

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND POLITICAL SCIENCE

**THE GLOBAL RESURGENCE OF RELIGION AND THE
DISECULARIZATION OF AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY,
1990-2012**

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A thesis submitted to the Department of International Relations of the London School of
Economics and Political Science for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,
London, August 2012

DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This thesis conceptually and empirically explores how American foreign policy is changing under the domestic and international pressures brought about by social and cultural processes associated with the global resurgence of religion. It argues that in response to these pressures the American foreign policy establishment, and American diplomatic, foreign assistance and national security practices and institutions are gradually undergoing, since the end of the Cold War and especially following September 11, processes of “desecularization”.

In order to explain these foreign policy changes, this thesis develops a Historical Sociological (HS) approach to Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). This theoretical framework allows investigating the complex causal mechanisms that have led to the emergence of “desecularizing actors” at the domestic American level, which are embedded or responding to macro-processes of religious resurgence at home and abroad. These desecularizing actors have mobilized at the micro-level to challenge at critical historical junctures what they perceive is the problematic secular character of American foreign policy intellectual traditions, state practices and policy-making structures. In order to advance their preferred inherently religious policy agendas, desecularizing actors have articulated a number of principled and strategic discourses, which enable them to successfully contest and renegotiate the boundaries between “the secular” and “the religious” in American foreign policy.

This thesis draws from ongoing conceptual debates in the sociology of religion on desecularization and applies this concept to that of a state’s foreign policy. It unpacks how processes of desecularization have taken place at multiple levels and with different intensities across the American foreign policy apparatus. This thesis identifies two broad processes that relate to foreign policy desecularization. First, processes of “counter-secularization” in terms of a growing entanglement between functionally differentiated American secular state practices and policy-making structures, and religious norms and actors. Second, processes of “counter-secularism” in terms of a progressive weakening of dominant secular epistemic, ideological, and normative ideational constructs among American policy-makers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Writing a doctoral thesis is a long and arduous, but incredibly fulfilling process, which would have never come to fruition without a great deal of financial, intellectual and moral support I received along the way. First of all this thesis would not have been possible without the full funding received by the LSE IDEAS Stonex Scholarship and by LSE IR department's travel grants to carry out fieldwork in the U.S. in 2010 and 2011. I would also like to extend my thanks to the Center for Transatlantic Relations at SAIS, Johns Hopkins, for giving me an air conditioned desk in the unbearably humid Washington, D.C. summer of 2011. I am also grateful to Emiliano Alessandri and Mesky Brhane for offering me a spare bed during my time in Washington. Emiliano, in particular, has been an important friend and intellectual partner throughout these years.

My deepest gratitude goes to my supervisor, Katerina Dalacoura, for her unfailing support, patience, kindness, and mentorship. Her analytical rigor, open-mindedness and ability to challenge assumptions have been an incredible source of inspiration throughout the process. My thanks also go to colleagues and friends at LSE IDEAS and the IR502 International Theory Workshop whose insights throughout the years I've benefitted enormously from. Special thanks go to (in alphabetical order) Kirsten Ainley, Barry Buzan, Michael Cox, Kim Hutchings, Nick Kitchen, Svetozar Rajak, and Arne Westad. Thanks must go to Emilia Knight, Martina Langer, Tiha Franulovic and Hilary Parker for their ever-present behind the scenes support. My interest in IR as a discipline developed by accident while attending Mervyn Frost's lectures at King's College, London, many years ago. The seed that became this PhD was planted then, and for that I am grateful to him.

I am especially grateful to Amnon Aran, Alex Edwards, Jim Guth, George Lawson, Elizabeth Prodromou and Nukhet Sandal who took time to read and comment on parts of my work. I am also grateful to the many NGO and faith-based activists, religious leaders, policy analysts, academics, U.S. government officials who took time to meet with me in Washington D.C. and discuss the issues raised by my research. Needless to say, I am entirely responsible for the content and conclusions of this thesis.

Crucial to the development of this thesis, have been the countless debates during lunches, coffees, and pints with my Millennium and Research Room friends from the "IRD 7th Floor". A huge thanks goes to Manuel Almeida, Filippo Dionigi, Rebekka Friedman, Andrew Jillions, Jorge Lasmar, Kevork Oskanian, Ramon "Moncho" Pacheco Pardo, and Chris Phillips. Thanks must go to Piero as well, who's panini e caffè kept me alive and going in the final deepest and loneliest moments of this doctorate.

Loving thanks go to my family, especially to my mother, Ludina, for her endless support throughout my life. Above all, though, my most heart-felt and deepest gratitude goes to Katie, who has had to put up with my physical and mental absence throughout most of our married life thus far. Without her constant love, reassuring encouragement, "date nights", and dreams of a life beyond the PhD, this thesis would not exist.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	9
The Argument	13
Defining Key Concepts	17
<i>Religion.....</i>	<i>17</i>
<i>Global Resurgence of Religion.....</i>	<i>19</i>
<i>The Secular and Deseccularization.....</i>	<i>28</i>
Empirical and Conceptual Contributions of the Thesis	31
Theoretical Framework: A Historical Sociological Approach to Foreign Policy Analysis.....	38
Methodology and Thesis Structure	41
1. EXPLAINING FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE: A HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS.....	49
Understanding and Explaining Change in FPA: An Incomplete Research Agenda	52
Why the Under-theorization of Change in FPA	54
Bringing More IR Theory into FPA	57
HS and FPA I: Towards a Pluralist and Historicist Conceptualization of the International in FPA	63
<i>Analytical and Ontological Pluralism.....</i>	<i>63</i>
<i>Historicism and Eventfulness</i>	<i>66</i>
<i>From Theory to Empirics</i>	<i>67</i>
HS and FPA II: Towards a Mutually Constitutive Understanding of Foreign Policy and International Politics	70
<i>Linking Macro Processes and Micro Social Action</i>	<i>71</i>
<i>The Institutional Concept of the State</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>From Theory to Empirics</i>	<i>80</i>
Conclusion	81
2. THE SECULAR AND DESECULARIZATION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	84
Conceptualizing and Historicizing the Secular, Secularization and Secularism ...	85
<i>Secularization: Concept and History</i>	<i>86</i>
<i>Secularism: Concept and History.....</i>	<i>91</i>
American Foreign Policy as a Secular Practice	100
Historicizing the Global Resurgence of Religion	104
Deseccularization in Foreign Policy: A Conceptual Framework.....	112
<i>Defining Deseccularization</i>	<i>113</i>
<i>Deseccularization and Foreign Policy.....</i>	<i>115</i>
<i>Deseccularizing Actors: A Taxonomy</i>	<i>119</i>
Conclusion	124

3. THE AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY ESTABLISHMENT: EXPLORING THE NEXUS BETWEEN RELIGION AND WORLD POLITICS	126
Religion, Religious Resurgence, and the Foreign Policy Establishment	128
<i>Before and During the 1990s</i>	<i>128</i>
<i>Following 9/11</i>	<i>133</i>
Islam, the Muslim World and the Foreign Policy Establishment	144
<i>Before and During the 1990s</i>	<i>144</i>
<i>Following 9/11</i>	<i>146</i>
Conclusion	154
4. AMERICAN DIPLOMACY AND STATECRAFT: ADVANCING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT	156
Desecularizing Actors in Context	158
<i>Activists, Principled Policy Elites and Political Elites Promoting International Religious Freedom Norms</i>	<i>159</i>
<i>Principled and Strategic Policy Elites Promoting Religious Engagement</i>	<i>164</i>
Institutionalizing Religious Freedom within American Foreign Policy	168
<i>A Broadening Agenda</i>	<i>175</i>
Religious Engagement and the Growing Nexus Between Religion and Foreign Policy	177
<i>Mapping Out and Institutionalizing Religious Engagement</i>	<i>178</i>
<i>Expanding Training and Knowledge on Religious Issues</i>	<i>180</i>
Assessing Desecularization	182
Conclusion	188
5. AMERICAN FOREIGN ASSISTANCE: INTERNATIONALIZING THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVES	192
Desecularizing Actors in Context	196
<i>Principled Activists Pushing to Access Government Resources</i>	<i>199</i>
<i>Political and Policy Elites Opening Up Government Resources</i>	<i>203</i>
President Bush Taking the Domestic Faith-Based Agenda Abroad	205
<i>The Faith-Based Initiative Goes Abroad</i>	<i>205</i>
<i>(Conservative) Religious Values and International Health Initiatives</i>	<i>208</i>
President Obama Consolidating and Broadening the Faith-Based Agenda Internationally	212
<i>Consolidating the Faith-Based Agenda</i>	<i>213</i>
<i>Broadening the Faith-Based Agenda</i>	<i>215</i>
<i>(Partially) Rolling Back Religious Conservative Norms on Health Policies</i>	<i>217</i>
Assessing Desecularization	218
Conclusion	229

6. AMERICAN NATIONAL SECURITY: CONFRONTING AND ENGAGING ISLAM AND THE MUSLIM WORLD	234
Desecularizing Worldviews and Actors in Context	237
<i>Clash and Confrontation Worldview and Strategic Policy Elites</i>	<i>238</i>
<i>Dialogue and Engagement Worldview and Strategic Policy Elites</i>	<i>240</i>
The Cold War and its Immediate Aftermath: Islam Emerges as a Security Concern	242
September 11: Islam and the Muslim World Acquire Centre Stage	247
<i>Democracy Promotion in the Muslim World.....</i>	<i>250</i>
<i>Winning the War of Ideas</i>	<i>252</i>
From Bush’s Confrontation to Obama’s Engagement with the Muslim World	258
<i>A New Rhetorical Beginning</i>	<i>259</i>
<i>Addressing Policy Tensions with Muslims</i>	<i>261</i>
<i>Widening America’s Engagement with Muslims and Targeting Terrorists Narratives</i>	<i>262</i>
Assessing Desecularization	267
Conclusion	273
CONCLUSION	276
Tracing and Unpacking American Foreign Policy Desecularization	276
A HS Approach to FPA: Explaining Foreign Policy Desecularization	282
Contributions to the Study of Religion and its Resurgence in IR	288
<i>The Nature of the Global Resurgence of Religion.....</i>	<i>288</i>
<i>Desecularization and Teasing out what is Distinctive about Religion and its Resurgence</i>	<i>290</i>
<i>Historical Sociology and the Study of Religion in IR.....</i>	<i>299</i>
ANNEX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWS	307
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	310

LIST OF ACRONYMS

AEI	American Enterprise Institute
ACLU	American Civil Liberty Union
BMENA	Broader Middle East and North Africa
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
CPC	Country of Particular Concern
CSID	Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy
CFBCI	Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives
CVE	Countering Violent Extremist
EPPC	Ethics and Public Policy Center
FBO	Faith-based organization
DOD	Department of Defense
FBO	Faith-based Organization
FSI	Foreign Service Institute
FPA	Foreign Policy Analysis
OIG	Office of Inspector General
GTU	Georgetown University
HS	Historical Sociology
IGE	Institute for Global Engagement
IRF	International Religious Freedom
IRFA	International Religious Freedom Act
ICRD	International Center for Religion and Diplomacy
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NSC	National Security Council
NSS	National Security Strategy
NAE	National Association of Evangelicals
OIC	Organization of Islamic Conference / Cooperation
OIRF	Office for International Religious Freedom
PEPFAR	President Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief
PCC	Policy Coordination Committee
SAIS	School for Advanced International Studies (Johns Hopkins)
UN	United Nations
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Aid
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
USCIRF	U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
WINEP	Washington Institute for Near East Policy
WFDD	World Faith Development Dialogue
WHFBO	White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives / White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

INTRODUCTION

“Whether governments around the world like it or not, this resurgence of religion has meant that they would now have to reckon with religion in a way that they did not forty, fifty, or sixty years ago.”

Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah (2011, p.15)

Since the 1990s, and particularly following three planes being flown into the symbols of American power at the cry of *Allahu akhbar* (God is great), American foreign policy has become ever more entangled with religious forces and dynamics. The study of religion in international politics, long ignored or consigned to the dustbin of history in the academy and elite circles in the United States, is going through a revival. Universities and think tanks that make up the intellectual backbone of the American foreign policy establishment have been busy launching research initiatives and creating centers exploring, from all possible angles, the ways in which religion increasingly “matters”, so it seems, in international relations and to the American national interest.

Georgetown University (GTU), a training ground for aspiring American diplomats and security officials, has established two major centers that directly address issues at the nexus of religion and foreign affairs. The Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, created in 2006, hosts a thriving scholarly community on religion across the social sciences and actively engages in foreign policy debates. GTU also houses a Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, directed by leading scholars on Islam and political Islam. The Center was founded in 1993 and revamped with a \$20 million endowment in 2005. The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), the leading think tank on international issues in the U.S., launched a “Religion and Foreign Policy”

initiative in 2006 which hosts regular talks, meetings and conferences with religious activists and scholars. *Foreign Affairs*, CFR's flagship journal, has led public debates in Washington about the role of culture and religion in world politics ever since the publication of Samuel Huntington's "Clash of Civilizations?" article in 1993 (Huntington 1993; Hoge 2010).

Since 2002 the Brookings Institution has hosted a thriving "U.S. Relations with the Islamic World" project producing reports and high-level conferences on a wide variety of issues affecting a transcontinental and religiously-defined community of people and countries. Like Brookings, countless think tanks are exploring Islam's apparent growing role in international politics. The PEW Research Center, a research and polling institute, launched in 2002 a "Forum on Religion & Public Life" to quantify and investigate religious dynamics at home and abroad. By 2012 the Forum has become one of PEW's largest and most successful research programs. In the wake of 9/11, Gallup opened a "Center for Muslim Studies", which assiduously tracks what "Muslims" around the world think about a wide variety of pressing social and political issues.

Mirroring trends in the academy and the policy-oriented research worlds, notable changes in American foreign policy have occurred in the past twenty years in terms of a greater interest and concern for religious actors and issues. During the Cold War, American diplomats and policy-makers paid sporadic attention to religious prisoners and minorities around the world. Since the 1990s, however, restrictions and violence towards religious individuals and communities worldwide, especially Christian, has become an ever more significant concern. Following the 1998 Congressionally-mandated International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), the United States seeks to promote and advance in an explicit and structured way religious freedom norms and practices internationally.

Since the U.S. Agency for International Aid (USAID) was established in the 1960s, and for the following four decades, only a selected and restricted handful of large and well-known non-sectarian and non-proselytizing faith-based organizations (FBOs)

would be granted access to federal funds for aid programs. Indeed religion was often seen in policy circles as antithetical to development and progress, and FBOs would be rarely sought out as partners given stringent church-state separation norms. Secular non-governmental organizations (NGOs) were overwhelmingly the implementing partners of choice. Yet, from the early 2000s through the enactment of faith-based initiatives, the American government has progressively come to rely ever more on FBOs, even overtly religious and proselytizing ones, in the delivery of emergency and development aid worldwide.

In the aftermath of 9/11 American presidents have regularly and repeatedly singled out a group of people and countries of a particular religious persuasion or identity as in need of special policy attention. Indeed in the past decade, the United States has come to see the confrontation or engagement, not just with secularly-defined Arabs, or Egyptians and Afghans, or Middle Easterners, but with the religiously-defined categories of “Muslims” and the “Muslim world”, as vital to its security. Theological disputes among Islamic scholars and activists have become central national security issues, and American policy-makers have increasingly sought to promote particular strands and interpretations of Islam that are deemed in line with its interests and values. All in all, compared to the Cold War, American decision-makers and foreign policy officials have become in the past two decades ever more explicitly and systematically concerned with engaging, reaching out and connecting with religious groups and leaders domestically and abroad.

In the process new positions, offices, and commissions have been created across overwhelmingly secular American foreign policy institutions and bureaucracies with the scope of managing and directing diplomatic, aid and national security policies with an “inherently religious” character.¹ An Ambassador-at-Large, an Office for International Religious Freedom (OIRF) within the State Department, and a government mandated

¹ Allen Hertzke has described foreign policies with an apparent religious content as “inherently religious” (2012, p.16). Hertzke refers mainly to the international religious freedom and faith-based development agendas. I borrow the term from Hertzke and expand it to include policies targeting “Muslims”.

independent U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), have been established since 1998. These are tasked with monitoring international restrictions on religious beliefs and practices, and violence towards religious individuals and groups. They also carry out programs and advise the President, the Secretary of State and other senior policy- and law-makers on issues ranging from reducing religious restrictions, to promoting interfaith-dialogues, and curbing sectarian violence worldwide.

A White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives was created by the Bush administration in 2001 and revamped as the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships by the Obama administration (hereafter White House Faith-Based Office: WHFBO). The WHFBO and its counterpart office within USAID, created in 2002, have been at the forefront of efforts to expand in normative and practical terms access by religious groups to federal resources for humanitarian and development projects internationally. With time the WHFBO has become ever more involved in a wide range of foreign policies with a religious dimension, especially following Obama's appointment of a 25-strong Advisory Council in 2009. The Advisory Council, managed by the WHFBO, was tasked to think through how American foreign policy could benefit from a closer partnership with religious communities and actors to solve issues ranging from poverty and climate change to improving interreligious cooperation and decreasing conflict worldwide.

During the Bush Presidency a number of coordinating committees designed to develop policies targeting Muslims and Islam were created in the National Security Council (NSC). A first ever Special Envoy to the then-Organization of Islamic Conference (now Organization of Islamic Cooperation) (OIC) was appointed in 2008. Under Obama a new Global Engagement Directive in the NSC was created around the time the President gave his famous 2009 Cairo speech reaching out to Muslims around the world. A great part of the directory's work would be to coordinate the administration's "Muslim engagement" policies following Cairo. Obama would re-appoint a Special Envoy to the OIC and create a new Special Representative to Muslim Communities position in the State Department in 2009.

Accompanying these institutional developments designed to articulate, coordinate and deliver a growing range of policies with an inherent religious content, are cultural and normative shifts among the human and institutional actors involved in processes of policy-making and implementation. Within foreign policy circles and bureaucracies, knowledge about international religious dynamics had been, during the Cold War, largely discounted based on the widespread assumption that religion was a dying force in an ever-modernizing world. Before the late 1990s, entanglement with religious forces and actors was overwhelmingly feared and avoided, on the prevalent understanding among policy- and decision-makers that: a) religion was an incendiary issue best kept private, and b) on the grounds of an ingrained strict interpretation of church-state separation norms. In just over a decade both accumulation of religious knowledge and entanglement with religious actors and issues have, instead, been increasingly and systematically encouraged.

The Argument

Although new policies and institutional developments designed to promote international religious freedom, structure religious engagement, advance faith-based development and win over the hearts and minds of Muslims are in many ways unrelated, they all happen to share a religious content. They also have all come into being within a period of less than two decades. These specific changes are not unrelated. They are deeply connected. Indeed this thesis argues they are all part of a broader trend of American foreign policy desecularization.

Compared to the Cold War period, religious concerns, norms, knowledge and actors have become in recent times ever more entangled with American foreign policies and policy-making structures. Before the late 1990s and early 2000s, there was little or no interest, for instance, in *systematically, openly, and methodically*: a) researching and

understanding international religious dynamics and how these intersected with political, economic and security outcomes; b) reaching out to religious communities or leaders to advance a wide range of foreign policy goals; or c) directly influencing religious institutions, interests and theologies to reduce violence and promote international peace and cooperation. This is not to say that these practices did not occur, they often did but in *sporadic, ad hoc, circumscribed* and often *concealed* ways. In this the delivery and formulation of foreign policy was more secular before the 1990s than it is today. That is what is meant here in a broad and general sense by suggesting that American foreign policy has undergone a process of desecularization.

Why now? And how have processes of desecularization happened? First, this thesis contends that we cannot explain *why* these foreign policy changes have taken place in recent decades if we do not contextualize them within a broader historical, social and cultural context: one that has experienced a progressive resurgence of religion at the global level over the past four decades.² Second, we cannot understand *how* desecularization has come about without looking at the behavior and purposive actions of specific actors (individual or collective), what I call *desecularizing actors*. Desecularizing actors are individuals or organizations, mainly religious as well as secular in character, who by virtue of being embedded within or reacting to process of religious resurgence, have sought to mainstream inherently religious policies and alter bureaucratic structures and norms across the American foreign policy apparatus.

Some clarifications are in order here. I am not claiming that I will prove or disprove in any substantial way the influence or lack thereof that religion *per se* - understood either in terms of religious interest groups, specific theological ideas or broader identity issues – has on American foreign policy. This is not a thesis on whether religious interest group “X” has simply lead the U.S. to pursue policy “Y”. Or whether a certain type of foreign policy or grand strategic change can be explained in terms of this

² Some like Timothy Shah and Monica Duffy Toft have set a precise date to mark the beginning of the modern process of religious resurgence: 1967 (2006, p.40). This was the year of Israel’s victory against Arab nationalist regimes in the Six Day War. An event, according to Shah and Toft, which had a double effect of galvanizing religious activists in the Arab Middle East and Israel.

or that religious belief of a particular president, or is the result of a specific religious interpretation of America's national identity.

Furthermore, arguing that American foreign policy was largely a secular practice before the end of the Cold War, and since then increasingly less so, may strike some as odd. However I am not contending that before the 1990s American foreign policy was immune to any religious influence and following the end of the Cold War it suddenly acquired a distinctively religious character. In many respects this would be an incorrect statement. As a growing body of historical literature has recently convincingly shown, religious ideas and religiously-infused worldviews at the mass or elite level have always had multiple and complex influences on American foreign policy (Inboden 2008; Preston 2012; Ribuffo 2001).

Indeed, Americans have long been a religious people and religion has mixed with politics ever since the first Puritan pilgrim set foot on America's shores (Noll 2009). This is something that the French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville promptly noticed during his travels in the New World in 1831-1832:

“Upon my arrival in the United States, the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention; and the longer I stayed there the more did I perceive the great political consequences resulting from this state of things, to which I was unaccustomed. In France I had almost always seen the spirit of religion and the spirit of freedom pursuing courses diametrically opposed to each other; but in America I found that they were intimately tied, and that they reigned in common over the same country.” (2000, p.358)³

³ On the relationship between Puritan influences and America, Tocqueville also would remark: “I see the destiny of America embodied in the first Puritan who landed on those shores, just as the human race was represented by the first man.” (2000, p.339)

This religious character is often said to underpin American exceptionalism.⁴ Debates about the impact of American exceptionalism, civil religion or its sense of “manifest destiny” in molding the Manichean lenses through which international contests are repeatedly portrayed in Washington and liberal values spread abroad: have time and again highlighted the religiously-infused tones with which Americans see themselves, their country’s place in the world and frame their relations with the “other”.⁵ While presidents have indeed often used religious imagery in their discourses and American nationalism does have a messianic streak, the cornerstone of this thesis’ argument is premised on an important distinction. I distinguish between the management and execution of foreign policy by state policy-makers and bureaucracies from the character of specific presidents or the country at large.

My main concern is with the former, that is, with the practices and policy-making structures of American foreign policy, and not the latter. Hence, while presidents may have at times called upon religious beliefs to interpret the world or religious language to justify particular decisions, rarely, if ever, were religious concerns and norms seen to inform and structure entire policy initiatives and underline specific institutional designs. In this sense, I argue that the implementation and policy-making processes of American foreign policy was overwhelmingly secularized during the Cold War and has undergone a process of desecularization since the late 1990s. This process is rooted in the novel qualitative and quantitative institutionalization of a growing number of inherently religious policies: religious freedom, religious engagement, faith-based initiatives, Islam-centered initiatives. These changes, I contend, can be fully understood and explained only in the context of the recent global resurgence of religion.

⁴ Indeed, Tocqueville was among the first to describe America as “exceptional” partly because of its religious character, arguing that: “The position of the Americans is therefore quite *exceptional*, and it may be believed that no democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one. Their strictly Puritanical origin, their exclusively commercial habits, even the country they inhabit...[emphasis added]” (2000, p.548)

⁵ The literature on the relationship between Protestantism, Puritanism and Calvinism, in informing America’s identity, self-image and, by extension, its foreign policy is virtually infinite. For recent scholarship see: Dudney and Meiser (2012); Dueck (2006); Lieven (2005); Marsden (2011b); Monten (2005). For other important, but older sources, see: Davis and Lynn-Jones (1987); Kurth (1998); McDougall (1997). For seminal work, but unrelated to foreign policy, on American exceptionalism and civil religion see: Bellah (2006); Lipset (1996)

To sum up, this thesis does not ask what the impact of religious actors, ideas or identities are on American foreign policy X or grand strategy Y. Domestic religious forces, in a way or another, have tended to exercise across history complex and multiple influences on America's international behavior. This project instead asks why, how, and why now American foreign policies and policy-making structures have desecularized acquiring over time an ever-more religious dimension. It explains this process by looking at the purposive actions of specific desecularizing actors at the domestic level, whose emergence and behavior cannot be fully grasped without looking at the macro-context and trends associated with the global resurgence of religion. As Elizabeth Prodromou points out: "a periodization of U.S. foreign policy after the Cold War shows a gradual yet discernible shift in the salience of religion" (2008, p.299). This "gradual yet discernible shift" is what this project is interested in unpacking and explaining.

"Religion", "religious resurgence", "the secular" and "desecularization" are broad, slippery and contested terms and it is good practice to define and circumscribe them. The next section is dedicated to this task. Definitions are an important conceptual moment in the development of an argument. As such as I discuss what I mean by these concepts, I will refer to and delineate where I stand with respect to ongoing debates within International Relations (IR) as well as the sociology of religion.

Defining Key Concepts

Religion

Religion is a notoriously slippery and contested concept, and no pretense is here made resolve debates that have a long history. I advance and largely work within the confines of Christian Smith's definition of religion as:

“...the distinctive way of life of communities of followers shaped by their particular system of beliefs and practices that are oriented towards the supernatural. Religion thus conceived is not merely a set of cognitive beliefs, emotional dispositions, or ethical imperatives, but is expressed fully as a way of life practiced by communities of people.” (2003, p.vii)

This is a “particularistic and substantive” definition (Smith 2003, p.vii). It includes those systems of beliefs, communities, institutions and practices of the vast majority of the world’s population that by popular convention are thought of as “religious”. Although it presents some problems in classifying something like Confucianism, it does include most major world religions and other smaller ones (even those which some may see as more approximating “philosophies” or “cults”) such as: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, along with Sikhism, Jainism, Taoism, Mormonism, Baha’ism, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Alevi, Scientology, and so on.

It is *particularistic* because it distinguishes religion from other forms of implicit religions, such as “civil religion” or secular ideologies like nationalism and Marxism, which appear to share some of religion’s characteristics (a system of beliefs, a community of believers, rituals and institutions), but are this-worldly oriented rather than towards the supernatural. In this sense a religion should involve a belief in the existence of one or multiple supernatural beings and/or other superhuman impersonal powers and forces. It is a *substantive* definition, as opposed to functionalist one, because – without having the pretense of being the most accurate or ultimate word about what religion “really is”⁶ – it does not focus on what religion/s does/do.

⁶ For example Scott Thomas argues, that there is “no universal concept of religion applicable to all societies and cultures [...], despite the attempts since the Enlightenment to find one, and not only because the elements of religion are historically specific. Most importantly, the concept of religion is itself the historical product of the discursive practices and history associated with one particular culture, religion, or civilization “Latin Christendom”; which has now become the liberal modernity of Western civilization” (2005, p.23). For an in-depth account of the etymological roots and the modern political and social construction of the concept of “religion”, particularly in contraposition to “the secular”, see: Asad (1993, Ch.1); Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and VanAntwerpen (2011a, pp.7-8). Building on these insights, Mona Kanwal Sheikh warns that “IR theorists should not try to detect the “real” or universally applicable essence of religion”, but also contends that “treating religion as substantive does not mean to essentialize it – it is possible to see religion as distinctive even while holding the view that religion is in flux, changeable and is

Functionalist definitions tend to demarcate religion in terms of what functions it has in our social, human or psychological life (for instance Marx's classical understanding of religion as "the opium of the people" would fall in this category). In a way functionalist definitions tend to veer towards seeing religion as comparable to "activities, ideologies, and organizational forms that seem to share some common features with religion although they are not necessarily or commonly designated as such" with the result that "[p]henomena like nationalism or political ideologies can thus be studied as religious phenomena if they function in the same way" (Sheikh 2012, p.370).

Subscribing to an idea that there is something *sui generis* about religion, not in what it does but what it is, has important implications for the development of my argument. IR scholars working through a substantive definition of religion are making interesting progress in exploring what is particular and characteristic about religious ideas, ethics, institutions, communities in and of themselves as opposed to secular ones (Lynch 2009; Sheikh 2012). What I am instead interested here in is investigating and exploring, along the lines of others before me (Hallward 2008; Hurd 2008), the relationship between "the religious" and "the secular". An issue that will be discussed in more detail later where I highlight the contributions this thesis seeks to make to the study of religion and the secular in IR.

Global Resurgence of Religion

What does the global resurgence of religion mean? And, does it make sense to speak of a "resurgence" in the first place? Up until the morning of September 11, 2001, most IR scholars,⁷ and the discipline at large, had largely "overlooked" religion (Fox 2001) implicitly believing the world to be a secular place or at least a relentlessly secularizing

made by human beings and communities through different processes of construction – but then we can still look at religion when it is socially sedimented, upheld with a relative degree of consensus in a community – we can see religion as being constructed as a social fact without though being insensitive to the possibility of change" (2012, p.370).

⁷ With some notable exceptions, such as: Jeffrey Haynes (1995, 1998); and Fabio Petito and Pavlos Haztopoulos's special issue of *Millennium* on religion (2000).

one (Philpott 2002). For example Daniel Philpott has counted that approximately only a total of six articles on religion were published between 1980 and 1999 in four leading journals of global politics: *International Studies Quarterly*, *International Security*, *World Politics*, and *International Organization* (2009, p.184). Over the past decade there has been a growing recognition among IR scholars that religious beliefs, actors, communities and institutions were not destined to the dustbin of history as often assumed.

The realization that religion actually “mattered” and increasingly appeared to do so in international politics, has spurred a qualitative and quantitative turn towards its study in IR. Much of this discussion has been explicitly or implicitly framed in terms of a *global resurgence of religion*, with scholars busying themselves exploring the multiple and complex causes, manifestations and effects of religion’s return for international relations practices and IR theory itself (Hatzopoulos and Petit 2003a; Haynes 2005; Thomas 2005; Toft, Philpott, and Shah 2011; Snyder 2011b). In a way IR scholarship has caught up with that in comparative politics (Kepel 1994) and sociology (Casanova 1994; Juergensmeyer 1993), which had already re-discovered religion a decade earlier.

Yet, much confusion still remains within IR about what the term “religious resurgence” entails, whether it has any real analytical purchase, and whether it simply reifies something (i.e. religion) that has actually always been there but the discipline had a blind spot towards. At close inspection the notion of a resurgence – or non-resurgence for the skeptics – means quite different things to different scholars. This often reflects the kind of phenomena the particular observer is most interested in understanding/explaining as well as the theoretical and scientific philosophical school he/she explicitly or implicitly subscribes to. Overall, scholars appear talking past each other rather than dialoguing with one another.

Before I move on to unpack what I mean by religious resurgence, I will go over some of the most common definitions, as well as misconceptions, associated with this concept in IR. In the process of reviewing various definitions I will in parallel address a number of critiques: mainly whether the term captures anything new at all and whether it

has any analytical power. This then leads me to advance my own definition, which seeks to conceptually clarify the constituent components of the resurgence and ground the thesis on what hopefully is a less contested understanding of the concept.

Scott Thomas, one of the scholars most closely associated with these debates, gives the following definition:

“...the global resurgence of religion is the growing saliency 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.” (2005, p.26)

This is somewhat too broad a starting point. What is most problematic about this definition is the split that Thomas makes between the resurgence in terms of personal life on the one hand, and public sphere on the other. In the latter case, Thomas’ definition leads him to explore the new “ways religion and politics are being mixed together around the world” (2005, p.26), which I contend is indeed a phenomenon of resurgence. But his insistence on the private realm also leads him to see as part of the “resurgence” also processes such as the “persistence”, “survival”, “spread”, “transformation” or “restructuring” of religions, religious communities or personal religious beliefs. For example Thomas argues that part and parcel of the resurgence are the spread of Pentecostalism, or the rise of new religious movements such as New Age spiritualists, Western Buddhists or the Falun Gong, in modern times and across continents (Thomas 2005, pp.10-11, 26-30; see also: Thomas 2010). And this is somewhat problematic.

By bringing in the private and personal aspect of religiosity, Thomas (and with him the broader discussion of resurgence) falls prey to those who are skeptical about the idea of a religious revival altogether. Indeed measuring in any satisfactory way personal religiosity and adherence to religion around the world, and its supposed increase over the

past half a century, seems a rather daunting and unfeasible task. Furthermore, the ebbs and flows of old and new religious beliefs and communities are part and parcel of what human history is generally (also) about. In such a case, can we really talk about a “resurgence” then? Or are social scientists just realizing that post-enlightenment theories of secularization and understandings of progress that pointed towards the death of God and the demise of religions were simply wrong?

Religion/s, in fact, some contend may have never gone away in the first place. The problem, these critics argue, was with social scientists that had a blind spot and did not pay much attention to it/them (Fox 2006a, p.11; Sheikh 2012, p.369, see in particular note 17). Hence it makes little sense to talk in terms of a “resurgence” or “return”. And I agree, up to a point. There is indeed a growing literature exploring why religions have survived and thrived in modern times (Inglehart and Norris 2007; Robbins 2004). Issues of change and continuity in the life of religions and the religiosity of individuals, while important in their own right and with *possible* political consequences, hardly amount to a process of resurgence.⁸ The spread of Christianity in China is new and may have social, economic and political consequences, but does this really constitute in a strict sense a process of religious revival, return or indeed resurgence? Not really. And critics seem correct to suggest that there is not much new taking place if we look at the persistence and changing composition of religions and religiosity among individuals.

Hence, if the word “resurgence” is to have any analytical weight in IR it should be associated more squarely with an understanding of religions’ growing *political salience* in societies and public life in domestic and international politics. Resurgence implies a change, a reversal, from a moment when religious actors, ideas, identities, discourses,

⁸ This is something Scott Thomas is well aware of. For example he argues: “It is important to be clear about the phenomena this book is trying to explain or understand in international relations. The dependent variable in this book is not greater religiosity per se, for in that case it would be a book about comparative religion or the sociology of religion. What is being explained is how the greater levels of religiosity or even spirituality are taking place in public life, and doing so in ways that have an impact on international relations” (2005, p.37). Nevertheless his continued interest and insistence on the “growth” of personal religiosity, and in process of religious “transformation”, “spread” and “restructuring” in the face of globalization leave him open in my opinion to the critic’s charge that there is little new and “resurging” going on.

practices and institutions appeared to have gone through some sort of decline in their public and political functions. Indeed this was very much the case – as Chapter 2 argues in more detail – with the emergence and spread of the modern state and secular political ideologies across the world in the past four centuries.

Daniel Philpott, Timothy Samuel Shah and Monica Duffy Toft flesh out more explicitly the exclusively political dimension of the resurgence in their work (2011). These scholars do not see the survival, spread and vibrancy of religions worldwide as a sign of resurgence, and indeed they make little or no references to these developments. For them the main theme that characterizes the resurgence is the progressive evolution and qualitative shift in the orientation of “religious people and communities” from “private devotion, enclosed in family, community, and place of worship, to public engagement, characterized by active efforts to influence constitutions, laws, and policy” and “from a strategy of changing cultural attitudes – regarding matters like family and the personal practice of faith – to one of changing laws, policies, and even regimes” (2011a, p.13). In other words, they understand the resurgence as a growing trend whereby people and organizations are adopting political pursuits in the name of religion (2011a, p.22).

They argue that since the 1960s in every major religious tradition, religious and religious-related actors have experienced a shift in their proximity to political power and a shift in their theology of political power towards more activist and engaged political theologies (understood as a set of religious ideas about what is legitimate political authority). Hence the resurgence of religion has a distinctive political meaning, it takes place as “major religious actors throughout the world enjoy *greater capacity for political influence* today than at any time in modern history [emphasis in the original]” (2011a, p.49). It constitutes a quantitative and qualitative rise of politically assertive theologies, and politically engaged religious actors⁹ and religious-related actors (individual and

⁹ Individual religious actors are: clerics, imams, pastors, priests, monks, religious scholars and so on. Collective religious actors: churches, congregations, mosques, orders, organized traditions, and so on.

collective).¹⁰

This understanding of religious resurgence incorporates the rise of modern-day fundamentalisms across religious traditions (Marty and Appleby 2004), and moves beyond it. It is a definition very much akin to José Casanova's understanding of the modern phenomena of religious "deprivatization" (1994). This includes a wide range of domestic, transnational and international phenomena connected with the increased overt political activism by religious groups and institutions, ranging from: Catholic Popes and orders; movements inspired by liberation theologies; Religious Zionist parties, violent or peaceful engaged Buddhist monks or laypeople; democratic or undemocratic political Islamic movements and parties, and Evangelical value-voters and faith-based organizations.

Seen from this perspective – in terms of a growing political, social and public visibility of religions – there is indeed a process of religious resurgence in the world of international politics. This is very much what Elizabeth Shakman Hurd has in mind when she argues: "Although religious politics is not new, there has been an increase in the scope and intensity of the politicization of religion around the world in recent decades" (2008, p.135). This novel development is then reflected and mirrored by the growing attention to religion in the academy. In other words, our previous oversight and now sudden interest towards religion in IR, as well as in other disciplines, cannot be solely understood as an intellectual blind spot exogenous from real-world events.

Yet, it seems to me that framing the resurgence solely in terms of the politicization, or deprivatization, of religion is somewhat reductive. Indeed, while the resurgence of religion can be thought in terms of a *politicization of religion/s*, it appears to be also taking place as a *religionization of politics* (Haynes 1995, p.119; Tibi 2007, pp.35-37). In other words the resurgence is not solely a sociopolitical process whereby, across religions, actors have developed activist political theologies and have become

¹⁰ Religious-related individuals are: lay journalists, activists, intellectuals, propagandists, dissidents and so on. Religious-related collective actors could be: religiously-based political movements, faith-based parties or organizations (from charities to transnational terrorist groups).

more engaged in public debates and political practices. I contend it also takes shape as a cultural process, whereby religious discourses and identities, and the practices and symbols associated with them, have become more politically salient and publicly pervasive in recent decades.

This is the process that Huntington (1993) and the larger identity politics literature indirectly point to, and that Fabio Petito more explicitly touches upon as constituting part and parcel of the resurgence. One of Petito's key insights is that "the resurgence of religion as central factors (*sic.*) in contemporary international relations is linked to the renewed visibility of the concept of civilization in post-Cold War political discourses" (2010, p.173; see also Petito 2011). This process, Petito argues, should be read as an "ideational (or ideological) change" (2010, p.179). As a "kind of "systemic" shift in the way world politics is constructed by and through new ideas, discourses, and shared knowledge", connected with the reassertion of civilizations defined in a fundamentally culturalist sense as "*strategic frames of references*, not as direct protagonists of international politics [emphasis in the original]" (2010, p.179).

The notion of civilizations as "frames of reference" moves beyond the Huntingtonian idea of identifying X number of clearly defined civilizations out there and explaining why they will clash. It instead points at the growing references to Islam, Confucian values, Judeo-Christian heritage, and so on, as central political categories in contemporary world politics. These categories are increasingly embedded in the discourses and shaping the practices of a plurality of religious as well as non-religious state and non-state actors at multiple levels of analysis in international and global society (Petito 2010, p.178).

Beyond civilizational appeals, the point here is that state and non-state actors, who one would have a hard time defining as religious, are regularly and increasingly appealing to religious identities and discourses in domestic and international politics (see also: Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and VanAntwerpen 2011a, p.18). So it happens that during the civil war in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s between Croats, Serbs and

Bosnian Muslims each side would reach out and find historically and religiously-related (not ideological) allies, respectively in Germany, Russia and the Arab-Muslim world. Individuals like the Ba'athist Saddam Hussein increasingly played the Islamic card during the Gulf Wars. Others like the agnostic Geert Wilders regularly speaks about Islam as a threat to Judeo-Christian Europe. Or debates in France where the problem of integrating immigrants who happen to be Moroccan, Algerian, Senegalese, or Arab and African becomes instead a “Muslim” problem about whether “Islam” is compatible with French values and institutions.

Such cultural shifts have often very real material manifestations and consequences, and important implications for social and political practices. Places of worship are built others burned down, money is collected and spent, communities are included or excluded, people are converted, attacked, resettled, killed, saved, and so on, according to the types of labels and identities they are given by others or subscribe to themselves.

Since no definition aptly captures this dual *social* and *cultural* process that I identify as constituting the resurgence of religion, I will propose my own. I define the global resurgence of religion in IR as the growing political salience of religion conceptualized as: i) social processes whereby religions, theologies, and religious actors (individuals, non-state actors, communities) become more publicly and politically engaged; and ii) cultural changes whereby religious beliefs,¹¹ identities,¹² discourses, practices,¹³ symbols and objects,¹⁴ and actors acquire growing political weight and meaning. These two sets of processes – which have taken place in multiple and complex ways across space and over the past four or five decades – can be seen as occurring independently and/or as mutually reinforcing of each other.

¹¹ For example: theologies, doctrines, norms, beliefs, interpretations, and so on.

¹² For example: Judeo-Christian, Confucian, Shi'a/Sunni, Jewish Orthodox/Reformer, Baha'i, Muslim, Protestant Evangelical, Mormon, and so on.

¹³ For example: reading holy texts, knowing religious verses by heart, praying, attending service, carrying out religious duties, and so on.

¹⁴ For example: holy texts, religious symbols and garments, places of worship (churches, mosques, temples, synagogues, shrines), holy sites, and so on.

I have amply discussed in the earlier parts what I mean by the social and cultural changes associated with the growing political salience of religion in domestic and international politics (either/or in terms of politicization of religion and religionization of politics). There are two further issues that this definition raises and which have not yet been addressed. In particular what is mean here by “global” resurgence of religion, and by “independent” and/or “mutually reinforcing” processes.

First, the term “global” has both descriptive and analytical content. It is descriptive in terms of the resurgence being global in its spatial diffusion. That is, occurring worldwide across geographic areas and peoples from the United States, to East, Central and Southern Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Africa – in uneven and distinctive ways according to complex international and domestic dynamics and local histories and context. Analytical, in the sense that it is mainly taking place at the world society level-of-analysis (Buzan 2004). That is, occurring largely at the level of non-state actors and in civil societies within, across and beyond states – indeed most religions and religious communities are transnational in character – rather than at the state and inter-state levels (see also: Thomas 2005, pp.27-29; Toft, Philpott, and Shah 2011, p.24).

Second, the social and cultural processes of resurgence may be occurring “independently” of each other. For instance, in the case of Italy religious and related actors have always been rather active politically, from the Catholic Church to the Christian Democratic Party to other faith-based organizations such as Comunione e Liberazione or the Comunità di Sant’Egidio. In this case we cannot speak of a social process of resurgence. However, cultural processes of resurgence are detectable to the extent that the xenophobic Lega Nord has responded to growing immigration by campaigning loudly for the defense of Italy’s “Christian identity” and the presence of the Crucifix in public schools.

Social and cultural processes may be “mutually reinforcing”. The more religious actors become engaged in politics, the more religious identities, ideas, and discourses

permeate the public sphere. Conversely the more non-religious actors adopt and refer to religious tropes and dynamics the more attention is bestowed upon religious actors and authority. For instance, the more Islamists participate in domestic or international politics, the more Islamic ideas, identities and practices become relevant. Simultaneously the more Islamic identities, practices and ideas become accepted as relevant the more authority those speaking in the name of Islam (religious dignitaries, clerics or religiously-inspired organizations) gain.

The causes of the global resurgence of religion are many and complex, depending on locality, history and what kind of process of resurgence scholars have been interested in investigating. As Jeffrey Haynes aptly points out, when it comes to explaining the resurgence: “no simple, clear-cut, one-size-fits-all, reason or theoretical explanation covers all cases” (2011, p.5). Rather than the causes, however, this thesis is concerned with exploring the effects of the resurgence. In particular in analyzing and teasing out the impact this global religious revival is having on: a) changes to American foreign policy in particular; and b) on exposing the contested nature of the secular in international relations practices and theory, more broadly.

The Secular and Desecularization

The growing emphasis over the past decades on religion across the social sciences has contributed to shedding a reflexive light on its opposite and partner concept: “the secular”. Indeed the resurgence of religion has generated scholarly and critical attention, particularly within sociology, towards long unexamined assumptions regarding processes and theories of “secularization” (Casanova 1994; Gorski 2003). Peter Berger, a leading proponent of secularization theory in the 1960s (1969), would humbly recognize in the late 1990s that:

“The world today [...] is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled “secularization theory” is essentially mistaken.” (1999, p.2)

This literature, however, does not discredit entirely notions that processes of secularization can and have ostensibly occurred around the world. In his recanting, Peter Berger recalls that, even if much of what was commonly understood as secularization theory in the 1950-80s may be outdated today, when contributing to this literature at the time: “I was in good company – most sociologists of religion had similar views, and *we had good reasons for holding them* [emphasis added]” (1999, p.2). In other words, processes of secularization seemed to be taking place at the time (hence the theories), although the generalized predictions made from some particular instances, mainly European ones, may have now not all proven correct. Overall, then, what this recent body of work does undermine is the taken-for-granted, universal, homogenizing, unidirectional and teleological understanding of secularization as a constitutive element of modernity and modernization.

Hence attention has been increasingly directed, by scholars such as José Casanova, towards unpacking the conceptually distinct processes of “secularization”, understood alternatively as: a) the decline of religious beliefs in the private sphere; b) the privatization and marginalization of religions from the public sphere; and C) the functional differentiation of religious institutions and authorities from secular institutions (such as the state) and other spheres of social life and knowledge (such as law, science, economics, and so on). These distinct processes may occur at different historical times, with different intensities, in multiple ways, and in separate places independently of, as well as in parallel to, each other (Casanova 1994, p.11-39; see also: Berger, Davie, and Fokas 2008)

These intellectual developments have led to a growing cross-disciplinary effort – in sociology (Casanova 2011), anthropology (Asad 2003), social theory (Taylor 2007), and IR (Hallward 2008) – dedicated to exploring the boundaries and multiple arrangements of “the secular” across political, social and cultural milieus. Likewise, a reflexive light has been progressively directed towards examining the ideological, rather than supposed neutral and impartial, nature of “secularism” (Connolly 1999), and to

exploring the role of agency and the complex normative structures that underpin secularizing processes and secularist projects (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and VanAntwerpen 2011b; Hurd 2008; Kuru 2009).

A focus on the multiple and historically contingent nature of processes and theories of secularization, the meaning and formations of the secular, and the norms and practices associated with secularism, has revealed their contested as well as reversible character. A space is opening up for thinking about and exploring how social and political challenges to secular arrangements, norms and practices by actors – whether scholars in the ivory tower, activists on the ground or practitioners in the halls of power – can lead to the re-negotiation of previously established boundaries between “the religious” and “the secular” – as the concept of desecularization rather unequivocally suggests.

Berger was the first to introduce the term “desecularization” in 1999. When he did so, however, it was mainly to highlight the continued persistence and in some cases revival of religious beliefs in the modern world, rather than exploring their societal impact in terms of processes that ran counter and against secularizing trends and forces – as the term implies. Vyacheslav Karpov has done most than any to advance framework that coherently defines and operationalizes the concept of desecularization. For Karpov desecularization is a: “process of counter-secularization, through which religion reasserts its societal influence in reaction to previous and/or co-occurring secularizing processes” (2010, p.250). In other words, desecularization can be understood as a process of contestation, reaction and pushback against secular, secularized and secularist structures and forms of authority.

Overall, while the two concepts and phenomena of religious resurgence and desecularization may be related, they should nevertheless be kept analytically distinct. The former refers more generally to the multiple causes, manifestations and effects of religion’s expanding influence on politics and societies domestically and internationally. The latter instead concentrates more specifically on explaining and understanding a

particular type of social change: when, why and how boundaries between “the secular” and “the religious” shift and change in favour of the latter rather than the former.

Empirical and Conceptual Contributions of the Thesis

A comprehensive and theoretically laden empirical focus on explaining and tracking the intellectual shifts occurring within the American foreign policy establishment and the development of policies and bureaucratic designs with an inherently religious content is in many senses a novelty. The only other publication, I am aware of, which has attempted something somewhat similar, but in an overwhelmingly descriptive way, is a Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) report in 2007.

Along with a rich investigation into the new ways in which the resurgence of religion and American foreign policy are mixing, this thesis adds to ongoing investigations and debates about religion and the secular across different research programs. It stands at the crossroads of a series of important scholarly investigations that rarely, if ever, talk to each other. By engaging with these discussions and attempting to bring them into fruitful dialogue, this thesis seeks to make a number of original contributions to ongoing empirical and conceptual debates on: the role of religion in American foreign policy; the impact of the resurgence of religion on international relations practices, in general, and states foreign policies, in particular; and the causes and effects of processes of secularization and desecularization in the sociology of religion.

First, this research lies at the crux of two sets of scholarly enterprises on religion and international relations broadly defined. One is a vibrant literature, discussed earlier, that has emerged over the past-decade or so charting the implications of the global resurgence of religion for IR theories and practices. The other is a flourishing literature on the role of religious actors, ideas and forces – note, not of processes of resurgence in a global sense – on American foreign policy. Indeed, and I would argue not coincidentally,

interest in the intersection between religion and American foreign policy has recently exploded. This ranges from normative debates about what the role of religion and morality should be in informing American foreign policy (Chaplin and Jouston 2010; Hehir 2004), to exploring the impact of religion on multiple domestic sources of foreign policy, for example: on public opinion (Guth 2009); on the beliefs of presidents and high level policy-makers in historical perspective (Inboden 2008) and recent periods (Bacevich and Prodromou 2004); on in the emergence of new religious movements such as the Christian Right (Marsden 2008); the increasingly politically active role of protestant Evangelicals (Mead 2006) and other Christian denominations and groups (Rock 2011); or the exponential growth in religious advocacy and lobbying in Washington (Abrams 2001).

These two scholarly enterprises investigating (a) the resurgence of religion in IR and (b) the impact of religion on American foreign policy, scarcely talk to each other however. The former (a) could gain much in understanding how processes of resurgence affect state behavior by mining the wealth of empirical knowledge produced by the latter (b). Indeed there is a recurrent narrative in the literature on the resurgence that tends to see this process as transformative as the end of the Cold War was or globalization dynamics are for international relations. Religious resurgence is described as possibly having the power to profoundly “challenge”, “transform” or “revolutionize” IR theory, the Westphalian order and how states behave internationally.¹⁵

Yet little substance is added to explain how, when and whether the international system, or states’ foreign policies are actually changing as profoundly under the force of new religious dynamics as at times the literature implies. A closer attention to empirical cases and actual changes in states’ foreign policy practices, and institutional and normative structures, which this research is committed to investigating, could shed more light on what appear to be somewhat premature and unfounded statements of possibilities of radical international change within the IR literature on religious resurgence. Indeed as

¹⁵ See: Hatzopoulos and Petitto (2003b, pp.2-3); Mendelsohn (2012); Philpott (2002, pp.83-92); Thomas (2005, pp.1-20); Shani (2008)

Eva Bellin has argued: “IR scholars interested in exploring the impact of religion on international affairs need to focus more on developing empirically grounded middle-range theory than on pursuing paradigm wars” (2008, p.346). By bringing together grand abstractions on religious resurgence with close empirical study of American foreign policy, this research responds to Bellin’s calls.

On the other hand, the issue with the religion and American foreign policy literature (b), is that it tends to be quite self-contained. While the ambitions of the religious resurgence scholarship need “scaling down” (Bellin 2008, p.346), those of the religion and American foreign policy could benefit by being “scaled up”. In fact, it seems that this scholarship (b) could travel much further and gain in theoretical sophistication if it was more explicitly contextualized in, and put in direct conversation with, the religion and IR literature (a). This thesis moves in this direction by linking empirical research on American foreign policy with ongoing IR debates about the mechanisms and processes by which the boundaries of the religious and the secular are constructed, maintained and re-negotiated.

Secondly, this thesis lies at the crux of another set of debates within the social sciences. Between the burgeoning literature on the resurgence of religion in IR and the flourishing scholarly investigation in the sociology of religion on the constitutive, multiple and contested nature of the secular, processes of secularization, and secularist norms. Indeed, work on desecularization takes place within the discipline of sociology. By bringing the concept of desecularization in IR, this thesis opens up new avenues for research in international politics, while also adding to ongoing debates in the sociology of religion. I will now expand on how sociological insights may add to IR discussions and *vice versa*.

IR scholarship generally focuses on very non-religious outputs of religion’s revival. That is its role, among others, in: promoting violence and conflict,¹⁶ fostering

¹⁶ See: Hasenclever and Rittberger (2003); Fox and Sandler (2006); Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011, Ch 5-6); Thomas (2005, Ch. 5); Toft (2007)

peace,¹⁷ spurring processes of democratization,¹⁸ or challenging liberal hegemony and actors.¹⁹ Likewise, literature charting how old and new religious factors influence American foreign policy tends to focus overwhelmingly on political and military outcomes. For instance, scholars have explored how religious actors and factors have affected, among others, the Bush administration's decision to go to war with Iraq in 2003.²⁰ More broadly attention has been paid to the relationship between religious variables and America's preference for – or lack thereof – military solutions to international problems,²¹ public attitudes towards and U.S. support for international law and organizations,²² or America's support for Israel.²³

As a result, much of what is specific or *sui generis* about the increasing mixing of “the religious” – whether norms, beliefs, or actors – with “the political” is often crowded out in IR research focused on types of outcomes which any actor, norm, identity or interest could produce such as conflict, military interventions, democratization, support – or lack thereof – for a particular country or international institution. It is here, I argue, where the analytical implications of subscribing to a substantive definition of religion become apparent and the import of sociological concepts is of great value. Particularly with regards to sociologists' focus on the multiple and context specific processes of secularization and desecularization.²⁴

¹⁷ See: Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011, Ch. 7); Sandal (2011); Thomas (2005, Ch.6)

¹⁸ See: Philpott (2007); Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011, Ch.4)

¹⁹ See: Adamson (2005); Barbato and Kratochwil (2009)

²⁰ See: Froese and Mencken (2009); Marsden (2008, Ch. 3); Prodromou (2008)

²¹ See: Guth (2009); Rock (2011, Ch. 3)

²² See: Croft (2007, pp.702-705)

²³ See: Croft (2007, pp.705-707); Mead (2006, pp.39-41); Mearsheimer and Walt (2007); Rock (2011, Ch. 5)

²⁴ This point is in line with recent efforts by Sheik (2012) to explicitly tease out “how does religion matter” to IR theory and practices. She concludes that religion is distinctive: as a “belief community” (a point emphasized also by Schott Thomas (2005, p.98)); as a distinctive source of “power”, “authority”, and “legitimacy” *vis-à-vis* the state (a point made also by Daniel Philpott (2009, p.193)); and as a particular kind of “speech act”. Cecilia Lynch (2009) has further argued that a particular characteristic of religious actors is that they act out of ethical considerations about the common good, while Michael Horowitz (2009) for instance has suggested that military campaigns with a religious dimension, and which include religiously motivated actors, tend to last longer than otherwise expected by rationalist and materialist explanations of war duration. Important as they are, most of these efforts are geared towards teasing out

Injecting novel sociological insights about the interaction and dynamics of religious and secular forces, the way actors give meaning and seek to redesign the boundaries between the two, which lies at the very heart of the concept of *deseccularization*, is a promising way to unpack social and political dynamics, across time and space, which are distinctively associated with religion and the resurgence of religion. In terms of this research, for example, the lens of deseccularization magnifies inherently religious institutional and normative/cultural changes in the predominantly secular structures of American foreign policy-making, and points towards the emergence of a set of policies that (directly or indirectly) all share a religious content. What current literature on the resurgence in IR often leaves out are the implications and effects that the growing mixing of religion and politics is having, not simply in causing this war or that peace; but also in bringing about more religion *itself* in international relations discourses and practices, and examining the ways in which this process creates new power structures, incentives and possibilities of action.

Additionally, by using deseccularization as a conceptual tool and lens to explore changes in American foreign policy, this thesis moves forward the nascent research program on “the secular” in IR. So far most conceptual and empirical attention has been dedicated to exploring the ways in which the secular is defined and deployed in IR scholarship, how it colors understandings of “the religious”, in general, and “Islam”, in particular, and the way it informs Western attitudes and policy-makers’ practices in international politics and foreign policy (Hallward 2008; Hurd 2008). Conversely, barring some highly theoretical and normative-oriented discussions (Barbato and Kratochwil 2009), IR scholars have paid less conceptually robust empirical attention to when and how challenges and contestations of secularized and secularist norms and practices, which processes of religious resurgence are engendering, can lead to a re-negotiation of the boundaries of the secular.

what is distinctive about “religion” rather than the “resurgence of religion” as such in international relations practices, which instead is a key concern of this thesis.

At the same time, sociologists of religion would benefit greatly from IR insights – especially when it comes to the role of politics, power, interests and normative contestations among social actors – in explaining and understanding secularizing and desecularizing dynamics. Much of sociology has tended to treat the secular and processes of secularization as a by-product of agentless apolitical abstract forces of *differentiation*, *rationalization*, or *disenchantment* brought about by *modernity*. Some point at rising income, education, safety and wealth as reasons that obviate the need for supernatural sources of security and compensation (Norris and Inglehart 2004, pp.13-17). In order to account for different trends and levels of secularization one would simply explain these by referring back to different levels of modernization and/or economic development. Likewise the persistence and revival of religion in the private and public sphere in some circumstances, and the lack of secularization in others, has been explained in terms of multiple ways of being modern (Eisenstadt 2000), as a by-product of globalizing forces (Roy 2010), or as a seamless transition towards a post-secular reality (Habermas 2008).

Overall, in most sociological accounts there is little space for the political and normative struggles among and across religious and secular actors and institutions inherent in the Wars of Religion (Nexon 2009), the Spanish Inquisition of Medieval Europe, or the French Revolution (Kuru 2009, Ch.5), to use some of the most extreme examples. In such instances the place of religion in public life and politics becomes highly, and often violently, disputed and power dynamics come brutally to the fore. These dynamics, with different intensities, occur daily today. As such, opening up the sociology of religion to insights from IR in particular, and political science in general, would introduce a more nuanced understanding that processes of secularization and desecularization are not simply the product of agentless impersonal macro-forces that just happen “out there”. Instead these result from power struggles and deep normative and political contestations among actors at the micro-level taking place right in front of us.

There is, in the sociology of religion, an emerging attention on secular/religious change emphasizing the role of agents and their beliefs.²⁵ These are, in many respects, what Philip Gorski terms the “sociopolitical perspective” on secularization, which focuses on conflict and competition between religious and nonreligious elites and movements, and the “religiocultural perspective” on secularization, which focuses on the relationship between religious and nonreligious values and worldviews for control of particular sectors and institutions (2003, p.110). Both perspectives involve studying the “ebbs and flows of secularity” across time and “examining the interactions between religious and nonreligious actors and institutions” (2003, p.111). They treat secularization not as a universal undifferentiated force, but as an episodic, uneven and at times reversible process dependent on the social and political conflicts between actors and worldviews who would enhance and maintain, or reduce and undermine, religion’s significance in the public sphere. Hence secularization is not simply a “historical process” but also the product of secularizing “historical projects” (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and VanAntwerpen 2011a, p.28). This thesis further adds an international perspective to an emerging sociological research agenda, which has tended to be largely domestic or comparative in character.

²⁵ For example Christian Smith builds on ideas of the sociology of revolutions and social movements, to theorize “issues of agency, interests, mobilization, alliances, resources, organizations, power, and strategy” in social transformations involving secularization (2003, p.29). For Smith the secularization of American public life between 1870 and 1930 was not simply the by-product of “modernization”, but more like an intentional “revolution”: the result of ideological and power struggles among cultural and intellectual elites (scientists, academics, and literary intellectuals) seeking to gain control of social institutions, marginalize religion, and increase their own cultural authority. The role of agency in processes of secularization is articulated in Peter Berger, Grace Davie, and Effie Fokas’ (2008) comparative analysis of religious change in Europe and America, which emphasizes among others intellectual elites’ orientations and differences in Enlightenment ideologies. Elena Lisovskaya and Vyacheslav Karpov (2010) have explored how the restoration of religious education in Russia and the consequent desecularization of Russian public schools following the end of the Soviet Union, was the outcome of an explicit policy and purposive alliance among top religious and political elites to reintroduce religion in the social fabric of Russia.

Theoretical Framework: A Historical Sociological Approach to Foreign Policy Analysis

Unpacking processes of American foreign policy desecularization and explaining them in terms of the purposive actions of domestic actors embedded in and reacting to the global resurgence of religion is not as theoretically straightforward as it seems empirically intuitive. To carry out such an investigation I develop a Historical Sociological (HS) approach to Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) that draws from the burgeoning field of HS in IR (Lawson 2007) and builds upon the work of scholars like Fred Halliday (2005, pp.41-72), Brian Mabee (2007), and Chris Alden and Amnon Aran (2012, pp.63-7, 113-16), who have already used a HS lens in FPA.

Such a theoretical framework allows me to understand and explain why, how and when changes and trends across history in the wider social and international context lead to deep changes in foreign policy practices and policy-making structures (in terms of institutions and norms). It also proves to be an invaluable tool to reconcile the ongoing above-mentioned debates between the resurgence of religion in IR and the domestic religious sources of American foreign policy, and encourage cross-disciplinary dialogue between IR and sociology on issues of religious/secular change. Furthermore, a HS lens can advance in new and original theoretical ways the broader study of religion in IR. I will now briefly expand on the claims made here.

First, this thesis is not simply an empirical study of the new ways in which American foreign policy and religion are mixing, or a conceptual one about how the resurgence of religion in IR is reconstituting the secular. At its core this is a study into the mechanisms of foreign policy change brought about by the complex interaction of domestic actors at the micro-level, embedded and responding to macro-processes of global change during a specific historical period and time-frame that goes from the end of the Cold War to the present (2012). Much of FPA tends to present a relatively static or snapshot depiction of foreign policy. One which, as Chris Alden and Amnon Aran (2012,

p.92) argue, reflects the field's primary concern for policy- and decision-making processes, where the state and its foreign policy institutions are seen essentially as given and timeless entities. In contrast, a HS approach to FPA introduces a deeper understanding of change into analyses of foreign policy. One that accounts for its impact in relation not only to individual policy-makers, but also state institutions and structures of policy-making, integrating these with the wider historical context and social forces – such as those investigated here in terms of global religious resurgence – within which foreign policy change – in my case processes of desecularization – occurs.

Second, it seems to me that the scholarly enterprises on “religious resurgence in IR” and “religion and American foreign policy” talk past each other not solely because they address different types of questions and puzzles. The lack of communication appears in part due to deeper and theoretically problematic rifts within the discipline of IR. These are the theoretical divisions that have increasingly come to exist between the broader field of IR theory – largely conceived as a theory of macro-structures and international systems – and the particular sub-field of FPA – largely conceived as a micro-oriented, agent-centered and actor-specific theory explaining human actions and state behavior. By adopting a HS approach to FPA, this thesis attempts to build a possible framework that reconciles the widening gap that has come to exist between IR and FPA theories, in order to productively bring together debates on religious resurgence in IR and religion in American foreign policy

Third, IR scholars and sociologists generally talk past each other because of obvious disciplinary boundaries and silos. Yet it not need be so. A HS framework can be a fertile interdisciplinary middle ground on which to bring together debates on the resurgence of religion and the secular in IR with those in sociology and *vice versa*. On the one hand, it allows to rigorously introduce into IR the sociological attention to issues of “desecularization” as part and parcel of a research agenda that focuses on particular types of dynamics engendered by the resurgence of religion in international politics. On the other hand, such a theoretical framework applied from an IR perspective speaks to sociology's need to explore in more detail the context and historical-specific political and

normative contestation between religious and nonreligious agents and worldviews involved in processes of secularization and desecularization. Indeed, by using a HS lens this research provides theoretical and empirical ammunition to Philip Gorski's (2003) quest, carried out through a comparative HS perspective, for a greater focus in the sociology of religion to "sociopolitical" and "religiocultural" models in the study of the secular.

