is about the way in which units are ordered. The international system has two ordering principles: hierarchy and anarchy.<sup>724</sup> 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.<sup>725</sup> 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.<sup>726</sup> 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.<sup>727</sup> 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 that 'they 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'.<sup>728</sup> Organical 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.<sup>729</sup> 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

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<sup>723</sup> Hans Mouritzen, "Kenneth Waltz: A Critical Rationalist between International Politics and Foreign Policy," in *The Future of International Relations. Masters in the Making?*, eds. Iver B. Neumann and Ole Wæver (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 69.

<sup>724</sup> "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, *Realism and International Relations*, 81.

<sup>725</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 88-93. 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'. *Ibid.*, 118.

<sup>726</sup> Kreisler, *Theory and International Politics*, 3.

<sup>727</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 93-97.

<sup>728</sup> Waltz, *Reflections on Theory of International Politics*, 323.

<sup>729</sup> *Ibid.*, 324.

between the units.<sup>730</sup>

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 socialization of the actor 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 member 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.<sup>731</sup> 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.<sup>732</sup>

The other way in which structures have 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.<sup>733</sup>

According to Waltz, the existence of anarchy and the fact that units strive for survival lead to a balance of power politics.<sup>734</sup> 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 sceptical 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'.<sup>735</sup> 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'.<sup>736</sup> Waltz suggests that it is irrational to fight for 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.

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<sup>730</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 107-110.

<sup>731</sup> *Ibid.*, 75, 76.

<sup>732</sup> Waltz, *Reflections on Theory of International Politics*, 344.

<sup>733</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 76, 77.

<sup>734</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>735</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

<sup>736</sup> *Ibid.*, 112.

The similarity with Niebuhr is striking here. Niebuhr, makes a clear distinction between how people relate to each other on an individual level and on a group level. Niebuhr, for example, 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; the social aspect of Wendt. For Niebuhr, this becomes much harder among groups because the 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 statesmen at their own peril.<sup>737</sup>

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 the one is the loss of the other. This mutual control leads to tensions and crises but prevents the great powers from attempts to overrule the other.<sup>738</sup> In 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'.<sup>739</sup> Waltz illustrates his argument with the interdependency of Germany and the other European countries before First World War, which did not prevent the outbreak of the war.

Bipolarity is also more appropriate to deal with international problems such as pollution, poverty, and proliferation of nuclear weapons. Because of anarchy, solutions must be found at the state level. International organization 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

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<sup>737</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society. A Study in Ethics and Politics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1960), 257-277; Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christianity and Power Politics* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1940), 26, 27, 78; Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: A Christian Interpretation*, Vol. II (London: Nisbet & Co, 1941), 85-94, 275, 276.

<sup>738</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 172-176.

<sup>739</sup> *Ibid.*, 138.

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'.<sup>740</sup>

### **7.2.2.1. Is Neorealism Holistic or Methodological Individualistic?**

There has been some debate on whether Waltz is a holist or a methodological individualist, also among religionists (see Chapter 3). The question is whether Waltz uses 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?

It is important to answer this question, because in the next chapter I will assess to what extent Waltz's holism causes religion to be left out. IR theorist Wendt characterizes Waltz as a methodological individualist.<sup>741</sup> 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.<sup>742</sup> 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.<sup>743</sup> 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.<sup>744</sup>

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<sup>740</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>741</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Review: Bridging the Theory/Meta-Theory Gap in International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 4 (1991): 384, 388, 389. See also, Alexander Wendt, "The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory," *International Organization* 41, no. 3 (1987): 339, 341, 342; Alexander Wendt, "Levels of Analysis vs. Agents and Structures: Part III," *Review of International Studies* 18, no. 2 (1992): 183. Wendt defines methodological individualism as 'commitment to the view that social explanations should be given microfoundations by being reduced to statements about the properties of individuals or their interactions'. Alexander Wendt and Ian Shapiro, "The Misunderstood Promise of Realist Social Theory," in *Contemporary Empirical Political Theory*, ed. Kristen Renwick Monroe (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California, 1997), 176.

<sup>742</sup> Wendt, *Review*, 388, 389.

<sup>743</sup> Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, "Beware of Gurus: Structure and Action in International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 4 (1991): 400.

<sup>744</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 90; Hollis and Smith, *Beware of Gurus*, 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.<sup>745</sup> In my view, Waltz's theory describes how the structure conditions the behavior of the units, and shapes the behavior and the outcomes.<sup>746</sup> Waltz's theory of international politics limits itself to the structure and does not deal with the units. He admits that an ideal theory would comprise both levels, but he argues that a good theory limits itself for the purpose of explanatory power.

### **7.2.2.2. Waltz's *A Posteriori* Materialism**

Another point of discussion that is relevant for the debate is whether Waltz's theory is based on materialism. 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.<sup>747</sup> Wendt also says that his problem with Waltz's theory is its materialism, because he thinks that ideas should have greater explanatory power.<sup>748</sup> The fact that Wendt frames the opposition between Waltz and himself as materialist versus idealist is not correct.

Wendt's depiction of Waltz as 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.<sup>749</sup> 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

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<sup>745</sup> Wendt, *The Agent-Structure Problem*, 342.

<sup>746</sup> Schouten, *Theory Talk#40: Kenneth Waltz*, 7.

<sup>747</sup> James Fearon and Alexander Wendt, "Rationalism v. Constructivism: A Skeptical View," in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth A. Simmons (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002), 59.

<sup>748</sup> Alexander Wendt and Daniel Friedheim, "Hierarchy Under Anarchy: Informal Empire and the East German State," *International Organization* 49, no. 4 (1995): 692; Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 184.

<sup>749</sup> Fred Halliday and Justin Rosenberg, "Interview with Ken Waltz," *Review of International Studies* 24, no. 3 (2000): 382. 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, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 184.

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, the other about what explanatory difference it makes.<sup>750</sup> 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'.<sup>751</sup>

### 7.2.3. 'Clothes Make the Man': Waltz's View on Scientific Theories

So far, I have dealt with Waltz's neorealism as a composition of realist political thought on the one hand and neorealist theory on the other. There is, however, another crucial factor to understand Waltz and that is his view on theory. In the title of this section I referred to this as 'the scientific coat', because as the saying goes: 'clothes make the man'. This metaphor has, however, also another meaning, because a coat or a jacket can also be or become too tight.

According to Waltz, a theoretical notion may be a concept, 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.<sup>752</sup> He says: 'If we could directly apprehend the world that interests us, we would have no need for theory'.<sup>753</sup> 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.<sup>754</sup>

Although Waltz prefers an explanatory approach modelled 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.<sup>755</sup> While the natural scientists look for simplicity, elemental units, and elegant theories, students of international politics complicate their studies and claim to identify more and more

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<sup>750</sup> Wendt and Friedheim, *Hierarchy Under Anarchy*, 692.

<sup>751</sup> Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (1992): 423.

<sup>752</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 5-7. See also, *Ibid.*, 65, 115.

<sup>753</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>754</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>755</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

variables.<sup>756</sup> Although a 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.<sup>757</sup> 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.<sup>758</sup> 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.<sup>759</sup> 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.<sup>760</sup> 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.<sup>761</sup>

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.<sup>762</sup>

Waltz claims that his theory is modelled after the natural sciences and that it is not prescriptive. Waltz argues that you cannot go directly from theory to application.<sup>763</sup> 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’.<sup>764</sup> 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.<sup>765</sup> 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,

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<sup>756</sup> Ibid., 68.

<sup>757</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, “Political Philosophy and the Study of International Relations,” in *Theoretical Aspects of International Relations*, ed. William T. R. Fox (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1959), 52; Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 373, 382, 386.

<sup>758</sup> Waltz, *Political Philosophy*, 60, 61.

<sup>759</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 69.

<sup>760</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, *Realism and International Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 213; Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 378.

<sup>761</sup> Kreisler, *Theory and International Politics*, 2; Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 377.

<sup>762</sup> Waltz, *Neorealism*, 3.

<sup>763</sup> Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 385.

<sup>764</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 210.

<sup>765</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, “The New World Order,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 22, no. 2 (1993): 189.

descriptive, and potentially theoretical field of inquiry'.<sup>766</sup> 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. To me that is also an important motive for Waltz to secularize his political theology, because in that way he can preserve it. Whether he succeeded in doing so remains to be seen. I will discuss that in the conclusion.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have demonstrated that Waltz's neorealism is the combination of classical realist thought, neorealist theory and his view on scientific theory. I have also shown that many of his theorizing is inspired by, and sometimes presupposes, theological or religious ideas. I have tried to demonstrate that Waltz has secularized this theological influence in order to conserve it. Also, by choosing for the third level, the system level, Waltz cut off his indebtedness to these theological ideas more rigorously than Morgenthau. I have defined this secularization as a continuation of theology, but by other means. I have also stated that I consider this an impressive move, because within the limited possibilities of the scientific discourse of that time, Waltz saved realism.

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, in Section 7.2.2. I demonstrated 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 as love and redemption to overcome the sinfulness of the system. This raises the question 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 (I discuss the same question in relation to Morgenthau in Chapter 9)? In Waltz's theory, it is a good thing when states try to balance each other and prevent mutual dominance.<sup>767</sup> Niebuhr would accept the strive for 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

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<sup>766</sup> Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan*, 136. Descriptive should here be understood as over against normative.

<sup>767</sup> John J. Mearsheimer, "Reckless States and Realism," *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009): 253, 254.

into consideration. Dangerous and ineffective politics are often the result of idealist thinking that overlooks the necessity of power.<sup>768</sup> 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 International Relations 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.

In this conclusion, I would also like to evaluate Waltz's attempt to save political realist thought. 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 the 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 fails in keeping up to 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

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<sup>768</sup> This explains why the neorealist John Mearsheimer argues strongly against critical theory, which Wendt, to a certain extent, defends. John J. Mearsheimer, "The False Promise of International Institutions," *International Security* 19, no. 3 (1994/95): 14, 15, 37-47; Alexander Wendt, "Constructing International Politics," *International Security* 20, no. 1 (1995): 71-81.

aberrant behavior in the form of an argument that states tend to overreact to conflicts in the peripheries of a bipolar world.<sup>769</sup> 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.<sup>770</sup> This quote put forward by Campbell reveals that Waltz, at this point, was no longer the disinterested observer and theorist, but felt involved.<sup>771</sup>

...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?<sup>772</sup>

Secondly, 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.<sup>773</sup> 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 spoken, 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 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.<sup>774</sup> So, even though Waltz's theory is not a normative theory, it is 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

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<sup>769</sup> Jervis, *Hans Morgenthau*, 859, 860.

<sup>770</sup> Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan*, 164.

<sup>771</sup> *Ibid.*, 167. See also Kenneth N. Waltz and James Fearon, "A Conversation with Kenneth Waltz," *Annual Review of Political Science* 15, no. 1 (2012): 5.

<sup>772</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "Nuclear Myths and Political Realities," *The American Political Science Review* 84, no. 3 (1990): 740.

<sup>773</sup> Waltz, *Q&A Session*; See also Robert H. Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 79.

<sup>774</sup> Mouritzen, *Kenneth Waltz*, 77.

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.

Finally, 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. In the next chapter, I will assess to what extent Waltz's neorealism addresses religion and whether the religionists are correct in their criticism.



# Chapter 8

## Religion in Waltz's Neorealism: 'It Is the Theory!'

### **Introduction**

In the last chapter, I argued that Waltz's neorealism is indebted to theology, and that this should be taken seriously to understand his dealing with religion. However, it is not only his indebtedness to theology, but also his view on theory that explains the way he deals with religion. In this chapter, I will argue that to understand Waltz's dealing with religion, the religionists should focus on his decision to limit a theory of international politics to the third level and to aim at parsimony (a theory should provide the simplest possible explanation). All the other reasons that the religionists put forward to account for the neglect of religion are interesting and, in some case also true, but to fully understand what Waltz is doing, one should look at his attempt to save political realist thought by adhering to the scientific standards of his days: 'it is the theory!' That will be the common thread of my argument in this chapter.

In the meantime, I will also answer the question 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 and religion. I will assess the validity of the empirical, the domain-specific, and the philosophy of science thesis.

It is important to understand how Waltz defines religion, to be able to assess to what extent the religionists are correct about his 'neglect' of religion. Waltz's definition of religion falls within the definition of the religionists. I base this on the references to religion as set out in the section hereafter. In the first place, Waltz distinguishes religion from ideology and ethnicity. Besides that, he speaks of religion as being Christianity many times, and in other places he uses religion in a more general sense over against the secular. The difference between religion and the secular seems to exist in the belief in a transcendent reality. Contrary to the religionists, Waltz does not ascribe a stronger

impact to religion in comparison to other factors, but he does not deny it either. In short, Waltz and the religionists sufficiently agree on the definition of religion to make an assessment possible.

## 8.1. 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.<sup>775</sup> 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.<sup>776</sup> He only writes about religion in his book *Man, the State, and War* and in some other places. In the previous chapter, I already demonstrated what he said about the Christian faith, human nature, original sin, the existence of war, and the influence of the Christian theologians Niebuhr and Augustine. I will copy the relevant passages to make clear how and against what background Waltz writes about religion. These passages are quoted in full length, 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.<sup>777</sup>

In another place, in reports on 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 towards 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

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<sup>775</sup> Cf. Kenneth N. Waltz, "A Strategy for the Rapid Deployment Force," 5, no. 4 (1981): 55, 56.

<sup>776</sup> Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons. A Debate* (New York, NY etc.: Norton, 1995), 12, 13, 16.

<sup>777</sup> Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 40.

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.<sup>778</sup>

In Chapter 6 of *Man, 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."<sup>779</sup>

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.<sup>780</sup>

In a 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.<sup>781</sup>

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<sup>778</sup> Scott D. Sagan, Kenneth N. Waltz and Richard Betts K., "A Nuclear Iran: Promoting Stability or Courting Disaster?" *Journal of International Affairs* 60, no. 2 (2007): 142, 143.

<sup>779</sup> Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 169. Note that this quote comes from the part of the book which deals with the international level, but that the content of the quote is about the influence of religion on a societal level. Waltz uses the influence of religion on the societal level to illustrate how the international level works. Waltz refers here to. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, (1762), Book IV, Chapter 8.

<sup>780</sup> Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 228, 229.

<sup>781</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "Conflict in World Politics," in *Conflict in World Politics*, eds. Steven L. Spiegel and Kenneth N.

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.<sup>782</sup>

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 level. 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 the 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.

## **8.2. 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.

### **8.2.1. 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 (Chapter 3). 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

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Waltz (Cambridge, Mass.: Winthrop Publishers, 1971), 464.

<sup>782</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Continuity of International Politics," in *Realism and International Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 250.

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.<sup>783</sup> Like in Morgenthau's sphere approach, Waltz's view on theory strengthens this political-theoretical assumption. For Waltz, a theory marks out a domain to which it applies and shows how it can be conceived of as an autonomous realm.<sup>784</sup> 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.<sup>785</sup> 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.<sup>786</sup> 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.<sup>787</sup> 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.<sup>788</sup>

Waltz does not give any reason why he believes that Westphalia marks the privatization of religion. He seems nonetheless to be influenced by the Western distinction between religion and politics. Whether he understands this as a Judeo-Christian or laicist form of secularism is not clear. It is also impossible to conclude whether he considers the distinction between religion and politics an atheistic or anti-religious movement, or whether he sees Westphalia as the birth of religious freedom.

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<sup>783</sup> Kreisler, *Theory and International Politics*, 2.

<sup>784</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "International Politics is not Foreign Policy," *Security Studies* (Autumn, 1996): 54.

<sup>785</sup> Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 385; Schouten, *Theory Talk#40: Kenneth Waltz*, 9.

<sup>786</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "The Emerging Structure of International Politics," in *Realism and International Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 199.

<sup>787</sup> Schouten, *Theory Talk#40: Kenneth Waltz*, 13.

<sup>788</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 66.

### 8.2.2. Waltz on the Central Role of the State and the Ideology of Interdependence and Globalization

The religionists are very critical about the central role that Waltz's neorealism ascribes to the state in his theorizing. They believe that it leads to the neglect of religion, especially because it denies the transnational level, which turns out to be the level where religious and non-religious actors play important roles, especially in the twentieth century. Besides that, the religionists believe it no longer adequate to see the state as very important, because nonstate actors, multinational corporations have become increasingly important and the role of the government has decreased.

In Waltz's theory, the state is indeed considered as the main actor in international politics.<sup>789</sup> 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.<sup>790</sup> Waltz holds that all states are characterized by the same attribute, namely sovereignty, and by being independent and autonomous with respect to other states.<sup>791</sup> 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 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 would have received nuclear weapons from Saddam Hussein, he would have been punished for it.<sup>792</sup>

In the chapter on Morgenthau, 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 – what Morgenthau would call – the 'subversion of the political by other modes of thought' and the reduction of the political sphere to economics or military. 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

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<sup>789</sup> Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 379.

<sup>790</sup> Schouten, *Theory Talk#40: Kenneth Waltz*, 14.

<sup>791</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 93-97.

<sup>792</sup> Kreisler, *Theory and International Politics*, 6.

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.<sup>793</sup> 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 previous century as integrated as they are now.<sup>794</sup> Waltz also points to the fact that states perform essential political, socioeconomic 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.<sup>795</sup> 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.<sup>796</sup>

This brings us to another important criticism that Waltz puts forward, namely that interdependence appears to most of the world as Americanization.<sup>797</sup> In fact, globalization is not global but mainly limited to northern countries.<sup>798</sup> 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.<sup>799</sup> The term interdependence has been used in American discourse as a leveling ideology to

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<sup>793</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "Globalization and Governance," in *Realism and International Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 236.

<sup>794</sup> *Ibid.*, 233.

<sup>795</sup> *Ibid.*, 238.

<sup>796</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>797</sup> Kreisler, *Theory and International Politics*, 4.

<sup>798</sup> Waltz, *Globalization and Governance*, 232.

<sup>799</sup> Waltz, *The Emerging Structure of International Politics*, 205.

obscure inequalities of national capabilities.<sup>800</sup> 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.<sup>801</sup> 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.<sup>802</sup> 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.<sup>803</sup>

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.<sup>804</sup> Weaker states, on the contrary, have greater difficulties to fashion institutes that serve their own ends, especially with respect to security issues.<sup>805</sup> The NATO is a good example of an international institution that is created and maintained by stronger states to serve their interests.<sup>806</sup>

It is noteworthy that Waltz not only takes interdependence as a confusing vogue word, but that he does the same with transnationalism.<sup>807</sup> 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.

### **8.2.3. '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

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<sup>800</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "America's European Policy Viewed in Global Perspective," in *The United States and Western Europe. Political, Economic, and Strategic Perspectives*, ed. Wolfram F. Hanrieder (Cambridge: Winthrop, 1974), 13.

<sup>801</sup> Schouten, *Theory Talk#40: Kenneth Waltz*, 13.

<sup>802</sup> Kreisler, *Theory and International Politics*, 4.

<sup>803</sup> See Section 7.2.2.

<sup>804</sup> Waltz, *The Emerging Structure of International Politics*, 213.

<sup>805</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.

<sup>806</sup> *Ibid.*, 208.

<sup>807</sup> Waltz, *America's European Policy*, 17.

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.<sup>808</sup> 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 level, 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 than the goal of promoting the own disappearance as political entities.<sup>809</sup>

For Waltz, the reason of the 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.<sup>810</sup> 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. He mentions, for example, the word freedom as one of the possible goals of the state, but he immediately adds 'that if freedom is wanted, insecurity must be accepted'. He also discusses the relation between might and right. He states: 'If might decides, then bloody struggles over right can more easily be avoided'.<sup>811</sup> He also says that states may have other ends, but survival is always a prerequisite.<sup>812</sup> 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.<sup>813</sup> 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

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<sup>808</sup> Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 238.

<sup>809</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 91, 92. Note the resemblance with the quote from Morgenthau 'whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim (...)'. Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 31.

<sup>810</sup> Waltz, *America's European Policy*, 26.

<sup>811</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 112.

<sup>812</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

<sup>813</sup> Kreisler, *Theory and International Politics*, 6.

boxes and focuses on the structure of the system. The latter is necessary to have a theory with explanatory power. Contrary to classical realism, he does not consider the beliefs and actions of religious individuals and communities relevant, because he limits his theorizing to the structural level.

The way Waltz speaks about power needs some clarification, because for him power is not the customary, American, pragmatically-formed, and technologically-influenced control. This pragmatic definition implies that power is the ability to get people to do what someone wants them to do, when otherwise they would not do it. However, given the fact that politics is the realm of unintended and unexpected outcomes, whereby the intention and its result are seldom identical because of the environment by which it is conditioned, a more accurate definition of power is needed. Waltz, therefore, suggests taking someone as powerful refers to the extent that he or she affects others more than that they affect him or her. With this definition of power, Waltz wants to separate two questions: how is power distributed and what are the effects of a given distribution of power? In the definition that Waltz rejects, these two questions are merged and confused. The consequence is that people become frustrated when power and the effects of it appear not to be equal. Waltz, on the contrary, sees power as means and the outcome of its use as uncertain. The political relevance depends on the distribution of capabilities: power cannot be measured based on the results one may or may not get.<sup>814</sup> Another important clarification that Waltz makes, is that, in the context of self-help, it is not only military power that counts but also economic power, because how you help yourself depends on the resources you can dispose of. This makes the distinction between high politics as the domain of military and diplomacy and low politics being economic misplaced.<sup>815</sup>

#### **8.2.4. Did the Cold War Context Lead to a Secular Neorealism?**

There are also adherents of the religion paradigm that point to the Cold War context to account for the neglect of religion in neorealism. They argue that Waltz's theorizing is influenced by the Cold War context, with two competing powers representing two secular ideologies. As a result, Waltz treats religion the same way as ideology. However, this argument does not hold because, as I stated in the beginning, 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

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<sup>814</sup> Waltz, *America's European Policy*, 13, 14; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 191, 192.

<sup>815</sup> Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 382, 383.

image'.<sup>816</sup> 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.<sup>817</sup> 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 distorts a rational assessment of world politics. This is hard to prove though.<sup>818</sup>

### **8.2.5. It Is not Holism, but the Limited Scope of Waltz's Theory**

Religionists have pointed out that another reason why Waltz omits religion is because he holds a holistic approach, meaning that he tries to account for the behavior on the unit level through a top-down approach. 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.<sup>819</sup> 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.<sup>820</sup> Waltz nevertheless admits that there remains a theoretical challenge. He says

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<sup>816</sup> Waltz, *The Emerging Structure of International Politics*, 169.

<sup>817</sup> Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 379.

<sup>818</sup> Examples are the way in which Waltz speaks about deviant forms of Islam as ideologies and the egalitarian idea that all men are born equal in the United States, which he describes as an ideology, but which could also be described as a religious conviction.

<sup>819</sup> *Ibid.*, 379, 380. Waltz discusses the issue about the structure and unit on many places. Kenneth N. Waltz, "Letter to the Editor," *International Organization* 36, no. 3 (1982). He argues that structural change begins in a system's units, and then unit-level and structural causes interact. Waltz, *The Emerging Structure of International Politics*, 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, *Theory and International Politics*, 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, *International Politics is Not Foreign Policy*, 55. 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'. *Ibid.*, 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, *Theory of International Politics*, 110.

<sup>820</sup> Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 379, 380; Waltz, *International Politics is Not Foreign Policy*, 56.

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.<sup>821</sup>

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.<sup>822</sup>

A clear example of how Waltz limits his explanation to the level of international politics, is the way he deals with the question 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. Secondly, 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. Thirdly, 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

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<sup>821</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>822</sup> Ibid., 57.

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.<sup>823</sup> 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.<sup>824</sup> Culture, personality traits, 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 process and vice versa.<sup>825</sup> The structure is a primitive selector that encourages certain behavior and discourages others via the unit based mechanisms of socialization and mutual competition.<sup>826</sup> 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.<sup>827</sup> The structure is the mechanism that intervenes between individual actions and outcomes and produces unintended results.<sup>828</sup>

### 8.3. 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

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<sup>823</sup> Waltz, *The Continuity of International Politics*, 246-250.

<sup>824</sup> Schouten, *Theory Talk#40: Kenneth Waltz*, 7.

<sup>825</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 82.

<sup>826</sup> Mouritzen, *Kenneth Waltz*, 73.

<sup>827</sup> Waltz, *America's European Policy*, 13.

<sup>828</sup> Mouritzen, *Kenneth Waltz*, 73.

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.

## **8.4. 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 favour of the religionists per se, but are not totally besides 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.

### **8.4.1. 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 (Chapter 4).

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 factor is easily overlooked. The fact that religion is considered as 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.

As I argued above, Enlightenment ideas on faith and reason, belief and science have influenced the theorizing of Waltz to a certain extent. One specific way in which these Enlightenment ideas have become influential in the social sciences, is through the modernization and secularization theory. As explained before, this theory holds that the progress of science and modernity causes religion to fade away. In the discussion on Spinoza, Augustine and Niebuhr, a more scientific approach of Spinoza challenges the religious interpretation. The fact that Waltz argues for the secular approach of Spinoza, which does not need an explanation from outside, reveals a certain preference for science over religion, and the conviction that science is able to replace religion. This does not mean, however, that Waltz ascribes to the modernization and secularization theory, that religion will decline automatically in the future and that he leaves it out for that reason. On the other hand, his shift from Niebuhr to Spinoza, assuming that a scientific explanation can replace a theological one, reveals that he quite easily goes along with the scientific way of thinking of his time.

#### **8.4.2. Ontology: Waltz on Immaterial Issues**

Materialism, as defined by the religionists, is the view that everything which can be observed reflects material causes. They consider this an important reason for the neglect of religion in IR. The consequence of materialism is that ideas, ideology, and religion have no independent role in an explanation. However, the reason for the absence of religion, ideology and ideas in Waltz's theory is not that Waltz has a materialist view on 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'.<sup>829</sup>

Or differently said: 'theory is a picture of the world that one is concerned with - but it's not the whole world'.<sup>830</sup> It could be argued that Waltz ends up to be 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 a context of self-help, how you help yourself depends on the resources you can dispose of and the situation you are in.<sup>831</sup> 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.<sup>832</sup>

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.

