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INTRODUCTION: RELIGION AND THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

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The study of religion and international relations (IR), once a minor preoccupation of political scientists, flourished in the 1980s, boomed in the 1990s and skyrocketed at the start of the new millennium. The number of books under this subject heading in the Library of Congress catalogue has quintupled since the attacks of September 11, 2001. Over 80% of all the articles published on religion in international relations journals have appeared in the aftermath of those attacks. This sudden surge of interest is attributable to world events, starting with the Iranian Revolution, continuing with the Yugoslav civil war, and culminating with the terror attacks of 9/11 and U.S. incursions into Afghanistan and Iraq. But it can also be traced, in no small part, to the influence of seminal intellectuals, like Samuel Huntington, Scott Appleby and Douglas Johnston, whose work has shaped both the academic and the policy realm.

In this four volume series, we seek to introduce and organize this burgeoning literature and its contribution to the study of international relations, focusing in particular on its influence in the subfield of war and peace studies. This first volume explores the contribution of the study of religion to analyses of the international system, its origins, nature and structure. What role has religion played in the founding of the modern state, the origins of statecraft, nationalism or diplomacy, and the development of international law and international organizations? How does it shape international institutions in the contemporary world? The sources in this volume offer a range of answers to fundamental questions regarding international order employing a range of methodologies. Subsequent volumes trace the role of religion in war, its contribution to peacemaking, and methodological challenges surrounding the study of religion and IR.

The study of religion and international politics was a topic of great interest to classical and medieval scholars (we include some of their work in volume III of this series). It occupied little to no room in the founding literature of modern IR. Hedley Bull, Hans Morgenthau or Raymond Aron pay scant attention to the role of religion in international politics. The revival of this subfield in the late 20th century owes a great deal to the influential work of **Samuel Huntington**, first in a brief article in the journal *Foreign Affairs*, reprinted below, and later in a book of the same name. Huntington envisions a new post-Cold War power politics in which the competition between "civilizations" replaces the earlier clashes between states. These civilizations are, in effect, religious groupings. Huntington recognizes the supreme allegiances and values that religious ideas provide and expects those to be the primary rallying point for international conflicts after the decline of the state. Of these civilizations, he suspects, Islam will be the one most involved in conflicts with neighboring units.

Empirical analyses (the most prominent of which we include in volume IV of this series) have since offered empirical refutation of Huntington's thesis. The post-Cold War world has not seen civilizations replace states. What Huntington would have recognized as "intra-civilizational" conflict, such as conflicts between Muslim entities, continues to overshadow "inter-civilizational" conflict. Huntington reduces religion to a handful of ideas about violence, drawn from ancient scriptures. Most importantly, Huntington fails to provide a clear mechanism through which religion provokes or sustain conflict other

than prpose that two groups divided by religion would repel one another like charged particles. Nonetheless, by introducing religion as a legitimate variable in IR analysis and by provoking a vibrant debate, Huntington launched a conversation that continues to this day.

Mark Juergensmeyer's *New Cold War?*, published in the same year as "Clash of Civilizations?", offers an influential variation on Huntington's theme. Rather than portray a religion-driven international politics as alien to the Cold War world that preceded it, Juergensmeyer sees a continuity between the two. Indeed, he sees much in common between the "religious nationalisms" in the Middle East, South Asia and the former Soviet Union and the secular nationalisms of the West. These religious nationalists seek to challenge Western domination and its secularism and some have done so successfully but they also invoke many of the same symbols, require the same loyalties and sacrifices, and provide the same communal bonds as their secular counterparts. In engaging with the religious equivalent of Western nationalism, Juergensmeyer urges tolerance: The leaders of religious revolutionary movements should be viewed not as fanatics but as legitimate activists who may ultimately come to embrace democratic values and human rights.

Scott Thomas, in "Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously", further explores the theme of disillusionment with secularism as the driver for the global resurgence of religion. At the roots of these developments he recognizes a crisis not just of secularism, as Juergensmeyer argued, but of modernism coupled with a thirst for authenticity and values. In the West, the privatization of religion was a precondition for the birth of the state and modern international society but in the developing world process remains incomplete and the Western notion of religion is encountering resistance. Understanding these developments Thomas argues, requires a social, not a private, understanding of religion and an openness towards religious and cultural pluralism.

Huntington, Juergensmeyer, Thomas and their contemporaries (including James Turner Johnson, Harvey Cox, and Scott Appleby, included in volume III of this series) contributed to a revival of the study of religion and IR in the 1990s. They also provoked self-reflection by IR scholars on the history and biases of their field and on their failure to account for, let alone foresee, the dramatic resurgence of religion. **Jonathan Fox** traces this prejudice to the influence of liberal thought on the formation of the social sciences which viewed religion with suspicion, found it hard to define and objectively delineate, and preferred to banish it from the public sphere. Fox finds that, whether scholars like it or not, religion intrudes on IR in multiple ways, influencing worldview, shaping the international environment, providing legitimacy, creating cross-cutting cleavages, and mobilizing international movements. **Kenneth D. Wald** and **Clyde Wilcox** issue a broader wake-up call to the entire political science discipline. They find that religion is marginalized across all political science fields and, like Fox, trace this negligence to the origins of the discipline and measurement challenges, as well as the social backgrounds of political scientists and their emphasis on current events.