Fourth, the proposed HS framework advances in a number of ways theoretically the study of religion in IR. Much of the nascent scholarship on religion in the discipline has been divided between those suggesting that religion's return poses a fundamental challenge to IR theory such that new and alternative paradigms should be developed (Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003b, p.3; Kubalkova 2003; Thomas 2005, pp.72-77). And those who instead have more recently argued that the study of religion in IR does not require a *revolution*, but rather an *evolution* in the theoretical frameworks currently at our disposal (Nexon 2011; Sandal and James 2010). By adopting a HS framework to the study of religion, this thesis falls squarely in the latter camp. It does so also by adding an original contribution. Indeed the field has yet to fully and substantially engage with alternative theoretical perspectives beyond more mainstream Realist, Liberal and Constructivist paradigms.

Moreover, a HS lens expands IR's understanding and study of religion by opening the discipline's doors to the wealth of research and knowledge produced within sociology's longstanding tradition of research on religion. This is a tradition that dates back to the latter discipline's founding moments with Max Weber (1930) and Emile Durkheim (1915),²⁶ and which is currently undergoing a process of revival (Clarke 2009; Smith 2008). IR scholars interested in religion and the secular would do a great disservice if they sealed their discipline off from this time-honored and newly reinvigorated wealth of knowledge and research. A HS approach promises to be a fruitful theoretical

²⁶ Cecilia Lynch (2009), for example, is engaged in such an enterprise recently proposing from the pages of, the purposefully multidisciplinary, *International Theory* a neo-Weberian approach to religion in international politics.

framework for a thorough and rigorous exchange with sociology, as opposed to IR's tendency towards shallow conceptual raiding parties into cognate disciplines.²⁷

Methodology and Thesis Structure

A HS theoretical framework is quite distinctive in its pluralist ontological, epistemological and methodological commitments (Lawson 2007, p.355; see also: Hobson and Hobden 2002, part II). Overall my project situates itself within the boundaries defined by neo-Weberian historical sociologists like Fred Halliday, John Hobson and George Lawson in IR. Epistemologically this position charts a middle ground between the positivist (or better neopositivist) insistence on scientific progress via hypothesis testing and falsification, to the detriment of any form of interpretation, and the post-positivist (or also post-modernist) embrace of description and understanding seen as diametrically opposite to the possibility of producing any form of causal inference and explanation.

Ahistorical law-like generalizations are here eschewed, both at the macro-structural level, typified by discussions of anarchy in neorealism, or at the micro-human one, typified by the rational-choice approaches of much FPA. What is being proposed here is a form of social scientific “knowledge-production” enterprise about world politics (Jackson 2011, p.19),²⁸ which is not anchored to a neopositivist methodology and research design. In terms of formulating hypothetical models about foreign policy

²⁷ For a similar critique see: Lawson and Shilliam (2010)

²⁸ Jackson has done more than anyone in recent years to advance a pluralist understanding of “science” within IR which is not solely limited to “neopositivist” methodologies (hypothesis-testing, empirical generalization, etc.), but includes also “analytical”, “critical realist” and “reflexive” understandings of “science” and ways of approaching IR inquiry and research. This decoupling of the notion of “science” from, but that includes also, neopositivist methodologies leads Jackson to define science, following Max Weber, in broad terms as “the careful and rigorous application of a set of theories and concepts so as to produce a “thoughtful ordering of empirical actuality”” (...p.193). A scientific enquiry in IR needs to have three qualities be “systemic, public, and intended to produce worldly knowledge” (p.195), something which “neopositivist”, “analytical”, “critical realist” and “reflexive” methodologies legitimately pursue in their specific ways.

deseccularization which are tested and falsified through empirical observation or statistical regression to produce general propositions and law-like generalities. I largely work within what Patrick Thaddeus Jackson calls a “critical realist” methodological framework (2011, pp.72-111), very much in line with Lawson’s understanding of Historical Sociology as based on a deep “ontological realism” (2007, p.357-58).

Yet this does not prevent HS (and a HS FPA) from explaining social facts, processes and actions “allowing concepts, categories and causal regularities to be properly assessed over time and space, and in the process generating workable, theoretically compelling taxonomies and classificatory schemas” (Lawson 2007, p.353). While trying to explain the complex and multiple causes of things historical sociologists do not shy away from using rich description to narrate historical events along with exploring how human agents understand and give meaning to and act within the constraints and possibilities imposed by the social and historical context they operate in.

The risk of falling into complete indeterminacy is real: the un-impressive “the world is complex” conclusion. Hence a variety of mid-range analytic tools tend to be employed by historical sociologists to properly unpack the causal process and mechanisms under examination. In this thesis I will focus on issues of “timing and sequencing” to explore the way events are related, the role of “historical contingencies” (political elections, exogenous shocks) and “macrosocial dynamics” (long term trends such as the resurgence of religion), “critical junctures” (when historical contingencies and macro-trends come together) and “path dependency” (George and Bennett 2005, pp.9-10, 145-48, 212-13; Lawson 2007, pp.356-60; Nexon 2012). These tools are employed as a way to tease out why, when and how changes in practices, institutional designs, and cultural/normative structures come about, reproduce and evolve to influence subsequent developments.

The thesis is broadly divided in two parts. The first part is theoretical and conceptual/historical. The second part is largely empirical. In Chapter 1, I develop the historical sociological theoretical infrastructure, the bones on which I then add the

conceptual muscles in Chapter 2, and then the empirical meat in Chapters 3-4-5-6. I use a wide range of methods to interpret, explain and conceptually unpack foreign policy change and desecularization. In Chapter 2 I use methods of concept formation and operationalization, and historical narrative and historicization. As David Collier, Henry Brady, and Jason Seawright argue in their call for a more pluralist and stronger qualitative research agenda: “assessing causes and consequences emphatically calls for careful attention to *concept formation and operationalization* [emphasis added]” (2010, p.3). Indeed, much of what this project does is “concept formation and operationalization”. Classifying knowledge, creating typologies and categories is part and parcel of *understanding* and *explaining* social reality.

What does it mean for the American foreign policy establishment and American foreign policy to be “secular” and/or “desecularizing”? Most of Chapter 2 will be dedicated to unpacking the meaning, and constituent parts, of concepts such as: the secular, secularization, secularism, and desecularization. It will present a conceptual framework to investigate processes of desecularization, especially as they apply to issues of foreign policy, which will then be operationalized throughout the case studies. The focus on concept formation is accompanied by the method of historical narrative and historicization, to describe and contextualize in time and space processes of secularization, the emergence of secularist ideational constructs, and the birth and development of scholarships on secularization theory.

The methodology used in the empirical part of the thesis (Chapters 3-4-5-6) is qualitative and case study based. The larger case study of American foreign policy is divided into three plus one sub-cases. The “plus one” case, presented in Chapter 3 is somewhat distinct from the remaining three. It focuses mainly on mapping developments across time in the research agendas of individuals (scholars, pundits, out of office policy-makers) and institutions (universities, think tanks, research and polling institutes), which form the foreign policy intellectual milieu in Washington D.C. within which international relations issues and policies are debated. This milieu of civil society-based individuals and institutions is what I will call the American foreign policy establishment. The

remaining three sub-case studies analyze changes in American foreign policy practices and policy-making structures (institutions and culture/norms) along three areas of American diplomacy and statecraft (Chapter 4), foreign humanitarian and development assistance (Chapter 5), and national security strategy (Chapter 6).

Overall the changes explored across the case studies involve a shift from previous research programs (Chapter 3), and foreign policy practices and bureaucratic structures (Chapters 4-5-6) largely identified as secular, secularized and secularist where religious actors and issues are ignored, purposely avoided, and/or stereotyped as problematic. To research programs, and practices and bureaucratic structures that instead are more open, entangled and favorable to articulating, investigating, promoting and engaging with religious actors and issues.

I will use a range of methods to interpret, explain and conceptually unpack foreign policy change in Chapters 4-5-6: process tracing, discourse and content analysis, and within-case cross-temporal comparison. Process tracing in conjunction with discourse and content analysis are used as the main vehicles to establish and infer causality within each case between trends of religious resurgence and American foreign policy change. This thesis sees *understanding* actors' perceptions, preferences and interests through discourse analysis as a fundamental part in *explaining* actors' behavior through process tracing. Understanding and explaining are thought of as essential in providing a richer and more complete causal story of social change (Klotz and Lynch 2006).

I further employ the method of process tracing, less so to “uncover evidence of causal mechanisms at work”, but more to investigate the chain of events that “explain outcomes” (George and Bennett 2005, pp.8-9). In particular process tracing will be used to convert a “historical narrative into an *analytical* [sic.] causal explanation [emphasis in original]” couched in an explicit theoretical form (George and Bennett 2005, p.211). One that accounts for the complex sequence, chain of events and interactions between historical junctures, macro-trends of religious resurgence, and shifting perceptions and

behavior of desecularizing actors at the micro-level: to unpack the specific conditions under which policy and bureaucratic change at the meso-institutional level occurs across time and cases.

In order to structure clearly the chain of events and analyze the proximate *who*, *how* and *why now* mechanisms of desecularization, I divide the narrative of the three sub-cases into four stages, which I then closely trace, and link in a step-by-step logical way through evidence-based rich description and causal inferences. The first step, at T1, will generally establish and present the predominantly secular character of the practices and bureaucratic structures under examination at a time when processes of religious resurgence were hardly detectable. The narrative here is generally temporally situated within a Cold War context and its immediate aftermath.

The second step, at T2, is to trace how processes of religious resurgence and specific historical events come together to open up the space for particular desecularizing actors and worldviews at the public and elite level to emerge and mobilize. Here the relationship between the changing macro historical social context, and the relationship of actors on the ground and the meanings they give to these macro-events events is unpacked through discourse and content analysis. I identify and specify the emergence of discourses in which different types of domestic individual or organizational actors articulate, in loose terms, two broad sets of “principled” and “strategic” beliefs about the problematically secular status of American foreign policy and that something needs to be done to make American foreign policy more attuned to religion.

Principled beliefs generally take the following argumentative form: “American foreign policy is too secular and has long unjustly neglected the concerns [X, Y, or Z] of domestic and/or international religious actors [broadly defined]. As such, American foreign policy ought to take these concerns more seriously and act upon them because it is the right thing to.” Strategic beliefs, generally take the following argumentative form: “Unlike previous historical periods [X, Y, or Z], religion [broadly defined] increasingly matters in international politics [broadly understood] and hence also to the American

national interest. As such, American foreign policy, which is overwhelmingly and problematically secular [broadly defined], needs to take this new religiously-fervent reality into account and act/react upon it by integrating more religion [in a wide variety of ways] in its practices and bureaucracies.” At this stage, which depending on the chapter is temporally situated between the end of the Cold War up to 9/11, beliefs and policy preferences of desecularizing actors are publicly articulated. It is expected that foreign policy practices and policy-making structures have not experienced much substantial change yet.

The third step, at T3, will focus on policy and bureaucratic changes that start to occur between the second Clinton (1996-2000) and the first Bush administration (2000-2004). It draws on detailed empirical research as well as discourse and content analysis to trace the links between desecularizing actors’ actions, the principled and strategic beliefs articulated by these actors, and the emergence of new official policy discourses, practices, offices and appointees with a parallel religious content at critical points in time. The fourth step, at T4, mainly coinciding with the Obama administration, explores processes of “path dependency”. It unpacks how new inherently religious foreign policies and institutional designs which came about in T3, evolved over time: decaying or developing, and in some instances acquiring a life of their own. All along the narrative maps out, as a way to further infer causality, the broadening, thickening and deepening connections that may come to exist between desecularizing actors and governmental institutions.

A further method employed in each of the three sub-cases is within-case cross-temporal comparison. This temporal comparative approach focuses on teasing out the changes that have occurred between a secular “before” (at T1) and the eventual desecularized “after” (at T4) within the different foreign policy areas under examination: diplomatic, development aid assistance, and national security practices and policy-making structures. The sub-cases are not selected with the view of comparing among them (cross-case comparison), in a sense each case is self-contained. They are investigated to provide a deeper understanding and more holistic perspective on the implications that broad macro social and cultural processes of change across time and

space can and do have on multiple and specific aspects of American foreign policy practices and bureaucracies. Overall, much in line with the spirit of HS these empirical chapters seek to “refine and refute, engage with, and accumulate knowledge” by adopting a methodology that constantly carries out a conversation “between empirical data, conceptual abstractions, and causal explanations” (Lawson 2007, p.409).

The principal motivation guiding this investigation into processes of boundary formation and re-negotiation between “the secular” and “the religious” in American foreign policy is chiefly theoretical and analytical, not normative or policy-oriented. Hence, in the final concluding chapter – and for that matter, also in the preceding empirical ones – I will not argue in favor or against processes of desecularization, whether these are a positive or negative development, whether they should be welcomed or resisted, or whether more or less is needed. The conclusion will chiefly limit itself to critically assess and tease out the most salient implications of the case studies under examination for our understanding of American foreign policy, in particular, and the broader conceptual and theoretical debates on the “resurgence of religion” and “the secular” in IR and sociology.

A final note on data. Data was gathered and analyzed from three main sources. First, from primary sources: speeches by high-level political decision-makers, such as: Presidents, Secretaries of Departments, and presidential advisors; and high-level bureaucrats, such as: directors of departments and offices across the executive branch. I also analyzed the discourses and content of government and congressional documents, such as Presidential, NSC, State Department and USAID memorandums and reports, strategy documents, *Wikileaks* files and congressional bills and testimonies. I closely monitored the websites of the White House, State Department, USAID, as well as leading universities, think tank, research institutions and FBOs to trace programmatic and institutional developments and changes. I also collected data through mailing list subscription to universities and think tanks centers and programs on religion and faith-based NGOs.

Second, data was gathered from elite interviews and participant observation conducted during my field research in the United States, mainly Washington D.C., in June 2010 and June-July 2011. Here I collected unpublished documents and interviewed officials, scholars and pundits in and out of office during the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations which were directly involved in the policies and events under investigation. I further interviewed independent academics, think tank researchers, NGOs directors and leading religious figures and advocates. A list of people I spoke to is provided in the annex. I also participated as an observant in conferences (as well as audio conferences), events, and roundtables in Washington D.C. on issues relating to the subject of my thesis. Thirdly, information was gathered through secondary sources such as books and journal article, but above all think tank and research institutes reports and online articles covering a wide range of topics as they relate to the entanglement between religion and American politics and foreign policy.

1. EXPLAINING FOREIGN POLICY CHANGE: A HISTORICAL SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACH TO FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS

This chapter provides the theoretical framework within which much of the following conceptual and empirical work will take place. This thesis argues that the gradual yet discernible emergence of inherently religious policy frameworks – such as the promotion of “religious freedom”, attention to “religious engagement”, the creation of “faith-based initiatives”, and the emergence of a bundle of “Muslim” specific policies – along with the development of new institutional arrangements designed to manage these policies, constitute an important departure from older and overwhelmingly secular American foreign policy practices and policy-making structures. These disparate developments all seem to suggest a progressive desecularization in terms of policies implemented and the institutional and cultural/normative settings that underpin policy-making. I argue that we cannot understand and explain these desecularizing changes if we do not contextualize American foreign policy within the broader international environment and historical period of the past forty-fifty years, one that has been marked by among others important global processes of religious resurgence.

A number of questions come to the fore. Why and how has the worldwide resurgence of religion, in its multiple domestic and international manifestations, led to foreign policy change and desecularization? And why, even if macro-processes associated with the resurgence have been taking place at least since the early 1970s, we have seen the first substantial shifts in American foreign policy only towards the second half of the 1990s and thereafter? Raising similar questions about the causes of American foreign policy desecularization and its relationship to the wider religiously fervent global

social and cultural context within which such development occurred, is to invite a deeper theoretical reflection about explaining and understanding change in the field of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA).

In fact, at its theoretical core, this thesis explores multiple and complex processes of foreign policy “change”. First changes to state practices, such as policies implemented, norms promoted, initiatives launched and so on. Secondly changes to policy-making structures, both in terms of institutional design, and the culture and norms prevailing within bureaucracies and among policy-makers. Multiple “changes” which are all brought about by wider international social and cultural developments across time and space. As Chris Alden and Amnon Aran point out:

“Understanding and integrating “change” into analyses of foreign policy requires accounting for its impact in relation to individual decision makers, institutions and structures of decision making as well as the wider socio-political and external context within which such change occurs” (2012, pp.11-12).

Unfortunately, in its current state, the extent to which the subfield of FPA has the theoretical tools to adequately address the empirical puzzles and complex causal relationships outlined above is somewhat limited. With its primary concern for unpacking the deepest intricacies of the decision-making process, the exploration of how shifts and developments to the “international” context across time and space leads to changes in policies along with those very same decision-making processes – by bringing in new actors and forces, influencing policy-makers’ perceptions, changing the normative and institutional structures within which policy-making takes place – is somewhat under-theorized territory for FPA.

As it stands today FPA theories seem to lack the tools to appropriately conceptualize and effectively integrate in their frameworks that “wider socio-political and external context” within which foreign policy change occurs. I argue that this under-appreciation of change is, in large part, the result of an impoverished theoretical status the

subfield of FPA has relegated itself to. Over the decades, FPA scholars' overwhelming focus on agency and the domestic sphere has led them to shun greater engagement with broader IR theoretical debates and IR theories, often seen as too structural and antithetical to the FPA project itself.

This has stifled theoretical innovation in the subfield. Especially as IR scholars have increasingly recognized their theoretical structural biases and have sought to bring agency and the understanding of change more squarely within their scholarship. I suggest that a promising avenue for integrating the international in explanations of foreign policy change is to foster a closer dialogue between FPA and Historical Sociology (HS). As Andrew Linklater has framed it: "the plain desire to understand social and political change is often the primary motivation for pursuing historical-sociological inquiry" (2009, p.137). Paraphrasing Linklater, one can argue that the desire to understand foreign policy change, and its relationship to international transformations, is a primary motivation for pursuing a HS FPA enquiry.

The chapter is structured as follows. I first begin by investigating why, despite the numerous calls to integrate a better understanding of the international in explaining changes to foreign policies and policy-making structures, such a research agenda has been slow to develop in the subfield of FPA. I then argue for a greater dialogue between FPA scholarship and IR theory in general, and HS in particular, in order to build a more theoretically robust research program on change. The second half of the chapter is dedicated to teasing out the advantages of a historical sociology-informed approach to FPA in providing: i) a 'pluralist' and 'historicist' concept of the international; and ii) a 'mutually constitutive' understanding of foreign policy and international politics. In these sections the theoretical discussion will regularly relay back to the empirical objective of the thesis by unpacking how a HS FPA contributes to explaining American foreign policy desecularization in light of global processes of religious resurgence.

Understanding and Explaining Change in FPA: An Incomplete Research Agenda

Understanding and explaining change has often been a bone of contention within the broader field of IR as well as the subfield of FPA. For most of IR's history, especially during the Cold War, IR scholars were concerned – if not obsessed – with issues of order, stability and teasing out the fundamental long-term regularities of the international system. The surprising collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of globalization, however, prompted important debates during the 1990s and thereafter on the ability – or rather inability – of IR theories to understand, let alone predict, change (Gaddis 1992).

These real world events spurred important theoretical developments. They brought about the emergence, revival and introduction of theoretical paradigms beyond the neo-realist / neo-liberal dichotomy, that sought to robustly integrate, explain and accommodate change in their midst: such as Constructivism (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998), the English School (Buzan 2001), and Historical Sociology (Hobson and Hobden 2002).²⁹ Indeed over the past decades constructivists, historical sociologists, and English School theorists have all developed a robust research program exploring the material and normative evolution and development of international societies, state structures and international organizations across geographical areas and historical periods.

The monumental international events of the 1990s prompted a similar self-reflective exercise within FPA. FPA scholars increasingly recognized their field's scarce interest in the wider and international context within which states acted as well as their own theoretical frameworks' limited ability to integrated these developments when investigating, explaining, and analyzing foreign policy change (Carlsnaes 1993; Hermann 1990; Rosati, Hagan, and Sampson 1994). For instance Joe Hagan and Jerel Rosati concluded back in 1994 that it is the complex “political interplay between the government, society, and global environment that generates and affects foreign policy

²⁹ With much foresight, but little mainstream following, scholars such as Robert Cox (1981), and Barry Buzan and Barry Jones (1981) called for a deeper engagement with issues of change in IR well before the end of the Cold War.

continuity and change” (1994, p.322). Walter Carlsnaes has long sought to bring the wider structural and social context back in FPA by building an explanatory theory of foreign policy change that dynamically links structures and agents. “Foreign policy analysis” – noted Carlsnaes in the early 1990s – “is unable to address a crucial aspect of empirical reality itself: that the policies of states are a consequence of, and can hence only be fully explained with reference to, a dynamic process in which both agents and structures causally condition each other over time” (1992, p.256).

Calls for a more dynamic integration of the ‘international’ in building explanations of change in FPA have persisted since (Webber and Smith 2002). For Christopher Hill, ongoing historical and international transformations – such as the end of the Cold War, power shifts, loosening ideological straightjackets, the rise of globalization, the spread of human rights norms – have a “significant impact on the nature of contemporary foreign policy, on its relationship with domestic society and the means by which it is conducted” (2003a, p.16). Hill argues that these are all substantive qualitative changes to international politics, which foreign policies have to, and FPA scholars should, take into account.

Despite these appeals, there is not much in the way of a consistent, theoretically conscious, and clearly identifiable research agenda exploring the complex dynamics between the international and the domestic that may lead states to gradually or suddenly substantively shift their foreign policy practices and adjust their institutional frameworks. A cursory glance at the (rather thin) literature on foreign policy change reveals that FPA scholars regularly downplay or ignore links to the wider international and historical context. The key variables which explain change then are the choices of entrepreneurial leaders and decision-makers (Barnett 1999; Daalder and Lindsay 2005; Stein 1994; Welch 2005), domestic cultural (Barnett 1999) and regime (Gorjão 2002; Mansfield and Snyder 2005) changes, or the endogenous development of new domestic forces, interest groups and ideas (Khong 2008). No doubt there are some important exceptions, which will be discussed in more detail in the next section, but by and large they have been few and far between.

Overall then, historical and international events have prompted a theoretical and empirical interest in issues of foreign policy change. However, to this day, much FPA research has tended to disregard calls for a more integrated cross-level approach to explaining change.³⁰ As Alden and Aran note, within FPA scholarship there is a general lack of appreciation of the wider “sources and conditions giving rise to significant alteration to state foreign policy” (2012, p.11; for a similar critique see also Mabee 2007). Few look beyond the nation-state’s borders for clues. When, and if, FPA scholars examine change, this tends to be portrayed as an endogenous process to the state generally sealed off from, or only very marginally influenced by, larger international events or historical forces at work. Leaders, bureaucracies and interest groups appear to exist in a vacuum, with the broader political, economic or ideological environment having little or no influence on policy-making structures and process, and foreign policy outcomes.

Why the Under-theorization of Change in FPA

Why this under-theorization of change in FPA? And especially, why is there little sustained theoretical and empirical attention towards exploring how the wider international and historical context relating to changes in state practices and policy-making institutions and processes? Taking a step back, these shortcomings appear to be rooted in the theoretical development and history of the subfield itself. Overall FPA, as a theoretical project, has been painstakingly built over the decades on an often one-sided focus on the domestic sphere of the state to the detriment of exploring the broader environment within which human and state agents exist and act.

³⁰ Indicative of this lack of interest, for instance, is the fate that Carlsnaes’ 1992 article has had over the past two decades within the respective IR and FPA scholarships. The article, which partly seeks to push FPA scholars to think outside the (state) box, has nevertheless become widely cited and referenced in the context of the structure-agency debates in IR theory. It has instead received comparably little sustained theoretical and empirical attention from FPA scholars themselves.

Indeed, the central and critical premise on which much of the FPA edifice is erected, is that the system-level international structures – whether material (Nye 1988; Waltz 1979) or social (Bull 1977; Wendt 1999) – which mainstream IR theorists spend significant time conceptualizing, have very limited causal power when it comes to explaining actual states’ behavior.³¹ FPA scholars adamantly argue that international structures do not determine nor explain states’ international behavior, and that only agent-oriented and actor-specific theories can satisfactorily account for the great variety of states’ foreign policies (Hill 2003b; Hudson 2005).

The key insight of much FPA scholarship is then to open the “black box” of the state, and to focus on the domestic sphere and the policy-making process as the central starting point for analyzing how states act internationally. States’ foreign policies are then explained by unpacking the rational choices (McGinnis 1994) or cognitive biases (Jervis 1976) of individual policy-makers, as well as the role played by state bureaucracies and institutions (Allison and Zelikow 1999), domestic pressure groups (Skidmore and Hudson 1993), or the public at large (Holsti 1992). Domestic political and constitutional structures (Risse-Kappen 1991) or domestic culture and identity (Duffield 1999) are also called upon to explain states’ international behavior and actions. All of these variables are generally treated as independent forces, often taken in isolation and with little attention to anchoring them within the broader international system and environment in which human and state agents exist and act.

FPA scholars’ critique of the overly structural nature of mainstream IR theory, and their call to bring human and state agency into the equation, is an important and sound one. A focus on human agency and initiative, as opposed to rigid a-historical international structures neo-realists theorize, for example, is clearly necessary if one

³¹ Some structural IR theorists have openly acknowledged that their theories are not geared nor intended to explain every particular instance of a state’s international behavior. As Kenneth Waltz (1996) himself has explained, his intellectual efforts have been geared towards developing a *theory of international politics*, which focuses on the international pressures that lead differing states to adopt similar international behaviors, and not a *theory of foreign policy*, which focuses on how domestic politics explain why states similarly placed in a system behave in different ways.

wishes to explain and account for change and variability in international politics and, of course, foreign policy. Unfortunately though, this meticulous empirical and theoretical insistence on the domestic-level, the individual decision-maker and the micro-processes of decision-making, has become somewhat of a stifling straightjacket for FPA scholarship.

In the long run, FPA scholars' self-imposed confinement to the domestic has unproductively isolated the subfield from engaging with a number of important developments within IR theory. Some, like David Patrick Houghton, have acknowledged that their subfield has become "a kind of free-floating enterprise, logically unconnected to the main theories of international relations" (2007, p.24). This has undermined theoretical innovation. Hence if FPA is to be revitalized and reinvigorated, Houghton argues, it desperately needs to "hitch its wagon to some of the critical substantive debates going on in IR theory today" (2007, p.24).

This theoretical impoverished condition, I would argue, affects also FPA scholars' ability to explore the dynamic relationship between shifts in the international context and foreign policy change. Repeated calls for multi-level explanations of foreign policy change therefore ring hollow also because the field of FPA has a limited range of theoretical and meta-theoretical tools to, first, effectively conceptualize the "international". And, secondly, to explore to what extent and in which ways historical context and international developments link up with domestic factors to cause foreign policy change. In other words, there needs to be a more sustained theoretical effort from FPA scholars in understanding *what* constitutes the wider international context within which states and human agents exist and act, and *why, how, and when* this environment gives rise to significant alteration to state foreign policy.

There are, of course, some important exceptions. For instance, an interesting research agenda has emerged linking FPA to globalization theory – a theoretical framework which has largely developed outside of the customary confines of IR (see: Held and McGrew 2000, 2007). Scholars have explored the nexus between a variety of

globalizing phenomena and processes – the rise of transnational capitalism and Multinational Corporations, the growth of non-state actors above and below the state, the shrinkage of space and time brought about by new information technologies, and so on – and states foreign policies. Some investigate how globalization is changing the nature of states’ foreign and national security policies (Rosenau 1997; Singh and Shetler-Jones 2011; Webber and Smith 2002). Others explain how states’ foreign policies and globalizing processes are deeply intertwined and “mutually constitutive” with (Western) states’ security policies enabling and constraining processes of economic globalization, and *vice versa* (Alden and Aran 2012, pp.78-91). These are important developments. Yet they have only begun to scratch the surface of how FPA can benefit from a more active and self-conscious engagement with theoretical frameworks that concentrate on unpacking the changing features and contours of “the international” within which state and human actors operate.

Bringing More IR Theory into FPA

While FPA scholars have over the decades generally eschewed a direct engagement with IR theories and paradigms, IR theorists have gradually paid attention to their critics and progressively acknowledged their overly-structural biases. IR scholars, across theoretical paradigms, have moved beyond the structural determinism of much Cold War era IR. They have sought to reconcile and bring human and state agency back in their theorizing, especially in order to explain change and variance in international politics. Many have looked at FPA to capture agency and change. Yet they have done so by steering clear from embracing full-heartedly the actor-centered reductionism of many FPA approaches. As a result some of the most interesting theoretical developments within FPA, particularly when it comes to exploring the relationship between international developments and specific foreign policy changes, is coming from scholars working within IR theoretical paradigms. And conversely from FPA scholars willing to substantively engage with IR theory.

For example, within the broad tent of Realism, a new generation of Neoclassical Realists is coming to the fore (Lobell, Ripsman, and Taliaferro 2009; Rose 1998). Neoclassical Realists attempt to bring together the structural insights of Neo-realists on the anarchical features of the international system, with the human dimension of decision-making emphasized by Classical Realists (and much FPA). They do so to explain, in a theoretically rich way, variations in states' grand strategies and foreign policies by focusing on the interaction between system-level independent material variables (anarchy and polarity), with domestic intervening variables. These intervening variables can either be the role of elites, institutions, pressure groups, and party politics, or ideational factors such as culture, identity, and ideas, or even a mix of both. As system level variables stay constant or change, so a number of options open up or close down for domestic-policy makers to pursue their differing foreign policy preferences.

Constructivism has also been a fertile environment, since its development in the early 1990s, for scholars seeking to build multi-level explanations of foreign policy change across time and space. A classic example is Thomas Risse-Kappen's (1994) groundbreaking study on the impact that internationally shared ideas, transnational actors, domestic agency and politics, had on Michael Gorbachev's "new thinking", which led to policy changes that partly precipitated the end of the Cold War (see also: Checkel 1993). Similarly Kathryn Sikkink (1993) has explored how international human rights norms entered domestic debates in Western countries, progressively shaping and becoming an integral and legitimate part of European and American foreign policy in the aftermath of World War II. While this was a promising start, constructivists largely moved on from investigating foreign policy puzzles and are increasingly focusing on issues of global governance and international institutions (Barnett and Finnemore 2004; Risse 2004).

IR theory's engagement with FPA is a welcomed move. It is a particularly promising one when it comes to exploring the broader conditions that give rise to foreign policy change. This is prompting FPA scholars to bring in the "international" and IR theory more self-consciously within its mist. As a result a more concerted effort is taking

place in recent years to reconcile and integrate the study of FPA with Constructivism in a more systematic and conceptually rigorous way (Checkel 2008; Houghton 2007). Although these developments are less concerned to theorize the ways in which developments in the international normative context constrain or enable new foreign policy options and outcomes, other constructivist-oriented FPA scholars are increasingly travelling that road (Hook 2008; Singh 2011).

Outside of recognizable IR theoretical schools, FPA scholars Stephen Walker, Akan Malici and Mark Schafer (2011) have proposed a “neobehavioral IR”. This theoretical framework is built around a “social-psychological” approach that integrates theories of FPA and IR by linking leaders’ internal world of beliefs and the external world of events in which states operate. Quite emblematically, leading FPA theorists like Valerie Hudson and Amelia Hadfield are starting, as of 2012, to give more thought to the issue of bridging the “IR structure/FPA-agent theoretical divide”.³²

“Hitching” FPA to HS – a theoretical framework which has experienced an exponential growth in IR in recent decades – is an underexplored and highly promising theoretical avenue when it comes to integrating international and historical transformations with foreign policy changes, and *vice versa*. More concretely, what are the implications of applying a HS theoretical framework to FPA? Also, what does a HS approach add that Neoclassical Realists or FPA-Constructivists do not already bring to the debate? I argue that bringing FPA into a dialogue with HS moves forward the study of foreign policy change in two ways.

First, a HS approach to FPA would produce a more explicit, complex and eventful conceptualization of the international environment, something that FPA theories often lack. Indeed, how can we integrate “the international” if we only have a faint idea of what

³² At ISA 2012 San Diego, Valerie Hudson and Amelia Hadfield were supposed to present a paper which on the conference programme had the suggestive title: “Neo-Classical Realism and Behavioral IR as Recent Attempts to Bridge the IR Structure/FPA-Agent Theoretical Divide: Walking Towards, or Past, the Other.” During the actual panel, however, Hudson and Hadfield presented instead a paper comparing European American perspectives on FPA rather than the one listed on the ISA program.

it looks like? A HS FPA does so by advancing an analytical and ontological “pluralist” as well as “historicist” understating of the international that, in many respects, complements and adds to those offered by Neoclassical Realists and Constructivists.

FPA theories, very much influenced by their subject matter – explaining state behavior – and an implicit theoretical association – at least in the United States – with classical Realism (Barkin 2009), mostly see the international as an unchanging anarchical system dominated by the state. The international is inter-state relations. Yet this rather material and a-historical picture of the international space as rooted in an a-social, bleak and unchanging struggle for survival between states, has come relentlessly under scrutiny over the past decades by scholars. Both among IR theorists, such as historical sociologists, English School theorists and Constructivists, as well as FPA scholars themselves, particularly those engaging with globalization theory and others such as Christopher Hill (2003a, pp.160-62) who has engaged with the English School.

Indeed, along with states there are a number of international and transnational actors – such as corporations, NGOs, transnational terrorist and criminal organizations, international and regional institutions, and not least religious movements and organizations – which exist. Likewise there are numerous material and ideational forces – such as economic globalization, the spread of norms and political ideologies, climate change, and not least the expansion of religions and the global process of resurgence – which work their way through the international system. Both non-state actors and forces seem also to be an ever more prominent feature of the international environment and cannot be simply reduced to the state or the domestic sphere. Yet they do have a bearing on, and are themselves influenced by, states’ foreign policies across time and space.

On the one hand, much of this diversity and complexity falls through the cracks in Neoclassical Realism and FPA-inspired Neobehavioral IR, both of which subscribe to a rather materialist, state-centric and a-historicist view of the international. On the other hand, Constructivists have advanced a more dynamic and historical sensitive view of the international (Reus-Smit 1999), along with a less state-centric one (Keck and Sikkink

1998). However, constructivists' interpretivist penchant for norms and ideas tends to somewhat reorient FPA away from a more pluralist ontology that seems to suit the study of foreign policy making and implementation best. Moreover Constructivism is more of an "analytical framework" (Reus-Smit 2009, p.226) rather than a coherent theory of IR. As such it ends up not developing a fully-fledged concept and picture of the international that FPA scholars can clearly and distinctively rely upon.

Finally, it is worth stressing that pushing for a more explicit concept of the "international" within FPA is not the same as suggesting the need to reconcile foreign policy explanations across level-of-analysis. In fact, this mode of thinking largely remains anchored to a state-centric view of the whole – with a clear separation between international, regional, state, and sub-state levels (Jervis 1976, Ch. 1; Singer 1961). Once more, there would be little space for bringing in the non-state and transnational elements of international relations. Likewise what I am arguing here is not simply to reconcile structures and agents, as important as this project may be. Indeed social structures of all kinds (material and ideational) can be found at all levels-of-analysis (Wight 2006, p.112). Hence just by referring to the structure-agency problem (Carlsnaes 1992), still does not solve the issue of what structures should we be paying attention to and how does the international environment, within which human and state agents interact, look like.

A HS perspective instead provides FPA with a complex and eventful (contra Neoclassical Realism), yet also more realistic and explicit picture (contra Constructivism), of the constituent parts of the international environment. HS' analytical pluralism is able to capture the diversity of state and non-state actors (contra Neoclassical Realism), which constitute the international. Its ontological pluralism gives substantially equal weight to material (contra Constructivism) and ideational (contra Neoclassical Realism) forces. Its historicism allows for this plurality of actors and forces to change and evolve, and their influence and power over states' foreign policies to wax and wane across historical periods and geographical areas. The following section of this chapter will look at these issues in more detail.

There is a second advantage of “hitching” FPA to HS. That is the ability of producing theoretically robust complex causal stories of foreign policy change that dynamically integrate, in a two way street, international structures and events with domestic pressures on policy-making processes and policy outcomes. A HS approach to foreign policy develops a framework geared towards appreciating the “mutually constitutive”³³ nature of international politics and foreign policy. A HS FPA does not treat “the international” as a side issue, as epiphenomenal, but rather as complementary to any account of foreign policy. Two key insights from HS are instrumental in building a “mutually constitutive” understanding of international politics and foreign policy.

First, as Brian Mabee (2007) suggests, a HS FPA would emphasize the centrality of dynamically linking in a two way street human agency and behavior at the domestic micro-level (which FPA scholars tend to look at in isolation) with macro-changes occurring across time and space at the international and world social levels. This theoretical move opens the door to conceptualizing processes of foreign policy change in terms of both historical and structural possibilities and human choice.

Second, as Halliday (2005, p.46), and Alden and Aran (2012, pp.63-6) point out, a HS approach would bring to the subfield of FPA a more explicit theory of the state, something that oddly tends to lack, and is sorely needed, in much FPA literature. In particular, HS’ concept of the “institutional state” leads to the following two conclusions. First, state foreign policies cannot be fully explained without taking into consideration domestic state-society relations, the institutional underpinnings of the state, and the pressures exercised by the international forces and structures within which the state exists. Second, by examining how state institutions and bureaucracies with foreign policy functions develop and adapt, provides a tangible meso-level site in which to explore the

³³ The expression of a “mutually constitutive” relationship between foreign policy and international politics is borrowed from Alden and Aran (2012, pp.85-9). These scholars use the expression mainly in light of research that situates itself at the intersection of FPA-Globalization Theory debates. It seems to me that, seen through a HS perspective, this notion of mutual constitution applies well beyond issues of globalization.

interplay of social action at the micro-level and international historical change at the macro-level.

The following two sections will unpack in more detail the theoretical and empirical value added of a HS approach to foreign policy change building on these two insights: a clearer conception of the international and a mutually constitutive understanding of foreign policy and international politics. The vital import of developing a HS FPA for reconciling IR debates on religious resurgence and those taking place in FPA on the impact of religion on American foreign policy will be teased out at the end of each section. Here I will also identify how integrating HS into FPA substantially contributes to understanding and explaining in a conceptually robust way why and how American foreign policy is changing and adapting to processes of global religious resurgence.

HS and FPA I: Towards a Pluralist and Historicist Conceptualization of the International in FPA

HS offers an analytically and ontologically “pluralist” concept of the international, one that is not fixed in time but rather is historical and eventful. It takes change and historical development, in other words “historicity”, not as background noise or simply as a locus to mine empirical data from, but as part of the explanatory story. I will take these issues – analytical and ontological pluralism, and historicity – in order and expand on them.

Analytical and Ontological Pluralism

By analytical pluralism, I mean to capture historical sociologists’ understanding of the international environment as constituted by both states, on the one hand, and social forces and non-state actors, on the other. HS is an approach that conceptualizes the international in terms of “states” and “society/ies”. The international is a space where states are not

treated as timeless entities or ontological givens, as Realists of all stripes and much mainstream FPA scholarship tend to do. International relations are not simply inter-state relations. For historical sociologists non-state actors and social forces exist and have a dynamic of their own beyond, and which may impact and are itself impacted by, the state.

Yet, historical sociologists are also careful not to reify “the social”. States are not simply an expression or derivative of some underlying non-state social forces and structures as world-systems (Wallerstein 2004), neo-Gramscian (Cox 1987) and globalist (Cerny 1995; Scholte 1999) social and IR theorists tend to suggest. States are seen as historical developments and relatively autonomous units. These stand in complex relationship between each other, but also with a range of economic, military, and cultural structures and forces at the domestic, international and global/transnational levels (Hobson, Lawson, and Rosenberg 2010, pp.2-4).

Anthony Jarvis, in somewhat materialist-realist terms, captures neatly the multilayered nature of the international from a historical sociological perspective with the expression “societies, states and geopolitics” (1989, p.281). John Hobson frames it as “societies, states and international systems (both political and economic)” (1998, p.288). The international hence is a place where “states stand in complex relationships to a range of forces and all these relationships – to the system of states, to the world and domestic economies, and to their own and other societies – must be considered” (Jarvis 1989, p.285). None of the levels (the international, the domestic or the global/transnational), structures (inter-state system or social forces), agents (states or non-state actors), or relationships (inter-state, inter-society or between states and society), is in principle the defining one. The level, the structures, the agents and the kind of relationships one wishes to start from to explain world politics is considered an analytical choice not an ontological one.

The English School, a theoretical paradigm that shares much with HS,³⁴ offers a similar and somewhat more elegant concept of the international as a multilayered space. The English School is well known for its sophisticated theorization of inter-state relations as constituting an “international society”. Yet scholars from this tradition have long acknowledged that the international society of states exists alongside, and overlaps with, a broader web of social relations: a “world society” which includes NGOs, international organizations and other global social actors and relations (Bull 1977, pp.266-271). According to Barry Buzan the concept of world society is a way to “capture the non-state side of the international system, and therefore as the complement/opponent to the already well-developed idea of international society” (2004, p.2). For Buzan international society, which captures the distinctiveness of the state in modern times or more generally of any sort of “independent political community” throughout history, and world society, which captures the complexity of non-state transnational and human relations, exist *simultaneously* as objects of discussion and as aspects of international reality (2004, p.87-89). Neither supersedes the other.

Historical sociologists are ontologically pluralist in the sense that they view the international largely as constituted by both material and ideational structures and forces.³⁵ Ontological pluralism allows for economic, military, and cultural logics all to operate in the international system at the inter-state and world-social levels impacting on, and influenced by, states’ foreign policies. This pluralist ontology, particularly when it comes to unpacking the forces within world society, which include the role of ideas and culture alongside material factors, fits with recent attempts by FPA scholars to chart an equally ontologically pluralist field between rationalists and cognitivists, materialists and interpretivists (Hill 2003a, p.30; Mintz 2003; Stein 2008).

³⁴ See for example: Buzan and Little (2002); Buzan and Lawson (forthcoming).

³⁵ For a comprehensive overview of HS’ ontological pluralism see: Hobson and Hobden (2002, especially Part II); Hobson, Lawson, and Rosenberg (2010, p.18); Lawson (2007, p.355).

Historicism and Eventfulness

HS has a *diachronic* rather than *synchronic* understanding of the international (Lawson 2006, p.415). Mainstream IR sees history very much as a “scripture” (Hobson, Lawson, and Rosenberg 2010, p.8), where historical changes and historical discontinuities are ironed out by creating isomorphic transhistorical categories, such as: the undifferentiated state (across units and time), the logic of anarchy or balance of power. History is assumed to have a timeless quality with the past regularly “ransacked in order to explain the present” (Hobson, Lawson, and Rosenberg 2010, p.11).³⁶

This “continuist mystique”, which seems to grip much of mainstream IR, is considerably present in FPA. While FPA scholars are well versed in history, using and referring to it abundantly, they seem to take discontinuity, temporality and historicity less seriously however. Recognizing the potential contribution that HS’s attention to temporality carries for the way FPA understands change, Alden and Aran argue:

“International societies *do* change. Norms are contingent and reinterpreted by state and non-state actors over time. Foreign policy decision-making is a process that evolves and responds to changing conditions within the halls of policy and the wider society. FPA should recognize as formative these conditions of change affecting the mutually constitutive relationship between foreign policy and international politics [emphasis in original].” (2012, p.115)

Along with bringing an understanding of the long term processes and trends shaping and structuring the international society and world society, within which foreign policies are formulated and executed, bringing historicity in would also lead to a more “eventful” understanding of world politics. This opens up the door to exploring and

³⁶ Hence Hobson, Lawson, and Rosenberg argue: the contest between Athens and Sparta is transplanted to the Cold War in order to elucidate the stand-off between the United States and the Soviet Union; all wars, whether they be guerrilla insurgencies or total conflicts, are explicable by the basic fact – or permissive context – of anarchy; and all political units – city-states, nomadic tribes, empires, nation-states and transnational alliances – are functionally undifferentiated (2010, p.11).

explaining how and when “historical *events* enable social formations to emerge, reproduce, reform, transform and break down [emphasis in original]” (Hobson, Lawson, and Rosenberg 2010, p.25). I argue that we can look at states foreign policy practices, and the policy-making institutional and normative structures that sustain them, as “social formations” that change and evolve at critical moments in time. Here history not only “matters”, but time and sequencing of events directly shape policy processes and outcomes.

Hence a better appreciation for this temporal dimension of international politics moves FPA away from seeing history simply as a place where timeless lessons are drawn or theories are tested. A HS FPA brings into the study of foreign policy change an understanding of the international marked by processes of change and continuity. Here the contingent and disruptive impact of events, and the particularities and discontinuities within the flows, patterns and trends of world history have a profound causal effect on a state’s international behavior and policy-making structures.³⁷

From Theory to Empirics

A pluralist and historicist concept of the international – which reconciles state and society levels of analysis, materialist and ideational ontologies, and takes temporality and change seriously – has a number of important implications for the study of change in foreign policy as well as for my research. First of all, it is worth pointing out that a conventional state-centric and non-diachronic understanding, albeit one that holds a pluralist ontology,

³⁷ I would like to emphasize that the analytically and ontologically pluralist concept of the international proposed here is not entirely new within FPA. Christopher Hill is among the few who explicitly theorizes and conceptualizes foreign policy-making and implementation as taking place both at a state-to-state level, but also at a world society to state, and state to world society level. Drawing from the English School, Hill conceives of the international arena as that “milieu in which every state is located and which is in part made up of states, but also of economic, political and cultural forces which transcend frontiers” (Hill 2003a, p.159). For Hill, “The world of governments and the world of peoples have always co-existed, overlapped and interfered with each other” (2003a, p.187). Here the international is seen as “never wholly dominated by states” but also “significantly transnational” in character (2003a, p.208). While Hill develops a more complete concept of the international system than most FPA scholars do, the research implications of theorizing foreign policy in the anarchical society are mostly alluded to, but not fully fleshed out by him or other scholars. Also Hill is less concerned with theorizing change across time, hence does not bring in ideas of temporality and historicity, which instead a HS framework emphasizes.

of foreign policy is not necessarily antithetical to capturing and explaining the role of religious ideas and institutions in foreign policy. Recently developed frameworks for the analysis of religion in foreign policy, for instance, fall squarely within FPA's theoretical mainstream (Haynes 2008; Warner and Walker 2011). These frameworks make a clear distinction between the domestic state and international spheres and rarely attempt to reconcile the two.

Likewise most scholars interested in exploring the role and impact of religion on American foreign policy have not pushed the FPA theoretical envelope that far either. Scholars have dug, very much in line with standard FPA frameworks, into the domestic sphere of the U.S. to explain how the religious convictions of presidents and policy-makers have recently (Bacevich and Prodromou 2004) or historically (Inboden 2008) fed into American grand strategy. They have explored the impact on particular foreign policies, for instance, of: religious advocates and interest groups (Rock 2011), the demographic growth of Evangelicals (Mead 2006), and the increased political clout of the Christian Right (Croft 2007; Marsden 2008). Others have explored how religious convictions inform public attitudes towards American foreign policy (Guth 2009).

Theories of religion and foreign policy, and empirical investigations into the American case, overall do a good job in illuminating the different ways in which domestic religious actors, ideas and identities may and do influence foreign policy-making process and outputs. They nevertheless suffer a number of important limits when it comes to the puzzles this research seeks to unravel. They do not advance a framework that effectively links international and domestic pressures across time and space to changes in foreign policy practices and institutional designs.

First, they generally take a snapshot in time and space of the individual or domestic religious influences that have led to this or that policy decision and foreign policy output. There is an interest in investigating different historical periods, yet there is much less attention paid towards unpacking how in different historical moments the impact of religion on foreign policy took different forms and intensities, for example.

Secondly, current theories and empirical investigations do not analytically take into consideration religious forces and dynamics that have an impact on foreign policy beyond the domestic sphere. For example, in the case of American foreign policy there is little attention, from a religious-theoretical lens, in investigating how and what effects the international rise of non-state actors such as political Islamic movements or the growing transnational ties American religious actors are developing with co-religionists across state boundaries, are having on American foreign policy.³⁸

Hence much of what has been done so far would not allow me to appropriately contextualize, theorize, and flesh out the apparent growing domestic, transnational and international salience of religious forces in American foreign policy that appears to be occurring within a context of global religious resurgence. A HS approach to foreign policy instead provides a more explicit and complex concept of the international which includes the international society of states and the world society of peoples, while also retaining that very same pluralist ontology on which FPA has always thrived upon. Such an explicit, multilayered and ontologically pluralist concept of the international allows me then to locate the global resurgence of religion, as a social and cultural process, not only domestically or externally, but more broadly at the *world social* level. And then explore simultaneously its domestic, transnational and external impact across time on American foreign policy.

A HS FPA leads one to view states and their foreign policies as taking place on and influenced by two overlapping and deeply entangled international levels: the world of states but also the world of peoples. This framework would not privilege necessarily social forces over the state, or *vice versa*. In terms of this research, even if analytically one is to locate the *explanan* of foreign policy changes (such as desecularization) at the world social level (as is the case with the resurgence of religion), this is not equivalent to endorsing the notion that states increasingly count less and non-state actors and forces

³⁸ In the case of transnational influences, an interesting exception is Timothy Byrne's (2011) recent work which explicitly seeks to tease out how American Catholic actors and orders holding a transnational religious identity that overlaps with their national one, have sought to influence American foreign policy to favour their co-religionists abroad.

more in IR. A HS theory of foreign policy would then caution us from reflexively accepting, without attentive empirical investigation, the idea that the resurgence of religion at the world social level may be making states less relevant, leading to a post-Westphalian international order.³⁹ At the same time, this analytical pluralism would open up the possibility of investigating not only how world social processes affect states, but also how the latter affect the former. An interesting question then opens up: how and to what extent, given the preeminent role that America has in the international system, do processes of American foreign policy desecularization interact, sustain and reinforce worldwide processes of religious resurgence?

Lastly, attention to historicity and temporality means taking the resurgence of religion and historical events that are somewhat connected to this trend, such as the end of the Cold War, the election of President G.W. Bush, the events of 9/11, not simply as background noise. These domestic, transnational and international trends and events become instead an integral element and critical junctures in understanding and explaining foreign policy change, in general, and the new ways in which religion and American foreign policy are mixing over the past decades, in particular.

HS and FPA II: Towards a Mutually Constitutive Understanding of Foreign Policy and International Politics

The second contribution of “hitching” FPA to HS is to produce a theoretically richer account of foreign policy change that dynamically integrates the broader international and historical context with the domestic policy-making process and *vice versa*. A HS approach to foreign policy develops a framework that does not treat “the international” as a side issue, as epiphenomenal. Instead it builds a foreign policy theory that is geared towards appreciating the mutually constitutive nature of international politics and foreign

³⁹ Much of the current debate about religion’s growing political salience in international relations tends to suggest, more or less explicitly, the notion that such processes may be leading to a post-Westphalian order. See discussion in the introduction.

policy. In particular two HS insights are key in developing a mutually constitutive understanding of international politics and foreign policy. First, is historical sociologists' insistence on linking macro-level social and historical processes and trends with social action and actors at the micro-level. Second, is their particular concept of the state that emphasizes the state's institutional underpinnings, which stands both at the cross roads between the international and domestic spheres as well as acting as a meso-level ligature between macro-level processes and micro-level decisions.

Linking Macro Processes and Micro Social Action

So far I have used HS insights to conceptualize the contours of the international environment within which foreign policy is formulated and conducted. When it comes to the nitty-gritty of explaining foreign policy-making, however, HS may appear a rather inhospitable theoretical resource. In fact, HS research in IR generally focuses on macro-social forces and long *durée* historical analysis of change and continuity, often leaving out agency and social action at the micro-level, which are the bread and butter of FPA. Witness, for instance, the theoretically rich and empirically substantive, but also rather sweeping and generalized, historical sociological-informed accounts of: the origins and varieties of international systems over time and space (Buzan and Little 2000; Spruyt 1994; Watson 2009); the non-Western origins of the contemporary world system (Hobson 2004); the rise, spread and international structuring power of capitalist modes of production across different historical periods (Gills 2002); and explorations into the international dimensions and complexities of modernity and globalization (Rosenberg 2005). These theoretical and empirical enquiries, often spanning centuries, surely do not appear to bode well with studding the *minutiae* of foreign policy decision-making and implementation.

Although HS has tended to focus on large-scale macro structures and processes of change and continuity within IR, original proponents of HS have always maintained that a historical sociological perspective allows, and can be employed to, investigate the relationship between grand structures and everyday life (Skocpol 1984, Ch. 1; Smith

1991, p.3). Likewise, historical sociologists in IR have emphasized that HS studies of macro-scale and long-term structural, international and historical trends and shifts in world politics that do not explore human agency and social action at the micro-level that produce and reproduce those patterns of continuity and change in larger political systems, are partial at best or incomplete at worst (Hobson, Lawson, and Rosenberg 2010, p.3; Lawson 2006, pp.398-402). Indeed, some have paid attention to the co-constitutive relationship between the international realm and state–society relations in revolutionary processes of radical change (Halliday 1999; Lawson 2005).

Similar insights can be applied to the co-constitutive relationship between the international realm and domestic state–society relations in processes of foreign policy change. In fact, when it comes to foreign policy, George Lawson has noted how much of the analysis offered by neoclassical realists bears a “family resemblance” to historical sociology (2006, p.408). Particularly in the way that, similarly to Neoclassical Realism, “historical sociology aims to unravel the complexity that lies behind the interaction between social action (both deliberate and unintentional) and structural forces (socially constructed but with an enduring authority and dynamic of their own)” (2006, p.408). In both theories “international factors are conjoined with domestic variables in order to find patterns that explain central social processes such as wars, alliances, and the rise and fall of great powers” (p.408).

Brian Mabee (2007) has sought to recapture HS’ awareness of the micro-dimension of social life in order to provide a useful complement to the current concentration in HS on macro-analysis. What is most interesting here is that Mabee has done so by adopting a foreign policy lens. He builds on the key sociological insight of C. Wright Mills that “no social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within a society, has completed its intellectual journey” (quote from: Mabee 2007, p.432). Mabee then argues that FPA’s focus on “biography” (i.e. human agency) is a perfect site to advance a micro-historical sociological approach to IR that concentrates on smaller scale processes and contingencies occurring within, and reproducing, large-scale social structures in a

historical context. This point gives further theoretical depth to the multiple calls by FPA scholars for a more thorough engagement with multi-level causal explanations.

It is important to stress that the focus on the macro-level in current HS scholarship is not the product of previous *ontological* commitments, but rather an *analytical* choice on the part of scholars. That is, micro or macro analysis in HS is the product of particular research problems and questions, and not of a meta-theoretical commitment to either. In this sense the micro-domestic and macro-international levels that FPA and HS scholars respectively tend to investigate in isolation, should be seen as complementary rather than conflicting (Mabee 2007, pp.432-33; see also: Lawson 2006, pp.399-414).

What does all this mean in terms of foreign policy? Macro social and historical changes within the international society of states and the world society of peoples are filtered through the domestic micro-level and relayed back into the foreign policy-making processes, by influencing the individual perceptions or collective ideas, the identities and interests of: decision- and policy-making elites in the executive; domestic actors such as interest lobbies, principled advocacy groups, political parties; or public opinion more broadly.⁴⁰ International changes can be protracted lasting years, decades and centuries, or instantaneous events and exogenous shocks.

In terms of trends, for instance, the recent evolution towards an international society where most major powers possess nuclear weapons, economies are increasingly interconnected, and norms of state sovereignty and self-determination are well entrenched, seems to have made the recourse to major war “obsolete” (Mandelbaum 1998). This new international environment, compared say to just before the second World War, has likely repercussions on the intersubjective understandings as well as individual perceptions and incentives of domestic policy-makers when deciding how to resolve a major foreign policy crisis. Long term normative (such as the rise of human rights norms), economic (the growth of market economies), environmental (processes of climate

⁴⁰ These are processes and mechanisms that both neoclassical realists (Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman 2009) and FPA-constructivists (Hook 2008; Singh 2011) have similarly investigated in line with their own ontological and epistemological commitments.

change) or technological (the development of the internet) trends and processes at the world social level, can likewise shift and influence the perceptions and calculations of foreign policy elites and the mass public at large.

These global social ideational and material developments also generate new domestic and transnational actors and groups – such as human rights NGOs, business lobbies and labor unions, environmental NGOs and parties, netizens – with a commitment to or vested interest in influencing states foreign policies according to their normative or strategic preferences. Sudden exogenous events can take place at the inter-state level (such as the end of the Cold War), at the social level (the collapse of Lehman Brothers in 2008), or at the social and state levels (the attacks on the U.S. state by a transnational terrorist actor such as al Qaeda in 2001). These events create new, or reinforce and undermine existing, perceptions, ideas, calculations and interests of domestic policy-makers, specific political actors, and public opinion at large. In turn how states themselves act, given the inputs of policy-makers, can influence long-term historical processes or sudden shocks at the international and world society levels.

From this perspective, conciliating HS and FPA is not only analytically possible, but also theoretically and empirically desirable.⁴¹ The view of a mutually constitutive relationship between foreign policy and international politics that a HS FPA promotes contributes to producing richer investigations into how the identities and actions of individuals and groups at the domestic micro-level sustain and transform, and are themselves sustained and transformed by, macro-level international, social and historical processes of continuity and change. Such an approach leads to constantly exploring the interaction and linkages between the micro-oriented analysis that centers on the interests, beliefs, identities, behaviors and roles of actors, with the broader international and historical context that constrains and enables certain kinds of actions (for a similar

⁴¹ For example Hobson, Lawson and Rosemberg argue that: “it is possible to combine domestic level processes with the “international” in such a way that we can generate a “rich parsimony” – one that is able to provide a succinct definition of the international, albeit one that develops and changes over time, while also situating the domestic realm within its core area of concern. In this way we hope to affect a balance between parsimony and complexity while also combining theoretical strength and empirical richness”. (2010, p.28).

perspective see: Halliday 2005, p.40; Mabee 2007, p.433)

The Institutional Concept of the State

The second important contribution of a HS FPA towards a mutually constitutive understanding of foreign policy and international relations, is to problematize the state and the theories of the state implicitly assumed by FPA scholars. Indeed, historical sociologists in IR can rely on a long tradition within HS that has spent much time in conceptualizing and theorizing the state. Mainstream IR paradigms that are chiefly preoccupied with international systems and structures, end up having little time to fully unpack and theorize the state.

While this may be a rather curious oversight on the part of IR theorists, even more paradoxical is the silence on the issue by much FPA scholarship, which instead looks in depth at how states function and why they adopt particular foreign policies. As Chris Brown and Kirsten Anley, among others, have noted: “most accounts of foreign policy do not relate back to a theory of the state”, something that decidedly goes, “to their disadvantage” (2009, p.76). What seems to dominate in FPA literature is an implicit liberal view of the state as a relative passive set of institutions that reflect and merely serve as an arena for competition among different interests and a plurality of civil society groups.

Scholars such as Halliday (2005, p.46), and Alden and Aran (2012, p. 63-66) have brought into FPA the concept of the “institutional state”, drawn from the work of neo-Weberian historical sociologists such as Theda Skocpol and Michael Mann. Broadly speaking, such theory conceptualizes the state as a distinct institutional entity, with its own internal institutional and organizational logics, simultaneously rooted in the domestic society and external international realms, yet with the capacity to act with *relative autonomy* with respect to both spheres.⁴²

⁴² Neoclassical realists have likewise chastened the field of FPA for not making explicit, or even lacking, a clear theory of the state. Compared to Marxian or liberal influenced FPA and IR theories, neoclassical

The institutional concept of the state has a number of important implications for the study of international relations, in general, and foreign policy, in particular. First, the institutional concept of the state, which emphasizes the state's relative autonomy and institutional underpinning, is fairly distinct from structural IR's understanding of the state as simply a territorial unitary actor, in terms of the old-fashioned "billiard ball" or the more contemporary notion of "person" (Wendt 2004), whose actions are determined by the logics of the system or social whole. To understand international relations in general and explain states' behavior in particular, historical sociologists claim, it does not suffice to pay attention solely to international structures. Scholars also need to explore in more detail the domestic institutional context and state-society relations (see: Halliday 2005, pp.41-50; Hobson 1998, pp.291-95).⁴³

This insight resonates well with FPA's broader critique of mainstream structural IR. The concept of the institutional state further overlaps with a number specific tools developed by FPA scholars to investigate the institutional frameworks, topologies of state structures, the nature of state-society relations, and the role of domestic societal influences, on foreign policy. The concept of the institutional state can accommodate investigations into the rational choices or cognitive biases of individual decision-makers in leadership positions (Stein 2008), and those that look at the role of bureaucratic influences (Allison and Zelikow 1999), in the formulation and implementation of foreign policy.

HS attention to state typology resonates well with foreign policy inquiries into the

realists do not see "states as simply aggregating the demands of different societal interest groups or economic classes" (Taliaferro, Lobell, and Ripsman 2009, p.25). Neoclassical realists advance, similarly to historical sociologists, a Weberian view of the "institutional state" epitomized by the national security executive, seen as sitting autonomously at the juncture of, but also influenced by, the international system and domestic politics (p.24-26).

⁴³ As Hobson frames it: "states need to be differentiated in terms of their embedded relations with society in order to understand foreign policy and international relations. Therefore the state-society relationship is crucial to understanding international relations, which in turn implies the use of "second image" theory – something which Waltz, in his insistence on third image theory, expressly warns against...[a] conception of state power/autonomy, enables us to bring the state and state-society relationship into the analysis of international relations" (1998, p.295)

nature of state political institutions and regimes, and the institutional arrangements linking state and society channeling societal demands into the political system and foreign policy outcomes (Neack 1995; Risse-Kappen 1991; Rummel 1995). Indeed Halliday (1999) has explored from a HS perspective the foreign policies of “revolutionary states”, as well as those of “different forms” of Middle Eastern authoritarian states (2005). Alden and Aran use HS’s insights into the nature of the state, and expand the concept of the institutional state to include two new categories of quasi-states and clustered-states. The intent is to reflect, in an ideal typical way, the variety of state structures in the international arena. Alden and Aran then explore the links between these different typologies of states and their foreign policies (2012, pp.62-77).⁴⁴

The concern for state-society relations in HS overlaps with FPA’s pluralist approaches to the domestic sources of foreign policy, which explore the beliefs and interests of sub-state and non-state actors within society and their efforts to exert influence over state institutions and domestic policy-making processes. Here we have, for instance, the wide-ranging FPA literature on: interest groups such as business lobbies and ethnic groups, advocacy and non-governmental organizations, epistemic communities and think tanks, political parties, and public opinion and the media (for good overviews see: Hill 2003a, Ch.10; Hudson 2007, Ch. 5).

While the institutional concept of the state opens up the space for adopting many theoretical tools already developed by FPA scholars, at the same time and contra much FPA, a HS FPA maintains that states have a degree of autonomy from domestic societal pressures. This means that states and, above all, the state elites and bureaucracies in charge of formulating foreign policies, do and can pursue courses of action that are “above the everyday private interests of its members” (Hobson 1998, p.292). Likewise a HS FPA would see states as constantly subject to important international pressures and constraints, which cannot be discounted: the structure of military, economic and

⁴⁴ For example Alden and Aran look at the available foreign policy tools, source of state autonomy in the context of foreign policy, and inputs from the external environment that influence quasi-states, institutional states, and clustered states’ international behaviour (2012, p.72).

ideological power within international society and the impact of ever-changing non-state and material and ideational forces within world society.

The idea of the state's relative institutional autonomy from domestic society and its simultaneous rootedness in the international sphere, prevents HS approaches to foreign policy from reducing the state and its international actions solely to its constituent parts or as a simple expression of some determinant internal factor: be it class structures, special interests, culture, or the whims and wishes of leaders, as much FPA tends to do (Alden and Aran 2012, p.65; Halliday 2005, p.42). Hence from a HS perspective, the state's relative autonomous character as well as the pressures and constraints exercised by the international environment should always be kept in consideration in order to have a full picture of a state's foreign policy.