### **8.4.3. Epistemology: Positivism and its Consequences for Theorizing Religion in IR**

The religionists claim that neorealism, because of the influence of positivism, want to develop theories with great explanatory power, that it believes in a rationality independent of context, and that the applied concepts must be secular. Unfortunately, the application of positivism to IR leads to a gap between the theory (which omits religion) and the world (in which religion plays an important role).

To assess this claim, it should be clear how positivism is understood by the

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<sup>829</sup> Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 383, 384.

<sup>830</sup> Schouten, *Theory Talk#40: Kenneth Waltz*, 4.

<sup>831</sup> Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 382.

<sup>832</sup> Waltz, *America's European Policy*, 8, 9.

religionists. First of all, positivism holds that there is a unity of science and a single logic of explanation. There is only one reality in the physical and social worlds, and therefore the methodology of scientific investigation is the same for both worlds. Secondly, facts can be separated from values in the social world because, as in the physical world, there exists something external and independent from theories or interpretations. Thirdly, positivism assumes that, like the physical world, the social world is governed by general laws and patterns that can be discovered empirically. Below, I will first address the supposed influence of positivism, and then discuss to what extent Waltz assumes a rationality independent of context and the secularizing influence of behavioralism.

My conclusion is that 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 shares only one characteristic with positivism, as defined by the religionists. 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.<sup>833</sup> 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'.<sup>834</sup> 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'.<sup>835</sup> 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 just a theory. That is also what distinguishes 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

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<sup>833</sup> Kenneth N. Waltz, "Thoughts about Assaying Theories," in *Realism and International Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2008), ix.

<sup>834</sup> *Ibid.*, xi, xii.

<sup>835</sup> Waltz, *Political Philosophy*, 55, 57.

positivist depends, of course, on the definition of positivism. That could explain why Waltz denies being a positivist, while others argue he is.<sup>836</sup> 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 apparent from his realist ontology and his instrumentalist and pragmatic epistemology.<sup>837</sup> 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.<sup>838</sup> 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.<sup>839</sup> 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 variable 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 the repetition. The difference between laws and theories is that the first is about truth and the latter about the explanatory power, because theories explain laws. As set out earlier, Waltz aims at explanatory power, because we need a theory to explain and possibly to control the world.<sup>840</sup>

A theory should be tested in order to know how strong the explanation it offers might be. Therefore, seven things should be done: (1) State the theory being tested. (2) Infer hypotheses from it. (3) Subject the hypotheses to experimental or observational tests. (4) In taking step two and three, use the definitions of the terms found in the theory being tested. (5) Eliminate or control perturbing variables not included in the theory under test. (6) Devise a number of distinct and demanding tests. (7) If a test is not passed, ask whether the theory still stands, needs repair and restatement, or requires a narrowing of the scope of its explanatory power. In the case that a hypothesis proves wrong, point two and seven should be re-examined, keeping in mind that a hypothesis is not the theory itself but is derived from it.<sup>841</sup>

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<sup>836</sup> Mouritzen, *Kenneth Waltz*, 67; Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 379, 386.

<sup>837</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 9; Herman Koningsveld, *Het verschijnsel wetenschap. Een inleiding tot de wetenschapsfilosofie*, 5th ed. (Meppel: Boom, 1980), 14, 15.

<sup>838</sup> Mouritzen, *Kenneth Waltz*, 70.

<sup>839</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 68.

<sup>840</sup> See Section 7.2.3.

<sup>841</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

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 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.<sup>842</sup>

Waltz reaffirms and strengthens his choice for the state as the central actor and the autonomy of the political. Everything that does not contribute to the relative power situation securing the survival of the state, is left out from his theory out of theoretical necessity. 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, modelled 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'.<sup>843</sup> Waltz claims to describe and not prescribe, and that one cannot go directly from theory to application.<sup>844</sup> 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.<sup>845</sup> 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

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<sup>842</sup> Waltz, *Neorealism*, 3.

<sup>843</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 210.

<sup>844</sup> Halliday and Rosenberg, *Interview with Ken Waltz*, 385.

<sup>845</sup> Jack L. Snyder, "Tensions within Realism: 1954 and After," in *The Invention of International Relations Theory. Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the 1954 Conference on Theory*, ed. Nicolas Guilhot (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 65.

line with the attempts of earlier realists and acceptable to the scientific standards of his day.<sup>846</sup>

#### **8.4.3.1. Context-Independent Rationality**

The religionists argue that neorealism understands rationality as independent of the social and historical context, and as a result, it pays limited or no attention to ideational factors such as, among others, religion. I interpret Waltz differently, because Waltz also 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'.<sup>847</sup> 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.<sup>848</sup> 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.<sup>849</sup> 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.<sup>850</sup> 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.<sup>851</sup> 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.

#### **8.4.3.2. The Secularizing Impact of Positivism and Behavioralism**

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

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<sup>846</sup> Murray, *Reconstructing Realism*, 8, 9.

<sup>847</sup> Mearsheimer, *Reckless States and Realism*, 241.

<sup>848</sup> Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 183.

<sup>849</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 76, 77.

<sup>850</sup> Schouten, *Theory Talk#40: Kenneth Waltz*, 8.

<sup>851</sup> Snyder, *Tensions within Realism*, 65.

secularization, while there was originally a certain religious or theological perspective, be it through the application of various ethical traditions which were applied to the field or because theology played a role in the formation of the field. 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 argued already 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 that 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 the contribution to peace, if they would take into account of the international political structure.<sup>852</sup> It is interesting that Waltz looks like a behavioralist with his choice for 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.<sup>853</sup> 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.<sup>854</sup> Waltz criticizes 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.<sup>855</sup> 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.<sup>856</sup> So, behavioralism and positivism do not sufficiently explain the secularization of IR and the disappearance of ethics and theology.

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,

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<sup>852</sup> Waltz, *Man, the State and War*, 58-60, 72, 73, 79.

<sup>853</sup> 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, *Reconstructing Realism*, 8.

<sup>854</sup> Schouten, *Theory Talk#40: Kenneth Waltz*, 7.

<sup>855</sup> *Ibid.*, 4; Snyder, *Tensions within Realism*, 65; Ole Wæver, "The Speech Act of Realism. The Move That Made IR," in *The Invention of International Relations Theory. Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the 1954 Conference on Theory*, ed. Nicolas Guilhot (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 118.

<sup>856</sup> Thomas W. Smith, *History and International Relations* (Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 1999), 94.

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 religion scholars 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. My argument is that to understand Waltz's theory correctly, one has to read it as an attempt to maintain realist thought as much as possible. In order to succeed in this endeavor he decided to adapt himself to the scientific discourse. In my view, he has successfully adapted realist thought to the requirements of the sciences, and preserved much of the realist philosophy.

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.

However, Waltz's project has a price. In this attempt to save as much of political realism, his theory also becomes too rigid and leaves many issues out. Also, is it possible to develop a theory on international politics and claim not to be prescriptive? In the conclusion, I discuss these points more extensively. For now, my conclusion is that the religionist idea that the secularization of international relations theory leads to the neglect of religion is not fully adequate and that it overlooks other important considerations.

#### **8.4.4. 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.<sup>857</sup> 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,

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<sup>857</sup> Wilson, *After Secularism*, 69.

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 dogma's or beliefs.

Another way to check the validity of the religionist argument is to answer the question of 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.

## **8.5. 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 the 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

By way of conclusion, I will address three questions: (1) To what extent are the religionists correct in their criticism? (2) Why did the religionists interpret Waltz so differently? (3) Did Waltz successfully save political realism?

The answer to the first question depends on the answers given to two questions which are derived from the three subtheses. First of all, is Waltz aware of the role that religion plays on the individual, national, transnational and international level, distinguishable from other factors, and as defined by the religionists? Yes, 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. Secondly, has Waltz neglected religion in his theory because of subject-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. The result is, that it is understandable that the religionist 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 also 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, did not apply either.

In accordance with the scheme I used in the conclusion of Part I, I conclude the following. 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 exclude 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 to involve religion. This leads me to the second 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. His philosophy of science radicalizes his choice for the state as the main actor, the reason of the state, and the autonomy of the political. Waltz wants to save political realism by secularizing (understood as continuing theology by other means) it and by adapting to the scientific standards of his time. This means that his theory might seem to be the expression of an atheistic, radically enlightened aversion to religion resulting in positivism, reductionism, and materialism. Yet this is not true. Waltz is none of these, but his radical limitation to the third level gives that impression. Waltz's theory states that there are three levels or images to account for social and political phenomena. He grants the third level most weight in explaining international politics, although the other levels are still important to indicate the forces that are at play! That means that he is aware of these levels and does not disregard the role of religion or morality on these levels per se. However, Waltz takes the third level as the exclusive domain of international politics with its own distinctive logic in relation to the other levels. To develop a clear understanding and offer strong explanation of what happens on the level of international politics, Waltz relies on the theoretical model of the natural sciences with its strong emphasis on empirical results.<sup>858</sup> He therefore has to limit the number of factors and select the most relevant, characteristic ones to make theory possible.

It makes it easier for Waltz to embrace the natural science approach with the Enlightenment assumption that reason and faith are separated, and that only can be known what is empirically proven. Again, the fact that Waltz limits his theorizing exclusively to the third level does not mean that he excludes the other levels, but means that a theory of international politics can only say something about the other levels within its own terms and variables. Ideally, a theory would indeed take into account the

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<sup>858</sup> 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, *Kenneth Waltz*, 69, 71, 72.

domestic factors, as well as the international structure that constrains them. However, international politics indicates only how much importance should be ascribed to structural forces. This is what international politics can offer: no more, no less. Waltz's theory explains why wars recur, why balances of power recurrently form, and why bipolar distribution of power is more stable or more peaceful than a multipolar one.<sup>859</sup> That is a limitation, and to some extent relativizes what a real scientific theory of international politics can accomplish. In this way, he continues the realist criticism on 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. 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.

If the above is the outcome of Waltz's theorizing, did he successfully save realism or is the price too high? 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 pre-scientific 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.

On various issues the Amsterdam School would praise Waltz. The fact that he acknowledges the influence of pre-scientific or worldview ideas on his theorizing is something they would agree on, although they would also challenge Waltz to be more open about these 'hidden' assumptions. They would also be fond of his emphasis on the limited scope of science since they consider absolutizing of scientific knowledge at the cost of the daily experience and philosophical knowledge dangerous. They would also understand, and to a certain extent agree, like in the case of Morgenthau, that theorizing requires singling out a certain sphere or domain to make it intelligible. The question is, however, whether Waltz is not too rigid with the result that he leaves out the first and second image. 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'.<sup>860</sup> Notice that she

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<sup>859</sup> Snyder, *Tensions within Realism*, 66.

<sup>860</sup> Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Woman, the State, and War," *International Relations* 23, no. 2 (2009): 289. Elshtain was introduced to Augustine's political realism through her teacher Kenneth Waltz and the writings of Niebuhr. Eric Gregory, "Taking Love Seriously: Elshtain's Augustinian Voice and Modern Politics," in *Jean Bethke Elshtain Politics, Ethics, and*

uses the word ‘compelling’. That is exactly what is lacking in Waltz’s neorealism: it is a strong theory, but not compelling as explanatory framework. 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?’<sup>861</sup>

Waltz states that one cannot base policymaking on his theory, but is it possible to claim that a theory is solely explanatory? As I have argued in the previous chapter, Waltz has not been fully consistent on this point himself. Regarding the first and second image, Waltz acknowledges that these images are important, but that it is impossible to take them into account, because it would make theorizing impossible. The Amsterdam School tries to account for this problem by making the distinction between foundational, qualifying and conditioning aspects, and between structural and directional issues (more about this in Part III). With these distinctions this school is able to prioritize the various factors, avoiding reductionism and doing justice to the variety of reality, while keeping focus.

I have the impression that Waltz leaves the international political domain too much, in the words of Thompson, ‘to Caesar alone’.<sup>862</sup> 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 on 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.

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*Society*, eds. Debra Erickson and Michael Le Chevallier (Indiana: Notre Dame Press, 2018), 179.

<sup>861</sup> Elshtain, *Woman, the State, and War*, 290.

<sup>862</sup> Thompson, *Religion and International Relations*, 7.



# **Conclusion Part II**

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**Political Realist Thought Makes a New  
Paradigm Redundant**

## **Conclusion Part II: Political Realist Thought Makes a New Paradigm Redundant**

If we look back on the second part of this dissertation, we can see two developments with respect to political realism and religion. Political realism becomes a major part of the scientific discourse of IR and the original theological influence on political realism secularizes, that is to say, theological notions are transformed into secular concepts. How should these two developments be appreciated?

The fact that political realism is now part of the scientific discourse has consequences of which the religionists are more critical than I am. This is partly the result of their interpretation of Morgenthau's classical realism and Kenneth Waltz's neorealism and the definition of secularization that they use. They interpret Morgenthau and Waltz as much more secular and anti-religious than I do. I understand Morgenthau's secularization as an acknowledgment that the various spheres of life have become differentiated. This does not mean that religion's influence is in decline. Also, Morgenthau warns against the process of secularization meaning that any transcendent reference point has been abandoned. The religionists did not take this side of Morgenthau into account. I see Waltz's secularization as the continuation of theology by other means. He tries to find a way to keep the valuable insights of political realism. The religionists see this secularization more as an anti-religious attempt to marginalize the influence of religion. To support my position, I started this Part II by emphasizing the continuity between Niebuhr, Morgenthau and Waltz regarding the realist political philosophy and I have drawn attention to the Augustinian moments in all three of them.

The religionists have pointed out that Morgenthau and Waltz, like most IR theorists, have fallen prey to secular thinking which has affected their theorizing on the philosophy of science level, and the domain-specific level, which has created a bias on the empirical level. I have challenged this observation by investigating the writings of these thinkers and often I came to opposite conclusions, or I frequently concluded that these thinkers were much more nuanced on issues like the Enlightenment or theory. In a few instances, I agreed with the religionists, but even then, I felt pushed to explain how Morgenthau or Waltz came to their position. I have also concluded that, even though the religionists are not very successful in accounting for the supposed neglect of religion, their point might still be worth taking seriously. However, that also requires much more theoretical reflection from the side of the religionists on the importance of religion in theorizing international or foreign politics, in comparison to other factors. And what view do they hold on the function and scope of a theory?

This leads me to the second point, on which I am more positive than the religionists. In my view, Morgenthau and Waltz have been wrestling with the overwhelming number of facts that play a role in international relations, but they have also tried to overcome theoretical paralysis by finding out what international relations and international

politics are really about. Taking seriously the facts at hand before making judgments is a very important characteristic of political realism. Morgenthau and Waltz have faced this challenge, and they teach us that the field of international relations can be made intelligible by focusing on the main issues and factors. In doing this, they have emphasized repeatedly that science has its limits and that a theory is not a picture, but a painting of reality which always reflects the ideas, intuitions, and beliefs of the painter. Both thinkers have also emphasized that the *ought* should not be conflated with the *is* and that a realist approach of international relations dares to set aside the wishes of the state leader or the scholar to do justice to the facts, because moralism and idealism easily distort or hide a sound analysis of the issue on the table. Although Morgenthau and to a lesser extent Waltz also admit that in practice these matters are often intertwined.

Morgenthau and Waltz apply the latter principle also to the theological inspiration of their own political realism. Niebuhr already introduced this critical point over against the liberalism in politics and religion in his time, but Morgenthau and Waltz respectively secularized and radicalized this. The religionists are very critical about this development and consider it one of the reasons that IR theory has overlooked or neglected religion, calling it ironic that a theological perspective leads to less attention to religion. I differ with the religionists on this point.

In the first place, involving a theological perspective should not necessarily lead to more attention for religion, because the kind of Augustinian theology that political realism contains, is very reluctant to involve religion in politics. To understand this 'irony', 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'.<sup>863</sup> 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 to further their earthly goals through state power. This means that classical realism takes religion and theology very seriously and therefore treats it cautiously in relation to political power.

In the second place, I am not convinced that the secularization of the original theological perspective or influence – and consequently the use of secular concepts – makes it more difficult to see religion, as long as it is accepted that scholars are open about the theological, or worldview inspiration on their theorizing. In Chapter 8, I have argued that Waltz replaced a theological explanation of human behavior by a psychological explanation, and left theology behind by limiting his theory to the structure of the system of states. In the meantime, however, Waltz acknowledges,

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<sup>863</sup> Ruurd Veldhuis, *Realism Versus Utopianism?: Reinhold Niebuhr's Christian Realism and the Relevance of Utopian Thought for Social Ethics* (Assen: Van Gorcum, 1975), 115.

though not very explicitly and without much discussion, his indebtedness to theology. He translated these ideas into concepts that are also understandable, accessible, and acceptable to people that do not assent to these ideas themselves.

Acknowledging worldview and theological influences requires that a scholar can ‘think twice’ (*dubbel denken*), as the Dutch theologian Gerrit de Kruijf called it. This means that a scholar first has to think about how a certain idea or concept relates to his theology, faith or tradition, and then he or she has to translate it into terms, concepts, or vocabulary that are understandable for people who do not believe.<sup>864</sup> I base the necessity to think twice on the fact that Niebuhr once pointed out that his use of Christian theology might have been less useful or effective than he would have liked.

I confessed that I had made a mistake in hurling the traditional symbols of Christian realism – the fall and original sin – in the teeth of modern culture when I sought to criticize the undue optimism of the culture. Both these symbols, though historically significant, are subject to misunderstanding in a secular culture.<sup>865</sup>

At the same time, however, we cannot do without these symbols and the language, because it makes a difference when it comes to theorizing. Leaving these Christian symbols or narratives aside is impossible, because they are at the basis of the disposition of scholars. Rice quotes James Gustafson, who states that for Niebuhr ‘the revelation of God’s grace’ provides a ‘stance or basis disposition towards the world’.<sup>866</sup> I will come back to this point in Chapter 9.<sup>867</sup>

At the end of Part I, I outlined the contours of a possible new paradigm. I have also questioned whether a completely new paradigm is necessary or if a renewal of the existing one would suffice. Religionists keep both options open. The answer depends partly on what the ‘old’ paradigm would have to say about religion. This is what has been examined in this part of the dissertation.

I do not discuss this assessment again, but I would like to evaluate the response by Morgenthau and Waltz to the religionists’ criticism by means of the Amsterdam School. If one observes Morgenthau’s classical realism and Waltz’s neorealism the way I have presented them, compared to some insights of the Amsterdam School of Philosophy as set out in Chapter 1, it reveals that there is much agreement between them. When it comes to Morgenthau’s and Waltz’s view on science, I have noticed that they both agree that science is not the only way to acquire knowledge. They agree that there can be religious, theological, or philosophical notions (e.g. view on human nature) that provide

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<sup>864</sup> G. G. Kruijf de, *Waakzaam en nuchter: over christelijke ethiek in een democratie* (Baarn: Ten Have, 1994). Cf. The requirement of translation of the philosopher Jürgen Habermas Jürgen Habermas, “Religion in the Public Sphere,” *European Journal of Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (2006): 10-16.

<sup>865</sup> Morgenthau, *The Influence of Reinhold Niebuhr*, 122.

<sup>866</sup> Rice, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau*, 270.

<sup>867</sup> See Section 9.3.5.

one with knowledge about reality and justifiably shape the way in which we approach reality through science. I argue that Waltz, possibly for strategic reasons, does not reveal these worldview notions, and sticks to the academic discourse arguing for these notions with rational, scientific arguments. Morgenthau is more open about his assumptions and openly argues that science, religion, and philosophy are equally important and that these sources of knowledge should not be reduced to each other. Partly because of the fact that Morgenthau and Waltz do not explicitly reflect on these notions, the overall reception of realism and neorealism is, unfortunately, much more positivist than an original reading of these thinkers justifies.

When it comes to theory, Waltz and Morgenthau concur on the fact that scholars and scientists are not neutral and often normative. This does not mean that there is no common ground or shared rationality from which one can argue. Especially Waltz shows that you can translate certain ideas into scientific language, argue for it, and have these ideas accepted on rational grounds: for example, with his argument that self-help makes states striving for security first he has given a rational argument for the idea of original sin. Morgenthau is very clear about the fact that scholars cannot be neutral and strongly opposes the positivist idea that we can only be 'saved' by positivist science because it is the only reliable source of knowledge. He is aware of the ideological or secularized nature of this way of thinking.

The idea that religion is an essential aspect of human nature is clearly present in Morgenthau: there is political, ethical, but also religious man. These various persons clash and that is exactly what politics is about. Waltz is also well aware of the religious element, but his choice for the, then prevailing, scientific discourse and the limitation of his theorizing to the third level leads to the exclusion of many issues, among which religion. However, Waltz never claims that his theory explains everything; he just provides a law-like explanation why states never will aim at something higher if their security is at stake. This means that he would never say that religion does not play a role, but that its role, among many other factors, does not significantly affect the particular object of study he is trying to account for by scientific means.

The claim of the Amsterdam School that reality is diverse, and that reductionism threatens good science and sound foreign politics, comes close to Morgenthau and Waltz's view of reality. They are both very sensitive and keen on attempts to explain international politics based on one element or aspect, as Marxists did during their day. They are well aware of the ideological nature of such attempts. It is on empirical grounds that they challenge Marxism, but also idealism; moreover, they also address the underlying philosophical and quasi-religious assumptions. Morgenthau's classical realism comes close to the Amsterdam School, since he points at various spheres which should be distinguished for theoretical reasons, but which can in practice never be isolated, because they are interrelated. He also acknowledges that his theories have to account for multiple actors, but he dares to state that in his time the state was the

most prominent. Waltz is much more rigid. He also thinks in spheres, but he radically separates the international political sphere from other spheres to make theorizing possible. He is nevertheless sensitive to reductionism, because he always states that one cannot infer policies from his explanatory theory. By this he implicitly acknowledges that his abstraction and reductionism do not fully justice to the complex world state leaders are dealing with.

It is interesting to notice that the assessment of the religionists, and the evaluation of Waltz and Morgenthau reveal that the Amsterdam School of Philosophy agrees with both sides on many issues. I understand this depends to a large extent on the way in which I interpret Morgenthau and Waltz, because I claim that the paradigm-challengers are mostly mistaken regarding their presentation and interpretation of classical realism and make mistakes as well at various points regarding neorealism. I have argued that the political realism of Morgenthau and Waltz harbours a number of important philosophy of science and political-theological propositions, overlooked by religionists, that are worthy of further study. Until it is proven that these assumptions are no longer tenable and applicable, I argue that they should be incorporated in a revised, or new paradigm.

For this I have the following reasons. First of all, regarding political realism, we are dealing with a respectable tradition that has been very influential over the centuries in the West. A new paradigm will have to relate to this tradition and substantiate how it relates to these thoughts. Secondly, within IR hardly any attention is paid to the aforementioned assumptions of Morgenthau's and Waltz's realism. Because a number of these assumptions have a theological origin or foundation, these require further study, especially from the side of the religionists. The question would then be whether the 'political theology of realism' can still have meaning in this time. Or does it require an update? What can we do with the assumption of the autonomy of the political now that religion manifests itself everywhere? Finally, what kind of theories is a discipline like IR supposed to produce?

Overall, given what the 'old' paradigm has brought, I think we cannot discuss a new paradigm yet. It is quite impossible to speak of a new paradigm if many assumptions of the 'old' paradigm are retained. We can, however, explore whether the weaknesses of both the religionists and political realism can be overcome and whether their strengths can be combined. This will be attempted in Part III by using insights from the Amsterdam School of Philosophy.





# Part III

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‘All Tested, Holding On to What Is  
Good’: Further Directions for Religion  
and IR

### Part III. ‘All Tested, Holding On to What Is Good’: Further Directions for Religion and IR

In 2018, an article by Shadi Hamid appeared in *The Atlantic* titled *Resist the Lure of Theological Politics*.<sup>868</sup> In this article, Hamid presents arguments that are like those of the political realists.

But neither returning to the Christianity of previous generations nor desacralizing American politics is likely to fix a public sphere that is simply too invested with meaning for anyone’s safety. Instead, Americans need to construct a different sort of public faith - one that borrows from religious sensibilities to infuse debate with a spirit of humility, instead of theological certainty. The problem with America’s public life isn’t that it has too much religion, or too little - but rather, that it has the wrong kind.<sup>869</sup>

Hamid argues that Americans must resist the temptation to directly apply theological certainties to political matters. He sees this happening as we speak in the political decision-making process in America. One of the reasons he advances this argument is that he is aware of the corrupting influence politics can have on religion. Once religion starts to identify with certain political choices, it could have a negative effect on the religion itself. Hamid then holds a mirror up to the Americans regarding the theology they follow when dealing with politics and religion. As this dissertation has, he goes on to show that early in history Augustine has provided us with a vision that distinguishes between the city of man and the city of God: ‘they inevitably overlapped, were separate, and he sometimes even portrayed them as walled cities, standing in opposition to each other. The gap between them could not be erased, at least not entirely’.<sup>870</sup> Hamid then introduces some thoughts of Abraham Kuyper, who was a theologian but also acted as the prime minister of the Netherlands from 1901 to 1905.

[A]lthough one can find some individuals who wish to keep their belief private, “the absence of an ultimate point of loyalty, meaning, or purpose cannot persist for long.” If this is the case, then it becomes a question of where individuals find their “ultimate point of loyalty.” Is it in a nation, rationalism, truth, God, or some mix of these things? The inherent risk of finding ultimate loyalty in a charismatic leader or a sovereign state is that they are of this world. To claim them, then, requires seeking victory in this world, because they are of this world and this world alone.<sup>871</sup>

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<sup>868</sup> Shadi Hamid, “Resist the Lure of Theological Politics,” *The Atlantic* (22 December, 2018).

<sup>869</sup> Hamid, *Resist the Lure*.

<sup>870</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>871</sup> *Ibid*. Hamid takes this from the American theologian Matthew Kaemingk.