Daniel Philpott draws together arguments made by Thomas and Fox to elucidate precisely how the Westphalian Order of 1648 contributed to the pervasive secularism of the field of IR which, in turn, accounts for the neglect of religion in that field. The birth of the modern state system was accompanied by a differentiating of politics and religion in which the latter was subordinated to the former. The state weakened, and then came to

control the Church, ultimately leading social scientists to conclude that religion would decline, if not disappear altogether, assumptions that were enshrined in fundamental theories of IR. Philpott find that scholars are now shedding these theories in order to explore the distinctive role of religion in IR. He proposes that they do so by probing the relationship between religion and modernization, study religious actors and not just states, investigate the relationship between religion and the state, study the role of religion in provoking large-scale systemic shifts, and draw on theology and religious studies to understand the origins of religion's political influence.

Scholars began heeding these warnings towards the end of the first decade of the 21st century leading to the flourishing of new lines of inquiry. Reviewing the new literature of the period, **Eva Belin** finds increased methodological sophistication and theoretical ambition. She outlines three promising venues for exploration: On the boundary between religion, politics, and economics, the study of religion and rationality; in IR, the study of religious identities and values; and in comparative politics, the salience of religious ideas. Of those, she finds work in comparative politics to be the least well developed and calls on political scientists to engage in empirically rich structured comparisons to discover the conditions under which religion matters in international affairs. Leading by example, **Nukhet Sandal** and **Patrick James** demonstrate how readily IR theories lend themselves to integrating religion as a variable. They show that the three primary traditions in IR theory, classical realism, structural realism and neoliberalism, can benefit from the inclusion of religion without forfeiting their theoretical coherence. The tendency to marginalize religion thus stems not from aspects inherent to IR theories but from the reluctance of IR scholars to take religion seriously. The authors argue that accommodating religion in IR theory is not just possible but necessary in an increasingly desecularized world.

The primary area of inquiry into religion for IR scholars, other than the study of war and peace, is the exploration of religion's role in the formation of the modern state system in work by Philpott, Daniel Nexon and William Cavanaugh that we did not include in this volume. In his earlier work, Philpott had argued that the Peace of Westphalia, considered a founding moment of the state system, was a product of ideas that first surfaced during the Protestant Reformation. Paradoxically, although 1648 is seen as a watershed line in the formation of the secular state, the circumstances of that change were prompted in large part by a theological reorientation.[1] Daniel Nexon, in turn, has emphasized the role of the Reformation in challenging dominant actors, such as the Holy Roman Empires and Europe's imperial dynasties. Religious identities, so Nexon, made it possible for modern rulers to create crosscutting religious networks in order to divide and contain local uprisings.[2]

Such violence was altogether absent from Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and China, despite the multiplicity of religious traditions and identities in East Asia. **David Kang** argues that the inclusivist religions of the region did not easily lend themselves to appropriation by political leaders as a means of differentiating groups or justifying

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[1] Daniel Philpott, "The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations," World Politics, Vol.52, No.2 (January 2000), pp.206-265; and Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2001).

[2] Daniel H. Nexon, *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

violence. This suggests that conclusions drawn from Christianity and Islam regarding the mobilization potential of religion distort the relationship between religion and war.

Most provocative among those rethinking the Wars of Religion, and in tension with Philpot, Nexon, and Kang, is William Cavanaugh, who questions the pacifying effect of the creation of the modern state. Cavanaugh shows that the so-called Wars of Religion did not, in fact, divide Europe along religious lines or motivate conflict. Rather, it was the creation of the secular state as an alternative to the imperial order that gave rise to wars. Nationalism then, and not religion, is at the foundation of the brutal wars of the 16th and 17th century. Modern secular thinkers have "framed" religion unjustly for fomenting the very violence that the secular order was responsible for.[3]

We have included several texts from this vibrant research program in this collection. **Anthony Marx**, for example, locates the role of religion in the birth of the modern state at a surprising juncture. Marks argues that early modern leaders employed religion to forge a sense of national solidarity and to support their efforts at centralizing power long before the Westphalian shift. Religious intolerance and the exclusion of religious minorities in England, France and Spain were used to construct state identity and cement popular unity behind the throne. This argument exposes the ethnic and intolerant roots of an earlier form of nascent nationalism and illustrates the significance of religious passions in developing state identities.

John Carlson and **Erik Owens** note the changing features of modern sovereignty and the many roles that religion plays in that transition. International interventions to stop mass killings and international tribunals are challenging the Westphalian principles of nonintervention. By providing supreme principles and commitments that drive ethics, religion competes with traditional sovereign principles. Because sacred notions, expressed as humanitarian concerns, as global religious teachings, as claims to religious freedom, or as non-state violent actors, can transcend borders, they rival and even upend the traditional rights reserved for sovereigns. Rather than seek to merge religion and politics, or banish religion from the political realm, the authors propose acknowledging and exploring the role that religion has played in shaping modern politics, including its constructive contributions.

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[3] William T. Cavanaugh, *The Myth of Religious Violence* (Oxford University Press, 2009).