To summarize: the institutional state, and the leaders and bureaucracies controlling it, have a considerable level of autonomy from the society within (contra mainstream FPA theories) and other states and social structures without (contra structural IR theories) when it comes to formulating foreign policy. Yet this autonomy is not equal to complete independence as it is limited "by both internal and external forces: states and leaders cannot do what they want in foreign policy", their choices are always "framed by the domestic and international contexts" (Halliday 2005, pp.42-43). The logical conclusion for Halliday of such a theory of the state for international politics is a natural "reconciliation of two distinct analytic approaches, those of historical sociology and of foreign policy analysis" (2005, p.43).

The institutional concept of the state generates a second key insight for the study of foreign policy and especially foreign policy change. As already discussed, an institutional theory of the state sees state agency in the international realm as mediated by the institutional structures of the state itself. State institutions set the context for human and bureaucratic actors within the state and domestic actors and social forces without the state to affect foreign policy. FPA has long recognized the role of institutions and bureaucracies in foreign policy making and output. It has nevertheless rarely seen them as

important objects of enquiry and analysis in their own right, exploring their origins, change and evolution at different points in time (Mabee 2011).

Focusing, rather than solely on how institutions function, but also on the way they originate at particular historical moments, how they reproduce and evolve over time, is seen as an important component of historical institutionalism (HI) a particular meta-theoretical approach within the larger HS framework (Lawson 2006, pp.410-14; Nexon 2012; for a good overview of HI, but one that somewhat distances it from HS, see: Fioretos 2011). Institutions are considered the meso-level locus and tangible site, the “ligatures” (Nexon 2012), that join together in a two way street: the interplay between micro-level analysis that centers on the actions and roles of individuals and organizations, with the broader historical context and social processes at the macro international level. Here institutions become the analytical focal point for translating processes at different scales and in different domains into historically specific outcomes. Institutions are the “points at which structure and agency, material and ideational factors, conflict and cooperation, intentional action and unintended consequences, continuity and disjuncture come together” (Lawson 2006, p.414).

Unpacking how, when and why state institutions and bureaucracies “with international functions” (Mabee 2007, p.443), originate and evolve becomes a fruitful way to link the domestic and international, the micro and macro, within a HS oriented FPA enterprise committed to explaining foreign policy change. Tracing the sequence of institutional development at particular moments in time provides the causal focal point to explain how long-term macro-trends and specific events, become the “critical junctures” that open the space for competing domestic actors to affect foreign policy change. Once new institutions and designs become locked-in at a specific point in time, their path-dependent nature is likely to yield interesting causal explanations for opening or closing: the opportunities for domestic actors to access the state and influence foreign policies; the possibility for officials within bureaucracies to affect policy-making processes; or the direction of future institutional developments and foreign policy trajectories. Brian Mabee breaks new ground, for instance, with his historically sensitive and sociologically

informed study of the development and reproduction of the National Security Council (NSC) in the United States (Mabee 2007, 2011).

From Theory to Empirics

What are the implications of this theoretical discussion, in terms of a mutually constitutive understanding of international politics and foreign policy, for my empirical research? I will start with the theoretical insight into the linkages between macro-level social and historical processes and trends with the interests, perceptions, and identities of actors at the micro-level. The social process of global religious resurgence at the world social level has brought to the fore new domestic actors in American politics. A growing and thickening number of religious advocacy groups are emerging, especially among Protestant evangelicals, but also across a wide range of religious denominations and traditions within and beyond Christianity (Hertzke 2012). These religious advocates, many of whom hold institutional links with and concerns for the health and wellbeing of fellow co-religionists outside the United States, are increasingly attempting to influence the practice and conduct of American foreign policy in favor of their transnational religious community.

At the same time, both the social and cultural processes of resurgence seem to be affecting the perceptions of foreign policy elites within and outside the government, as well as elected political leaders. The rise of political Islam, the appearance post-Cold War conflicts which often seem to pit warring parties along sectarian lines, and the events of 9/11, have all in one way or another contributed to the impression among scholars, pundits, policy- and decision-makers that religion matters more out there and that the United States needs to take these development strategically into account in its foreign policy.

Secondly, the concept of the institutional state makes two important analytical contributions. First, the idea of the state as a “relatively autonomous” entity from both the domestic and external sphere sits easily with a central tension identified in the research.

The distinction, which was alluded to in the introduction and which will be unpacked more thoroughly in the next chapters, between America as a secular state – especially in terms of its foreign policy practices, bureaucracies and bureaucrats – and Americans as a religious people. From a HS perspective this is a perfectly possible occurrence.

Moreover, the notion of the state as a relatively autonomous entity adds an important note of caution against falling prey to reductionism when looking at the impact of religious forces and actors on foreign policy. For instance, some Marxian and Liberal approaches tend to reduce a state's foreign policy to the preferences of particular domestic groups and forces. Without an concept of the state as relatively autonomous from domestic social forces, which HS alerts us to, little would prevent us from arguing, in somewhat essentialist undertones, that a particular state's foreign policy is simply the reflection of its society's religious orientation (for a similar point see also: Halliday 2005, pp.46-47).

Thirdly, and finally, the concept of the institutional state opens the door to the insights of historical institutionalism. This perspective allows me to unpack the complex sequence and causal mechanisms between: a) large-scale social and cultural processes of global religious resurgence; b) the identities, beliefs/interests and actions of domestic actors embedded and responding to these trends; c) the role of specific events, such as presidential elections, the end of the Cold War, 9/11, in creating the political opening, at the time they did; that d) lead to the emergence at the meso-level of novel American foreign policies and bureaucratic structures with a religious content.

Conclusion

The chapter started by arguing that, in its current state, FPA theories do a poor job in understanding and accounting for the wider international and historical context in their explanations of foreign policy change. This theoretical limit leaves me in a rather difficult

position when trying to empirically investigate why, when, and how global social and cultural processes such as the resurgence of religion are affecting, and may be themselves influenced by, American foreign policy desecularization. This chapter argued that a theoretical reconciliation between HS and FPA is a promising way forward. A HS FPA offers a story of the making of foreign policy rooted in the co-constitutive role played by material and ideational factors, by economic, social, and political processes, and by international and domestic forces, that is only latently recognized within the FPA lexicon.⁴⁵ Conceptually bringing together FPA with HS allows to build explanations of foreign policy change that dynamically integrate, in a two way street, international structures and events with domestic pressures on policy-making processes and policy outcomes.

First, a HS provides FPA with a more explicit and complex concept of the international than what much FPA scholarship tends to work with. HS advances an analytically and ontologically pluralist, and a historicist concept of the international environment. This understanding of international relations allows me to locate the global social and cultural processes of religious resurgence – occurring over the past four decades, in multiple forms and locally specific ways – at the world social level. And then unpack how and in which ways such developments interact with American foreign policy.

Second, an HS approach to FPA leads to a reading of foreign policy and international politics as mutually constitutive. This analytical move rests on two theoretical assumptions that come with taking a HS lens: i) an insistence on linking macro-level social and historical processes and trends with actors and social action at the micro-level; and ii) a particular concept of the state that emphasizes its autonomous institutional underpinnings that lie at the intersection between the international and

⁴⁵ The sentence is borrowed and paraphrased from George Lawson, who argues that what HS brings to IR theory is a “story of the making of the *modern world* rooted in the co-constitutive role played by material and ideational factors, by economic, social, and political processes, and by international and domestic forces – [which] is one that is only latently recognized within the *IR lexicon* [emphasis added to highlight modified parts above]” (2006, p.405).

domestic spheres, acting as well as a meso-level ligature site between macro-level processes and micro-level decisions. This is a theoretical move that, rather than leaving the particular FPA scholar with the choice of whether or not to include macro-international structures and historical events, builds a framework that treats these as an integral and essential part to any account of foreign policy change.

In my case, I will explore how global macro changes associated with religious resurgence give rise to a number of different actors who, at the micro-domestic level, seek to influence and take part in the process of foreign policy-making. I will then unpack how domestic actors, some which are domestically embedded in as well as others who are responding to, the global processes of religious resurgence, mobilize to mainstream a set of inherently religious concerns and issues within American foreign policy. Both in terms of policies implemented, as well as institutional and normative changes in bureaucracies with international functions, such as the NSC, the White House, the State Department, and USAID.

2. THE SECULAR AND DESECULARIZATION: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The main purpose of this chapter is to provide a conceptual framework for exploring the desecularization of American foreign policy in the rest of the thesis. In order to define what desecularization is and explain why, how, when it occurs, it is indispensable however to have a clear grasp of its symmetrical opposite: secularization. The core of this chapter is dedicated to the task of defining and historicizing the multiple component parts of “the secular”. The focus will be, in particular, on its two cognate terms: secularization and secularism. It will explore the multiple meanings and diverse historical processes associated with “secularization”. Likewise it will conceptually unpack and trace across time and space the emergence and codification of “secularism” as an ideational construct.

This effort has three crucial purposes. First, it allows me to conceptualize and historicize how secular forces – secularization/s as historical process/es and secularism/s as ideational construct/s – have shaped for most of the XXth century domestic and international politics worldwide and the type of knowledge that has been produced in the social sciences, with a particular focus on IR. These secular processes and ideational constructs have, by reflex, also structured the practices, institutions, ideas, and norms that underpin American foreign policy.

Second, this effort sets the secular stage on which processes of global religious resurgence would then progressively take place over the past four to five decades across regions and religions. The central part of this chapter will be dedicated to teasing out and historicizing how processes of resurgence have brought about substantial social and political changes in the domestic and external environments within which American foreign policy-making and implementation take place. These changes have shed not only a reflexive light on the secular in the social sciences. They have provided as well the

context for the rise of new domestic forces and actors in Washington who, particularly from the 1990s onwards, would find the secular nature of American foreign policy problematic and would mobilize to desecularize it.

Third, mapping out the secular, is vital to anchoring the meaning of desecularization and tease out its constituent component processes in relation, and more specifically opposition, to secularization and secularism, especially as they relate to American foreign policy. In this section of the chapter I will present a taxonomy of those actors, which I will call *desecularizing actors*, that mobilize to challenge the secular status quo in foreign policy. These actors constitute the causal link between broad processes of religious resurgence, within which they are either embedded or reacting to, and specific desecularizing changes in American foreign policy.

Conceptualizing and Historicizing the Secular, Secularization and Secularism

Terms like “the secular”, “secularization” and “secularism” are complex, inevitably contested, and often confused and misused interchangeably. I argue, along the lines of Casanova (2011), that it is important to keep them conceptually distinct. For example, while Daniel Philpott (2009, p.185) captures perfectly the multiple nature of these terms when he presents nine different definitions for the secular, he nevertheless includes and subsumes under this category also definitions of secularism and secularization without making a clear-cut analytical separation between the three terms. Yet, it seems more appropriate to kept them distinct.

Broadly speaking “the secular” is understood here as “a central modern epistemic category [used] to construct, codify, grasp, and experience a realm or reality differentiated from “the religious.”” (Casanova 2011, p.54).⁴⁶ In this sense the secular

⁴⁶ It is important to note that the notion of “the secular” as opposed to “the religious”, or better “the religious” as not being “secular” is largely a modern post-Enlightenment construct and a contraposition

denotes a particular *condition* and a set of norms, institutions and practices that structure that very same condition and are not religious. This is distinct from *secularization* that instead, as other terms ending in *-ization*, identifies a *process*, and *secularism* that, like other *-isms*, identifies a particular *worldview* or *ideology*. The secular comes about and is sustained by processes of secularization and the emergence of secularism. In the two following sub-sections I attempt to tease out more explicitly the concepts of secularization and secularism, and historicize them in terms of events occurring in Europe and around the world over the past two centuries.

Secularization: Concept and History

Secularization suggests a trend, a general historical tendency toward a world in which religion matters less in the private life of individuals as well as in the public sphere, and where various forms of secular reason and secular institutions matter more. José Casanova (1994, 2011) has probably been one of the most consistent and clearest scholars over the past decades when it comes to defining our contemporary understanding of the concept of secularization. Casanova highlights three, largely independent and unintegrated, processes that are generally associated with the concept of secularization (1994, pp.19-23; 2011, pp.60-66).

First, secularization is most commonly, especially in popular discourses, understood as the decline of religious beliefs and/or practices in modern societies often postulated as a universal, human, developmental process. Second, secularization refers to the privatization of religion and the declining authority of religious norms and institutions

which may even have little meaning beyond the West (Asad 2003). Going back to Patrick Jackson's (2011) typologies of methodologies, by virtue of being non neo-positivist my inquiry accepts that the status of knowledge claims is often value-laden and understands the stakes involved when we use and naturalize certain concepts. This said however, this thesis does not adopt a fully "reflexive" methodology on the issue of the secular and the religious. It is not chiefly concerned with the genealogies of concepts and deconstructing meanings and hegemonic knowledge structures. This inquiry is carried out from a "critical realist" standpoint, as such it takes the use and deployment of categories, even if modern constructs, such as "the religious" and "the secular", in the discourses and practices of actors in world politics as important objects of study in and of themselves. As Mona Kanwal points out "People do in fact use the distinctions between secular and religious, fill these categories with distinctive content, and engage in disputes over them" (2012, p.373), and hence it becomes vital to investigate the political implications of processes of category and boundary formation and maintenance.

in the public sphere understood as a general modern historical trend. Thirdly, secularization is associated with the functional differentiation and emancipation of the secular in terms of institutions (mainly the state), and spheres of life and knowledge (politics, law, economics, science) from religious institutions and norms. With the idea of differentiation referring to the transfer of persons, things, meanings, and authority from ecclesiastical or religious to civil or lay use, possession, or control and the concomitant specialization of religion within its own newly found religious sphere. This third definition is generally the core component of classical secularization theories.⁴⁷

In light of worldwide processes of religious resurgence, scholars across the social sciences are today revisiting the idea of secularization particularly understood as a *universal, teleological* and *homogenizing* process. This debate, I argue, does not necessarily discredit the notion that, depending on historical periods and social context, processes of secularization in its various component forms (decline, privatization, and functional differentiation), can and have ostensibly occurred. Religious beliefs, traditions and practices may have not disappeared across the modern world as often assumed (Inglehart and Norris 2007), nevertheless their hold on the lives of (Western) Europeans, for example, seems to have declined in the past centuries. Whereas Europe was thought to be the norm, it may now appear more of an exception. Yet an exception that nevertheless needs adequate explaining as Peter Berger, Grace Davie and Effie Fokas point out (2008, see Ch.2).

Casanova's critique of secularization is centered mainly on the idea of privatization, rather than notions of decline of personal faith or functional differentiation between secular and religious institutions and norms for example. Also, while Casanova disputes the notion of privatization as a universal constant, it does not necessarily imply that processes of privatization have never occurred throughout history. Mark Regnerus

⁴⁷ Jurgen Habermas, rather than making a clear distinction between secularization as differentiation and privatization links the two together. He defines secularization for example with the "functional differentiation of social sub-systems, the churches and other religious organizations lose their control over law, politics, public welfare, education and science; they restrict themselves to their proper function of administering the means of salvation, turn exercising religion into a private matter and in general lose public influence and relevance." (2008, p.17)

and Christian Smith have explored (1997), for example, how patterns of religious withdrawal (privatization) and engagement (deprivatization), can and have taken place across time and religious traditions.

Moreover, while the universal logic of private religious decline and privatization are increasingly disputed, secularization as differentiation and emancipation of the secular from the religious sphere – albeit as a process which varies in shapes and forms across history, societies and states – appears to be more generalizable than others. This is something which Casanova himself recognizes (1994, p.6).⁴⁸ Historically, for example, in Medieval Europe religion (and in particular the Catholic Church) exercised a great deal of authority over political institutions, and social life and knowledge. Temporal and spiritual power were deeply intertwined. The rise of the modern state during the 16th and 17th centuries, however, progressively weakened the power of religious actors in international and domestic politics. Following the 1648 Peace of Westphalia, the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, which laid the groundwork for the principles of nonintervention and state sovereignty, also substantially curtailed the transnational authority of the Catholic Church (for excellent accounts on the relationship between religion and Westphalia see Nexon 2009; Philpott 2001).

As states emerged and consolidated to be the most powerful and efficient way of organizing polities and economic resources for security purposes (Buzan and Little 2000, pp.241-344), these would also conduct “massive expropriation and appropriation...of monasteries, landholdings, and the mort-main wealth of the church after the Protestant Reformation and the ensuing religious wars” (Casanova 1994, p.13). Many of the education and healthcare services that religious institutions used to provide during medieval Europe were likewise increasingly taken over during the 17th and 18th centuries by specialized state-financed and state-run institutions. The end result, once more, was a net decrease in the temporal power of religious institutions and authorities within European societies and politics.

⁴⁸ Casanova argues: “I do not share the view that secularization was, or is, a myth. The core of the theory of secularization, the thesis of the differentiation and emancipation of the secular spheres from religious institutions and norms, remains valid” (1994, p.6).

As Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and VanAntwerpen suggest, over the centuries “there has been an enormous expansion in the construction of institutions for this-worldly, nonecclesial purposes...much of social life is organized by systems or “steering mechanisms” that are held to operate independently of religious belief, ritual practice, or divine guidance” (2011a, p.10). Markets are an example where “participants may have religious motivations; they may pray for success or form alliances with coreligionists. Nonetheless, economists, financiers, investors, and traders understand markets mainly as products of buying and selling” (2011a, p.10). Like markets other institutions have been created to organize and advance secular projects – such as schools, welfare agencies, and armies – which “all operate within the terms of what might be called a secular imaginary” (2011a, p.10).

Alexis de Tocqueville already more than a 150 years ago indirectly touched upon the multiple and complex aspects of secularization. While comparing the New with the Old Worlds, Tocqueville would dispute the conventional Enlightenment wisdom of his times that modernity and progress spelled the end of religious beliefs:

“The philosophers of the eighteenth century explained the gradual decay of religious faith in a very simple manner. Religious zeal, said they, must necessarily fail, the more generally liberty is established and knowledge diffused. Unfortunately, facts are by no means in accordance with their theory. There are certain populations in Europe whose unbelief is only equaled by their ignorance and their debasement, whilst in America one of the freest and most enlightened nations in the world fulfills all the outward duties of religious fervor” (Tocqueville 2000, pp.357-358).

Upon his arrival to America “the religious aspect of the country was the first thing that struck my attention” Tocqueville argues (2000, p.358). He would point at the deep-seated link between America’s puritan origins and the establishment of democratic values and institutions within the country. Yet he also observed how, even though American peoples were both modern and highly religious, their state was nevertheless more secular

than European ones. In other words, Tocqueville's account suggests that while secularization as *religious decline* did not seem to fit America well, secularizing as a processes of *functional differentiation* instead did.

Compared to his own country, "in the United States religion exercises but little influence upon the laws" (2000, p.353) and "takes no direct part in the government of society" (2000, p.355). Unlike France, the United States exhibited a clear "separation of Church and State" (2000, p.358). In the new American world compared to the old European one, clergy and politics rarely mixed:

"I learned with surprise that [the clergy] filled no public appointments; not one of them is to be met in the administration [...] And when I came to enquire into the prevailing spirit of the clergy I found that most of its members seemed to retire of their own accord from the exercise of power, and that they made it the pride of their profession to abstain from politics" (2000, pp.358-359).

Processes of functional differentiation have occurred well beyond the West. Take the Middle East, for example, a region that is generally assumed to experience little separation between state and mosque. In recent decades there has been an obvious growth in religious politics. Even here however "processes of secularization", Sami Zubaida argues, "in the sense of differentiation and separation of institutions and spheres of knowledge and culture from religion and its authorities have been features of modernity in most "Muslim societies"" (2005, p.440). Indeed, he adds that, "from the nineteenth century, the world of Islam had undergone processes of modernity which included extensive secularization in all spheres of life" (2005, p.440). According to Fred Halliday, the modern Middle Eastern states that were born in the 19-20th centuries following European colonization differed fundamentally from their pre-modern cousins: "in the range and extent of their power: their control of territory, economy, society and culture, *including religion*, [which was] far greater than their predecessors" [emphasis added] (2005, p.45).

Overall, then secularization is understood here not as a unitary and teleological phenomenon, but as three conceptually distinct, broadly unintegrated and to some extent historically, geographically and context specific processes. Seen through this light, as a complex and multifaceted phenomenon, there is indeed a “reality” to processes of secularization (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and VanAntwerpen 2011a, p.10). Particularly, in terms of differentiation and decline in the power of religion in the public sphere of Western and non-Western countries across the past centuries.

Secularism: Concept and History

A particular feature of, and closely intertwined with, processes of secularization is also the emergence of “secularism”. Secularism does not refer to a process or trend, but rather to a kind of ideational construct or belief system. In IR it has invariably been described as a discursive tradition (Hurd 2008), an ideology (Hallward 2008), or a doctrine (Sheikh and Wæver 2012). For Casanova, secularism refers to either a: “whole range of modern secular worldviews and ideologies that may be consciously held and explicitly elaborated into philosophies of history and normative-ideological state projects, into projects of modernity and cultural programs”; or “an epistemic knowledge regime that may be unreflexively held and phenomenologically assumed as the taken-for-granted normal structure of modern reality, as a modern *doxa* or as an “unthought”” (Casanova 2011, p.55).

Either way, as an explicitly held worldview or implicitly assumed *doxa*, secularism takes on a number of different forms. Overall I distinguish between three broad typologies of secularisms, each with its own internal and geographical specific differences: epistemic, ideological, and state-normative secularism/s. These modern secularist ideational and knowledge constructs are very much the product of the intellectual revolution occurred during the European Enlightenment in the 17-18th centuries. These, as will be discussed shortly, then spread globally, and were absorbed, resisted, adapted, remodeled, rejected – at different times, in different places, in uneven

and culturally and geographically specific ways – during the age of European colonization and encounter with other societies.

Starting with *epistemic secularism*. Secularism in this sense is a form of knowledge held consciously or unconsciously by individuals, movements and organizations which reproduce the idea that religion, rather than an intrinsic feature of human nature across time, is instead epiphenomenal and a product of some underlying condition such as underdevelopment, ignorance, insecurity, economic malaise, and so on. It does not take a normative or ethical stance towards or against religion, it just sees it as inevitably declining or as increasingly irrelevant to social and political life when processes of modernization set in (such as rising wealth, living standards and education for example).

Such an assumption about the inherently secular character of modern life and politics is most explicitly articulated in a bulk of knowledge that has come to be known as “secularization *theory*”. Secularization *theory* refers to the actual (or increasingly alleged) empirical-historical patterns of transformation brought by modernity (in its different forms), causing a general tendency towards a world in which religion matters less in the personal lives of individuals as well as in social and political life.

It is an ideational construct to the extent that secularization theory, rather than based on extended empirical investigation (as Tocqueville already noticed a century and a half ago), instead sought to universalize from events taking place in Europe, which to some extent later seemed occurring around the world, to produce a general teleological and progressive account of human and societal development from the primitive “sacred” to the modern “secular”. Secularization theory has a long pedigree and intellectual roots in the work of towering (European) social theorists and philosophers such as Weber, Durkheim, and Marx. It was then most explicitly articulated in the 1960-70s (Berger 1969; Martin 1978). Not coincidentally this was a time when processes of secularization and secular ideologies, as will be discussed in a moment, did appear to have universal validity and appeal.

Epistemic secularism is not only articulated and codified explicitly in a body of theory that carries its name. It can be held as an un-reflexive “common sense” within the wider social scientific enterprise as well as among individuals and groups belonging to particularly secular cultural milieus that assume that religion has become irrelevant in the modern world. When IR scholars, for instance, are accused of *ignoring, overlooking* or *disregarding* religious forces and dynamics it is this epistemic secularist bias that is unveiled. The following passage by Daniel Philpott neatly captures the essence of this bias:

“The dominant theories in this field assume that the states, nations, international organizations, parties, classes, businesses, interest groups, nongovernmental organizations, and lobbies that carry on politics pursue ends that include power, conquest, freedom, wealth, redistribution of wealth, welfare provision, human rights, justice, environmental cleanliness, and other goals, but they do not pursue religious ends and are not influenced by religious actors. Such theories reason as if religion has disappeared from politics” (2009, p.187).

The step from secularism as an analytical theory or naturalized assumption of religious decline, privatization and differentiation to a normative commitment towards marginalizing religious actors and beliefs, or eliminating them altogether, has often been a small one. Enter *ideological secularism*. The distinction between epistemic secularism and ideological secularism is that, while the former has a rather neutral stance towards religion seeing its demise as an inevitable by-product of modernization (broadly defined) the latter instead sees it in many ways as necessary precondition for modernity to exist. Ideological secularism develops certain assumptions of what “the religious” and “religion” is or does – mainly with pejorative connotations.

Ideological secularism is no longer an explicit theory seeking to explain historical processes that appear underway, or an implicit worldview that simply relegates religion to a superseded stage. Ideological secularism has many shades, but generally takes

religion as an abstract category that has a particular and problematic essence – non-rational, primordial, particularistic, intolerant, dangerous, illiberal, and so on – and produces certain undesired effects and outcomes – violence, backwardness, and so on. Hence religion should be excluded or marginalized from politics, the public sphere, and, in some extreme forms of secularist ideologies, extinguished in the consciousness of individuals. Secularization (as secular differentiation, privatization of religion, and religious decline) becomes an indispensable condition, if not a precondition, for ensuring peaceful coexistence among people and nations, promoting economic growth and social progress, or for rational political practices and discourse to be sustained. In this view the secular is largely seen “not just as one way of organizing life, not just as useful in order to ensure peace and harmony among different religions, but as a kind of maturation. It is held to be a developmental achievement” (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and VanAntwerpen 2011a, p.20; see also Cavanaugh 2009).

Ideological secularism takes many shapes most of which, somewhat like epistemic secularism, can be broadly divided into *explicit* and *implicit* forms. *Explicit ideological secularisms* are openly visible ideologies that, to various degrees and in their various local characteristics, attempt to separate faith from politics and public life. To use Ahmed Kuru’s distinction, some forms of explicit secularism more “assertively” seek to “exclude religion from the public sphere and confine it to the private domain” (2009, p.11). Examples of these are *laïcité* in France, *laicismo* in Italy or Kemalism in Turkey which, with their own local specificities, are distinctively anti-religious and anti-clerical doctrines aiming at controlling and abolishing most religious expressions and symbols from politics and the public sphere. Other forms of explicit secularism are less assertive, demand simply “that the state play a “passive” role by allowing the public visibility of religion” (Kuru 2009, p.11). This is the case for instance in places like the U.S. and India. Secularists in these countries seek to uphold a strict separation between state and religious institutions, however they are more tolerant and accommodating of religious expressions in the social and public domains than for example French or Turkish *laicists*.

Explicit secularist ideologies have an impact on political life. In places like France *laïcité* is generally seen as a constitutive element of the country's national identity. It is a distinctively anti-clerical and catholic sentiment born out of the French revolution, which today is increasingly reinforced in the context of Muslim immigration with debates about headscarf bans. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk drew upon French concepts of *laïcité* to model the newly created Turkish Republic at the beginning of the 20th century around strongly secularizing principles. The vestiges of the Ottoman Empire – the caliph, the sultan, the Sharia, the Islamic institutions and schools – were replaced by European-inspired secular political, legal, and educational systems. As a secularist ideological framework *Kemalism* has increasingly been contested with the rise of the moderate and conservative Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP). In the United States, argues Christian Smith, the secularization of American public life, culture, educational system and judicial institutions that occurred particularly between the 1870s and 1930s, was the “successful outcome of an intentional political struggle by secularizing activists to overthrow a religious establishment's control over socially legitimate knowledge” (2003, p.1). This process has come under attack in recent decades by parts of the American Religious Right in its polemics against “secular humanism”.

In each of the cases described above secularism “takes on its own meanings, values, and associations; in no case is it simply a neutral antidote to religious conflicts” (Calhoun, Juergensmeyer, and VanAntwerpen 2011a, p.9). The point here is that secularism is a deeply political force, a form of “political authority” as Hurd labels it (2008), which demarcates the appropriate place of religion and religious institutions in the public sphere.

By *implicit ideological secularism*, I refer to what William Connolly has described as: “several variants of secularism kill two birds with one stone: as they try to seal public life from religious doctrines they also cast out a set of nontheistic orientations to reverence, ethics, and public life that deserve to be heard” (1999, p.5). In other words implicit ideological secularism, not only identifies the category of “religion” and assigns it a particular place in society and politics (like explicit secularism), but becomes

elaborated as a foundational ideational brick in distinct secular political philosophies, cultural programs and ideologies. Implicit ideological secularism is part and parcel of political ideologies born out of the Enlightenment such as socialism, communism, liberalism, nationalism, and fascism that construct non-religious social and political ends for citizens and societies.⁴⁹ These channel loyalties away from God and, depending on the ideology, toward the creation of egalitarian societies, the fulfillment of individual liberties, the unity of a nation or the supremacy of a race. Each of these political ideologies has its more assertive or passive take on the appropriate place of religion in society and politics.⁵⁰

From the late 18th century the ideologies and political movements with the greatest momentum in Europe and then across the world were mainly secular: American and French republican revolutionaries in the 1700s; the European nationalist revolutions of the 1800s; and the rise of Fascism and Nazism in Italy and Germany, the Bolshevik revolutionaries which brought Communism to Russia, and the early Zionist movement, chiefly conceived in secular and socialist terms, which propelled the modern state of Israel into existence, all in the 1900s. When European colonialism reached its limits in the 19th and 20th century, most anti-colonial struggles for equality and self-determination in Africa, Asia, and the Middle East were largely inspired by secular liberal, nationalist or socialist principles.⁵¹ Post-colonial states while rejecting European domination, they nevertheless often sought to emulate the Western secular path – what was then thought as the only path – to modernity. Regimes in the post-colonial period were by en large

⁴⁹ For a similar understanding of secularism in IR see: Toft, Philpott, and Shah (2011, p.74)

⁵⁰ For instance, ideologies like political liberalism are generally tolerant of religion as long as it is disestablished from the state, separated from politics and (in some circumstances) privatized. Communist ideologies perceive religion as an oppressor of the people, hence communist movements and regimes have tended to forcefully abolish religion within their societies – for instance in the former Soviet Union, Maoist China and Fidel Castro's Cuba (Marsh 2011). Nationalism which is to a great extent the ideology of the state, has led nationalists often to curtail more cosmopolitan forms of shared religious identity as well as transferring forms of legitimation for rulers from god to the people (Juergensmeyer 2008). Fascist ideologies have often used all the trappings of religions, its symbols and rituals, to build however new secular divinities around their leaders, the nation and its peoples (Gentile 1990).

⁵¹ This is a generalized story and of course there were exceptions, for example the case of Ghandi's non-violent anti-colonial struggle in India against the British Empire.

secularist in ideology and orientation as in Chiang Kai-Shek's China, Shah's Iran, Nehru's India, Nasser's Egypt, and Sukarno's Indonesia.

In the Middle East, for example, the development of modern states in the mid-20th century was heavily influenced by Western secular paradigms (Tamimi 2000, pp.88-89; Zubaida 2005). John Esposito highlights how at the time few in the region “questioned the accepted wisdom that modernization meant the progressive Westernization and secularization of society” (2010, p.51). Parliamentary governments, political parties, capitalist or socialist economies, and modern European and American school curricula, became the norm in the region. As a result, Islam's role in the state and society as a legitimating source for rulers, states, and government institutions was greatly curtailed as state elites often used secular frameworks to organize their states and societies. In Communist regimes in Russia and around the world in Eastern Europe, China, Vietnam, and Cuba, for instance, “tremendous amounts of resources were allocated to erasing religious faith and promoting atheism in its stead” (Marsh 2011, p.2). As Toft, Philpott and Shah point out: “during most of the period between 1789 and 1967, political secularism put religious actors and ideologies on the defensive in much of the world” (2011, p.79).

Since implicit ideological secularist influences underpin particular political philosophical systems and ideologies rooted in the Enlightenment such as Liberalism and Marxism, these influences may filter through to cognate IR theoretical paradigms. Marxian and Liberal approaches to IR hence, not only tend to ignore religion, but see it as a problematic force when mixed to international politics. Either as an obstacle to the triumph of liberal democratic forms of politics (Fukuyama 1992, pp.45-46) or as an epiphenomenal force that leaders instrumentally appropriate in so far as it is useful to selfishly legitimize their political choices and mobilize masses (Shaffer 2006).

More generally, much of IR scholarship's focus on issues related to security, conflict and terrorism when it comes to exploring the impact of religion in international politics seems to suggest a generalized lingering implicit ideological secularist bias

within the discipline as a whole.⁵² This is not to say that the authors investigating the nexus between religion and security see religion as inherently problematic or conflict prone. Indeed most actually suggest that a rather complex relationship between religion and violence exists. Yet the fact that such a broad and flourishing research program, probably more so than in other areas, on religion and security issues has developed – even simply to disprove those very same facile assumptions linking religion and violence – indirectly underscores the discipline’s inbuilt ideological secularist bias.

Thirdly I identified a third secularist form of knowledge structure. This is what I called *state-normative secularism*. State-normative secularism is premised, drawing from Casanova’s definition of secularism as statecraft doctrine, on the need to “maintain some kind of separation between “church” and “state,” or between “religious” and “political” authorities” (2011, p.69). The functional differentiation between state and church that secularization theories take as a natural evolution, is in great part the result of “political negotiations surrounding a broad array of regulatory laws affecting religion” within states (Gill 2001, p.132). Secularism as a state-norm broadly entails two principles: on the one hand it involves the principle of separation between “religious” and “political” authorities, on the other the principle of state regulation and control of religion in society.

States’ constitutional and legal regimes approach religion, and the secular, in different ways. For instance, in the United States the first amendment, introduced in 1791, dealt explicitly with religion stating that: “congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof” and was intended to regulate state meddling into religion and *vice versa*. France’s norms of church and state separation were officially codified in the 1905 Law on the Separation of Churches and State. With the end of the Ottoman Empire, Turkey’s 1937 constitution identifies, in Article 2, “The Republic of Turkey” as a “democratic, secular and social State”. The 1949 Indian constitution declares in the opening lines India to be “a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic Republic”.

⁵² The literature on this topic is virtually infinite, see among many: BISA Working Group, Durward and Marsden (2009); Fox and Sandler (2006); Hasenclever and Rittberger (2003); Horowitz (2009); Philpott (2007); Toft (2007).

As recent scholarship convincingly argues (Kuru 2009; Sheikh and Wæver 2012), historical events and specific ideological and political negotiations surrounding these principles, rather than the particular stage of “modernization” states and societies find themselves at, largely determines the wide range of constitutional and legal arrangements delineating the relationship between religious authority and the state which countries exhibit worldwide (Fox 2006b). Secularist state-norms in their multiple forms are premised upon the particular institutional arrangements, social forces, religious authorities and the types of secularist ideology (explicit and implicit) that permeate the social fabric and political context of the state at the time of their codification. What this literature suggests is that the degree to which these norms are then upheld or reinterpreted, enforced to a greater or lesser extent, or even redesigned and re-articulated depends very much on the configuration of relations between religious and secularist forces at different historical junctures.

Overall then for much of the past two centuries social, political, ideological and normative secularizing trends and secularist projects did appear to marginalize and undermine religious authority from multiple facets of private and public life around the world. Likewise, during most of the 20th century, the pressing international security and political issues of the day seemed to mostly exclude religion as a source of influence and power in international politics. Countries and peoples were preoccupied with the real and present danger of states committed to fighting highly destructive wars in the name of secular projects. The ideological lines and military competition during the World War II were drawn between secular systems and regimes: fascist, communist and market-oriented democratic ones. During the Cold War regions and countries worldwide were parceled according to secular idioms such as: first, second and third worlds; Western, Eastern and Non-Aligned blocs; free and un-free world; imperialists and anti-imperialists; and so on.

Stalin’s quip in the 1930s, “The Pope? How many divisions has he got?”, symbolically captured the idea that religions’ social and political power in the 20th

century had become virtually negligent. “Is God Dead?” tellingly asked the *Times* on a 1966 cover. That very same year the secular Arab Nationalist government of Gamal Abdel Nasser in Egypt was executing Sayyid Qutb, one of the founders of modern Islamism. It is no coincidence then that key texts explicitly outlining the *theory* of secularization were written at the height of the Cold War during the 1960-70s. Likewise, ever since E.H. Carr’s seminal work on *The Twenty Years Crisis* (Carr and Cox 2001), much of IR’s development as a discipline took shape within this international context. The understanding by social scientists that the world was on a relentlessly secularizing trajectory was clearly not only naïve or the product of blind hope, but reflected real-world historical events and secular regimes that seemed to prove their theories and assumptions right.

American Foreign Policy as a Secular Practice

The international context described above influenced not only the development of secularization theory and IR theory, but also the environment within which American foreign policy would be formulated and executed. Indeed this was, and still is in many respects, the secular historical and intellectual context within which much of the American foreign policy establishment, its institutional architecture, and practices developed over most of the second half of 20th century. Indeed, a central claim of this thesis is that, at least up until the end of the 1990s, American foreign policy practices and policy-making institutional and cultural structures were largely secular, in the multiple ways identified earlier.

It is important to be clear about what exactly I am claiming here. The cornerstone of my argument is premised on an important distinction. One that separates the management and execution of foreign policy by state officials and bureaucracies, which I argue has overwhelmingly been secular, from the significant influence religion has regularly had on the history, politics, character and identity of Americans, whether

ordinary people or presidents (for a good overview see Guth, Smidt, and Kellstedt 2009). In the latter case, religious influences have spilled over into foreign policy especially by molding presidents' character and by articulating a religiously-infused sense of mission and exceptionalism ever since Puritan pilgrims stepped on America's shores (McDougall 1997; Preston 2012). This is the propensity by Americans to construct their nation's identity around notions of providential destiny and by presidents and high-level policymakers to publicly adopt or use religious discourses to frame, explain, and legitimize foreign policy choices.

Yet, while presidents, from the Cold War (Inboden 2008) to more recent times (Bacevich and Prodromou 2004; Marsden 2011b), may have regularly called upon religious language and beliefs to explain and justify individual decisions or grand strategies, rarely, if ever, were religious concerns and norms seen to inform entire policy frameworks or underline specific institutional structures. For instance, throughout most of the second half of the 20th century American efforts to promote human right norms were largely carried out within a secular framework of civil and political rights. There was sporadic attention to issues of religious freedom, as was the case with the Jackson-Vanik amendment of 1974 against the Soviet Union's curbs on Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel. Nevertheless little structured and systematic policy attention was given to the state of religious individuals, minorities and groups more broadly around the world. Likewise for most of its existence since the 1960s up until the late 1990s, the way the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) would design its programs and distribute its funds was largely carried out in a secular fashion. Foreign aid resources would overwhelmingly be distributed to secular NGOs and implementing partners. Likewise most developmental theories and paradigms informing aid policies at the time largely discarded the role of religion, if not even seeing as a major stumbling block, on the road to development.

National security policy discourses and practices were deeply secularized during the Cold War as well. Surely did Presidents, like Truman, Eisenhower and Reagan, rely on religious language and idioms to frame the Cold War. However, policy discussions

were largely a secular affair between nuclear deterrence and détente, great power management, and competition between two broad secularist political and economic projects. The National Security Council Report 68 (NSC-68), considered the forefather of recent National Security Strategies (NSSs), did have a rather religious tone and messianic streak and Soviet Communism was referred to as dangerous “faith”, yet religious issues and actors were never mentioned as an important security concern in and of themselves. Catholic Popes, from Pius XII to John Paul II, and Islamist groups, such as Afghan *Mujahidin*, were called upon by Presidents to fight against the common atheist enemy. Yet most of this activity was carried out in an episodic and undercover fashion, rather than publicly or as part of a coherent long-term strategy of engaging with religious actors.

Similarly, at least up until the late 1990s, institutions with international functions – such as the White House, State Department, and USAID – were organized in strictly secular terms. They had no major departments that were purposively assigned to either systematically producing and disseminating knowledge and norms that related to religion, or overseeing policies with a religious content. Religious and religious related actors were not called upon in any structured and systematic way to participate, manage or deliver foreign policy. The overwhelming culture in many of these bureaucracies, as well as among the civil servants and policy-makers staffing them, was a deeply secularist one (either in epistemic or ideological terms).

Capturing both the use of religious rhetoric as a political tool and simultaneously its comparable absence from policy discourses and practices, former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright recalls how:

“During my adult years, western leaders gained political advantage by deriding “godless communism;” otherwise I cannot remember any leading American diplomat (even born-again Christian Jimmy Carter) speaking in depth about the role of religion in shaping the world. Religion was not a respecter of national borders; it was above and beyond reason; it evoked the deepest passions; and historically, it was the cause of much bloodshed.

Diplomats in my era were taught not to invite trouble, and no subject seemed more inherently treacherous than religion.” (2006, p.8)

The education that American foreign policy-makers (diplomats, development professionals and national security officials) received, the universities they would attend and the international relations (Shah, Philpott, and Toft 2011) or development theories (Deneulin and Bano 2009, Ch.2) they were socialized in, rarely if ever mentioned religion as a relevant or unproblematic factor in world politics. “People in our government”, Berger has argued in the wake of 9/11, “are trained to think of the world in terms of a giant ivory chessboard where states make highly rational moves to checkmate their opponents and there is no room for cultural forces” (quoted from Morgan 2001, webpage).⁵³ In other words there is an important distinction to be made between political elites (presidents and members of congress), and intellectual and policy elites. As Peter Berger has put it: “In the U.S. political elites tend to be religious, they are a reflection of the American population at large. Intellectual and cultural elites instead are overwhelmingly secular” (2011, author’s participant observation).

Moreover, the domestic normative environment, for most of the second half of the 20th century, greatly discouraged American foreign policy bureaucracies and bureaucrats to openly and directly include, engage and support religious actors. The constitution’s Establishment Clause in the First Amendment (an expression of what was earlier labeled as state-normative secularism) was overwhelmingly interpreted in strict separationist terms. This strongly prohibited most forms of institutional and financial entanglement between church and state (PEW 2009c, p.11), and created a culture among foreign policy- and decision-makers where engagement with religious issues and actors was overwhelmingly discouraged and avoided.⁵⁴

⁵³ Much of Hurd’s theoretically sophisticated work exposes the secularist assumptions that colour American policy-makers attitudes and practices towards religion in general and Islam in particular (2008, see especially Ch.6).

⁵⁴ For a good overview of how establishment clause norms have affected the worldview and practices of American foreign policy officials see: CSIS (2007, pp.3, 39-47).

Yet events domestically in the United States and internationally from the 1970s onwards progressively seemed to challenge secular processes and assumptions as religious actors, affiliations, identities and discourses gradually became ever more public and politically significant. The following section explores and historicizes how trends over the past fifty years have recast religious forces and factors as an important element of American domestic as well as international politics.

Historicizing the Global Resurgence of Religion

Secularization processes and secularist ideational knowledge structures came to define much political life and social scientific scholarship worldwide, along with American foreign policy practices and decision-making structures, for most of the past century. Simultaneously, however a slow, progressive and discernible shift in the political salience of religion has occurred in the United States and round the world. This section briefly historicizes processes of religious resurgence, as defined in the introduction in terms of the *politicization of religion/s* and the *religionization of politics*. This part is mainly descriptive and empirical, as opposed to the discussion about resurgence of religion in the introduction that largely focused on definitional and conceptual issues.

The mixing of politics and religion has a long history in America ever since the first Pilgrims stepped off the Mayflower. Likewise, religious individuals and leaders have taken part in many social progressive or conservative movements in the past century or so to abolish slavery, prohibit alcohol, or promote civil rights for African Americans. Yet since the 1970s a “diminishing divide” (Kohut et al. 2000) between religion and politics has been observed as religious actors and discourses started to enter the American public sphere in qualitatively new and increasingly assertive ways compared to preceding decades. First of all, the growing numerical weight and political activism from the 1970s

onwards by previously disengaged Protestant Evangelicals around social and values issues,⁵⁵ has led to a remarkably close intertwining of religion and politics in past decades.

In 1976 Jimmy Carter was the first Southern Baptist “born again” president to be elected. In 1979 the televangelist Jerry Falwell founded the Moral Majority, which gave birth to the modern American Christian and Religious Right movements. This was the first ever grass-roots movement with the explicit goal of rallying religious conservatives across the board in support of conservative candidates and encouraging church goers to register as voters. Ronald Reagan actively courted conservative Christians’ votes and was elected in 1981 thanks in part to the open support of Falwell’s Moral Majority. Many prominent conservative Christian political action and advocacy organizations aimed at influencing politics and public policy still active today, took shape during these decades.⁵⁶ The growing entanglement between Protestant Evangelicals, the Religious Right movement, and the Republican Party, has been a fixture of American politics ever since then and has successfully propelled the “born again” Governor of Texas George W. Bush into the presidency during the 2000s.⁵⁷

More widely, there has been a generalized and an unparalleled growth in the degree of organized religious lobbying and advocacy in Washington D.C. Not just by Christian conservative organizations, but across the Christian and non-Christian religious and theological spectrum. Allen Hertzke, the scholar who most closely has traced this trend, points out that: “for most of the nation’s history, religious interest group activity was episodic, not institutionalized” (Hertzke 2009, p.300). Herzke (2012, p.24) has

⁵⁵ This activism was spurred by what Protestant Evangelicals perceived as the moral decay of the 1960-70s, exemplified by: the abolition of school prayer, the feminist and anti-Vietnam war movements, the legalization of abortion in *Roe v. Wade* and the Watergate scandal.

⁵⁶ For instance: James Dobson’s Focus on the Family in 1977 and his Family Research Council in 1981; Robert G. Grant’s Christian Voice in 1978, Ed McAteer’s Religious Roundtable in 1979 and with Tim LaHaye the Coalition for Religious Freedom in 1982; Beverly LaHaye’s Concerned Women for America in 1979; Louis P. Sheldon’s Traditional Values Coalition in 1980; and Pat Robertson’s Christian Coalition in 1988. Some have dissolved, others mutated, and others are still active today.

⁵⁷ The literature addressing the politicization of Evangelicals, the birth of the Christian and Religious Right movements in America, and their relationship to the Republican Party is huge. For good places to start, see: Wald and Calhoun-Brown (2007, Ch.8); Wilcox (1992); Wilcox and Larson (2006).

counted that in the 1940-50s there were roughly 30 religious advocacy groups⁵⁸ with a permanent office and paid employees in the greater Washington, D.C. area. By the 1970s, the number had more than doubled to 67 and by 2011 roughly 216 religious advocacy groups were operating in and around Washington D.C. Herzke, aptly captures the social process of religious resurgence when arguing that the “growth in the number of religion-related advocacy organizations appears to have kept pace with – *or even exceeded* – the growth in some other common types of advocacy organizations [emphasis added].” (2012, p.14)

Moreover, scholars have found that the policy concerns of religious activists have widened exponentially over the decades. In terms of domestic politics, religious activists have sought legislation on issues from regulating personal morality, combating social injustice, addressing immigration problems. They have attempted to influence Supreme Court appointments and have articulated broad policy frameworks on the role of the government in domestic politics and economics (Green, Jones, and Cox 2009).

In parallel, a qualitative and quantitative shift has occurred in recent decades in the attention and engagement by religious activists and groups to international issues (Abrams 2001). Once again a caveat is in order here. I am not suggesting that activism and interest on the part of religious actors on international issues in the past was absent, indeed this was not the case.⁵⁹ This activism, however, was largely sporadic and tokenistic. A watershed and groundbreaking moment in the direct and overt engagement by church and denominational-based organizations in American public life on

⁵⁸ Ranging from un-affiliated religiously-based organizations, to organizations officially representing the interests of a particular religious institution, denomination or tradition, to issue-specific coalitions.

⁵⁹ Historically American religious interest groups have focused periodically on international and foreign affairs issues (Ribuffo 2001). American Christian organizations have carried out missionary work in developing countries, reporting back to parishioners about conditions abroad, since the 19th century. Mainline Protestant churches had a pivotal role in pressing for the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 (Nurser 2005). Churches also were central in the anti-Vietnam protests. Likewise conservative Christian activists have long been fervent anti-communist since the 1950s. During the Reagan years Christian conservatives – encouraged by the state department – were offering ideological and financial support to anti-communist forces in El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua (Martin 2003). Much of this past activism was, however, often very specific and *ad hoc* rather than the professionalized, wide-ranging and systematic lobbying campaigns of recent decades by religious actors across groups and denominations.

international issues, according to the well-known sociologist of religion Robert Bellah (1986, pp.53, 56-57), was the U.S. Catholic Bishop's "Pastoral Letter War and Peace" of 1983. Bellah was noticing in the 1980s what by the 1990s and thereafter has become ever more apparent, the growth in religious lobbying on foreign policy concerns.

By 2004, exemplifying these important shifts, the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) released its most comprehensive ever policy document offering theological justification for religiously-based activism on an extensive number of issues. The document was a turning point particularly in expanding Evangelicals' agenda beyond a narrow focus on abortion and family values domestically, towards a much wider policy interest especially on international economic, humanitarian and security issues (NAE 2004). Hertzke (2012, p.47) found that religious advocacy groups in Washington are addressing something like 300 different policy issues. Four-fifths out of the 216 groups surveyed, either focus on both domestic and international issues, or in a smaller percentage solely on foreign concerns.

Processes of religionization of politics have occurred as well. Religion has progressively become a central component of how Americans think about political candidates and policy issues. While until Jimmy Carter, "presidents had largely declined to discuss their personal beliefs", in past decades, however, scholars have noted that "now [...] every ambitious politician does so" (Kohut et al. 2000, p.1). Confirming this trend some have found that the use of religious references and language in presidential speeches has increased exponentially from the Reagan years up to the Bush presidency (Domke and Coe 2007; see also Balmer 2008).⁶⁰ In the footsteps of conservatives, Democrats across the board have in recent years increasingly spoken about their faith more openly and engaged with religious voters more directly (ABC 2007).

Barack Obama has often expressed publicly and with ease his own faith. Ever since his 2006 speech at Sojourners' Call to Renewal conference, Obama embraced the

⁶⁰ Elizabeth Prodromou argues: "American Presidents have always been, to some degree, religious and praying. What is different is that now religion is politicized – I pray therefore vote for me!, I pray therefore I am a Republican! I pray therefore I vote! and so on" (2011, author's interview).

notion that religion had an important role to play in the public sphere and that Democrats should not shy away from it. He has been eager to engage with evangelicals (Broder 2008) and explain how his administration's economic and tax policies are informed by faith and religious beliefs (Riley 2012). The Council on Foreign Relations (CFR), America's preeminent foreign affairs think tank, has launched a "Campaign 2012 blog" scrutinizing the foreign policy dimensions of the presidential race. One of its posts, noting how issues of religion and faith have become hot topics over the years, suggestively argues that:

"Questions on religion are no longer limited to the quizzing of candidates on their beliefs, but now include hard hitting inquiries into how each candidates' views on religion and religious freedom will shape his policy overseas."⁶¹

Simultaneously over the past four-five decades processes of religious resurgence have occurred worldwide. Starting from the Middle East, Shah and Toft (2006, p.40) have argued, religious politics has been on the rise ever since Israel's victory against Arab nationalist regimes in the 1967 Six Day War. On the one hand, Israel's capture of the Old City of Jerusalem and the West Bank spurred a revival of religious Zionism within the country itself. This further led to the creation of the Gush Emunim (Bloc of the Faithful), the first movement committed to establishing Jewish settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories – or as they saw it, in the biblical Land of Israel (see also Weissbrod 1982). With time religious settlers and parties – such as Mafdal and Shas – have emerged as important contenders to secular forces in Israeli politics itself. Quite symbolically, in past decades, the secular socialist *kibbutz* has been replaced by the religious settlement in the Israeli geography and collective imagery.⁶²

On the one hand, the defeat of Arab armies in 1967 progressively eroded the attractiveness of secular Arab nationalist ideologies and gradually opened up an

⁶¹ For the quote and link to the blog post see: <http://www.cfr.org/about/newsletters/archive/newsletter/n563> (accessed 18/08/2012)

⁶² See for example: Cohen and Susser (2000); Sandler (1996).

ideational vacuum increasingly filled by rising Islamist movements in the region (see also: Ajami 1992, pp.60-73). The longed for peace agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians reached by the Israeli Labor Government and Arafat's Fatah secularist nationalist movement in 1993 (i.e. the Oslo Accords) was short lived. It was promptly jettisoned with the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin by Yigal Amir, a right-wing religious Zionist, and by an intense suicide bombing campaign led by Islamist Palestinian organizations such as Hamas (formed in 1987-88). When in 2000 the second *intifada*, also known as the *Al Aqsa intifada*, broke out religious actors and issues had become entangled in the conflict more so than ever before (Nyroos 2001).

Over the past decades all across Northern Africa, the Middle East, and in parts of Central, Southern and South Eastern Asia, Islam and politics have progressively and unexpectedly mixed in multiple ways and with different intensities according to local context.⁶³ The 1979 Iranian revolution was an important turning point for secular regimes in the Middle East. A new Islamic Republic, at whose helm stood the Supreme Leader and Grand Ayatollah Khomeini, replaced the Western-backed secularizing monarchy of the Shah. Ever since 1982-85 Hezbollah has become a fixture of Lebanese politics. In 1991 the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front went on to win the first round of elections, then cancelled by a military coup that led to a bloody civil war. Around the mid-1990s, the Taliban took control of Afghanistan. In 2003 the moderate Islamist party AKP in Turkey won the elections and Recep Teyyip Erdogan became the country's first non-secularist Prime Minister. In 2006 it was Hamas' turn to gain a majority at the ballot box. By 2012 the Arab spring is sweeping Islamists at the forefront of political activity from Tunisia to Egypt.

The 1980-90s were another major turning point in the fortunes of secularizing regimes and ideologies worldwide as Soviet Communism withered. While the Pope surely had long lost its military divisions, the Catholic Church and the Solidarity movement played a pivotal role in the complex protest cycles that toppled the Communist

⁶³ The literature on political Islam has exploded over the years, for good places to start see: Ayoob (2008); Eickelman and Piscatori (2004).

regime in Poland. A protest movement that grew ever since Pope John Paul II made his first symbolic and highly political visit to Poland in 1979 (the same year of the Iranian revolution and the founding of Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority). Overall, Catholics had already become more socially and politically engaged ever since the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s – an event which some partially credit for the “third wave” of democratization that began in the 1970s (Huntington 1991, pp.76–85; Philpott 2007, pp.510-13).

In Russia, since the 1990s, a rapprochement has occurred between the Orthodox Church and the state (Lisovskaya and Karpov 2010). In the aftermath of the Soviet Union's collapse, the former-Yugoslavia imploded. Here the overarching Communist ideology and identity, which was already in disrepair in the 1980s, was then finally abandoned and local populations re-constituted around ethnic and religious lines among Orthodox Serbs, Catholic Croats, and Muslim Bosniaks. Saudi, Pakistani and Turkish Islamist movements soon filled the post-Soviet Central Asian space left empty by the collapsing empire, among others with the scope to Islamize local societies, promote sharia law and create Islamic states (Adamson 2005). China is currently experiencing a revival of Confucianism, promoted in the past decade by President Hu Jintao as a way of filling the vacuum left by withering Maoist state ideology and identity (Hu 2007). In India, Hindu nationalists have been on the rise since the 1960s, winning national elections in the 1990s with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Buddhism generally thought of as a religion of introspective withdrawal, has become increasingly engaged in social and political issues starting in the 1960s in Vietnam and then across parts of Asia from Thailand, to Myanmar, and Sri Lanka (Queen and King 1996).

Even in supposedly secularized Western Europe religion has become a more significant political issue in recent decades. This is apparent in debates about the place of Christianity in Europe's political identity – either promoted by the Catholic Church or by Right Wing populists such as Geert Wilders in Holland – and about the EU's apparent unease towards integrating “Muslim” immigrants within its borders and Turkey at its periphery (see Byrnes and Katzenstein 2006). Bastions of European Enlightenment

philosophy such as Jurgen Habermas (2006) have recognized the need to engage in a less prejudicial way with religious discourses and actors.

From an international relations and American foreign policy perspective, the attacks of September 11, 2001, were a pivotal moment. These events seemed to bring together many loosely connected trends connected with the global resurgence of religion across religions and countries. Since then, the newfound political salience of religion moved decisively beyond domestic and regional politics into the international sphere. Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda's terrorist act brought abruptly to the fore, not just the violent dimension, but also the global and globalized character of political Islam and Muslim politics (Mandaville 2005; Roy 2004). American exceptionalism and Bush's personal religious faith seemed to converge in his administration's crusading and missionary zeal to spread freedom and democracy around the world (Judis 2005; Monten 2005).

Discourses following 9/11 in the U.S. and around the Middle East increasingly acquired the religiously charged and vitriolic language of "good" versus "evil", "crusaders" versus "jihadists", "Muslims" versus "Christians". Thereafter the United Nations (UN) would declare itself committed to fostering, not only peace among nations, but also a "Dialogue Among Civilizations". Former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair has, rather surprisingly, set up an impressive Faith Foundation upon leaving 10 Downing Street in 2008 geared towards fostering interreligious understanding and dialogue.

American news channels like CNN⁶⁴ and international ones like the BBC or Al Jazeera, have all become saturated with reports and debates about religion: from the status of sectarian conflicts and religious minorities in America, the Middle East or Africa; to the attempts of communities and government to re-define the place of religion in the public sphere in places like the U.S., France or Turkey; controversies about building mosques in Switzerland or Islamic centers in New York; attacks on churches in

⁶⁴ Since the 2000s, CNN.com has a specialized blog exploring and reporting on the role of faith and religion on all sorts of facets of domestic and international life: religion.blogs.cnn.com

Nigeria, Egypt and Iraq; Buddhist monks protesting in Tibet and Myanmar; the political and often violent repercussions of Korans burned either in Florida, in Guantanamo or Kabul; and the place of Judeo-Christian, Muslim, or Confucian values in modern politics.

Compared to the high-water mark reached in the 1960s by the secular, in its multiple forms, processes and ideational constructs, the historical trends of religious revival described above all amount to a substantial shift in the domestic and international social and ideational context within which American foreign policy is formulated and executed. Investigating and explaining how the developments associated with the resurgence of religion have contributed to changing, and in particular to progressively desecularize, American foreign policy is the main scope of the following empirical chapters. The next and final section of this chapter is dedicated to defining and providing a conceptual framework to explore processes of foreign policy desecularization.

Desecularization in Foreign Policy: A Conceptual Framework

The global resurgence of religion over the past decades, most vividly manifesting itself in international politics following 9/11, has not only led scholars to revisit their secular theories and biases within the social sciences. It also brought to the fore in Washington D.C., particularly since the end of the Cold War, a wide variety of actors that have sought to challenge the secular consensus and *status quo* underpinning much of American foreign policy-making processes and practices. This challenge is so profound that, this thesis argues, American foreign policy has been subject to important desecularizing pressures and processes. This section conceptually defines and analytically unpacks the concept of desecularization. Building and expanding upon the work of Peter Berger and Vyacheslav Karpov, it applies this concept to issues of foreign policy, in general, and American foreign policy, in particular.

Defining Desecularization

Peter Berger was the first to use and coin the term “desecularization”. Berger’s intent was more descriptive rather than to develop a clear framework to study and theorize processes that ran counter and against secularizing trends and forces, as the term desecularization suggests. When speaking about desecularization Berger sought chiefly to capture the idea that religions were going through a period of revival across the world and that this process was severely undermining a whole body of literature loosely labeled as “secularization theory” (Berger 1999, p.2).

As Christopher Marsh succinctly notes: “it is more the persistence of religion that he [Berger] is highlighting, not so much the religicization (*sic.*) of a secularized world, which the term seems to imply” (2011, p.11). Likewise Karpov points out that Berger’s desecularization thesis in 1999 “focused more on the nature and social origins of resurgent religions than on their societal impact” (2010, p.238). Clearly the two phenomena of religious resurgence and desecularization are linked, if not even mutually reinforcing in many respects, yet they should be kept analytically distinct. The former relates more generally to the multiple causes, manifestations and effects of religion’s expanding influence on politics and societies. The latter instead concentrates more specifically on a particular type of social change: when, why and how boundaries between “the secular” and “the religious” shift and change, especially in favour of the latter rather than the former.

Karpov has advanced a conceptual framework that analytically defines and operationalizes the concept of desecularization. For Karpov desecularization is a “process of counter-secularization, through which religion reasserts its societal influence in reaction to previous and/or co-occurring secularizing processes” (2010, p.250). In this definition desecularization is not just another way to describe the resurgence of religion, but entails a clear process whereby there is a pushback and reaction against secularizing trends and secular forces.

Taking different concepts of secularization, Karpov conceptualizes desecularization as the symmetrical opposite of these processes. He outlines five distinct processes of counter-secularization, all of which are quite generic and mostly applicable to social phenomena that do not relate directly to foreign policy. He identifies and distinguishes between the following cases of desecularization: a) a rapprochement between formerly secularized institutions and religious norms; b) a resurgence of religious beliefs and practices; c) a return of religion to the public sphere; d) a revival of religious content in culture and science; e) religion-related changes in society's substratum (including religiously inspired demographic changes, redefinition of territories and their populations along religious lines, reappearance of faith-related material structures, etc.) (2010, p.250).

This is a good starting point, but one that has a number of limitations for the purposes of my research. First, Karpov focuses nearly exclusively on processes of counter-secularizations as in the case of (a), (b) and (c), but does not unpack as clearly instances of counter-secularisms, which are somewhat folded in his definition of desecularization as (d). My earlier discussion about the secular emphasized that attention to secularization/s, as historical process/es, should be complemented by an equal attention to secularism/s, as ideational construct/s, a distinction that is less explicit in Karpov's work. I suggest that the concept of desecularization be enlarged to include broader phenomena of contestation of the secularist status quo. That is a contestation of the contours, practices, assumptions and norms associated with secularist ideational constructs. Desecularization in this expanded sense becomes a phenomenon by which secularist epistemic knowledge, ideologies and state-norms are not only exposed and questioned but their influence and power is eroded. I hence expand upon Karpov's definition of desecularization as (d) to include a more explicit reference to the constituent processes that relate to three counter-secularist phenomena.

Second, Karpov's framework is a broad and general take on desecularization which encompasses multiple levels and units-of-analysis from individuals, to religious communities, domestic societies, state institutions, and ultimately even civilizations

(2010, pp.259-62). My concern though is more specific, namely with a state's foreign policy practices and policy-making structures. As such I will go through Karpov's five component processes of desecularization, unpacking whether and how they may or may not relate to issues of foreign policy – with a particular focus on American foreign policy.

Desecularization and Foreign Policy

Taking the notion of secularization as functional differentiation, Karpov argues that desecularization happens when there is a rapprochement and growing entanglement between secular spheres and religious norms and institutions (a). Given that this component process of desecularization largely identifies the shifting and increasingly overlapping boundaries between state institutions and policies, and religious norms and actors, it has great import here. Especially in terms of investigating how religious norms and actors become ever more entangled with a state's foreign policy practices, and policy-making institutions and processes. Karpov then identifies desecularization with both a resurgence of religious beliefs and practices (b), and a return of religion to the public sphere (c) both as a reaction to previous processes of secularization. Since my object of analysis is the state and changes to its foreign policies and institutions, it is difficult to include processes (b) and (c) which largely focus on the individual and non-state level of analysis. As such they will not be included in this and following analysis.

Karpov's concept of desecularization as (d) builds upon the idea of secularization as affecting the type of ideas and knowledge which are produced in the social world in terms of a "revival of religious content in a variety of culture's subsystems, including the arts, philosophy, and literature, and in a decline of the standing of science relative to a resurgent role of religion". In other words, what he is indirectly suggesting is that desecularization is also a process by which secularist ideational constructs are challenged and lose their uncontested power over different forms of knowledge and norms. Building on the classification of secularism proposed earlier it is possible to identify processes of epistemic, ideological and state-normative desecularization.

When it comes to foreign policy, epistemic desecularization means that (conscious or unconscious) secularist worldviews of policy-makers and the secularist culture of institutions with international functions are eroded. Policy-makers and institutions stop viewing international politics as if religion was irrelevant and simply epiphenomenal. In its mild forms epistemic desecularization leads to treating religious actors and factors as serious and important issues in world politics and foreign policy. Hence data is collected, research conducted, knowledge produced and content disseminated on a wide variety of issues linked to religion. In deeper forms of epistemic desecularization, religion becomes perceived as the primarily constitutive element of actors' (whether individuals, organizations or states) identities, and social and political behaviour, to the point that religious actors and identities become reified as spokespersons and representative for entire countries and people. Epistemic desecularization, for example, may shift how policy-makers see the international environment, the way foreign policy is conducted on a day-to-day basis, and the content and form of policy initiatives.