Hamid also illustrates the solution presented by Kuyper and his interpreter Kaemingk. They argue that from a Christian-pluralistic view, the city of man must be viewed as inherently broken and fallen. That means that politics should be regarded as a site of uncertainty, rather than certainty. In some matters, only God knows for certain what is right. This does not equal a termination of judgment, but rather a delay. For the faithful, judgment will come, but not now. In other words, there should be enough room for political decisions, and sometimes this requires theology and religion to be excluded, because religion and theology tend to view matters as absolute and indisputable, which are not characteristics of many political issues. From this perspective, the political realists resist spending too much attention on religion. Therefore, they appear to refute the claim of the religionists. Their political theology inspires them to keep religion separate and to create space for the political. By doing so, they have thrown a heavy-weight argument into the debate on which the religionists have not yet reflected. That also explains their confusion over the fact that Niebuhr, who was a theologian and a believer himself, is considered the 'father' of the prominent school of realism.<sup>872</sup>

However, this does not conclude the story. The claim of the religionists goes beyond a plea for 'more' religion or more 'God' in IR theory. They also argue that religion can indeed be a factor of power. Therefore, it should be included in political decision-making. Religionists would contend that including religion might have enabled IR to foresee the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the Polish Revolution and the terrorist attacks of the 11<sup>th</sup> of September.<sup>873</sup> They would show that a misreading of religious forces in the case of Lebanon, Vietnam, Sudan and Iran led to less effective policies.<sup>874</sup> Adherents of the religion paradigm would say that theories on international relations have to reflect reality in order to be justifiable. If the importance of certain religious factors becomes increasingly important theories should respond constructively to this. They would agree with David Brooks who states that

Our foreign policy elites (...) go for months ignoring the force of religion; then, when confronted with something inescapably religious, such as the Iranian revolution or the Taliban, they begin talking of religious zealotry and fanaticism, which suddenly explains everything. After a few days of shaking their heads over the fanatics, they revert to their usual secular analyses. We do

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<sup>872</sup> There has been some discussion whether Kennan in fact has made this remark. Kennan did not remember that he said this when Jonathan Fox interviewed him at the age of 76, but according to Thompson, Kennan said it when he was 67 years old and speaking from his soul and not worrying about his own status. In 1991, Dean Acheson confirmed that this expression came from Kennan, when he was interviewed by June Bingham Birge who was researching her biography of Niebuhr. Charles C. Brown, *Niebuhr and His Age. Reinhold Niebuhr's Prophetic Role and Legacy* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Trinity Press International, 2002), 304 fn. 49. According to Kennan, the wordings did not really express his feelings on Niebuhr. He personally found Niebuhr's philosophical perspective attractive, but his political judgments and foreign-policy views unexceptional. Richard Wightman Fox, *Reinhold Niebuhr. A Biography* (New York: Harper & Row, 1985), 238.

<sup>873</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 1-10.

<sup>874</sup> Edward Luttwak, "The Missing Dimension," in *Religion, the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, eds. Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), 10-13.

not yet have, and sorely need, a mode of analysis that attempts to merge the spiritual and the material.<sup>875</sup>

A main counterargument from the political realists Morgenthau and Waltz is that theory cannot encompass everything. Their position leads to the question what the religionists demand from a theory? Does it have to account for all cases in which religion plays a role? The discussion between the religionists and the political realists mainly revolves around a political-theological issue and a theoretical issue. Addressing these two issues could be beneficial to both parties. That is ultimately the goal of this dissertation. Mapping the discussion, identifying the main issues, and then determine the best way forward.

For that reason, in this final part, the third sub-question will be answered: what are the strengths and weaknesses of both positions, and to what extent could a so-called practice approach do justice to the challenge posed by the adherents of religion, while at the same time upholding insights of the realist school? To be able to answer this question, I have analyzed the discussion between the religionists and Morgenthau and Waltz in the two preceding parts of this dissertation. I have also tried to clarify this debate with insights from the Amsterdam School of Philosophy. In this final part, I will draw up the balance and evaluate the discussion so far. I will also come up with a diagnosis of the differences between the religionists and political realists. After that, I will show to what extent the so-called practice approach used by the Amsterdam School could be helpful to overcome the weaknesses of either the religionists or political realists and combine their mutual strengths.

In the second part of this dissertation, I have shown that much of the criticism of the religionists proves to be inadequate or wrong. This could give the impression that we do not have to listen to the religionists anymore. That is not the position I take. First of all, as I concluded earlier, the fact that the criticism does not apply to Morgenthau and Waltz does not mean that their overall argument is worthless. Secondly, there are many handbooks in International Relations that still picture realism in such a way that it looks like a secular, normatively numb power politics approach. In the third place, the criticism of the religionists might apply for many other IR theories or theorists, even though Morgenthau and Waltz and political realism in general are quite representative for the development of IR since the Second World War.

To give an impression of the benefits of the practice approach I mention a few characteristics. A more detailed account follows later.<sup>876</sup> The Normative Practice Approach (NPA) of the Amsterdam School wants to theorize around concrete practices. That means that theorizing should not come to contradict the everyday experience of

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<sup>875</sup> David Brooks, "Kicking the Secularist Habit: A Six-Step Program," *The Atlantic* (1 March, 2003).

<sup>876</sup> A very recent volume in which the NPA is explained and discussed in relation to sustainable development, health care, management, military operations, etc. is. Marc J. de Vries and H. Jochemsen, eds., *The Normative Nature of Social Practices and Ethics in Professional Environments* (Hershey: IGI Global, 2019).

the daily practice. This prevents theories from becoming so rigid that they lose the connection to the practices they discuss. This clearly provides theories with a direction, although this could endanger the theoretical requirement of explanatory power. Besides the purpose of a theory, its reach is also of importance. The NPA wants to do justice to the diversity of factors that play a role in different practices. That is why it distinguishes between context, structure, and direction, between that which conditions, founds, and qualifies practices. The NPA is an integral type of theory, because it gives account of its ontological, epistemological and methodological foundations. The approach as developed by the Amsterdam School also wants to go beyond the contradiction between empirical and normative theory. According to them, there is no such thing as neutral research. The Amsterdam School denies the possibility of pure positivism because pre-scientific presuppositions always play a role. Its starting point is that theorizing is always based on deeper assumptions connected to a worldview, which is of a paradigmatic nature and has the character of an ultimate conviction about reality. These deeper convictions often influence one's view on science and theory. As the religion scholar Thomas states, referring to the critical theorist Robert Cox: 'Theory is always for someone for some purpose'.<sup>877</sup> Thomas himself maintains: 'At all times, a key question of international theory is: What kinds of *actors*, doing which *activities*, are socially and politically *constructed* by *whom*, and in whose *interests* - to be a part, or to be excluded, from domestic, politics or international affairs.'<sup>878</sup>

This critical element forces scholars to acknowledge normative considerations in scholarly research. The Amsterdam School advocates for openness regarding these presuppositions. This is not unimportant, especially when religion is involved, because the discussion on religion and IR also seems to be influenced by certain presuppositions that must be identified. Finally, with the NPA, the Amsterdam School offers opportunities to address the complexity of religion. The Amsterdam School itself is the product of a religious tradition, which is why it has always wanted to take the role of religion and worldview into account in its theorizing.

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<sup>877</sup> Scott M. Thomas, "A Trajectory Toward the Periphery: Francis of Assisi, Louis Massignon, Pope Francis, and Muslim-Christian Relations," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs* 16, no. 1 (2018): 22.

<sup>878</sup> *Ibid.*, 24. The difference between critical theorists and the Amsterdam School is that the latter explicitly draw attention to the deeper, ultimate commitments while critical theorist focus on the structural conditions and power relations.



# **Chapter 9**

## **Balance, Evaluation, and Diagnosis of the Debate Between Religionists and Political Realists**

### **Introduction**

Throughout this dissertation, I have continuously distinguished between four levels: the empirical level, the level of a specific domain, the level of philosophy of science, and the worldview level. If we use these levels to present the statements of the religionists and Morgenthau and Waltz, this will provide a clear overview of the discussion. Based on that, it is also possible to draw up the balance and to identify the strong and weak points.

In the first section of this chapter, I will indicate how, respectively the religionists, Morgenthau, and Waltz thought about the empirical, domain-specific, and philosophy of science subtheses. I will also look at the worldview level. Previous chapters elaborated on the accusations made by the religionists and the counterarguments that can be found in Morgenthau and Waltz, so I will not repeat them now. I also sketched the contours of their alternative approach in the conclusion of Part I. Based on all of this, I will provide a short schematic summary of the previous chapters. More important is the fact that it allows for an evaluation of the various perspectives. This will be done in the second section. After that, I will elaborate on certain underlying issues in the discussion between the religionists and the political realists.

### **9.1. Drawing up the Balance: The Contributions of Religionists and Political Realists**

The scheme below consists of the useful input gathered from the discussion between the religionists and political realists (see Figure 9.1). I explicitly use the term political

realism when I refer to Morgenthau and Waltz, because together they are sufficiently representative for political realism.

	Religionists	Classical Realism	Neorealism	Balance
<b>Empirical</b>				
Global resurgence	Religion has manifested itself differently since 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 -Political realists do not reflect on a global resurgence -The exact relevance of religious factors for international relations remains unclear
Individual	People's worldviews, norms and beliefs influence public and political life	Shows to be aware of religion in lives of politicians and statesmen	Mentions of few examples of religion in lives of individuals	
National	Religion influences the state, political society and civil society	Has an eye for role of religion as change agent and challenger on the national level	Is aware of religion on the national level	
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 makes the greatest impact in international politics	Pays attention to religion in relation to human rights, diplomacy, nationalism, political religion	Mentions a few examples of role of religion	
<b>Domain-specific</b>				
State	State+non-governmental+domestic actors	-Primary focus on states, state leaders, and some domestic issues. -State as 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 same view on Westphalia <sup>879</sup> -Religionists want to involve all three levels in theorizing, while political realist focus on second and/or third level -Political realists emphasize autonomy of the (international) political sphere and therefore central role of state(s)men and not religion
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	
Interpretation Westphalia	Westphalia revives the Augustinian distinction religion and politics	Disenchantment; transcendent reference point remains necessary	Seems not to deviate much from religionists	

<sup>879</sup> The neosecularization theory is not followed by all religionists, because most religionists only counter the conventional modernizing and secularization theory, but do not present an alternative. I have presented the neosecularization theory as an alternative approach of the religionists as it strengthens their position when they offer an alternative besides their criticisms of the existing theory.

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, the religious impulse remains	-Prefers a scientific over a theological or religious explanation, but allows for influence of religious or theological intuitions or ideas on theory formation -Goes along with idea that a scientific explanation replaces a religious one	-All respect contribution of religious perspective to theorizing -All understand religion in similar way -They acknowledge impossibility of neutrality in science -Political realist emphasize importance of theory
Ontology (materialism)	More attention for 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 <i>posteriori</i> materialist	
Epistemology (explanatory power, context-independent rationality, positivism and behavioralism)	-More room for interpretative theory and attention for historical context	-Ideal-typical theory: empirical, but normative -Religion and morality are different spheres than 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	
<b>Worldview (political theology)</b>				
Man	Not a particular view on human beings, but seem to be quite optimistic about religious man	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 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 <i>katechon</i> makes politics possible	Non-utopian view on history, because 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 a little more justice or freedom and seeking to avoid politics that lead to a little less of it	

**Figure 9.1. Overview contributions of religionists and political realists**

## 9.2. Strengths and Weaknesses of the Religionists and Political Realists: An Evaluation

I have clarified the visions 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. To evaluate the debate between the religionists and these two political realists, I treat Morgenthau and Waltz as representatives of political realism. I will only refer to differences between them if that is relevant for the evaluation. Up until now, my contribution has mainly been a reconstruction of the religionist position. I have also started a discussion with the political realists Morgenthau and Waltz. In addition, I have introduced views from the Amsterdam School of Philosophy as these clarified the debate. Other sections have indicated the strengths and weaknesses of the religionists and political realists. Below, I will briefly describe what I said previously and then I will provide a short list of the strengths and weaknesses of each position. All these points have been addressed earlier in the conclusion of chapters or evaluative sections. It is for the purpose of clarity that I list them here point by point. 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 for 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. It should be noted though that this integrality is the result of my reconstruction as done in Part I, because most individual contributions of the religionists are less coherent and systematic. The religionists lack a clear vision on 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. For that reason, the general conclusion of a group of scholars is that research must be conducted into the impact of different actors and then identify the role of religion in that process.<sup>880</sup> One of them, Sebastian Rosato, states that if scholars want to convince their colleagues to give religion a special treatment, they should achieve at least three things:

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<sup>880</sup> Sebastian Rosato, "The Sufficiency of Secular International Relations Theory," in *Religion and International Relations: A Primer for Research* (University of Notre Dame: Mellon Initiative on Religion Across the Disciplines, 2013), 184-186.

First, they must show that existing approaches – specifically realism, liberalism, and constructivism – would come up with different explanations of international politics if they were to incorporate religion in their theorizing. Second, they must demonstrate that religion has a causal effect on international politics rather than merely being correlated with various outcomes. Third, they need to rule out alternative, non-religious, explanations for the international political phenomena they claim to explain.<sup>881</sup>

His conclusion is that proponents of the religious paradigm do not yet succeed in doing so.<sup>882</sup> Rosato's theoretical requirements are quite unrealistic. Would he also use these criteria to assess the statement that states aim at survival? Does neorealism as a theory meet these criteria? His point that it has to be 'proven' that religion enriches the understanding and explanation of international relations, is nevertheless a point which deserves attention.

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. This impression is strengthened by the fact that they, at times, appear to confuse the return of religion with the return of God. 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 still indebted to this context. In this view, the secular has become a domain in which there are no references to religious concepts. It is, however, not hostile to religion and does not imply a decline of it. This theory makes it possible to have a different, possibly more positive and accurate, view on the Westphalian system and the emergence of the secular and the political.

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 philosophy of science. They also acknowledge their indebtedness to 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-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 political-theological stance which has become obsolete?

A disadvantage of Waltz's neorealism is that his theorizing assumes an almost rigid

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<sup>881</sup> Ibid., 176.

<sup>882</sup> Ibid., 182, 183.

### *Strengths Religionists*

- Empirical openness for what is going on in the world
- Demonstrate overwhelming empirical evidence for religion, especially the transnational level
- Draw attention to deeper philosophical levels in 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 Religionists*

- No clear view on scope and function of theory
- Unclear and divided about what is meant by integrating religion in IR theory
- Religion's distinctiveness unclear
- Seem to be prejudiced on relevance of religion
- Do not always distinguish clearly between theology, religion and personal faith
- Many demonstrate insufficient knowledge of IR theory

### *Strengths Political Realists*

- Openness to 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 Political Realists*

- De facto not much attention for religious actors
- Rigid theorizing (in case of Waltz) and reductionism
- Political theology might make too cautious for considering religion as 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)
- Use of scientific language cloaks the fact that his theory is normative and unavoidably prescriptive (Waltz)

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 favour a scientific explanation over a theological one. I do not think that the latter is necessary. For that reason, I will elaborate on the possibilities offered by the sociotheology to include religious worldviews in a scientific explanation below.

### **9.3. What Are the Problems and Possible Solutions? A Diagnosis**

In the debate between the proponents of the religious paradigm and the political realists, a number of underlying problems play a role. I have discussed some of these problems previously, but others just briefly or only in passing. Therefore, I will discuss them here and I also offer some alternative ways of thinking. The issues that I will address are: (1) the role of the worldview level; (2) the theoretical weight of the various levels and the relationship between them: irreducibility and dependency; (3) the distinction between a theological, religious and a scientific explanation; (4) the object of study: explaining international relations *through* religion or explaining religion *in* international relations?; (5) competing methodological foundations: constructivists versus naturalists; (6) scope and function of scientific, political and IR theories; (7) different political theologies.

First of all, it appears that the worldview level is barely involved in the discussion. I tried to bring out this level for Morgenthau and Waltz by pointing at the role of theological ideas, but it is much more difficult to do so for the religionists. The religionists are generally much more positive about the resurgence of religion. The theological influence of the political realists gives them the tendency to keep religion as a meaningful factor away from world politics. I will return to the theological aspect later, but I would like to mention here that it has been especially helpful to include this worldview level in the discussion. That should also be a condition for the future if the debate on religion and international relations wants to progress. Openness regarding the worldview or political-theological influences ensures that these can both be understood and criticized.

Secondly, it appears that not all four levels are dealt with equally in the discussion. When I look at the religionists, their criticism is mainly aimed at the domain-specific

and philosophy of science level. They barely reflect on their own worldview and political-theological presuppositions. When discussing their own contribution to an alternative approach, this primarily happens on the empirical level and partly on the domain-specific level regarding an alternative approach of Westphalia.

Morgenthau and Waltz discuss religion here and there, but they do not consider it a factor in their theorizing. For Waltz and Morgenthau, no direct cause can be found on the empirical level for their exclusion of religion. It should be pointed out here that the global resurgence was not noticed or written about by most scholars when they wrote their main theoretical works. It is therefore especially noteworthy to see their dealing with religion on the domain-specific level. It appears that Waltz is clear about the fact that he cannot pay attention to religion. Morgenthau's perceptions and theorizing, at times, comes very close to the religionists, but religion is not a very relevant factor in his theory. It is, however, not evident that this is the result of Westphalian assumptions. The choices made by both political realists are more directly influenced by their interpretations of theory and their political theology. In short, the philosophical considerations regarding theory and political theology are much more decisive when explaining why religion plays a role in political realism. Religionists completely ignore both these points.

This results in the following ironic situation: most criticism the religionists have on the political realists is targeted on the philosophy of science and the empirical level. As Part II made clear, most of the criticism of the religionists on the philosophy of science level turns out not to be warranted. Also, their criticism on the empirical level does not really apply, because the political realists already made their decision not to include religion empirically on the domain-specific level, and the political-theological level. In other words, the religionists 'attack' the political realists on the levels that are the least relevant for the political realists in their choice not to include religion. As said earlier, that does not mean that the religionists do not have a point, because the question remains whether the political realists are sufficiently open to the role of religion and perform a realistic power analysis.

So far, I discussed the weight of the various levels. Now, I would like to draw attention to the mutual dependency and irreducibility of the various levels. The four levels cannot be reduced to each other, although they are all dependent on each other. The religionists primarily start from their positive appreciation of the resurgence of religion in the world. The political realists strongly base their opinions on several political-theological stances regarding the human person, history, and ethics. However, it is not possible to reduce this debate to either political theology or empirics: all four levels need to be involved, as well as the translation from one level to the others. It is precisely the translation from the political-theological to the philosophy of science and domain-specific levels that provide a possibility for debate. Similarly, the translation from the empirical to the domain-specific and philosophy of science offers talking points for a discussion. This does not mean that the worldview level and empirical can be excluded from the discussion, but eventually there is

a continuous interaction between the different levels, and considerations on the empirical and domain-specific levels can eventually change political-theological stances.<sup>883</sup>

A future theory on religion and international relations will be stronger and more transparent if it is an integral theory meaning that it is able to account for the exact role of the four levels, their respective weight and the way they are related.

### 9.3.1. A Theological, Religious and a Scientific Explanation

In the discussion between the religionists and political realists there is some confusion about the difference between a scientific, religious and theological explanation.<sup>884</sup> A religious explanation differs from a scientific explanation, because it explicitly includes religious concepts (e.g. rituals, forgiveness, sacrifice). It uses concepts which do not require an insider perspective. A scientific explanation differs from a religious explanation, because it mainly uses non-religious (economic or political) concepts. A theological explanation differs from a scientific and a religious explanation, because it uses theological notions (e.g. incarnation, redemption, eschatology). There is overlap in terminology between a religious and theological perspective, but they differ because the latter presupposes an insider perspective. In practice, a theological explanation often also includes religious and scientific ideas. Similarly, a religious explanation often also contains scientific or non-religious concepts. It is quite uncommon that a scientific explanation also has theological elements in it. When the topic of research concerns a non-religious phenomenon, most scholars do not have problems with distinguishing between these three kinds of explanations. However, when the research topic is religion itself, the confusion arises.

I will illustrate this with the debate between the religionists and political realists. The religionists sometimes seem to confuse the resurgence of religion with the theological statement that God has returned. Simultaneously, they seem to think it is desirable to use religious concepts or explanations to explain the role of religion in international relations.<sup>885</sup> They also seem to imply that a lack of a theological perspective is partly responsible for the exclusion of religion. The political realists, especially Waltz, do the exact opposite. They strive for an explanation that is anything but religious or theological, and they do not want to include a religious or theological perspective to argue for the autonomy of the political domain. Their premise is that international

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<sup>883</sup> The idea that something can both be irreducible and dependent is an idea I borrowed from the Amsterdam School of Philosophy. See for example H. G. Geertsema, "Denken over zin en wetenschap. Waarom de filosofie van Dooyeweerd zo belangrijk is." *Afscheidsrede bijzonder hoogleraar Dooyeweerd leerstoel* (Amsterdam, 2005): 6. He makes a distinction between worldview, philosophy, and science. *Ibid.*, 11, 12. For an example on how these borders can be crossed, see the way in which Geertsema argues that the Intelligent Design approach crosses the borders of science by presupposing a designer. *Ibid.*, 13, 14.

<sup>884</sup> I have set out this point earlier. Polinder, *Practice-Based Theory*, 263-282.

<sup>885</sup> For example Kubálková, *Towards an International Political Theory*, 675-704; Thomas, *Living Critically and 'Living Faithfully' in a Global Age*.

politics should not be infused by theological dogmas, because it would threaten the autonomy of the political. As a result, they seem to be against the inclusion of religion in a theory on international relations before the discussion has even started. However, a religious explanation is not the same as involving theology!

As I said, I can be helpful to distinguish between the three perspectives. When I apply this distinction to the religionists, it would imply that the religionists should clearly distinguish between a religious and a theological explanation. Referring to more of God's presence in this world is a theological statement which presupposes an insider perspective. Invoking theology makes people that do not share this perspective hesitant to reflect on religion in international relations. Religionists can, however, use religious language and symbols to try to give an adequate explanation of religion in international relations. They should not be deterred when scholars state that a strict scientific explanation does not allow for a religious explanation. IR theory should be open to the fact that a scientific explanation of religion could benefit from the use of religious concepts. It should, at the same time, be aware of the fact that a religious explanation is not identical to a theological explanation. Using religious concept and language does not mean that theological ideas are becoming part of IR theory. If the religionists and IR theorists can work with these distinctions, it will enable them to think about the place of religion in IR together.

A good example of an approach in which religious ideas are taken seriously without invoking theology is sociotheology. This is an approach from Juergensmeyer and Mona Kanwal Sheikh in which theologically informed worldviews or religious worldview of a certain subject play a role in the explanation of religion in IR.<sup>886</sup> Sheikh states the following about it:

In International Relations (IR), religion's ability to provide legitimacy for an end other than religion has been the usual reason to include it in analysis. The instrumental use of religion is arguably a central concern for IR, but not a sufficient one. (...) [T]here can be religious reasons behind the behaviour of political actors, and hence religion should not just be treated as a rhetorical gloss over 'real motives' or non-religious goals. The actions and ideas of political actors can be based on hopes for spiritual transformation in this life and the next, and on the longing for salvation and spiritual fulfilment.<sup>887</sup>

In another article she states that:

To take religion seriously does not mean merely to explain religion from a traditional social

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<sup>886</sup> Juergensmeyer and Sheikh, *A Sociotheological Approach*, 620-643.

<sup>887</sup> Mona Kanwal Sheikh, "Sociotheology: The Significance of Religious Worldviews," in *Nations Under God: The Geopolitics of Faith in the Twenty-First Century*, eds. Luke M. Herrington, McKay Alasdair and Jeffrey Haynes (Bristol: E-International Relations Publishing, 2015), 134-143.

scientific viewpoint, which has, despite the self-perception of the social sciences, deeply imbedded problems living up to its own criteria of objectivity and value-free knowledge. Rather, the task is to open up to the idea that religion can in fact explain events taking place in International Relations. There is an important difference between seeking to explain religion, which in IR has practically meant explaining religion away more than explaining its presence, and incorporating religion in analysis more substantially to explain International Relations phenomena.<sup>888</sup>

The sociotheological approach can be applied to every worldview or tradition and does not make any statements regarding the truthfulness of these claims. It tries 'to understand the reasoning behind the truth claims, not to verify them', and place them within a social context.<sup>889</sup>

With that, the sociotheological approach meets the hesitation of the political realists regarding theology. It offers religionists an answer to the question on how they can use religion without it turning into theology. Sociotheology distinguishes between theology and religious studies which avoids the truth claims about the beliefs they study. A limitation of the sociotheological approach is that it does not claim to be a theory of international relations. It is more like an approach with which religion in international politics can be explained. The claim of the religionists goes a step further, as they want IR theories to incorporate religion.

### 9.3.2. Explaining IR Through Religion or Explaining Religion in IR?

[T]he task is to open up to the idea that religion can in fact explain events taking place in International Relations. There is an important difference between seeking to explain religion, which in IR has practically meant explaining religion away more than explaining its presence, and incorporating religion in analysis more substantially to explain International Relations phenomena.<sup>890</sup>

As this quote illustrates, there are multiple ways to deal with religion, which has to do with the exact object of the study. In the discussion on religion and international relations, the research object is not always clear. Is the goal a better understanding of international relations? Do we need religion for that? Or do we want to understand the role of religion in international relations and do we therefore need to know more about religion? Both arguments come up in the discussion.

The religionists say: religion plays an important role in the world and that role is so

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<sup>888</sup> Mona Kanwal Sheikh, "How does Religion Matter?: Pathways to Religion in International Relations," *Review of International Studies* 38, no. 2 (2012): 6.

<sup>889</sup> Sheikh, *Sociotheology*, 136-138. How to apply a sociotheological approach is explained in. Jurgensmeyer and Sheikh, *A Sociotheological Approach*.

<sup>890</sup> Sheikh, *How does Religion Matter?*, 6.

large and decisive that International Relations should work with that. The religionists also say that research must be conducted into the specific role of religion or religions in international relations. That last part is required to provide a better argumentation for the first. Once you know what religion does in international relations, it is easier to determine whether and how religion plays a role in research into international relations. When trying to understand or explain international relations better, the question will be: what does the factor religion add to existing explanatory variables?

The central claim of the religionists is about both, but subthesis 1 of the religionists (religion is everywhere in the world and IR should not ignore it) is mainly about religion as object of study. Subtheses 2 and 3 (IR has a bias against acknowledging the significance of religion because of its Westphalian assumptions and its philosophy of science) are mainly about how including religion helps to achieve better theories on international relations. The difference between both positions also becomes visible among the religionists. Kubálková pleads for the creation of a sub-discipline named International Political Theology (comparable to a subfield International Political Economy), in which the role of religion in international relations is studied. Thomas leans more towards having existing IR theories take religion more seriously. One does not exclude the other, because a sub-discipline might help to map how religion plays a role, while IR theory is then tasked with finding out what this means for research into international relations in general. As we have seen in the case of Morgenthau and Waltz, they are not convinced that adding religion can help them reach a better understanding or explanation of international relations. That does not mean that they think the study of religion is unnecessary. They just doubt its added value in the context of a theory of international politics.

If theorizing on religion and international relations wants to succeed, it should distinguish: do we want to better understand international relations or do we focus on religion in international relations? The last can help to answer the first question, but it is not the same.

### **9.3.3. Competing Methodological Foundations: Constructivists versus Naturalists**

The discussion of religion and international relations also reveals that there are different views regarding the question whether a theory should have an explanatory or interpretative purpose. The choice for one or another depends on the object of study. It is also related to the question of what the world consists of and the (im)possibilities of science. Because, as I already mentioned in Chapter 1: '[u]nderneath any given research design and choice of methods lies a researcher's (often implicit) understanding of the nature of the world and how it should be studied.'<sup>891</sup> This understanding of the nature of the world is something that is more basic, fundamental and comprehensive than method. Moses and Knutsen quote Waltz who says that students

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<sup>891</sup> Moses and Knutsen, *Ways of Knowing*, 2.

have been much concerned with methods and little concerned with the logic of their use. This reverses the proper priority of concern for once a methodology is adopted, the choice of methods becomes merely a tactical matter. It makes no sense to start a journey that is to bring us to an understanding of a phenomenon without asking which methodological routes might possibly lead there.<sup>892</sup>

In my own words, it is important for researchers to know what their philosophy of science starting points are (the third level). Because of it, they better understand how to study a certain domain or object (second level). Therefore, they more adequately report what presents itself as empirics (first level). Moses and Knutsen emphasize, as Morgenthau and Waltz do, that theories are not neutral, because their methodological assumptions are different.

Each research tool or procedure is inextricably embedded in commitments to particular versions of the world and to knowing that world. To use a questionnaire, to use an attitude scale, to take the role of a participant observer, to select a random sample, to measure rates of population growth, and so on, is to be involved in conceptions of the world which allow these instruments to be used for the purposes conceived. No technique or method of investigation (and this is as true of the natural science as it is of the social) is self-validating: its effectiveness, i.e. its very status as a research instrument making the world tractable to investigation, is, from a philosophical point of view, ultimately dependent on epistemological justifications.<sup>893</sup>

In this dissertation, I have tried to draw attention to philosophical views that play a role and that these differences should be addressed. However, I also would like to emphasize that different methodologies can be seen as complementary.

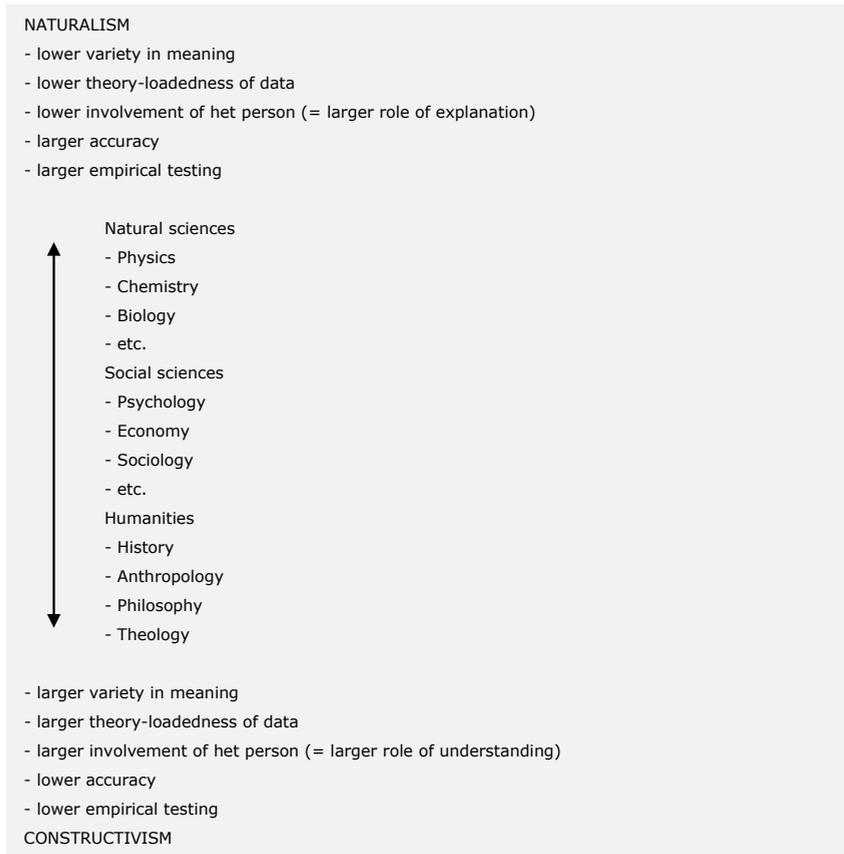
The diverging methodologies are a well-known problem in science. Inspired by Michael Polanyi, Andy Sanders has illustrated this with a scheme in which he has put the different cognitive appreciations of reality on a line with two extremes.<sup>894</sup> I have put that scheme in the figure below and added 'naturalism' and 'constructivism' to it (see Figure 9.2).

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<sup>892</sup> Ibid., 4. Cited from Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 13.

<sup>893</sup> Moses and Knutsen, *Ways of Knowing*, 5. Quoted from John A. Hughes, *The Philosophy of Social Research*, 2nd ed. (London; New York: Longman, 1990), 11.

<sup>894</sup> Andy F. Sanders, "Geloof, kennis en natuurwetenschappen." In *Theologie en natuurwetenschap: op zoek naar een snark?*, ed. W. B. Drees (Kampen: Kok, 1992), 49. See also, Andy F. Sanders, *Michael Polanyi's Post-Critical Epistemology. A Reconstruction of some Aspects of 'Tacit Knowing'* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988), 232.



**Figure 9.2. Continuum of competing methodologies**

The above continuum shows that certain preferences regarding theorizing – explaining versus understanding – hide interpretations regarding the meaning of data. It also reveals a vision of that which makes up the world and reality. For example, naturalism holds a view of the world as being objectively real and permanent. Constructivism sees the view of the world as a human construction which is changeable. Scholars are part of what is being investigated and therefore they can have a role in the outcome. Their views on theory also differ. Naturalism sees theory as an aid to explaining and reveal patterns in the world and a cluster of objective laws. Constructivists maintain that theory is a product of human imagination and an aid to understanding and used to reveal contingent phenomena.<sup>895</sup>

When discussing theorizing religion and international relations, the contradiction between the naturalists and the constructivists emerges. By presenting it as a continuum, it is no longer an absolute contradiction. It is also possible to speak of explaining and

<sup>895</sup> Moses and Knutsen, *Ways of Knowing*, 287.

understanding as complementary aspects of the acquisition of knowledge. According to this way of thinking scientific inquiry is a cognitive ordering of a certain part of reality.<sup>896</sup> That implies that the various sciences can be considered as ordered as in the table above. Sanders puts theology at the bottom of the hierarchy, but calls it the highest level of structuring. Theology, in his view, pretends to make statements about the totality of reality, the meaning of life and human salvation. As a result, theology is more vulnerable to rational criticism, because it deals with the lack of comprehension, contrast and incompatibility of life. According to this hierarchy it is impossible to reduce higher levels to the lower levels e.g. to reduce theological or philosophical issues to physical or biological matters.<sup>897</sup> The fact that the higher the hierarchy the more the person is involved, also explains why the empirical study of religion is so often seen as difficult.

The figure above is useful to the discussion on religion and international relations for different reasons. It shows that reality is pluriform and that scientific disciplines are an expression of that. Therefore, it is impossible and undesirable to try and reduce one phenomenon to something else: theology cannot be reduced to something psychological or social. As a consequence, the study of international relations is conducted from different perspectives, each with their own characteristics. Waldemar Gurian points this out nicely.

Finally, in order to satisfy his need of finding norms for international relations, the student could attend courses in philosophy: ethics would teach him to understand that power politics are subordinated to higher aims, that conflicts and crises among nations derive from imperfections of human nature. In Catholic institutions, ethics would be studied in relation to the supernatural end of man, the consideration of which helps to evaluate human action. (...) In this evaluation, views on the nature of men become decisive. The Catholic student of international relations will claim that he has an insight which other students do not have, or, from their point of view, would be obliged to reject and regard as a subjective (...) I think that a well-organized class in international relations, accessible to all students, given with the right respect for other disciplines as well as for philosophy (and, I may add, theology) would help to bring about the unification of college and university threatened today by a combination of specialization and utilitarianism. Students and faculty would come to realize that in all temporal things something supratemporal appears. Therefore, they would be saved from the dangerous twin evils of our time - cynicism and perfectionism.<sup>898</sup>

Gurian's vision corresponds to that of James Skillen and Lucas Freire, who both indicate that IR indeed knows no uniformity and brings together many different disciplines. They both argue that the field of international relations needs a unifying perspective and that the Amsterdam school offers a valuable starting point for that.<sup>899</sup>

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<sup>896</sup> Sanders, *Michael Polanyi's Post-Critical Epistemology*, 232.

<sup>897</sup> Sanders, *Geloof, kennis en natuurwetenschappen*, 50.

<sup>898</sup> Waldemar Gurian, "On the Study of International Relations," *Review of Politics* 8, no. 3 (1946): 277, 280-282.

<sup>899</sup> Lucas Freire, "Opening Up Space for a Reformational Approach to the Study of World Politics," *Presentation*,

### 9.3.4. Scope and Function of Scientific, Political and IR Theories

A different matter that plays between the religionists and political realists is that there are different views on what a scientific theory on international relations should do. A number of discussions play a role here: (1) normative versus empirical; (2) prescriptive versus descriptive; (3) the object of theorizing; and (4) structure and actor. Below, I want to discuss each of these issues.

In this dissertation, I have continuously sought to highlight the fact that a domain-specific theory is often based on philosophy of science starting points, and that there are often worldview influences hiding below the surface. Both the religionists and Morgenthau and Waltz also recognize that their theories are not neutral. Time and context, and the personal values of the researcher or scholar always play a role in the creation of theories. Of course, the degree to which space is provided for normativity varies from one thinker to the next. Waltz, for example, works more towards a theory that makes sense empirically compared to Morgenthau and the religionists, although the last group also include more positivist approaches. There is a gradual difference between the different positions instead of a fundamental difference. If the various theorists could see each other that way, their theories and approaches on religion and international relations would be seen as complementary rather than contradictory.

Related to this is the second point namely whether a theory should be prescriptive or not. The religionists generally view theories as instruments with which policymakers can make decisions. A large part of their plea to change IR theory is based on the fact that current foreign policy does not take the religious factor seriously enough. Waltz on the other hand says that his theory cannot be a source of conclusions on which to base policies. I have previously stated that I doubt whether he is always consistent in this, but that is how his theory is intended. Morgenthau's theory which is less focused on explanatory power than Waltz also wants to be prescriptive, because the state leader has to know how to act. A future theory on religion and international relations should be aware of the fact that theories cannot be isolated from the desire or inclination of policymakers to draw conclusion from theories how to act.

The third point about the demarcation of the object of theorizing also plays a role here. The religionists, Waltz and Morgenthau both make the conscious or unconscious choice to theorize on a certain domain or object. The religionists in general are not that explicit in their choice for a certain domain. Waltz is clearest and most outspoken in this. He limits his theorizing to the political domain and the third level: the structure of the system. Morgenthau chooses a theory of foreign policy that has both the domestic and international domains as starting points. He tries to limit himself within these confines to the political domain, but he inevitably has to make statements regarding characteristics on the unit level. Eventually the above choices and scientific starting

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*Conference The Future of Creation Order* (Amsterdam, 2011); Skillen, *Unity and Diversity Among States. A Critique of Assumptions in the Study of International Relations*, 32-34.

points also determine whether a theory includes structure and actor, as Morgenthau attempts, or that it merely focuses on the structure of the system. Theorizing on religion and international relations means that a scholar has to make abstractions and limitations. That is unavoidable, but he or she should be explicit about it and substantiate the choices made. That makes it easier to see what the limitations and possible applications of a theory are.

### **9.3.5. Different Political Theologies: The Need to Talk About Theology**

I have continuously discussed political theology and political realism, without making many distinctions between different political theologies within political realism. This might give the impression that the discussion is about involving political theology or not. That is partly true, but it is also about what kind of political theology one wants to involve. That means that at the moment that political theology starts to play a role, these ideas should be subject of discussion: there is a need to talk about theology!<sup>900</sup> When a theorist adheres to a more positive or hopeful view on the possibilities of human beings inspired by his or her theology, this might lead to a different political theory than someone who believes that human beings are mere animals. It might also lead to a different appreciation of the role of religion. If religion can motivate people to reach beyond their self-interest, it may be granted a more prominent role in theorizing than in case religion is seen as superstition, divisive and dangerous. To illustrate how subtle theological differences matter in theorizing international politics, I will focus on some differences between Morgenthau, Niebuhr and Augustine. I choose to focus on Niebuhr and Morgenthau, because they have more actively reflected on their political theologies than Waltz. Niebuhr was personally committed to his theological standpoints which makes his reflections existential, while this remains unclear in Morgenthau's case. This reflection might also show what secularization actually does, because it might lead to impoverished theories.

Rice argues that Niebuhr and Morgenthau agreed on many issues as political realists,

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<sup>900</sup> There are interesting theological discussions within the Amsterdam School about power and the state. Wolterstorff, for example, wrote a paper called *Fallen Powers*. Nicholas Wolterstorff, "Fallen Powers," *Presentation Conference Consultation on Good Power: Divine and Human* (Yale Center on Faith and Culture, New Haven, 2007). The argument in this paper has also become part of his later book. Nicholas Wolterstorff, *The Mighty and the Almighty: An Essay in Political Theology* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012). In the article he refers to the theologian Barth that there is a parallel between the way in which mankind is justified, and politics. In both cases, the question is which role redemption plays. Wolterstorff then shows that a theological justification of power can be given. According to him, created structures have fallen, but they still play a role after redemption: states play a role in redemption. States may be subject to fallen power, but they are not fallen powers themselves. Another example is an article of Geertsema in which he discusses the meaning of power and conflict from the perspective of a Christian worldview consisting of creation, fall and redemption. H. G. Geertsema, "Power and Conflict in Human Relations. Tentative Reflections from a Christian Perspective," in *Philosophy Put to Work. Contemporary Issues in Art, Politics, Science and Religion*, eds. Jan Van der Stoep, H. G. Geertsema and R. Peels (Amsterdam: Christian Studies of Science and Society, 2008), 70-99.

but that Niebuhr's *Christian* realism gave his realism a distinctive trait.<sup>901</sup> Niebuhr's theological orientation gives him a 'disposition' to see the world in a certain way.<sup>902</sup> Almost all Niebuhr's disagreements with realist friends are the result of Niebuhr's theological frame of reference. This did not mean that Niebuhr's view was not accepted or understood by a broader audience. On the contrary, the philosopher Morton White coined the phrase 'Atheists for Niebuhr' to describe a group of secular or religiously sceptical thinkers who gravitated towards Niebuhr.<sup>903</sup>

To understand the 'Christian' taint of Niebuhr's realism, I will discuss a few differences with Morgenthau. Niebuhr's difference with Morgenthau has to do with his distinctive view on man's radical freedom, which is the basis of both human dignity and human misery.<sup>904</sup> Niebuhr defines both from the perspective of love. The dignity of the human person (the fact that the self is defined by the law of love) and the misery of the human person (the self in its self-love is in violation of the law of love) gives a meaning to justice and evil which goes far beyond the common political realist understanding.<sup>905</sup> Daniel Rice discusses the differences between Morgenthau and Niebuhr with respect to power and national interest. Niebuhr and Morgenthau differ about the way in which love and power are related in human nature. Morgenthau ends up more pessimistic than Niebuhr about 'the important residual creative factor in human rationality' that could be a source for justice, understood as love making its way in the world.<sup>906</sup>

With respect to national interest, Niebuhr is critical of realists such as Morgenthau who argue that the national interest is a moral end in itself. Niebuhr not only denies this. He is also worried that nations would be inclined to define their interests too narrowly and that they would sacrifice the mutual interests they have with others. Niebuhr tries to show how a Christian understanding could widen the vision of realists to provide a more humane basis for American policy. Therefore, he stresses the need to find areas where values that transcend the self-interest could intersect with the national interest.<sup>907</sup> Niebuhr's basic critique is that Morgenthau holds a too narrow view of the nation and overlooks the 'important residual creative factor in human rationality'.<sup>908</sup> Niebuhr then argues for the superiority of Augustine:

Modern realists know the power of collective self-interest as Augustine did (...) they do not understand its blindness. Modern pragmatists understood the irrelevance of fixed and detailed

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<sup>901</sup> Rice, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau*, 266.

<sup>902</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>903</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>904</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>905</sup> *Ibid.*, 269.

<sup>906</sup> *Ibid.*, 273-275.

<sup>907</sup> *Ibid.*, 277, 278. In Chapter 5, I maintain that Morgenthau argued for the morality of the national interest, but I doubt whether Rice does justice to Morgenthau by stating that he sees the national interest as a moral end in itself.

<sup>908</sup> *Ibid.*, 280.

norms; but they do not understand that love must take the place as the final norm of these inadequate norms. Modern liberal Christians know that love is the final norm for man; but they fall into sentimentality because they fail to measure power and persistence of self-love.<sup>909</sup>

Niebuhr believes that justice must be the instrument of the command to love and that this deepens and enhances a realist approach to international and domestic politics.<sup>910</sup>

While Morgenthau's realism is tragic, Niebuhr goes beyond tragedy because he holds a Christian view of grace.<sup>911</sup> Epp makes the same observation. He confronts Morgenthau's statement that 'to know with despair that the political act is inevitably evil, and to act nevertheless, is moral courage' with Niebuhr's contention that 'despair was the fate of those realists who knew something about sin, but nothing of redemption'.<sup>912</sup>

That Niebuhr sees more room for creative forces than many of his realist friends is also the point that Bettina Dahl Soendergaard makes. She explores this in an article in which she compares Augustine to Morgenthau. She concludes that Augustine believes that man is not completely corrupted. According to Augustine man's nature was only damaged in the fall, while Morgenthau believes that man is completely corrupted. Soendergaard sees similarities to the discussion between the Catholic Church and the Protestants during the Reformation. Martin Luther (1483-1546) believed that converted man was declared righteous, while he was still a sinner; the Catholic Church believed that converted man is inspired by God with a good will which slowly drives out evil.<sup>913</sup> Morgenthau and Augustine agree with each other that man does not reach perfection in this life. Consequently, good people can be in conflict with other good people. Therefore, it is impossible to improve the nature of international politics. However, the difference is that Augustine seems to be a little more optimistic about the possibility to improve or heal the human person. Soendergaard argues that this leads to a different approach to state leaders. She states that Augustine believes that state leaders have a moral purpose, while Morgenthau believes that the consequences of man's nature can only be counterbalanced.<sup>914</sup> Although Soendergaard's interpretation of Morgenthau is too one-sided, she makes a convincing argument that Augustine has higher moral expectations than Morgenthau does.<sup>915</sup> This also appears from her discussion of Morgenthau and Augustine's views on war and the possibility of peace. Morgenthau would argue that one

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<sup>909</sup> Ibid., 280. Reinhold Niebuhr, *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953) 146.

<sup>910</sup> Ibid., 280.

<sup>911</sup> Ibid., 270.

<sup>912</sup> Epp, *The Augustinian Moment in International Politics*, 19.

<sup>913</sup> Soendergaard, *The Political Realism of Augustine and Morgenthau*, 8.

<sup>914</sup> Ibid., 8. I believe that Soendergaard interprets Morgenthau too negative here. As she sets out later herself, Morgenthau does not discard the moral purpose, but thinks it has to be subjected to the political criterion. For that reason, I do not agree with Soendergaard's critique on Murray that he reads Morgenthau as someone who applies moral standards to the national interest, because I side with Murray here. Ibid., 9.

<sup>915</sup> Ibid., 10, 11. In this article, Soendergaard illustrates her point also with respect to Morgenthau and Augustine's view on war.

cannot change the world by confronting it with an abstract ideal. Augustine confronts the earthly peace with the ideal of the unattainable peace of God. Augustine believes that earthly peace can be moved towards God's peace. He also emphasized that it is important that Christians participate in politics because they know, through faith, about God's peace.<sup>916</sup> Epp argues that Augustine thought that the love of God (*caritas*) can infuse social structures and transform them away from the opposite pole of self-love (*cupiditas*). This means that those in positions of political responsibility will use fatal force and power to maintain order and administer justice. What truly matters, however, is their inward disposition. The real evil in war is love of violence, since violence and war remain 'so horrible, so ruthless' even when they are just.<sup>917</sup>

According to Willem Boerma, Niebuhr is more optimistic than his fellow realists, such as Morgenthau, but he is more negative than Augustine. He also ascribes this to the fact that Augustine holds a Catholic view, while Niebuhr tends to think more like a Protestant. Niebuhr finds Augustine too optimistic about human beings, because he denies the seriousness of an ongoing struggle against sin.<sup>918</sup>

The differences between Augustine, Niebuhr, and Morgenthau are striking. Where does this come from? Epp concludes that the use of the word love by realists 'may be indicative of the relative emphasis of those who intersected the [Augustinian, SP] tradition from the domain of theology instead of politics and international relations'.<sup>919</sup> In that case, it matters whether someone interprets Augustine as a theologian or a political philosopher. That might explain why Morgenthau differs from Niebuhr and Augustine and why Niebuhr disagrees with Augustine to a certain extent. In both cases, however, it is anthropology and Christian theology that makes theorizing different to a certain degree. A theory of international relations and religion should not only be explicit about the kind of political theology it adheres to, but should also be open to discuss the content of its political theology. Theologians have thought about many issues that are crucial for political philosophy for centuries and their ideas are also developing over the years. Neglecting the wisdom of a discipline once called 'the queen of the sciences' would be unwise and unnecessary.

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<sup>916</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>917</sup> Epp, *The Augustinian Moment in International Politics*, 5.

<sup>918</sup> Boerma, *Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971)*, 1449, 1450. Skillen, a philosopher in the tradition of the Amsterdam School, makes a distinction between a biblical, classical a Greek and a Roman Stoic approach. He calls Morgenthau's realism an 'agnostic secularized Augustinianism'. Skillen, *Unity and Diversity Among States. A Critique of Assumptions in the Study of International Relations*, 18, 22. Kamminga nicely describes the difference between a pessimistic Protestant and a more optimistic Roman approach in combating climate change through carbon commodification. He points out which religious or theological ideas about human nature, progress, the role of the market and government are involved and decisive. His conclusion is that political realism is more Protestant than Roman in its orientation. Menno R. Kamminga, "The Protestant Dimension of the Ethical Critique of Carbon Commodification," in *Christian Faith, Philosophy & International Relations: The Lamb and the Wolf*, eds. Simon Polinder and Govert J. Buijs (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2020), 266, 276, 277.

<sup>919</sup> Epp, *Power Politics and the Civitas Terrena*, 286.

## Conclusion

This chapter has drawn up the balance of the harvest from Part I and II. I mainly looked at the contributions of both the religionists and the political realists regarding their thoughts on religion and international relations. Many of the contributions from the religionists are critical of existing IR theory and a lot of this criticism is unfounded. I have tried to find out what kind of theory they would like to see instead. Surprisingly, they agree with a lot of what the political realists had to say. I brought this together in a schematic overview where I indicate their input on a level by level basis.

Then, I listed the different contributions of both parties and their strengths and weaknesses. Also, the debate between the political realists and the proponents of the religious paradigm has shown that there is confusion regarding several problems that do play a role in the debate. What exactly is the subject of the study? What do people expect of science and political theories? What underlying worldview or political-theological preferences play a role in theorizing about religion and international relations? I have also indicated what are possible solutions to these problems that hinder the discussion. In response to that, I will argue in the next chapter that the NPA of the Amsterdam School offers promising leads.



# Chapter 10

## A New Christian Realism: The Normative Practice Approach as a 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.<sup>920</sup>

I have explored various dimensions of this question by reconstructing the religionist position in Part I, by assessing the validity of their criticism in Part II. In the previous chapter, I have summarized, evaluated and diagnosed the discussion between the religionists on the one hand and the political realists on the other hand. In this chapter, I would like to present an answer to the third sub-question: to what extent could a so-called practice approach 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.

I will start this chapter arguing why the NPA meets many of the problems that I addressed in the previous chapter and that it is able to combine the strengths of both

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<sup>920</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 12.

positions and overcome their weaknesses. The approach I sketch below is not intended to replace existing theories, but it shows how different approaches can be regarded as a single theoretical whole. The next steps are that I will set out the NPA and apply it to the discussion on religion and international relations. I have entitled this application a tentative proposal. It is no less and no more than that.

### **10.1. A Turn to Practice Theory in International Relations**

Working with the NPA comes at a good time, since practice theory has become a topic in International Relations since 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 and postpositivism and critical theory, can be said to assume the same themes as practice theory.<sup>921</sup> 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.<sup>922</sup>

However, as it stands now, IPT does not pay much attention to religion.<sup>923</sup> 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 has a sensitivity and attention for the role of religion in practices. Secondly, 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.<sup>924</sup>

Thirdly, 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

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<sup>921</sup> Jérémie Cornut, “The Practice Turn in International Relations Theory,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of International Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), 2,3.

<sup>922</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>923</sup> Cecelia Lynch, “Why ‘Practice Theory’ Should ‘Get Religion,’” *International Studies Quarterly* (2017): 16, 17.

<sup>924</sup> Cornut, *The Practice Turn*, 13.

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.<sup>925</sup> It can therefore also contribute to a lot of religionist literature that is mainly targeted at the relevance of religion for international policy.