Ideological secularism views the mixing of religion and politics as problematic, either as a source of conflict, an impediment to development and progress, as a recipe for intolerance, and so on. Hence ideological desecularization erodes the notion among policy-makers that religion is "the problem" and instead creates an awareness of religion as "the solution" to the issue at hand. This is reflected in foreign policies that are not reluctant to engage with religious actors and issues. They are instead purposively designed, to a greater or lesser extent, to either utilize religious and religious-related actors or moulded around religious norms in order to produce hoped-for outcomes, such as resolving conflicts, fighting terrorism, reducing poverty, eradicating HIV/AIDS, and so on.

Finally, processes of desecularization of state-normative secularism revolve around the reinterpretation, and in the most extreme cases redrafting, of norms of church and state separation in less stringent and separationist ways. In the case of the United States, the opening lines of the Constitution's First Amendment address the issue of

church-state entanglement by stating that: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”. Both the “Establishment Clause” and the “Free Exercise Clause” are generally thought of as operating not only to protect the State from religious interference, but also the religious liberty and freedom of conscience of Americans from state interference. Quoting Thomas Jefferson, the Supreme Court stated in the 1947 landmark decision *Everson v. Board of Education* that the Establishment Clause was intended to erect a “wall of separation” between church and state.

How thick and impermeable or thin and porous this “wall” is, depends very much on the extent to which the Establishment Clause is interpreted across time. During heightened periods of secularization and when secularist ideologies are powerful it is likely that a strict *separationist* interpretation of the establishment clause dominates the Supreme Court as well as among foreign policy-makers (i.e. the wall is a firewall). In periods of religious resurgence or when epistemic and ideological secularisms are vibrantly contested the expectation is that the clause is interpreted in more *accommodationist* terms (i.e. the wall is more like a porous net).⁶⁵

Overall, foreign policy desecularization, especially in the case of American foreign policy-making and implementation, is expected to manifest itself as a combination of some, or all, the following component processes.⁶⁶

In terms of counter-secularization:

⁶⁵ The terminology used here of “separationism” and “accommodationism” when it comes to interpretations of the Establishment Clause, is taken from Christian Smith (2003). According to Smith a strict separationist interpretation generally “privileges the secular over the religious by excluding religion from whole spheres of public life” (2003, p.ix). Accommodationist interpretations instead are those who want the “state to advantage one or all religions in public life because of the benefits for democracy and civic life that religion is said to provide” (2003, p.ix). Among accommodationist there are exclusivists and pluralists: the former tend to privilege one religion over others, the latter tend to privilege all religions over non-religion.

⁶⁶ Karpov identifies a further process of secularization and counter-secularization. This deals with declining and resurging religious influences on society’s material substratum such as religiously inspired demographic changes, the redefinition of territories and their populations along religious lines, reappearance of faith-related material structures such as buildings, and so on. This is a process less immediately applicable to foreign policy and hence will be overlooked here.

- a) A rapprochement and/or growing entanglement between religious and religious-related norms and concerns with a state's foreign policy, which can lead to the development of short- and long-term policy frameworks and practices with a religious content;
- b) A rapprochement and/or growing entanglement between religious and religious-related actors and the state, whereby the former are increasingly engaged and systematically called upon to deliver foreign policy objectives;
- c) A rapprochement and/or growing entanglement between religious and religious-related norms and concerns with a state's policy-making process. This can lead to the short- and long-term creation of new institutions, departments, offices and positions outside or within existing bureaucracies to accommodate and manage foreign policies with a religious content;
- d) A rapprochement and/or growing entanglement between religious and religious-related actors and the state, whereby the former are increasingly and systematically included in and gain influence over the foreign policy-making process;

In terms of counter-secularism:

- e) A loosening grip of secularist epistemic knowledge over policy-makers worldviews and institutional culture. As a result religious dynamics and factors are no longer ignored, but taken seriously if not even, in the most extreme cases, considered as the principal force animating specific international events. This affects and shapes the kind of knowledge that is produced, policies that are implemented, and actors engaged.
- f) A loosening grip of ideological secularism over policy-makers worldviews and institutional culture. As a result religious dynamics and factors are no longer considered solely as a source of problems (antithetic to peace, security, development, growth, prosperity, wellbeing, etc), but also as part of the solution to a wide range of issues. This affects and shapes the kind of knowledge that is produced, policies that are implemented, and actors engaged.

- g) The reinterpretation, informally by policy-makers and more formally by Supreme Court judges, of previously strict secularist state-norms of church and state separation towards a more accommodationist view. One that allows for a closer entanglement between church and state, and support by the state to religious actors and norms.

It is important to emphasize that these processes of desecularization are not necessarily correlated. They may actually be weakly integrated, if at all. Casanova keeps the processes of secularization (as secular differentiation, privatization of religion, and religious decline) analytically distinguished in order to capture diverse historical patterns and on-going processes. The same applies for counter-secularizing processes. Karpov explains the un-integrated nature of desecularization as follows: “counter-secularization’s component changes may develop incongruently, be differently paced, and coexist with secularizing trends” (2010, p.248).

As such, processes of desecularization as rapprochement of religious and secular institutions may be occurring in one area of foreign policy (say foreign aid assistance) while not occurring in others (for example in economic statecraft). A surge in politically expedient religious rhetoric by presidents does not necessarily imply a weakening of secularist epistemic knowledge among foreign policy-makers and within institutions. Even if a rapprochement between secular and religious institutions may be occurring at a particular place in time, if there is not an equal weakening of secularist state-norms towards a more accommodationist position, for example, this rapprochement may be short lived and soon declared unconstitutional and rolled back. This means that generally desecularization should be talked about in the plural, i.e. desecularizations or processes of desecularization, rather than in the singular.

Desecularizing Actors: A Taxonomy

As outlined in the previous theoretical chapter, proposing a Historical Sociological (HS) approach to Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), one cannot presume that macro social and

cultural trends across time and space, themselves cause processes of foreign policy change. Hence, in order to understand and explain how the global resurgence of religion can lead to changes in American foreign policies and decision-making structures, it is essential to look at the role of agency. It becomes vital then to explore the identities and perceptions, and how these inform the actions, of individual and group actors who by virtue of being embedded in, or responding to, the macro-process of religious resurgence, mobilize to change the secular *status quo* in the foreign policy domain.

A HS approach to FPA hence requires a focus on agency to explain foreign policy change, something which is perfectly compatible with Karpov's suggestion that:

"...students of desecularization need to embrace the agency-focused perspective. This involves a view of counter-secularization as the work of "*desecularizing activists*," and, more broadly, specific social actors with specific interests, ideologies, and levels of access to resources [emphasis in the original]." (2010, p.252)

Depending on the social actors involved, desecularization of social institutions and culture, according to Karpov, can be initiated and carried out "from below" and/or "from above." He explains:

"When the activists and actors involved are grassroots-level movements and groups representing the masses of religious adherents, we are dealing with a desecularization "from below." When the activists and actors largely include religious and secular leadership, a desecularization "from above" is taking place." (2010, p.254)

Karpov's discussion here is somewhat confusing and limiting. Confusing because it is not clear what the real difference and analytical import of having a distinction between desecularizing actors, as passive supporters, and activists, as active implementers, of desecularization is. Why not focus specifically on the latter for example? Furthermore, can we really call secular leadership "activists", a terminology that captures grass-roots mobilization well, but less so agency at the elite political level. Do "religious

leaders” necessarily desecularize from above? Are not they supposed to be representing the “masses of religious adherents”? Maybe there is a great distance between religious leadership and masses, but this may not always be the case. Indeed, while Karpov may have in mind mainly Russia here (see Lisovskaya and Karpov 2010), in the United States for instance religious leaders are more likely to be desecularizing “from below” or at best “from the side”.

Here is also where Karpov’s distinction from below and above is limiting. Indeed I argue desecularization may as well happen “sideways” by denominational leaders, policy experts and scholars who are neither representing grass-roots movements, nor part and parcel of political elites, but who still may have access from times to time to the highest levels of government and policy-making.

Starting from Karpov’s insights I propose to use the term desecularizing actors as a more general category encapsulating an expanded and more specific taxonomy of agents. By desecularizing actors I intend to capture a great variety of individuals – religious, religious-related and even secular, in or outside government, operating either on their own or as members and spokespersons for broader organizations, movements or groups – and organizations – religious, religious-affiliated, and even secular (as in the case of some think tanks). These individual and organizational actors believe and perceive, or come to believe and perceive, for a variety of reasons that American foreign policy-making and implementation are too secular, that is too secularized and/or too secularist. They mobilize – from below, side and above – for the adoption of inherently religious policies and to promote desecularizing changes in the institutional and cultural structures of American foreign policy-making.

I will now be more explicit about my taxonomy of desecularizing actors, which includes: activists, policy elites and political elites. First, there are *desecularizing activists*. These are religious and religious-related individuals – clerics, laypeople, religiously affiliated or unaffiliated campaigners and lobbyists – and organizations – faith-based organizations, church and denominational organizations, domestic or international

religious NGOs, and faith-based lobbies and advocacy networks. They are organized at the domestic or transnational civil society level and actively and directly lobby to include inherently religious concerns in American foreign policy. A religious leader, or faith-based organization, or religious advocacy group *is* or *becomes* a desecularizing activist when, and only when, they advocate for inherently religious foreign policies, such as international religious freedom or faith-based initiatives. Not when they mobilize, motivated by their religious beliefs, for international policies with secular goals, such as support for Israel, promoting democracy, fighting climate change, and so on. In this latter case, activists are simply religious advocates and not desecularizing actors.

Desecularizing activists are similar to Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink's (1998) "norm entrepreneurs", but of a religious kind. Their intent is to promote, instead of secular liberal policies and norms, a bundle of inherently religious policies and norms, like attention to religious persecution and freedom, faith-based development, and abstinence only HIV/AIDS programs. Desecularizing activists are linked to the expansion of religious advocacy that has occurred in both American domestic politics and transnationally since the 1970s. In other words, desecularizing activists are not free floating agents but embedded in, sustaining and reproducing, the processes and structures of global religious resurgence. Activists, since they are organized at the civil society level, promote foreign policy desecularization "from below". When and if activists are successful in their desecularizing efforts, they may be called upon to participate in making and implementing policies.

A second category of desecularizing actors is members of what can be loosely defined as the policy elite. Part and parcel of this *desecularizing policy elite* are individuals and organizations that make up the American foreign policy establishment. These are the pundits, academics, scholars, and policy-makers working for research institutes, think tanks and universities in Washington, or with close connections to Washington and the government. In a sense they make up what Emanuel Adler and Peter Haas (1992) have called "epistemic communities". Desecularizing policy elites have a recognized knowledge and expertise in a particular issue area, which they use to frame

international issues through religious lenses or in religious terms and persuade decision-makers “from the side”, rather than “from below”, to adopt policies with a particular religious content. These pundits, scholars, advisors, and policy-makers are not elected officials and do not take part in Washington’s active political life, although they can be, and often are appointed, to specific policy-making positions within bureaucracies.⁶⁷

Members of the policy establishment can be divided in two kinds of desecularizers: *principled* and *strategic*. *Principled desecularizing policy elites* are “principled” by virtue of either acting out of deep religious convictions or in support of particular religious causes. They may be espousing similar religious-related norms and policies advocated by desecularizing activists. For example in the case of religious freedom there are grass-roots activist organizations as well as pundits and scholars that advocate American action on behalf of these norms internationally. In this sense, principled desecularizing policy elites are embedded and part and parcel of the process of religious resurgence.

Strategic desecularizing policy elites are “strategic”, instead, because they perceive and believe that in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 world, religious actors, identities, discourses and practices have become more salient to international affairs, and to America’s national interest. They are not “principled” because they do not necessarily seek to desecularize American foreign policy according to deeply felt religious beliefs and or in support of particular religious convictions. Hence, strategic policy elites tend not to be directly embedded in the social process of religious resurgence. They are, however, responding to the emerging structures of politicized religion (for example the rise of political Islam) and religionized politics (such as identity conflicts) beyond America’s shores. They conclude that an overly secularized foreign policy misses this new religious and cultural dimension of world affairs at America’s own expense, if not peril. As a result strategic desecularizing policy elites advocate for a retooling of the

⁶⁷ Karpov does recognize a specific role for “counter-secularizing intellectual vanguards” taking an active part along with “activist groups” in processes of secularization and counter-secularization (2010, p.253). Yet he does not fully tease out and specify, as instead is done here, this group as a distinct category of desecularizing actors.

secular premises on which American foreign policy rests so that it starts taking seriously, and acting upon, this new religiously fervent international reality.

The third broad category of desecularizing actors is *desecularizing political elites*. I am referring here to presidents, as well as members of Congress, who out of their own initiative, or in response to successful lobbying pressures by activists, or persuaded by scholars, pundits and members of the policy establishment, take an active and crucial role in allowing or promoting counter-secularizing and counter-secularist changes. Whether political leaders decide to do so out of “principled” sincerely felt beliefs, or “strategic” political expediency or national security imperatives, is probably ultimately unknowable. The issue though is that without a level of political elite consent or initiative “from above”, new inherently religious foreign policies that revert the secular *status quo* would hardly come into existence.

Conclusion

When it comes to the salience of religious forces and factors to domestic and international politics, the context within which American foreign policy is formulated and conducted has dramatically changed over the past 40 years. What appeared for most part of the 20th century as, and in many senses was, a secular or at least relentlessly secularizing world, over the past decades has instead gone through a worldwide process of religious resurgence. In response to these changing conditions IR scholars have started to revise their secular theories to include religion. Global processes of religious resurgence are imposing similar pressures on the secular practices, institutions, and norms that for the most part structure American foreign policy-making process and its execution.

The following chapters will trace how, to what extent, and when a variety of desecularizing actors embedded within, or responding to, macro-processes of religious

resurgence have emerged to successfully renegotiate the boundaries between the secular and the religious in three broad foreign policy areas diplomacy and statecraft (Chapter 4), foreign assistance (Chapter 5), and national security (Chapter 6). Before doing so, however, the next chapter takes a closer look at cultural and institutional changes occurring within the largely secular foreign policy establishment in Washington D.C. It explores how the very same elite institutions and organizations – the universities which churn out graduates that end up staffing foreign policy positions, the think tanks which influence so much of the discourse and thinking in Washington – have gone through their own process of desecularization over the past decades.

3. THE AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY ESTABLISHMENT: EXPLORING THE NEXUS BETWEEN RELIGION AND WORLD POLITICS

With the end of the Cold War gone were the old debates in Washington D.C. about the Soviet threat, containment, balance of power, and mutually assured destruction. The American foreign policy establishment was left in search of new paradigms and perspectives that would help interpret and explain the world ahead. One was of course Francis Fukuyama's (1992) optimist account of the "end of history" and the emergence of a peaceful and prosperous era driven by the triumph of economic and political liberalism. Another was Samuel Huntington's famous "clash of civilizations" thesis (1993), which from the influential pages of *Foreign Affairs*, the leading journal among American foreign policy elites, offered a rather different vision of world politics.

Huntington's reference to civilizations, which he largely defined around religious identity and history, did much more for policy debates than just offer an alternative narrative to liberal cosmopolitan optimism. At a time when the former-Yugoslavia was imploding along ethnic-religious lines and Islamist movements were spreading across the Middle East, it abruptly brought center-stage within the halls of American punditry two sets of distinct, but interrelated, discussions about the role of "religion" in international affairs. On the one hand, Huntington indirectly shed attention to the vastly unexplored and seemingly ever-growing relevance of cultural and religious forces in international politics. On the other hand, his thesis cast a long shadow over the place of "Islam" in international politics, in general, and to American security, in particular.

This chapter maps to a great extent these two broad sets of debates – about the role of "religion" and about the place of "Islam" in international affairs – which have progressively become a pervasive topic of research and discussion within the American

foreign policy establishment. I define the American foreign policy establishment as those individuals – scholars, pundits, out of office policy-makers – and institutions – universities, think tanks, research and polling institutes – which form the intellectual milieu within which international relations issues and policies are analyzed and debated in and outside Washington D.C.

The following section explores how the foreign policy establishment has progressively come to see international religious dynamics and religious-related issues like, among others, religious conflicts, persecution, peacemaking, and freedom as a constituent part of what international relations in a post-Cold War are about. It traces how “religion”, in a broad and general sense, from being largely ignored during the Cold War has become an ever more pressing interest and concern of the American foreign policy establishment. The second part is closely related to the first. But rather than looking at religion, it maps out instead how the religious categories of “Islam” and the “Muslim world” have relentlessly entered the everyday lexicon of scholarly and policy elites and shaped the research programs of numerous institutions and think tanks.

The chapter contextualizes a number of changes in the institutional arrangements and intellectual climate of key international affairs think tanks and universities in relation to the global process of resurgence and historical events such as the end of the Cold War and 9/11. In particular it investigates desecularizing processes among foreign policy elites and within their institutions. It maps out counter-secularizing and counter-secularist trends and seeks to explain why they occurred when they did.

In terms of counter-secularization: it highlights, on the one hand, the institutional changes such as the emergence of previously inexistent new centers, research programs, initiatives, dedicated to the study of “religion” or “Islam” in world politics. On the other hand, it maps out the growing practice among elite research institutes of including and engaging domestic and foreign religious actors in research programs and events. In terms of counter-secularism: it explores the progressive erosion of strict secularist understandings of international relations, in terms of believing that religious issues where

either overwhelmingly unimportant or singularly problematic in world politics,⁶⁸ which largely permeated the foreign policy establishment's intellectual climate during the Cold War. It traces how, since the 1990s onward, these elites are increasingly enquiring into, if not even reifying, the international political salience of "religion"⁶⁹ and "Islam".⁷⁰ Along with mapping developments in institutions, research programs and university courses, I infer causation by tracing and exploring discourses within the foreign policy establishment that explain these changes in light of processes of religious resurgence.

Religion, Religious Resurgence, and the Foreign Policy Establishment

Before and During the 1990s

Around the time Huntington developed his thesis, Douglas Johnston was working on the "Religion and Conflict Resolution Project" at the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS). The project, which according to Johnston, was at the time "a complete novelty for a think tank devoted to hardnosed strategic issues and known for its realist Cold War mentality" (2011b, author's interview), culminated in the 1994 co-edited volume with Cynthia Sampson *Religion: the Missing Dimension of Statecraft*. The

⁶⁸ I am here referring mainly to what I call epistemic and ideological secularism permeating the intellectual landscape. I am not talking about state-normative secularism since I am not looking in this chapter at state institutions and practices.

⁶⁹ Considerable generalisation is involved in using the term "religion", hence the use of quotation marks at this point, which will be later omitted. Foreign policy establishment actors use the term "religion" in a number of ways. The word is often used either as an abstract analytical category which identifies religious-beliefs, identities, traditions, institutions and actors; or in the sense of a set of forces which relate to socio-political dynamics such as religious- conflicts, violence, persecution, democratization, resurgence, and so on. My scope here is not to define, say, what a "religious belief" or a "religious conflict" actually is as opposed to the ways in which these terms are adopted by the foreign policy establishment. My intent is to explore how the notion of, say, "religious conflict" becomes increasingly a meaningful, uncontested, and accepted category of analysis in Washington structuring the type of debates and research which is conducted.

⁷⁰ Once again, like the case of religion, considerable generalisation is involved in using the terms "Islam" and "Muslim world". Hence the use of quotation marks at this point, which will be omitted in what follows. I adopt this terminology, without however necessarily endorsing it, but just because it is what increasingly comes to be used by foreign policy elites – whose debates I hereby trace.

volume, produced under the auspices of a major Washington think tank, was among the first scholarly research and policy-oriented books to directly address the nexus between religion and American foreign policy.

Johnston, linking the publication of the volume to processes of worldwide religious resurgence, recalls the impetus behind the research project as follows:

“I had thought about such a book back in 1982. By 1987 when I was executive Vice President of CSIS I was able to start turning my ideas into reality. During the Cold War security environment, however, it was very difficult to think about religion and politics and we could find scarce funding for the project. But after 1989 – with Communism crumbling, having seen the role of the Polish Pope and Walesa in the process, and ethnic conflicts blossoming everywhere – five foundations came forward and we were able to move ahead.” (2011b, author’s interview)

While Huntington brought indirect attention to religion, Johnston and Sampson’s intent was to push for an explicit intellectual paradigm shift by exposing both the epistemic and ideological secularist bias of the foreign policy and diplomatic establishment. Articles throughout the volume complained that in a world increasingly abuzz with religious fervor, the intellectual traditions and statecraft practices American diplomats and policy-makers were steeped in were stubbornly secularist. American statecraft suffered from an “enlightenment prejudice” some suggested (Luttwak 1994, p.9), or “dogmatic secularism” others lamented (Burnett 1994, p.286). This secularist bias, the book argued, was problematic for two reasons. First it led scholars, policymakers and diplomats to discount the growing salience of religion in international affairs. Secondly if religion was to be brought back into the study and praxis of international diplomacy, it should not be seen solely as a cause of conflicts, but also as a way to foster nonviolent change, and preventing or resolving conflicts. While the book was groundbreaking and received positive reviews, among others, by Francis Fukuyama

on the pages of *Foreign Affairs*,⁷¹ it remained however largely a lonely voice in an overwhelmingly secularized intellectual panorama.

In the same decade, some started to notice the growing impact that religiously based advocacy groups, especially conservative evangelical ones, were having on American foreign policy. This was a time, as the previous chapter highlighted, of growing activism by domestic faith-based organizations and movements on international issues. This revolved, among others, around concerns for alleged religious persecution of Christians in the Middle East and remaining Communist countries (more on this in Chapter 4), as well as worldwide poverty and development (more on this in Chapter 5). A work that aptly captured these changes was the edited volume *The Influence of Faith: Religious Groups and US Foreign Policy* by Elliott Abrams (2001).

Abrams, a prominent neoconservative pundit and policymaker, was at the time of preparing the volume in the late 1990s president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center (EPPC)⁷² and a member of the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF).⁷³ The volume was the first of its kind that extensively explored the role of faith-based groups such as missionary and relief organizations in the formulation and implementation of U.S. policy. It featured essays by scholars interested in religion and politics like Samuel Huntington and Allen Hertzke, as well as Andrew Natsios, a top-level director within the faith-based NGO community.⁷⁴ Elliot Abrams, explaining the intellectual environment giving birth to the project, argues:

⁷¹ See: www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/49927/francis-fukuyama/religion-the-missing-dimension-of-statecraft (accessed 17/08/2012)

⁷² EPPC was established, according to its website, in 1976 to “clarify and reinforce the bond between the Judeo-Christian moral tradition and the public debate over domestic and foreign policy issues”. The EPPC is largely inter-religious think tank bringing together conservative Catholic, Evangelical and Jewish intellectuals and pundits that straddles between secular and religious research. For more information see: www.eppc.org/about/ (accessed 17/08/2012)

⁷³ Abrams is, at the time of writing (Summer 2012), a Senior Fellow for Middle Eastern Studies at CFR. He also served as deputy assistant to the president and deputy national security adviser in the administrations of President G. W. Bush, where he supervised U.S. policy, particularly democracy promotion, in the Middle East (more on this in Chapter 6).

⁷⁴ Natsios was later appointed by G.W. Bush as director of USAID (more on this in Chapter 5).

“Some of us had read Peter Berger’s re-canting of the secularization theory in 1990s. What hit us the most was his claim that intellectual elites had become uniquely secularized and did not understand that the world around them continued to be, if not was becoming even more, religious. We felt that his arguments gave intellectual legitimacy to exploring issues related to religion in foreign affairs.” (2010, author’s interview)⁷⁵

At Freedom House, a prominent research and advocacy institute for the promotion of democracy and human rights internationally, a group of researchers and scholars were focusing increasingly on issues of religious freedom. Nina Shea, driven partly by her Christian faith, funded and directed the Center for Religious Freedom in the late 1980s. She, along with Paul Marshall, have been at the forefront among American policy elites in advocating a closer attention by the U.S. government not only to the whole gamut of secular human rights, but also to international religious persecution and freedom (more on this in Chapter 4).

With some exceptions, few established think tanks during the 1990s were paying serious and sustained attention to the nexus between religion and foreign policy. The Council on Foreign Affairs (CFR), America’s leading think tank on international affairs, was instrumental in kicking-off the debate from the pages of its widely read journal *Foreign Affairs*. Aside from Huntington’s article, however, there was little systematic scrutiny of the role of religion internationally. The Brookings Institute, one of Washington’s major think tanks, started to focus from the second half of the 1990s on domestic religious issues and how these intersected with American politics. There was yet little interest on foreign policy. CSIS did have a rather path-breaking project on religion and conflict, but this closed down once Doug Johnston left the organization in the mid-1990s.

⁷⁵ Indeed Peter Berger’s edited volume *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (1999), was sponsored by the EPPC itself.

Although leaving CSIS, Johnston went on to found in 1999 the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD). This was an important turning point for the deeply secularized foreign policy institutional and intellectual landscape of Washington. ICRD was mainly created to practice what Johnston had preached in his edited volume *The Missing Dimension*. That is: “prevent and resolve identity-based conflicts that exceed the reach of traditional diplomacy by incorporating religion as part of the solution”.⁷⁶ ICRD started to work on ‘track-two’ faith-based diplomacy in the context of the Sudanese civil war between the North and the South – which faith-based actors, like Johnston, tended to see in great part as a religious conflict between northern Muslims and southern Christians. Since then Johnston and ICRD have been at the forefront of debates about the necessity to mainstream religion and integrate faith-based approaches within American statecraft and diplomatic practices.

International relations courses and foreign affairs programs at major universities were equally deeply secularized during this time. Courses in places like Harvard as well as Georgetown, which churn out the graduates staffing Washington’s internationally-focused think tanks and bureaucracies, paid scarce attention to religion. As Madeleine Albright recalls about her time at Georgetown:

“In the early 1980s, I became a professor at Georgetown University. My specialty was foreign policy, about which such icons as Hans Morgenthau, George Kennan, and Dean Acheson theorized almost exclusively in secular terms.” (2006, p.8)

Boston University was somewhat of an exception. Here Peter Berger was directing The Institute on Culture, Religion, and World Affairs (CURA) since 1985. Largely interdisciplinary – with a particular focus on sociology and anthropology, rather than political science and IR – the center nevertheless produced research that had resonance among policy circles in Washington (as Elliott Abram’s quote above suggests). Peter Berger himself cultivated in the 1990s relationships with the neoconservative think

⁷⁶ See: <http://icrd.org/> (accessed 17/08/2012)

tank American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and prominent conservative Christian public intellectuals, such as Michael Novak and Richard John Neuhaus.

Overall, with the end of the Cold War, clearly something was changing among the foreign policy establishment. The 1990s saw an initial, albeit even if sporadic and unorganized, interest in religious actors and factors when it came to U.S. foreign policy. This reflected a changing domestic and international environment where according to scholars with a policy audience like Huntington and Berger, and pundits like Johnston and Abrams, the salience of religion appeared on the rise. This was evident from an emerging number of initiatives, articles and books paying attention to the nexus between religion and international affairs. A new religious-based “think and do tank”, ICRD, was created with the explicit scope of using religious resources to promote peace and reconciliation while also persuading American diplomats to employ similar faith-based techniques. Then came the election of an avowedly and publicly religious President such as G.W. Bush in 2000, and the tragic events of 9/11.

Following 9/11

The highly publicly religious Bush presidency, Al Qaeda’s use and abuse of Islam to explain and justify its terrorist attacks in 2001, and the religiously charged discourses that surrounded international politics thereafter, had a dramatic effect on the foreign policy establishment’s largely secularized perceptions of foreign affairs. Desecularizing changes – both in terms of a rapprochement between secularized institutions and religious actors and norms, as well as a weakening of secularist epistemic and ideological assumptions – became ever more discernible within the policy intellectual and institutional landscape from the 2000s onwards.

Think tanks and university courses that had long ignored or just sporadically explored how domestic and international religious forces affected American foreign policy, started to pay more systematic attention to the phenomenon. That the intellectual mood among policy elites was changing, was evident from Madeleine Albright’s (2006)

autobiographical reflections on how the “Mighty and the Almighty” were surprisingly relevant to international relations and America’s security at the dawn of the 21st century.

CFR has embraced and partly led this counter-secularizing trend within the policy community. From 2003 to 2006 it launched a “Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy Project” lead by Walter Russell Mead, a historian and scholar of American foreign policy, and Timothy Samuel Shah. The project was designed to address “one of the most important challenges facing U.S. foreign policy in the 21st century: the growing importance of religion in world politics.”⁷⁷ During this period CFR became active in engaging the evangelical community and its leaders, such as Richard Land, of the Southern Baptist Convention, and Rick Warren pastor of Saddleback Church on international issues.⁷⁸ Mead’s article *God’s Country?*, which appeared in 2006 on the pages of *Foreign Affairs* charting the growth and influence of Evangelicals in American foreign policy, grew out of these initiatives.

That same year, in 2006, CFR established a full “Religion and Foreign Policy Initiative”. Its stated scope was, and still is, to provide a much more structured “forum to deepen the understanding of issues at the nexus of religion and U.S. foreign policy”.⁷⁹ The initiative does so by connecting with, and serving as a resource for, religious and congregational leaders, scholars, and thinkers on religion “whose voices are increasingly important to the national foreign policy debate”.⁸⁰ Irina Faskianos, CFR Vice President for National Program & Outreach and coordinator of the initiative, recalls CFR’s thinking at the time of the launch as follows:

“Richard Haass [President of CFR] took the lead because we realized that there were more religious voices in foreign policy debates than ever before. Hence as part of the Council’s efforts to engage “non-traditional” elites in

⁷⁷ www.cfr.org/projects/religion-and-politics/religion-and-us-foreign-policy-project/pr421 (accessed 17/08/2012)

⁷⁸ See the following links: www.cfr.org/projects/world/evangelicals-and-foreign-policy-roundtable/pr1287; and www.cfr.org/religion-and-politics/christian-evangelicals-us-foreign-policy/p11341 (accessed 17/08/2012)

⁷⁹ www.cfr.org/about/outreach/religioninitiative/mission.html (accessed 17/08/2012)

⁸⁰ *ibid.*

its programs and projects we sought to open up the discussion and reach out to religious leaders.” (2011, author’s interview)

In terms of connecting religious groups to the foreign policy community the initiative organizes an annual “CFR Religion and Foreign Policy Summer Workshop” that brings religious leaders from across the US to the Council’s headquarters in New York to discuss international issues such as: Darfur, conflict in the Middle East, democracy and the promotion of religious freedom, the Arab Spring, and religious demography trends around the world. In terms of providing content the initiative has a dedicated website that collects articles, books and analysis which either have a religious slant or may be of interest to the religious and scholarly community.⁸¹ It sends out to “more than 15,000 and growing subscribers” (Faskianos 2011, author’s interview), a “Religion and Foreign Policy Bulletin” highlighting CFR resources of interest to the religious community. Most importantly it hosts a “Religion and Foreign Policy Conference Call Series” where a prominent scholar or religious leader discusses with other religious and congregational leaders, scholars, and thinkers key global issues of interest.

Podcasts of these audio conferences are posted online,⁸² with topics ranging from: Middle Eastern experts discussing sectarian divides and religious minorities in Middle Eastern countries, Scott Thomas debating the global resurgence of religion; Walter Russell Mead or Robert Putnam looking at religion in American politics; American Orthodox church leaders explaining the relationship between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Kremlin; conversations about international religious freedoms led by key religious advocates; Sudanese religious leaders discussing conflict in Sudan; to debates about inter-religious conflicts and dialogues.

A “Religious Advisory Committee” provides guidance for all aspects of the initiative. Along with boasting the presence of Madeleine Albright, it includes a great

⁸¹ www.cfr.org/about/outreach/religioninitiative/index.html (accessed 17/08/2012)

⁸² www.cfr.org/about/outreach/religioninitiative/audio.html (accessed 17/08/2012)

number of prominent religious and congregational leaders and scholars from across the United States.⁸³ It comprises well-known scholars and pundits on religion such as: Peter Berger, Boston University; Father Bryan Hehir, Harvard University; Luis Lugo, Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life; Scott Appleby, at Joan B. Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies at Notre Dame; Reza Aslan, University of California Riverside; Mark Noll, University of Notre Dame; and Paul Marshall, Hudson Institute. Among the religious leaders and activists it counts: Richard Land, Southern Baptist Convention; Eboo Patel, Interfaith Youth Core; Feisal Abdul Rauf, Cordoba Initiative; David Saperstein, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism; Chris Seiple, Institute for Global Engagement; Richard Stearns, World Vision; Jim Wallis, Sojourners; and Robert Wood, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.⁸⁴

Other major secular think tanks have increasingly focused on religion and world politics, although maybe somewhat less broadly and systematically compared to CFR. This is a noticeable trend both among think tanks dedicated exclusively to international issues such as the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), CSIS and the Chicago Council on Foreign Relations; as well as those with a broader research agenda on domestic and foreign policy such as The Brookings Institute, AEI and the Hudson Institute.

USIP has a growing research program that, for over a decade, has sought to identify best practices on religion and peacebuilding, develop new peacebuilding tools for religious leaders and organizations, and support conflict resolution programming with religious leaders in conflict zones. Its work started with a Program on Religion in Identity-based Conflicts in the late 1990s. The initiative was then institutionalized and broadened with the creation of the Religion and Peacemaking Center in 2001. According to the website, the creation of the center “reflects the development of the larger field of

⁸³ For more information see: www.cfr.org/about/outreach/religioninitiative/advisory_board.html (accessed 16/08/2012)

⁸⁴ As will be clearer in the current and following chapters, many of these scholars, pundits, policymakers and activists all regularly contribute to the public discourse on religion and world affairs through a wide variety of other organizations, enterprises and outlets.

religious peacebuilding.”⁸⁵ Among its numerous activities, the center has a well-developed “Women, Religion and Peace Initiative”, it prepares countless briefs and reports on issues of religious conflict and violence, it provides an online “Course on Interfaith Conflict Resolution”, and carries out multiple interfaith dialogues and workshops in the field.

AT CSIS, religious-related initiatives are less well institutionalized. The Post-Conflict Reconstruction Project⁸⁶ started hosting events on religion in conflict settings and produced a groundbreaking 92-page long report entitled “Mixed Blessings: U.S. Government Engagement with Religion in Conflict-Prone Settings” (2007). The report, which opens with a quote by Peter Berger on the “explosive, pervasive religiosity” of the contemporary age (2007, p.1), extensively surveyed U.S. government approaches to religion abroad. Finding them “improving”,⁸⁷ but still somewhat “wanting”, it provided concrete policy guidelines on how to use better government resources to account for the power of religious actors and dynamics in international and local conflicts.

The Chicago Council on Global Affairs has released a major report addressed to the newly incoming Obama administration titled “Engaging Religious Communities Abroad: A New Imperative for U.S. Foreign Policy” (2010). The report obtained widespread resonance in Washington and was widely covered by major media outlets.⁸⁸ It argued that “despite a world abuzz with religious fervor [...] the U.S. government has been slow to respond effectively to situations where religion plays a global role” (2010, p.21). The report urged President Obama and his National Security Council to make religion and engaging with religious communities around the world “an integral part of our [American] foreign policy” (2010, p.13). The document was the result of a task force

⁸⁵ www.usip.org/programs/centers/religion-and-peacebuilding (accessed 16/08/2012)

⁸⁶ At the time of writing (2012) the project was renamed the Program on Crisis, Conflict, and Cooperation (C3)

⁸⁷ The report recognized and spotted initial signs of what I argue in the following three chapters are processes of desecularization.

⁸⁸ It further generated a lively and at times somewhat heated debate among the social scientific community on religion on the webpages of the *Immanent Frame* blog. See: blogs.ssrc.org/tif/category/religious-freedom/page/2/ (accessed 16/08/2012)

of thirty-two “experts and stakeholders” – former government officials, religious leaders, heads of international organizations, and scholars. The task force was co-chaired by Scott Appleby, a leading scholar on religion and fundamentalism, and Richard Cizik, president of the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good and former Vice President for Governmental Affairs of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE).⁸⁹

Other think tanks covering both domestic and foreign affairs started to pay growing attention to how religion affects American foreign policy and international politics. The Brookings Institute, ever since the early 2000s, moved slowly beyond exploring the intersection of religion in domestic politics and widened its outlook towards international affairs since, it argued, “religion and faith [...] increasingly influence public policy and political questions” both in “America and across the globe”.⁹⁰ In 2003 it organized a major conference on religion and American foreign policy, which then became an edited volume *Liberty and Power: A Dialogue on Religion and U.S. Foreign Policy in an Unjust World* (Hehir 2004). Through the work of scholars and fellows such as E.J. Dionne, on American religion, Justin Vaisse, on Islam and Europe, and Ömer Taşpınar, on religion and secularism in Turkey and the Middle East: Brookings’ engagement with religious actors and issues has expanded considerably over the past decade.

The AEI hosts discussions and commentary by Michael Novak and others on religion and American politics ever since the 1980s. Their frequency noticeably increased, as a quick glance to AEI’s webpages reveals, during the 1990s.⁹¹ Following 2001, a growing attention was directed towards international issues with a particular focus on the religious character of America and Middle Eastern politics (Israel and political Islam). The Hudson Institute, another conservative think tank, hosts since 2007 the Centre for

⁸⁹ The task force included prominent scholars and pundits with great influence over debates on religion in Washington, such as: José Casanova, Thomas F. Farr, Timothy Samuel Shah, Douglas Johnston, William Inboden and Katherine Marshall. It also included a number of leading “Muslim” researchers and activists, such as: Radwan A. Masmoudi, Dalia Mogahed and Eboo Patel.

⁹⁰ www.brookings.edu/research/topics/religion-policy-and-politics (accessed 18/08/2012)

⁹¹ www.aei.org/policy/society-and-culture/religion/ (accessed 18/08/2012)

Religious Freedom once at Freedom House.⁹² The Centre, which is directed by Nina Shea, produces ample research and regularly advocates for the integration of religious freedom as a central American foreign policy concern.

A groundbreaking desecularizing development within the intellectual and policy scene in Washington was the creation of the well-funded Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life in 2001.⁹³ The PEW Forum on Religion is one, and among the largest (Lugo 2010, author's interview), of seven projects that make up the PEW Research Center, a non-partisan research institute which conducts extensive public opinion polling and research on a wide range of social, political, cultural and media issues. The Forum, as the name suggests, started as a place for bringing religious leaders across traditions (mainly Christians, Muslims and Jewish) to engage in dialogue and interfaith discussions in the tense post-9/11 atmosphere. When Luis Lugo joined as director in 2004, he turned the forum into a research center that, as the website states, seeks to “promote a deeper understanding of issues at the intersection of religion and public affairs”. It does so through two main programs on “Religion and American Society” and “Religion and World Affairs”. Its ever growing pool of reports, data and figures on worldwide religious demographics and trends, religious freedom, religious lobbying have become widely used and cited by religious activists, scholars, policy-makers and political leaders across Washington D.C..⁹⁴

Louis Lugo, explains the rationale behind turning the PEW Forum into primarily a research center on religion, as follows:

“When I took my Ph.D. in political science at the University of Chicago most social scientific theories I was taught assumed the world to be secularizing. But already since the late 1970s with the Iranian revolution and Likud winning its first election in Israel I realized then that some kind of religious resurgence was occurring in the world... Peter Berger's admission that he was

⁹² crf.hudson.org/ (accessed 18/08/2012)

⁹³ www.pewforum.org/ (accessed 18/08/2012)

⁹⁴ For example Brian Grimm, who compiles PEW's *Global Restrictions on Religion* reports was invited to testify before Congress at a June 3, 2011, hearing before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

wrong about secularization in the 1990s was another turning point. Things were happening, religion was everywhere, but no one was noticing. With the Forum we attempted to fill that knowledge vacuum with solid social scientific research.” (2010, author’s interview)

The expansion of old faith-based “think and do tanks”, and the development of new ones, is contributing to deepening the desecularization of the foreign policy establishment’s secular milieu. Following 9/11, Johnston’s ICRD expanded its “track-two” faith-based diplomacy projects and operations in places like Afghanistan, Iran, Kashmir, Pakistan, the Palestinian occupied Territories, Saudi Arabia and Syria. Johnston has continued his scholarly output with new books (2003, 2011c), which have all championed the same cause: understanding better and including more proactively religion in American state-craft. From 2011, ICRD started publishing “Forum Policy Reports” on countries and issues of concern as they related to conflict, peace and religion.

The Institute for Global Engagement (IGE) was founded in 2000, and is today directed by Chris Seiple.⁹⁵ Along with ICRD, IGE has become a pivotal faith-based institution in Washington at the nexus between religion and world affairs. The organization mixes advocacy and practical work on religious freedom, with in an in-depth attention to research on religion in international relations. Its “Center on Faith and International Affairs”, in particular, hosts a thriving research program, one that is increasingly influential in policy and scholarly circles and debates.⁹⁶ The Center publishes, since 2002, a quarterly journal, *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, which by the time of writing (Summer 2012) is the only peer-reviewed scholarly journal explicitly dedicated to issues of religion and world politics.⁹⁷ Since 2010, *The Review* is

⁹⁵ www.globalengage.org/about.html (accessed 18/08/2012)

⁹⁶ According to its website, the Center seeks to equip “scholars, practitioners, policymakers, and students with a balanced understanding of the role of religion in public life worldwide”. See: www.globalengage.org/research/about.html (accessed 18/08/2012)

⁹⁷ It counts among its contributing editors prominent scholars and pundits on religion who are directly or indirectly involved in shaping the debate on faith and global affairs in Washington such as: Peter Berger, Akbar Ahmed, Thomas Farr, Allen Hertzke, Douglas Johnston, Paul Marshall, Mark Noll, Daniel Philpott and Elizabeth Prodromou.

published by Routledge/Taylor & Francis, giving it a further seal of scholarly approval along with making it more widely available through the publisher's indexes.

Dennis Hoover, *The Review's* editor, recalls the idea of creating the journal as follows:

“There was always quite a lot [of scholarship] out there on religion and domestic politics, but not much in comparative perspective nor in IR. Given that today religious actors are increasingly global players we thought important to have a journal that explored these issues and bridged the academic, policymakers and religious worlds. When we started there was not much. *The Review* has become part of a growing trend towards examining the role of religion in the context of foreign policy.” (2011, author's interview)

IGE further contributes to academic and policy debates by hosting and organizing conferences, and editing a growing number of books, such as *Religion and Security: The New Nexus in International Relations* (Seiple and Hoover 2004). Most recently Hoover, from IGE, and Johnston, from ICRD, co-edited a major volume entitled *Religion and Foreign Affairs: Essential Readings* (2012). The book collects a wide-range of seminal articles in the field that have appeared over the past decades,⁹⁸ if not even millennia in the case of excerpts by Thucydides and St. Augustine. The EPPC would organize a series of conference discussions following 9/11. These culminated in the edited volume *Religion, Culture, and International Conflict: A Conversation* (2005), featuring contributions by Samuel Huntington, Bruce Hoffman, Christopher Hitchens, Gilles Kepel, Philip Jenkins, and David Brooks.

As attention to religion and international affairs expanded during the 2000s, universities started to open centers and offer new courses discussing the complex and

⁹⁸ The volume includes articles or excerpts by, among others: Madeleine Albright, Scott Appleby, Benjamin Barber, Peter Berger, Timothy Byrnes, José Casanova, Thomas Farr, Jonathan Fox, Jeffrey Haynes, Allen Hertzke, Samuel Huntington, Mark Juergensmeyer, Paul Marshall, Vali Nasr, Daniel Philpott, Timothy Shah, Chris Seiple, and Scott Thomas.

apparently ever rising influence of religion in international politics. This section does not present a comprehensive list of all new courses and developments across American universities,⁹⁹ but will focus on a number of important changes in leading scholarly institutions with strong links to the Washington foreign policy establishment.

Probably the single most important change in the academic panorama was the inauguration of the “Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs”, at Catholic-based Georgetown University (GTU) in Washington D.C.¹⁰⁰ GTU has long been recognized as a leading training ground for America’s security experts, diplomats and foreign policy decision-makers. Quite emblematically, the center was launched in 2006, the very same year that Madeleine Albright’s book *Mighty and the Almighty* came out complaining about the secular nature of the international affairs education she received at GTU. With the Berkley Center things were now going to change substantially.

The center is organized around an ever-expanding number of programs that carry out research, organize conferences and workshops, and design university courses. By June 2012 the center featured programs on: Globalization, Religions, and the Secular (lead by José Casanova); Religion and US Foreign Policy (lead by Thomas Farr); the Religious Freedom Project (lead by Thomas Farr and Timothy Samuel Shah); Religion and Global Development (lead by Katherine Marshall); Religion, Conflict, and Peace (lead by Eric Patterson); and Islam and World Politics (lead by Jocelyne Cesari). From 2011, the Berkley Center offers, in collaboration with GTU’s Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, an optional “Religion, Ethics, and World Affairs” certificate for interested students. Just a cursory glance at the Berkley Center’s website reveals the deeply connected nature of the center and its scholars with the Washington policy circles and governmental institutions such as the State Department, USAID, or the Pentagon.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ For a good overview of courses in the United States see: www.globalengage.org/research/syllabi.html (accessed 18/08/2012)

¹⁰⁰ berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu (accessed 18/08/2012)

¹⁰¹ Thomas Farr, for instance, was in the Foreign Service for over 20 years. He was also the first Director of the Office of International Religious Freedom in the State Department. The close links between the centre and policy-makers in government are evident by the events the centre organizes which are often explicitly targeted to engage this community: berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/events (accessed 19/08/2012)

The Belfer Center, Harvard University's center for international affairs, in 2007 launched "The Initiative on Religion in International Affairs". The initiative, lead by Monica Duffy Toft and aimed at policy-makers, scholars, and students, has generated over the years courses, seminars, executive training sessions, and research projects "focusing on the study of religion as it bears on international relations and foreign policy".¹⁰² Research on religion and world affairs conducted by scholars at The Kroc Institute for International Peace, housed in the Catholic-based University of Notre Dame (Indiana), has made substantial inroads into the intellectual scene in Washington. The Kroc Institute was founded in 1986 out of a deep concern for nuclear weapons and the arms race. Here in 2000 the Program on Religion, Conflict and Peacebuilding was launched hosting scholars such as Scott Appleby and Daniel Philpott. Timothy Shah was a visiting fellow in 2010.

Boston University has long hosted Peter Berger's CURA. As the discussion thus far amply reveals, the sociologist's influence on the thinking of sections of the foreign policy establishment when it comes to religion has been rather substantial. Yet, during the 1980s and 1990s, Boston University had no courses explicitly addressing the issue of religion from an IR perspective. This changed with the integration of religious issues in the IR curriculum by Elizabeth Prodromou from the mid 2000s onwards. Today the university boasts an "IR & Religion" MA program jointly coordinated by the departments of International Relations and the Division of Religious and Theological Studies, in cooperation with CURA.¹⁰³

Johns Hopkins' School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in the heart of Washington D.C., labeled the 2009-10 academic year "The Year of Religion" hosting seminars, workshops and events geared towards examining the role of religion in international affairs.¹⁰⁴ In 2012 the school launched a major "Global Politics and

¹⁰² belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/project/57/religion_in_international_affairs.html (accessed 19/08/2012)

¹⁰³ www.bu.edu/ir/graduate/programs/irrn/ (accessed 19/08/2012)

¹⁰⁴ www.sais-jhu.edu/religion/index.htm (accessed 19/08/2012)

Religion Initiative” (GPRI) to incorporate the study of the interaction between religion and politics into the school’s existing graduate-level international relations program. The initiative promotes new master’s degree courses, faculty and community research seminars and executive education training sessions. GPRI’s goal is to “foster an appreciation and deeper understanding of religion and international affairs among students, scholars and practitioners who will shape and influence future policymaking.”¹⁰⁵

Overall this section traced how, in the 1990s a noticeable albeit still sporadic and patchy interest emerged in exploring the ways religious actors and factors appeared to increasingly “matter” in a post-Cold War world. Establishment-oriented journals such as *Foreign Affairs*, think tanks such as CSIS and Freedom House, centers such as EPPC, and newly created organizations such as ICRD were highlighting how the salience of religion was growing in world politics and reflexively also for American foreign policy. The first timid critiques towards the secularized and secularist nature of the foreign policy establishment were advanced at this time. The events of 9/11 were yet another turning point. From then on, both a qualitative and quantitative explosion of terms of new centers, initiatives, programs, and courses occurred seeking to explore the complex and multiple facets at the nexus of religion and international politics. As a result of these changes, the Washington foreign policy establishment’s institutional and intellectual milieu has undergone over the past twenty years a profound process of desecularization. Talking about religion, it seems, is no longer taboo among intellectual and policy elites.

Islam, the Muslim World and the Foreign Policy Establishment

Before and During the 1990s

Scholarship on Islam in the U.S. was largely the domain of Islamic or area specialists up

¹⁰⁵ www.sais-jhu.edu/academics/functional-studies/global-theory-history/global-politics-and-religion-initiative.html (accessed 19/08/2012)

until the 1990s according to John Voll (2007). During the 1960-80s international studies and politics scholars identified Islam mainly as a religion or a particular regional socio-cultural complex, hardly as a geopolitical category or an international actor. If not considered a dying force under the pressures of modernization and secularization, what generally caught the attention of some were then the most extreme forms of “Islamic fundamentalism” that were gaining ground in places like Iran (Voll 2007, pp.38-39).

Then came the end of the Cold War and Islam was no longer simply represented as a set of religious practices and beliefs, either waning or being perverted by fundamentalists. Islam for some actually started to appear on the horizon as a new monolithic and dangerous geopolitical agent and as such was portrayed on the pages of leading journals in the policy community. Huntington’s *Foreign Affairs* 1993 article, not only conceptualized an international reality where religious identities increasingly structured political conflict worldwide, but also carved out Islam as the new post-Soviet “other”. Similarly to Huntington, Middle East area specialists such as Bernard Lewis (1990) were identifying from the pages of *The Atlantic*, Islam as a particular social and political complex resentful of and in opposition to the West and the modern democratic values it espoused. As Voll has argued, in the 1990s “the most prominent interpretations of the role of Islam in the world involved a conceptualization of global relations in terms of the “clash of civilizations”” (2007, p.40). Another major and caustic critique of Islam and political Islam was Daniel Pipes, a Washington pundit close to the neoconservative movement, who in 1990 founded the Middle East Forum.

Against this double narrative of Islam as a monolith and of an international environment consigned to a set of new post-ideological cultural rivalries, other area and Islamic studies scholars started to offer alternative interpretations of Islam’s role in international politics. John Esposito (1992) would emphasize the complexity and local variances of Islam as a religion and above all of political Islam as a socio-political force. Esposito and Voll (1996), pointed out that Islam and democracy were not inherently incompatible. These scholars would also go on to found the Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding at GTU one of the first of its kind in the Washington policy and scholarly

community. Although Huntington did much to set the tone of the conversation, during the 1990s it was mainly area and Islamic studies experts – such as Bernard Lewis, Daniel Pipes, John Esposito and John Voll – who chiefly engaged in heated debates about the political significance of Islam in the Middle East in particular, and in the modern world in general. These authors set much of the intellectual parameters within which the conversation following 9/11 on Islam among the larger foreign policy establishment would occur.

Within policy circles, few of the major D.C. research institutes had research programs with a religious slant that focused on “Islam”, “Islamism”, “Muslim world” or “West-Islam relations”. Attention was clearly shifting from the old confrontation with the Soviet Union to local and regional crisis such as Iraq, Somalia, the Balkans and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. When looking at the outside world, the secular human and geographical categories of the Arab and the Middle East, however, still loomed large in the mind of policy elites and think tanks’ research programs. Area specialist institutes, had secularized names such as: the Middle East Policy Council, founded in 1981, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), founded in 1985, as well as Daniel Pipes’ anti-Islamist Middle East Forum.

Following 9/11

In the wake of 9/11, discussions about Islam spilled outside the area and Islamic studies scholarly box, where they had till then been mostly confined to, and into the foreign policy mainstream. Debates roughly split along the lines identified above. On the one hand, particularly among conservative pundits and scholars, the terrorist attacks clearly revealed that something was endogenously wrong with or within “Islam”. On the other hand, particularly among liberal pundits and scholars, great efforts were taken to unpack the Islamist phenomenon and dispel ideas of an impending clash of civilizations. No matter the ideological orientation, however, long adopted and established secular idioms progressively turned religious within foreign policy discourses. Arabs increasingly became “Muslims”, Moroccans and, say, Indonesians became “Muslim peoples”, and the

geographically specific Middle East turned into a broader, wider, and amorphous “Muslim world”. All of a sudden, 9/11 generated within the Washington foreign policy community a cottage industry of “Islam” and “Muslim world” experts, conferences, events, and policy papers.

Within the conservative research universe, RAND produced some of the most prominent reports parceling international geography into a distinct space comprising the so-called 1.5 billion people-strong Muslim world which followed its own specific internal dynamics. In a report on “The Muslim World After 9/11” (RAND 2004) – co-edited by a team of scholars with close ties to the Bush administration of the time –¹⁰⁶ Muslims (even secular ones) across the globe were all divided into five distinct ideological orientations that cut across countries, regions and societies. “Radical and dogmatic interpretations of Islam have gained ground in many Muslim societies” – the report argues – “The outcome of the “war of ideas” under way throughout the Muslim world is likely to have great consequences for U.S. interests in the region” (RAND 2004, p.xxii)

The report proposed a set of policies to influence these ideological struggles. The cornerstone of this strategy, reiterated by similar RAND-sponsored reports in 2003 and 2007, was to win the war of ideas by promoting reform within Islam and assisting with the development of “liberal” and “moderate” Muslims across the globe. The task ahead was daunting, argued one of the reports, yet necessary: “It is no easy matter to transform a major world religion. If “nation-building” is a daunting task, “religion-building” is immeasurably more perilous and complex. Islam is neither a homogeneous entity nor a simple system” (Benard 2003, p.3). The United States, can find “partners in the effort to combat Islamist extremism”, according to the 2007 report, in “secularists; liberal Muslims; and moderate traditionalists, including Sufis” (RAND 2007, p.70)

¹⁰⁶ Cheryl Benard, who co-authored the 2004 and other RAND reports cited above, is the wife of Zalmay Khalidzad, former National Security Council (NSC) official and U.S. ambassador to Afghanistan and Iraq during the Bush administration. Khalidzad was, among others, a signatory to the neoconservative-inspired Project for the New American Century.

The notion of a war of ideas within Islam resonated across the neoconservative policy establishment. AEI pundits Joshua Muravchik and Charlie Szrom (2008) have attempted to identify what a “moderate Muslim” looks like and provide strategies designed to encourage the silent “Muslim majority” to mobilize “against the acts and ideology of the terrorists”. AEI posts an extensive list of articles and commentary by Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Somali refugee and former Dutch Member of Parliament, on – or better against – Islam since 2005.¹⁰⁷ A search, on AEI’s website, for religiously-laden hash-tags such as “Islam”, “Muslim nation” or “Islamic Jihad” reveal a burgeoning list with hundreds of pages, but only a couple of references before 2001.

The Hudson Institute launched in 2006 a Center on Islam, Democracy and the Future of the Muslim World.¹⁰⁸ The center’s mission is to: “research and analyze political, religious, social and other developments within Islamic countries and Muslim minority populations around the world”; “analyze the ideological dynamic of Islam around the world and to examine how the political and theological debate within Islam impacts both Islamist radicalism as well as the Islamic search for moderate and democratic alternatives”; and to encourage the development of “moderate Muslims” by influencing American foreign policy.¹⁰⁹ Its flagship publication is a report on the “Trends in Islamist Ideology”, which as of 2012 was at its 12th edition.

More liberal-oriented think tanks in the aftermath of 9/11 would shy away from reifying the most extreme voices among violent Islamist groups as representative of an entire community of people or countries. Nevertheless they also started to progressively rely on the religious categories of Islam and Muslim world in their analysis and policy prescriptions, either by emphasizing the nuances of Islamist movements within the “Muslim world” as well as seeking to foster a better understanding between the “West and Muslims”.

¹⁰⁷ www.aei.org/scholar/ayaan-hirsi-ali (accessed 19/08/2012)

¹⁰⁸ www.currenttrends.org (accessed 19/08/2012)

¹⁰⁹ www.currenttrends.org/mission (accessed 19/08/2012)

Institutional developments at the Brookings Institute are particularly representative of this trend. In 2002 Brookings inaugurated a new center for the Middle East, the Saban Center, which in 2003 launched the “Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World”. The project was conceived to “respond to some of the profound questions that the terrorist attacks of September 11 have raised for U.S. policy”. Its intent is to conduct policy-relevant research and convenes briefings, panel discussion, and major international conferences with scholars and policy-makers “designed to educate, encourage frank dialogue, and build positive partnerships between the United States and the Muslim world”.¹¹⁰

Its signature event is the yearly “US-Islamic World Forum” launched in 2004, at a moment when there was a “virtual absence of dialogue between leaders of the United States and the Muslim world”.¹¹¹ In other words, it was created when (neo)conservative voices and clash of civilization narratives were dominating policy discourses in Washington and within the Bush administration. The forum, which is held in Doha Qatar annually, brings together political, business, media, academic, civil society and religious leaders “from across the Islamic world (including Muslim communities in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East) and the United States” to bridge this perceived cultural and political chasm.¹¹²

Stephen Grand, the program’s director, explains as follows the role religion plays in the initiative:

“The program and the forum are not explicitly centered on issues of faith, it is not about interfaith dialogues. Yet it does recognize that religion in general and Islam in particular have come to play a growing role in international affairs. Jim Steinberg, Shibley Telhami and Martin Indyk,

¹¹⁰ www.brookings.edu/about/projects/islamic-world/about (accessed 19/08/2012)

¹¹¹ www.brookings.edu/about/projects/islamic-world/us-islamic-world-forums (accessed 19/08/2012)

¹¹² Participants have included prominent political leaders and policy-makers such as: President Bill Clinton; Secretary of State Hillary Clinton; Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan of Turkey; former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; General David Petraeus; the Grand Mufti of Bosnia-Herzegovina Dr. Mustafa Cerić; Secretary General of ASEAN Surin Pitsuwan; and Secretary General of the OIC Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu.

who thought of the initiative, were building upon Brookings long tradition of looking at the intersection between religion and domestic politics led by people like E.J. Dionne and Bill Galston.” (2011, author’s interview)

Over the years as Brookings produced regular events, commentary, and a growing string of research and reports on a great variety of “Islamic world” issues, it has reinforced and upheld also among the liberal intelligentsia the shift towards a less secular understanding of international relations. Among the scholars linked to the initiative feature Peter Mandaville, a political Islam expert at George Mason University and former Policy Planning fellow at the State Department, and Akbar Ahmed, Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies at American University and a foremost public intellectual on Islam-West dialogue in D.C. policy circles.

Following 9/11 through the work of David Smock , USIP has likewise been active in exploring the how Islam relates to issues of democracy, interfaith-dialogues and peace-building.¹¹³ In 2006 it launched a major “Muslim World Initiative” that attempted to bridge conservative and liberal concerns. The initiative was designed to help “mobilize moderates, marginalize militants [i.e. the conservative agenda], and bridge the U.S./Muslim-world divide [i.e. the liberal agenda]”.¹¹⁴ It culminated with the release of the USIP book, “Conflict, Identity and Reform in the Muslim World” (Brumberg and Shehata 2009), as well as a report by its USIP Study Group on Reform and Security in the Muslim World (USIP 2010). The declared scope of the initiative was to “make sense of the diverse peoples, cultures and societies that constitute the Muslim world, [who are] all animated by a common ethical and religious heritage. From Jakarta to Cairo, from Dakar to Paris, Muslims sense that they form one grand community, or umma”.¹¹⁵ In 2010, USIP co-sponsored with the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy a major

¹¹³ www.usip.org/experts/david-r-smock (accessed 19/08/2012)

¹¹⁴ www.usip.org/programs/initiatives/muslim-world-initiative (accessed 19/08/2012)

¹¹⁵ *ibid.*

conference with public intellectuals, scholars, think tank pundits and government officials to assess the progress of “US-Muslims relations in the Obama era”.¹¹⁶

CFR and CSIS did not develop specific centers or initiatives dedicated to Islam. They have nevertheless joined the chorus with a string of events, talks, reports, and commentary exploring, among others: conflicts between “Christians and Muslims” (CFR),¹¹⁷ and the Muslim world’s struggle to democratize and modernize (CSIS 2004). The Washington D.C.-based NGO Search for Common Ground convened in 2007 a Leadership Group on U.S.-Muslim Engagement composed of “34 American leaders, *including 11 Muslim Americans*, in the fields of foreign and defense policy, politics, business, religion, education, public opinion, psychology, philanthropy, and conflict resolution [emphasis added]”.¹¹⁸ The group released in 2008 a major report that, as will be discussed in Chapter 6, had wide resonance in the Obama administration (US-Muslim Engagement Project 2009). Once again the report reiterated the theme of an American and Muslim world deeply suspicious of each other and provided policy recommendations to bridge this divide between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Esposito and Voll’s Georgetown center was revitalized and renamed in 2005 the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding (ACMCU), after having received a \$20 million dollar gift from the Saudi prince. Boston University opened and Institute for the Study of Muslim Societies & Civilizations in 2006. Peter

¹¹⁶ The conference brought together worldwide public intellectuals such as Oxford professor Tariq Ramadan, scholars known in Washington policy circles such as Peter Mandaville and Erik Patterson, and US government officials such as Farah Pandith, Special Representative to Muslim Communities and Rashad Hussain U.S. Special Envoy to the OIC (more on Pandith and Hussain in Chapter 6). www.usip.org/events/us-relations-the-muslim-world-one-year-after-cairo (accessed 19/08/2012)

¹¹⁷ www.cfr.org/religion-and-politics/exploring-religious-conflict-between-christians-muslims-audio/p23099 (accessed 19/08/2012)

¹¹⁸ Among which featured: Madeleine Albright; Richard Armitage, former U.S. Deputy Secretary of State; Thomas Dine, former Executive Director, American Israel Public Affairs Committee; Richard Land, President, The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, Southern Baptist Convention; Dalia Mogahed, Executive Director, Gallup Center for Muslim Studies; Vali Nasr, Professor of International Politics, The Fletcher School, Tufts University; Feisal Abdul Rauf, Imam, Masjid al-Farah in New York City; Founder and Chairman, Cordoba Initiative; Dennis Ross, former U.S. Special Middle East Envoy and Negotiator; Mustapha Tlili, Director, Center for Dialogues: Islamic World-U.S.-The West, New York University; Ahmed Younis, Senior Analyst, Gallup Center for Muslim Studies; former National Director, Muslim Public Affairs Committee. See: www.usmuslimengagement.org (accessed 19/08/2012)

Mandaville directs the new Ali Vural Ak Center for Global Islamic Studies at George Mason University inaugurated in 2009.

In the 1980s early 1990s, think tanks were created to study and influence U.S. policy in the “Middle East, such as the Middle East Policy Council and WINEP. In the late 1990s 2000s, a number of new institutes were launched instead to improve understanding of and policy towards “Islam” and “Muslims”. One of these was the liberal-leaning Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (CSID), founded in 1999, dedicated to studying and exploring the relationship between “Islamic and democratic political thought”.¹¹⁹ The center produces research and commentary on issues of democracy and freedom in the Muslim world, it conducts seminars and lectures at mosques, churches and think tanks around the country, it carries out international workshops on “Islam & Democracy” in Muslim countries, and hosts a major annual conference bringing together specialists, activists and policymakers.¹²⁰

The Institute for Social Policy and Understanding (ISPU) was founded in the wake of 9/11 in Detroit, Michigan and by 2010 it moved its headquarters to Washington DC. ISPU, a self-described nonpartisan think tank that conducts policy-relevant research on foreign policy and national security with a particular “emphasis on those issues related to Muslim communities in the U.S. and abroad”.¹²¹ Likewise over the years organizations and initiatives with a religious slant dedicated to interfaith and intercultural dialogues have mushroomed including the Rumi Forum (part of the Gulen movement and founded in Washington D.C. in 1999), the Cordoba Initiative (founded by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf in New York in 2002), and the Buxton Initiative (co-founded by Akbar Ahmed and Douglas Holladay, an Evangelical businessman, in Washington D.C. in 2004).