Fourthly, the NPA is both normative and descriptive (or empirical).<sup>926</sup> 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.<sup>927</sup>

Fifthly, 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.<sup>928</sup> 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.<sup>929</sup> 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.<sup>930</sup> This rationality does have to pass the empirical test, and must be applied dependent on time and place. NPA also thinks that scientific distance and objectivity can be reached better due to her awareness of her normative starting points.

Sixthly, 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 scholars that want to view the world from a distance and do not wish to

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<sup>925</sup> Cf. *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>926</sup> Chaplin, *Reformational Insights*, 44-47.

<sup>927</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

<sup>928</sup> Cornut, *The Practice Turn*, 20, 21.

<sup>929</sup> Bech and Snyder, *Religion's Contribution*, 207.

<sup>930</sup> Cornut, *The Practice Turn*, 8.

work on direct applications. Practice theory is ‘an approach that provides new tools with which to think about international politics’.<sup>931</sup> 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.<sup>932</sup>

Seventhly, 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.<sup>933</sup> 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. Elshstain, 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.<sup>934</sup>

The theoretical insights of Waltz’s neorealism on the rationality of the international political domain can be integrated in 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.<sup>935</sup> 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.<sup>936</sup> 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.

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<sup>931</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>932</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>933</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>934</sup> Elshstain, *Woman, the State, and War*, 302.

<sup>935</sup> Skillen also appreciates Morgenthau’s emphasis on practical political knowledge Skillen, *Unity and Diversity Among States. A Critique of Assumptions in the Study of International Relations*, 32.

<sup>936</sup> Buijs and Polinder, *Christian Philosophical Reflections and Shalom-Searching Wisdom*, 321, 322. The distinction between high grounds and lowlands comes from Donald A. Schön, *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1991).

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. Religion has a different role regarding politics in different contexts.<sup>937</sup>

## 10.2. Integrating Religion in International Relations: A Tentative 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 on religion and international relations.<sup>938</sup> 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 has originally been 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.<sup>939</sup> 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.<sup>940</sup> 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,

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<sup>937</sup> Toft, Philpott, and Shah have indicated that it is important to look at two things to identify the role of religion in a certain context, namely the institutional relation between religion and politics and the political theology at play Toft, Philpott and Shah, *God's Century*, 20-47.

<sup>938</sup> Parts of this have been published elsewhere Polinder, *Practice-Based Theory*, 263-282.

<sup>939</sup> H. Jochemsen and G. Glas, *Verantwoord medisch handelen. Proeve van een christelijke medische ethiek* (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 1997), 64-99. Jan Hoogland is co-author of the chapter I am referring to. Govert J. Buijs and H. Jochemsen, "Op weg naar een herijkt ontwikkelingsbegrip," in *Als de olifanten vechten...: Denken over ontwikkelingssamenwerking vanuit christelijk perspectief*, ed. Govert J. Buijs (Amsterdam: Buijten & Schipperheijn, 2001), 298-319; Corné J. Rademaker and Henk Jochemsen, "Beyond Modernization: Development Cooperation as Normative Practice," *Philosophia Reformata* 83, no. 1 (2018): 111-139.

<sup>940</sup> Vries and Jochemsen, *The Normative Nature of Social Practices and Ethics in Professional Environments*.

with the result that human powers to achieve excellence, and human conceptions of the ends and goods involved, are systematically extended.<sup>941</sup>

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.<sup>942</sup> 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.<sup>943</sup> 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.<sup>944</sup>

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.<sup>945</sup>

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.<sup>946</sup> It is here that the worldview of the participants of the practice comes into play.

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<sup>941</sup> Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2003), 187.

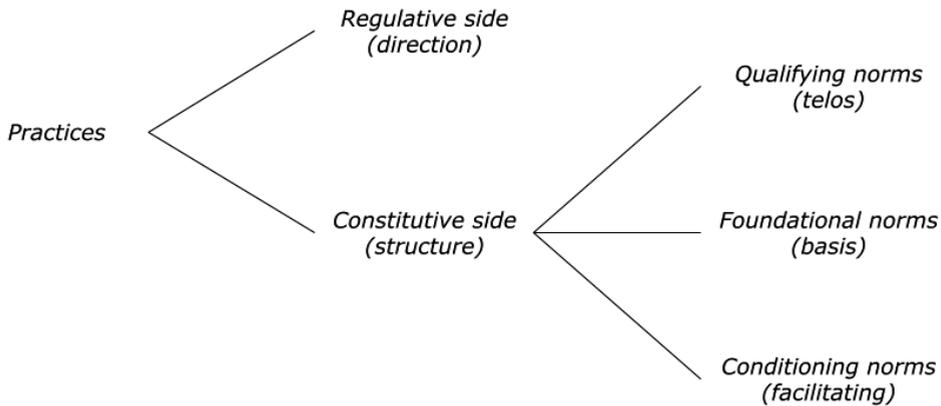
<sup>942</sup> Jochemsen and Glas, *Verantwoord medisch handelen*, 67.

<sup>943</sup> MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 188.

<sup>944</sup> Jochemsen and Glas, *Verantwoord medisch handelen*, 67, 68.

<sup>945</sup> *Ibid.*, 69.

<sup>946</sup> *Ibid.*, 70-72.



**Figure 10.1. Overview different sides and norms**

Jochemsen and Glas divide the constitutive side in three types of rules: qualifying, conditioning, and foundational (Figure 10.1).<sup>947</sup> 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, or juridical, whereby each aspect of reality has its own most characteristic rules or norms.<sup>948</sup> 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 about forms of reductionism and it invites scholars to reflect on the variety of different norms that play a role in various practices.

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

<sup>947</sup> Ibid., 76.

<sup>948</sup> Jochemsen and Glas use the philosophy of the Dutch philosopher Herman Dooyeweerd here. Dooyeweerd distinguishes fifteen irreducible aspects, modalities or ways of being which are ontological structures that determine how things exist and how can experience them. Many of the aspects agree with the various practices that MacIntyre distinguishes. The aspects stand in a successive order and they presuppose each other. All aspects have a governing kernel. Over time, these kernels have been debated so the list that follows is open to changes. Natural side of reality: numerical (discrete quantity), spatial (continuous extension), kinematic (movement), physical (energy), biotic (life), and psychical (feeling, emotion). Cultural side of reality: logical (analytical distinction), historical (mastery, control), lingual (meaning, symbolic signification), social (interaction), economic (frugality), aesthetic (harmony), juridical (retribution), ethical (moral, love), and pistical (certitude).

practice is based. The remaining aspects are conditional, meaning that they condition or shape the development of a practice indirectly.<sup>949</sup>

To illustrate the relationship between the qualifying, foundational and conditioning aspects, I will use an example of Jan Hoogland. He uses the medical practice to make his point. The medical practice has as its *telos* to care for – and possible 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 a balanced attention to the diversity of norms that are at stake. This is called the simultaneous realization of norms.<sup>950</sup>

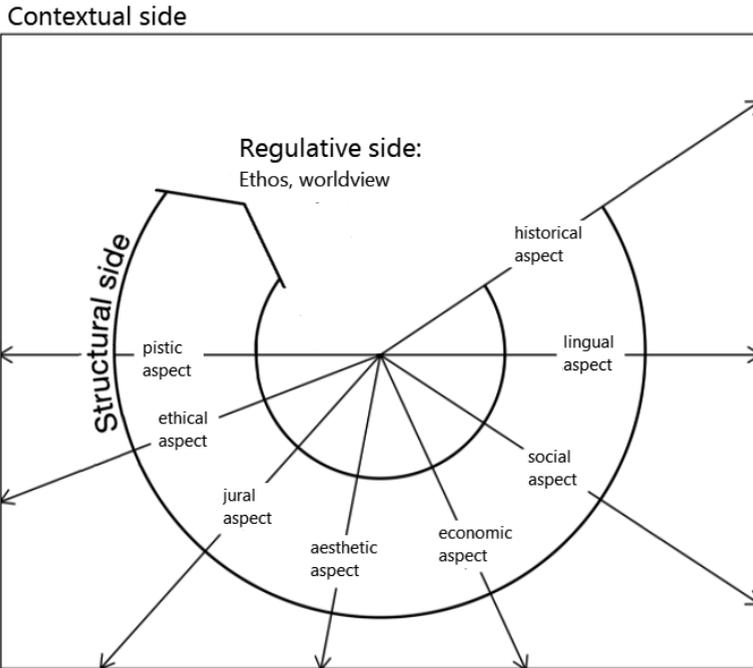
In my application of the NPA, I will use the model Corné Rademaker developed with respect to the practice of development cooperation: a field of study which is close to the field of international relations. Rademaker developed a model in which he illustrates the relationship between the context of the practice, the regulative and the constitutive side (see Figure 10.2).<sup>951</sup> 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.

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<sup>949</sup> Ibid., 73-75.

<sup>950</sup> Jan Hoogland, “Positioning the Normative Practice Approach,” in *The Normative Nature of Social Practices and Ethics in Professional Environments*, eds. Marc J. de Vries and H. Jochemsen (Hershey: IGI Global, 2019), 47.

<sup>951</sup> Corné J. Rademaker, *Practices Makes Improvement. A Contribution of the Normative Practice Approach to an Ethics of International Development Cooperation in the Agro-Food Domain* (PhD thesis, Wageningen University, the Netherlands, 2020) 131. I have adapted this model a little bit with permission.



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

### **10.2.1. 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 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 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.<sup>952</sup> Morgenthau's classical

<sup>952</sup> Viotti and Kauppi, *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism, and Beyond*, 3.

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 that of Morgenthau and the religionists' regarding the role of religion in the world.

The object of study is international relations. At the start, I defined that as '[T]he total of political, social, economic, cultural and other interactions among states (and even non-state actors)'.<sup>953</sup> 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 which 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.<sup>954</sup> This is a huge step, but it is a necessary step to make the international realm understandable. States,

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<sup>953</sup> Ibid., 483.

<sup>954</sup> Evans and Newnham, *The Penguin Dictionary*, 274.

and non-state actors, are very much dependent on the power they have if they want to accomplish something in the international domain.<sup>955</sup>

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 tentative 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.<sup>956</sup> 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, referred to as the katechontic role of states. Finally, they 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.<sup>957</sup>

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 matter and how they are related to the power politics dynamic.

Wendt attempts to answer this question. He points at the importance of culture and the influence that is exerted on the type of anarchy that arises.<sup>958</sup> Wendt distinguishes between three cultures of anarchy: a Hobbesian, Lockean and a Kantian. Each of the cultures are characterized by a certain structure describing the shared ideas and

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<sup>955</sup> Fred Halliday, “The Romance of Non-State Actors,” in *Non-State Actors in World Politics*, eds. Daphné Josselin and William Wallace (Houndmills and New York: Palgrave, 2001), 21-37.

<sup>956</sup> Chaplin, *Reformational Insights*, 53, 54.

<sup>957</sup> Buijs and Polinder, *Christian Philosophical Reflections and Shalom-Searching Wisdom*, 318.

<sup>958</sup> Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 249-251. For a more extensive description of the three cultures of anarchy. *Ibid.*, 259-308. Wendt makes a distinction between society and culture. Society implies cooperation, while culture consist of shared knowledge. While shared knowledge is analytically neutral to cooperation and conflict, society is based on cooperation. *Ibid.*, 253.

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 allies. 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.<sup>959</sup> 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.<sup>960</sup> 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 characterised 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.<sup>961</sup> The question remains how large the influence of religion in each of the cultures of anarchy is and if it possible to speak about a *social* practice – as MacIntyre sees it – in case of a Hobbesian culture.<sup>962</sup>

The religionists have extensively drawn attention to the various actors that are present in the international domain (Chapter 2). Religious non-state actors not only shape the international relation practice, but they also participate in 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.<sup>963</sup> 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 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

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<sup>959</sup> Ibid., 257, 258.

<sup>960</sup> Ibid., 254. Wendt makes a distinction between three degrees of internalization which are respectively based on force, self-interest and legitimacy. Ibid., 268-273.

<sup>961</sup> Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 94, 152-154.

<sup>962</sup> Wendt considers Hobbesian cultures as social 'insofar as they are based on representations of the Other in terms of which the posture of the Self is defined'. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 260.

<sup>963</sup> Rademaker, *Practices Makes Improvement*, 144.

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.<sup>964</sup> 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.<sup>965</sup>

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.<sup>966</sup> 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 (Part I) is not included. In other words, we need to include the first and second image 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'.<sup>967</sup> According to Wendt, the state has identities and interests whereby the second are not reducible to the first, because identities are about who and what actors are and interests are about what actors want.<sup>968</sup> Wendt accepts that states are constituted by the international structure, but they are forming their interests and identities by interacting socially with each other.<sup>969</sup> With this argument, Wendt includes the first and second level 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

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<sup>964</sup> Wendt, *Anarchy is what States Make of it*, 424; Alexander Wendt, "Identity and Structural Change in International Politics," in *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory*, eds. Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner, 1996), 48; Alexander Wendt, "A Comment on Held's Cosmopolitanism," in *Democracy's Edges*, eds. Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordon (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 127, 129, 132.

<sup>965</sup> Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 9, 243.

<sup>966</sup> Jodok Troy, *Christian Approaches to International Affairs* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 49. Troy argues that the same applies to the growth of the concept of soft power in comparison to hard power, because it is still related to the state. *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>967</sup> Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 194.

<sup>968</sup> *Ibid.*, 231.

<sup>969</sup> *Ibid.*, 243, 244, 245.

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.<sup>970</sup> That is the question I will address in the next section.

### **10.2.2. 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.<sup>971</sup> Morgenthau argues that national survival is a moral principle given the circumstances of international politics and the absence of a supranational government.<sup>972</sup> 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.<sup>973</sup>

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

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<sup>970</sup> Buijs and Polinder, *Christian Philosophical Reflections and Shalom-Searching Wisdom*, 318, 319.

<sup>971</sup> Evans and Newnham, *The Penguin Dictionary*, 112.

<sup>972</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 12.

<sup>973</sup> Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 91.

international public interest does not have the compulsory trait of a government, which can eventually impose an order.<sup>974</sup> 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’.<sup>975</sup> 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.<sup>976</sup>

It is interesting to see how Dooyeweerd reasons in the same way as Niebuhr does.<sup>977</sup> He acknowledges that vital interests play a role, but does not accept that egoistic self-interests are becoming the norm. He points at the mutually 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’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.<sup>978</sup> 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.

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<sup>974</sup> Herman Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, Vol. III and IV (Grand Rapids: Padeia Press, 1984), 600.

<sup>975</sup> *Ibid.*, 475.

<sup>976</sup> *Ibid.*, 476.

<sup>977</sup> See Section 9.3.5.

<sup>978</sup> Although there are striking similarities between constructivism and the views of the Amsterdam School, I do not discuss here any further to what extent the Amsterdam School agrees with a conventional, consistent or critical constructivist approach, or a combination of them, in international relations.

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 the foundational function of international politics.<sup>979</sup> In this view, politics is the sphere where power and justice come together. The difference between the domestic and the international domains 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 coalition and alliances, concluding treaties, etc.<sup>980</sup>

### **10.2.3. 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 unfolding of the practice.<sup>981</sup> It is not helpful to explore all thirteen 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.<sup>982</sup> 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

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<sup>979</sup> One could also argue that there should be an extra aspect namely the political. However, what would be the rule or norm of that aspect? I consider it important to retain the tension between justice and power, because that is so typical for international politics. I know that Dooyeweerd did not distinguish a political aspect. However, as the physicist M.D. Stafleu has made clear in his article, this is not convincing. In his view, the state is qualified by the political aspect and founded in the social aspect. M. D. Stafleu, "On the Character of Social Communities, the State and the Public Domain," *Philosophia Reformata* (2004). I differ from him on the latter point and found the state in the historical aspect.

<sup>980</sup> See also, Hoogland, *Positioning the Normative Practice Approach*, 47; H. Jochemsen and Corné J. Rademaker, "International Cooperation in Development: The Need for a Multidimensional Normative Approach," in *The Normative Nature of Social Practices and Ethics in Professional Environments*, eds. Marc J. de Vries and H. Jochemsen (Hershey: IGI Global, 2019), 263.

<sup>981</sup> Jochemsen and Glas, *Verantwoord medisch handelen*, 83.

<sup>982</sup> See Section 8.2.2.

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.<sup>983</sup>

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.<sup>984</sup>

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 a 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 the 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 occur. These worldviews, in particular when they gain traction on the political process, should be criticized the same way the political realists did in their

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<sup>983</sup> Dooyeweerd, *A New Critique of Theoretical Thought*, 476.

<sup>984</sup> See Section 5.6.3.

time.<sup>985</sup>

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 that 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.<sup>986</sup> 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.<sup>987</sup> I have argued that the context of power politics makes religious actors dependant 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 that 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, their own commitments and that influences the way they play the game. That is what the regulative side is about.<sup>988</sup>

#### **10.2.4. 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 guides and judges the interpretation and unfolding of the constitutive rules. The

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<sup>985</sup> Emilio Gentile, *Politics as Religion* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006), 13ff.

<sup>986</sup> See Section 2.5.3.

<sup>987</sup> Hoogland, *Positioning the Normative Practice Approach*, 48.

<sup>988</sup> *Ibid.*, 48-50.

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”.<sup>989</sup>

Thomas makes an interesting point here, because there is a relationship between the everyday behavior of citizens and 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 that 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 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.

In Chapter 1 I set out that the Amsterdam School takes scientific knowledge very seriously, but always in relation to the fullness of human experience. Theories provide clarification, but scholars always should consider how this relates to the everyday experience. Similarly, a state leader could be an expert in all kind 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.

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<sup>989</sup> Thomas, *Living Critically and Living Faithfully in the Global World of the Twenty-First Century*, 73.

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.<sup>990</sup>

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.<sup>991</sup>

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.<sup>992</sup>

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.<sup>993</sup>

In contrast to Morgenthau’s lower prudence, Kamminga pleads for higher prudence as the supreme virtue in international politics.<sup>994</sup> 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”’.<sup>995</sup> 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.<sup>996</sup> 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

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<sup>990</sup> Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 12.

<sup>991</sup> Rice, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Hans Morgenthau*, 276 fn. 71.

<sup>992</sup> *Ibid.*, 276.

<sup>993</sup> Waltz, *Reflections on Theory of International Politics*, 344.

<sup>994</sup> Menno R. Kamminga, “Higher Prudence as the Supreme Virtue in International Politics,” *Philica*, no. 134 (2008), <http://hdl.handle.net/11370/4b956dde-8a70-4f19-8e08-2acbb2d426c7>.

<sup>995</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>996</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

perspective that gives a sense of direction.<sup>997</sup> 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.<sup>998</sup>

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 its 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.<sup>999</sup> 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.<sup>1000</sup>

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.<sup>1001</sup>

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 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, pistical – that play a role. These aspects condition or qualify – meaning

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<sup>997</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>998</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>999</sup> Ibid., 12.

<sup>1000</sup> Ibid., 12, 13. Morgenthau and Thompson, *Politics Among Nations*, 12.

<sup>1001</sup> Kamminga, *Higher Prudence*.

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 or a 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 the 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 worldviews 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?<sup>1002</sup>

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 plays 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.<sup>1003</sup> 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:

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<sup>1002</sup> See, for example, the section 'Inspired Political Leaders' in Polinder and Buijs, *The Lamb and the Wolf*.

<sup>1003</sup> James M. Gustafson, *Theology and Christian Ethics* (Philadelphia: United Church Press, 1974), 99-119.

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".<sup>1004</sup>

### 10.2.5. 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.<sup>1005</sup> For that reason, the most adequate approach is to take the ambivalence of religion as a starting point.<sup>1006</sup> During the World Economic

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<sup>1004</sup> Buijs and Polinder, *Christian Philosophical Reflections and Shalom-Searching Wisdom*, 321, 322.

<sup>1005</sup> Hunter, *God on our Side*, 224.

<sup>1006</sup> R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000). I doubt whether Thomas is not too optimistic about the shared commitments of all people of faith 'that the final goals of International Relations are bringing about global peace, justice, and emancipation (i.e. not only for your 'our' own tribe, ethnicity, religion, community, country or civilization)'. Thomas, *Living Critically and Living Faithfully in the Global World of the Twenty-First Century*, 80. The religionist present many examples that illustrate this ambivalence. Bernbaum, *Getting Russia Right*, 143; Farr, *World of Faith and Freedom*, 57, 72, 91, 96, 97, 265; Fox and Sandler,

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, climate policy, etc. For each of these topics, it is also investigated whether religion can be a limiting factor, or for that same reason, be a solution.<sup>1007</sup> 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.<sup>1008</sup> 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 peace building.

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.<sup>1009</sup> 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.<sup>1010</sup> 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.<sup>1011</sup> This 'overlapping consensus' shows that religious leaders can be of relevance for international policy making.

Secondly, 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,

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*Bringing Religion into International Relations*, 39–41, 43, 48, 49; Fox, *Lessons on Religion and Conflict Resolution*, 34; Klein Goldewijk, *Resurgence of Religion*, 23; Patterson, *Politics in a Religious World*, 82–85; Stempel, *Faith, Diplomacy and the International System*, 8, 9; Thomas, *Religion and International Conflict*, 2; Thomas, *The Global Resurgence of Religion*, 33, 182, 184–186.

<sup>1007</sup> Brian J. Grim and others, *The Role of Faith in Systemic Global Challenges* (Geneva: World Economic Forum, 2016), online available at [http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF\\_GAC16\\_Role\\_of\\_Faith\\_in\\_Systemic\\_Global\\_Challenges.pdf](http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_GAC16_Role_of_Faith_in_Systemic_Global_Challenges.pdf) (accessed December 28, 2020).

<sup>1008</sup> Konrad Raier, *Religion, Power, Politics* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 2013).

<sup>1009</sup> The Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought, "A Common Word between Us and You," (2007), online available at <https://www.acommonword.com/the-acw-document/> (accessed December 28, 2020).

<sup>1010</sup> Harold W. Attridge, Miroslav Volf, Joseph Cumming, and Emilie M. Townes, "Loving God and Neighbor Together: A Christian Response to A Common Word Between Us and You," (2007), online available at <https://www.acommonword.com/loving-god-and-neighbor-together-a-christian-response-to-a-common-word-between-us-and-you/> (accessed December 28, 2020).

<sup>1011</sup> See for example the Dutch philosopher and atheist Herman Philipse, *Atheïstisch manifest: drie wijsgerige opstellen over godsdienst en moraal; de onredelijkheid van religie: vier wijsgerige opstellen over godsdienst en wetenschap*, 4th ed. (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2004), 135.

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 the 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 consideration 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.<sup>1012</sup>

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’.<sup>1013</sup>

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 on face value, it requires study 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 realist. The religionists may be too quick and uncritical in taking religion seriously and involve 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 sphere sound.

Fourthly, practitioners should dare to weigh and decide whether religious actors or religious worldviews are sufficiently relevant to deal with in a particular situation. Too

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<sup>1012</sup> Ingvar Carlsson, *World Religions as a Factor in World Politics* (Tübingen: InterAction Council, 2007), online available at <https://www.interactioncouncil.org/publications/world-religions-factor-world-politics> (accessed December 28, 2020).

<sup>1013</sup> Ibid.

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 less 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 at 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 towards 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.<sup>1014</sup> 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.<sup>1015</sup>

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.<sup>1016</sup>

Hunter maintains that the influence of religion takes place mainly through the international politics of the state.<sup>1017</sup> Interestingly, many of her other descriptions of religion's role in international relations are similar to the religionist ones. She describes religion's influence through domestic structures, civil society, public opinion, political leaders. She points at 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.<sup>1018</sup>

Berger too asked whether Islam is an important factor in international relations and concluded that it 'plays a relatively small role in international relations'.<sup>1019</sup> 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

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<sup>1014</sup> Hunter, *God on our Side*, 223.

<sup>1015</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>1016</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>1017</sup> *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>1018</sup> *Ibid.*, 226-228.

<sup>1019</sup> Maurits Berger, *Religion and Islam in Contemporary International Relations* (The Hague: Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael, 2010), 25.

“Islamize” foreign politics and politics of Muslim countries - that is, to identify 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.<sup>1020</sup>

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 the Islam is disruptive to a true understanding of international relations.<sup>1021</sup> Too much focus on religious arguments and too much attention for 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.<sup>1022</sup> 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.<sup>1023</sup> But that is not required from outsiders, because religion is not entirely subjective or irrational. Many religious people are well versed to argue 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 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.<sup>1024</sup> 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 an entirely different nature and deserve to be treated as political issues. Just as I encourage the religionists and political theorists to be explicit about their political-theological or worldview starting points, the same applies to international politics. One need not to talk like a theologian but one should recognize that political-theological considerations and worldview 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.<sup>1025</sup>

Instead of Berger’s stance in which religious discourse is ignored and deconstructed,

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<sup>1020</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>1021</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>1022</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>1023</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>1024</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>1025</sup> Audi nicely shows that there are different ways to incorporate certain worldview considerations. Robert Audi, *Religious Commitment and Secular Reason* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 69-78.

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 their 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.<sup>1026</sup>

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have proposed a practice approach of international relations based on ideas from the Amsterdam School. It combines the practice ideas as developed by MacIntyre with the insights of Dooyeweerd. It leads to a practice-based theory which distinguishes between context, a structural and a regulative side. 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 to 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 as set out in this chapter is partly a response to the diagnosis and possible solutions presented in Chapter 9. The NPA also combines the strengths of both political

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<sup>1026</sup> Sara Silvestri and James Mayall, *The Role of Religion in Conflict and Peacebuilding* (London: The British Academy, 2015), 2.

realists and the 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 a 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, 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.



# **Conclusion Part III**

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**Conspiring Nations and Religion: A Call  
for Serenity, Courage and Discernment**

## Conclusion Part III: Conspiring Nations and Religion: A Call for Serenity, Courage and Discernment

In 1964, Thompson, a colleague of Morgenthau, wrote the following on the topic of religion and international relations.

The rapid shifts and changes in the contact of present-day international relations lead spokesmen and critics of religion to opposing conclusions respecting the continuing relevance of religion. Some spokesmen whom with a certain irreverence I have called apologists envisage the solution in a straightforward revival of religious consciousness. In a world dominated by a vast pluralism of religious and political outlooks, this approach seems more a pious hope than a practical possibility. But the answer of critics and cynics who rejoice in the passing of the Christian era is more disturbing. Religion and its lessons provide a thread of continuity in a world of unsurpassed change. These lessons give us a theme on which discussion appropriately reached some concluding points of focus.<sup>1027</sup>

With that, he neatly summarizes the different lines of thought from this dissertation. The main research question of this dissertation was: To what extent could the claims of the religionists be substantiated and what would be the implications for IR theory if their claims are plausible indeed? Since I have answered this question already quite extensively I will not repeat it here again. However, I would like to emphasize a few issues. This dissertation has shown, for example, that the positive meaning of the global resurgence should not be overestimated. First of all, because it is unclear what exactly has changed, but especially because the global resurgence of religion does not have to be positive by definition. Religion has a Janus face. It is an ambivalent phenomenon. It can also have a negative contribution.

Thompson writes about 'apologists'. He describes them as people who think that the religious resurgence is the solution. The religionists sometimes have a similar attitude and this influences their assessment of the global resurgence of religion. At the same time, the religionists do contribute hope and perspective that this world does not have to be the way it is. The political realists may be too focused on the practical or added value of religion for theorizing and therefore cannot see that religion, as Niebuhr argues, opens the doors for a new perspective that could be a source for justice, understood as love making its way in the world.

A nice contribution in a similar vein as Thompson is the book *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World* by Miroslav Volf. The origin of this book are classes he gave on religion and globalization together with former state leader Tony Blair. He then shared his ideas all over the world in countless countries with a wide variety of scholars, which is how this book came to be. Volf recognizes that the world is pluriform

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<sup>1027</sup> Thompson, *Religion and International Relations*, 20.

and that religion can be a source of conflict. He assumes the same as Thompson, namely: 'Religion and its lessons provide a thread of continuity in a world of unsurpassed change'. According to Volf, religions contain leads and sources that can contribute to human flourishing. With the term flourishing, Volf refers to life that has been lived well, life that goes well, and life that feels well. It concerns the good life and whether life is worth to be lived. Volf does not shy away from labelling certain aspects of religion as wrong. In short, he is not merely in favour of 'more' religion, but in favour of religion that contributes to flourishing.<sup>1028</sup>

The title of the introduction of Part III is that we need to study things and maintain what is good. Based on that, I have also shown that the contributions of the religionists, the political realists, and the Amsterdam School have brought forth many good things. NPA has played an important role in that, because it manages to unite many elements from the different parties. I do regard that as my contribution to the discussion on religion and international relations. I have not only tried to represent the religionist position as completely and as accurately as possible, but I have also shown that many of their reproaches are sometimes unwarranted. That does not take away the fact that the religionists' point still stands. That also applies to the insights we have garnered by studying the political realists and the contributions of the Amsterdam School.

When I think about further directions, I think both religionists and IR theorists will need to think about what it is they want to theorize about and how they wish to do so. Will it become religion with international relations as a sub-discipline to gain more knowledge on the role of religion in the world? Or will it focus on the international relations and the discussion on whether religion is necessary to understand or explain the domain more effectively? It is also possible to do both, of course, where religionists will mainly opt for the first and try to give input based on that for the IR theorists who work on the second. That also provides opportunities to work with separate interpretations of theory. With religion and international relations, or International Political Theology as a subdiscipline, more use can be made of interpretive approaches. When discussing the domain of international relations, perhaps a more explanatory approach can be strived for. The NPA tries to integrate both in a sense.

Another important point for the future is that we need to look towards the domain of theory and the involvement of worldviews. Hopefully, this will also open up room for reflecting on the worldview presuppositions and the degree to which they permeate theorizing. That requires openness and vulnerability, and perhaps even an abandonment of the scientific ivory tower, but it can also reduce a lot of noise and result in a larger mutual understanding.

Personally, I would like it if this involvement of the worldview level leads to the realization of the practitioners of international relations that there is a lot of overlapping

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<sup>1028</sup> Miroslav Volf, *Flourishing: Why We Need Religion in a Globalized World* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2015).

consensus, and that this can be a basis on which government leaders, international organizations and institutions, and civilians find each other when the nations conspire and the kings of the earth rise up, the people plot, and the rulers band together (Psalm 2). That requires courage, because as Niebuhr makes clear in his serenity prayer, there are always things that can be changed. But it also requires serenity, because there will always be things that cannot be changed. The difficulty is to know and see the difference between these two. That requires wisdom and moral discernment.



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## Samenvatting

### **Hoofdstuk 1. Inleiding: de noodzaak van een nieuw religie-paradigma in het vakgebied Internationale Betrekkingen en de mogelijke bijdrage van de christelijke filosofie**

Vanaf het begin van de jaren negentig van de vorige eeuw is er een groep wetenschappers opgestaan die het vakgebied Internationale Betrekkingen (IB) fel bekritiseert. Volgens hen zou het ten onrechte de rol van religie in de internationale verhoudingen negeren. De gevolgen hiervan zouden dramatisch zijn: inadequate theorieën leiden namelijk tot inadequaat beleid. Wanneer de Verenigde Staten de rol en betekenis van religie serieuzer hadden genomen, was bijvoorbeeld de Iraanse Revolutie van 1979 geen complete verrassing geweest. Deze groep wetenschappers vindt dan ook dat er binnen IB meer aandacht moet komen voor de rol van religie. Om dat mogelijk te maken, zouden bestaande theorieën moeten worden vervangen of aangepast.

In mijn proefschrift onderzoek ik de claim van deze groep wetenschappers, die ik voor het gemak religionisten noem. Ik stel de vraag in hoeverre de claim van de religionisten hout snijdt en wat de consequenties hiervan zijn voor IB. Om deze vraag te kunnen beantwoorden, onderzoek ik in de eerste hoofdstukken wat de religionisten betogen. Wat zeggen ze precies en hoe ziet hun argumentatie eruit (Deel I)? In de tweede plaats 'test' ik in hoeverre de religionisten gelijk hebben als we kijken naar de meest bekritiseerde en meest dominante school binnen IB, namelijk het politiek realisme. Negeert het realisme inderdaad religie en doet zij dat ook vanwege de redenen die de religionisten hiervoor aandragen (Deel II)? In de derde plaats ga ik na wat de consequenties zijn van de antwoorden op voorgaande vragen voor IB. Moet zij inderdaad haar theorieën vervangen of herzien of is er een alternatief (Deel III)?

De opvatting dat religie geïncorporeerd zou moeten worden in IB is gebaseerd op drie beweringen van respectievelijk empirische, domein-specifieke en wetenschapsfilosofische aard. De empirische stelling is dat religie zo'n belangrijke rol speelt in de wereld dat IB dit niet kan negeren en moet incorporeren. De tweede stelling is dat IB als vakgebied een blinde vlek heeft waardoor zij religie niet ziet. De derde stelling gaat over de manier waarop er binnen IB gedacht wordt over wetenschapsfilosofische zaken. Hoewel de stellingen op zichzelf staan, is er een duidelijke onderlinge relatie. Aannames die op wetenschapsfilosofisch niveau worden gemaakt, werken door op het domein-specifieke niveau en uiteindelijk ook op het empirische niveau. Uiteraard kan die invloed ook in omgekeerde richting plaatsvinden. In de hoofdstukken 1-3 presenteer ik de inhoud van de stellingen.

Op basis van het gedachtegoed van de christelijke filosofie voeg ik echter nog een vierde niveau toe, namelijk het levensbeschouwelijke niveau. Dit is nodig om de discussie te verhelderen. In de discussie spelen namelijk levensbeschouwelijke aannames een rol die doorwerken op de drie genoemde niveaus. Een levensbeschouwing is opgebouwd

uit overtuigingen enerzijds en een persoonlijk ultiem commitment anderzijds. Beide elementen kunnen elkaar versterken. Overtuigingen die rationeel kunnen worden verdedigd zijn in een levensbeschouwing ook zaken waar men een bepaalde waarde aan hecht en waar men persoonlijk vertrouwen in stelt.

Een wereldbeschouwing kan seculier, quasi-seculier of religieus van aard zijn. In het eerste geval wordt er niet uitgegaan van een transcendent oriëntatiepunt. Een quasi-seculiere wereldbeschouwing heeft overeenkomsten met een religieuze wereldbeschouwing, maar uiteindelijk is het doel een immanente werkelijkheid. Zodra een quasi-religieuze wereldbeschouwing publieke of politieke aspiraties krijgt kan het een ideologie of politieke religie worden. Een religieuze wereldbeschouwing heeft als referentiepunt een transcendente werkelijkheid.

De verschillende soorten wereldbeschouwingen spelen bewust of onbewust een rol in het debat. Bijvoorbeeld doordat er bepaalde politiek-theologische opvattingen worden gehuldigd. Dit zijn theologische ideeën die afkomstig zijn van de theologie (de wetenschappelijke discipline die religieuze wereldbeschouwingen bestudeert) of ontspruiten aan een religieuze wereldbeschouwing en die worden toegepast op het politieke domein. Het kan ook doordat bepaalde persoonlijke voorkeuren of opvattingen doorwerken in de waardering van religie.

Behalve dat levensbeschouwing een rol speelt in de het vakgebied IB, speelt zij ook een rol in de internationale betrekkingen zelf. Bijvoorbeeld doordat bepaalde ideologieën of politieke religies met een quasi-seculier karakter het gedrag van mensen en actoren bepalen. Door het gebruik van het concept levensbeschouwing is het mogelijk de uiteenlopende manieren waarop religie een rol speelt beter te zien. Religie veronderstelt wel een religieuze wereldbeschouwing, maar wordt vaak beperkt opgevat als de gemeenschappen en de praktijken die daarbij horen. Ik definieer religie dan ook als de persoonlijke commitment aan een aantal overtuigingen over de uiteindelijke grond van het bestaan, een transcendent referentiepunt en de gemeenschappen en praktijken die daar uit voortvloeien en daar omheen gevormd worden. Religie omvat dus de religieuze levensbeschouwing en de bijbehorende praktijken. Als ik spreek over de rol van religie in de internationale betrekkingen, gaat het over bovengenoemde. Ik wijs daarnaast echter op de invloed van religieuze, quasi-religieuze en seculiere levensbeschouwingen. Dit voorkomt dat er gemakkelijk wordt gesproken over religie als een duidelijk afgebakende zichtbare categorie, terwijl religie heel gelaagd is en zich op tal van subtiele manieren voordoet. Soms zelf op zo'n manier dat ogenschijnlijke seculiere bewegingen of denkbeelden 'religieuzer' zijn dat ze doen voorkomen.

## **Deel I: Een kritische reconstructie van de positie van de religionisten**

In dit deel worden de drie stellingen van de religionisten een voor een uit de doeken gedaan. Daarbij wordt ook gekeken naar wat er in deze stellingen eventueel doorschemert aan levensbeschouwelijke elementen.

## **Hoofdstuk 2. De empirisch basis van de religionisten: de heropleving van religie**

De religionisten ondersteunen de stelling dat religie een belangrijke rol speelt met de observatie dat religie een heropleving heeft doorgemaakt sinds de jaren zestig. Ze dragen hier verschillende verklaringen voor aan, zoals het globaliseringsproces, de toegenomen interesse van academici voor religie, de opkomst van de radicale Islam en de invloed van de moderniteit op niet-westerse samenlevingen. Hoewel deze verklaringen van nogal uiteenlopende aard zijn, vormen ze samen voor de religionisten voldoende bewijs voor hun stelling: sinds de jaren zestig is er echt iets veranderd ten aanzien van religie in de wereld en IB dient daar aandacht aan te geven.

De religionisten onderbouwen hun stelling vervolgens door te laten zien dat religie eigenlijk overal aanwezig is. Ze illustreren dat met tal van empirische voorbeelden op verschillende niveaus:

- individuele niveau (regeringsleiders, beleidsmakers of diplomaten die zich direct of indirect door religieuze overwegingen laten sturen);
- nationale niveau (via religieus geïnspireerde maatschappelijke organisaties of politieke partijen, of door overheden die zich expliciet verbinden aan een bepaalde (staats)religie);
- transnationale niveau (missionaire activiteiten, religieus terrorisme, non-gouvernementele organisaties zoals World Vision, World Conference of Religion and Peace of Opus Dei);
- internationale niveau (de Heilige Stoel met diplomatieke betrekkingen in 168 landen).

## **Hoofdstuk 3. De religie-blindheid van het oude paradigma: de dominantie van het Westfaalse systeem**

Volgens de religionisten zijn er een aantal vakspecifieke assumpties die ervoor zorgen dat IB een blinde vlek heeft met betrekking tot religie. De belangrijkste oorzaak die zij noemen is dat IB is gestoeld op Westfaalse assumpties: de opvatting dat de staat de centrale actor is, dat macht als het nationale belang van de staat wordt gezien en dat het binnenlandse domein als irrelevant wordt gezien. Hoewel elk van deze verklaringen op zichzelf staat, worden ze versterkt door een vierde verklaring, namelijk dat IB het Westfaalse systeem identificeert als het moment waarop de invloed van religie afnam. Elk van de genoemde assumpties zou er voor zorgen dat religie buitenspel werd gezet, gemarginaliseerd of geprivatiseerd werd, omdat het de publieke orde bedreigt. Vanuit hetzelfde paradigma werd de Koude Oorlog geanalyseerd en geïnterpreteerd als een competitie tussen twee seculiere ideologieën. Religieuze conflicten of verschijnselen werden binnen dit seculiere raamwerk geanalyseerd, waardoor de rol van religie over het hoofd werd gezien.

De religionisten stellen niet alleen dat deze assumpties allang niet meer opgaan omdat de wereld veranderd is. Zij presenteren ook een alternatieve visie op dit proces. Zij zien Westfalen ook als een seculariseringsproces, maar waarderen dit anders. Ze noemen deze benadering neosecularisatietheorie. Dit houdt in dat secularisatie wordt gezien als een verandering van de institutionele plaats van religie. Secularisatie hoeft dus niet te betekenen dat er minder gelovigen zijn of dat religie een minder prominente rol speelt in het publieke domein. Het betekent dat religie een andere gedaante heeft aangenomen. Waar voorheen de legitimiteit van sociale instituties binnen een bovennatuurlijk raamwerk werd bepaald, gelden daarvoor tegenwoordig empirische en rationele criteria. Deze criteria komen echter tot stand binnen een religieuze of christelijke context en als zodanig zijn ze daar nog schatplichtig aan. Het seculiere is zo'n categorie: het veronderstelt het gebruik van taal waarin het religieuze en eventuele verwijzingen naar het religieuze afwezig is, maar het betekent niet dat het daarmee vijandig is richting religie.

De religionisten werken deze neosecularisatietheorie verder niet uit richting de rol van de staat en het nationale belang, maar het is niet moeilijk voor te stellen dat zij dit als een minder religie-vijandige ontwikkeling zien dan binnen de gangbare IB wordt aangehangen. En dat opent mogelijkheden om ook in deze tijd aandacht te vragen voor de rol van religie. Religie hoeft namelijk niet op gespannen voet te staan met de staat, het nationale belang, veiligheid en macht.

#### **Hoofdstuk 4. De dominantie van naturalistisch denken in het ontstaan van het oude paradigma**

Op het wetenschapsfilosofische niveau zijn er verschillende oorzaken te noemen die eraan bijdragen dat religie gemarginaliseerd wordt. Allereerst is daar de invloed van de Verlichting. Volgens de religionisten heeft de Verlichting ervoor gezorgd dat geloof en rede werden gescheiden. Vervolgens werd religie tot een irrationele vorm van kennis gereduceerd bestaande uit morele regels, en werd het terrein van de rede versmald tot dat wat (natuur)wetenschappelijke kenbaar is. Dit zorgde ervoor dat religie steeds verder gemarginaliseerd en geprivatiseerd werd. Volgens de religionisten is dit terug te zien in IB, omdat religie hooguit nog interessant wordt gevonden als een vorm van soft power. Maar die is inferieur ten opzichte van hard power zoals militaire en economische macht.

Een concreet gevolg van het verlichtingsdenken is de zogenaamde moderniserings- en seculariseringstheorie. Deze theorie was binnen de sociale wetenschappen jarenlang dominant. Volgens de religionisten is IB een van de meest westerse varianten binnen de sociale wetenschappen. Daardoor is ze sterk beïnvloed door de moderniserings- en seculariseringstheorie. Als gevolg daarvan zou binnen IB lange tijd verondersteld zijn geweest dat religie als vanzelf zou verdwijnen. De religionisten wijzen erop dat inmiddels is gebleken dat deze theorie niet klopt.

Het ontologische argument van de religionisten luidt dat IB is gebaseerd op materialisme. Daardoor ziet IB de waarneembare werkelijkheid als een reflectie van materiële oorzaken. Dit leidt er binnen IB toe dat religie wordt gereduceerd tot een materieel verschijnsel. Zoals ook militaire macht, geografische ligging en natuurlijke hulpbronnen materiële verschijnselen zijn. Volgens de religionisten is de gedachte dat materiele aspecten gemakkelijker in een theorie zijn te vatten een belangrijke stimulans om deze meer gewicht te geven. Naast materialisme zien de religionisten ook holisme als een oorzaak waardoor religie geen plek krijgt. Holisme betekent namelijk dat het gedrag van individuele actoren wordt verklaard vanuit het grotere geheel en de structurele en materiële krachten van het systeem. Religie wordt al snel over het hoofd gezien in deze top-down benadering.

De religionisten betogen verder dat IB dusdanig is beïnvloed door het positivisme dat religie als vanzelf buiten beeld is geraakt. Het positivisme zorgt er in de eerste plaats voor dat men in het ontwikkelen van theorieën streeft naar maximale verklaringskracht naar analogie van theorieën in de natuurwetenschappen. Als gevolg hiervan worden religie en cultuur niet meegenomen in het theoretiseren. Positivisme zou, in de tweede plaats, uitgaan van een rationaliteit die onafhankelijk van de context geldig is. Het resultaat hiervan is dat ideële factoren, zoals religie en cultuur, en hun historische verschijningsvormen niet worden verdisconteerd. Een derde ontwikkeling die volgens de religionisten met het positivisme samenhangt, is de secularisering van gebruikte concepten. Veel concepten binnen IB waren van theologische oorsprong, maar de invloed van positivisme en behaviorisme zorgde ervoor dat theologische concepten plaats moesten maken voor sociaal-wetenschappelijke concepten en methodes. Volgens de religionisten heeft dit er toe geleid dat er minder aandacht kwam voor religie.

Als laatste betogen de religionisten dat IB religie reduceert tot een irrationeel, individueel en institutioneel verschijnsel. Daardoor zou IB de rationele, collectieve en ideële kant van religie veronachtzamen. Deze opvatting van religie leidt tot een gemankeeerde visie op de werkelijke rol van religie, volgens de religionisten.

### **Conclusie Deel I. Contouren van een nieuw paradigma?**

Het valt op dat de religionisten veel overtuigend empirisch materiaal presenteren om te laten zien dat religie overal een rol speelt. Dat is een punt wat IB serieus moet nemen. Helaas slagen de religionisten er niet in om te laten zien hoe religie dan precies anders is dan vele andere factoren die een rol spelen en waarom religie dan zo onderscheidend is dat het aparte behandeling verdient. Als het gaat om de kritiek op het Westfaalse systeem valt het op dat de religionisten niet alleen kritiek leveren, maar ook een alternatieve visie op secularisatie naar voren brengen. Daarnaast is het positief dat er niet alleen kritiek is op bepaalde opvattingen binnen de IB omdat het leidt tot het negeren van religie, maar ook omdat bepaalde opvattingen zoals de centrale rol van de staat volgens hen niet meer in lijn is met de stand van zaken in de wetenschap. Helaas is dit in het geval van het deel

over de Verlichting anders. Hier wordt vooral kritiek geleverd en worden gematigder varianten van de Verlichting buiten beschouwing gelaten.

Door niet alleen te kijken naar wat de religionisten schrijven over religie, maar ook wat daarin mogelijk aan levensbeschouwelijke invloeden doorheen klinkt, valt op dat ze in hun taalgebruik en definitie van religie niet altijd zo objectief zijn als het lijkt. Regelmatig lijkt het dat bepaalde persoonlijke voorkeuren of opvattingen oplichten in de manier waarover men over de materie schrijft en discussieert. Zo lijkt de algemene teneur te zijn dat de terugkeer van religie iets positiefs is en wordt dat hier en daar aangegrepen om het tekort van een seculiere benadering te bekritisieren. Voor een gelijkwaardig en transparant debat is het waardevol dit te benoemen en te onderkennen. Het is overigens niet vreemd dat het gebeurt: het gaat immers over religie en dat gaat vaak ook over onszelf.

Het is overigens opvallend dat de religionisten IB denkers ook verwijten dat ze er bevooroordeeld in staan. Zo wijzen zij erop dat er in binnen de IB bepaalde mythes in stand worden gehouden die veel weg hebben van een gesecculariseerde eschatologie.

Door de kritiek van de religionisten is duidelijk dat zij een ander paradigma voor zich zien. Een paradigma waar oog is voor religie, niet alleen als set van opvattingen, maar ook als een sociale praktijk. Dit paradigma moet gebaseerd zijn op een andere visie op secularisatie dan nu dominant is. Bovendien lijken de religionisten de voorkeur te hebben voor een meer interpretatieve theorie.

## **Deel II: Ter verdediging van het ‘oude’ paradigma: ‘augustiniaanse momenten’ in IB**

Nu de claim, de stellingen en de onderliggende argumenten van de religionisten duidelijk zijn, is het de vraag of hun claim stand houdt. In dit tweede deel ga ik na in hoeverre de verschillende stellingen van de religionisten en de daarbij behorende argumenten juist zijn. Daarbij kijk ik naar twee invloedrijke vertegenwoordigers van respectievelijk het klassieke realisme en het neorealisme. In de hoofdstukken vijf en zes zet ik respectievelijk uiteen hoe ik Morgenthau's klassieke realisme interpreteer en in hoeverre de religionisten gelijk hebben. In de hoofdstukken zeven en acht presenteer ik achtereenvolgens Waltz's neorealisme en de mate waarin de religionisten in dat geval hun claim kunnen staven. De rode lijn in mijn argumentatie is dat er in het politiek realisme augustiniaanse elementen aanwezig zijn die mee dienen te worden gewogen om een volledig beeld te krijgen. Deze invloed verloopt voornamelijk via de Amerikaanse theoloog Reinhold Niebuhr. De augustiniaanse invloeden worden zichtbaar als het gaat om de visie op de mens, de geschiedenis en de ethiek. We zijn hiermee op het terrein gekomen van de politieke theologie, omdat deze ideeën theologisch geïnspireerd zijn, maar toegepast worden op de politiek. Het is ook niet noodzakelijkerwijs zo dat Morgenthau of Waltz deze ideeën persoonlijk aanhangen.

## **Hoofdstuk 5. De verborgen theologie van Morgenthau's klassieke realisme**

Morgenthau kan niet goed begrepen worden als er geen aandacht is voor de theologische invloeden op zijn politieke denken. Morgenthau gaat ervan uit dat de mens, zoals beschreven in het paradijsverhaal, de neiging heeft om vanuit hoogmoed zijn grenzen te overschrijden. De mens wil als God zijn, maar zijn menselijke conditie staat dat niet toe. Dit 'zondige' streven van de mens is zo verweven met de orde van de wereld dat er als gevolg daarvan een voortdurende strijd is tussen goed en kwaad en geen onvermijdelijke ontwikkeling naar het goede. De visie van Morgenthau op de geschiedenis hangt hier mee samen. Morgenthau ziet de menselijke tijd begrensd door Gods tijd. Dat betekent dat de vervulling van de geschiedenis uiteindelijk vanuit God komt en niet door de mens wordt bewerkt. Dat heeft weer gevolgen voor de ethiek. De mens moet op zoek gaan naar oplossingen die in deze tijd en context werken. Dit kan ertoe leiden dat het mindere kwaad de beste oplossing is in sommige situaties. In kort bestek zijn dit de uitgangspunten van Morgenthau's politieke theologie en dat werkt door in zijn visie op de staat, macht, ethiek en het onderscheid tussen religie en politiek. Morgenthau is er vanuit zijn politieke theologie erg beducht voor dat de autonomie van de politieke sfeer niet wordt aangetast. Vanuit die gedachte is terughoudendheid ten aanzien van het betrekken van religieuze actoren bij Morgenthau te begrijpen.

Het klassiek realisme van Morgenthau benader ik primair vanuit zijn magnum opus *Politics Among Nations* uit 1948 dat vele herdrukken beleefde. Ik richt mij vooral op het eerste hoofdstuk waarin hij zijn zes principes van het politiek realisme uiteenzet. Dat betekent niet dat ik zijn andere werken niet in ogenschouw neem, maar ik behandel deze als aanvullend op *Politics Among Nations*. Morgenthau's zes principes bevatten weinig expliciete empirische elementen. Die vinden we echter wel terug in de andere hoofdstukken van *Politics Among Nations* en zijn resterende werken. Hij heeft namelijk veel over actuele politieke vraagstukken heeft geschreven. Ik beschouw die bijdragen als het empirische deel van Morgenthau's theorie.

In mijn weergave van zijn klassiek realisme benader ik die vanuit de volgorde van de zes realistische principes. Dat betekent dat ik Morgenthau's klassiek realisme benader vanuit zijn ontologische en epistemologische aanname dat er constante objectieve rationele wetten zijn die ook door ons in meer of mindere mate gekend kunnen worden. Wetenschap is daarbij volgens Morgenthau slechts een van de manieren om hier iets over te zeggen, want religie en filosofie doen dat ook. Hij waarschuwt voor de neiging om de wetenschappelijke benadering bepalend te laten zijn. Morgenthau vindt namelijk dat politieke wetenschappen gebaseerd moeten zijn op een wereldbeschouwing waarin ook religie en filosofie een plek hebben.