¹¹⁹ www.csidonline.org (accessed 19/08/2012)

¹²⁰ Akbar Ahmed and Peter Mandaville are on CSID’s board of directors. John Esposito was a former vice chair of the centre.

¹²¹ Akbar Ahmed, John Esposito, and James Piscatori are among the scholars on Islam and political Islam who make up its board of advisors. See: ispu.org (accessed 19/08/2012)

Quite importantly polling and research institutes such as PEW and, especially, Gallup increasingly started monitoring what “Muslims” thought about a wide variety of international issues from terrorism, to the war in Iraq, to relations with America or the West, and the place of religion in public life. Highly influential and often quoted by pundits and policymakers, surveys of this kind have contributed greatly to shift perceptions away from past secular categories of Arabs and individual nationalities (Slade 1981; Suleiman 1988), to religious ones of Muslims. Gallup would open a Center for Muslim Studies, which under the direction of Dalia Mogahed has released a number of high profile reports and surveys, such as the influential: *Who Speaks for Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think* (Esposito and Mogahed 2007). PEW regularly reports on perceptions about “how great the divide between Islam and the West” (2006)¹²² is and on the state of “Muslim-Western tensions” (2011).¹²³

The following (polemic) quote from Daniel Pipes tangentially captures much of the desecularizing process that occurred over the past two decades among the foreign policy establishment:

“Books on “The Arabs,” “the Arab world,” “Arab politics,” “Arab nationalism,” and “Arab socialism” flew off the press during my student years [1960s-1970s]. With time, however, the hollowness of this modern concept of Arabs became evident. I was one of those who argued for Islam as the real defining factor, devoting myself thirty years ago to proving that “Islam profoundly shapes the political attitudes of Muslims.” Met with skepticism back then, this understanding has now become so blindingly self-evident that Amazon.com lists no fewer than 3,077 items in English on jihad. ” (2011a, webpage)

¹²² www.pewforum.org/Politics-and-Elections/Islam-and-the-West-How-Great-a-Divide.aspx (accessed 19/08/2012)

¹²³ www.pewglobal.org/2011/07/21/muslim-western-tensions-persist (accessed 19/08/2012)

Conclusion

Shah, Philpott and Toft recall as follows the secularized education received during their political science classes at top U.S. universities back in the 1980-90s:

“All of our Harvard [and University of Chicago] classmates ... who entered, say, the State Department had lots of political economy, or political sociology, or international security, or theories of democratization, crammed into their heads, and were well prepared to analyze almost any conceivable global political problem. But the one thing they did not have crammed into their heads was any understanding of religion, or even any expectation that religion might be an important factor in shaping global politics.” (2011, webpage)

Times have considerably changed since then. Shah, Philpott, and Toft, and universities such as Harvard, Notre Dame and Georgetown, which these scholars are associated with, have been at the forefront of profound intellectual shifts towards a less secularist understanding of international politics over the past two decades. Their co-authored book *God's Century* (2011) is a key text in the burgeoning literature exploring the multiple dimensions of the global resurgence of religion in international relations. All this amounts to rather important intellectual shifts, as Chris Seiple suggestively argues:

“If you compare courses in the academy on religion in 1991 to 2011, you'll notice a huge difference. You know something is happening among secular elites when universities start changing. Intellectual elites formerly steeped in a secularist mindset are now increasingly awakening to religious variables.” (2011, author's interview)

This chapter argued that long-term processes of resurgence both domestically and internationally, along with major historical events such as the end of the Cold War and 9/11, have had a profound desecularizing influence on America's largely secularized foreign policy establishment. Along with universities, desecularizing institutional and

ideational changes have taken place across think tanks and research centers as they sought to conduct and accommodate research on the seemingly ever more profound entanglement between “religion” or “Islam” and world affairs. Indeed the notion of a “global resurgence of religion” has become conventional wisdom in leading research institutes such as CFR, CSIS, USIP, Brookings, or PEW. Progressively the idea that a clearly recognizable religiously defined Muslim world “out there” is either in religious and ideological turmoil (according to conservative scholars) or deeply misunderstood by policy-makers (according to liberal scholars), has taken deep intellectual and institutional roots across the entire foreign policy establishment. New “think and do tanks” such as ICRD, IGE, CSID have emerged providing policy-relevant international research on the nexus between religion and American foreign policy but from a faith-based perspective.

Often ignored or shun in the past, Evangelical, Jewish, Catholic, Mormon, and Muslim religious leaders, as well as lay activists, are invited by secular think tanks to become fellows, sit on advisory boards, deliver talks, take part in conferences and attend events. They are called upon to provide their insights and perspectives on how faith, religious issues and theological matters are interwoven with modern understandings and practices of international politics and American foreign policy. The perception that religion has come to “matter” more to American interests is unmistakably reflected by the wide resonance that Huntington’s thesis of civilizational clashes, despite its crude and rather unsophisticated argument, has held among policy debates over these past two decades. Quite indicatively, in 2010/2011 *Foreign Affairs* was luring in readers by offering free copies of *The Clash Of Civilizations? The Debate* (Hoge 2010) to all its new subscribers.

4. AMERICAN DIPLOMACY AND STATECRAFT: ADVANCING RELIGIOUS FREEDOM AND RELIGIOUS ENGAGEMENT

Stemming “religious persecution” and “religiously-based violence”, while also promoting “religious freedom”, mitigating “religious conflicts” and engaging with “religious communities” around the world, are increasingly part and parcel of what American policy-makers think about and do. This was not always the case. The scope of this chapter is to trace in particular how “international religious freedom” and worldwide “religious engagement”¹²⁴ have become over the past two decades two broad inherently religious policy frameworks that shape American foreign policy discourses and practices. This development has contributed to the progressive desecularization of American foreign policies and the normative and institutional structures underpinning the policy-making process.

The protection and advancement of “international religious freedom” norms is not a new issue for the United States. These norms are intimately ingrained in the country’s conscience and history. Domestically, they are tied with the country’s founding moments by persecuted Puritans fleeing England and then codified in the Constitution’s First Amendment in the wake of America’s independence (“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the *free exercise* thereof [emphasis added]”). Yet, when it comes to foreign policy, attention to these issues was for the most

¹²⁴ Considerable generalization is involved in using terms such as “international religious freedom” and “religious engagement”, hence the quotation marks. My interest is to trace how these discourses, and the foreign policy practices associated with them, have become ubiquitous and institutionalized in American foreign policy. The quotation marks will be used in the introduction and in the final more analytical sections, they will be omitted in the more descriptive and historical part. It is important to stress that religious freedom and engagement are complex and highly contested concepts and policy frameworks, see the following debates appeared on the *Immanent Frame* on “religious freedom” (<http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/the-politics-of-religious-freedom>) and “religious engagement” (<http://blogs.ssrc.org/tif/tag/chicago-council>).

part of America's history sporadic to say the least. A first major exception was when Congress passed the Jackson-Vanik amendment at the height of the Cold War in 1974 against the Soviet Union's curbs on Soviet Jewish emigration to Israel. Indeed, this piece of legislation may be considered a precursor to more recent and structured attempts through Congress to fully institutionalize religious freedom norms in American foreign policy. This chapter will partly explore and unpack these recent changes.

Similarly, "religious engagement" was hardly a buzzword in foreign policy circles for much of the Cold War and its immediate aftermath. By religious engagement I do not just mean the *ad-hoc* practice by American diplomats and foreign policy institutions of connecting and reaching out to religious groups when necessary to national security. This is something that has happened in the past. For instance, during the Cold War succeeding U.S. administrations often reached out to and formed covert alliances with Popes such as Pius XII and John Paul II to balance the "God-less" Soviets. During this period the U.S. did support, for example, actors that had a religious dimension to them like Christian Democratic parties in Western Europe and the Catholic Union Solidarity in Poland, or Islamists groups such as the *Mujahidin* in Afghanistan. Often, however, operations would be undercover and chiefly conducted through a secular prism of security and Soviet containment.

What I mean by "religious engagement" here is instead the emergence in the past decade or so of a much broader, structured, and increasingly bureaucratized policy framework than the practices described above. It is a framework that ranges from growing efforts by foreign policy-makers and institutions to understand and map worldwide religious dynamics and movements deemed to be of increased salience to American foreign policy. It also involves growing systematic and public efforts by the White House or the State Department to include religious communities and actors in the formulation and delivery of American foreign policy, particularly though religiously-based practices such as inter-faith dialogues and other programs geared towards promoting religious tolerance and understanding.

The central claim of this chapter is that the lack of sustained interest in international religious freedom and engagement before the 1990-2000s made the conduct and implementation of American foreign policy more secular. The introduction of these two inherently religious policy frameworks is instead making it less so today. These desecularizing changes should be understood as taking place within a context of worldwide processes of religious resurgence. And they can be explained by paying attention to the activities of a wide range of desecularizing actors responsible for promoting and pushing ahead with the implementation of these two broad inherently religious policy frameworks.

The next section looks at a number of desecularizing actors that have emerged – particularly following the end of the Cold War – campaigning, advocating and in some cases legislating for the adoption of these foreign policies. As will be shown later, many of those championing the cause of “international religious freedom”, have also taken an interest in “religious engagement” and *vice versa*. That is why these two issues are brought together in the present chapter. The sections that follow historically trace the efforts by these multiple actors to introduce and mainstream international religious freedom and engagement within diplomatic discourses and practices over the past two decades. The final sections will assesses the multiple foreign policy desecularizing process brought about by these developments and conclude.

Desecularizing Actors in Context

Two broad constituencies of desecularizing actors emerged during the 1990s, expanding considerably following September 11, advocating for the explicit adoption of a more religious-sensitive approach to foreign policy. The first constituency was, and still is, largely composed by religious activists who, with the help of scholars and pundits among the foreign policy establishment and members of Congress (often highly religious themselves), formed an eclectic but well organized advocacy network campaigning

against what they perceived was the growing persecution of Christians and other religious groups worldwide. The second constituency of desecularizing actors revolved around, and still does, a set of intellectual and foreign policy-making elites within universities and think tanks. These have expressed growing concerns for what they described as a dangerously “secularized” American foreign policy apparatus unable to adequately respond to an international environment where religious dynamics were becoming ever more salient to America’s interests.

Activists, Principled Policy Elites and Political Elites Promoting International Religious Freedom Norms

Throughout their history, American Christian groups have often been concerned with the state of Christianity abroad. American Protestant churches for instance have a long history of missionary work around the world (Hutchison 1987). During the Cold War organizations such as Voice of the Martyrs (founded in 1967) and Open Doors (founded in 1955) were consistently smuggling bibles across the “iron curtain”, documenting the harassment, arrest or killing of fellow believers, and lobbying the U.S. government to take initiative when local priests and pastors would be detained or jailed by Communist regimes.

Because of important social and historical changes over the past decades, these interests and efforts have multiplied. First, there has been a demographic expansion of Protestant Evangelicals – a group of Christians particularly concerned with missionary work and proselytization – both domestically within the United States (Mead 2006) and across the globe (Jenkins 2007). Secondly, the end of Cold War rivalries, the emergence of information technologies, the growth of cheaper means of travel have all allowed for an expansion of missionary work. This has led to growing and deepening transnational connections and solidarity between thriving and well-organized American churches at home and Christians around the world (Hertzke 2004; Wuthnow 2009).

As a consequence of these changes, there has been a growing domestic awareness within the U.S. of fellow Christians suffering from conflict and poverty abroad. Many saw the violence and lack of opportunities directed towards co-religionists in developing and authoritarian countries often as religiously motivated. In the late 1980s early 1990s of particular concern was the perceived persecution of Christians and the curbs set on evangelization and proselytization in remaining Communist countries (such as: China, North Korea and Vietnam) and increasingly so in Muslim majority countries (such as: Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Sudan). The 1983-2005 Sudanese civil war between the North, seen as the Muslim aggressor, and the South, seen as the Christian victim, became an important catalyst for action.

A coalition emerged in the first part of the 1990s among grass-roots religious activists and Washington insiders with the goal of making the plight of persecuted Christians a specific aim of American foreign policy (Hertzke 2004; McAlister 2008). One flank of the movement were Christian organizations, largely Protestant Evangelical, such as the older Voice of the Martyrs and Open Doors, and newer ones such as International Christian Concern, Persecution Project Foundation, Christian Freedom International, and Compass Direct. The other flank was constituted by conservative policy elites in Washington. The issue of Christian persecution reached widespread notoriety among foreign policy circles following a 1995 *Wall Street Journal* editorial by Michael Horowitz (1995), a conservative think tank pundit, accusing “Muslims” of attacking “Christians” in Africa and the Middle East. Others in the human rights community such as Nina Shea, a conservative Catholic, and Paul Marshall, a committed Anglican, both at Freedom House at the time, joined the anti-persecution campaign (Marshall and Gilbert 1997; Shea 1997).

As the movement grew it also became more mainstream by moving away from the sectarian language of *Christian persecution* towards the broader concept of *religious freedom*. This was a less contentious idiom and one more closely linked to human rights discourses, which during the 1990s were becoming increasingly powerful. This shift widened the campaign’s appeal to a broader spectrum of human rights NGOs, as well to a

host of other religious communities such as Jews, Mormons, Buddhists, Baha'is, and Sikhs who equally feared persecution around the world (Hertzke 2004, p.36).

The campaign drew upon growing number of supporters within Congress where “many members themselves, and their staffs, are enmeshed in religious life and thus predisposed to sympathy for the cause” (Hertzke 2001). In 1996 Congressman Chris Smith (R-NJ), took up the agenda and in a Congressional hearing called witnesses to discuss religious freedom and the persecution of Christians. By 1997 two major bills were making their way in the House and Senate aimed at securing American government action in the face of international religious persecution. The first was The Freedom from Religious Persecution Act, co-sponsored by Congressman Frank Wolf (R-VA) and Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA). The bill demanded immediate action against any nation found guilty of egregiously persecuting religious communities and employed blunt measures designed to hold the president accountable if he waived automatic sanctions against such nations. Because of the Clinton administration's and the State Department's opposition to it, a second more watered-down bill that contained a broader definition of persecution and that gave the president greater leeway in deciding whether to respond was introduced by Senators Don Nickles (R-OK) and Joe Lieberman (D-CT).

These bills were combined into the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act (IRFA), which passed unanimously in both houses and then signed into law by President Clinton. The act intended to “express United States foreign policy with respect to, and to strengthen United States advocacy on behalf of, individuals persecuted in foreign countries on account of religion; to authorize United States actions in response to violations of religious freedom in foreign countries...”.¹²⁵ With the passage of the 1998 IRFA, a network of desecularizing actors – activists, Washington pundits and scholars and Congressional political leaders – had made the provision of international religious freedom a key component of American foreign policy to be monitored and promoted by the State Department.

¹²⁵ www.state.gov/documents/organization/2297.pdf (accessed 20/08/2012)

After this initial activist phase, religious freedom issues have become ever more established and institutionalized within the Washington D.C. scholarly and policy community. Nina Shea and Paul Marshall moved the Center for Religious Freedom from Freedom House to the conservative think tank Hudson Institute.¹²⁶ Thomas Farr, at Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Politics, has written extensively about these issues for major policy journals such as *Foreign Affairs* (Farr 2008a) and *Foreign Policy* (Farr 2010). Since 2011 he directs a Religious Freedom Project with the objective to conduct and advance policy-relevant research on the topic.¹²⁷ Brian Grim, at PEW, has led research on a number of highly influential and widely cited reports detailing international restrictions on religious belief and practices (PEW 2009b, 2011)

Faith-based “think and do tanks”, such as the Institute for Global Engagement (IGE) and The Institute on Religion and Public Policy (The Institute) emerged in the 2000s producing research, carrying out programs, and mobilizing in favor of international religious freedom. Chris Seiple, who is president of IGE is as well the co-founder of the “IRF Roundtable”, a Washington-area consortium of international religious freedom (IRF) NGOs. The roundtable meets bi-monthly to discuss how best to promote religious freedom in American foreign policy, Washington policy circles and across countries worldwide.¹²⁸

The events of 9/11 gave a further impetus to this agenda, as scholars and pundits sought to securitize it. They increasingly framed religious freedom not solely as a human rights issue, but also as an important part of strengthening international peace, promoting democracy and countering terrorism (Farr 2008b; Grim and Finke 2010). This line of argument is evident when Joseph Grieboski, founder of The Institute, frames the importance of religious freedom policies with the following rhetorical question: “What

¹²⁶ See: crf.hudson.org (accessed 20/08/2012)

¹²⁷ See: berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/rfp (accessed 20/08/2012)

¹²⁸ See: www.aicongress.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/IRF-Roundtable-Web-Update.pdf (accessed 20/08/2012)

would the world look like if we really understood the Taliban's thinking when they destroyed the two statues of Buddha at Bamiyan?" (2011, author's interview).¹²⁹

A caveat is in order. Religious freedom is not solely, or not strictly, a *religious* norm. Indeed it is a norm that is also deeply rooted in secular and enlightenment political philosophy. It is a norm, however, that has an inherently religious content. Elizabeth Prodromou, from Boston University, succinctly captures this point as follows: "Religious freedom is a norm designed to create the possibility for religious outcomes, by promoting institutions and fostering regulatory frameworks which create an enabling environment for religion" (2011, author's interview). Saba Mahmood similarly notes:

"The right to religious liberty is widely regarded as a crowning achievement of secular-liberal democracies that guarantees the peaceful co-existence of religiously diverse populations. While all members of a polity are supposed to be protected by the right to religious liberty, religious minorities are understood to be its greatest beneficiaries in the protection it accords them to practice their beliefs freely without fear of state intervention or social discrimination." (2012, webpage)

The actors most concerned with international religious freedom norms – whether campaigners, pundits or members of Congress – are largely religious themselves. "The motivation for much of this ecumenical activism", Allen Hertzke remarks, "appears to flow from authentic religious conviction and conscience" (2004, p.4). Furthermore the activists and organizations involved in promoting these norms internationally are overwhelmingly faith-based. Their interest is driven by a desire to stem persecution of religious people and communities, while allowing for the free expression of religious beliefs and practices. As a corollary, it is a norm that is sympathetic to proselytizing religions and traditions that wish to "spread the word" freely and unhindered, such as the Evangelical one in the United States.

¹²⁹ See also the June 2011 congressional testimonies by Grieboski, Grim and Farr on international religious freedom policies: <http://religionclause.blogspot.com/2011/06/us-house-holds-two-hearings-on.html> (accessed 20/08/2012)

Principled and Strategic Policy Elites Promoting Religious Engagement

In parallel, during the 1990s, a small pool of scholars, pundits and policymakers in Washington would start making the case that American foreign policy was problematically culturally and institutionally too “secular”. This left it at a lost in appreciating how religious actors and identities were becoming, in the post-Cold War world, increasingly salient to American national security. Around the time Huntington (1993) published his controversial clash of civilizations thesis, Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson (1994) were co-editing under the auspices of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) a groundbreaking volume making the case that religious knowledge and engagement were a dangerously “missing dimension” in American “statecraft”.

Articles throughout the volume complained that American statecraft suffered from an “enlightenment prejudice” (Luttwak 1994, p.9) and “dogmatic secularism” (Burnett 1994, p.286), which led policy-makers and diplomats to discount the growing salience of religion in international affairs. Authors in the volume also complained that American statecraft under-appreciated how religious forces and actors themselves could be employed in the post-Cold War world to enable democratic transitions and contribute to resolve conflicts along ethnic and sectarian lines around the world.

The volume was an isolated intellectual precursor to debates that became more widely and forcefully advanced following the terrorist attacks of 9/11. In fact, ever since 2001 a growing number of high profile books, reports and initiatives have come to the fore pushing for the American foreign policy apparatus to revisit its secular intellectual and normative assumptions, institutional structures, and policy practices. In Madeleine Albright’s reflections about “America, God, and world affairs” (2006), she would complain about the secularized nature of IR theories and much of the culture within the American diplomatic corps (2006, p.8). American foreign policy-makers’ secularity was ever more jarringly out of touch with a world marked by processes of religious resurgence. Albright has not been alone in her critique of American statecraft. Pundits

and former policy-makers like Thomas Farr (2008a), major scholars on religion and international relations such as Timothy Shah, Daniel Philpot, and Monica Duffy Toft (2011), and faith-based advocates and researchers such as Chris Seiple (2007) and Douglas Johnston (2011c), have all advanced similar claims.

A Chicago Council for Global Affairs report “Engaging Religious Communities Abroad: A New Imperative for U.S. Foreign Policy” (2010), has crystallized much of the post-9/11 policy thinking on the subject. The report’s task-force was co-chaired by Scott Appleby, a leading scholar on religion and religious fundamentalism, and Richard Cizik, president of the New Evangelical Partnership for the Common Good and former chief lobbyist for the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE). The task-force included a wide range of prominent religious leaders, scholars, and former government officials, such as: José Casanova, William Inboden, Timothy Samuel Shah, Thomas Farr, Douglas Johnston, Martin Indyk, Dalia Mogahed, and Eboo Patel. The report was intended to provide recommendations to the newly installed Obama administration. The close ties between the Obamas and the Chicago Council further reinforced its policy significance. Michelle Obama sits on the think tank’s board of directors and Barack Obama gave here his first major presidential campaign foreign policy speech in April 23, 2007.

The Chicago Council report argued that “despite a world abuzz with religious fervor”, the American government “has been slow to respond effectively to situations where religion plays a global role” (2010, p.21). The causes of such failures lay in a mix of “political context that did not require as great an appreciation for the religious fabric of societies, a fear of treading too far over a set of unclear domestic legal lines separating church and state, and what some observers view as a secular bias in U.S. foreign policy” (2010, p.21).

Douglas Johnston’s provocatively suggests: “Once Cold War-era international relations Realists ignored religion. If we are to be Realist today, we need to recognize the role of religion in international affairs” (2011b, author’s interview). Desecularizing actors within the American scholarly and policy community, complain that the national security

fall-out of this pervasive epistemic, ideological and state-normative secularism within the foreign policy apparatus is dire, especially on two accounts.

First, it prevents policy-makers to adequately understand and predict how religious dynamics and actors may affect national security. Here the failure to foresee the events of 9/11, or Iraq's sectarian conflict in the aftermath of the 2003 invasion, are regularly held up as an example of this secularist blind spot. For instance, Seiple makes the case that:

“Because of our inadequate understanding of religion, we missed the *Salafi* interpretation of Islam and the events leading up to 9/11, such as the 1993 World Trade Center bombings and Osama Bin Laden's 1998 *fatwa* declaring holy war against America” (2011, author's interview).

Second, these secularist biases are seen as undermining the smooth operation of American foreign policy itself. Some argue America is hampered when it comes to resolving conflicts that have a religious element to them. In “places where religion becomes politicized like the Israeli-Palestinian one”, Johnston explains “America needs to come up also with a religious framework for peace” (2011b, author's interview). Desecularizing actors tend to see a world where religion is important both privately and publicly for the great majority of people. In such circumstances, they argue, policy-makers cannot remove religion from the table if American diplomacy is to be effective. Grieboski's words perfectly capture this logic:

“The State Department's ultra-secularism, finds it perfectly normal to send ambassadors to Pakistan, China, Nigeria that have no understanding of religion. How can we even think of sending someone to a place like Saudi Arabia who doesn't know anything about Islam? Islam informs the basic structures of that country's society and identity.” (2011, author's interview)

America can take concrete steps to correct course, desecularizing actors argue. Most subscribe – often implicitly, at times explicitly (Farr 2008a, p.118) – to the idea that

American foreign policy should undergo some sort of process of “desecularization”. These scholars, pundits and former policy-makers, advance a wide range of proposals, which can be categorized into three broad overlapping camps. These proposals largely constitute what I call the policy framework of “religious engagement”.

First, policy-makers need to have a better knowledge and understanding of international religious dynamics. Hence, in order “to anticipate events rather than merely respond to them, American diplomats will need to...think more expansively about the role of religion in foreign policy and about their own need for expertise” (Albright 2006, p.99).¹³⁰ Bureaucracies can assist this process by bringing in experts on religious matters and expanding training on religion and world affairs for its diplomats and foreign policy-makers (Chicago Council 2010, p.10; Farr 2008a, p.123)

Second, policy-makers must reach out and engage more directly with religious leaders and communities in order to advance American interests. Back in the 1990s, Edward Luttwak proposed that “religion attaches” be put in place in diplomatic missions in “countries where religion has a particular salience, to monitor religious movements and maintain contact with religious leaders, just as labour attaches have long been assigned to deal with local trade unions” (1994, p.16). The Chicago Council report’s first recommendation was to “build internal capacity to engage religion and religious communities” more “effectively overseas” (2010, p.8).

Third, church and state separation norms should at least be “clarified”, if not even reinterpreted in a more accommodationist way when it comes to international matters. Thomas Farr, William Inboden, and Timothy Samuel Shah, among others, have questioned in a dissenting note in the Chicago Council report (2010, p.84), the extent to which a strict separationist interpretation of the Constitution’s Establishment Clause is relevant and applicable in the context of foreign policy. “In the past ambassadors could

¹³⁰ Mrs. Albright suggestively argues: “When I was secretary of state, I had an entire bureau of economic experts I could turn to, and a cadre of experts on nonproliferation and arms control...I did not have a similar expertise available for integrating religious principles into our efforts at diplomacy. Given the nature of today’s world, knowledge of this type is essential” (2006, p.112).

not mention issues of religion for fear of breaching the Establishment Clause in the First Amendment”, Elliot Abrams, a prominent neoconservative policy-maker and pundit, explains and then adds, “it was absurd and a wrong reading of the first amendment, as times change so should our interpretation of it” (2010, author’s interview).

Over the past two decades a wide range of principled and strategic desecularizing actors have mobilized to include international religious freedom and religious engagement issues in American foreign policy. Some, like Thomas Farr, Joseph Grieboski, and Chris Seiple, straddle comfortably between the two issues. Others have been more focused on one or the other policy framework. The next section will trace and map out the extent to which they have been successful in mainstreaming their agendas within American diplomatic practices and policy-making structures.

Institutionalizing Religious Freedom within American Foreign Policy

Before Congress passed IRFA in 1998, religious freedom advocates were already gaining some traction within the foreign policy bureaucracy. This was evident when in 1996 then Secretary of State Warren Christopher established an “Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad” in the State Department.¹³¹ The Advisory Committee was composed of religious campaigners (such as Nina Shea) and American leaders across religious traditions (such as Evangelical and Mainline Protestants, Orthodox, Mormons, Jewish and Muslim). It was tasked with advising the Secretary of State on enhancing the protection and promotion of religious freedom abroad as a key human right concern. By 1998 the Committee produced an “Interim Report” addressed to the Secretary and the President focusing on two areas of concern: religious persecution and conflict resolution.¹³²

¹³¹ dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/briefing/press_statements/9611/961112ps2.html (accessed 15/07/2012)

¹³² www.state.gov/www/global/human_rights/980123_acrfa_interim.html#presidential (accessed 15/07/2012)

Language on religious persecution, which was absent from President Clinton's National Security Strategies (NSSs) up to the mid 1990s, started to appear thereafter. The NSS 1998 makes three such references in the document. The State Department's longstanding Human Rights reports also started to pay more attention to these issues. The 1997 report would explain that:

“A disturbing aspect of the post-Cold War world has been the persistence, and in some cases the intensification, of religious intolerance, religious persecution, and the exploitation of religious and ethnic differences for narrow and violent ends. In 1996 many religious groups around the world continued to face persecution and other difficulties in practicing their faiths and maintaining their cultural loyalties.” (State Department 1997, webpage)

The congressional passage of IRFA in 1998 was a groundbreaking moment however. The act more fully institutionalized the promotion of religious freedom norms in American foreign policy. Soon after signing the 1998 IRFA, President Clinton authorized the first official delegation of religious leaders from the U.S. to visit China to confront its leaders on the issues of religious freedom and religious persecution.¹³³ The 1999 NSS was no longer simply peppered with references to religious persecution, but would also now highlight that:

“[The] Promotion of religious freedom is one of the highest concerns in our foreign policy. Freedom of thought, conscience and religion is a bedrock issue for the American people” (1999, p.27).

Most importantly IRFA mandated the creation of an Office for International Religious Freedom (OIRF) within the State Department directed by an Ambassador-at-Large. IRFA also required the publication of an annual report on the status of religious freedom around the world designed to set into motion presidential actions against violating countries. It further mandated the creation of an independent United States

¹³³ www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/reid-and-clinton-announce-appointment-of-dr-don-argue-to-the-united-states-commission-pn-international-religious-freedom-58323922.html (accessed 20/08/2012)

Commission for International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), to further monitor religious freedom violations and hold policy-makers in the executive accountable for their response – or lack thereof.

The OIRF was situated in the State Department’s bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) and was tasked with the explicit mission of “promoting religious freedom as a core objective of U.S. foreign policy”.¹³⁴ The Ambassador-at-Large heading the OIRF was charged with “making sure that this issue [religious freedom] is woven into the fabric of U.S. foreign policy”.¹³⁵ Along with the Ambassador, a director is selected from the Foreign Service to oversee the office’s day-to-day activities. Thomas Farr was OIRF’s first director from 1999 to 2003. OIRF carries out its mission by:

- Monitoring religious persecution and discrimination worldwide,
- Recommending and implementing policies in respective regions or countries, and
- Developing programs to promote religious freedom.

In terms of “monitoring” (i), the office releases an “Annual Report on International Religious Freedom”.¹³⁶ A member of staff in embassies across 198 countries is tasked with collecting and feeding back to the office information on the status of religious freedom, and local governments’ policies towards religious belief and practices of groups and individuals. Secretaries of State are then invited to designate countries where “systematic, ongoing, egregious violations of religious freedom” as Countries of Particular Concern (CPCs) and possibly levy economic sanctions upon them. The first IRF Report (2001) included the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, Burma, China, Iran, Iraq, Sudan, and the Milosevic regime in Serbia as CPCs. As of 2012 the CPC list comprises Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Uzbekistan. Out of these countries, Eritrea is explicitly sanctioned for religious freedom violations. China, Burma, Iran, and North Korea have “double-hatted” sanctions - these countries all had previous sanctions which are now designated also to apply for abuses to religious liberty.

¹³⁴ www.state.gov/g/drl/irf (accessed 20/08/2012)

¹³⁵ www.state.gov/www/about_state/biography/seiple.html (accessed 20/08/2012)

¹³⁶ For more information on OIRF’s reports see: www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf (accessed 20/08/2012)

Countries like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, which are close U.S. allies, have wavers on sanctions.

OIRF fulfills its mandate to “recommend and implement policies” (ii) by promoting in-country norms and policies supporting religious freedom, economic wellbeing, political empowerment and security of religious minorities. For example in Iraq OIRF works in close coordination with the Department of Defense (DOD), the National Security Council (NSC) and intelligence agencies to reduce violence against Christians and other minority groups. It provides local direct grants to religious communities for economic development projects requiring cooperation across religious lines. The office is further involved in supporting a minorities caucus in Iraq that has proposed the first pro-Christian legislation to help save and secure churches and Christian groups from persecution (OIRF Official 2011).

Similarly, OIRF officials have held among others meetings with delegations of Coptic Christians to help guide their thinking on Article-2 of the Egyptian constitution.¹³⁷ The Ambassador-at-Large during his/her travels and OIRF staff in local U.S. embassies actively encourage interfaith discussions and meetings among religious community leaders in countries where there are growing sectarian tensions, such as Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey (Banks 2011; CSIS 2007, p.13). For instance, in Turkey OIRF staff have brought together Jewish and Alevi leaders – who had never met or spoken to each other before – to jointly lobby the Turkish government to change discriminatory regulation, policies and behavior towards these religious minorities (OIRF Official 2011). Concerns regarding religious freedom have been raised at the bilateral meetings and consultations with China, Central Asian countries, Morocco and Jordan (OIRF 2011a).

Ever since 9/11, OIRF has sought to securitize and expand the religious freedom agenda by moving it beyond solely a human rights issue. As an aptly designed brochure on religious freedom and security states:

¹³⁷ Article-2 of the Egyptian constitution states: “Islam is the Religion of the State. Arabic is its official language, and the principal source of legislation is Islamic Jurisprudence “.

“...the suppression of religious freedom and expression can lead to violence and extremism. An open marketplace of ideas is the best way to promote religious freedom and moderation...our national security strategy must include promoting respect for religious pluralism in society.” (OIRF 2011b)

In terms of “developing programs” (iii), OIRF has been given a growing portfolio of grants to deliver projects that promote religious freedom and tolerance, and reduce sectarian and religious violence around the world. As of 2011, these amounted to over \$10 million of the State Department’s Human Rights and Democracy Fund (OIRF 2011a). These grants are distributed to US-based NGOs working with local partners. They are generally distributed on a standard regional or country-by-country basis. Some are, however, targeted, under the euphemism of “global programs”, mainly towards a transcontinental and transnational category of “Muslim” countries and peoples who share a particular religious identity or faith.¹³⁸

Grants have been awarded, among others, to organizations to: “promote and advocate freedom of religion” through mainstream print and online media across the Near East, South Asian, and East Asian regions; “strengthen the capacity” of religious leaders to “promote mutual respect and prevent violence” in Nigeria; promote “sustainable in-country capacity building for religious freedom” in East Asian countries; reform education policies in Indonesian Islamic boarding schools away from “extremism and towards religious freedom and appreciation for religious pluralism”; improve “tolerance towards Islam” in Azeri media; “reform how Israeli and Palestinians are respectively portrayed in each other’s school books”; increase the “appreciation for the diverse religious heritage” of Iraq; carry out “community development projects to encourage religious tolerance” in Lebanon; “bring together interfaith leaders” in India; or work to

¹³⁸ The concern with targeting a distinct category of countries and people, such as the “Muslim world” sharing a particular religious identity and faith has become a recent and ubiquitous practice in American foreign policy. This issue is discussed in more detail in chapter 6.

“encourage peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding” of religious minorities in Muslim majority Pakistan.¹³⁹

As of 2011 OIRF was spending \$1.9 million on “global” programs, that is programs targeting Muslim people and countries. Organizations are financed in the Near East and Southeast Asia to “promote international religious freedom norms” in specific professional demographics (legal, media, and human rights professionals, religious and secular leaders). Another organization is financed to “promote religious tolerance and freedom” through mainstream print and online media across the Near East, South Asian, and East Asian regions. A further initiative centers on global journalists reporting on religion. In particular the project supports “Muslim and other journalists” with the resources to “promote fair and balanced reporting on religion” and aims to improve “understanding” among journalists “of all faiths who live in and cover the Muslim world” of the different ways Islam is practiced and integrated into political and social life around the globe.¹⁴⁰

Along with OIRF, the 1998 IRFA also created the USCIRF, an independent commission equally assigned to monitoring religious persecution and promoting religious freedom norms internationally. USCIRF has benefitted from a considerable budget of more than \$4 million a year (considerably more than the OIRF) up until 2011 and somewhat curtailed since 2012 to \$3 million (Feddes 2011). It also drafts an “Annual International Religious Freedom Report” and assigns CPC status to religious freedom violating countries.¹⁴¹ Given its independent status, USCIRF is less hamstrung to official diplomacy than OIRF. This gives it more latitude in naming and shaming CPCs; indeed it has a longer CPC list than OIRF’s and in 2011 it included countries important to U.S. national interests such as Egypt, Iraq, Pakistan and Vietnam for example. The Commission is also tasked with making policy recommendations to the President, the Secretary of State and Congress. “USCIRF and OIRF are both concerned with religious

¹³⁹ This list is based on a 2011 internal State Department document I was given access to.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ See: <http://www.uscirf.gov/reports-and-briefs/annual-report.html> (accessed 20/08/2012)

freedom and American diplomacy, with USCIRF playing bad cop, to OIRF's good cop" (USCIRF Official-1 2010, author's interview).

USCIRF is headed by a team of commissioners who are selected: "for their knowledge and experience in fields relevant to the issue of international religious freedom, including foreign affairs, direct experience abroad, human rights, and international law".¹⁴² Over the years commissioners have included prominent religious leaders¹⁴³ and lay religious activists,¹⁴⁴ along with recognized experts on religion,¹⁴⁵ human rights activists and law scholars.¹⁴⁶ Commissioners have lead multiple delegations to assess conditions for religious freedom in countries such as: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Belarus, China, Egypt, Eritrea, Laos, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam. In collaboration with Douglas Johnston's ICRD, USCIRF (2011) released its first-of-a kind study monitoring religious discrimination both in Pakistani public schools and *madrassas* textbooks.

With time religious freedom has filtered through a number of Presidential foreign policy documents and initiatives. George W. Bush's NSS 2006 (pp.6-7) framed religious freedom as a key pillar of the President's freedom agenda. The fact that religious freedom made it so squarely into the document was partly due to the President's personal faith and appreciation for the issue, but also thanks to the presence of Elliot Abrams and William Inboden among the NSC staff drafting the NSS. Elliott Abrams, before joining Bush's NSC in 2002 as an advisor on democracy promotion, had been USCIRF Commissioner

¹⁴² <http://www.uscirtf.gov/about-uscirtf/commissioners.html> (accessed 20/08/2012)

¹⁴³ Such as: Don Argue, former president of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE); Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention; William J. Shaw, former president of the National Baptist Convention; and a number of other religious figures such as Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, Most Reverend Charles J. Chaput, Rabbi Davidz Saperstein or Imam Talal Y. Eid.

¹⁴⁴ Such as: Nina Shea, Director of the Center for Religious Freedom at the Hudson Institute; Robert Seiple, founder of IGE; Michael Cromartie, Vice President of the Ethics and Public Policy Center; and Dr. Firuz Kazemzadeh, a leading Baha'i advocate and in the United States and Professor Emeritus of History at Yale University.

¹⁴⁵ Such as: Elliott Abrams, former Deputy National Security Advisor for Global Democracy Strategy under G.W. Bush and currently at CFR; and Elizabeth H. Prodromou, Professor at Boston University.

¹⁴⁶ For a list of current commissioners see: <http://www.uscirtf.gov/about-uscirtf/commissioners.html>; for past commissioners see: <http://www.uscirtf.gov/about-uscirtf/former-commissioners.html> (accessed 20/08/2012)

(1999-2000) and Commissioner Chair (2000-2001). William Inboden, before joining the NSC in 2004, had been a Special Advisor to the OIRF at State.

Obama publicly discussed religious freedom during his so-called Speech to the Muslim World in Cairo (2009b). Here he listed “religious freedom” as one of the seven main issues that needed to be confronted head-on in relations between the U.S. and Muslim communities around the world. At the first U.S.-China Human Rights Dialogue under the Obama administration in 2010, religious freedom was designated as one of the three main agenda items (OIRF 2011a). The President would return on the theme of religious tolerance in his speech on the Arab Spring (2011b) as sectarian tensions between Christians, Sunnis and Shias’ appeared to boiling up across the region.

A Broadening Agenda

In addition to monitoring and promoting religious freedom within countries and societies, the institutional actors concerned with these norms have turned their attention increasingly towards international organizations. Over the past decade the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), has attempted annually to pass a Defamation of Religions resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Council (in Geneva) and General Assembly (in New York). The stated objective of the resolution was to curb perceived growing international criticism of Islam and rising levels of Islamophobia. OIRF and USCIRF have been at the forefront since the mid-2000s of lobbying efforts against the resolution, believed to be an attempt to promote blasphemy laws around the world and stifle freedom of speech. As a State Department IRF Report argues:

“While the United States deplores actions that exhibit disrespect for deeply held religious beliefs, including those of Muslims, we do not agree with the “defamation of religions” concept because it can be used to undermine the fundamental freedoms of religion and expression.” (2010, webpage)

OIRF and USCIRF are joined in their efforts by a wide network of religious

NGOs, secular human rights organizations, and a large number of Congressional representatives – particularly those from the International Religious Freedom Caucus in Congress (The Economist 2010).¹⁴⁷ “At the core of the anti-defamation campaign”, a USCIRF official explains, “are oftentimes the same organizations and people involved with international religious freedom advocacy” (USCIRF Official-2 2011).

Secretary Hilary Clinton has been personally involved in negotiations and diplomatic attempts to counter the resolution. During a visit to Turkey, Clinton (2011) gave probably the most high profile remarks on protecting religious freedom and fighting religious intolerance made by a Secretary of State since IRFA passed in 1998. Practice has overwhelmingly seen Secretaries of State directly addressing these issues publicly mostly when presenting the yearly IRF reports and not much beyond that. In Turkey Clinton committed the U.S. to the Istanbul Process along with OIC countries. The Istanbul Process is an attempt through the UN to downplay the institutionalization of defamation of religion norms within international bodies, while simultaneously advancing concrete measures and specific policies to fight intolerance, discrimination and violence on the basis of religion or belief internationally.

Furthermore, the protection of religious minorities is emerging since 2011 as a particular policy concern. This concern is especially surfacing in response to rising sectarian tensions, such as the state of Christian Copts in Egypt, in the wake of the Arab Spring across the Middle East and North Africa (USCIRF Official-1 2011, author’s interview)

¹⁴⁷ For instance, I was given access by a USCIRF official to a 2010 petition signed by 42 members of Congress sent to over 150 countries urging them not to support OIC’s defamation resolution at the UN.

Religious Engagement and the Growing Nexus Between Religion and Foreign Policy

Along with the deepening and broadening religious freedom agenda, under the Obama administration there has been a further push towards developing a better understanding of international religious dynamics and to structure more robustly U.S. engagement with religious communities around the world. Obama inherited from the Bush administration an Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in the White House (which I will call the White House Faith-Based Office: WHFBO). The office was created in 2001 to assist faith-based organizations to bid for federal funding to deliver social programs at home and abroad (more on this in Chapter 5). What is relevant here is that with the Obama administration the WHFBO was given a bigger and broader foreign policy mandate.

As an enthusiastic WHFBO Official explained at a time when Obama had just reconstituted the office:

“Although it should be in our national interest to have a better grasp of religious dynamics internationally, we have done a poor job at it so far.... In many places the only civil society that works effectively is religious. We as government need to understand this and work with them better. President Obama gets it and is moving in the right direction by expanding the office’s responsibilities.” (2010, author’s interview)

Joshua DuBois, a pastor and Obama’s 2008 campaign faith-based outreach director, was appointed to head the WHFBO. Mara Vanderslice, a progressive faith-based political campaigner, was specifically appointed to head the WHFBO’s international portfolio. She was the main liaison between the WHFBO and bureaucracies with international functions such as the NSC, State and USAID on matters of religion. She was assigned to coordinate a newly appointed 25-member Advisory Council to the President on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships made up mainly by a diverse group of religious leaders and advocates (more on this in chapter 5). A first of its kind, the Advisory Council was tasked to provide policy advice on a wide range of issues:

deepening the engagement with the Muslim world, improving faith-based partnerships and assistance, strengthening interreligious cooperation, and promoting religious freedom (White House 2010).

Mapping Out and Institutionalizing Religious Engagement

One of the first priorities for Obama's WHFBO was to "take a step back and survey what [was] already going on within the U.S. Government in terms of our interaction and engagement with religious leaders abroad", according to its director Joshua DuBois (2010). OIRF was tasked to map the State Department's entire range of religious and community engagement activities. Information was received from 138 Embassies around the world and a Religious Engagement Report was produced in 2010. The report was the first-ever detailed survey of U.S. government ongoing collaboration with religious organizations and communities around the world (OIRF 2011a; DuBois 2010).

DuBois highlights how the report – which has been presented to Congress but has not been made public yet – showed "a growing trend" when it came to "engaging religious and community-based actors" internationally (2010). Yet, as DuBois points out, the report also underscored how much of this engagement was taking place in a "sporadic and ad hoc" way. In particular much of the staff reported that they "did not understand the critical legal guidelines regarding the engagement of religious organizations" and "did not feel that they had adequate knowledge and training to effectively reach out to religious leaders to advance non-religious goals" (2010). As a result the WHFBO would start to work "with the White House National Security Staff and the State Department" to increase the "government's capacity and training to allow for ongoing relationship building with diverse religious and community leaders across the globe" with the scope of reducing, among others, violence and conflict (2010).

Part of this overall coordination effort was a new interagency working group on "Religion and Global Affairs", set up in 2009 (OIRF 2011a). Members of the working

group included, among others: staff from the NSC; Joshua DuBois and Mara Vanderslice from the WHFBO; Judd Birdsall, Special Assistant to the Director of Policy Planning on detail from the OIRF at State;¹⁴⁸ and staff from USAID. The working group was designed mainly for “sharing religion-related information and analysis and for connecting officers who are thinking creatively about new strategies for effectively engaging religious ideas, actors, and communities in the pursuit of U.S. foreign policy objectives” (OIRF Official 2011, author’s interview). The working group would host high profile speakers that explored “the significance of religion and religious freedom in world affairs” (OIRF 2011a). For example, Douglas Johnston was invited to speak and help the White House think through how to better integrate and understand religion into American foreign policy.

Many of these efforts seem to have fed into the creation of the “Religion and Foreign Policy” working group, as one of the five key thematic working groups,¹⁴⁹ within the State Department’s wider “Strategic Dialogue with Civil Society” initiative launched in 2011. The Strategic Dialogue, which is still ongoing at the time of writing (2012), is designed to elevate and strengthen the U.S. Government’s engagement with and support to a wide range of civil society actors, among which also religious ones. The “Religion and Foreign Policy” working group includes four task forces: Religion in Foreign Policy and National Security; Religious Engagement and Conflict Prevention/Mitigation; International Religious Freedom: Advocacy to Combat Religious-Based Violence and Human Rights Abuse; and Faith-Based Groups and Development and Humanitarian Assistance.

Directing the religion working group are three government officials and two civil society representatives. The three government co-chairs are Joshua DuBois, Suzan Johnson Cook, who is Obama’s Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, and Maria Otero, the Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and

¹⁴⁸ Before joining State, Birdsall was managing editor of IGE’s journal *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*.

¹⁴⁹ The other four thematic groups are: Governance and Accountability; Democracy and Human Rights; Empowering Women and Girls; and Labor.

Human Rights. The two civil society chairs are Chris Seiple, from IGE, and William Vendley, Secretary General of the World Conference for Religions of Peace. Overall the group is seen as an effort to consider ways in which to provide a framework for religious civil society involvement in policy-making and equip its Foreign Service officers to better engage religious communities overseas (IGE 2011a). It does so by facilitating regular dialogue and interaction between the U.S. foreign policy establishment and religious leaders (across faiths), scholars, and practitioners worldwide.

Its objective is to come up with proposals for Secretary Clinton on how to build and improve partnerships with religious groups on issues relating to conflict prevention, humanitarian assistance, religious freedom, and national security (IGE 2011b).¹⁵⁰ In May 2012 a first set of official recommendations were presented to Secretary Clinton. These included, expanding training on “religious engagement” and “religious freedom” issues for diplomats. It also called for further guidance on the extent to which the Establishment Clause applies to foreign policy issues and to develop clearer legal guidelines on what State Department officials can and cannot do when reaching out and supporting religious actors and communities abroad (IGE 2012).

Expanding Training and Knowledge on Religious Issues

Developments are gradually taking place to raise awareness among Foreign Service officers and ambassadors about international religious issues through newly developed training opportunities. Over the years the OIRF has increasingly worked closely with the State Department’s Foreign Service Institute (FSI), which is the primary training institution for officers and support personnel of the U.S. foreign affairs community, to integrate courses with an inherently religious content into the wider FSI curriculum. OIRF officers cover topics in the FSI program ranging from: “the international basis and standards for the right to freedom of religion”, the “theological beliefs of different

¹⁵⁰ A first live webchat in October 2011 included co-chairs of the group Chris Seiple, Suzan Johnson Cook, and William Vendley along with other faith-based activists such as Joseph Grieboski and State diplomats such as Miguel Diaz, U.S Ambassador to the Holy See. A further 30 different consulates and embassies around the world tuned in to participate.

religious groups”, “involvement of religious groups in politics”, “diplomatic tools used by the United States to promote respect for religious freedom”, and the “relationships between religious freedom, democracy, and national security”.¹⁵¹

Maryann Cusimano Love, from the Catholic University of America, has drafted a number of training materials and case studies for the FSI that examine the importance of religious actors and factors in international affairs. One of the case studies investigates then-Ambassador Tracey Jacobson’s decisions on how to integrate religious freedom concerns into her negotiations with the government of Turkmenistan.¹⁵² During her time in Central Asia, “Ambassador Jacobson”, according to Cusimano Love, “developed a real appreciation for religious issues and dynamics” (2011, author’s interview). “Which she then”, Cusimano Love adds, “sought to mainstream within FSI’s curriculum” when occupying a number of directorship roles at the FSI between 2009-2011. As of 2011 a new three-day course on “Religion and Foreign Policy” for career officers and diplomats was in the FSI’s pipeline (OIRF 2011a).

More generally, with time OIRF has become a repository of knowledge and information on a broad range of issues at the nexus between religion, American foreign policy and international politics. OIRF, for example, appears to be the only office across the foreign policy bureaucratic apparatus that regularly collects data and information on a wide range of international religious issues. The Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has relied on OIRF data and information regarding religious persecution and the state of religious minorities in preparation of her visits to the Middle East during and in the aftermath of the Arab Spring. An OIRF Official explains, when referring broadly to the State Department as an institution:

“We are becoming more aware that religion is, or maybe has always been, the lifeline of the great majority of people in the world. All of which does

¹⁵¹ The FSI is also offering a growing range of courses on “Islam”, with a decidedly religious twist, such as “Islam, Institutions, Modernity and Reform”, and “Islam the Rise of Religion in Eurabia”. For more information see: www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/irf/2010/148653.htm (accessed 20/08/2012)

¹⁵² Jacobson was Ambassador to Turkmenistan from 2003-2006. For more information on Cusimano Love’s case studies see: isd.georgetown.edu/publications/casestudies/ (accessed 20/08/2012)

have an influence on their economic and political life and should be taken better into account.” (2011, author’s interview)

Assessing Desecularization

As these bundles of inherently religious policies such as “international religious freedom” and what I have called “religious engagement” have been mainstreamed within the foreign policy apparatus, a parallel process of desecularization has occurred. In this section I explore first counter-secularizing processes in terms of a rapprochement and growing entanglement between religious and religious-related norms and actors, and foreign policy practices and decision-making institutions. I then look at counter-secularist processes, whereby dominant secularist knowledge and normative structures among policy-makers and within bureaucracies become contested and weakened.

Foreign policy practices are becoming desecularized as human, monetary and time resources within the federal government and in local embassies is increasingly devoted, within the context of the religious freedom and engagement agendas, to monitoring international religious dynamics and developing initiatives with an inherently religious content to them. Whether it is curbing religious-based violence and persecution, conducting interfaith dialogues, promoting religious tolerance through media, economic projects or government reforms, supporting local advocates for religious freedom, and so on.

A process of desecularization is discernible when it comes to the norms and practices America is committed to spreading internationally under the rubric of “international religious freedom”. Desecularizing activists themselves like Grieboski, recognize that a qualitative and quantitative change compared to before the 1990s has occurred:

“Up until recently, religious freedom was mainly done in a case by case way, there was no systematic approach. What the 1998 IRFA did was to look at

religious freedom following the end of the Cold War in more systemic way and institutionalize the issue within the U.S. government” (2011, author’s interview).

Religious freedom is not exclusively a religious norm, but one also rooted in secular enlightenment thinking and part of the larger human rights discourse. Yet rather than being promoted within a human rights framework, the “religious freedom” agenda has become a separate and distinctive aspect of U.S. foreign policy. Hence a process of desecularization in terms of practices is discernible particularly as a separate space has been opened to directly monitor and promote norms that are overwhelmingly advocated by faith-based actors and designed to produce outcomes favorable to religions. This distinction between non-religious and religious human rights is even more apparent when one considers that a IRF Report now flanks the well-known State Department Human Rights Report. USCIRF also compiles its own IRF report. No other human right seems to have its own distinctive government mandated report, let alone two of them.

Reaching out to and partnering with foreign religious leaders and groups is not a new practice in American foreign policy. Yet it appears that over the decades, according to a mapping exercise conducted by the Obama administration, there has been “a growing trend” when it came to “engaging religious and community-based actors” around the world (DuBois 2010). This growing entanglement between American foreign policy practices and religious actors is not only noticeable, but also explicitly promoted under Obama’s emphasis on “engagement” with civil society actors – which actively includes religious individuals, organizations and communities. Under what I have identified as the “religious engagement” agenda, the State Department and embassies around the world are systematically encouraged to establish links and reach out to religious actors abroad in an ever more consistent and systematic way. Indeed, as a USAID Official who until 2010 was a member of Obama’s NSC explains, “today there is a more open attitude than ever before towards engaging religious actors” (USAID Senior Official 2011, author’s interview).

In terms of policy-making structures, processes of desecularization are evident in the institutional changes that have occurred in the White House and the State Department to manage and coordinate these inherently religious policy frameworks. Most prominently, within the State Department a new Office and Ambassador-at-Large position for International Religious Freedom were created in the late 1990s. An independent commission, the USCIRF, was established as a separate entity in charge of advancing religious freedom in American foreign policy. While in 2011 the number of commissioners and resources available to USCIRF was partly curtailed, OIRF instead seems to be growing in terms of staff and resources. A CSIS (2007, p.14) report found that by the mid-2000s OIRF had a staff of 22. By 2012, according to my calculations the office was employing at least 60 people (between civil servant staff, consultants, and interns).¹⁵³

Obama inherited from the Bush administration a small Office for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives in the White House (the WHFBO), which the Democratic President then revamped by giving it also a broader foreign policy mandate. The WHFBO became one of the leading policy-making voices in the “religious engagement” agenda. As an effort to create networks among policy-makers involved and interested in managing and promoting policies with an inherently religious content and interagency group on Religion and Global Affairs was created during Obama’s first term. This continuing and expanding processes of bureaucratization of inherently religious agendas suggest a deepening process of desecularization within the institutional architecture of American foreign policy-making since the late 1990s.

A parallel surge has occurred in the involvement of religious and religious-related actors in the policy-making process. Desecularizing activists and pundits such as Nina Shea, Joseph Griebosky, Douglas Johnston and Chris Seiple are included and consulted by policy-makers in the State Department and the White House. Thomas Farr has served as director of the OIRF. Hillary Clinton’s working group on “Religion and Foreign

¹⁵³ This number was reached by counting the individually named OIRF employees acknowledged in the July-December 2010 *International Religious Freedom Report*. See: www.state.gov/j/drl/rls/irf/2010_5/168439.htm (accessed 20/08/2012)

Policy” is a way of bringing the concerns of religious leaders closer to American diplomacy and statecraft. Such an effort, according to Suzan Cook, “may not be the first time it’s ever happened, but it’s the first time that it’s institutionalized” (quoted from Banks 2011). According to Chris Seiple, the working group creates a “safe space...where religious and governmental leaders of all political and theological stripes can gather and discuss how best to work together” (quoted from IGE 2012). USCIRF commissioners are mainly selected among religious leaders and lay religious activists, along with a host of other experts on religion, human rights activists, and law scholars.

An interesting trend, suggesting a deepening level of desecularization across time, is further discernible. President Clinton and President Bush chose deeply religious but laypeople as IRF Ambassadors-at-Large.¹⁵⁴ President Obama however has appointed Doctor Suzan Johnson Cook an ordained minister to fill the position. Likewise, President Bush appointed lay individuals to head the WHFBO.¹⁵⁵ President Obama appointed Joshua DuBois once again an ordained minister. Moreover, Obama’s novel Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships in the WHFBO, was overwhelmingly staffed with lay and religious civil society leaders.¹⁵⁶

Counter-secularist processes are discernible too. Overall the strong epistemic secularist culture which many desecularizing actors identified as hegemonic within the diplomatic establishment and its institutions appears to be weakening. The idea that international religious dynamics and factors “matter” to American foreign policy is increasingly becoming common sense. For example the Secretary of State and her office find it useful to consult OIRF, which at present (2012) appears to be the only bureau that systematically collects international religious data. Most importantly, FSI is developing

¹⁵⁴ President Clinton chose Robert Seiple, who was Ambassador between 1999-2001. At the time Mr. Seiple was president of World Vision, an Evangelical humanitarian organization and one of the largest international NGOs in the world. Robert Seiple is also the founder of IGE, which his son Chris Seiple directs. President Bush appointed John Hanford, who was ambassador between 2002-2009. Mr. Hanford, holds a Master of Divinity degree, and at the time of his appointment was a Congressional Fellow on the staff of Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) who was closely involved with passing the 1998 IRFA.

¹⁵⁵ Respectively: John Dilulio, Jim Towey, and Jay F. Hein.

¹⁵⁶ See: www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp/about/council (accessed 20/08/2012)

and delivering new courses and training material for all Foreign Service staff and ambassadors with the scope of creating an environment that is more predisposed towards understanding and appreciating the role of religion in international affairs. These changes are described as a turning point by desecularizing actors themselves. “It is a sure indication of “desecularization””, Brian Grim points out, “if the system allows for such courses to take place” (2011, author’s interview). Dennis Hoover, from IGE, argues that: “such trainings were something unthinkable just a decade ago” (2011, author’s interview).

While in the past, talk of religion was considered beyond the pale for most diplomats today the cultural and intellectual boundaries of what is permissible are slowly shifting and desecularizing. There is a growing sense that the U.S. cannot conduct effective policies without an understanding of global religious dynamics. At times the pendulum seems to have swung far to the other side. A tendency is noticeable in the IRF reports, for example, of reifying religious causes and effects. These documents minutely report all sorts of attacks and restrictions that people with a religious identity and belief are subject to. “Christians” are persecuted in one place, “Muslims” are attacked in another, “Sunnis” and “Shi’as” are clashing across the Middle East, “Baha’is” and “Ahmadis” are tortured everywhere, and so on. Clearly, there are few people in the world who do not have a religious identity or belong to some sort of religious group. However an image and narrative are often produced where violence towards faith communities or across sectarian lines is taking place almost entirely on religious grounds. Local context and history, along with actors’ political activism, party allegiance, political ideology, social grievances, and economic interests, for example, are all but absent as explanatory factors. The religious dimension tends to be instead elevated and reified as the primary cause of abuse.¹⁵⁷

For instance IRF reports regularly highlight the plight of persecuted Afghan converts to Christianity (see for example IRF Report 2010). Such cases often have a wide resonance across the American public. Yet little or no context is provided about the not-so-religious reasons why such events may be taking place. Little context is provided on

¹⁵⁷ For a similar perspective see: Hurd (2012)

the role played by the presence of largely Western (and Christian) military forces in Afghanistan, the impact of embedded Christian proselytizers within American military forces,¹⁵⁸ or the impact of Western military personnel wearing controversial “infidels” and “pork eating crusaders” patches on their uniforms.¹⁵⁹ Surely these issues all contribute to making conversions to Christianity not simply a matter of religious freedom, but also a deeply political and controversial one. Reports give little space to exploring such nuances and dynamics.

Likewise the Sudanese civil war is generally portrayed as a religiously based conflict by much of the religious freedom community. The 2011 USCIRF Report argues that the independence of Southern Sudan was a “stunning triumph for the right to freedom of religion or belief”, particularly after a, “20-year north/south civil war which had been triggered by the Khartoum regime’s militant attempts to impose its radical version of Islam on southern Sudanese Christians and animists” (2011, p.1). Surely there was a religious divide between South and North, but one wonders whether the conflict was singularly caused by attempts to impose religious law. Where would Darfur, which is mainly Muslim, fit in this picture? Little attention is given to whether sectarian fault-lines may just be the proxy for wider struggles for political or economic power.

Ideological secularist assumptions among practitioners are partly retreating as well. The very same idea underpinning the policy frameworks of international religious freedom and engagement are presupposed on overcoming ideological secularist biases. Religious norms and actors in these instances are not seen as dangerous and inimical to U.S. interests. These are instead mobilized in support of American foreign policy goals. The case for overcoming ideological secularist assumption in foreign policy, was made clearly by Under Secretary Maria Otero when launching the working group on “Religion and Foreign Policy”:

“Religion can be as dangerous as it is powerful when carried with zeal and fervor. We see every day how religion is used by human rights advocates

¹⁵⁸ www.militaryreligiousfreedom.org/weekly-watch/12-12-08/travel_the_road.html (accessed 20/08/2012)

¹⁵⁹ www.thedaily.com/page/2012/03/18/031812-news-infidel-gear-1-2 (accessed 20/08/2012)

and terrorists alike to defend their actions. But, for those of us in this room today, we believe in *religion as a force good* in the world [emphasis added].” (2011)

A stringent separationist interpretation of the Establishment Clause is being contested, rethought and relaxed in its applicability to foreign policy. Policy-makers have privately argued that “back in the 1990s those skeptical of the religious freedom agenda would cite concerns regarding the separation of church and state, today instead such objections are rarely if ever raised” (USCIRF Official-1 2011, author’s interview). Operations involving religious groups during the Cold War were kept secret and undercover, partly also for fears of infringing on church-state separation norms. Today the normative environment has changed, engagement and support of faith-based actors abroad is more public and visible. Indeed, “a consensus is emerging within State and the White House that there should be some leeway abroad in the interpretation of the Establishment Clause, especially when it comes to engagement with religious actors” (Cusimano Love 2011, author’s interview). Given these shifting normative grounds and the growing entanglement between American foreign policy and faith-based actors, the State Department’s legal office is in the process (as of 2012) of preparing a set of guidelines on what officials can and cannot do in the engagement of religious communities and the protection/promotion of religious freedom abroad (IGE 2012).

Conclusion

Ever since the late 1990s two broad policy frameworks structured around issues of “international religious freedom” and “religious engagement” have been progressively mainstreamed within American foreign policy. Concerns with the persecution and imprisonment of religious actors abroad, especially Christian or Jewish, is not new among American religious activists and political leaders. Likewise diplomatic contacts with and support to religious groups abroad have extensively occurred during much of

the Cold War. Yet the breath and depth with which these respective concerns and practices have been institutionalized in the past decades in American foreign policy and its decision-making structures is.

Indeed ever since the 1990s, two distinct, yet overlapping, domestic constituencies of actors, what I identify as *deseccularizing actors*, have emerged driving these qualitatively and quantitatively new policy developments. The first constituency comprises a number of different actors. At the core are faith-based activists, largely Protestant Evangelical, but also from other Christian traditions as well as non-Christian groups highly concerned for the state of their co-religionists abroad. These have been supported by prominent intellectual and policy elites, on the one hand, and political elites in Congress (often all highly religious themselves), on the other, forcing from “below”, “above” and “sideways” the State Department to pay closer attention to monitoring and promoting “international religious freedom” norms. The second constituency of deseccularizing actors revolves around a set of intellectual and policy elites, largely based in think tanks and universities in the Washington D.C. area, with very close ties to the foreign policy-making community. These actors, who also tend to be highly religious themselves, perceive American statecraft as problematically culturally and institutionally secularized. They mobilize “sideways” to mainstream through the catchall concept of “religious engagement” a better appreciation for the role that international religious actors and dynamics play in world politics and America’s security.

These different constituencies did not emerge in a social and historical vacuum but are part and parcel, and responding to, larger process of religious resurgence. Some are deeply anchored in, and others responding to, macro social and cultural changes taking place at the domestic and international level over the past decades, such as: the growing demographic and political clout of Protestant Evangelicals both domestically within the United States and globally, the emergence of political Islam in the Middle East and America’s growing foreign policy entanglement in the region, and the perception of declining secular forces and the surge in the political salience of religious identities, beliefs and institutions when it comes to conflicts. Religious freedom

and engagement actors have also respectively relied upon a foreign policy environment fertile to the promotion of human rights norms and the empowerment of civil society actors. The end of the Cold War especially 9/11, provided important historical moments of change and crisis for the articulation and implementation of their religiously based foreign policy programs.

As a result, gradual yet discernible processes of America foreign policy desecularization have occurred. In terms of practices, for example, America increasingly promotes norms that favor religious outcomes, monitors religious restrictions, sanctions religious freedom violating countries, advances interfaith dialogues, curbs international anti-defamation law campaigns, and provides programmatic and economic support to religious minorities overseas. Foreign policy-makers and officials are ever more regularly and openly reaching out to actors and groups exclusively because of their religious identity or beliefs.