Morgenthau's opvatting van theorie is ideaaltypisch, wat betekent dat hij zijn theorie ziet als een reflectie op veronderstelde objectieve rationele wetten. Vanuit zijn ideaaltypische benadering denkt Morgenthau vanuit verschillende sferen, zoals de politieke, religieuze, economische en morele sfeer. Hij vindt dat een politieke theorie

zich moet beperken tot de politieke sfeer en de rationaliteit daarvan moet proberen bloot te leggen. Zij moet deze rationaliteit niet laten vertroebelen door de rationaliteit van andere sferen. Morgenthau komt op voor de eigenheid, de 'autonomie' van de politieke sfeer. Voor Morgenthau was het heel duidelijk dat de politieke sfeer in zijn tijd werd gekarakteriseerd door de belangen van natiestaten en dat macht daarin bepalend is. Hij merkt daarbij wel op dat nationaal belang in een andere tijd of cultuur een andere betekenis kan krijgen: het is in die zin contextbepaald. Volgens Morgenthau kan er een tijd aanbreken dat de natiestaat vervangen wordt door een andere, grotere eenheid.

Het is kenmerkend voor Morgenthau's klassiek realisme dat het een theorie is over buitenlands beleid en dus gaat over het snijvlak van binnenlandse en internationale politiek. Het verschil tussen die beiden is echter dat in de internationale politiek een supranationale instelling ontbreekt, terwijl dat meestal wel aanwezig is op binnenlands niveau. Omdat buitenlands beleid gaat over het snijvlak tussen die twee, speelt moraal in Morgenthau's denken ook een wat ambivalente rol. Dat betekent niet dat moraal afwezig is, want volgens Morgenthau is politiek realisme zich bewust van de morele significantie van politiek en de betekenis en het belang van universele morele normen. Morgenthau's visie kan het best omschreven worden als tragisch. Hij erkent de noodzakelijkheid van macht, maar beseft dat politiek daar nooit mee kan volstaan. Hij erkent het bestaan van universele morele principes, maar weet ook dat de realisering daarvan afhankelijk is van de context waarin de verschillende belangen worden vormgegeven. Zo onderscheidt hij tussen wat individuen en staten in moreel opzicht van elkaar kunnen verwachten. Daarmee wil Morgenthau de spanning tussen de hoge morele eisen die aan individuen worden gesteld en hetgeen staten kunnen waarmaken niet teniet doen. Die spanning acht hij juist kenmerkend en fundamenteel voor het politieke domein. Tenslotte stelt Morgenthau dat politiek realisme kritisch is ten aanzien van de neiging van staten om hun nationaal belang te identificeren met een universele morele wet, want hij beschouwt het als afgoderij als staten dat doen.

### **Hoofdstuk 6. Religie in Morgenthau's klassieke realisme: het is de theologie!**

De religionistische argumentatie houdt geen stand in het licht van Morgenthau's klassiek realisme. Het blijkt namelijk dat de drie stellingen in het geval van Morgenthau maar beperkt opgaan. Ten aanzien van de empirische stelling geldt dat er overduidelijk bewijs is dat Morgenthau zich bewust was van de aanwezigheid van religie op de verschillende niveaus. Er is geen aanwijzing dat Morgenthau zich ook bewust was van een heropleving van religie. Het is niettemin veelzeggend dat hij zelfs zonder deze heropleving zich bewust was van de rol van religie in de wereld.

Als het gaat om de domein-specifieke stelling ligt het wat genuanceerder. Morgenthau schrijft wel over religie en moraal, doet zelfs theologische uitspraken, maar benadrukt voortdurend het onderscheid met de politieke sfeer waardoor er niet echt over een blinde vlek gesproken kan worden. Het is dan ook niet verwonderlijk dat de redenen die

religionisten aandragen om de absentie van religie in Morgenthau's theorie te verklaren, nauwelijks van toepassing zijn. Zo stellen de religionisten dat Morgenthau de staat als centrale actor ziet die fungeert als een black box, en dat hij het nationaal belang definieert als macht. De religionisten hebben gelijk dat Morgenthau deze aannames huldigt met uitzondering van de black box assumptie, want dat is direct in tegenspraak met zijn zes principes. Het punt is dat Morgenthau duidelijk stelt dat deze aannames afhankelijk zijn van tijd en plaats. Het is dus in theorie mogelijk dat Morgenthau in de huidige tijd op basis van empirische gegevens tot een andere invulling van zijn assumpties zou komen.

Het is lastig te beoordelen of Morgenthau het Westfaalse systeem inderdaad beschouwt als de opmaat naar de privatisering van religie, omdat hij er weinig over schrijft. In ieder geval heeft het er niet toe geleid dat hij daardoor het definiëren van het nationale belang als macht en de opkomende centrale rol van de staat als een proces van afnemende invloed van religie beschouwde. Integendeel, vanuit zijn politieke theologie was Morgenthau gekant tegen een strikte scheiding tussen religie en politiek, omdat het zou leiden tot een volledig geseclariseerde staat die zijn legitimatie aan zichzelf ontleent en niet aan religieuze openbaring. Tegen die achtergrond moet zijn pleidooi voor de staat en de autonomie van de politiek worden gezien. Voor Morgenthau belichaamde de huidige staat de verbinding met de christelijke morele orde. Hij beschouwde het als secularisering als de staat deze dualistische verhouding zou verbreken. Het zou namelijk leiden vereenzelviging van het nationale belang met de morele orde en daarmee tot een politieke religie zoals in het geval van het liberalisme, zeker als deze gemengd werd met bepaalde vormen van liberaal protestantisme. Het realisme van Morgenthau komt daarmee in verweer tegen al te utopische en eschatologische denkbeelden en biedt een politieke visie waarin de animositeit tussen verschillende werelden en de beperktheid van de politiek een gegeven is.

De religionisten hebben gelijk als ze stellen dat Morgenthau de ideologische functie van religie vaak sterk benadrukt, maar dat is niet wat zijn zes principes kenmerkt. Daarnaast wordt in Morgenthau's andere werken duidelijk dat hij helder onderscheid maakt tussen religie en de verwording en ideologisering daarvan. Daarmee vervalt dus het argument dat de invloed van de context van de Koude Oorlog zou leiden tot een ideologische benadering van religie. In sommige gevallen, zoals de invloed van de Verlichting en de moderniserings- en secularisatietheorie, is het zelfs zo dat Morgenthau bijkans het tegenovergestelde stelt van wat de religionisten denken dat hij beweert. Zo was Morgenthau erg kritisch op de Verlichting en verdedigt hij ten aanzien van de moderniserings- en seculariseringstheorie de blijvende betekenis van de religieuze menselijke impuls. Ten aanzien van het punt dat IB alleen de irrationele, institutionele en individuele aspecten van religie benadrukt, geldt dat de zes principes daar geen aanleiding voor geven. De verdere geschriften van Morgenthau laten juist zien dat Morgenthau de andere aspecten van religie ook in ogenschouw nam.

Ook in andere gevallen gaat de kritiek van de religionisten nauwelijks op. Zo is heel duidelijk dat Morgenthau op geen enkele manier als een positivist beschouwd kan worden. Het verwijt van de religionisten dat Morgenthau een materialist zou zijn, is ook niet correct, omdat hij duidelijk stelt dat belangen zowel materieel als ideëel kunnen zijn.

Kortom, de claim van de religionisten kan *in casu* Morgenthau niet worden gehandhaafd. Overigens is met dit assessment niet gezegd dat de claim van de religionisten niet waar zou kunnen zijn: ik heb alleen aangetoond dat de redenen die zij aandragen te zwak zijn. Morgenthau zelf stond namelijk open voor nieuwe empirische gegevens die tot bijstelling of aanvulling van zijn theorie zouden leiden, dus dat zou ook in dit geval kunnen gebeuren. Of dat ook mogelijk is met betrekking tot zijn politiek-theologische vertrekpunten, is nog maar de vraag.

## **Hoofdstuk 7. Waltz's neorealisme: politiek realisme in een wetenschappelijke jas**

Het neorealisme van Waltz is aanzienlijk gemakkelijker te behappen dan Morgenthau's klassiek realisme, omdat het voornamelijk is gebaseerd op twee boeken, namelijk *Man, the State and War* (1959) en *Theory of International Politics* (1979), en een reeks artikelen. In die boeken en artikelen beperkt Waltz zich voornamelijk tot het uiteenzetten van zijn theorie. Waltz is vooral een theoreticus, waardoor in zijn publicaties de meeste aandacht uitgaat naar de domein-specifieke en wetenschapsfilosofische van zijn theorie.

Evenals bij Morgenthau heeft Waltz via Niebuhr invloed ondergaan van Augustinus. Hij deelt dus in beginsel de politieke theologie van Morgenthau ten aanzien van de mens, de geschiedenis en de ethiek. Hij gaat ook uit van de mens als iemand die probeert als God te zijn, maar die in zijn streven de oorzaak is van kwaad. Als gevolg daarvan verzet hij zich tegen het streven naar een perfecte aardse vrede. De geschiedenis wordt door hem getekend als plaats van menselijke vrijheid en creativiteit, maar ook van destructie en chaos. Dat leidt bij hem, net zoals bij Morgenthau, tot een gematigde ethiek waarin het streven naar een beetje meer gerechtigheid en vrijheid te verkiezen is boven een politiek die tot een beetje minder hiervan leidt. Het verschil is alleen dat bij Waltz deze politieke theologie verder seculariseert. In plaats van terug te grijpen op Niebuhr, komt daarvoor Spinoza in de plaats. Daarmee snijdt hij de lijn naar theologie als het ware door en dat geeft hem een zogenaamde stevigere (want minder theologische) wetenschappelijke basis. Ik zie dit echter als secularisering waarbij theologie wordt voortgezet met andere middelen. Want Waltz's theorie is uiteindelijk in zijn uitwerking trouw aan de politieke theologie van het politiek realisme en werkt dit uit in onder andere een bescheiden opvatting over wat wetenschap vermag en de mate waarin een waardenvrije politieke theorie eigenlijk mogelijk is.

Het neorealisme zie ik als een poging om binnen het wetenschappelijke discours van IB zoveel mogelijk van de politiek realisme te bewaren. Bij die poging is er sprake

van continuïteit en discontinuïteit. De continuïteit bestaat daaruit dat Waltz evenals Morgenthau probeert de autonomie van het politieke domein te handhaven. Hij doet dat op basis van inhoudelijke en theoretische overwegingen. De inhoudelijke reden is dat hij, zoals Morgenthau ook al aangaf, het binnenlands domein ziet als van een ander karakter dan het internationale domein. In het laatste domein is als gevolg van het ontbreken van supranationaal gezag sprake van anarchie: elke staat is er op uit zijn relatieve machtspositie te verstevigen. Het is om theoretische redenen (o.a. parsimoniteit) dat Waltz besluit zijn theorie van de internationale politiek te beperken tot het internationale domein. Binnen het politieke domein beschouwt Waltz het als een kenmerkende wetmatigheid dat staten willen overleven door hun relatieve machtspositie te verbeteren.

Evenals Morgenthau heeft Waltz een tragische opvatting over internationale politiek. Staten kunnen naar van alles streven, zoals vrijheid en rechtvaardigheid, maar als zij de wens om te overleven negeren, zijn ze een speelbal van andere landen. Daarom ziet Waltz de machtsverdeling tussen staten als de belangrijkste indicator om het gedrag van staten te verklaren. Net zoals bij Morgenthau zijn bij Waltz politiek-theologische assumpties niet ver weg. Waar Morgenthau waarschuwt tegen zelfvergoddelijking van staten, waarschuwt Waltz langs theoretische weg voor het streven naar een betere wereld zonder inachtneming van de zelfzuchtigheid en *hubris* van mensen zoals die tot uiting komt in gedrag van staten.

De discontinuïteit bestaat daaruit dat Waltz zich strikt beperkt tot internationale politiek en dus geen theorie ontwikkelt voor het buitenlands beleid. Daarnaast benadrukt Waltz dat zijn theorie empirisch en wetenschappelijk is en daarmee niet normatief, hoewel dat laatste betwijfeld kan worden. Verder kiest Waltz radicaler dan Morgenthau voor een theorie die voldoet aan natuurwetenschappelijke eisen zoals verklarende kracht en eenvoud.

### **Hoofdstuk 8. Religie in het neorealisme: het is de theorie!**

De religionisten hebben ten aanzien van Waltz's neorealisme een aanzienlijk sterker verhaal dan ten aanzien van Morgenthau's klassiek realisme, omdat de drie stellingen meer hout snijden. Ten aanzien van de empirische stelling geldt dat er in het werk van Waltz passages zijn aan te wijzen waar hij aandacht besteedt aan religie op het individuele, nationale en internationale niveau. De schamele passages waarin Waltz over religie schrijft, zijn echter geen systematische verhandelingen die direct voortvloeien uit Waltz's theoretiseren. Hoewel Waltz later leefde dan Morgenthau en in die zin getuige had kunnen zijn van de zogenaamde terugkeer van religie, refereert hij er nergens aan. Ondanks het feit dat de religionisten ongelijk hebben dat Waltz niets met religie doet, moet ik ze gelijk geven dat Waltz's aandacht voor religie *de facto* afwezig is.

De religionisten hebben gelijk dat Waltz's neorealisme beïnvloed is door de Verlichting en dat hij daardoor religie niet incorporeert. In zijn theoretiseren scheidt hij

geloof en rede en beperkt de rede tot dat wat empirisch vastgesteld kan worden. Waltz's positie wordt duidelijk als hij stelt dat de seculiere verklaring van Spinoza de voorheen theologische verklaring van menselijk gedrag kan vervangen. Met deze redenering komt Waltz dicht in de buurt van de moderniserings- en secularisatietheorie: waarom zou je iets wat door een seculiere verklaring vervangen is of kan worden, nog bestuderen?

De religionisten hebben ongelijk ten aanzien van de Koude Oorlog context en de reductie van religie. Om met dat laatste te beginnen, er is nergens aanleiding om te concluderen dat Waltz in de paar keren dat hij religie definieert deze reduceert tot iets irrationeels, institutioneels of individueels. Wat betreft de Koude Oorlog context geldt dat het onmiskenbaar zo is dat Waltz's theoretiseren beïnvloed is door de bipolariteit van de Koude Oorlog context, maar niet zozeer vanwege de seculariteit van beide machtsblokken. Waltz maakt in zijn denken namelijk wel degelijk onderscheid tussen religie en ideologie. Dit maakt in zijn theorie echter geen verschil, omdat ze beide vallen onder de eigenschappen van de staat. Deze eigenschappen doen er op het niveau van de staat wel toe, maar Waltz formuleert een theorie van het internationale systeem.

De religionisten hebben maar ten dele gelijk wat betreft de invloed van het Westfaalse systeem. Zo is er onvoldoende grond om te concluderen dat Waltz dit als de privatisering van religie zag. Wel is het zo dat Waltz duidelijk de centraliteit van de staat onderschrijft. Dit doet hij op empirische gronden: hij heeft een onderzoek gedaan naar interdependentie en de rol van de staat. Daarnaast maakt hij deze keuze ook om theoretische redenen: de staat is volgens hem de meest betekenisvolle actor. Het is waar dat Walt het nationaal belang ontdoet van moraal. Niet omdat het niet relevant zou zijn, maar omdat hij een verklarende theorie wil. Waltz is zich er van bewust dat tal van overwegingen een rol spelen bij staatshoofden, maar dat behoort tot het nationale niveau. Op het internationale niveau worden deze overwegingen overheerst door de wil om te overleven en worden ze door Waltz te onbelangrijk gevonden om op te nemen in een theorie met zoveel mogelijk verklaringskracht.

De religionisten hebben slechts gedeeltelijk gelijk dat Waltz's neorealisme positivistisch is in die zin dat Waltz een theologische verklaring afwijst en zich beperkt tot een wetenschappelijke verklaring. Toch is Waltz van mening dat religie en theologie wel inspirerend kunnen zijn voor theorieën. Dat is immers bij Waltz zelf ook het geval: bepaalde theologische noties van Niebuhr hebben zijn theoretiseren duidelijk gestempeld. Hij heeft deze echter gesecculariseerd door er een psychologische invulling aan te geven en de anarchische situatie tussen landen hiervoor als verklaringsgrond aan te dragen. Een tweede indicatie dat Waltz's neorealisme inderdaad positivistisch is, blijkt uit het feit dat hij gelooft dat er een verklaringsmodel mogelijk is voor zowel de fysische als de sociale wereld. Hij onderschrijft daarentegen niet de scheiding tussen waarden en feiten alsof wetenschappers neutraal zijn. Hetzelfde geldt voor de positivistische assumptie dat er een rationaliteit bestaat onafhankelijk van context.

De gedachte dat Waltz's neorealisme materialistisch is en daarom religie veronachtzaamt, is in zoverre waar dat Waltz erkent dat materiële factoren meer gewicht in de schaal leggen. Dit is echter geen ontologische stellingname, alsof Waltz alles zou willen reduceren tot materie, maar een epistemologisch vertrekpunt. Waltz merkt namelijk op dat de context bepaalt welke hulpbronnen de staat uiteindelijk aanwendt om haar positie verstevigen. Dat hoeven niet alleen materiële factoren te zijn. Tenslotte hebben de religionisten gelijk dat Waltz een holist is en dat hij daardoor religie niet incorporeert. Waltz kiest er namelijk voor om het individuele en nationale niveau geen onderdeel te maken van zijn theorie. Hij erkent echter wel dat op die niveaus religie een rol speelt, maar ziet niet voor zich hoe deze drie niveaus in een theorie kunnen worden opgenomen, wil het nog een goede theorie zijn.

De religionisten hebben in het geval van Waltz overtuigend duidelijk kunnen maken dat Waltz op empirisch niveau religie geen aandacht geeft, en dat hiervoor op het domein-specifieke en wetenschapsfilosofische niveau oorzaken voor aan te wijzen zijn. Tegelijkertijd hebben ze op even zoveel punten ongelijk, omdat ze belangrijke overwegingen van inhoudelijke (overlevingsdrang van staten) en theoretische (noodzaak theorie) aard over het hoofd zien. Waltz's neorealisme geeft de religionisten een stevige huiswerkopdracht mee, namelijk de vraag welke rol theorie eigenlijk speelt in het denken over religie in de wereld. Waltz's neorealisme wordt uitgedaagd, omdat zijn theorie niet in staat blijkt een empirische ontwikkeling te verklaren, terwijl die volgens de religionisten zo duidelijk aanwezig is in de wereld.

## **Conclusie Deel II. Politiek realistisch denken maakt een nieuw paradigma overbodig**

De claim van de religionisten staat of valt met de mate waarin ze in staat zijn hun claim met argumenten te onderbouwen. Op basis van mijn assessment blijkt echter dat de religionisten behoorlijk vaak de plank mislaan. Dat heeft verschillende oorzaken, waaronder een oppervlakkige kennisneming van deze politiek realistische denkers, maar ook het over het hoofd zien van de bepaalde politiek-theologische ideeën die ook bij Morgenthau en Waltz op de achtergrond meespelen. Een ander belangrijk punt is dat er vergeten wordt dat het voor Waltz belangrijk is om goed na te denken over wat een theorie precies vermag. Wat is een goede theorie en welke verklaringskracht moet een theorie hebben? Dat is een punt waar de religionisten eigenlijk niet goed over nagedacht hebben. Mijn conclusie is dan ook dat het op dit moment te prematuur is om een nieuw paradigma na te streven. Er is zowel bij de religionisten als bij de politiek realisten nog wel wat huiswerk te doen.

## **Deel III: Balans, diagnose en de normatieve praktijken benadering als wenkend perspectief**

In het laatste deel van mijn proefschrift evalueer ik de inbreng van de religionisten

enerzijds en de politiek realisten anderzijds. Daarnaast probeer ik een diagnose te stellen van het debat over religie en internationale politiek met daarbij ook een aantal suggesties voor een volgende stap. Als voorzet presenteer ik vervolgens een benadering, die enerzijds recht doet aan de sterke punten van beide partijen en anderzijds de zwaktes repareert.

## **Hoofdstuk 9. Balans, evaluatie en diagnose van het debat tussen religionisten en politiek realisten**

In dit hoofdstuk vat ik alle standpunten nog een keer samen in een schematisch overzicht. Vervolgens zet ik de sterke en zwakke punten van de verschillende posities nog een keer op een rij. Ik zal dat hier niet herhalen, maar de stap maken richting een diagnose. Allereerst is door mijn reconstructie van de positie van de religionisten en het debat met de politiek realisten duidelijk geworden hoe onoverzichtelijk het debat tot nu toe was. De verschillende niveaus liepen door elkaar heen. Bovendien werd het levensbeschouwelijke niveau vaak vergeten, terwijl dat ondertussen wel doorwerkt in het debat. In de tweede plaats is er door de verschillende partijen niet goed nagedacht over de verhouding tussen de verschillende niveaus. Hoe werken opvattingen op het wetenschapsfilosofische niveau door richting het domein-specifieke en empirische niveau en vice versa? Als derde wordt er geen scherp onderscheid gemaakt tussen een wetenschappelijke, religieuze en theologische verklaring. De religionisten maken nauwelijks onderscheid tussen een religieuze en een wetenschappelijke verklaring en verwarren dat laatste soms met een theologische. IB denkers (met name Waltz) zijn geneigd zich tot een strikt wetenschappelijke verklaring te beperken en sluiten een religieuze, laat staan een theologische, verklaring uit. Vanwege deze verschillen van opvatting over wat wetenschappelijk is, komt men uit op verschillende standpunten ten aanzien van de rol van religie in de wereld. Vanuit een strikt (natuur)wetenschappelijk perspectief is religie namelijk moeilijk te theoretiseren. Een wetenschappelijk perspectief dat breder is dan de natuurwetenschappelijke benadering en de gangbare sociale wetenschappen en dus ook ruimte biedt voor een verklaring in religieus vocabulaire, zou veel gemakkelijker ruimte kunnen bieden aan religie. In de vierde plaats is niet altijd duidelijk of de religionisten meer aandacht voor religie willen om zodoende de internationale betrekkingen beter te kunnen begrijpen of dat men de rol van religie in de internationale verhoudingen beter wil begrijpen. Met andere woorden: wat is het studieobject precies? Ten vijfde speelt er voortdurend een verschil van mening een rol in de discussie omdat een meer naturalistische benadering wordt uitgespeeld tegen een meer constructivistische benadering. Maar deze tegenstelling is niet nodig. Het is heel goed mogelijk deze benaderingen als complementair te zien. Als laatste wordt er weinig over (politieke) theologie gesproken. Dan kan samenhangen met het derde punt hierboven. Ondertussen vallen er op het politiek-theologische niveau wel veel beslissingen.

## **Hoofdstuk 10. Een nieuw christelijk realisme: de normatieve praktijken benadering als wenkend perspectief**

Om het debat verder te helpen doe ik een voorzet voor een benadering die tegemoet komt aan de geschetste problemen hierboven. Deze benadering is de zogenaamde normatieve praktijken benadering zoals die binnen de christelijke filosofie is ontwikkeld. Vanuit deze optiek wordt de internationale betrekkingen beschouwd als een praktijk met een eigen normativiteit. Het komt daarmee tegemoet aan hetgeen Morgenthau en Waltz beogen met de benadering van de internationale politiek als een eigen domein waarin bepaalde wetmatigheden van kracht zijn. Deze benadering is echter qua theoretische gerichtheid niet zo rigide als Waltz's neorealisme waardoor religie geen kans krijgt een rol te spelen, maar meer in lijn met de ideaaltypische benadering van Morgenthau. De normatieve praktijken benadering deelt echter met beide denkers de opvatting dat theoretiseren niet neutraal is en altijd beïnvloed wordt door bepaalde waarden. De normatieve praktijken benadering komt ook tegemoet aan de wens van Waltz om een theorie te formuleren waarin alle drie de niveaus—het individuele, nationale en internationale niveau—een rol spelen. De internationale politieke praktijk wordt voornamelijk ontsloten door regeringsleiders die leiding geven aan staten. Daarnaast heeft de normatieve praktijkenbenadering oog voor de verschillende manieren waarop religie een rol speelt.

Religieuze actoren spelen een rol in de internationale betrekkingen praktijk, omdat de context hiervan gekenmerkt wordt door een veelheid aan instituties, waaronder de staat en niet-statelijke actoren. Sommige van deze instituties zijn religieus van aard. Deelnemers aan de internationale betrekkingen praktijk participeren in deze instituties. Van deze instituties is de staat een van de belangrijkste actoren en dat bepaalt ook de mate van invloed die religieuze instituties hebben. Religieuze actoren opereren in een context van rivaliserende staten.

Ik stelde dat de context er een is van rivaliserende staten, maar daar is niet alles mee gezegd. Het maakt nogal uit hoe er naar de internationale betrekkingen gekeken wordt, zowel door de beoefenaars als degene die het bestuderen. Gaat het alleen maar om macht en overleven, of staat macht ten dienste van het recht? Bij het beantwoorden van deze vraag speelt ook wereldbeschouwing mee. Dat verklaart deels het verschil tussen Niebuhr, Morgenthau en Waltz. Bij Niebuhr is de spanning tussen de eis van rechtvaardigheid enerzijds en de machtsrealiteit anderzijds steeds aanwezig, terwijl Morgenthau deze spanning afvlakt en Waltz het bijna opheft. Vanuit de normatieve praktijkenbenadering stel ik dat de spanning aanwezig is in de praktijk zelf en dat je ook niet zonder kunt. Macht is in die zin funderend voor de praktijk. Tegelijkertijd kan het nooit de praktijk kwalificeren, omdat ook staten uiteindelijk onderworpen zijn aan de plicht om rechtvaardigheid na te streven.

Maar hoe belangrijk zijn dan die religieuze wereldbeschouwingen en overtuigingen in de internationale betrekkingen praktijk? Vanuit de normatieve praktijkenbenadering

stel ik dat ze conditionerend zijn. Dat betekent dat ze van invloed zijn op de manier waarop bijvoorbeeld macht en rechtvaardigheid zich tot elkaar verhouden, uitgeoefend of nagestreefd worden. Het is uiteindelijk dus aan de beoefenaars van de internationale betrekkingen praktijk hoe deze praktijk zich ontwikkelt. Daarin speelt hun (religieuze) wereldbeschouwing een belangrijke rol. Overigens hoeft de invloed van religieuze wereldbeschouwingen niet direct te herleiden te zijn tot een persoon. Het kan ook tot uiting komen in een bepaalde cultuur of dominante levensfilosofie. Uiteraard gaat het ook niet alleen om de religieuze wereldbeschouwing van de praktijkbeoefenaars, maar er wordt van hen ook verwacht dat ze bepaalde technische vaardigheden bezitten om diplomatie te bedrijven.