Decision-making structures are changing too. New offices, appointees, working groups, and independent commissions, have emerged within and outside the foreign policy apparatus dedicated to managing and coordinating inherently religious policy frameworks and agendas. Religious experts, advocates and clergy are progressively included in the policy-making process in the State Department and the White House. The fact that knowledge is produced and programs are implemented with an inherently religious content, mirrors an ongoing process whereby epistemic and ideological secularist assumptions are losing their taken for granted status in the minds of individual officials and the wider cultural milieu of the foreign policy establishment. In the process, norms of church-state separation are being contested and revisited in a more accommodationist light.

The depth and extent of these counter-secular trends across levels is hard to gauge. It is important not to overestimate nor underestimate their significance. In the latter case, as religion and foreign policy are increasingly mixing, some have warned of the possible perils of an American theocracy (Phillips 2006). The State Department and the White

House have not become, however, overwhelmingly religious institutions. They still remain profoundly secular state bureaucracies. Both are huge and complex governmental machines that respond to a great number of interests and deal with an infinitely vast array of foreign policy and security concerns. Reducing them only to the pressures exercised by religious actors and factors, both domestically and internationally, would be a gross oversimplification, if not downright incorrect.

On the other hand, if one takes at face value what desecularizing actors say, it seems that not much has changed in the past decades. They argue that, albeit there have been important institutional shifts, offices and the officials responsible for dealing with religious issues are overwhelmingly marginalized within the bureaucracy and have had little policy impact (Farr 2012). Although there are new FSI courses with a religious content to them, some complain that the (all too) few existing ones are only “elective” (i.e. optional) rather than “required” (i.e. compulsory) (Cusimano Love 2011, author’s interview). People like Douglas Johnston argue that there is still an overwhelming secularist resistance to religion within foreign policy bureaucracies (2011c).

When all is said and done, it is however undeniable that desecularizing actors have been successful in moving the boundaries between “the secular” and “the religious” ever more so slightly in favor of the latter. It would be incorrect to argue that there is no separation between church and state when it comes to American foreign policy. What is not incorrect, though, is to point at processes of desecularization. For example at changes in practices and institutions that increasingly include religious agendas, a systematic surge of religious actors in the delivery and making of policies, and cultural and normative shifts more accommodating to religion than before. All of which are occurring in very circumscribed, yet unprecedented, places within the foreign policy apparatus.

5. AMERICAN FOREIGN ASSISTANCE: INTERNATIONALIZING THE FAITH-BASED INITIATIVES

Charity and religion have always been closely associated. In Islam, for instance, Mohammed initiated the practice of *Zakat* (giving a set proportion of one's wealth to charity), which constitutes one of the five Pillars of the faith. In Christianity, the parable of the Good Samaritan in the Gospel of Luke has inspired countless selfless acts and charitable organizations throughout history. No surprise then if some trace the roots of modern-day humanitarianism in the West to Christian missionaries treading the globe intent in meeting the (alleged) spiritual and physical needs of non-Europeans during the colonial period (Thaut 2009, p.322; Clarke 2006, p.843)

Yet, the modern day international humanitarian and development sector, which has experienced an exponential growth in the post-World War II era, has had to say the least a difficult relationship with religion. When in the United States USAID was created by the Kennedy administration in the early 1960s, development theories underpinning much government assistance programs were deeply rooted in modernization theory with its embedded secularist assumptions. Within this paradigm religion was perceived as a hindrance, at best, and as the antithesis, at worst, to social and political progress. Development was largely seen as a material process of economic growth, which had little to do with the spiritual and moral dimensions of poverty that faith organizations instead often emphasized and focused on (Clarke 2007, p.79)

In parallel, in the U.S., government support to faith-based organizations domestically increasingly became a contentious issue. From the 1940s up to the 1990s, the Supreme Court gave a strict separationist interpretation of the Establishment Clause in the Constitution's First Amendment (PEW 2009c, p.2). Under a separationist

interpretation most, if not all, funding of religion is seen as unconstitutional. From the 1970s the Supreme Court, which till then had allowed some government aid to flow unhindered to religious entities, started scrutinizing even more carefully the practice (Rogers and Dionne 2008, p.5). The Court increasingly distinguished between pervasively sectarian organizations – organizations that would hire according to religious beliefs and regularly mix social services with religious messages – and those that were merely religiously affiliated but acted and delivered social services as if they were secular. If an organization was deemed to be pervasively sectarian and religious, its opportunities to receive government aid became much more limited. These domestic normative developments also constrained government support for religious organizations when it came to foreign aid.

Here Laura Thaut's (2009) taxonomy of Christian faith-based organizations (FBOs), which distinguishes, among others, between "Synthesis Humanitarian" and "Evangelical Humanitarian" agencies, comes in handy. The former are churches and religious charities which, in order to access government and USAID resources, have diluted their religious rhetoric and effectively function as secular organizations (2009, p.335). Organizations belonging to mainstream churches, with a more ecumenical and humanitarian theology such as Catholics and Mainline Protestants, have been willing to tone down the religious content of their programs in order to meet government concerns about supporting religion. For example, their religious roots inspire FBOs such as Catholic Relief Services, Episcopal Relief and Development, or Mercy Corps to serve as Christian witness through their service, yet their primary concern is humanitarian and do not actively infuse their assistance programs with religious messages engaging in missionary and proselytizing work. Such organizations also tend to reflect, and at times appear indistinguishable from, secular organizations in their hiring practices, humanitarian goals, and operations.¹⁶⁰

¹⁶⁰ Quite interestingly some of the most well known NGOs today such as the International Red Cross, Oxfam, or Care have religious origins. These non-profit organizations however do not qualify as *faith-based* having even more so gone down a "secular route" and are no longer "guided by any theological statement or denominational commitment in hiring staff and carrying out their work" (Natsios 2001, p.191). Thaut (2009) calls these organizations "Accommodative Humanitarian" agencies, which aside from their

In “Evangelical Humanitarian” agencies instead, religion plays a pervasive role at all levels, with “evangelism not only incorporated into [their] humanitarianism but also [their] most important objective” (Thaut 2009, p.346). Evangelical FBOs generally come from more theologically conservative Protestant denominations and churches, and tend to hire strictly according to religious beliefs. What makes these Evangelical FBOs distinctive is “the way they combine humanitarian and development activities with a fervent commitment to winning converts to the faith” (Clarke 2007, p.83). Indeed many of these organizations that engage in international development, are also “church planting organizations who engage in relief and development as an ad hoc peripheral activity”(Kniss and Campbell 1997, p.100). Some may emphasize mission over humanitarianism, others may put the two on the same plane. The point here is that mission is an integral part of an Evangelical FBO’s humanitarian activity. Given the danger of blurring church-state lines when supporting such types of organizations, for the most part until the late 1990s USAID avoided funding Evangelical-inspired, as well as other explicitly proselytizing FBOs, to carry out international aid activities.

As Mark Brinkmoeller, a Catholic faith-based advocate, argued at the time he was leading the ONE Campaign’s faith-based relations and outreach strategy:¹⁶¹

“When it comes to USAID engagement with FBOs, Catholics and Episcopal groups have always been involved to some degree, Evangelicals less so. That’s because Catholic and Episcopalians use the language of natural law and can speak in secular terms about religious issues. Evangelicals instead speak in an explicitly religious language they do not have the same complex theological thought and are less inclined to use secular terminology. Catholics and Episcopal are comfortable not to talk “God speak”, Evangelicals are not” (2011, author’s interview).

religious roots are completely indistinguishable from secular organizations like Save the Children or *Medicins San Frontieres*.

¹⁶¹ Mark Brinkmoeller left the ONE Campaign and joined USAID in February 2012. Before being at ONE, Brinkmoeller was Director of Church Relations at Bread for the World, a leading FBO in the fight against global hunger.

This engagement between the American government and mainstream FBOs, albeit limited, makes U.S. foreign aid practices and institutions less fully secularized than American diplomacy and statecraft (discussed in the previous chapter). The environment within USAID compared to the overall State Department, for example, is somewhat more permissive towards religion. Andrew Natsios, former administrator of USAID and former vice-president of World Vision U.S. (the largest faith-based non-governmental organization in the world), explains the differences as follows:

“While American ambassadors and civil servants at State have always been reluctant to engage with local religious actors, USAID staff has long realized that to be effective on the field around the world it needs to work with local religious groups and leaders, whichever the religion” (2011, author’s interview)

Overall, even though there has been a limited engagement with religious groups, it is fair to say that since the 1960s up until the late 1990s American humanitarian and development assistance has, for the most part, been secular in character. USAID, and other aid delivering bureaucracies, largely had a secular institutional structure. Great care was taken to avoid excessive entanglement among church and state by sticking to the Supreme Court’s strict separationist interpretation of the Establishment Clause. The development theories and practices that donors and implementing NGOs drew upon were overwhelmingly based on a modernization paradigm of rational economic progress where religion was often associated with backwardness and tradition (Deneulin and Bano 2009, see especially Ch.2). Within this context there was scarce space for religious norms and religious actors, unless they somehow secularized themselves, in partnering with the American government to provide international aid. For most of the second half of the XXth century the intersection between religion and the American international

development sector may be thought of as “fragile and intermittent at best, critical and confrontational at worst”.¹⁶²

From the late 1990s onwards, however, a progressive movement from “estrangement to engagement” (Clarke 2007, p.79) between faith and foreign aid has occurred. Following the 2000, elections George W. Bush launched and institutionalized a series of now faith-based initiatives. When Barack Obama came into office, rather than scaling-back on the many Bush era initiatives, he retailored a few and overall continued and expanded many of them by building on the institutional and regulatory frameworks left in place by his Republican predecessor. All of this has led to a gradual and consistent desecularization of American foreign assistance practices and decision-making structures in just over a decade.

This chapter proceeds as follows. It first outlines the key desecularizing actors who have had a major role in pushing forward the faith-based development agenda in American foreign policy. The section also starts by placing these actors in the wider historical and social context of the time. The two sections that come after are historical and contemporary accounts of how religious norms and actors became increasingly entangled with American foreign aid, first during President Bush’s two terms and then evolving during the (first) Obama administration. An analysis of processes desecularization at multiple levels (in terms of practices, institutional design and cultural/normative shifts) then follows.

Desecularizing Actors in Context

This section starts by unpacking a number of trends as they relate to the resurgence of religion, the overarching historical and normative context, and important critical

¹⁶² I borrow this expression from Katherine Marshall and Lucy Keough (2004, p.1) who do not talk directly about U.S. foreign aid, but make a more general point about the relationship between the international development sector (UN, World Bank and other organizations), and religion and religious-based actors.

junctures that explain the progressive rise, and thereafter, success of desecularizing actors in implementing and institutionalizing their faith-based agendas. It looks first at domestic political developments within the United States and then at the larger context within which the field of development studies evolved in the aftermath of the Cold War.

First, the expansion of conservative Protestant Evangelical organizations and agendas since the 1970s-80s onwards has been a major development in American domestic politics. Their concerns became ever more entangled with those of the Republican Party's (Wilcox and Larson 2006). These newly politically and socially active religious organizations would also increasingly knock at the door of the states' and federal government to access resources for the provision and delivery of services. In the process they gradually and successfully contested church-state separation norms that were barring them from accessing government finances. With time the Supreme Court's strict separationist interpretation of the Establishment Clause started giving way to a more accommodationist stance. The result of the Court's reinterpretation was to "dramatically [increase] the government's options for partnering with religious groups" (PEW 2009c, p.16).

Correspondingly, during the 1990s a progressive rolling back of the federal government's direct intervention in service and welfare provision started occurring. According to Elizabeth Prodromou: "the emergence of a neo-liberal consensus in the 1990s across the political spectrum brought Democrats to think that government "could not" and Republicans that it "should not" provide welfare services", adding that, "this was a shift which opened a vacuum faith-based organizations stepped in to fill" (2011, author's interview).

These social and political trends on the one hand (i.e. the rise of Evangelicals and their growing links to the Republican Party), and normative developments on the other (the weakening of Establishment Clause strict separationist interpretations and the emergence of neoliberalism), converged setting the context that led to the first major domestic faith-based reform. In 1996 Charitable Choice was introduced by a majority

controlled Republican Congress during the Clinton Presidency. Charitable Choice was a provision of a larger Welfare Reform Act designed to reduce the size of government and encourage active civil society participation in service delivery. The provision was introduced to remove obstacles and expanded the eligibility of FBOs and churches to secure government funding and contracts for providing welfare services domestically.¹⁶³

The initiative relaxed certain rules that were more stringent in the past on funding for religious organizations. It exempted religious groups receiving government funds from having to hire employees who did not share the tenets of their belief and from giving up their explicit religious character. This also meant that they continue to display religious symbols, scripture and icons while delivering government social services. In essence Charitable Choice removed many barriers for Evangelical, and other overtly religious, organizations and ministries to access state and federal resources. John Ashcroft, a Republican Senator from Missouri and well-known religious conservative from the charismatic Pentecostal Assemblies of God, was responsible for introducing the provision in the Welfare act. As will be discussed later, Ashcroft continued to play a prominent role in the faith-based initiatives a few years later when appointed by G.W. Bush as attorney general (2001-2005).

These domestic changes need to be complemented with a number of key international developments. First, the end of the Cold War opened up a space, free from West versus East rivalries, for greater attention by developed countries to poverty-related issues in the so-called Global South. This was reflected in the explosion of Western resources poured into humanitarian and development programs and the staggering expansion of the NGO sector from the late 1980s onwards (Agg 2006, pp.1-2). At the same time globalizing pressures and neoliberal economic models were leading to a progressive withdrawal of the welfare state also around the rest of the world. This opened up a space for civil society actors to fill this vacuum. Unexpectedly for secularized development specialists, many of the most organized civil society actors proved to be religious themselves (Deneulin and Rakodi 2011, pp.46-48). This forced international

¹⁶³ For a first hand and comprehensive account of these developments see: DiIulio (2007)

development scholars and practitioners to “rewrite their secular script” (Deneulin and Bano 2009) and increasingly come to grips with religion’s continued and, at times, growing social and political presence around the world (see also Clarke 2006). Similarly Scott Thomas observes: “The way culture, religion, and spirituality increasingly impact the debate over the meaning of international development is another aspect of the global resurgence of religion” (2004, p.137).

A first indicator that intellectual and programmatic shifts were occurring within the world of international development was when the World Faith Development Dialogue (WFDD) was launched in the late 1990s. The initiative was organized by James Wolfensohn, then president of the World Bank, and Dr. George Carey, then Archbishop of Canterbury, with the scope of bringing together a group of senior leaders across major world faiths to discuss the links between religion and development. The initiative spurred the creation of new reports and departments in the World Bank and number of dedicated conferences around the world.¹⁶⁴

The domestic and international trends described above set the stage for important changes to come in terms of American foreign policy. Two broad categories of agents were instrumental in pushing and expanding the domestic faith-based initiatives to the international level. First, internationally oriented FBOs and activists, mainly Evangelical in character. Second, political and policy elites, mainly Republican and conservative in character, motivated by a mix of principled or strategic beliefs.

Principled Activists Pushing to Access Government Resources

Mainline Protestant and Catholic organizations have long been important and well-organized voices calling the United States to take an active role in fighting poverty abroad. Organizations such as Catholic Relief Services have been key developmental players and USAID implementing partners long before the 1990s. What has changed

¹⁶⁴ The WFDD continues to this very same day, in a slightly different form. Interestingly it is housed in Georgetown’s Berkley Center for Religion, see: berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/wfdd/about (accessed 20/07/2012)

remarkably in the aid panorama in recent times is the entrance of Evangelical organizations and advocates who have injected a good dose of energy as well as religion into the humanitarian and development agenda (Mead 2006, pp.37-38).

Since the 1990s, American Evangelical agencies have dramatically increased as a percentage of the total number of religious agencies engaged in international relief and development work. By 2004, Evangelical organizations accounted for 48% of the total number of religious humanitarian agencies and 33% of all relief and development agencies (compared to only 8% of Catholic organizations) in the United States (Thaut 2009, p.322). They have become more organized and present in Washington D.C. Some of the key players, which I will soon discuss in more detail, are: World Vision (founded in 1950), NAE's World Relief (founded in 1944), Food for the Hungry (founded in 1971), Franklin Graham's Samaritan Purse (founded in 1970), Pat Robertson's Operation Blessing (founded in 1978), and increasingly individual churches such as Rick Warren's Saddleback (particularly since in the 1990s).

During much of the 1990s and 2000s Evangelical organizations became among the most active campaigners to end poverty in Africa (Huliaras 2008) and among the most ardent advocates for vigorous action in the fight against HIV/AIDS (Burkhalter 2004). World Vision is one of the largest providers of international relief and development assistance in the world, with a total annual revenue as of 2010 of over \$1billion.¹⁶⁵ It has over 40,000 staff members in nearly 100 countries, that is even more staff members than CARE, Save the Children and the USAID combined (Kristof 2010). The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), especially under the guidance of Richard Cizik, became increasingly concerned at the turn of the millennium with international social issues. NAE's (2004) document "For the Health of the Nation: An Evangelical Call to Civic Responsibility" explicitly and repeatedly encouraged Evangelicals to take action on international poverty.

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[www.worldvision.org/resources.nsf/Main/annual-review-2010-resources/\\$FILE/AR_2010FinancialHighlights.pdf](http://www.worldvision.org/resources.nsf/Main/annual-review-2010-resources/$FILE/AR_2010FinancialHighlights.pdf) (accessed 20/07/2012)

Evangelical activism on foreign aid is driven both by a growing desire to fight extreme poverty internationally as well as an interest in expanding their foreign missionary work. Many prominent Evangelical pastors, in fact, are at the forefront of a booming missionary-aid nexus. Examples include televangelist Pat Robertson, whose relief organization Operation Blessing boasts revenues on average between 2011 and 2010 of \$400million.¹⁶⁶ Franklin Graham's relief and development organization Samaritan Purse, which had revenues in 2010 for \$385million, is active (and proselytizing) in over 100 countries around the world.¹⁶⁷

Megachurch pastor Rick Warren has developed a P.E.A.C.E Plan to mobilize Christians around the world to address what he believes are the key five global problems: spiritual emptiness (by planting churches), self-serving and corrupt leadership (by equipping servant leaders), poverty (by assisting the poor), disease (by caring for the sick), and illiteracy (by educating the next generation).¹⁶⁸ Warren has become a central supporter of programs to curb HIV/AIDS. He has committed millions in royalties from his all-time best-selling book *The Purpose Driven Life* (30 million copies sold) to those affected by the disease in Africa through his Acts of Mercy Foundation.¹⁶⁹ Bishop Charles E. Blake of the Church of God in Christ, the largest Pentecostal church in the US, founded Save Africa's Children in 2001 to support children affected by HIV/AIDS and poverty. So far SAC has assisted over 400 orphan care programs in 21 African nations, reaching over 200,000 AIDS-affected children.¹⁷⁰

Over the past decades major Evangelical FBOs and leaders have partnered with other religious and non-religious organizations in a number of high profile advocacy campaigns concerned with international poverty reduction, debt relief, and HIV/AIDS. Particularly successful were the "Jubilee 2000" and later on the 2005 "Make Poverty

¹⁶⁶ www.ob.org/press_room/annual_report/OBI_FY11_AnnualReport.pdf (accessed 20/07/2012)

¹⁶⁷ issuu.com/samaritanpurse/docs/4288_sp_2010_financials.final?viewMode=presentation&mode=embed (accessed 20/07/2012)

¹⁶⁸ See: www.saddleback.com/lakeforest/adults/peace/ (accessed 20/07/2012)

¹⁶⁹ www.purposedrivenlife.com/en-US/AboutUs/AboutTheAuthor/AboutTheAuthor.htm (accessed 20/07/2012)

¹⁷⁰ www.saveafricaschildren.org/pages/how_we_work (accessed 20/07/2012)

History” campaigns. In these instances Evangelicals joined forces with Mainline Protestant, Catholic, secular groups (like the ONE Campaign), and Hollywood and music celebrities, to push for debt cancelation for the poorest countries in the world and commit increasing resources for the Millennium Development Goals (Clarke 2006, pp.839-41; Huliaras 2008, p.165). Evangelicals were both at the forefront of these advocacy efforts as well as key political players. Especially because, as Tom Hart, a lobbyist for the Episcopal Church at the time, explains: “Evangelicals had an ease of access to the Bush administration that others did not enjoy as much” (2011, author’s interview).

Alongside high-profile international aid efforts by leading Evangelical organizations and individuals there is a parallel more “invisible” (Hearn 2002), but equally important, movement which also combines missionary work with development activity. Since their origin Protestant Evangelicals, as well as other American Christian traditions, have carried out missions around the world in the hope of alleviating suffering as well as garnering new converts. However over the past five decades “missionary activity by Evangelical and Pentecostal congregations expanded exponentially, displacing mainstream denominations” who dominated the field until 1960s (Clarke 2007, p.83). In the late 1980s roughly nine out of 10 American Protestant missionaries were Evangelical. By 2002, Julie Hearn, observing Evangelicals at work in Africa, would remark that: “the beginning of the new millennium marks not the end of the missionary era but its high point” (2002, p.32).

In 2001, an estimated 350,000 Americans travelled abroad with Protestant missionary agencies, and donations to such agencies totalled \$3.75 billion, a 44% increase in 5 years (Clarke 2007, p.83). In 2002, the Southern Baptist Convention, spent \$290m abroad, mainly in Asia and Africa, establishing more than 8,000 churches and baptising more than 421,000 converts (Huliaras 2008, p.162). In Kenya a study has counted at least 1,300 American Protestant missionaries, the highest concentration of any other African country (Hearn 2002, p.41). It is no coincidence then that American Evangelicals have become increasingly interested in the so-called Global South. Missions also serve as a conduit for information to domestic audiences about the needs of people

and fellow Christians in far flung countries (Wuthnow 2009). As Mark Brinkmoeller explains, using Haiti as an example:

“It is not uncommon that a Haitian pastor has been first educated in the United States and then sent back to his home country to open a Church. This pastor has connections back to America. He sends congregations over here information about his work over there and receives direct support by American congregations.” (2011, author’s interview)

Overall, Evangelical FBOs and churches have expanded their domestic and international presence. Their international missionary activism has come to dovetail with a growing attention to international development issues. They have formed coalitions with other Christian groups and secular organizations and have become key players in global aid campaigns. As Charitable Choice opened federal funding for the provision of domestic services to a wider range of FBOs, Evangelical activists increasingly came to demand by the end of the 1990s that similar government resources were made available for humanitarian and development activities abroad.

Political and Policy Elites Opening Up Government Resources

During this period, American political elites became increasingly sympathetic to Evangelicals’ calls to expand their opportunities to access government resources for social services. The introduction of the Charitable Choice initiative in 1996 had altered in a significant way the relationship between the government and FBOs domestically. Hence when the 2000 presidential elections came about, a virtual bipartisan consensus had emerged on the desirability of organizing more systematically the faith-based initiative domestically as well as expanding it to the international level. Both Presidential candidates Al Gore and George W. Bush jumped on the faith-based bandwagon. It was actually Vice President Al Gore who first spoke about the issue on the campaign trail in May 1999. Then-governor of Texas G.W. Bush addressed the issue a few months later, in July 1999, during his “first major policy address” as presidential candidate delivered in a

church in Indianapolis (Brownstein 1999). When governor of Texas, G.W. Bush, was the first governor to include Charitable Choice provisions at the state level.

Once elected, G.W. Bush quickly moved to turn into reality many of his promises on the faith-based initiatives (more on this in the next section). What drove Bush personally to embrace the faith-based initiatives may ultimately unknowable. It seems like both a mix of personal beliefs and political calculations may have played a part in the story. Two issues seem to have had a direct influence on the President. First, Bush's "born again" faith surely made him sympathetic to Evangelical position. This said, in the circumstance of faith-based initiatives what appears to have made him even more susceptible to their advocacy efforts seems Bush's personal life story that led to his "born again" experience in 1986. Indeed Bush turned to faith as a way of straightening-up his life and move beyond alcoholism which had plagued him for most of his adult life. An experience that Bush (2010, pp.31-34) himself has described as instrumental in improving his life, saving his marriage, and possibly leading him to the presidency.

Second, a number of key intellectual trends and political calculations among Bush's closest advisors may have played an important role as well. The fertile environment for faith-based initiatives among high-level Republican political leaders, generally less interested than liberals in social issues of poverty and healthcare, found its roots in an intellectual movement among conservative intellectuals and policy-makers: "compassionate conservatism". Mark Rodgers, a key player in the compassionate conservative movement of the 1990s and former chief-of-staff to Senator Rick Santorum, explains:

"Compassionate conservatism is a philosophical stance which born in the 1980s and developed in the 1990s. A framework which led to the Charitable Choice initiative and opened up space among conservatives to talk about poverty in the years following. Bush, who had seen the power of the church in changing people lives, was interested in the movement. A group was formed, the "Renewal Alliance", to help give policy guidance to the Bush campaign on faith-based initiatives" (2011, author's interview).

Simultaneously, Bush' campaign strategist Karl Rove saw Evangelicals as a pivotal voting bloc. According to Michael Cromartie, Vice President of the Ethics and Public Policy Center (EPPC), Rove believed that "Bush's personal faith as well as the promise of opening government resources for their activities by enacting the compassionate agenda could do much to mobilize them in the 2000 presidential elections" (2011, author's interview). Scholars and intellectuals such as Marvin Olasky, the god-father of modern compassionate conservatism, John DiIulio, a professor at Pennsylvania University who later became the first head of Bush's White House faith-based office, and James Q. Wilson, a professor at the Christian Pepperdine University, were invited by Rove during the campaign to meet with Bush and discuss the faith-based initiative.

President Bush Taking the Domestic Faith-Based Agenda Abroad

The discernible entrance of religious-related policies, actors, discourses and norms within the foreign aid sector was noticeable during the Bush administration in two broad areas. First, in the institutionalization and expansion of the Charitable Choice provision into a more structured domestic and international initiative. Second, the growing role religious actors and norms began to have in proposing and shaping global health programs, especially regarding reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention. This section provides a brief historical overview of these two parallel, but often intertwined, changes that occurred during the Bush administration.

The Faith-Based Initiative Goes Abroad

In his first month as president, G.W. Bush signed Executive Orders 13198 and 13199 (on 29 January, 2001) mandating the creation of an entirely new White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (what I have will call the Hite House Faith-Based Office: WHFBO) and establishing Centers for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

(CFBCIs) in five federal departments mainly concerned with domestic affairs. The initiative was intended as a “national effort to expand the opportunities for faith based and other community organizations and to strengthen their capacity to better meet social needs in America’s communities”.¹⁷¹ With these executive orders, Bush moved forward in consolidating and institutionalizing the faith-based initiatives at the domestic level inaugurated with Charitable Choice. John DiIulio, one of the brainchildren behind Bush’s compassionate agenda, was in 2001 initially assigned to head the White House office.¹⁷²

Along with the White House, USAID became an important target for reform. Andrew Natsios, a former vice president of World Vision, was appointed USAID administrator in 2001. With Executive Order 13280 (on 12 December, 2002) Bush established a faith-based center (CFBCI) also in USAID.¹⁷³ Both the WHFBO and USAID’s CFBCI were designed to create a “level playing field”, for churches and FBOs, especially Evangelical ones, to compete for foreign aid funds on equal terms with non-religious organizations (and other established and more secularized mainstream religious ones). The level playing field was to be achieved by identifying and reducing informational, normative and bureaucratic barriers for religious groups to access government resources which had long been precluded to them (White House 2001).

In 2004, the so-called “Final Rule” on participation by religious organizations in USAID programs was introduced. Under the new rule USAID could not exclude organizations competing for funding on the basis of: a) their religious beliefs; b) their hiring and managing practices, even if “sectarian” (that is hiring only people of the same religious faith); and c) whether their development or humanitarian operations were combined with “inherently religious activities” such as worship, religious instruction or proselytization –provided however that religious activities were separated in time or location from their USAID-funded activities.¹⁷⁴ The ruling transformed substantially

¹⁷¹ en.wikisource.org/wiki/Executive_Order_13198 (accessed 22/07/2012)

¹⁷² DiIulio was succeeded between 2002-2006 by Jim Towey, a devout Catholic and former legal counsel for Mother Teresa. Jay Hain, a conservative policy wonk, directed the office from 2006-2008.

¹⁷³ en.wikisource.org/wiki/Executive_Order_13280 (accessed 22/07/2012)

¹⁷⁴ www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_partnerships/fbci/rule.html (accessed 24/07/2012)

USAID policy on engagement with FBOs. By allowing FBOs that exclusively hired based on religious creed and who explicitly combined humanitarian work with religious practices and messages, the Bush administration made it easier for explicitly proselytizing and evangelizing religious groups to apply for funds.

Major Catholic and mainline Protestant organizations already had established systems in place to collaborate with the U.S. Government. Hence the White House and USAID's faith-based offices, the "Final Rule" and the appointment of Andrew Natsios as head of USAID, were all a way for the Bush administration to help Evangelical churches and organizations access government largess. Resources were not being set aside to finance specific faith-based initiatives or organizations. What the Bush administration did was to identify and try to eliminate barriers to the full access to existing federal resources by faith-based and community organizations. In other words, funds that were previously earmarked for development and relief activities were now increasingly available to FBOs and religious organizations, not solely to secular ones. FBOs gained wider access and non-religious NGOs had to increasingly share the available pie. In relative terms, these reforms and initiatives were a gain for FBOs and a loss for non-religious and secular NGOs.

Soon the resources available increasingly started flowing to religious organizations. As Lee Marsden has argued: "attempting to track the money awarded to faith-based initiatives by the US Government has been notoriously difficult" (2011a, p.8). The Boston Globe conducted a survey in 2006, one of the most comprehensive assessments of USAID contracts with faith-based organizations during the Bush Administration to this day (2012). The Boston Globe found that in 2001 USAID assigned 10.5% of its resources to religious groups and FBOs. In 2005, the amount nearly doubled, as the percentage rose up to 19.9% totaling over \$1.7 billion for that fiscal year (Kranish 2006).

Catholic Relief Services, a longstanding partner of USAID was the principle recipient of funds with over \$638 million. Organizations whose lines between

evangelization and development are highly blurred such as World Vision and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), the humanitarian arm of the Mormon Church, received respectively \$374 and \$85 million. FBOs that, even more explicitly, intertwine religious objectives with relief activities were handed a growing portion of government funds. For example Samaritan’s Purse, Franklin Graham’s humanitarian organization, received over \$35 million. World Relief, the humanitarian arm of the NAE, received over \$22 million. And Operation Blessing, Pat Robertson’s humanitarian organization, received over \$390 thousand. Explicitly Christian centred and proselytizing organizations such as Voice of the Martyrs and Evangelistic International Ministry received funding for the very first time (respectively \$305 and \$290 thousand) (Boston Globe 2006). USAID’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) has calculated that between 2006 and 2007 the amount USAID awarded to faith-based groups continued to rise from \$552 million to \$586 million. During those two years, USAID counted 512 assistance agreements with 136 faith-based organizations (OIG 2009, p.3).

Table 1: USAID funding to Faith-based Organizations Financial Year 2001 – 2007 in Millions of dollars (Marsden 2011a, p.9)

FY 2001	FY2002	FY2003	FY2004	FY2005	FY2006	FY2007	Total
247	260	420	419	375	552	586	2859

Sources: Boston Globe (2006) and Office of Inspector General’s Audit of USAID’s Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (2009)

(Conservative) Religious Values and International Health Initiatives

Once elected, the Bush administration also came increasingly under pressure by conservative religious supporters to place a set of restrictions on health programs financed by USAID and other departments abroad. Indeed by the end of the 1990s international health policies (such as reproductive health, family planning, and HIV/AIDS prevention) had all increasingly become contentious issues for social conservatives (Buss and Herman 2003). Conservative Evangelical organizations such as

James Dobson's Focus on the Family and Beverly LaHate's Concerned Women for America were especially active in lobbying the White House to change well established policy approaches on global health issues (Kranish 2006).

Soon after his inauguration, President Bush signed a directive reviving and expanding the Mexico City Policy, also known as the Global Gag Rule. This policy precluded awarding government money for international population assistance that is funded by USAID to NGOs of other countries that perform, counsel, or advocate for abortion services, even if the NGO uses money from other sources than USAID to carry out such activities (Kulczycki 2007, p.340). The policy was first introduced by President Reagan in 1984 and revoked by President Clinton in 1993.

Another arena of conflict over reproductive health policy, concerned the use of condoms as a family planning tool and, most importantly, as a prevention method for sexually transmitted diseases such as HIV/AIDS. Social and religious conservatives, who argue that "condoms are ineffective and that their use can result in promiscuity", lobbied to constrain USAID from implementing programs that emphasized contraceptives as a method of family planning (Kulczycki 2007, p.340). By 2008 U.S. funding levels for international family planning assistance had dropped by nearly 40% (accounting for inflation) compared to their high-water mark in 1995. That year saw the U.S., under the Clinton administration, as one of the leading voices in global sexual and reproductive health policy during the International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo (Barot 2009).

Religious actors and beliefs further informed Bush's President Emergency Plan For AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), launched in 2003. In the words of John DiIulio: "The single biggest program to result from born-again President George W. Bush's push ...for faith-based initiatives has been international, not domestic: a \$15 billion, five-year effort to address the global HIV/AIDS epidemic" (2007, p.263). In launching PEPFAR, Bush labeled it a "work of mercy" to save Africa and hailed what he called the "Lazarus effect" of anti-HIV drugs in saving AIDS patients from the brink of death. Once President Bush

had made up his mind, Condoleezza Rice was asked to meet with multiple church leaders to hem out the program.

A number of actors were instrumental in advocating for the initiative. First, White House insiders such as Michael Gerson, “the president’s “compassionate agenda” czar” (DiIulio 2007, p.263), played a key role. Gerson, who at the time was also Bush’s speechwriter,¹⁷⁵ is a devout Christian and Wheaton College graduate. *Time* nominated him in 2005 one of the 25 most influential Evangelicals in America. In parallel, Conservative Christian leaders and organizations that had long ignored the HIV/AIDS pandemic, seen as a disease punishing prostitutes, homosexuals and drug addicts for their “immoral behavior”, started paying attention to the issue. Especially when it came to Africa. Organizations like World Vision were at the forefront in lobbying Congress and the Bush administration for PEPFAR. For instance, Tom Hart recalls that:

“World Vision saw its orphanages in Africa being depleted by the disease and came to the realization that something had to be done and that the resources within the religious community, the appeal to their congregations and flock, were not going to be enough to fight the battle against AIDS” (2011, author’s interview).

PEPFAR focused initially on 15 countries. By the end of 2008, 1.4 million people infected with HIV had received drug treatment, 3 million counselled and tested and 6.7 million had received other care (Marsden 2011a, p.9). In 2008, before Bush left office, PEPFAR was reauthorized with an additional \$48 billion over five years (2009 to 2013). Its stated aim being: preventing 12 million new infections; treating 3 million people living with AIDS and caring for 12 million people, including 5 million orphans and vulnerable children. PEPFAR represented a considerable commitment of U.S. money and resources, one of the biggest by any nation to combat a single disease.

¹⁷⁵ Michael Gerson is also notable for having coined in 2002 the famous “axis of evil” expression referring to the threat of nuclear proliferation posed by Iraq, Iran and North Korea (Noah 2003).

Conservative religious “ideology” (Kulczycki 2007) and “politics” (Dietrich 2007), however also had an important influence in shaping the structure of PEPFAR. First of all the program was designed in a way that appealed to religious conservatives by focusing overwhelmingly on HIV/AIDS “treatment” rather than “prevention”. Initially, 80% of the budget was assigned to care and treatment, and other services. The remaining 20% would go to prevention, most of which had to be carried out following the ABC approach: Abstinence, Be Faithful, use Condoms consistently and correctly. Moreover one third of the resources for prevention were specifically assigned to “abstinence-until-marriage” programs up until 2008. This requirement that a portion of the resources be allocated exclusively to abstinence-until-marriage programs was lifted with the PEPFAR reauthorization in 2008. But the opportunity for organizations wishing to carry out abstinence-until-marriage prevention to apply for funding was kept intact thanks to the “conscience clause”.

The conscience clause was introduced with PEPFAR in 2003 and extended once the program was re-authorized. The clause allows FBOs that, employ only A (abstinence) and B (be-faithful) prevention methods, but do not use C (condoms) because of their religious outlook, to equally qualify for PEPFAR funding. In other words, the clause gives the chance to organizations receiving public funding to carry out prevention programs based on their own religious priorities. Even if these may be in conflict with evidence-based approaches, which suggest that using condoms is the most secure way to prevent the spread of the disease. Also, organizations receiving PEPFAR funding would have to sign an “anti-prostitution pledge”. The pledge required organizations not to work with prostitutes, a critical group in the spread of HIV, because of fears of encouraging prostitution and sex-trafficking.¹⁷⁶

Finally, the program was housed and managed by a newly created Global AIDS Coordinator Office in the State Department, with funds then distributed through USAID. In this way it was designed to circumvent other ongoing programs partly because religious organizations had little access and influence over them. First, PEPFAR was

¹⁷⁶ Information is retrieved from: www.pepfarwatch.org/about_pepfar (accessed 20/08/2012)

created even though the Bush administration had committed to support the UN's Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria already back in 2001. This was however an initiative where the U.S. would have much less leverage on deciding which kind of programs should be funded and which not. USAID was also circumvented. Mark Brinkmoeller explains this case as follows: "religion and faith played a crucial role, among others, in creating PEPFAR as a separate entity outside the control of USAID. USAID was seen as too secular, not favorable to funding non-abortion, non-condom initiatives" (2011, author's interview).

President Obama Consolidating and Broadening the Faith-Based Agenda Internationally

During the 2008 presidential race, Republican and Democratic candidates disagreed on most things, but all shared the common goal of extending Bush's faith-based initiatives. At the time of the campaign, among Republicans, John McCain signalled he supported the idea, especially as it related to improving educational programs for disadvantaged children. Mitt Romney, when governor Massachusetts, created a special state faith-based office. Democrats were similarly supportive of the initiatives. Hillary Clinton wholeheartedly supported the initiatives ever since she declared back in 2005 that she saw no contradiction between "support for faith-based initiatives and upholding our constitutional principles" (quoted from: Kuo and DiIulio 2008, online).

Candidate Obama, declared in a July 1st, 2008, campaign speech in Ohio on "faith in America" that he intended preserve as well as expand the faith-based agenda by giving it more resources and making it more pluralist and inclusive than Bush's was. He described the faith-based programs as a "uniquely powerful way of solving problems". He would revamp the White House faith-based office and would give it also "a broader role – it will help set our national agenda" (2008). During the speech he additionally promised to regulate better the intersection between aid and proselytization and to

legislate that federal grants could not go to organizations that discriminated (on sectarian bases) when hiring.

Barack Obama had long been a leading supporter among Democrats of giving religious groups a greater role in social work at home and abroad ever since his “Call to Renewal” speech in 2006 at a Sojourners conference (Dionne 2006). A mix of personal conviction and political opportunism, seem to come together here as well. On the one hand, the then-Senator’s interest in the faith-base initiatives appears rooted in his community organizing days on the South Side of Chicago where he would often work closely with religious organizations. This experience influenced his belief that, “faith-based organizations can be powerful catalysts for development and social action: from rebuilding communities ravished by natural disasters to responding to outbreaks of deadly disease” (DuBois 2010, online).

Equally, electoral expediency cannot be ignored. Following the Bush years Democrats had realized they needed to close what came to be know as the “God Gap” with religious voters (ABC 2007). Obama more than any other candidate on the left, sought to address this issue. During the 2008 presidential campaign, he actively and publicly courted religious, especially Evangelical, voters and leaders (Goldman 2008). To coordinate these efforts he mobilized a network of faith-based activists, such as Joshua DuBois and Mara Vanderslice, to carry out much of this outreach (Luo 2008; Paulson 2008). Furthermore, surveys were showing that 69% of Americans had a favorable opinion of the faith-based initiatives and using taxpayer money to support the work of faith-based organizations (PEW 2009a).

Consolidating the Faith-Based Agenda

A month after his inauguration, Obama reconstituted the White House’s faith-based office into a newly named Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (which I will still call WHFBO), with Executive Order 13498. Joshua DuBois was assigned to head the office, while Mara Vanderslice was tasked with overseeing all its international

activities. Obama's intent while extending the office was to make it more pluralistic and expand the range of religious (and nonreligious) groups it was going to engage beyond the Bush administration's narrower focus on conservative Evangelicals. In parallel he gave the office a greater policy mandate. First the President included the office, which under Bush was somewhat unanchored to the policy-making process, in the White House's Domestic Policy Council. Second Obama established a 25-member Presidential Advisory Council in the WHFBO.¹⁷⁷ With these decisions Obama brought even "more religion rather than less to the decision making and implementation process" when it came to foreign aid (2011a, p.4).

The Advisory Council comprised an overwhelming majority of faith-based actors across religious tradition and groups. It was tasked with providing the administration with policy advice from a faith-based and community perspective on international issues such as "inter-religious dialogue and cooperation", "environment and climate change, and global poverty", "health and development". One of the working groups was also dedicated to thinking through issues that had to do with "reforming the faith-based office". The result was a 164-pages strong, recommendation-rich, report (White House 2010).

The "reforming the faith-based office" taskforce's objective was to put on a more stable legal footing many of the controversial practices institutionalized by the Bush administration, especially regarding issues of church and state separation. Following the taskforce's recommendations, Obama signed an executive order on November 2010 that took steps to create more clarity, transparency, and constitutional compliance in the rules governing faith based partnerships. However, as close observers and participants in the process such as Melissa Rogers (2010) have noted, Obama's policies in this area were marked more by a sense of continuity than change.

Indeed under the Obama administration: a) the federal government still allowed religious organizations, even explicitly proselytizing ones, to compete on an equal

¹⁷⁷ See: www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp/about/council (accessed 23/08/2012)

footing with secular organizations for federal social service funds;¹⁷⁸ b) religious organizations could still retain a religious name and mission, select board members on a religious basis, and provide federally funded social services in buildings containing religious art, scriptures, and symbols; and c) religious groups could continue to hire based on religious beliefs and sectarian preferences even when using government funding for their activities. This last was a policy that candidate Obama had promised to reverse, but backtracked on seemingly due to intense lobbying by a wide-range of conservative and progressive religious leaders.¹⁷⁹ As such funds have continued to flow, as they did during the Bush administration, to proselytising and missionary FBOs.

Broadening the Faith-Based Agenda

The President's emphasis on engaging religious groups and structuring such engagement in a more pervasive and systematic way, which was also discussed in the previous chapter, has equally translated in the faith-based initiatives realm. As an official in USAID's faith-based office at the time of Obama explains:

“With Obama, we have moved from faith-based initiatives 1.0 to faith-based initiatives 2.0. While this office used to focus mainly on “leveling the playing field”, ensuring that FBOs are treated equally to secular organizations, today we actively seek new ways of engaging and developing partnerships with organized religious groups and NGOs across different faiths. What we are doing is *broader* than the Bush years [emphasis added]” (USAID CFBCI Official 2010, author's interview).

¹⁷⁸ With the understanding though that federal funds could not be directly used by FBOs to proselytize.

¹⁷⁹ In August 2010 a letter was signed by leading conservative and progressive Evangelical organizations (such as World Vision, NAE, Samaritan's Purse, Southern Baptist Convention, Sojourners) and other Catholic, Jewish and ecumenical religious organizations, urging members of Congress not to amend laws regarding hiring practices: [www.worldvision.org/resources.nsf/main/religious-hiring-rights/\\$file/RHR-letter.pdf](http://www.worldvision.org/resources.nsf/main/religious-hiring-rights/$file/RHR-letter.pdf). (accessed 23/08/2012)

Joshua DuBois from the White House tasked USAID's CFBCI with mapping past and current aid programs that engaged religious groups abroad.¹⁸⁰ This mapping was part of a larger effort to "develop mechanisms for the United States Government to systematically partner with religious organizations abroad" with the scope of alleviating "pain and suffering across the globe" (DuBois 2010, online). The President's commitment to strengthening government partnerships with religious groups was on display during the 2011 National Prayer Breakfast. Here Obama argued:

"...sometimes faith groups can do the work of caring for the least of these on their own; sometimes they need a partner, whether in business or in government...And through that office [the WHFBO] we're expanding the way faith groups can partner with government" (2011a).

When it comes to international development, it appears that USAID's CFBCI is pursuing three engagement strategies. First the office is involved in including ever more actively American faith- and community-based organizations in most new major international assistance initiatives launched by the Obama administration. For example, USAID would organize an event, among many, in January 2011 bringing together its administrator Rajiv Shah with over thirty religious leaders and activists to discuss Obama's new signature program to alleviate global hunger: Feed the Future.¹⁸¹ Similar efforts are being carried out for other key initiatives such as the Global Health Initiative, Child Survival, and Counter Trafficking in Persons.

Second, USAID's CFBCI is attempting to find new ways to partner with religious groups and leaders on the ground. A case in point was the 2010 Haiti earthquake. During this incident USAID's faith-based office sought to be at the center of the wider USAID humanitarian response by coordinating with local religious actors. FBOs *in loco* plaid an important role in Haiti's recovery phases (Wallin 2011). During the operation, USAID was able to capitalize and build upon CFBCI's network of local religious contacts. This

¹⁸⁰ This is similar to the mapping task given to the State Department's Office for International Religious Freedom by the WHFBO (see chapter 4).

¹⁸¹ See: blog.usaid.gov/2011/01/administrator-shah-speaks-to-faith-based-leaders-at-white-house-feed-the-future-event/ (accessed 23/07/2012).

experience was used to expand and institutionalize these relations more widely within USAID by creating a list-serve of local faith-based organizations for future operations (USAID CFBCI Official 2011, author's interview).

Third, USAID's faith-based office is increasingly thinking of exploring avenues for reaching out to the ever-expanding world of missionaries. As a USAID CFBCI Official explains:

“American churches, especially Evangelical ones, are in droves establishing branches in developing communities to provide among other poverty assistance. However, these churches, except larger ones such as Saddleback, know very little about development. Hence there is a lot of scope for us at USAID to partner with them and help them improve their poverty reduction activities on the ground” (2011, author's interview).

(Partially) Rolling Back Religious Conservative Norms on Health Policies

With the election of Obama the role of religion in international health policy was to some extent reversed and watered down. Most evidently, the religiously inspired Mexico City Policy / Global Gag Rule was lifted also thanks to the persistent campaigning and lobbying done by major women's health and rights organizations (Levey 2009). These organizations tend to have a larger constituency among progressive and Democratic circles. It is however not clear, whether the Obama administration is planning to restore the dwindling funding for family planning activities internationally.¹⁸²

PEPFAR instead has continued under the Obama administration without any major change. For example, while the required percentage for abstinence-until-marriage prevention funding was already lifted in the 2008 reauthorization, the “conscience clause” was left untouched. Hence, ample resources are still flowing to abstinence-only programs promoted by FBOs (Hastings 2010). Likewise, the “anti-prostitution clause” is largely

¹⁸² See petition by health and reproductive rights groups asking Obama not to cut further family planning assistance: health.usnews.com/health-news/blogs/on-women/2010/01/29/reproductive-rights-groups-beg-obama-not-to-cut-family-planning (accessed 24/08/2012)

still in place. Under Obama, PEPFAR constitutes the cornerstone (70% of the funding) of a new and broader Global Health Initiative (GHI). The initiative, which was announced in 2009, expands U.S. health assistance beyond HIV/AIDS to other areas such as child and maternal health, tuberculosis, malaria and other neglected tropical diseases. The initiative focuses the resources increasingly on capacity building and building partnerships for local health systems.

Assessing Desecularization

As the above account suggests, since the early 2000s, religious norms, interests, and actors have visibly become ever more closely integrated in American international humanitarian and development assistance policies and programs. This, I argue, has led to processes of desecularization in the foreign aid regime at multiple levels. This section starts by teasing out the changes in practices and policies, and the growing entanglement between these practices/policies and religious and religious-related actors. It will then focus on institutional developments and the inclusion of religious and religious-related actors in the policy-making process. Finally, it will concentrate on the counter-secularist ideational and normative changes occurring.

In 1996, Congressionally-mandated Charitable Choice opened up federal resources to a wide range of churches and FBOs (especially Evangelical in character) for the delivery of domestic social services. Little had yet changed in terms of foreign assistance where only a few, well established, and operationally secularized Mainline Protestant and Catholic organizations were given regular access to USAID government grants. Under the Bush administration there was a push, via presidential executive orders in 2001 and 2002, to expand the domestic faith-based agenda abroad. The guiding principle was to provide a “leveled playing field” between secular NGOs and religious FBOs. In particular the scope was to reduce the latter’s bureaucratic and regulatory obstacles when it came to applying for USAID grants and contracts. Resources became

increasingly available to a growing number of religious groups including large and small Evangelical, Pentecostal, and Mormon ones that had long been excluded because of their explicitly religious character.

During the Bush administrations international health assistance and some specific programs were molded around religious interests and norms. Policy guidelines such as the Mexico City Policy / Global Gag Rule, the prostitution pledge, the conscience clause, and HIV/AIDS prevention requirements which stressed A+B, and only last C(ondoms), were all structured around conservative religious principles. These changes were substantial in term of their desecularizing impact. Indeed the Mexico City Policy / Global Gag Rule and the prostitution pledge, for instance, would siphon USAID resources away from established secular NGOs such as CARE, Planned Parenthood, Marie Stopes International and Population Services International (Kranish 2006). These policy frameworks tilted the balance in favor of religious FBOs, since “US or foreign NGOs that provide[d] information on abortion (and which, by definition, are overwhelmingly secular) [became] ineligible for USAID funding” (Clarke 2007, p.83). New major initiatives were launched such as PEPFAR opening up an entirely new stream of funding that would be easily accessible FBOs. In some circumstance only accessible to FBOs given the insistence that one-third of all prevention funds be used for abstinence-only education.

In terms of international health programs, some re-secularizing changes have occurred under the Obama administration. The Mexico City Policy / Global Gag Rule, for example, was removed. As such, a better “balance” between religious and secular NGOs has been restored. This said, compared to the 1990s, the bar has overall moved towards a less secular approach to international health issues. For example, PEPFAR’s “conscience clause” is largely still in place. This means that FBOs cannot be excluded from receiving funds on the basis of their abstinence-only prevention activities when it comes to HIV/AIDS.

In the case of the broader faith-based agenda, Obama has enthusiastically supported it and in many ways sought to expand it. Obama has sought to move forward from simply “leveling the playing field” between non-religious and religious organizations. His administration has encouraged USAID to seek new and more comprehensive ways in which to partner both with FBOs in the delivery of major foreign aid programs as well as reaching out to religious actors and churches on the ground when responding to local needs. As of July 2012, USAID boasts on its website that “twenty-five percent of USAID’s partners are faith-based organizations”.¹⁸³ These policy changes have led to a deepening process of desecularization in terms of a growing entanglement between American state structures and an ever-greater variety of FBOs and religious actors.

Bureaucracies such as the White House and USAID are changing and religious and religious-related actors are increasingly called upon to assist in the development and management of faith-based policies abroad. The most important step towards institutional desecularization was Bush’s decision to establish an office in 2001 and a center in 2002 for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives respectively in the White House (the WHFBO) and in USAID (the CFBCI). When President Obama came into office, rather than dismantling Bush’s faith-based institutional architecture he *extended, deepened* and *expanded* it.

Obama extended it, by reconstituting Bush’s WHFBO into a better resourced and equipped office. He consolidated it by placing the new WHFBO closer to the policy-making process under the White House’s Domestic Policy Council. Obama expanded it, by adding a new special Presidential Advisory Council. As a rather enthusiastic staffer in Obama’s new WHFBO explained in 2010:

“There are few gifts that the Bush administration left behind. The faith-based infrastructure is one of those. It is great and we are planning to expand on it. It is especially a gift for us folks interested in the progressive movement of faith-based organizations. It allows us to have a voice and

¹⁸³ See: transition.usaid.gov/our_work/global_partnerships (accessed 23/07/2012)

carry forward our ideas in the policy process.” (WHFBO Official, author’s interview)

Before G.W. Bush’s presidency, religious or religious-related actors were occasionally, if ever, included in the policy- and decision-making processes when it came to international assistance. An *ad hoc* approach was substituted by a much more systematized one following 2000. Both faith-based offices in the White House and USAID, Mark Brinkmoeller points out, “created an avenue for more structured conversations with faith-based groups” (2011, author’s interview). In theory these offices should accommodate both religious and non-religious actors since the U.S. Government cannot be seen as supporting, due to Establishment Clause norms, the former over the latter. In practice though, the individuals that staff them and the responsibilities these are given is overwhelmingly skewed towards the faith-based angle.

During the Bush years policy-makers and pundits with strong religious ties, such as John DiIulio and Jim Towey, were appointed to lead the WHFBO. Bush relied also on people like Andrew Natsios, who came from the faith-based world, to direct the entire USAID. Individuals with close ties to the Christian Right movement, such as John Ashcroft and Michael Gerson, held important positions within Bush’s (first) administration and were instrumental in creating a regulatory and intellectual fertile environment for the institutionalization of the faith based-initiatives and the creation of PEPFAR.

Individuals related to the Christian Right movement are, for obvious reasons, absent from the Obama administration. The President also chose Rajiv Shah, who comes from the secular NGO sector, to head USAID. This may suggest some sort of re-secularization when it comes to religious actors involvement in policy-making. That is not the case however. In fact, Obama has not shied away from expanding the presence of religious and religious-related actors in many areas that oversee international development policy. He has just made it more diverse. Obama’s WHFBO head, Joshua DuBois is an ordained minister and not simply a layperson (as Bush’s appointees were).

DuBois' deputies Mara Vanderslice, up until 2011, and Alexia Kelly thereafter are both well-known progressive religious activists, Evangelical the former and Catholic the latter. Ari Alexander, a Jewish religious activist, was initially appointed to head USAID's faith-based office. Mark Brinkmoeller was chosen to replace him in 2012. Obama's 25-member Advisory Council, which is supposed to comprise both faith-based and non faith-based leaders, had only 2-3 members (depending on how one counts) representing secular organizations in 2010. In parallel, a wide range of external religious leaders and activists are regularly consulted and systematically invited to participate in government-wide discussions about aid and development.¹⁸⁴

“There has been an incredible amount of outreach to the faith community from this administration. I've never seen so much before”, argues an enthusiast Jim Wallis, founder of The Sojourners a progressive Evangelical advocacy organization (quoted from Marsden 2011a, p.4). Obama's time in office does seem to suggest a deepening level of desecularization in terms of rapprochement between religious actors and policy-making. As the American Civil Liberty Union's (ACLU) argued in reaction to the establishment of the President's Advisory Council:

“What we are seeing today is significant – a president giving his favored clergy a governmental stamp of approval. There is no historical precedent for presidential meddling in religion – or religious leaders meddling in federal policy [...] Although former President George W. Bush gave prominence to his faith-based initiative and informally consulted with individual religious leaders, even he never formed a government advisory committee made up primarily of clergy.” (ACLU 2009)

An increasingly less secularist outlook is detectable among political elites and policy-makers themselves when it comes to foreign assistance. During the past two decades, discourses favoring a greater inclusion of religion in foreign aid practices and

¹⁸⁴ For a quick sense of the degree to which the WH reaches out to and engages with religious groups see the following blog: www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp/blog (accessed 25/07/2012). For a list of events where USAID invited faith groups to participate on international aid discussions and programming see: www.usaid.gov/our_work/global_partnerships/fbci/events.html (accessed 25/07/2012).

institutions have been increasingly articulated. Quite noticeable is the weakening of ideological secularist assumptions when it comes to the role of religion in improving people's economic and physical wellbeing. This is clearly detectable in the ever more bipartisan endorsement among political elites of the faith-based agenda since the mid 1990s onwards. What is most interesting though is the intellectual shift that seems to underpin a similar growing consensus among policy elites around the desirability and legitimacy of faith-based approaches.

In policy circles the effectiveness of relying exclusively on secular NGOs to carry out development work is increasingly questioned. As Andrew Natsios explains: "you simply cannot work in societies around the world which are religious without involving religious groups on the ground" (2011, author's interview). An understanding is emerging among USAID and other development experts that working with American or local religious organizations makes for sound policy. Religion is progressively seen as the solution to underdevelopment, not the problem. The often-repeated advantages that FBOs are said to bring to the table are extensive local networks, credibility on the ground, and a motivated staff and volunteer force that is able to carry out work under great hardship. In this narrative, development and policy elites tend to regularly rhetorically emphasize FBOs role as key grass-root service providers reaching there where Government should or is unable to intervene. At the same time, for instance, the more problematic evangelistic and missionary objectives of many FBOs, and the closer association that is being established between American foreign policy and these kinds of religious activities, is instead generally de-emphasized.¹⁸⁵

As a result, over the years, a blind eye seems to have been turned on inherently religious activities carried out by many FBOs USAID has partnered with. Current faith-based rulings, circumvent the issue of Government support of proselytism by requiring

¹⁸⁵ In the case of sexual and reproductive health issues the debate however is somewhat more contentious. There is, in fact, a strong push back by the development and health communities to religious norms, in favour of scientific and evidence-based approaches, when it comes to issues such as HIV/AIDS prevention and family planning. The idea of using FBOs for a wide range of other services such as emergency relief or education, is not as contentious.

that if faith-based organizations engage in religious activities these should be funded privately, rather than through USAID grants, and should be separate in either time or location from USAID activities. Yet, the degree to which these regulations are effective at curbing that USAID money is either indirectly or even directly used for, and more broadly associated with, winning converts abroad appears quite limited.

First, USAID itself does not seem to do, or have the capacity to do, much monitoring on whether its funds are used to support inherently religious activities. A 2006 Boston Globe investigation reported USAID director Natsios acknowledging that USAID does not and could not really keep a close eye on whether groups were using money to proselytize (Kranish 2006). Civil society actors find it equally hard to keep USAID accountable. Heather Weaver, a staff attorney at ACLU's Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief, argues that: "compared to grants given at home, which are much easier to monitor, it is difficult to establish exactly what faith-based NGOs are doing with the funds that go abroad" (2011, author's interview).

Moreover, even if resources are used in line with current regulations, recipients on the ground may not tell the difference between what services are funded with private money compared to USAID grants. Above all, beneficiaries have little time for the nitty-gritty of far-flung and arcane bureaucratic regulations. Recipients hardly distinguish between the privately financed religious services, which often proceed or follow the USAID financed goods and services that are distributed to the needy. Furthermore, FBOs can use USAID funds to buy the necessary hardware (infrastructure, machinery, etc.), but then use their own resources to provide services that are often religiously infused. Franklin Graham's comments in this regard are rather instructive:

"Of course you cannot proselytize with tax dollars, and rightfully so. I agree with that. But it doesn't mean that we can't build buildings, we cannot provide housing and buy bricks and mortar. The proselytizing or the preaching or the giving out of Bibles, people give us funds for those."
(quoted from Kranish 2006)

For example, Samaritan Purse, Graham's organization, received from USAID \$830,000 to help build the Evangelical Medical Center in Lubango, Angola. The hospital's staff and clergy, who are not paid by USAID, are all Evangelical. According to Minne Prins, director of Samaritan's Purse operation: "all the nurses are Christians [...]. Nurses will be trained to not only talk about the disease but also talk about Jesus" (quoted from Marsden 2011a, p.12). Samaritan Purse received ample USAID grants to intervene in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake to provide, among others, shelters, medical care, food distribution, clean water and sanitation, and education (Beeson 2010). On the side, and thanks to private support, it then carried out its religious duties as is clear from the online diary of Dr. Furman, a medical missionary, posted on the organization's own website:

"I think about the future of Haiti. Will voodoo continue or will this be a time for Christ? [...] In the Samaritan's Purse clinics, many patients become first-time believers. I believe the work we are doing here – food, shelters, water and latrines, medical – is making a difference. I believe Haiti is on the verge. I believe we have one chance in time to change this nation. I believe now is the time for these people to connect with God."
(Furman 2010)

Similarly, Food for the Hungry, a faith-based development organization, is carrying out relief work deep in the mountains of northern Kenya financed by USAID. The organization received a \$10.9 million grant in the early 2000s to provide training in hygiene, childhood illnesses, and clean water. According to the Boston Globe: "the group has brought all that, and something else that increasingly accompanies US-funded aid programs: regular church service and prayer" (Kranish 2006). Indeed at Food for the Hungry's outpost in Lakartinya, staff members spoke openly to the Boston Globe correspondents about how they preached about Jesus while teaching breast-feeding and nutrition. According to the fieldworkers and villagers, over the seven years that the organization had been operating there, it had converted almost the entire area to Christianity (Kranish 2006).

World Vision, a major USAID grant recipient, regularly seeks to convert non-evangelical Christians and people of other faiths during its development operations. In countries such as Zimbabwe field staff sign a “statement of faith” and “evangelism committees” are set up at project sites (Bornstein 2002). In Kenya for example, Julie Hearn states, “of the NGOs with which USAID works, US evangelical missions are a significant constituency” among which feature prominently World Vision and Food For the Hungry (Hearn 2002, p.34).

In Pakistan, the Boston Globe found a World Witness hospital where top-of-the-line medical equipment, (computers, machinery, lecture theaters), were emblazoned with USAID stickers. The hospital patients however learned about the gospel from missionary nurses whose salaries, unlike the medical equipment, was not paid with taxpayer money. A brochure for the hospital explained that: “the hospital and staff feel that through Christ, terrorism will be eliminated in this part of the world”. “I want Muslims to become Christians”, the hospital director explained to his interviewers (quoted from Milligan 2006). And this may not just be an isolated case. An Ethics and Public Policy Center survey in 2003 showed that 81% of Evangelical leaders believed it to be “very important” to evangelize Muslims in other countries (Croft 2007, p.702).

Although there are regulatory barriers that prevent FBOs accessing U.S. government money from use these resources for missionary purposes, the substance in terms of perceptions and end results on the ground is may be quite different. Indeed while proselytizing FBOs may use (or report they are using) government resources to buy food, medicines, pay for petrol and operations and so on and not to hold sermons and distribute religious material; once on the ground the two are indistinguishable as the left hand attempts to save lives and the right one attempts to save souls.¹⁸⁶ A WHFBO Official has, in fact, privately commented that: “As a Government over the past decade we have turned a blind eye towards Christian proselytization. We need to be clearer on where we stand on this issue” (2010, author’s interview).

¹⁸⁶ For a similar perspective see also: Marsden (2011a); Pelkmans (2009); Thaut (2009)

Important state-normative desecularizing shifts are occurring as well. Changes are underway from a strict separationist interpretation of church-state norms when it comes to foreign aid. This is in part facilitated by ongoing domestic forces which are pushing the Supreme Court towards a more accommodationist understanding of the Establishment Clause, which also led to the emergence of Charitable Choice (PEW 2009c, p.11; Rogers and Dionne 2008, p.6). The Bush and Obama faith-based initiatives should be squarely placed in this shifting legal normative context. Indeed close observers of these developments have noted: “The Constitution is no longer a potential obstacle to a successful faith-based initiative in the White House” (Kuo and DiIulio 2008, online).

The loosening up of impediments towards building stronger church-state partnerships domestically, are mainly translated into foreign aid policy through USAID’s 2004 Final Rule drafted under the Bush presidency. In spite of campaign promises to tighten things up, Obama has simply clarified previously unspecified regulations, while leaving intact much of the Final Rule’s permissive approach to financing inherently religious organizations who discriminate according to hiring and proselytize internationally (Markoe 2011; Banks 2012).

Moreover, as of 2011 the Obama administration was seeking to make the Final Rule even less stringent by allowing “federal funding to be used to construct, acquire, or rehabilitate houses of worship” abroad (ACLU 2011). The G.W. Bush administration – like the preceding Clinton, George H.W. Bush, and Reagan ones – argued that the Constitution did not permit taxpayer money to be used to construct or rehabilitate buildings devoted to religious use, such as churches, mosques and temples. The proposed USAID changes suggest that an attempt is underway to further desecularize strict (secularist) norms of church-state separation. The following remarks by Heather Weaver, from the ACLU, aptly capture the changes underway:

“Something is happening here. Once we at ACLU used to focus on establishment clause issues mainly domestically, today we are branching out into foreign policy issues. There are worrying debates in Washington

that the Establishment Clause does not apply abroad.” (2011, author’s interview)

Generally there are two cases being made for a less separationist interpretation of the Establishment clause when it comes to foreign aid. First Evangelical, and other, religious organizations and movements have been successful over the years in constructing a powerful narrative around their exclusion from government contracts as constituting a “discriminatory” practice – even if such exclusion is based on concerns over blurring of church and state. As Mark Brinmoeller explains:

“In the religious milieu there is a sense of grievance that religion has been unfairly squeezed out of the public sphere. As a reaction there are strong voices pushing for a less strict separation and grater access to government resources” (2011, author’s interview).