### **Conclusie Deel III: Samenspannende landen en religie: een oproep tot kalmte, moed en onderscheidingsvermogen**

Met de normatieve praktijkenbenadering is geprobeerd tegemoet te komen aan de lacunes in de discussie over religie en internationale betrekkingen. Het laat zien dat internationale betrekkingen een praktijk is waar religie een rol speelt en het is aan de professionals in die praktijk om daar zo wijs mogelijk mee om te gaan. Dat vraagt enerzijds religieuze geletterdheid om te weten welke rol religie precies speelt. Anderzijds vraagt het moreel onderscheidingsvermogen om vervolgens te weten wat daarmee te doen.

## Summary

### **Chapter 1. Introduction: The Necessity of a New Religion Paradigm in International Relations and the Possible Contribution of Christian Philosophy**

Since the early 1990s, a group of scholars has criticized International Relations (IR). They argue that the field wrongly ignores the role of religion in international relations. The consequences of this could be dramatic: inadequate theories lead to inadequate policies. If the United States had taken the role and significance of religion seriously, for example, the 1979 Iranian Revolution would not have been a complete surprise. This group of scientists therefore advocates that more attention should be paid to the role of religion within IR. To make that possible, existing theories would have to be replaced or adapted. In my dissertation I examine the claim of this group of scientists, whom I call religionists for the sake of convenience. I ask the question to what extent the claim of the religionists makes sense and what the consequences are for IR.

In order to answer this question, I first investigate what the religionist argument is about (Part I). Secondly, I test to what extent the religionists are correct in the case of the most criticized and dominant school within IR, namely political realism. Does realism indeed ignore religion and does it do so for the reasons the religionists put forward (Part II)? Thirdly, I examine the consequences of the answers to the previous questions for IR. Should IR be revised or is there another alternative (Part III)?

The view that religion should be incorporated into IR is based on three theses. The empirical thesis is that religion plays such a significant role in the world that IR cannot ignore it and should incorporate it. The second assertion is that IR has a clear bias because of which it does not see religion. The third statement concerns the way in which IR thinks about matters of philosophy of science. Although the statements stand on their own, there is a clear relationship between them. Assumptions made at the level of philosophy of science have an impact on the domain-specific level and ultimately also on the empirical level. Of course, this influence can also take place in the opposite direction. Based on the ideas of the Amsterdam School of Philosophy, however, I add a fourth level, namely the worldview level. This is necessary to clarify the discussion. Worldview assumptions play a role in the discussion, which have an impact on the three levels mentioned.

A worldview is made up of beliefs on the one hand and a personal ultimate commitment on the other. Both elements can reinforce each other. Beliefs can be rationally defended, but are also beliefs someone is personally committed to. A worldview can be secular, quasi-secular or religious in nature. In the first case, no transcendent orientation point is assumed. A quasi-secular worldview has similarities with a religious worldview, but ultimately the goal is an immanent reality. Once a quasi-religious worldview takes on public or political aspirations, it can become an ideology or political religion. A religious

worldview has a transcendent reality as its point of reference. The different kinds of worldviews play a role in the debate consciously or unconsciously, for example, when certain political-theological views are held. These are ideas that come from theology (the academic discipline that studies religious worldviews) or come from a religious worldview and are applied to the political realm.

Besides their role in IR, worldviews also play a role in international relations itself. For example, certain ideologies or political religions with a quasi-secular character determine the behavior of people and actors. By involving the worldview level, I show the various ways religion can play a role. Religion presupposes a religious worldview, but it is often understood as a the communities that hold certain religious practices. Therefore, I define religion as 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. Religion includes the religious worldview and the practices that follow from it. When I speak of the role of religion in international relations, I am referring to the above. But I also point out the influence of religious, quasi-religious and secular worldviews. Religion is often perceived as a clearly defined category, while in practice it is very layered and manifests itself in subtle ways. Sometimes apparently secular movements of ideas appear more 'religious' than they seem at first sight. A worldview perspective brings this to light.

## **Part I: A Critical Reconstruction of the Position of the Religionists**

In this part, the three propositions of the religionists are explained one by one. It also examines what ideological elements may be hinted at in these statements.

### **Chapter 2. The Empirical Base of the Paradigm Challenge: The Global Resurgence of Religion**

The religionists justify their thesis on the importance of religion in IR with the observation that religion has experienced a revival since the 1960s. They offer various explanations for this, such as the globalization process, the increased interest of academics in religion, the rise of radical Islam and the influence of modernity on non-Western societies. Although these explanations are quite diverse, together they provide sufficient evidence for the religionists to support their position: since the 1960s something has really changed regarding religion in the world and IR needs to pay attention to this. The religionists then substantiate their position by showing that religion is actually present everywhere.

- individual level (government leaders, policymakers and diplomats which 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) .

### **Chapter 3. The ‘Religion-Blindness’ of the Old Paradigm: The Dominance of the Westphalian System**

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 three ideas are strengthened by a fourth one, namely that IR identifies the Westphalian system as 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, 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 towards 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.

### **Chapter 4. The Dominance of Naturalistic Thinking in the Genesis of the Old Paradigm**

At the level of philosophy of science, there are several causes that contribute to the marginalization of religion. First of all, there is the influence of the Enlightenment. According to the religionists, the Enlightenment ensured that faith and reason were separated. 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.

A further product of Enlightenment thinking is the development of the so-called modernization and secularization theory. This theory was dominant in the social sciences for many years, and according to the religionists, was strongly influential on IR. IR has long assumed that religion would disappear by itself. The religionists point out that through the course of time this theory has now been proven incorrect. The other argument of the religionists is that IR is based on materialism. As a result, IR sees the observable reality as a reflection of material causes. Within IR, this leads to religion being reduced to a material phenomenon, the same as military might, geography and natural resources. In addition to materialism, the religionists also point to holism for the marginalization of religion. Holism explains the behavior of individual actors from the perspective of the larger whole and the structural and material forces of the system. Religion is easily overlooked in this top-down approach.

First, positivism ensures that in the development of theories one strives for maximum explanatory power by analogy with theories in the natural sciences. As a result, religion and culture are not included in theorizing. Second, positivism would assume a rationality that is valid regardless of context. The result of this is that idealistic factors, such as religion and culture, and their historical manifestations, are not taken into account. Third, in relation to positivism, the secularization of the concepts is rampant. 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.

Finally, the religionists argue that IR reduces religion to an irrational, individual and institutional phenomenon. As a result, IR would neglect the rational, collective and ideational side of religion. This view of religion leads to a flawed view of the real role of religion, according to the religionists.

### **Conclusion Part I. Contours of a New Paradigm?**

The religionists present much convincing empirical material to show that religion plays a role everywhere—a point that IR should take seriously. Unfortunately, the religionists fail to show how exactly religion is different from many other factors at play and why religion is so distinctive that it deserves separate treatment. When it comes to criticism of the Westphalian system, the religionists not only denounce but also put forward an alternative view of secularization. In addition, they not only criticize certain views within IR for diminishing religion, but they also demonstrate that these views, such as the central role of the state, are no longer concurrent with the state of affairs in

research. Unfortunately, in the case of the Enlightenment, they mainly criticize and overlook moderate variants of the historical movement.

It is noticeable that the religionist language and use of terms are not always as objective as they seem. For example, the general tendency among the religionists is that the return of religion is something positive. They often use this to criticize the omissions of secular approaches. It is valuable to identify and acknowledge this influence for a transparent debate. It is striking that the religionists also accuse IR thinkers of being biased. For example, they point out that certain myths are perpetuated within the IB that resemble a secularized eschatology. It is clear from the criticism of the religionists that they envision a different paradigm. A paradigm that pays attention to religion, not only as a set of ideas, but also as a social practice. This paradigm must be based on a different view of secularization than is currently dominant. Moreover, the religionists seem to prefer a more interpretative theory.

## **Part II: In Defense of the ‘Old’ Paradigm: ‘Augustinian Moments’ in IR**

In the second part, I examine to what extent the position of the religionists and the associated arguments are correct. In addition, I look at two influential representatives of classical realism and neorealism. In chapters five and six respectively, I explain how I interpret Morgenthau’s classical realism and to what extent the religionists are correct with their criticism. In chapters seven and eight I successively present Waltz’s neorealism and the extent to which the religionists can substantiate their claims about the theory. My argument is that there are Augustinian elements present in political realism which should be weighed in a complete picture of the school of thought. This Augustinian influence enters IR through the American theologian Reinhold Niebuhr and becomes visible in his view on human nature, history, and ethics. This brings us into the realm of political theology, because these ideas are theologically inspired but applied to politics, even though Morgenthau or Waltz do not personally adhere to these ideas necessarily.

### **Chapter 5. The Hidden Theology of Morgenthau’s Classical Realism**

Morgenthau cannot be properly understood without attention to the theological influences on his political thought. Morgenthau assumes that human beings, as described in the paradise story, have a tendency to exceed their limits out of pride. Human beings want to be like God, but their human condition does not allow it. This sinful pursuit of man is so intertwined with the order of the world that as a result there is a constant struggle between good and evil with no inevitable development towards good. Morgenthau’s view of history is grounded in this conception of human nature. Morgenthau sees human time limited by God’s time. That means that the fulfillment of history ultimately comes from God and not from human beings, which in turn has implications for ethics. People must look for solutions that work in this time and context. This can lead to the lesser

evil being the best solution in some situations. Briefly, these are the starting points of Morgenthau's political theology which are reflected in his vision of the state, power, ethics and the distinction between religion and politics. On the basis of his political theology, Morgenthau is very concerned that the autonomy of politics will be affected. From this point of view, Morgenthau's reticence regarding the involvement of religious actors is understandable.

I approach the classic realism of Morgenthau primarily from his magnum opus *Politics Among Nations*. I mainly focus on the first chapter in which he explains his six principles of political realism. I do consider his other works, but I treat them as complementary to *Politics Among Nations*. Morgenthau's six principles contain little explicit empirical elements. They are, however, present in the other chapters of *Politics Among Nations* and his remaining works. Morgenthau has written extensively on current political issues. I regard those contributions as the empirical part of Morgenthau's theory.

I follow the order of the six realistic principles. This means that I approach Morgenthau's classical realism from his ontological and epistemological assumption that there are constant objective rational laws that can be known by us, to a greater or lesser extent. Morgenthau believes that political science should be based on a worldview in which religion and philosophy also have a place. Morgenthau's conception of theory is ideal-typical, meaning that he sees his theory as a reflection on supposed objective rational laws. He 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. Morgenthau defends the autonomy of the political sphere. It was very clear to Morgenthau that the political sphere in his time was characterized by the interests of nation-states and that power within them was decisive. He notes, however, that national interest can acquire a different meaning in a different time or culture. According to Morgenthau, the time may come when the nation-state will be replaced by another, larger unit. It is characteristic of Morgenthau's classical realism that it is a theory of foreign policy and thus deals with the intersection of domestic and international politics. The difference between the two, however, is that there is no supranational institution in international politics, while this is usually present at the domestic level. Since foreign policy is about the interface between the two, morality also plays a somewhat ambivalent role in Morgenthau's thinking. This does not mean that morality is absent, as according to Morgenthau, political realism is aware of the moral significance of politics and the meaning and the importance of universal moral standards. Morgenthau's vision can best be described as tragic. He recognizes the necessity of power, but realizes that politics can never be sufficient. He recognizes the existence of universal moral principles, but also knows that their realization depends on the context in which the various interests are shaped. He considers this tension to be characteristic and fundamental to the political domain. Finally, Morgenthau argues

that political realism is critical of the tendency of states to identify their national interest with a universal moral law, which he considers idolatry.

### **Chapter 6. Religion in Morgenthau's Classical Realism: It Is the Theology!**

The religionist claim and argument does not hold up in light of Morgenthau's classical realism. It turns out that in the case of Morgenthau, the three propositions hold only to a limited extent. With regard to the empirical thesis, there is clear evidence that Morgenthau was aware of the presence of religion at the various levels. There is no indication that Morgenthau was also aware of a revival of religion. It is nevertheless significant that even without this revival, he was aware of the role of religion in the world. When it comes to the domain-specific statement, things are a bit more nuanced. Morgenthau writes about religion and morality and makes theological statements, but stresses continually the autonomy of the political atmosphere, so no bias is clearly evident.

It is therefore not surprising that the reasons which the religionists put forward to explain the absence of religion in Morgenthau's theory hardly apply. For example, the religionists argue that Morgenthau sees the state as a central actor that functions as a black box, and that he defines the national interest as power. The religionists are right that Morgenthau makes these assumptions, with the exception of the black box, which directly contradicts his six principles. Morgenthau clearly states that these assumptions depend on time and place. It is therefore theoretically possible that Morgenthau would arrive at a different interpretation of his assumptions in the present day on the basis of empirical data.

It is difficult to determine whether Morgenthau really sees the Westphalian system as the prelude to the privatization of religion, because he writes little about it. In any case, it is not true that he saw the central role of the state and the national interest defined as power as defining moments of the decline of religion. On the contrary, based on his political theology, Morgenthau opposed a strict separation between religion and politics, as it would lead to a fully secularized state that derives its legitimacy from itself and not from religious revelation. It is against this background that his advocacy for the state and the autonomy of politics must be seen. For Morgenthau, the current state embodied the connection to the Christian moral order. He regarded it as secularization if the state broke this dualistic relationship. Such a break would lead to the identification of the national interest with the moral order and thus to a political religion, as in the case of liberalism, especially if it was mixed with certain forms of liberal Protestantism. Morgenthau's realism argues against utopian and eschatological ideas, and provides a political vision in which the tension between the different worlds is assumed.

The religionists are right that Morgenthau often emphasizes the ideological function of religion, but that is not what characterizes his six principles. In addition, in Morgenthau's other works it becomes clear that he makes a clear distinction

between religion and its distortions or ideologies. This therefore invalidates the argument that the influence of the Cold War context would lead to an ideological approach to religion. In some cases, such as the influence of the Enlightenment and the modernization and secularization theory, Morgenthau actually states almost the opposite of what the religionists think he claims. For example, Morgenthau was very critical of the Enlightenment and defends the enduring significance of the religious human impulse with regard to modernization and secularization theory. With regard to the claim that IR only emphasizes the irrational, institutional and individual aspects of religion. On the contrary, Morgenthau's subsequent writings show that Morgenthau considered other aspects of religion such as the communal and rational as well. Thus it is very clear that Morgenthau cannot in any way be regarded as a positivist. The criticism of the religionists which Morgenthau would be a materialist is also not correct because he clearly states that interests can be both material and ideal.

This assessment does not mean that the claim of the religionists might not be true. I have only shown that the reasons they put forward are too weak. Morgenthau himself was namely open to new empirical data for updating or fill in his theory. Whether this is possible with regard to his political-theological starting points is still questionable.

### **Chapter 7. Waltz's Neorealism: Political Realism in a Scientific Coat**

Waltz's neorealism is much easier to understand because it is mainly based on two books: *Man, the State and War* (1959) and *Theory of International Politics* (1979), as well as a series of articles. In those books and articles, Waltz mainly confines himself to explaining his theory. Most of his publications focus on the domain-specific and philosophy of science level. As with Morgenthau, Waltz was influenced by Augustine through the thinker Niebuhr. He thus basically shares Morgenthau's political theology with regard to mankind, history and ethics. He also subscribes to the idea that human beings try to be like God, and therefore cause a lot of evil. As a result, Waltz resists the pursuit of perfect earthly peace. He sees history as a place of human freedom and creativity, but also of destruction and chaos. As with Morgenthau, this leads to a moderate ethic in which striving for a little more justice and freedom is preferable to a politics that 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. For 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.

I see neorealism as an attempt to preserve as much of political realism as possible within the scientific discourse of IR at that time. In that attempt, there

is continuity and discontinuity. The continuity is seen in Waltz's (and Morgenthau's) attempt 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. It is for theoretical reasons (e.g. parsimony) that Waltz decides to limit his theory of international politics to the international domain. 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 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 discontinuity is that Waltz restricts himself to international politics and thus does not develop a theory for foreign policy. In addition, Waltz emphasizes that his theory is empirical and scientific and therefore not normative, although the latter can be doubted. Furthermore, Waltz more radically than Morgenthau opts for a theory that meets scientific requirements such as explanatory power and simplicity.

### **Chapter 8. Religion in Neorealism: It Is the Theory!**

The religionist arguments regarding Waltz's neorealism are much more convincing than in the case of Morgenthau. Regarding the empirical thesis, there are passages in Waltz's writing which are devoted to the role of religion at the individual, national and international level. The few cases where Waltz writes about religion are not systematic treatises which directly follow from Waltz's theorizing though. Although Waltz lived later than Morgenthau and in that sense could have witnessed the so-called return of religion, he makes no reference to it. Despite the fact that the religionists are wrong that Waltz is blind to religion, I have to agree with them that religion is *de facto* absent in his theory.

The religionists are also correct that Waltz's neorealism is influenced by the Enlightenment and that it does not incorporate religion as a result of it. In his theorizing, he separates faith and reason and limits reason to that which can be established empirically. Waltz's position becomes clear when he argues that Spinoza's secular explanation can replace the previous theological explanation of human behavior. With this reasoning, Waltz comes close to the theory of modernization and secularization: religion will disappear over time and in modern times we cannot build on theological ideas. However, the religionists are wrong with respect to the Cold War context and the reduction of religion. To begin with the latter, there is no reason to conclude on the basis of the few writings of Waltz that he reduces it to something irrational, institutional

or individual. As for the Cold War context, it is undeniable that Waltz's theorizing is influenced by the bipolarity of, but not so much because of the secularity of both power blocs. Waltz does indeed make a distinction between religion and ideology in his thinking. This does not make a difference in his theory, however, as they both fall under the properties of the state. These properties do matter at the state level, but Waltz formulates a theory of the international system.

The religionists are only partly right about the influence of the Westphalian system on Waltz. For example, there is insufficient ground to conclude that Waltz saw the system as the privatization of religion. It is true that Waltz clearly endorses the centrality of the state, but he does this on empirical grounds: he has conducted research into interdependence and the role of the state. He also makes this choice for theoretical reasons: the state is the most significant actor. It is true that Waltz strips the national interest of morality—not because it is irrelevant, but because he wants an explanatory theory. Waltz is aware that state leaders take into account many different considerations, but that belongs 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. The religionists are only partially right that Waltz's neorealism is positivist in the sense that Waltz rejects a theological explanation and limits himself to a scientific explanation. Nevertheless, Waltz believes that religion and theology can inspire theories. After all, this is the case with Waltz himself: certain theological notions of Niebuhr have clearly marked his theorizing. He, however, secularized those notions by using psychological notions. Instead, he used the anarchic situations between states to account for the behavior of states. A second indication that Waltz's neorealism is indeed positivist appears from the fact that he believes that one explanatory model is available for both the physical and social world. On the other hand, he does not subscribe to the separation between values and facts, as if scientists are neutral. The same applies to the positivist assumption that rationality exists independent of context.

The idea that Waltz's neorealism is materialistic and therefore neglects religion is true to the extent that Waltz recognizes that material factors carry more weight. However, this is not an ontological position, as if Waltz wanted to reduce everything to matter, but an epistemological starting point. Waltz maintains that the context defines what resources the state eventually employs to strengthen its position. This does not have to be material factors only. Finally, the religionists are right that Waltz is holistic and therefore does not incorporate religion. Waltz chooses not to make the individual and national level part of his theory. He did, however, acknowledge that at those levels religion plays a role. He did not see how these three levels can be incorporated into a good explanatory theory.

The religionists have convincingly made clear that on the empirical level Waltz does not pay attention to religion, and that this is caused by considerations on the domain-

specific and philosophy of science level. At the same time, they overlook important substantive (survival of states) and theoretical (necessity theory) considerations. Waltz's neorealism gives religionists homework: what role does theory actually play in their thinking about religion? Waltz's neorealism is challenged because his theory is unable to explain an apparent empirical development.

### **Conclusion Part II. Political Realist Thought Makes a New Paradigm Redundant**

The claim of the religionists stands or falls with the extent to which they are able to substantiate it with arguments. However, based on my assessment, it appears that the religionists quite often miss the point. This has various causes, including a superficial acquaintance with these political realist thinkers, but also the overlooking of the political-theological ideas that play a role in the background of Morgenthau and Waltz's theories. It is often forgotten that Waltz prioritizes thinking carefully about what a theory can do. What is a good theory and what explanatory power should a theory have? This point is often missed by the religionists. My conclusion is therefore that it is too premature at the moment to pursue a new paradigm. Both the religionists and the political realists still have some work to do.

### **Part III: 'All Tested, Holding On to What Is Good': Further Directions for Religion and IR**

In the last part of my dissertation, I evaluate the input of the religionists on the one hand and the political realists on the other. In addition, I try to diagnose the debate about religion and international politics, along with a number of suggestions for future research. I then present an approach which does justice to the strengths of both parties and at the same time repairs the weaknesses.

### **Chapter 9. Balance, Evaluation, and Diagnosis of the Debate Between Religionists and Political Realists**

In this chapter I summarize all positions on religion in IR in a schematic overview. I then list the strengths and weaknesses of the different positions. I will not repeat them here but instead take the step towards a diagnosis. First of all, my reconstruction of the position of the religionists and the debate with the political realists has shown how unclear the conversation has been until now. The different levels of the debate were continuously intertwined. Moreover, the worldview level was forgotten, although it had an effect in the debate. Second, the various parties have not thought carefully about the relationship between the different levels. How do views at the philosophy of science level work through to the domain-specific and empirical level and vice versa? Third, no sharp distinction is made between scientific, religious, and theological explanations. The religionists hardly distinguish between a religious and a scientific

explanation and sometimes confuse the two. IR thinkers (particularly Waltz) tend to limit themselves to a strictly scientific explanation and exclude a religious, let alone a theological, explanation. Because of these differences in the definition of scientific explanation, there are different views about the role of religion in the world. From a strict (natural) scientific perspective, religion is difficult to theorize. A scientific perspective that is broader than the scientific approach and the prevailing social sciences, which has room for religious vocabulary and concepts, would more easily accommodate religion. Fourthly, it is not always clear what exactly is the object of study. Do they want to understand religion in international relations better or do they need religion to understand international relations? Fifthly, there is a constant clash between a more naturalistic approach pitted against a more constructivist approach, where there is not necessarily a contradiction. It is, in fact, quite possible to see these approaches as complementary. Finally, little is said about (political) theology, while many decisions are made at the political-theological level.

### **Chapter 10. A New Christian Realism: The Normative Practice Approach as a Promising Perspective**

To help further the debate, I present an approach that overcomes most of the problems as outlined above. This approach is the so-called Normative Practices Approach (NPA) as developed within Christian philosophy. From this point of view, international relations is regarded as a practice with its own normativity. It thus meets the aim of Morgenthau and Waltz to approach international politics as a domain of its own in which certain laws are in force. This approach is not as rigid as Waltz's neorealism, so that religion does not have a chance to play a role, but is more in line with Morgenthau's ideal-typical approach. NPA shares with both thinkers the view that theorizing is not neutral and is always influenced by certain values. It also meets Waltz's desire to formulate a theory in which all three levels—the individual, national and international level—play a role: the international political practice is primarily shaped by government leaders who lead states.

In addition, the NPA takes into account the different roles of religion in IR. Religious actors play a role in international relations practice because its context is characterized by a multitude of institutions, including state and non-state actors. Some of these institutions are religious in nature. Practitioners of the international relations practice participate in and through these institutions. Of these institutions, the state is one of the most important actors, which also determines the degree of influence of religious institutions. Religious actors operate in a context of rival states.

Further still, the context rather depends on how the practice of international relations is examined, both by its practitioners as those who study it. Is it only about power and survival, or is power at the service of law? Worldview also plays a role in answering this question, which partly explains the difference between Niebuhr, Morgenthau and

Waltz. With Niebuhr, the tension between the demand for justice on the one hand and the reality of power is always present. Morgenthau softens this tension and Waltz almost eliminates it. From the NPA, I argue that the tension is present in the practice itself and that it cannot be without it. In that sense, power is the foundation for the practice. At the same time, it can never qualify the practice, because states too are ultimately subject to the call to pursue justice.

But how important are religious worldviews and beliefs in international relations practice? From the NPA, I argue that they are conditioning factors. This means that they influence the way in which, for example, power and justice are related, exercised or pursued. It is therefore ultimately up to the practitioners of the international relations practice how it develops. Their (religious) worldview plays an important role. Incidentally, the influence of religious worldviews does not have to be directly traceable to a person, it can also be expressed in a certain culture or dominant philosophy of life.

### **Conclusion Part III. Conspiring Nations and Religion: A Call for Serenity, Courage and Discernment**

The NPA has attempted to fill the gaps in the discussion on religion and international relations. It shows that international relations is a practice where religion plays a role and that it is up to the professionals in that practice to develop it as wisely as possible. On the one hand, this requires religious literacy to know exactly what role religion plays. On the other hand, it requires moral discernment to subsequently know how to deal with it.

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## About the author

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What if religion was taken more seriously during the Iranian revolution in 1979? There are scholars who argue that it would have made a difference in international relations. These so-called 'religionists' argue that religion has unfortunately been neglected by International Relations. In their view, religion has seen a resurgence since the late 1960s. Why, therefore, has religion not been incorporated into theories of international relations?

This book provides a critical reconstruction of the position of these religionists. It investigates how Hans Morgenthau's classical realism and Kenneth Waltz's neorealism deal with religion. Do these theories indeed ignore religion? Do they ignore it for the reasons put forward by the religionists? The conclusion is that the religionists quite convincingly argue for the importance and relevance of religion in international relations. However, the reasons given do not do justice to Morgenthau's classical realism and Waltz's neorealism, as they overlook the theological inspiration (Augustine and Niebuhr) of political realism and the importance of theorizing.

As a result of an evaluation of both positions, this book presents an alternative approach inspired by the Amsterdam School of Philosophy, called 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.