Along with the normative argument by FBOs, there is also a foreign policy strategic argument, which is being advanced. This is based on the notion that an overly stringent interpretation of the Establishment Clause may be at times more of a nuisance than anything when it comes to securing America’s national interest and helping people overseas. Joshua DuBois has argued that: “if your focus is first and foremost serving people in need, then there’s not a tremendous amount of time left to debate the finer points of the church-state relationship” (quoted in Draper 2011). A USAID CFBCI Official makes a similar case as follows:

“We need to be pragmatic about how things work in the field. Religion is a pervasive presence in civil societies worldwide. Over restrictive interpretation of the Establishment Clause ties our hands in certain cases and we cannot meet our humanitarian and development objectives. It is important that we both clarify and update our understanding of the law, this needs to mirror world reality” (2011, author’s interview).

This laxer attitude towards supporting religious partners is filtering through USAID programs and practices. Because of mounting legal concerns that USAID was

supporting religious activities abroad, during the 2000s, an audit was carried out in 2009 of its faith-based initiatives. The audit discovered that USAID funds had been knowingly used for religious activities in at least four contracts that amounted to more than \$325,000 (OIG 2009, p.1). The report found that USAID officials, mindful of Establishment Clause issues, nevertheless would often overlook whether funding overlapped with religion “in light of compelling foreign policy priorities” such as pacifying Iraq or combating the spread of HIV/AIDS (OIG 2009, p.7).

The report found that funds were used for the rehabilitation of mosques and adjoining community centers in Iraq. USAID also funded, within a program to combat HIV/AIDS, lesson plans that contained Biblical applications and discussions. This monitoring exercise is however likely to have underestimated the extent to which resources were being miss-used. The audit relied on self-reporting by FBOs about “whether they had engaged in inherently religious activities using USAID-provided funding” (OIG 2009, p.21). This is a rather weak methodology, particularly if one wants to uncover any wrongdoing by FBOs themselves. As Lee Marsden has noted: “perhaps not unsurprisingly funded organizations reported back that they used the money in accordance with USAID practice” (Marsden 2011a, p.7).

Conclusion

American foreign development aid and assistance have never been, to start with, as fully secularized as for instance were its diplomacy and statecraft practices which were explored in the previous chapter. USAID and its staff have to some extent always worked with religious organizations, especially mainstream Catholic and Mainline Protestant ones, and local religious communities. Nevertheless, this chapter has argued, modern foreign aid programs, institutions, and intellectual frameworks have largely operated from the 1950s-60s onwards on a secular basis. Indeed religious beliefs and organizations were often seen as antithetical, if not inimical, to developmental models built around

modernization theories of the time. Yet over the past two decades a gradual and discernible process of desecularization has occurred.

Since the early 2000s the American government has launched a number of faith-based development and health initiatives. Gradually and steadily under the Bush administration the percentage of federal funds assigned to FBOs in general, and Protestant Evangelical ones in particular, grow substantially. With the first Obama administration, many Bush era policies were extended. Additionally, new and innovative efforts to partner and engage with the faith community at home and abroad were pursued by the Obama administration. There have been important institutional developments as new offices and centers were launched and then expanded in the White House and USAID to coordinate and manage much of the faith-based agenda. Religious and religious-related actors are ever more integrated into policy-making by being appointed to head offices, direct agencies, and sit on policy advisory councils with a focus on international aid. As Melissa Rogers, at Wake Forest University Divinity School and a former member of Obama's Advisory Council, observes: "Today, more than ever, the relationship between religion and foreign aid is more intentional, more visible to the public, and more widespread" (2011, author's interview).

Epistemic and ideological secularist assumptions, which implicitly and explicitly informed much development thinking before the 1990s, are being reexamined. USAID staffers and development experts have come to note the continued and newfound vibrancy or religious traditions, communities and actors in local contexts around the world. Local churches and faith-based organizations are progressively seen as important partners in delivering life-saving services around the world. Because these religious institutions and organizations are often rooted deeply in the social fabric of local communities, they are increasingly perceived as able, at times even more effectively than secular humanitarian organizations, to reach and influence people.

The injection of religion in development has not gone without controversy. Concerns have been raised about the blurring boundaries between church and state,

whether government funds should be assigned to organizations who discriminate on the basis of religion in their hiring practices, and whether resources should be made available to organizations which also explicitly proselytize. In the past, and especially before the 1990s, because of these apparent tensions court judges, policy and political elites were wary of granting funds to overtly religious organizations and churches. Today however, in the name of reducing discrimination against FBOs and reaching out to the world's poorest, strict norms of church and state separation are being contested and watered down. Presidential executive orders and USAID special rulings (in 2004 and a new emerging one in 2011) are creating an environment where American religious organizations and local religious groups have a freer hand in partnering with the government and USAID and *vice versa* to reduce poverty, violence, illiteracy and diseases abroad.

A number of desecularizing actors are the main causal force driving and promoting these policy, bureaucratic and normative changes. Domestic religious activists, in particular Evangelical ones, have done much to advance the faith-based agenda at grass roots and from "below". Their growing transnational international missionary work, compounded by closer attention to Christian co-religionists' suffering around the world from hunger, poverty, diseases and conflict, has prompted Churches and religious advocates to demand a mounting share of the available federal aid budget as well as new resources for humanitarian and development activities. Political elites such as Presidents Bush and Obama, and their policy advisors, have equally supported from "above" a greater role for religious actors in partnering with USAID. Both presidents Bush and Obama appear to have been guided by a mix of genuine belief in the power of religion to transform peoples' lives for the better, as well as opportunistic electoral calculations to grab the growing Evangelical and religious vote in America.

These desecularizing actors, and their interests and principled intentions, have not emerged in a vacuum. A series of international and domestic trends have made this process possible. At the international level, the end of the Cold War, the huge expansion of the development and NGO sector, a growing consensus around neo-liberal development recipes questioning the desirability and efficiency of state welfare systems,

compounded with the resurgence of religion in societies across the globe have created the context for a growing nexus between religious civil society actors and international development. Domestically within the U.S., the demographic growth and political salience of Evangelicals, normative shifts loosening previously strict separationist interpretations of the Establishment Clause, and the introduction of the domestic Charitable Choice provision in the late 1990s, further created a fertile environment for the international faith-based agenda.

It is important to highlight that, as was done in the previous chapter, I am not claiming that American foreign assistance is today completely desecularized. Nor that it follows exclusively a religious logic. Critics, who would like to see both more “resources” and more “faith” poured in the faith-based initiatives, have complained that there has not been enough of either (Kuo 2006). Rebecca Sager’s (2010) assessment of the faith-based parabola, since Charitable Choice up to the present, suggests these initiatives have been heavy on “symbolic politics” but quite light on substantive policy changes. Indeed, for instance, data show that despite the increases in grants and partnerships with FBOs, the lion-share of USAID funds still goes to secular organizations.¹⁸⁷ Most development programs and initiatives are not really designed around religious norms and interests, but follow other secular logics (development theories, economic principles, security imperatives, etc.). While strict church-state separation norms are indeed eroding when it comes to international development, this is a far cry from arguing that church and state have become one or that FBOs can do anything they want with federal resources.

Endless debates can be, and currently are being, entertained on whether the developments unpacked and explained in this chapter constitute a dangerous slide towards an American theocracy or whether they are just a toothless, yet politically expedient, façade. It is not my scope to enter these discussions. It is evident however, that religion *is* penetrating more and more in a small corner of American foreign assistance practices and policy-making structures. And with it a clear gradual process of

¹⁸⁷ For example, USAID top 5 vendors (governments excluded) for FY 2011 were: the World Bank Group, Chemonics International, World Food Program, Partners for Supply Chain Management and John Snow. See: transition.usaid.gov/policy/budget/money (accessed 25/07/2012)

deseccularization is occurring at the programmatic, institutional, intellectual and normative levels.

6. AMERICAN NATIONAL SECURITY: CONFRONTING AND ENGAGING ISLAM AND THE MUSLIM WORLD

During the Cold War the United States' chief foreign policy and national security concern was containing and deterring secular, indeed "God-less", Soviet Communism. While America always imbued its role in the world and its titanic struggle against the Soviet Union with religious meaning, national security policy was largely conceived and conducted in secular terms. During the Cold War, there was little space for religious concepts, practices, and categories when it came to formulating and executing national security policies in the White House's National Security Council (NSC), or the State Department. When the Cold War came to a close and, particularly, following 9/11 things changed substantially.

From the 1990s onwards America foreign policy became ever more entangled in the Middle East and North African region. Concomitantly local social and political dynamics were bringing "Islamism" and "Islamist terrorism" to the fore.¹⁸⁸ As different forms of political Islamic movements increasingly became over the past decades a central strategic concern to the United States, so too confronting or reaching out to the religious categories of "Islam", "Muslims" and "Muslim world"¹⁸⁹ progressively turned into

¹⁸⁸ I understand Islamism along the lines of Katerina Dalacoura's definition as a: "political ideology which employs an interpretation of Islam as a blueprint for building the ideal society" (Dalacoura 2011, p.15). Islamism in this sense can be used interchangeably with 'political Islam', but not with 'Islamist terrorism' which is defined as: "those individuals or movements who pursue Islamist objectives using terrorist methods" (Dalacoura 2011, p.15). Like Dalacoura, I start from the premise that "not all Islamists are real or potential terrorists or terrorist sympathizers, and that, far from being monolithic, Islamism can evolve in different and widely divergent ideological directions under the influence of specific factors and conditions" (p.47).

¹⁸⁹ Considerable generalisation is involved in using the terms "Islam", "Muslims", "Muslim world". Hence the use of quotation marks at this point and in other parts where I analyse foreign policy practices and discourses. Quotation marks will be omitted in the more historical and narrative part given the persistence and increasingly unproblematic use of these terms adopted by pundits and policy-makers in Washington.

central reference objects for American national security discourses, strategies and initiatives. This has led to a number of desecularizing trends in terms of foreign and national security policies implemented and in terms of changes to the largely secularized institutional and normative structures involved in the policy-making process.

Mapping and explaining in clear and precise terms the multiple desecularizing changes, which have occurred particularly over the past two decades, is no easy task. First of all, there is a nearly infinite amount of public statements, documents, scholarship and commentary that falls into what can be described as the *Islam and American foreign policy* literature. In order to circumscribe as accurately as possible what my intents are, I will first start by outlining what this chapter is not about. It is not about explaining in any comprehensive way the historical or contemporary drivers and results of American foreign policy in the Middle East. Nor does it seek to provide an authoritative account or critique of the War on Terror, in general, or counter-terrorist practices, in particular. It does not chart or critique in any direct or extensive way American policies towards political Islam, nor does it have the pretense to be yet another take on the myth or reality of an Islamist or Muslim threat to the U.S. or the West.

What is this chapter about then? It is about how *Islam* as a faith and the *Muslim world* as a set of countries which transcends regional blocks and a category of more than a billion people which transcends national borders, have become strategic analytical categories, acquiring ontological reality, in national security discourses and practices. More precisely, it will unpack how and explain why U.S. presidents and policy-makers have come to view inherently religious categories such as Islam and Muslims as fundamental to American national security. It charts how *confronting* or *engaging* and more generally *targeting* Islam and Muslims has become part and parcel of what American policy-makers think about in the process of foreign policy-formulation and do when it comes to policy execution.

The chapter is organized slightly differently from the two preceding ones. First of all, it takes “Islam” and “Muslims”, rather than the more general categories of “religion”

and “religious actors”, as the salient religious variables. Secondly, compared to the previous chapters, the current one will not have a section specifically dedicated to outlining key desecularizing actors among civil society, foreign policy elites, and high-level political leaders. That’s because over the past two decades, and especially following 9/11, there has been a virtual consensus across American policy and political elites on the necessity of either confronting or reaching out to Islam and Muslims as such. Disagreements emerge when it comes to defining exactly whom this Muslim “other” is and how to go about confronting or reaching out to it or them. Listing all key desecularizing actors separately, as previously done, would be a daunting task.

Actors will be instead pulled together into two broad *desecularizing worldviews* between those who see relations with Islam and the Muslim world in terms of “clash and confrontation”, on the one hand, and “dialogue and engagement”, on the other hand. These two worldviews have their own internal divisions and specific *desecularizing outlooks*. Larger worldviews and more specific outlooks are articulated by members of the foreign policy establishment and inform foreign policy debates and thinking in Washington on the subject of Islam and national security. The next section will outline these desecularizing worldviews and outlooks and to some extent the key desecularizing actors espousing them in more detail.

The chapter then moves onto tracing how the different desecularizing worldviews, and the actors supporting them, have fed into policy-making processes and outputs. These sections will present a comprehensive, albeit not fully exhaustive, account of key foreign policy initiatives – speeches and symbolic gestures, public diplomacy efforts, and presidential or interagency overt and covert programs – targeting Islam and the Muslim world during the past two decades.¹⁹⁰ These parts will be divided in a chronological order, with thematic sub-sections, starting with the Cold War and its immediate aftermath, moving onto G. W. Bush’s presidency (particularly following 9/11), and then Obama’s first term in office. The final part of the chapter is dedicated to conceptually teasing out

¹⁹⁰ Due to available sources of information in terms of reports, personal interviews and online content, I focus mainly on overt Presidential, NSC and diplomatic initiatives rather than covert programs carried out by the Pentagon or the CIA.

the different component processes of desecularization as policies intended to target inherently religious categories such as Islam and Muslims progressively became institutionalized within the decision-making architecture.

Desecularizing Worldviews and Actors in Context

Over the past three decades, Islamist movements and states have emerged in a vital strategic area for American interests such as the Middle East. American targets abroad and at home have also been subject to a growing number of terrorist attacks by groups claiming to act in the name of Islam. These developments have all reflexively led American foreign policy and security elites to grapple more generally with the issue of Islam and relations with Muslims in foreign affairs. National security debates involving (religiously-defined) Muslims and the Muslim world, rather than (secular) Arabs and Middle Easterners, or the Arab world and the Middle East, have become a staple within foreign policy circles.

Two broad distinct approaches, what I call “desecularizing worldviews”, have come to color American foreign policy elites’ attitude towards political Islam and by extension towards Islam as culture and religion. These worldviews are divided amongst those who see relations with political Islam and Islam in terms of *clash and confrontation*, on the one hand, and *dialogue and engagement*, on the other hand. These larger worldviews can each be divided into the following two specific sub-categories of “desecularizing outlooks”:

- Worldview: Clash and confrontation
 - Outlook: Good West-bad Islam
 - Outlook: Good Muslims-bad Muslims
- Worldview: Dialogue and engagement
 - Outlook: Good Islam-bad terrorists
 - Outlook: Good Islamists-bad Islamists

These worldviews and outlooks are *deseccularizing*, because regardless of which category individual intellectual and policy elites fit in or straddle when addressing the threat of terrorism or Islamist movements to American security, these nevertheless feel compelled to address also the relationship between Islam, as a faith, or Muslims, as a religiously-defined community of nations or people, and violence. By doing so religious faith, discourses, practices, identities and actors become a fundamental political category in international relations. While differing on many issues, as will be discussed shortly, these worldviews are all trapped in what Mamdani has called “culture talk” (Mamdani 2002).¹⁹¹

Clash and Confrontation Worldview and Strategic Policy Elites

These four *deseccularizing outlooks* are ideal types, inevitably they do not capture in their entirety all the debates, complexities and factions in Washington that push and pull for specific policies towards Islamist groups, in particular, and Islam and the Muslim world, in general. I will start by outlining the outlooks among those who view American-Muslim world relations as marked by hostility and antagonism, in other words by a clash of civilizations broadly defined or a more specific and circumscribed confrontation between America and Islamism.

The “good West-bad Islam” outlook is most explicitly articulated by prominent scholars such as Samuel Huntington and Bernard Lewis, whose opinions have greatly influenced public debates on Islam since the 1990s and carried substantial weight, as will be discussed later, among certain conservative policy-makers. This perspective tends to

¹⁹¹ In developing these categories I drew upon Mahmood Mamdani’s critique of the Bush administration rhetorical distinction between “bad” and “good” Muslims. For Mamdani this form of “culture talk” – the separation of Muslims into “good” peaceful ones and “bad” terrorist ones - is troubling because it provided cultural explanations to political outcomes, avoiding history and other socioeconomic issues, and because it superimposes on individuals a fixed identity shaped by the culture in which they are born (2002, p.767). The following passage from Mamdani neatly captures the deseccularizing power of such framework: “We are now told to distinguish between good Muslims and bad Muslims, Mind you, not between good and bad persons, nor between criminals and civic citizens, who both happen to be Muslims” (2002, p.767). I argue, with the four deseccularizing outlooks listed above, that “culture talk” in Washington does take more forms than the one identified by Mamdani.

see Islam as a monolith religion and culture where something has gone awfully wrong. Little effort is made to sharply distinguish Islamists as political ideologies and movements from Islam as a religion. The former are seen as a natural outgrowth of the latter's character as a religion or its inability compared to Christianity and the West to reform in the face of modernity (Lewis 2002).

As such, Islam and Muslims stand in stark antithesis to the West seen as the standard of enlightened modernity and democracy (Lewis 1990; Huntington 1993, 1996). The following passage from Huntington aptly summarizes this outlook:

“The underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power. The problem for Islam is not the CIA or the U.S. Department of Defense. It is the West, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the universality of their culture.” (1996, pp.217-218)

The “good Muslims-bad Muslims” outlook is most explicitly articulated by a number of pundits, columnists, think tank and research institutes closely associated with the neconservative movement or “persuasion” (Kristol 2003). Those holding such a view see the world of Islam as a whole split somewhat in two camps along the lines of violent anti-Western and peaceful pro-Western Muslims. Here, Muslims – whether self-described as such or even personally religious or not is often unclear – are perceived as locked into an ideological battle for the future direction of Islam as a religion and civilization. The “good Muslims” are apolitical individuals or pro-Western governments (Mubarak's Egypt, Saudi Arabia, etc.). These are touted as “moderate Muslims” either because of their religious convictions or their international stance which is not in antithesis with American interests first and values second.

The “bad Muslims” are instead Islamists of all strides, from globalized terrorist networks (Al-Qaeda), to domestic movements (such as the Muslim Brotherhood, Hezbollah, Hamas) or anti-Western states (such as Iran). Here, political Islam is

monolithically described as “Islamic fundamentalism”, “Islamofascism”, “militant Islam”.¹⁹² This global deterritorialized force is considered an evil on par with previous totalitarian enemies such as Communism and Nazism (Pipes 2002a; Frum and Perle 2003; Podhoretz 2007). Islamism is not just a product of historical developments or economic and political grievances, but the result of cultural resentment towards the West. It is conceived as an ideological opponent and security threat because of its perceived hostility to American values (democracy and freedom) as well as to its interests (access to oil, Israel’s security, curbing nuclear proliferation) in the Middle East and beyond.

Dialogue and Engagement Worldview and Strategic Policy Elites

On the dialogue and engagement side of the spectrum are those who challenge the clash and confrontation with Islamists and Islam narrative. The “good Islam-bad terrorists” outlook portrays terrorists and violent Islamist groups as an exception and a loud minority of fanatic extremists. These groups have hijacked and distorted Islam and have instrumentally used its language (such as: *jihad*, *umma*, *kafir*, etc.) for their radical political purposes (Esposito 2002). Terrorists are largely the product of political and socioeconomic forces, not culture or religion. It is a desecularizing outlook however because those holding it do not make simply the distinction between terrorists and civilians. But feel compelled to bring religion in the mix at least to make the case that there is little or no link between terrorism and Islam. Indeed, they argue “genuine” Islam is a peaceful religion and “real” Muslims are peaceful people, perfectly compatible with modernity, democracy and American values (Esposito and Voll 1996; Ahmed 2010). Rather than essentializing Islam and Muslims as inherently violent, the religion and its, more or less, faithful adherents are portrayed instead as innately peaceful.

Against notions of clashing civilizations, actors upholding such an outlook often propose one of interfaith and/or intercultural dialogue to dissipate misunderstandings and undercut terrorist narratives. They particularly seek to develop a broader based relationship with over one billion members of the world’s population who, while

¹⁹² For an overview of Neoconservative thought on Islam and political Islam see: Lynch (2008).

understood to be extremely diverse, are perceived also as sharing a common religious and cultural bond and possibly a growing belief that America is at war with them. It is an outlook which finds expression in the work of scholars with close connections to Washington policy circles such as Akbar Ahmed (Forst and Ahmed 2005). As well as by initiatives and centers such as Brookings' U.S.-Islamic World Forum directed by Stephen Grand, or John Esposito and John Voll's Georgetown University Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding.

The "bad Islamist-good Islamist" outlook unpacks more thoroughly the phenomenon of political Islam and how this relates in complex and not always straightforward ways to violence and terrorism. It does not split all Muslims into two simple camps of "good" and "bad". Those holding this outlook argue that Islam is no monolith, but a religion open to multiple and contradicting political interpretations, according to specific countries and social and historical context. Scholars, pundits and policy-makers holding this outlook distinguish between Islamist movements that may have legitimate grievances, pursued through peaceful and democratic means, and other more extremist and violent groups. America should recognize these nuances and should not be afraid engage with the former rather than dismissing all Islamists and Islam in general as inherently hostile and violent. This view tends to be articulated by close academic observers of Islamism with important ties to foreign policy circles, such as John Esposito (1991, 1999) and Peter Mandaville (2001, 2005).

Overall the two broad opposing desecularizing worldviews, and their more specific outlooks, are important because they frame the intellectual context in which successive American administrations, from Bush Sr.'s in the early 1990s to the recent Obama one, would address the growing salience of Muslim politics and Islamism worldwide. Indeed presidents and their administrations have in a way or another relied on these worldviews and outlooks – and even upon the very same scholars who articulated them – when framing and designing their foreign policies. While these outlooks provide different interpretations about the nature of and solution to America's real and perceived Islamist threat in the post-Cold War and post-9/11 world, they also have something in

common. They share a desecularizing premise to the extent that they all attempt, in their own way, to understand and explain the significance of inherently religious categories such as Islam and Muslims to international politics, in general, and American security, in particular.

The Cold War and its Immediate Aftermath: Islam Emerges as a Security Concern

During much of the Cold War the state of Islam and Muslims were not *central* security issues for the United States. Let me explain what I mean by this. America's chief international rival during much of the post-World War period up until the late 1980s was Soviet Communism, a thoroughly secular and secularizing force. Likewise in the Middle East, American foreign policy was largely framed in opposition to, at least up to the 1970s, revolutionary Arab nationalism led by President Gamal Abdel-Nasser of Egypt. Islam and Muslims did not figure prominently in any national security document or strategy. Rather than representing a possible threat, Islam and Islamists were actually implicitly seen as a force that could be harnessed to counterbalance Soviet Communism and secular nationalist Arab forces in the Middle East (Gerges 1999, p.60; Halliday 2002, p.ix). The chief example was Carter's and Reagan's embrace of the Afghan *mujahidin* as freedom fighters in the aftermath of the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Ahmed 2010, p.126).

The 1979 Iranian revolution was an important turning point. This episode, for the first time, brought home to a largely secularized national security establishment the idea that Islamism and Islam could pose a security threat. Gary Sick, then NSC staff member for Iran and chief assistant to Brezinski throughout the Iran crisis, indirectly reveals the epistemic secularist thinking taking place within the administration at the time as follows:

“...Khomeini's call for the establishment of an Islamic state [was] “absurd”; it ran counter the entire modern history of the Western tradition of secularizing revolutions. The U.S. foreign policy elite was thus

unprepared to deal with the unthinkable – the emergence of a cleric-dominated Islamic republic. U.S. officials failed to grasp the new revolutionary flame emanating from the mosques” (quoted in Gerges 1999, p.64).¹⁹³

Ronald Reagan, in an interview for *Time Magazine* in 1980 was the first to raise the specter of a possible “religious war” with “Muslims [who were] returning to the idea that the way to heaven is to lose your life fighting the Christians or the Jews” (quoted from Gerges 1999, p.59). Reagan fell squarely within a “good West-bad Islam” outlook, at least in rhetorical terms. In fact strategies or policies to avoid or win such a “religious war” were not being thought-of nor implemented. National security practices remained largely within a secular paradigm as the United States continued to see the Soviet Union and its client states as the real threat to international order.

Towards the end of the Cold War, Islamic movements emerged throughout the Middle East. Islamists gained political strength following Egyptian, Tunisian and Jordanian elections in the late 1980s. In Sudan a *coup d'état*, in 1989, brought the National Islamic Front to power. In Algeria, Islamists won the first round of elections in 1991, and event that led to a bloody civil war as the Military refused to cede power. With the Soviet threat receding, the issue of Islamic revivalism progressively turned into an important American security concern. Especially as U.S. foreign policy became increasingly embroiled in the Middle East and East Africa with the 1991 Gulf War, the 1992 Somali intervention, and renewed efforts in brokering a peace agreement between Israeli-Palestinians.

This was the context within which Edward Djerejian, then assistant secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs during the Bush Sr. administration, delivered his famous 1992 Meridian House Address. The speech was the “first thorough statement given by any U.S. administration on the Islamist question” (Gerges 1999, p.78). It was as well the

¹⁹³ For a similar account of the secular mind-frame within Carter’s National Security Council team at the time of the Iranian revolution see: Thomas (2005, p.1)

first major policy statement highlighting the salience of religion and Islam to American national security. Djerejian argued that in the post-Cold War world American policy in the Middle East would be based, among others, on defusing the idea of a coming confrontation between “Islam and the West” (Djerejian 1992).

In the speech Djerejian articulated a position that bridged the “good Islam-bad terrorist” and “bad-good Islamist” desecularizing outlooks, falling squarely within a dialogue and engagement paradigm. He would point out how “the role of religion has become more manifest” especially when it came to “a phenomenon variously labeled *political Islam*, the *Islamic revival*, or *Islamic fundamentalism* [emphasis in original]”. Yet Islamist political activity was “no monolithic or coordinated international effort”, but a complex phenomenon taking shape in different countries in different ways that had little to do with Islam itself. Islam in fact was “one of the world’s great faiths”, perfectly compatible with Christianity and Judaism as, among others, it “acknowledges the major figures of the Judeo-Christian heritage: Abraham, Moses, and Christ”. Those who believed that the Cold War was being replaced with a “new competition between Islam and the West” were offering a distorted and simplistic analysis of events out there, one that the “U.S. Government” did not share. Terrorism, not Islam was the enemy (1992, p.36).

The speech would articulate a first explicit approach to countries with strong Islamic movements, stressing outreach to Muslim moderates, economic aid, and help in resolving ethnic and religious conflicts. It is here that, for the first time, “Islam” and “Muslims” enter as formal categories into the discursive articulation of American foreign policy. From Djerejian’s address onwards, tackling the role of Islam in relation to America’s security concerns progressively became part and parcel of foreign policy discourses at the highest levels.

By 1994, against the backdrop of the evolving Arab-Israeli peace process, Bill Clinton would consistently address the relationship between the United States and Islam in light of emerging security threats posed by terrorism. In a speech to the Jordanian

Parliament, Clinton spoke within a “good Islam-bad terrorist” framework. He would repute the idea that “cultures must somehow inevitably clash”. In fact, Americans “respect Islam” and know that the “traditional values of Islam, devotion to faith and good works, to family and society, are in harmony with the best of American ideals.” America’s new foe was not a religion, but rather “forces that transcend civilization”, such as “terror and extremism” (Clinton 1994). Other similar speeches presenting a conciliatory and nuanced understanding of U.S.-Islam relations followed.¹⁹⁴

Tentative policy planning exercises to build a more coherent set of policies and practices towards Islamist movements and Islam were taking shape too. In 1993, a weekend-long seminar was organized on Islamic politics at the State Department attended by senior policy-makers, including Warren Christopher, then Secretary of State, and Madeleine Albright, then Ambassador to the UN. Informal study-groups of mid-level officials were formed to talk about and analyze issues pertaining to political Islam (Gerges 1999, p.89).

Islam, and in particular the “bad terrorist-good Islam” outlook which shaped the Clinton administration’s rhetoric, made its way into the National Security Strategy (NSS). In the context of the American embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania, the first nod to Islam in relation to terrorism appeared in the 1998 NSS. These attacks, the document argued, were perpetuated by a network of radical groups affiliated with Osama bin Laden who distorted “religion to justify the murder of innocents” (NSS 1998, p.16). The NSS went on to explain that American policies in the Middle East were “not anti-Islamic” as groups like Al-Qaeda alleged. Indeed Americans recognized and respected “deeply [Islam’s] moral teachings and its role as a source of inspiration and instruction for hundreds of millions of people around the world”. What U.S. policy in the region was directed at were “the actions of governments and terrorist groups, not peoples or faiths” (NSS 1998, p.54; see also: NSS 1999, p.45).

¹⁹⁴ For a sympathetic review of the Clinton administration’s approach to political Islam and Islam see: Gerges (1999, pp.86-114). For a very exhaustive, but markedly critical, range of citations from Clinton administration officials dispelling the clash of civilization narrative see: Pipes (2002b)

Along with emerging religiously charged discourses and evolving policy thinking, the first concrete actions explicitly directed towards Islam as a religion took shape through a range of symbolic gestures designed to reach out to Muslims and dispel misconceptions of inter-religious clashes. During a state visit to Indonesia in 1994, Clinton made sure to visit Jakarta's Istiqlal Mosque. In 1996, then-first lady Hillary Clinton hosted the first ever *Eid al-Fitr* dinner at the White House to celebrate the end of Ramadan.¹⁹⁵ President Clinton continued the tradition throughout his time in office. The foreign policy logic of these events was evident when the Pentagon and State Department followed with their own Ramadan celebrations.

To sum up. During the Cold War, security was defined chiefly in secular terms. With the 1979 Iranian revolution, Islam and Muslims first appeared on the radar screen of American presidents and national security advisors as a potential source of conflict and instability. Yet it was not until the end of the Cold War that senior policy-makers, such as Djerejian, began to articulate a framework to address the strategic issue of political Islam. In his Meridian House Address, Djerejian amply praised Islam, as a faith, and Muslims, as a community of believers, to dispel misconceptions of possible civilizational clashes. In the depth and breadth of its public pronouncements, strategic thinking, policy planning, and symbolic gestures, the Clinton administration went even further in emphasizing that America's security concerns in the Middle East were related to terrorism rather than the nature of a religion or its faithful adherents.

The Bush Sr. and Clinton administrations largely adopted a "dialogue and engagement" worldview towards Islam. At the time, some praised their approach for its sensitivity towards Islam and nuance towards the Islamist phenomenon (Gerges 1999, p.17), others saw them as dangerously conciliatory (Pipes 2002b). What is central to the argument here is not whether this was sound rhetoric and thinking or not, on the part of these administrations, but that it was *desecularizing rhetoric and thinking*. What is relevant here is that Islam and Muslims begin to acquire growing strategic salience for policy-makers and policy-making. By seeking through speeches and symbolic gestures to

¹⁹⁵ See: <http://www.history.com/topics/ramadan> (accessed 25/08/2012)

build bridges with Muslims and put to rest lingering doubts about the potential of a West-Islam rift, addressing the role of a particular faith and its people in international relations increasingly crept into the margins of national security rhetoric and practices. These were gradual small changes. There was yet little in the way of major and concrete policy initiatives and frameworks that specifically targeted Islam and Muslims.

September 11: Islam and the Muslim World Acquire Centre Stage

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 carried out by Al-Qaeda in the name of a global *jihād* against “Zionists and Crusaders” brought Islam from the margins to the center of American national security concerns. President G.W. Bush’s first reaction to 9/11 was to adopt a “bad terrorist-good Islam” outlook common to his predecessor. In an effort to downplay the idea that a hypothetical clash of civilizations had turned from distant nightmare to present day reality, the President visited a mosque in Washington D.C. on September 17. Here he pronounced an important and theologically charged speech on the nature of Islam as a faith and its compatibility with American values:

“These acts of violence against innocents violate the fundamental tenets of the Islamic faith...let me quote from the Quran itself: “In the long run, evil in the extreme will be the end of those who do evil, for that they rejected the signs of Allah and held them up to ridicule”. The face of terror is not the true faith of Islam. That’s not what Islam is all about. Islam is peace. These terrorists don't represent peace. They represent evil and war.” (Bush 2001)

Following these first conciliatory rhetorical and symbolic moves, the logic of war nevertheless soon took over. The administration’s views on the role of Islam in the attacks gradually shifted away from Bush’s initial praise of “Islam” and condemnation of “terrorists”. Key figures in the administration, such as Vice President Dick Cheney and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, came to hold a “good West-bad Islam” outlook

which was deeply shaped and influenced by scholars like Bernard Lewis (Observer.com 2006).¹⁹⁶ Conservative evangelical Christians, a central voting bloc of the Bush administration, saw 9/11 as the symbol of a deeper religious conflict. Prominent Christian Right leaders, who had wide and regular access to the White House, would denounce Islam as a violent and oppressing religion. Jerry Falwell (2002) compared Muhammad to a “terrorist”. Pat Roberson (2009) has described Islam as a “political movement” bent on dominating the world.

Neoconservatives were another key constituency informing the administration’s view of Islam. Pundits and policy-makers generally associated with the neoconservative movement such as Elliot Abrams, Douglas Feith, Zalmay Khalilzad, Lewis “Scooter” Libby, Richard Perle, and Paul Wolfowitz, held important government positions at the time. These obtained a growing sway and policy influence within the administration in the aftermath of 9/11 (Mann 2004; Fukuyama 2004). Their views of Islam were in the confrontationalist camp, but, as argued earlier, they largely espoused a somewhat more nuanced “good-bad Muslims” outlook rather than an outright clash of civilizations one.

Within the administration, not everyone subscribed to a specific desecularizing outlook. Indeed, “people like Colin Powell and Richard Armitage, worked outside cultural frameworks”, a Policy Planning Official argues, adding that “these touted at the time a more “Realist” line, which ignored religion and focused on assessing strategic interests rather than painting Islam or Islamofascism as the new existential threat to the United States” (2011, author’s interview). The “Realists” within the administration, however, even before losing the debate on the Iraq war (Woodward 2004, pp.148-53), had already lost the battle to frame the new ideologically heightened and religiously fervent international context within which America’s national security policy would be conducted.

¹⁹⁶ In speech to celebrate Bernard Lewis’s 90th birthday, Cheney would remark: “I got a wide range of advice [in my career] – some of it very good and some of it terrible. No one offered sounder analysis or better insight than Bernard Lewis...we have met often, particularly during the last four-and-a-half years, and Bernard has always had some very good meetings with President Bush.” (2006)

As the 2002 NSS revealed, the administration's view of the security threat posed by Al-Qaeda became crystallized around the "good Muslims-bad Muslims" outlook that neoconservative advisors and pundits championed. Terrorism and the war that was being conducted against it, the NSS explained: "is not a clash of civilizations. It does, however, reveal the clash inside a civilization, a battle for the future of the Muslim world. This is a struggle of ideas..." (2002, p.31). Winning the "war of ideas" against radical Islam, and influencing the outcome of this internal battle between violent/extremist and peaceful/moderate Muslims in favor of the latter, became a central national security concern for the administration (Abrams 2011, author's interview; see also: NSS 2006, pp.9-11, 36). By 2006 the notion that an ongoing "war of ideas" was taking place within Islam and that the War on Terror was part of a larger ideological struggle against "Islamofascism" had even permeated Bush's rhetoric (Stolberg 2006).

Defeating "Islamofascism" required more than just military operations and sound intelligence. Equally important to American national security became reforming Islam itself and winning the apparent battle for hearts and minds raging within the Muslim world. An ever-increasing number of symbolic gestures were employed from *iftar* dinners, to adding copies of the Koran to the Presidential Library in 2005, to conducting more visits to mosques in 2002 and 2007. As the War on Terror drums were well underway, policy towards Muslims and the Muslim world, however, moved beyond the realm of rhetoric and symbolism acquiring a substantive form.

Policies started to be designed and implemented to turn "bad Muslims" into "good" ones. Initiatives fell into two broad areas. First, an active military, diplomatic and aid campaign was pursued to promote liberal values and democracy in the Middle East and the (religiously defined) Broader Middle East. Influenced in great part by the "democratic peace thesis" the Bush administration, and especially its neoconservative backers, saw democracy promotion as a potent antidote to the poison of Islamist violence and extremism (Dalacoura 2011, pp.3-6; Lynch 2008, p.201). Second, it implemented a series of "Muslim-specific initiatives" (GAO 2006, pp.11-7). These initiatives largely revolved around a far-reaching public diplomacy and communication strategy designed to

overtly or covertly improve America's image and standing, while also targeting and discrediting Islamist ideology, in the Muslim world.

Democracy Promotion in the Muslim World

Democracy promotion as an element of American foreign policy is not a post-9/11 novelty, but has a long, complex and at times controversial history.¹⁹⁷ Yet after Al-Qaeda's attacks, America's national security became increasingly linked to the democratization, not only of the Arab world geographically contained within the Middle East, but also of the religiously and Muslim demarcated "Broader Middle East". While addressing graduating seniors at West Point in 2002, President Bush would argue that:

"When it comes to the common rights and needs of men and women, there is no clash of civilizations. The requirements of freedom apply fully to Africa and Latin America and the *entire Islamic world*. The peoples of the *Islamic nations* want and deserve the same freedoms and opportunities as people in every nation [emphasis added]." (2002b)

Soon thereafter, Iraq was presented as the test case for spreading democracy to the "entire Islamic world". The administration would repeatedly explain America's entry into the war as an opportunity "to make the Muslim world safe for democracy" (Kurth 2005, p.322). Making the case for the war against Saddam to the international community at the UN in 2002, Bush linked Iraq to the ongoing military intervention in Afghanistan and diplomatic efforts to promote elections in the Palestinian territories. Iraq was described as part and parcel of a broader strategy to inspire democratic "reforms throughout the *Muslim world* [emphasis added]" (2002a). Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq, would "show by their example that honest government and respect for women and the great Islamic tradition of learning can triumph in the Middle East and *beyond* [emphasis added]" (2002a).

¹⁹⁷ For good overviews of democracy promotion as an element of American foreign policy and grand strategy, see: Carothers (2007); Ikenberry, Inoguchi, and Cox (2000).

Alongside the “hard edge of military-led regime change in Iraq”, the administration rolled out “a complementary soft side” to its democracy promotion efforts in the Arab and Muslim world (Carothers 2003, p.403). The centrepiece of these efforts would be the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). The initiative was described by Richard Haas, then-Director of Policy Planning at the State Department, as an attempt to “expand political participation, support civil society, and fortify the rule of law [in] Muslim nations” (2003, p.144). Launched in 2002, by 2009 MEPI had contributed over \$530 million to implement more than 600 projects in 17 countries and territories in the Middle East (Spirnak 2009).¹⁹⁸

MEPI was largely designed around longstanding geographical boundaries, rather than Muslim civilizational ones, and housed in the regional Near East Affairs Bureau at State. Democratization support for the Muslim “beyond”, as Bush had mentioned in his UN speech, came in 2004. A Greater Middle East Initiative was presented by the Bush administration at the Sea Island 2004 G-8 summit in Georgia. The initiative was described at the time as: “part of President Bush’s “forward strategy of freedom,” by which the expansion of political rights and political participation in the Muslim world is meant to combat the appeal of Islamist extremism” (Cofman Wittes 2004). The initiative was then renamed the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Initiative. It was designed as a multilateral development and reform plan aimed at “fostering economic and political liberalization in a wide geographic area of Arab and non-Arab Muslim countries” (Sharp 2010, pp.19-20). The centerpiece of the initiative was, and at the time of writing (2012) still is, the Forum for the Future (FFF). The FFF is an annual gathering of G-8 and BMENA Foreign Ministers, civil society and private sector leaders, to promote and finance projects that support economic and social reform in the Muslim world.

¹⁹⁸ These sums do not include the war affords in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Winning the War of Ideas

Public diplomacy and strategic communication became a central tool in winning the “war of ideas” against Islamist ideology. Multiple initiatives, some widely publicized others undercover, were launched following 9/11. These initiatives were designed to reach out and improve America’s image in the Muslim world and expand the pool of “good Muslims”. As well as isolate the “bad Muslims” and undermine Islamists’ religious and political narratives by influencing theological debates among Islamic scholars and clerics. Whether they were effective and achieved their objective, this is a whole other matter, one that will not be addressed in any direct way here.

While ramping up its activities targeting “Islam” and “Muslims”, the Bush administration faced a number of institutional obstacles in coordinating and delivering policies along religious and civilizational lines. This was an important concern within the NSC. Elliott Abrams, who was at the time a NSC staffer, recalls how:

“In the administration some of us were wondering how does a state like the U.S. deal with a religion, like Islam? Who is in charge? Our national security bureaucracies, such the State and Defense Departments, dealt with countries and regions, but were not adept to coming up with a strategy that tackled the war of ideas going on within Islam.” (2011, author’s interview)

William Inboden, who covered important policy roles in the Bush administration at the time, similarly argues:

“In the administration we saw that within the Muslim world there were violent as well as peaceful Muslims. We wanted to reach out to the peaceful Muslims, but the State Department was tone deaf on religion and on how to engage with Muslims.” (2011, author’s interview)

Coordinating America’s efforts across bureaucracies, and within them, became high on the agenda. As Abrams recalls: “we formed an interagency group which sought

to understand how to deal with religion and the transnational threat posed by Islamic ideology” (2011, author’s interview). In 2002, under Condoleezza Rice’s supervision, the first such interagency group, the Strategic Communications Policy Coordination Committee (PCC) co-chaired by the NSC and the State Department, was created. In 2004 the committee was reconstituted as the Muslim World Outreach PCC in order to focus more explicitly on public diplomacy efforts towards Muslims and develop a strategy to marginalize extremists (Johnson, Dale, and Cronin 2005, p.7; GAO 2005; Kaplan 2006). The committee polled U.S. embassies for ideas on how to communicate with Muslim audiences. Among the ideas put forward, and thereafter increasingly implemented, included:

“...bolstering the influence of moderate leaders, working through allied Islamic nations such as Indonesia to counter extremism, funding moderate Muslim think tanks, integrating psychological operations into U.S. efforts, and giving foreign aid to establish moderate Muslim schools as well as to restore mosques” (Johnson, Dale, and Cronin 2005, p.8).

A comprehensive public diplomacy strategy was then launched in 2007. The strategy’s core idea was to: “isolate and marginalize violent extremists who threaten the freedom and peace sought by civilized people of every nation, culture and faith” (PCC 2007, p.3). This goal would be achieved, among others, by actively engaging “Muslim communities”, amplifying “mainstream Muslim voices”, isolating and discrediting “terrorist leaders and organizations”, “de-legitimizing terror” as a tactic, and demonstrating that the “West is open to all religions and is not in conflict with any faith” (PCC 2007, p.3). The strategy was drafted mainly with the scope of improving the effectiveness, encouraging the coordination, and giving a direction to an ever-expanding pool of Muslim-focused programs and initiatives launched in the aftermath of 9/11.

Media campaigns and TV and radio broadcasting started to be widely used to reach out to Muslims. One of the initial efforts to improve America’s image and dispel the clash of civilization narrative among Muslims worldwide was a \$15 million Shared Values Initiative. The initiative, launched in 2002, consisted of a TV and print media

campaign depicting religious tolerance and moderate Muslims living happily in the United States. The controversial and rather unsuccessful campaign was scheduled to overlap with the month of Ramadan and was aired in Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, and across the Middle Eastern countries that did not bar it. Other media initiatives followed. The Broadcasting Board of Governors (BBG), a U.S. government agency responsible for overseeing Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, launched the TV station Al-Hurra in 2004 and Radio Sawa in 2002 to reach Arab and Muslim audiences.

Exchange programs directed at Muslims, whether religious or secular, became a central component of the administration's outreach efforts. Both Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy Charlotte Beers (2001-2003) first, and Karen Hughes (2005-2007) later, implemented a wide range of exchange programs directed to Muslim youth, students, academics, business people, and religious leaders (Amr 2009, p.8). In 2007 the Fulbright Program was expanded to include an Interfaith Community Action Program bringing Muslim religious leaders and organizers from around the world to the United States with the objective of "building a robust interfaith dialogue".¹⁹⁹ By 2007, through the Citizen Dialogue initiative, more than 40,000 "Muslim American citizens", such as clerics, youth leaders, and musicians, were sent "across the world to engage with grassroots citizens in Muslim communities" (Hughes 2007).

Efforts to engage directly with Muslim communities and countries around the world occurred also at the highest levels. Karen Hughes took a much-publicized tour of the Muslim world in 2005, which included disparate countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey. During the tour she would meet women and youth representatives, but also sought to approach the religious dimension of public diplomacy. In places like Turkey, she would organize interfaith dialogues among local Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities as well as speaking to religious leaders to let them know that "faith" was also an "important part of life for so many Americans" (Hughes, quoted from: CSIS 2007, p.11).

¹⁹⁹ See: www.cies.org/news/download/InterfaithDialogue.pdf (accessed 25/08/2012)

A further push to strengthen America's engagement with Muslims came in 2008 when Bush appointed Sada Cumber, a Karachi-born Pakistani American, as the first-ever U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). Bush would explain Mr. Cumber's responsibilities as follows:

“The core of his mission is to explain to the Islamic world that America is a friend – is a friend of freedom, is a friend of peace, that we value religion – that, matter of fact, we value it to the point where we believe that anybody should be able to worship the way they see fit.” (2008)²⁰⁰

Great efforts were made to tarnish Al-Qaeda's image among Muslims. Reports at the time showed that the CIA was revitalizing Cold War-era programs of covert action to target, this time round, Islamic media, religious leaders, and political parties (Kaplan 2005, 2006). As Elliot Abrams confirms: “Some of our operations were modeled on the Cold War's CFF [Congress for Cultural Freedom]. Because of her background in Soviet studies, Condi was very receptive at the idea that we needed something like the CCF for Islam” (2011, author's interview).²⁰¹ The U.S. increasingly worked through “credible third parties rather than through direct American spokesmen”(Lynch 2010, p.15), in other words through religious leaders and opinion-makers, to expose Al-Qaeda's narrative. During James Glassman's stint as Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy (2008-2009), State Department resources were freely used to back a number of religious groups and “moderate voices engaged in the battle of ideas with extremists about the true nature of Islam” (Waterman 2011).

Madrassas (religious schools), particularly those that appeared to churn out Islamist ideology, became a concern. Reports cite \$157 million invested by 2004 to reform *madrassas* in Indonesia (Pipes 2011b). USAID launched an initiative directed to the broader Middle East region, especially Afghanistan and Pakistan, centered around

²⁰⁰ For an insider view of Sada Cumber's first meetings with OIC and country representatives and their religiously charged diplomatic discussions see the following State Department cable:

www.cablegatesearch.net/cable.php?id=08GENEVA637 (accessed 25/08/2012)

²⁰¹ The CCF was a CIA financed initiative during the Cold War that brought together left leaning and former-communist intellectuals, scholars and artists from the West and, where possible, from the East to denounce and expose Communist ideology and Soviet practices (Scott-Smith 2002).

working with *madrassa* religious leaders to develop textbooks and promote a broader curriculum that included mathematics, science, and literature in addition to religious studies. According to a USAID brief, the initiative was providing by 2008/2009 formal education to 48,000 children at 500 *madrassas* (Pease 2009, p.8; see also Pipes 2011).

Overall, the Bush administration would quietly spent hundreds of millions to fund a growing number of programs designed to promote “moderate Islam” by attempting to reform coursework in Muslim schools and building new ones; supporting moderate Muslim think tanks and foundations, Islamic media, radio, TV shows, and religious leaders; promoting particular strands of Islam such as Sufism; organizing workshops for Islamic political activists and non-profit groups; and restoring mosques and ancient Islamic texts. Countries and people were targeted across the globe from South East Asia, to Central and South Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and specific Sub-Saharan African and European countries with large Muslim minorities. A *US News* investigative report calculated that in 2005 the American government was spending around \$1.26 billion in public diplomacy to “change the very face of Islam” (Kaplan 2005). A more conservative and detailed breakdown offered by a Brookings report estimated that in 2006, the U.S. was spending at least \$437 million on public diplomacy initiatives specifically “targeting Arab and Muslim populations” (Amr 2009, p.8).

By the time President Bush left the White House, American national security debates were shot through with endless religious references. More Bush and his administration repeated that the War on Terror was not against “Islam” or “moderate Muslims”, but a confrontation against “Islamofascism” and “radical Muslims”, the more national security rhetoric and policy reflexively acquired a cultural dimension. This religiously charged and polarizing rhetoric further contributed to reproducing the clash of civilization narrative between the West and Islam on which groups like al-Qaeda based much of their ideological appeal (Halliday 2002, p.110-11; Kepel and Ghazaleh 2008, p.16).

Simultaneously, a growing number of polls began to track, and reify, what Muslims thought. PEW found that the War on Terror was contributing to producing a “great divide” between “Westerners and Muslims” (PEW 2006). Other opinion surveys explained how the Iraqi intervention, the abuses and Koran desecrations at Guantanamo and Abu Graib, America’s unconditional backing of Israel, its opposition to Hamas’ 2006 electoral victory, were fuelling the perception among “Muslims” that the U.S. sought to “undermine Islam” (World Public Opinion 2007). A widely publicized Gallup poll by John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed purported to explain what “a billion Muslims really think” about the West (Esposito and Mogahed 2007). The ire towards America that Muslims from Morocco to Indonesia were voicing, the survey argued, had little to do with extremist theology or incompatible values, but rather was the product of U.S. policies and actions.

Scholars and pundits in Washington when critical of the Bush administration’s response to 9/11 – its aggressive and divisive rhetoric and its militarized democratization program – would themselves fall back on culture talk. A classical refrain was to criticize the administration for repeatedly mistaking the good Muslim *forest* for the rotten terrorist *tree*. America, some argued, urgently needed to “comprehend Islam, not only for the sake of its ideals (which included religious tolerance) but also for its geopolitical needs and strategy” (Ahmed 2010, p.6). Prominent liberal policy-makers such as Madeleine Albright and Dennis Ross were involved in compiling a major report with the suggestive title: “Changing Course: A New Direction for U.S. Relations with the Muslim World” (US-Muslim Engagement Project 2009). Dalia Mogahed was, among others, a key member of the report’s task force.

With pollsters tracking Muslim attitudes towards America, scholars arguing the U.S. was misunderstanding Islam, and policy-makers calling for a new direction with the Muslim world, much of the national security debate in Washington critical of the Bush administration remained firmly within a desecularizing paradigm. One anchored to an understanding of international politics where religious identity, beliefs and actors

mattered greatly. This environment would shape the intellectual and national security context within which Barack Obama came into the presidency.

From Bush's Confrontation to Obama's Engagement with the Muslim World

When President Obama took office, repairing the “divide between the United States and the Muslim world” was among his administration's most pressing concerns (Amr 2009, p.7). Indeed, as a Policy Planning Official argues:

“The new Obama administration internalized the idea of the “Muslims”. Members of the administration would look at polling data out there and see that “Muslims” hate us, and that there was a “global Muslim” problem that needed to be addressed” (2011, author's interview).

The administration soon devised a strategy aimed at bridging this apparent divide with Muslims. Obama sought to mend fences by: i) shifting rhetoric towards a more conciliatory tone (as opposed to the confrontational one adopted by the previous administration); ii) attempting to address contentious foreign policy issues (as opposed to solely pressing ahead with democracy promotion); and iii) developing a broad-based policy framework to engage all Muslims and marginalize radicals (as opposed to solely focusing on winning the “war of ideas” against Islamic extremists).

Some pointed out how much of the administration's strategy towards re-booting relations with Islam paralleled closely many of the recommendations from the “Changing Course” report (Zaharna 2009, pp.5-8). This is no surprise given the close ties between policy-makers like Madeleine Albright and Dennis Ross and the Democratic leadership. Another important influence was Dalia Mogahed. She was invited, along with Eboo Patel a prominent advocate for inter-faith dialogue with Muslims, to sit on the President's 25-

member White House Advisory Council on Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships.²⁰²

A New Rhetorical Beginning

President Obama's first approach was to shift rhetoric and develop a discursive strategy on Islam. This strategy consisted in simultaneously underscoring the common values and interests that bonded the U.S. and Muslims together while deemphasizing the link between Islam and terrorism. The President repeatedly used his oratory qualities and personal story – during part of his childhood Obama lived Indonesia, his Kenyan father was Muslim – to reach out to Muslim audiences and address the increasingly sedimented clash of civilization narrative. During his 2009 inaugural address, Obama would make the first of many explicit and increasingly high profile conciliatory gestures towards “Muslims”. “To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect”, he remarked (2009a). During Obama's first overseas trip he visited among other countries Turkey, where he addresses the parliament remarking that: “United States is not, and will never be, at war with Islam” (Obama 2009c).

The apogee of these rhetorical overtures came with Obama's June 2009 so-called Speech to the Muslim World in Cairo. In a speech peppered with quotes from the Koran and religious references, Obama explained to an audience that went far beyond the highly symbolic Al-Azhar University where he spoke, that:

“I've come here to Cairo to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world, one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition” (Obama 2009b).

Throughout his first term, President Obama would repeatedly use the power of his rhetoric along with a number of symbolic gestures – continuing to host *iftar* dinners at the

²⁰² For more information on the Advisory Council in molding Obama's inherently religious policies see Chapters 4-5.

White House or visiting mosques overseas. Interestingly, from Cairo onwards the Obama administration would start to adopt the term “Muslims around the world” or “Muslim communities” rather than the more commonly used “Muslim world”. The difference is subtle, a turn of phrase preferred by the administration to signal its focus on diverse Muslim peoples rather than a monolithic Muslim bloc. While adding a level of nuance and complexity, the new administration would however still substantially work within a framework that sought to address rhetorically and policy-wise a religiously-defined Muslim “other”.

The second discursive strategy adopted to reduce tensions was to drop references to the charged language of the War on Terror, in general, and the “war of ideas” within Islam and against Islamists in particular (Burkeman 2009; Waterman 2011). The President’s new NSS would frame the terrorist threat in terms of “defeating and disrupting violent extremists” (2010, pp.19-22). A USAID Senior Official, who was part of Obama’s NSC between 2009-2010, explains the administration’s thinking at the time as follows:

“We sought to disassociate the link between terrorism and Islam. We left out references to “Islamic terrorism” from speeches and the NSS. We did not want to acknowledge the terrorists as speaking for Islam and their religion. We did not want to give Al Qaeda the credit that they wanted as Islamic soldiers and theologians, which they don’t have.” (2011, author’s interview)

Along with these symbolic shifts, a number of new policies were crafted in line with Obama’s new approach to the Muslim world. Similarly to Bush, Obama’s strategy can be broadly divided into indirect and direct policies aimed at winning over Muslim majorities and marginalizing Islamist terrorists. Indirect policies sought to address a number of contentious political tensions between Muslims and Americans. Direct policies sought to publicly broaden America’s engagement with Muslims while behind the spotlight focus on countering terrorist narratives in a more targeted way.

Addressing Policy Tensions with Muslims

Under Obama, indirect policies towards the Muslim “other” concentrated less on pushing for democracy across the Middle East and its Muslim beyond. They instead focused more on addressing contentious political and policy issues, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, torture and Guantanamo, and the war in Iraq. Scholars such as Esposito, as well as the members of the “Changing Course” report had suggested that these issues, rather than just the lack of freedom, were at the root of larger Muslim mistrust and narrower terrorist activity towards the U.S. (Esposito 2007; US-Muslim Engagement Project 2009, pp.6-7).

Barack Obama made resolving the festering Israeli-Palestinian conflict a priority from the very beginning – compared to the tradition of addressing the issue towards the end of a presidential career. Obama entered the Oval Office on January 21st, on the 22nd he appointed George Mitchell as Special Envoy to the peace process. Within the first month of his presidency, Obama signed executive orders to shut down the Guantanamo Bay detention center and curb any form of harsh interrogation that was tantamount to torture. He would also commit to withdrawing America’s military operations from the unpopular “war of choice” in Iraq, refocusing on the less controversial “war of necessity” in Afghanistan.²⁰³

The new administration abandoned the idea of forcefully promoting liberal values and democracy in the Muslim world via military means. It continued and expanded, however, most democracy promotion programs launched by Bush, such as MEPI and BMENA. Funding for MEPI reached \$582 million in 2010, an increase of \$50 million compared to 2009 (Sharp 2010, p.17). For 2011 the administration requested an additional \$86 million (McInerney 2011, p.3). According to estimates in fiscal year 2011 total funding for democracy and governance programs in the “broader Middle East” were projected to grow by 10% (McInerney 2011, p.3)

²⁰³ I borrow these terms from Richard Haas (2009)

Overall, addressing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the issue of torture, and America's occupation of Iraq had clear and explicit foreign policy and national security merits in their own right. Yet these policies were not carried forward in a vacuum of meaning. They had a more subtle and indirect intent. The urgency, with which they were dealt with, was to a great extent tied to the desire of repairing American's standing in the Muslim world. Indeed, if this were not the case, then why would Obama mention these very same issues as important sources of "tension between the United States and Muslims around the world" in his 2009 Cairo speech?

Widening America's Engagement with Muslims and Targeting Terrorists Narratives

A number of policy initiatives were implemented directly aimed at the Muslim world. Rhetorically and to some extent policy-wise the Bush administrations' "bad Muslims-good Muslims" outlook which underpinned much of the "war of ideas" framework was abandoned. This was replaced by a "good Islam-bad Terrorist" outlook that led the Obama administration to concentrate programmatically on engaging *all* Muslims, while simultaneously focusing more *narrowly* on countering extremist and terrorists' narratives. Overall, the idea animating the administration was to "launch a broad-based engagement effort" that moved "away from the "distorting lens" of terrorism" with which the U.S. had approached much of the Muslim world during the Bush administration (Lynch 2010, p.5).

An overarching organizing policy framework called "Muslim engagement" was developed (Lynch 2010, p.19). Under this framework, Obama pulled together, restructured and expanded many of the overt and covert public diplomacy initiatives launched by the Bush administration. Above all, Obama structured "Muslim engagement" around a set of new key offices and appointees designed to overcome the coordination problems and bureaucratic silos encountered by the previous administration when framing policies around religious and civilizational lines. The cardinal institutional centers of the "Muslim engagement" policy framework became: i) a newly appointed

Special Representative to Muslim Communities in the State Department; ii) the Special Representative to the OIC; and iii) a newly constituted Global Engagement Directorate in the NSC.

Secretary of State Hillary Clinton²⁰⁴ appointed Farah Pandith, a Muslim American of Pakistani origins, as Special Representative to Muslim Communities. Farah Pandith, had already worked as a staff member on Muslim outreach and democratization in the NSC from 2004-2007. Now she would report directly to the Secretary of State. Her mission was to “build respectful and strong long-term relationships between the U.S. government and Muslim communities”, “support organic and credible alternative narratives that counter violent extremism”, and building new “networks of like-minded leaders”.²⁰⁵

Under her watch U.S. embassies worldwide were increasingly tasked to host *iftar* dinners and actively connect, even across Europe, with Muslim leaders and communities (Kern 2012). Her office launched grass-roots initiatives and exchange programs targeting Muslim youth and women in America and around the world. Religious leaders and clerics have been brought in growing numbers to the United States with the scope of showcasing the country’s religious diversity and Muslim communities. In 2011, Pandith introduced – together with the State Department’s Special Envoy against Anti-Semitism – a campaign to promote pluralism and respect across lines of culture, religion, and tradition. She traveled widely to countries with significant Muslim populations meeting with local entrepreneurs, faith leaders, students, activists, bloggers, NGOs, and foundations.²⁰⁶

Along with appointing a representative to engage with Muslim *people*, President Obama also continued Bush’s policy of appointing an envoy to Muslim *countries*. In February 2010 Rashad Hussain was designated U.S. Special Envoy to the OIC.

²⁰⁴ Secretary of State Clinton has been very active in pushing forward Obama’s engagement strategy, see: www.rollcall.com/news/hillary_clinton_pushes_post_911_muslim_outreach-208558-1.html (accessed 25/08/2012)

²⁰⁵ See: www.state.gov/documents/organization/155334.pdf (accessed 25/08/2012)

²⁰⁶ See the State Department’s webpage dedicated to the Special Representative: www.state.gov/s/srmc/index.htm (accessed 25/08/2012)

Interestingly, one of the characteristics that made Hussain a stand out candidate for the job, President Obama explained, was his knowledge of the Koran by heart (BBC 2010). Before the appointment, Hussain worked with NSC staff in developing and implementing President Obama's "Muslim engagement" policies leading up to and in the aftermath of Cairo 2009. In 2008 he had co-authored a Brookings Institute report titled: "Reformulating the Battle of Ideas: Understanding the Role of Islam in Counterterrorism Policy" (Hussain and Madhany 2008). As Special Envoy, Hussain was tasked with strengthening business, health and technology partnerships with the OIC.²⁰⁷ He has also not shied away from publicly calling on Muslim religious leaders to go further in theologically denouncing terrorism and violence (Hussain 2010).

A third cardinal institutional center was a newly created Global Engagement Directorate in the NSC. The directorate was broadly geared towards overseeing public diplomacy and other government-to-people activities across the executive. However, much of its responsibilities during the first Obama administration were dedicated to formulating and coordinating the "Muslim engagement" agenda (Lynch 2010, p.19; Policy Planning Official 2011, author's interview). The Directorate was first lead by Pradeep Ramamurthy, a Washington intelligence and policy insider. Under his watch a multimillion Technology and Innovation Fund as well as new business investment initiatives (such as Partners for a New Beginning) were launched directed to the Muslim world. Business and science exchanges with Muslim countries were expanded, summits for Muslim entrepreneurs were hosted in Washington (Ramamurthy 2010). Ramamurthy traveled to Muslim majority countries to meet with government officials and secular and religious civil society groups to help "address concerns and misperceptions about American attitudes towards Islam and Islam in America" (Wikileaks 2010).

Accompanying Obama's wider "Muslim engagement" framework was a narrower and less public focus on activities known as "countering violent extremist" (CVE) narratives. The introduction of the term CVE was part of Obama's strategy to de-

²⁰⁷ See the State Department's webpage dedicated to the Special Envoy: www.state.gov/p/io/c36387.htm (accessed 25/08/2012)

emphasize both in terms of discourse and, to some extent, practice the notion of a “war of ideas” against an undistinguished and unified Islamist ideology. CVE’s activities focused mainly on local and context specific Islamist discourses and anti-American narratives, rather than suggesting the existence of a grand struggle of ideas at the global level. Given these important conceptual differences, at the heart CVE policies were very much in line with those of the previous administration. Especially, to the extent that their core intent was to “delegitimize the ideologies and ideas that animate violent extremists” (Lynch 2010, p.20).

Implementation hence focused not only on al-Qaeda’s global discourse, but also on countering the appeal of extremist ideas at a more context specific level. When it came to implementation, the Obama administration would however build upon “the initiatives of the last years of the Bush administration to empower, support and amplify credible voices inside the Muslim world [i.e. religious leaders and scholars] speaking out against extremists efforts” (Lynch 2010, p.20). Overall these changes in practices were not a major shift away from a desecularizing paradigm, but remained locked within it. The shift from a global war of ideas to CVE was a shift along the desecularizing outlook axis away from the “bad Muslim-good Muslim” framework of the neoconservatives, to a more nuanced “bad Islamist-good Islamist” one articulated by scholars with close ties to the administration such as John Esposito and Peter Mandaville.

Interest in reforming *madrassas* and religious education institutions continued. In October 2011, Doug Johnston’s ICRD (see chapters 3 and 4), began work on a contract from the State Department to assess the progress of educational reform in Saudi Arabia as part of the Kingdom’s deradicalization efforts. Part of the assignment is to determine the possible downstream impact of such reforms on other Muslim majority countries. “The ICRD’s reputation for competence and balance demonstrated in its work with the *madrasas* in Pakistan has led to this assignment,” explained a former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (quoted in Johnston 2011a).

In January 2011, as the Arab Spring was breaking out across the Middle East, Quintan Wiktorowicz, an expert of Islamic movements and radicalization, replaced Ramamurthy at the head of the Global Engagement Directorate. This appointment would alter the directorate's focus from a broad engagement with all Muslims (whether entrepreneurs, youth, scientists, etc.), towards a more detailed and targeted attention to Islamist movements and CVE activities. Interestingly, the appointment reinforced and confirmed that the directorate's chief responsibilities were to coordinate, in a way or another, the administration's policies dealing primarily with Muslim world matters.

Overall, during Barack Obama's first term in office, re-focusing America's War on Terror and re-booting its relations with the Muslim world became among the President's priorities ever since his Inaugural Address. Obama did not move beyond a desecularizing framework, he simply move from a "clash and confrontation" to a "dialogue and engagement" approach to Islam and the Muslim world. Exemplary in this regard is the following observation by a Policy Planning Official:

"We saw the carrying over from an administration [Bush's] to the next [Obama's] of an ontological category, the one of Muslims. The previous administration saw Muslims as a danger, the current one wants to reach out and engage with them" (2011).

As such, in terms of the salience of religion to American national security, this shift was not a change in paradigms. Rather it was a move along a continuum from a more confrontational *desecularizing worldview* to one more open to dialogue. The religious categories of Islam and Muslims, and the role of holy texts, religious practices, actors, and countries associated with these categories, still loomed large in national security thinking and policies. Indeed both liberal (Roy and Vaisse 2008) and conservative (Marshall 2010) critics exhorted the Obama administration to abandon altogether the idea of reaching out to "Islam" and the "Muslim world". Obama's strategy, they argued, dangerously reproduced, reified and legitimized Islamic identity and actors.

In terms of practices, the administration did launch new initiatives but it also built upon, modified and expanded upon what was already there from the Bush years. In the process Obama ended up both broadening and deepening America's entanglement with "Islam" and "Muslims". Indeed, as Farah Pandith, Hillary Clinton's Special Representative to Muslim Communities, would enthusiastically point out:

"Having worked on this issue [U.S.-Muslim relations] for many years now and especially in the context of a post-9/11 world, I cannot imagine more energy, dedication and interest in the issue of relationship building with Muslims around the world...No other time in our history have we seen the kind of attention over the course of the last year and a half on the issue of engagement with Muslims around the world" (2010).

Assessing Desecularization

Ever since the end of the Cold War and particularly following 9/11, the state of "Islam", as a religion, and "Muslims", as a group of countries and people sharing a particular faith or identity, have become central American national security concerns. In parallel there has been a gradual yet discernible process of *bureaucratizing* relations with this specific religious community and its more or less faithful adherents. This process of *bureaucratization* relates to the type of policies targeting "Islam" and "Muslims", the institutional changes that have accompanied this development, and the growing entanglement between Muslim and Muslim-related actors in the delivery and formulation of foreign policy. This development has led to, and has been driven by, important counter-secularizing and counter-secularist changes, which will be teased out carefully in this section. I will proceed in order by looking at changes in practices, then looking at institutional developments and entanglements between the policy-making process and religious-related actors. Finally I move onto exploring the extent to which there have been changes to secularist epistemic, ideological and state-normative knowledge structures.

In terms of practices, during the Bush Jr. and Obama administrations a growing number of policies were implemented to either *indirectly* or more *directly* confront, reform, dialogue or engage “Islam” and “Muslims”. In terms of the most *direct policies* towards Islam and Muslims, both the Bush and Obama administrations implemented a wide range of initiatives designed to win over the hearts and minds of a group of states and non-state actors especially targeted across continents because of their religious identity and/or faith. Bush discursively and in practice couched these set of policies in terms of a “war of ideas”, Obama in terms of “Muslim engagement” and “countering violent extremist” narratives. Attempts to win Muslim hearts and minds were pursued, by both administrations, first by making an ever increasing number of symbolic gestures, such as hosting *iftar* dinners in Washington and in embassies around the world, visiting mosques in the U.S. and worldwide, and by praising “good” Muslims (Bush) or “all” Muslims (Obama).

Secondly, by pouring hundreds of millions of dollars to implement tangible and concrete initiatives engaging “Muslims” in order to influence what they thought about violence, religious tolerance, democracy, West-Islamic world relations, and America. For instance, “Muslims” in general were being reached out to through an ever-growing number media, health, business, youth, women, scientific, and educational initiatives. At the same time government resources were increasingly directed to supporting activities with a decidedly religious dimension. These included organizing interfaith-dialogues, exchanges with religious scholars and clerics, restoring mosques, reforming *madrassas*, supporting particular religious groups over others (especially Sufi Muslims), and financing “moderate” Muslim religious figures and Islamic organizations in order to promote a theological interpretation of Islam that was not antithetical to U.S. security and interests. In terms of practices enacted and actors engaged to deliver American foreign policy, these policies constitute a rather profound level of desecularization. Indeed, at this level, American foreign policy has effectively sought to shape the course and content of a major world religion.

Accompanying these markedly desecularized policy practices, are important processes of institutional change across policy-making bureaucracies. Since 9/11 a number of desecularizing institutional developments have taken place in order to coordinate policy frameworks planned around religious and cultural faultlines. These developments were designed especially to overcome the secularized thematic, country, and regional boundaries around which much of the national security and foreign policy bureaucratic apparatus was accustomed to operate. Under Bush a number of interagency committees were organized in the NSC, such as the Muslim World Outreach PCC, to coordinate and implement America's "war of ideas". Special responsibilities on "Muslim" matters were also assigned to the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy in the State Department. A Special Envoy to the OIC was appointed in 2008. Many of these institutional changes were extended and deepened during the Obama administration. An OIC envoy was re-appointed and a new position of Special Representative to Muslim Communities was created in the State Department. A new Global Engagement Directory was set up in the NSC. While the directory was broadly designed to coordinate government-to-people activities, the *people* it has been mostly concerned with have overwhelmingly been "Muslims".

A growing entanglement between policy-making structures, on the one hand, and Muslim and Muslim-related actors, on the other hand, has occurred. Foreign policy decision-makers regularly rely on external expertise. Hence is no surprise that following 9/11 scholars recognized for their knowledge of Islam and political Islam such as Bernard Lewis, during the Bush administration, or John Esposito, Peter Mandaville, and Quintan Wiktorowicz during the Obama one, were included or consulted in the policy-making process. What is most salient, however, was the inclusion of officials and experts in the policy-making process not just because of their knowledge of "Muslim" matters, but also because of their publicly recognized "Muslimness", in terms of their background or their faith commitments. This was very much the case, for instance, with the appointments of Sada Cumber (Bush), Farah Pandith (Bush, Obama), Rashad Hussain (Obama), Dalia Mogahed (Obama), and Eboo Patel (Obama).

With time a loosening grip of secularist epistemic and ideological knowledge over policy-makers worldviews and institutional cultures is evident. Religious categories such as “Islam” and “Muslims”, largely absent from security discourses and policies before the end of the Cold War, have become ever more a concern to policy-makers. Especially since 9/11, American security is increasingly perceived by Presidents and high-level officials in Washington, as dependent upon what a group of countries and people, spread across continents with hugely different histories but unified by a particular religious identity or faith, think and do.

I distinguish here between the emergence of “identity Muslims” and that of “faith Muslims” as important non-secularist categories in American foreign policy discourses and thinking. “Identity Muslims” are all those countries and more than a 1 billion people that have become defined increasingly by their religious affiliation, regardless of whether these are faithful adherents to Islam or define themselves in religious terms. Over the decades there has been a construction of a religiously defined “Muslim” as an agent and the “Muslim world” as a spatial frame of reference. As such, men, youth, women, business people, scientists, activists, or countries, become the target of a wide variety of policies because they are “Muslim” rather than because of other non-religious criteria such as geographical location or social status. Implicitly capturing this desecularizing change, Justin Vaisse, a Senior Fellow at Brookings, has argued that:

“American policy-makers over time have come to address the “Muslim world” rather than the “Arab World”. But Muslims exist only in representations. Representations however do matter. Representations become reality when taken into consideration in research, analysis and policies” (2011, author’s interview).

The reification of “identity Muslims” dovetails with a growing attention paid to “faith Muslims” and “Islam”. This entails a dwindling power of epistemic secularist knowledge structures, as well as in some circumstances a weakening of ideological secularism. As this process occurs religious authority and theology becomes important, at times even magnified and reified, in the worldview of leading decision- and policy-

makers. A number of issues follow from this. First, a notion gains ground (in certain policy circles) that the tensions between America and “Muslims”, in general, and America and Islamist groups, in particular, is the result of religious differences and misunderstandings rather than the product of conflicting political and economic interests. Second, the state of Islam as a faith, its different theological interpretations and traditions, and its history become a major concern for American policy-makers. Third, religious texts and beliefs are seen, or elevated, as representatives of entire groups of people or countries. Policy-makers come to believe, for example, that a secular Indonesian or Nigerian or any other Arab, may be susceptible to an American president quoting the Koran in Cairo. This belief constitutes an evident move away from a purely secular understanding of the forces and dynamics taking place in international politics.

Fourth, Presidents and high-level officials start feeling increasingly comfortable intervening in theologically charged debates about Islam and religion. They start entertaining discussions about what Islam’s true nature is, exploring the compatibility of Islam with other religious faiths, explaining what Muhammad’s real teachings were, highlighting what the correct interpretations of the faith are and who is a religious moderate, a fundamentalist or a *jihadist*, and so on. For instance, is Islam really a “religion of peace”, as President Bush explained outside a mosque while quoting the Koran just after 9/11? According to some of his own Christian Right and neoconservative supporters this was not the case. Staunch secularists like Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins would surely find equally problematic such a comment. For them Islam, like any other religion, is unlikely to be peaceful. By making a call on the nature of Islam and quoting the Koran in his mosque speech – rather than simply arguing that 9/11 and Islam were completely unrelated and then moving on – Bush made theological interpretation and discussion an important part of national security debates. So did Obama in Cairo after him.

The policy outcome of this process is the emergence inter-faith dialogue initiatives as well as programs designed to develop particular interpretations of Islam as an antidote to violence and terrorism. Islam itself increasingly becomes seen as the

solution to America's security problems. This is quite ironic given that "Islam is the solution!" is a slogan that Islamists themselves, such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, have widely adopted.

Finally, a progressive erosion of a strict separationist interpretation among policy-makers of the Constitution's Establishment Clause is detectable. Due to national security concerns, norms of church-state (or better mosque-state) separation are seen as ever less binding when it comes to winning over Muslim hearts and minds. Policymakers at the time of Bush, a *US News* report argues, realized that the "war of ideas" was going to drag "Washington into a battle involving mosques, mullahs, and Scripture [which] went against 200 years of U.S. church-state relations" (Kaplan 2005). Yet, the Bush administration still pressed ahead with initiatives to reform and build *madrassas*, or that supported "moderate" Islamic movements and actors.

Legal experts have questioned whether America's growing involvement with Islam is in line with the constitution. Herman Schwartz, a constitutional law professor at American University, has argued that many programs implemented during Bush's first term were "probably unconstitutional" (quoted from Kaplan 2005). Indeed, capturing how state-normative secularism has been relaxed over time, Schwartz noted that back in 1991 the American Civil Liberties Union was able to win case against USAID to stop it from funding 20 Catholic and Jewish schools overseas. That "seems a long time ago", Schwartz remarked and continued to explain, "I don't know if anyone would support that kind of suit today" (Schwartz quoted from Kaplan 2005). Similar practices have continued during the Obama administration. Daniel Pipes, a neoconservative pundit, has equally attacked the Obama administration for breaching the U.S. Constitution by funneling taxpayer money to build, support, or reform Muslim institutions and leaders (Pipes 2011b).

Conclusion

Since the 1970s onwards, political Islam and Islamist groups have gradually become important political players across Northern and Eastern parts of Africa, the Middle East, Central, Southern and South-Eastern Asia. America's initial approach towards this social and political development was both distracted and ambiguous. Distracted by the larger Cold War rivalry against the atheist Soviet Union. At the time political Islam and Islamist movements were nothing more than a distant speck in its calculations. Ambiguous because political Islam, as distant as it seemed, it also appeared as a double-edged sword. While Washington would support the Afghan *mujaheddin* to contain the God-less Red Army, it was also bitten back by the 1979 Iranian revolution. It was then that for the first time Muslim politics appeared in a major way on the national security radar screen of American policy-makers.

At that time scarce thinking was poured into understanding the role of Islam in politics and international relations. References to Islam and Muslims in official security discourse and strategies were nearly inexistent. No detailed or comprehensive policy frameworks were developed and implemented towards political Islam, in particular, let alone the Muslim world understood as a somewhat coherent category of countries and peoples sharing the same faith, more broadly. Aside from the religiously infused American exceptionalist rhetoric of presidents like Ronald Reagan, at the height of the Cold War national security was largely debated, formulated and conducted along secular lines in Washington. With the end of the Cold War, America's attention towards the Islamist phenomenon increased as its national security interests became ever more entangled with the fate of the Middle East and its neighboring regions. Here the U.S. was confronted with an emerging set of domestic and transnational forces often opposed to it and which claimed to draw their inspiration from the Koran and Islamic history, rather than from secular texts and leaders. As a result, Washington's foreign policy elites were ever more reflexively drawn into understanding and explaining, not solely the political,

but also the religious and cultural dynamics within societies and countries in these particular regions.

During the 1990s the American scholarly and policy establishment's views on Islamism largely crystallized around two broad *desecularizing worldviews* with their own internal differing *desecularizing outlooks*. These outlooks all sought to make sense of what political Islam was about, whether there was a link across Islamist groups and ideologies, what was the relationship between Islamism (as political ideology) and Islam (as a religion), what was the nature of Islam as a religion, and what was its compatibility with American and Western values. These outlooks all gave somewhat different answers to these various questions. What they all shared, however, was a common concern for what was happening to "Islam" and "Muslims". They all have been caught in a way or another in culture talk and thinking, between the fear of an impending clash and confrontation with, or the desire to promote a dialogue and a deeper understanding of the "Muslim world".

These worldviews, and the pundits and scholars holding and promoting them within the Washington foreign policy circles, were responsible for making Islamic and Muslim discourses, identities and actors ever more central to national security thinking from the 1990s onwards. The events of 9/11 were a major turning point. Since then addressing the religious categories of "Islam" and the "Muslim world", moved beyond the realm of rhetoric and acquired materiality under the Bush Jr. and then Obama administrations. Managing U.S.-Muslims relations, while also undermining Islamist power and discourses in the "Muslim world", all became a central national security concern. Each administration pursued these objectives by implementing policies that were in line with the desecularizing outlook that carried most weight with the President and high-level officials.

The growing salience that was assigned to religious identities, dynamics and actors (state and non-state) has gone hand in hand with a process of desecularization in terms of practices and decision-making structures. Foreign policies have been designed to

change governments and societies in the “Muslim world”, win over the hearts and minds of “Muslims”, and reform the faith of “Islam”. America’s institutional architecture has evolved as well. New special representatives to Muslim countries (the OIC) and Muslim communities have been appointed. Interagency coordinating bodies in the NSC have gradually emerged and then progressively institutionalized to better coordinate programs geared no longer just towards secularly defined nations but also to the transnational entity of Islam. Actors identified as Muslims, and with knowledge of and faith in Islam, have been increasingly consulted and brought into the formulation of American national security policies.

Epistemic secularism has weakened as religious categories such as “Muslims” and the “Muslim world” became major organizing principles for policy discourses and initiatives, and acquiring ontological reality for American policy-makers. Counter-secularist processes are evident, as presidents have increasingly felt compelled and authorized to intervene in theological disputes explaining what the “true nature” of Islam is. The idea that Islam, or religion more generally, is inherently *problematic*, is being replaced by an attitude among policy-makers that sees Islam also as the *solution* to America’s security concerns. Hence, the growing interest in inter-faith dialogues as well as pressing Muslim clerics to issue *fatwas* that condemn terrorism and violence. These activities often involve funding religious individuals and institutions abroad. Despite much publicly available information on such programs, no major legal challenge compared to past instances is appearing on the horizon to dispute the current decrease in “mosque-state” separation. This seems to suggest that policy-makers and the broader legal environment are adopting an ever more accommodationist interpretation of the Establishment Clause when it comes to national security concerns.

CONCLUSION

This conclusion is structured as follows. First it outlines this thesis' understanding of the concept of desecularization, particularly in relation to American foreign policy, and briefly summarizes some of the findings of this research. The part that follows goes over the Historical Sociological (HS) approach to Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) that was employed to explain why processes of desecularization have occurred, how they came about and why they took place at specific historical moments over the past two decades. Lastly, building on the empirical findings, theoretical framework adopted, and the argument developed, I will reflect on the most significant contributions this project as a whole makes to our present understanding of secular and religious dynamics in IR and, to some extent, the sociology of religion.

Tracing and Unpacking American Foreign Policy Desecularization

Since the second half of the 1990s, the United States has implemented a growing range of inherently religious foreign policies. American diplomats and Foreign Service officials have become increasingly concerned with promoting “international religious freedom”, and improving their understanding and engagement with “religious actors and issues” worldwide. Humanitarian and development practitioners have become ever more involved in delivering foreign assistance through a number of “faith-based initiatives”. National security experts and advisors have repeatedly attempted to confront, reform, or reach out to “Islam” as a religion, and the “Muslim world”, as a religiously-defined category of countries and people. During the past two decades, think tanks, universities and research institutes, which hold great sway over policy debates in Washington, have

increasingly conducted research, organized conferences and opened centers dedicated to the study of international religious dynamics and factors, particularly as they intersect with issues of conflict and terrorism, poverty reduction, peace-building, or human rights and democracy.

This thesis argued that these changes in American foreign policy and within the American foreign policy establishment have all led to, and are sustained by, multiple processes of desecularization. In its analysis of American foreign policy this thesis distinguished between bureaucratic state practices and policy-making structures that characterize foreign policy on the one hand, and the broader character and identity of the American people and the personal inclinations and discourses of individual Presidents on the other. Ordinary people and American Presidents have often been quite religious themselves. Likewise, America's place in the world and confrontation with its enemies has regularly been cast in (civil) religious imagery and language since its very inception, through to the Cold War and more recently the War on Terror. In this sense, there is little that is secular in the private life and public discourses of Americans and their Presidents. On the contrary, this thesis argued, and hopefully convincingly demonstrated, that state policies, bureaucracies and bureaucrats, have been instead overwhelmingly secularized (in terms of functional differentiation) and secularist in their ideational and normative orientation, overwhelmingly at least until the mid-1990s when processes of desecularization most visibly started to occur.

Building mainly on the work of sociologists of religion such as José Casanova (1994, 2011), Peter Berger (1999) and Vyacheslav Karpov (2010), I proposed in Chapter 2 a conceptual framework to unpack processes of secularization and desecularization applicable to the case of a state's foreign policy. In terms of foreign policy I distinguished between practices (policies implemented, norms promoted, initiatives launched and so on) and policy-making structures (the institutions involved in formulating and delivering policies, and the cultural and normative-environment defining the contours within which policy-makers operate). In terms of processes of desecularization I distinguished between processes which are counter-secularizing and those that are counter-secularist.

Bringing everything together, then, *foreign policy practices* are undergoing processes of *counter-secularization* when there is an increasing and systematic entanglement: a) between religious issues and norms and foreign policy practices; and b) between religious and religious-related actors and the delivery/execution of foreign policy. *Foreign policy-making institutions* are undergoing processes of *counter-secularization* when: a) new offices, departments and appointees are created with an implicit or explicit religious content; and b) religious and religious-related actors are ever more included in policy-making. *Counter-secularist* processes occur when there is a growing contestation, renegotiation and weakening of entrenched epistemic, ideological and state-normative secularist ideational formations in the *minds of policy-makers and the culture of policy-making institutions*.

This thesis's central empirical and conceptual concern was to trace across time the emergence of inherently religious foreign policies and unpack the multiple and complex desecularizing changes which have accompanied these developments over the past two decades. In terms of foreign policy practices, desecularization has occurred as America has progressively sought to monitor and sanction countries around the world deemed to be religious freedom violators. Simultaneously it has sought to promote these norms by influencing other states' regulatory frameworks and implementing a small but growing number of initiatives and projects to encourage interfaith-dialogue and understanding. The U.S. has come to rely in an ever more structured way on religious organizations and institutions, including some who hire exclusively along sectarian lines and openly proselytize, to assist in the delivery and implementation its foreign assistance programs to fight poverty. New health initiatives to fight HIV/AIDS have been structured, such as PEPFAR, partly around the preferences, concerns and norms of (conservative) religious advocates. Countless overt and covert programs have been carried out to encourage the development of a "moderate" Islam. Simultaneously numerous initiatives were launched to improve relations with a set of countries and people chiefly defined by their Muslim faith or identity.

From the mid-1990s onwards, noticeable desecularizing changes occurred in terms of new offices and appointments being created, and actors being brought in, to manage, promote and coordinate policies with an inherently religious content. As of 2012, the State Department houses an Office (OIRF) and an Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. A Government-mandated independent Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) supports, or duplicates as critics argue, OIRF's work. State has also launched a working group on Religion and Foreign Policy that seeks new ways of partnering and engaging with religious groups to advance American national interests.

The White House hosts an Office for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships (WHFBO) in the Domestic Policy Council. This office is assisted in its role and responsibilities to promote the President's faith-based agenda across the executive, by a 25-member strong Presidential Advisory Council. Directly linked to the WHFBO, is a USAID-based Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (CFBCI) overseeing the partnerships with faith-based organizations (FBOs) in foreign assistance. A Global Engagement Directory, which is overwhelmingly concerned with policies towards the Muslim world, is housed in the White House's National Security Council. The State Department is also home to the offices of a Special Envoy to the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and a Special Representative to Muslim Communities. All the above offices or positions are mostly staffed with religious actors, religious-related advocates, or officials and advisors who are chosen because of their religious expertise or identity.

Conscious or unconsciously held epistemic secularist beliefs that led policy-makers to ignore religious forces and dynamics, believed to be also a dying force in an ever modernizing world, have been replaced by a much greater awareness that religion actually does matter in modern world politics. Training programs are implemented, national security strategies and operational tool-kit manuals are being drafted, and presidential speeches are delivered which reveal that religion as an analytical category in international politics is being taken increasingly seriously. Explicit and implicit ideological secularist assumptions that led policy-makers to view religion exclusively as

an inherently dangerous and problematic force, often linked to the most perverse behaviors and seemingly irrational violence, are giving way to a greater interest in exploring how religion can be harnessed to serve American interests. This is attested by the growing attention to using interfaith-dialogues, diplomatic efforts to engage and reach out to religious communities (especially Muslim) worldwide, making resources available to faith-based organizations to carry out poverty and HIV/AIDS reduction initiatives, and promoting particular brands of Islam which are deemed to be more “peaceful”.

I argued that state-normative secularism in the U.S. mainly takes shape in a strict separationist interpretation of the Establishment Clause of the Constitution’s First Amendment. Strict separationism prohibits most forms of government aid and support to religious institutions. Such an interpretation of the Establishment Clause has been both formally weakened by domestic challenges in the Supreme Court as well as informally within foreign policy circles. A number of legal-normative and policy-instrumental arguments are being advanced quite successfully for a more accommodationist stance towards issues of church and state separation. An accommodationist stance on the Establishment Clause still maintains that church and state should be institutionally separate, but argues that the government can and should be allowed to fund, aid and support religion, as opposed to a strict interpretation that excludes most forms of support.

The legal-normative argument develops along the two following axes: a) the Establishment Clause applies mainly/only domestically, not internationally and in terms of foreign policy; or b) inherently religious organizations should not be discriminated against when attempting to access state resources and should be allowed to receive government funding just as non-religious organizations do. The policy-instrumental argument develops along the following lines: around the world from the Middle East to Africa and Asia, religion and politics regularly mix, and increasingly appear to do so in ways that have an impact on American interests. Hence if America is to reach its foreign policy objectives (improve security, reduce poverty, promote human rights, etc.) the U.S. must embrace a certain level of entanglement with religion.

It is important, however, to be modest and not exaggerate the scale and scope of these changes. I am *not* claiming here, nor in the preceding chapters, that American foreign policy is now solely committed to religious issues, or that the United States has become some kind of theocracy with little or no separation between spiritual and temporal powers. The foreign policy apparatus is a complex and sprawling machine dealing with an endless number of issues and concerns well beyond religion. It counts on the inputs and assistance of a wide range of non-state actors – scientists, scholars, activists, NGOs, and specialists and experts of all kinds – which have nothing to do, at least publicly, with religion. In a sense there is still a high degree of functional differentiation between American foreign policy practices and institutions, and religion.

Likewise it would be an exaggeration to claim that the secularist epistemic and ideological worldview of much of the elites in Washington and within bureaucracies has been completely diluted. A degree of indifference and skepticism among policy-makers towards the necessity of mainstreaming religious considerations in American foreign policy is still prevalent (see Johnston 2011c). Nor have state-church separation norms been completely jettisoned. Although these are progressively interpreted in accommodationist terms, the Establishment Clause still stands. Furthermore new religious-based foreign policies can be resisted by bureaucratic inertia and material constraints. Indeed, compared to the wide variety of issues American decision- and policy-makers are daily called upon to address, institutional, monetary and human resources are instead limited.

For instance, while the international religious freedom agenda is quite a breakthrough, one would be hard pressed to say that the promotion of these norms are the highest priority in American foreign policy. Although OIRF's responsibilities and staff are expanding, it is still a small office with scarce resources and its Ambassador does not report directly to the Secretary of State as other Ambassadors-at-Large tend to do, but rather to the lower-ranking Assistant Secretary for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (see Farr 2012). The future of USCIRF is uncertain, and the commission is currently being downsized, albeit it seems with the intention to strengthen the OIRF. The

normative and institutional changes brought about by the faith-based initiatives are a controversial and significant development, particularly with the establishment of what appear to be permanent and growing faith-based offices in the White House and USAID. Yet the resources spent on these initiatives are a small fraction of those the U.S. dishes out for humanitarian and development purposes to secular institutions, such as the World Bank, implementing governments, and secular international NGOs.

The symbolic moves and wide-ranging programmatic efforts directed at influencing and reaching out to Islam and Muslim public opinion around the world during Bush's War on Terror and the first Obama administration are surely unprecedented. Yet these initiatives are largely public diplomacy and strategic communications-based, and pale in comparison to the resources invested in the war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan and the, known and unknown, military-based counter-terrorism initiatives implemented around the world in the wake of 9/11.

This said we should not underestimate the significance of the changes that have occurred. What *is* being argued here is that while before the 1990s American foreign policy practitioners mostly did not "do religion" in a public, structured, and systematic way, this no longer is the case in the 2010s. Indeed today, among its countless activities, American foreign policy practitioners increasingly and explicitly "do religion". As a result there has been a process of desecularization of a number of foreign policy practices and policy-making structures. This is a rather substantive, important, under-investigated and, in many respects under-theorized, development.

A HS Approach to FPA: Explaining Foreign Policy Desecularization

What can explain both the variety and multiplicity of religious issues that are being tackled across diplomatic, foreign assistance, and national security areas, as well as the fact that these changes all share a common non-secular dimension? In particular what can

coherently account for the common desecularizing thread that binds the disparate policy changes, institutional developments and cultural/normative shifts analyzed above – along with, let’s not forget, the changes in the American foreign policy establishment? Moreover, how did these developments come about, and why did they happen when they did? That is, how and why did most of the observed changes occur within the space of a decade or two following the end of the Cold War?

One may point at the growth of Protestant Evangelicals in the United States or the rise of the Christian Right in the past decades. But these may only, and partially, explain the adoption of certain policies such as international religious freedom and faith-based initiatives while leaving out, however, policies targeting Islam and, to a great extent, religious engagement policies. One may point at the rise of political Islam and Islamist terrorism, or the War on Terror more broadly, as inspiring Muslim-related policies and, to some extent, the religious engagement framework. *Vice versa* this explanation does not account for the development of religious freedom and faith-based initiatives. Some may find in “born again” President Bush the chief architect of American foreign policy desecularization. However, much of the religious freedom and faith-based agendas predated Bush, and the religious engagement agenda mostly followed his presidency. Nor does the Bush explanation take into account that the “non-born again” Obama has mostly extended, and in many circumstances expanded, U.S. involvement with religious issues and actors. While we may look at this or that specific cause, it appears evident that most of these explanations remain incomplete and partial, unless they are framed within a larger context. In other words, the net should be cast wider.

In particular, we cannot make sense of these changes without looking at how the domestic and international context within which American foreign policy is formulated and conducted has substantially changed over the past forty-fifty years. What appeared for the most part of the 20th century as, and in many senses was, a secular or at least relentlessly-secularizing world, in recent decades has instead experienced a process of global religious resurgence. As such, I have argued and attempted to demonstrate, that without taking into account the broader *social* and *cultural* historical process of religious

resurgence we cannot fully make sense of these shifts. By religious resurgence I mean the growing *political salience* of religious ideas, discourses, identities, practices, symbols, objects and actors which has occurred in multiple, complex and often locally specific ways, but simultaneously, across most religions and geographic areas of the world over the past five decades.

This thesis opened with a quote from a milestone book in the field of religion and IR, a book that pulls together more than a decade-worth of thinking by three leading American scholars on the subject: Monica Duffy Toft, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah (2011). In the book these scholars explain why and how religions have been resurging and, as quoted in the passage of my introduction, warned governments that “like it or not” they would have to “reckon” with this new fact of international life. It seems to me that a process of “reckoning” is well underway in the case of America. This line of argument, however, raises even more questions than it answers. How do broad, long-term trends explain the specific and diverse policy and institutional outcomes observed? And why, if the process of resurgence has its roots in the 1960s-70s, did the desecularizing changes examined here take place mostly from the late-1990s onwards?

At this point, looking at specific historical events (such as the end of the Cold War and 9/11) and actors (such as the political rise of Protestant Evangelicals, the role of Presidents Bush and Obama, or the emergence of Islamists movements across Africa and Asia), firmly placed within a context of religious resurgence, becomes crucial to explain processes of foreign policy change and desecularization. In order to explore the complex causal mechanisms that this line of argument implies, and investigate the links between broad global trends, historical events and specific foreign policy changes, this thesis articulated in Chapter 1 a HS approach to FPA. Such a framework appears to be well suited to tease out and explain the wider sources and conditions that give rise to changes in foreign policy practices and decision-making structures. Andrew Linklater argues that “the plain desire to understand social and political change is often the primary motivation for pursuing historical-sociological inquiry” (2009, p.137). Transported to foreign policy, one can argue that the plain desire to understand foreign policy change, and its

relationship to international transformations, is a primary motivation for pursuing a HS FPA enquiry.

A number of key HS insights add to the study of change in FPA. A HS FPA advances an explicit view of the international that is analytically pluralist, ontologically pluralist, and historicist, which tends to be lacking in much mainstream FPA theorizing. Secondly, it leads to an understanding of foreign policy and international politics as mutually constitutive. This analytical move rests on two theoretical assumptions that come with taking a HS lens. On the one hand, an insistence on linking macro-level social and historical processes and trends with actors and social action at the micro-level. On the other hand, a particular concept of the state that emphasizes its autonomous institutional underpinnings that lies at the intersection between the international and domestic spheres and acts as a meso-level institutional ligature between macro-level processes and micro-level actions.

When it comes to conceptualizing the international, HS's analytical pluralism gives equal weight to the international society of states and the world society of peoples. Its ontological pluralism sees the international as constituted by both materialist and ideational forces and structures. HS's historicism takes discontinuity and temporality seriously in the international sphere, rather than focusing on uncovering a-historical law-like generalizations. These insights have important implications for this research.

Analytical and ontological pluralism allow me to locate the global resurgence of religion as a *social* and *cultural* process not only either domestically or externally, but more broadly at the *world social level* which is both domestic and international at the same time. From here I can then explore how processes of religious resurgence that are simultaneously taking place domestically, transnationally and externally impact on American foreign policy. Attention to historicity and temporality means taking both (a) the processes of religious resurgence, and (b) historical events that are somewhat connected to the growing salience of religion in international politics (the end of the Cold War, the election of President G.W. Bush, the attacks of 9/11 and the ensuing War on

Terror), as integral elements and critical junctures in understanding and explaining foreign policy desecularization.

A mutually constitutive account of international politics and foreign policy has a number of repercussions for this research. First, it highlights the necessity of linking processes of macro change with agency at the micro-level. On the one hand, the social process of global religious resurgence at the world social level has domestically brought to the fore in the United States a growing and thickening number of religious advocacy groups embedded in and contributing to the resurgence. These are mostly Protestant Evangelical, but also belong to a wide range of other religious denominations and traditions within and beyond Christianity (Hertzke 2012). Many of these religious organizations and advocates hold transnational links to fellow co-religionists outside the United States. These religious advocates have been increasingly committed to the health and wellbeing of their co-religionists abroad and have attempted to influence the practice and conduct of American foreign policy accordingly. I have identified these actors as *desecularizing activists*. These activists, have formed coalitions with *principled desecularizing policy elites* and *desecularizing political elites* in Washington which share their concerns, and mobilized mainly around two inherently religious agendas: i) promoting international religious freedom, and ii) opening up foreign assistance resources to faith-based organizations.

On the other hand, both the social and cultural processes of resurgence are affecting the beliefs and perceptions of foreign policy elites within and outside the government. These are whom I called *strategic desecularizing foreign policy elites*. The rise of political Islam, the appearance post-Cold War conflicts which increasingly seem to pit warring parties along sectarian lines, the attacks of 9/11 and the events that followed, have fostered a belief among scholars, pundits and officials in Washington that religious issues and actors increasingly “matter” in international politics. American foreign policy practices and bureaucratic structures, these policy elites argue, need to shed their entrenched and multiple secular biases, and respond adequately to this new religiously vibrant reality. These have mobilized mainly to promote two inherently

religious agendas: i) greater attention to engaging with religious actors and issues abroad; and ii) policies designed to confront, reform or reach out to Muslims across the globe.

Secondly, the historical sociological notion of the institutional state makes two important analytical contributions. First, the idea of the institutional state as a relatively autonomous entity from both the domestic and external sphere sits comfortably with a central tension identified in the research. The distinction between America as a secular state – especially in terms of its foreign policy bureaucracies and bureaucrats – and Americans as a religious people. Second, the concept of the institutional state opens up the space to trace causality by looking at the emergence and development of new foreign policy practices and bureaucratic structures at the level of institutions. Institutions are understood here to act as meso-level ligament sites between macro-level trends of religious resurgence and critical junctures at specific historical points in time, with the actions of desecularizing actors at the micro-level.

These triangulations help explain why even though processes of resurgence had their roots roughly in the 1960-70s, only in the late-1980s early-1990s, as the Cold War ended, religious agendas concerning religious freedom, religious engagement, faith-based initiatives, and confronting or dialoguing with Islam, started to be explicitly articulated among religious activists and foreign policy pundits and scholars in Washington D.C. A string of domestic and international events then occurred, which opened up critical space for the initial adoption and institutionalization of these agendas by political elites during the second half of the 1990s and the early 2000s. Important turning points were the Republican victory in the 1994 mid-term elections granting them control of both the House and the Senate, the rise of terrorist attacks abroad and directed towards U.S. targets in the second part of the 1990s by groups claiming to act in the name of Islam, the election of the highly publicly religious and “born again” President G.W. Bush in 2000, and the events of September 11, 2001.

A number of causes ensured that once inherently religious policy frameworks became institutionalized in foreign policy practices and bureaucracies, these were then

extended, in the great majority of cases, and expanded, in some circumstances, under the Obama administration. Explanations revolve around issues of institutional path dependence, the continued resonance of domestic and international actors and factors connected to the resurgence of religion, and President Obama's own efforts at reaching out and engaging, motivated by a mix of principled and strategic beliefs, with religious actors domestically and abroad.

Contributions to the Study of Religion and its Resurgence in IR

In this concluding section, I consider some of the most significant theoretical, conceptual, and analytical implications of my argument and empirical analysis for the study of religion and the secular in IR and sociology. The discussion is divided into three main parts, dealing in turn with: i) the nature of the resurgence of religion; ii) introducing the concept of desecularization to unpack what is distinctive about religion and its resurgence in IR; and iii) the contribution of a historical sociological framework to the study of religion and its resurgence in IR.

The Nature of the Global Resurgence of Religion

The notion and understanding of a resurgence of religion in world politics, although produced and reproduced by a wide range of social scientific literature, is not unproblematic and uncontested. Firstly, I argued in the Introduction that if the concept is to have analytical weight it should be tied to the public visibility and political salience of religion. Conversely it should be linked less to the changing nature of religion/s *per se* or the persistence and deepening of religious beliefs among people and communities around the world, say in an era of globalization. In many respects, as the verbs “changing”, “deepening”, and “persisting” suggest, there is in fact little “resurging” going on.

Having said this, it is also important to distinguish between two different and independent, yet possibly mutually-reinforcing, processes of resurgence. On the one hand, there are processes of *politicization of religion* that Thomas (2005) partly alludes to in his work, and Toft, Philpott and Shah (2011) more firmly subscribe to. These are processes whereby over the past four or five decades, religions, theologies, and religious and religious-related actors (individuals, non-state actors, and communities) have become ever more publicly and politically engaged. On the other hand, there are processes of *religionization of politics* which indirectly Samuel Huntington (1993), Fabio Petito (2010) and the general identity politics literature refer to, and which Bassam Tibi (2007) and Jeffrey Haynes (1995) more explicitly have talked about. This is a cultural process – a change in intersubjective meanings and knowledge – whereby religious ideas, identities, discourses, practices, symbols, objects, and actors acquire growing political weight and meaning, also for secular actors themselves.

Secondly, the notion of a “resurgence” holds if we frame the issue in a *historical perspective*, as was done in Chapter 2. In the chapter I argued that there was indeed a time of “decline” in the public and political authority of religion, albeit in distinctive and uneven ways across the world. I looked at the rise of the modern-state, the functional differentiation of religious institutions from a wide range of knowledge areas (especially natural and social sciences), the emergence and spread of secular ideologies and political projects, and the drafting of constitutions mandating the creation of “secular states” or the “disestablishment of church and state”, as important historical occurrences. I then suggested, along the lines of many others before me, that these events and processes, and the actors associated with them, did much to curtail and dampen throughout the past centuries the power and role of religion/s’ institutional and normative authority in the public sphere²⁰⁸ starting in Europe and then across most regions of the world – albeit in complex, uneven and geographically distinctive ways.

Thirdly, the idea of a resurgence of religion also stands up if one takes a *historicist perspective* on ongoing scholarly debates. E.H. Carr saw the work of the

²⁰⁸ Note that I am not arguing for the same effect in the private sphere, this is a whole other matter.

historian as largely bound to and reflecting his own empirical and historical context (1990). If one sees (as I do) the work of the IR scholar much like E.H. Carr saw that of the historian, then the fact that inquiries on the resurgence are being pursued in the academy reflects not just intellectual fads but also the kinds of practices and events which are taking place “out there”, on the ground of international politics. Finally, if one accepts this thesis’s argument and its empirical findings, then processes of desecularization further reveal the impact that the global resurgence of religion is having on a state’s practices and institutions.

Desecularization and Teasing out what is Distinctive about Religion and its Resurgence

This research follows in the footsteps of ongoing debates about the impact of the “resurgence of religion” and “the secular” on international relations practices and theory. It adds to this scholarship by bringing into the discipline the sociological concept of *desecularization*. This concept proves to be a particularly useful way to explore how processes of religious resurgence are leading to a renegotiation of material and ideational boundaries that were long-assumed to be settled between “the religious” and “the secular” within the social sciences in general and American foreign policy in particular.

In order to unpack what this project understands to be highly contested terms such as the secular and the religious, secularization and desecularization, it turned to debates largely outside IR and in the sociology of religion. The thesis worked mostly within the confines of José Casanova’s (1994, 2011) understanding of the secular, secularization/s and secularism/s, and Peter Berger’s (1999) initial intuition and Vyacheslav Karpov’s (2010) more explicit conceptualization of desecularization/s. This cross-disciplinary effort is not a first. Much of the current literature on the religious and the secular in IR draws inspiration from somewhere else. For instance, some like Hurd (2008) have drawn heavily from the work of anthropologist Talal Asad on the power-laden and socially constructed notion of the secular. Others like Barbato and Kratochwil (2009), draw from social theorists like Jürgen Habermas and his normative concerns surrounding the emergence of a post-secular public sphere.

Rather than focusing singularly on the power of secular forms of authority, or unpacking the normative dilemmas that surround a post-secular world, this thesis has called for more attention in IR to the issue of desecularization. It has done so not with the intent of simply pillaging from other disciplines,²⁰⁹ but to initiate a fruitful and mutually beneficial dialogue between IR and the sociology of religion. The hope is that sociologists may find much analytical and empirical value in this project, especially as it highlights the international dimensions that surround the political contestations involved in processes of secularization and desecularization of state practices and institutions. In this concluding section I will, however, mostly tease out what an attention to sociological issues such as desecularization yields to ongoing debates about religion and its resurgence within IR.

Most promisingly, I contend that a desecularization lens brings more starkly to the fore what is distinctive about religious forces and dynamics in international relations. Teasing out how religion “matters” and what is “distinctive” about religion is something that scholars lament has often been under-theorized in current IR research (Philpott 2009, pp.192-93; Sheikh 2012). Indeed, over the years IR and FPA scholars have often focused on very non-religious outcomes of religion’s revival. As a result, much of what is studied under the rubric of religion regularly seems to have very little religious flavor. What is distinctive about the increasing mixing observed over the decades of “the religious” (whether norms, beliefs, organizations or social movements) with “the political”, evaporates somewhat in research programs focused on dynamics and outcomes which most secular actors or norms could produce. Religious variables are generally entangled with explanations about conflicts and violence, or when it comes to foreign policy with explaining the support – or lack thereof – for a particular military intervention, country or international institution. Some suggest that conflicts may last longer if they have a religious dimension, which may point towards something unique about religious factors (Horowitz 2009). Nevertheless, one is often left wondering: what are the distinctive

²⁰⁹ A practice it seems IR more broadly tends to be guilty of, see: Buzan and Little (2001)

features and outcomes that the processes of resurgence carry for the way we theorize and conceptualize IR as a discipline and as practice?

What current literature often leaves out are the implications and effects that the growing mixing of religion and politics is having, not simply in causing this war or that peace, but in bringing about more religion *itself* in international relations discourses and practices and examining the ways in which this process creates new social dynamics, institutions, power structures, incentives and possibilities of action. In terms of this research, for example, the concept of desecularization has helped draw connections between a string of apparently unrelated changes in secular American foreign policy practices and institutions that however all shared an inherently *religious content*. Injecting a desecularization lens brought out more explicitly the interaction and dynamics between religious and secular forces, and the way actors gave meaning, negotiated and sought to redesign the boundaries, by articulating a series of “principled” and “strategic” arguments, between the two.

A second area that a desecularization lens sheds light on is a set of American foreign policies that (directly or indirectly) seem to be geared towards producing *religious outcomes*. In fact, it appears that as American foreign policy desecularizes this becomes increasingly tied with defending and advancing religion worldwide in general, and Christianity in particular, while also attempting to reform and promote certain theological interpretations and brands of Islam. I will now address these two claims – advancing religion and Christianity on the one hand, and reforming Islam on the other – in order.

First, through processes of desecularization, a growing institutional, regulatory and normative space has been created domestically whereby religious actors can increasingly have access to and influence over American foreign policy. It is appropriate to keep in mind that a core issue most of these actors care deeply about, at times even more so than America’s national interest, is the domestic and worldwide health and state of their co-religionists and their religion. As Daniel Philpott eloquently frames it when

discussing what is singularly distinctive about religious activism:

“What is important to understand about religious actors is that religious politics, even when it converges with that of the state, emanates from beliefs, practices, and communities that themselves are prior to politics.”
(2009, p.193)

Hence policies such as religious freedom and the faith-based initiatives that have been, and currently are, most explicitly and vigorously advanced by religious and lay activists and scholars, are not just promoted with the intention of advancing human rights, relieving poverty or mitigating violence around the world, but also with scope of promoting religious outcomes. The secular-religious split is evident when, rather than subsuming religious freedom norms within a broader and expanded human rights framework, these instead are pursued on a separate parallel track. Mostly secular activists, scholars and organizations (such as Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, Freedom House) push American foreign policy to be concerned with human rights. Which are then monitored in the State Department Human Rights Reports. Predominantly faith-based or lay but publicly religious activists, scholars, members of Congress, and organizations, push American foreign policy to be concerned with international religious freedoms (IRF). Which are then monitored in another set of State Department IRF Reports.

The scope of the international religious freedom agenda is to track religious persecution, restrictions on religious practices and actors, and mistreatment of religious minorities worldwide. As was discussed in Chapter 4, whether the persecution, restrictions, or mistreatments are all truly religiously-based, rather than caused at times by other political or economic interests and grievances, is often unclear. This policy framework also seeks to promote around the world social and legal norms that are friendly towards religion, and religious practices and expression. This is something that quite interestingly, and not coincidentally, goes to the advantage of actively proselytizing

religions,²¹⁰ such as Christianity in general and Protestant Evangelical strands in particular.

Not surprisingly, this agenda has come to hold both a perceived and, in some respects, a real, Christian bias. The perception that the religious freedom agenda is somewhat of a Trojan horse for the protection and the export of a particular religion, which is present among both domestic and international observers,²¹¹ is not completely unfounded. The 1997 Wolf-Specter bill, the “Freedom from Persecution Act”, that preceded IRFA did not come out of a historical, geopolitical and social vacuum. The fact that the initial input for religious freedom activism was rooted in concerns about the state of Christians, especially in the Middle East and Communist countries, is an obvious case in point.²¹²

Even if the anti-persecution agenda did expand with time into a religious freedom one that includes other religious groups (Jewish, Muslim, Baha’i, Mormons, and so on) and human rights organizations, in practice the Christian interest remains the most apparent and dominant. It is often the well organized Protestant Mainline and Evangelical, along with Catholic institutions and groups, that have the greatest access to power, and the friendliest ears in Congress and the Executive (see Abrams 2001; Rock 2011). These groups also have the most extensive networks to denounce the mistreatment of their Christian brethren around the world (from China, to Nigeria, to Iraq and so on), as well as the greatest financial resources for international missionary work (see Hertzke 2004; Wuthnow 2009).²¹³

²¹⁰ For a friendly perspective on the relationship between religious freedom and proselytism see the Berkley Center’s “Report of the Georgetown Symposium on Proselytism & Religious Freedom in the 21st Century” (Berkley Center 2010)

²¹¹ See for example discussions in: Fore (2002); Mahmood (2012); Smolin (2000)

²¹² It also does not help, in terms of perceptions, that the USCIRF has come under fire for allegedly having a pro-Christian and anti-Muslim bias (Boorstein 2012).

²¹³ The link between the state of religious communities abroad and Christian interests is evident in the widespread resonance and traction that violence directed towards Christian minorities in the Middle East during the Arab spring, and especially Copts in Egypt for example, receive in American media and public opinion (Fahmy and Lee 2011). Another example was the well documented vocal reaction by Evangelical and religious freedom advocates to Morocco’s expulsion of Evangelical proselytizers in 2010 (Bandow 2010).

Likewise, assisting the poor is a noble cause and one that religious groups and organizations have championed, and courageously so, across history. At the same time poverty reduction and taming the spread of HIV/AIDS have become important foreign policy goals, as well as means to shore up American soft power, since the end of the Cold War. As was discussed in Chapter 5, thanks to a successful advocacy and lobbying campaign by religious groups, particularly Evangelical ones, substantial foreign assistance resources have progressively been made available to a growing range of American religious groups and organizations that have an overt, public and explicit missionary purpose. It is evident from a cursory glance at the websites of organizations such as World Vision, Samaritan Purse, Operation Blessing, Food for the Hungry, World Relief – which have all received federal grants within the faith-based initiative framework over the past decade – that a central goal of these organizations is to actively “spread the good word” through caring for the suffering. They do so by planting new churches, re-constituting old ones, and by preaching the gospel before or after (at times also during) providing services and handing out aid.

Current faith-based rulings circumvent the issue of Government support of proselytism by requiring that if FBOs engage in religious activities these should be funded privately, rather than through USAID grants, and should be separate in either time or location from USAID activities. Yet, the degree to which these regulations are effective at preventing USAID money from being used indirectly or directly for winning converts appears quite limited. USAID does not seem to be monitoring very closely how money is spent on the ground in terms of funding inherently religious activities. Moreover, even if resources are used in line with USAID rules, the substance in terms of perceptions and end results on the ground is nevertheless quite different, as needy beneficiaries have little time for the nitty-gritty of far-flung and arcane bureaucratic regulations set out in Washington. Recipients may hardly distinguish when an FBO uses private resources for religious activities and USAID grants for goods and services. Indeed, while evangelizing FBOs may use government resources to buy food, medicines, pay for petrol and operations, but not to hold sermons and distribute religious material, once on

the ground the two are often indistinguishable, since often while the left hand attempts to save lives the right one attempts to save souls.

Furthermore, the faith-based agenda is in principle an effort to integrate an increasingly wider range of religious groups into American foreign assistance and aid programs. However, once again, in practice the reality appears somewhat different. The sense that the U.S. Government may be complicit in spreading a particular religion worldwide is compounded by numbers showing that “the faith-based initiative overseas is almost exclusively a Christian initiative” (Kranish 2006). Christian organizations received 98.3% of all funds to religious groups from fiscal 2001 to fiscal 2005.

The above statistic may have since then changed somewhat, especially as Obama attempted to make the faith-based agenda more inclusive of non-Christian groups. However, it is unlikely that it has changed that substantially by the end of 2012. The fact that the faith-based agenda is overwhelmingly a Christian endeavor is the product of two factors. On the one hand, as in the case of religious freedom advocacy, it may be a natural outgrowth of America’s religious landscape where Christian organizations are more established, numerous and better organized when it comes to accessing U.S. Governmental resources than other non-Christian groups. But it also may reveal a bias towards working with Christian organizations, compared, say, to Muslim ones, even in foreign contexts where Islam is the dominant religion such as Afghanistan, Pakistan and Indonesia. An issue which in a post-9/11 world is reinforced, as a USAID official admitted, by the fear that if: “a suicide bomber were to come out of an Islamic orphanage that has received U.S. funding, whoever made the funding decision could be held personally liable [...] this would simply not be the case with funding a Christian charity” (quoted from CSIS 2007, p.19).

Policy-makers in Washington are well aware of these tensions. Indeed there is an ongoing discussion, although not very publicly visible, about the relationship between religious freedom, faith-based initiatives and Christian proselytization. For instance, a White House official working in the realm of the faith-based initiatives admits that: “As a

Government over the past decade we have turned a blind eye towards Christian proselytization. We need to be clearer on where we stand on this issue” (WHFBO Official 2010, author’s interview). Likewise, at a Global Leadership Forum on “Evangelicals and Muslims: Perspectives on Mission and Partnership” sponsored by IGE and held at Georgetown in June 16-17, 2010, the issue of missionary work and proselytization was hotly debated throughout the conference. For example Knox Thames, USCIRF Director of Policy and Research, speaking not as a representative for the commission but in his faculty as private citizen, recognized that the mixing of foreign aid with proselytization activities by Christian groups was problematic and at times, especially in Muslim majority areas, counterproductive. Yet he also supported the right of groups that received federal funding to nevertheless “spread the word” with private (but not federal) resources as an essential religious freedom (Thames 2010, author’s participant observation).

A second area of religious outcomes that a desecularization lens sheds light on is the way in which American presidents and foreign policy practitioners have become ever more concerned and entangled with theological debates about and within Islam. As Chapter 6 discussed, Muslim clerics, imams, foundations and religious schools (*madrassas*) are being privately and indirectly supported to advance messages of religious tolerance and provide theological condemnation for violence and terrorism. Another strategy has been to bestow recognition to branches of Islam that appear more “moderate” and “peaceful”, such as Sufism. The whole notion of reforming Islam and supporting “good” Muslims is premised on the idea that the United States has a vested interest in stirring religious debates and controversies in its favor.²¹⁴ Damaged Mosques are being rebuilt in key strategic areas to improve America’s image among local Muslim populations in the Middle East. And the active promotion of interfaith-dialogues at the

²¹⁴ This is a belief, as was discussed in Chapters 3-6, that cuts across the conservative-liberal spectrum and the Muslim non-Muslim one in Washington. Witness for example recent calls to the Obama administration by Imam Feisal Abdul Rauf, chairman of the Cordoba Initiative, to invest more in the religious sphere and Islam, rather than secular groups, if the U.S. is to pacify, bring democracy and improve women’s rights in Afghanistan (Rauf and Khan 2012).

international and local level have become an important and ever more utilized religio-diplomatic tool.

Overall, what this analysis reveals is quite substantial, but not anything outside of the ordinary in many respects. The fact that states directly or indirectly support and seek to meddle in religious affairs internationally is surely not a new practice. Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia tacitly, and not so tacitly, for instance support the work of preferred Islamist non-state actors in places like central Asia (Adamson 2005, pp.561-64). Likewise the history of European empires such as the British, French and Spanish ones is deeply entangled with the history of religion and that of worldwide missionary activities (Gascoigne 2008).

Without getting bogged down in endless debates about whether the United States is an empire or not,²¹⁵ it is surely a very powerful state in the international system today. The correlation between America's rise to preeminence and the worldwide spread of Protestant Evangelicalism is hard to ignore. At this point, an intriguing question comes to the fore. Is the global expansion of Christianity and particularly of American brands of Protestantism (Jenkins 2007) simply the product of effective transnational missionary work by these organizations (Wuthnow 2009)? Or are these social and religious changes also at times directly but more often indirectly supported by American policies, especially those related to international religious freedoms and faith-based initiatives? These are interesting questions that seem to have largely gone unaddressed.

Moreover, many of these religious outcomes as they relate to American foreign policy raise new and thorny normative and policy questions, which this research however was not designed to tackle. What ought to be the status of church and state separation norms in an era of religious resurgence? Should they be doubly protected or continued to be relaxed? Is it in the American interest to support religious outcomes that are perceived to, and often do, favor Christian groups? Some have argued that supporting FBOs helps with efforts to reduce poverty (Thomas 2004; DiIulio 2007). Others note that Christianity

²¹⁵ For a good starting point to these debates see for example: Cox (2012); Nexon and Wright (2007)

around the world, especially Protestant Pentecostalism, is the most pro-American religion (Mead 2010), hence making an implicit argument that what is good for Christianity abroad is good for America. Others suggest instead that turning a blind eye towards proselytism, especially in geopolitically sensitive spots such as majority Muslim countries, may put other FBOs and NGOs in jeopardy (Thaut 2009), or give the impression that the U.S. is on an actual crusade against Islam (Marsden 2011a).

Would greater efforts by the U.S. to promote religious freedom norms abroad help unequivocally reducing worldwide conflict and violence as some suggest (Farr 2008b; Grim and Finke 2010)? May it open up spaces for aggressive proselytization efforts which risk increasing local sectarian tensions (ICG 2010)? To what extent does attention to Christian persecution or reforming Islam abroad risk undermining the *cuius regio, eius religio* foundational principle on which the Westphalian order rests? Moreover, to what degree should the U.S. be investing substantial resources into molding and shaping a major world religion such as Islam? What kind of new and unforeseen social and political dynamics is this process likely to generate in the future? These important issues and tensions are only recently and passingly starting to be addressed by few interested, and at times partisan, observers. Much wider and sustained attention and research is needed to unpack and give some answers to these fundamental normative and analytical issues.

Historical Sociology and the Study of Religion in IR

A HS approach to FPA advances a mutually constitutive understanding of foreign policy and international politics. One where the international society of states and world society of people affect in multiple and complex ways state behavior, and where state actions can affect international and world society. This is a picture of the international where states, and material and ideational social forces, constantly interact and influence each other. Such a theoretical framework has important consequences for the way we think about the resurgence of religion in IR. I will here tease out three issues in particular: first explaining the causes of the resurgence, second the impact the resurgence is having on

the Westphalian states-system, and thirdly the implications for current debates about religion and IR theory.

This thesis was not committed to explaining the causes of the resurgence, but rather explore its effects on American foreign policy. Yet a closer examination of the case studies and empirical findings leads me to make some preliminary observations and add to debates about the causes of resurgence. Scholarship in IR, and to some extent in cognate disciplines, can be largely divided into two camps when it comes to explaining the resurgence at the world social level. On the one hand are those who see this processes as a result of broad structural developments such as the rise of globalization, the spread of democracy worldwide, or the social dislocations brought about by modernity and modernization. On the other hand are those who see the resurgence as both a phenomenon of resistance to, and a force emerging out of, the crisis of secular ideologies and projects such as neo-liberal economics, communist ideologies and regimes, or Arab nationalism.

Little attention though has been given to the role of the “state” and its policies in promoting, reinforcing or undermining such processes. Indeed if we think about the active role of the Soviet Union and its policies in crushing religious beliefs and institutions, then we can also appreciate the impact that American foreign policy may have in fostering social and cultural processes of global religious resurgence. Both the religious freedom agenda and the confronting/engaging Islam and the Muslim world one can be seen as contributing to *cultural* processes of resurgence (i.e. the religionization of politics). These policies have injected religious language both at the highest levels and in everyday policy discourses. They have reified, to some extent, religion as a primary source of identity for peoples and countries which may and would not necessarily identify themselves primarily in religious terms, and have often elevated religious factors as causes of events and religious actors as spokespersons for entire communities, peoples and states.

In terms of contributing to *social* process of resurgence (i.e. the politicization of religion), the U.S. is ever more actively supporting, directly and indirectly, domestic and international socially and politically active religious groups worldwide through its faith-based initiatives. By making the available pot of foreign assistance resources increasingly accessible to an ever-wider range of explicitly religious organizations, the U.S. increases their *relative* influence and power with respect to secular NGOs and humanitarian organizations. In a way this process further incentivizes religious communities and institutions to develop more engaged and activist political theologies. Simultaneously resources are channeled towards developing Islamic religious organizations and theologies, not all quietists and disengaged from politics, in order to undermine those Islamist groups and actors that are seen to be the most threatening to American interests. When it comes to relations with and intervening within Islam, what is new is the systematic and public approach pursued, but not necessarily the practice itself. Indeed the well-known support for the Afghan *Mujahidin* and Osama Bin Laden's organization by the U.S. during the Cold War (Coll 2005), ensured that following 9/11 the resurgence of religion became a hot topic in IR scholarship.

This emphasis – undergirded by a HS FPA framework – on state practices and policies as they relate to religion's revival, leads to the second issue I alluded to earlier: exploring the impact of the resurgence of religion on the Westphalian international society of states. In existing scholarship there is a recurrent and underlying narrative that religion's revival may undermine the centrality of the state and/or bring about systemic changes to the international order.

Some have explored how the politicization of transnational religious civil society actors has the potential to dilute state sovereignty (Rudolph and Piscatori 1997). Giorgio Shani (2008) points to a globalizing Muslim *Umma* and the Sikh *Khalsa Panth* as embryonic post-Westphalian transnational communities. Barak Mendelsohn (2012) maintains that religions, and religious inspired groups such as *al-Qaeda* and *Hizb ut-Tahrir*, can attempt and may have the ability to provide an alternative organizational principle for world politics that challenges the logic of the state-based system. In Richard

Falk's (2002, 2003) work on the possibilities of a post-Westphalian international order, religious forces often appear as a contributing factor towards this trend. Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos (2003b, p.2) suggest that religion's return, from the Westphalian exile it was confined to has the potential to bring about a post-Westphalian order.

Similarly Scott Thomas (2005) suggests that the global resurgence of religion can lead to the "transformation" of international relations by, among others, influencing states' behavior and foreign policies, the source of international conflicts, and the possibilities for international cooperation. According to Daniel Philpott (2002, pp.83-92), the events of September 11 posit a powerful challenge to secularism in international relations by bringing to the fore religiously motivated groups such as Al Qaeda that question the very legitimacy of the secular Westphalian international order. Philpott's (2001, see Part II) investigation into the causal impact of the Protestant Reformation on European politics during the 16th and 17th centuries and the pivotal role this event played in the creation of the modern sovereign states-system indirectly speaks to present-day concerns and implicitly reinforces an image of religion's revolutionary power for international society.

Clearly stating that religion's return *may* and has the *potential* to "transform" or "revolutionize" the Westphalian international society of states, is different from arguing that it *will*. Yet an impression is created that monumental changes may be waiting to happen. Are they? Is religion's challenge to the international Westphalian states-system as far-reaching as the current literature at times explicitly, but more often than not implicitly, tends to suggest?

A HS FPA perspective on these debates cautions against jumping on the post-Westphalian bandwagon too quickly. For instance Chris Alden and Amnon Aran (2012, pp.78-91) have partly used insights from HS to advance a mutually constitutive thesis of foreign policy and globalization. Much conventional globalization literature tends to treat states as secondary actors being subjected to, if not undermined by, economic-technological and spatio-temporal globalizing forces, argue Alden and Aran. These scholars instead contend that it is often states and their foreign policies, particularly those

of liberal democracies, which actually are at the center of and responsible for producing and reproducing processes of globalization. They also recognize that globalizing dynamics, once unleashed, gain an independent force of their own compelling states, particularly weaker ones, to respond to these forces and adjust their foreign policies. Overall Alden and Aran conclude that states' foreign policies and globalization dynamics are not counter-positioned, but actually mutually constitutive.

As the preceding discussion about America's role in producing and reproducing processes of religious resurgence suggests, a similar dynamic may be at work here. Indeed, states may be thought of as facilitating, rather than simply being undermined by, religious revivals. Likewise if one examines the relationship between politicized religious movements and America it is not at all clear whether the former are gaining to the expense of the latter. The impact of *al Qaeda's* attack on the U.S. seems to have both increased some kind of broad-based civilizational politics in terms of presidents and programs reaching out to a socially constructed transnational Muslim world. Yet it also increased American nationalism, led the U.S. into two major wars against specific states and their regimes, and greatly strengthened the power of the state to monitor, control and imprison foreign and domestic citizens. Likewise Protestant Evangelicals and Christian Right activists, among others, are pressuring American decision-makers to care more about their co-religionists around the world, yet they are also staunch defenders of American sovereignty and quite skeptical about international arrangements and organizations.

By looking at processes of American foreign policy desecularization, this project has substantially sought to bring to light qualitative new changes in state practices and institutions that processes of religious resurgence may be causing. Yet even here it remains uncertain whether higher levels of entanglement between state and religious institutions like the ones that, for example, countries like the U.K., Saudi Arabia or Iran exhibit compared to the United States, necessarily lead to states working to undermine the Westphalian system. It is obviously difficult to generalize from the American case. If anything may be said, though, is that the impact of the resurgence in undermining the

centrality of the state and leading us to a post-Westphalian system is, in the case of America rather ambiguous to say the least, and more generally still quite underspecified and under-researched thus far in the overall literature.

Finally, a word on theory. There have been heated debates on whether the revival of religion in modern times meant a complete overhaul of IR's theoretical apparatus or not. The first wave of scholarship on the subject appeared to suggest that IR was in urgent need of some kind of paradigmatic shift if it were to comprehend and explain religion (Hatzopoulos and Petito 2003b, p.3; Thomas 2005, pp.72-77). Some even called for a new International Political Theology (IPT), which explored the singular power of religion, as International Political Economy sought to grasp that of economic forces (Kubalkova 2003). Those advancing these ambitious pleas, somewhat found it themselves hard to follow through. Thomas has largely worked within the parameters of the English School, Petito within a mix of International Political Theory and Constructivism, and Kubalkova's revolutionary cry for a new IPT was more akin to a plea for constructivists to pay closer attention to religious norms and identities rather than simply secular liberal ones.²¹⁶

A second wave of scholarship however has taken a more pragmatic tack, seeking to explicitly integrate religion within the main IR theoretical paradigms (Sandal and James 2010; Snyder 2011a). Constructivism (in its multiple shades) with its attention to issues of culture, norms, discourses, identity, and norm entrepreneurs and epistemic communities has appeared to be a well suited home for much research on religion.²¹⁷ Yet, like much Constructivist literature in other subject-domains, there is a sense in which the causal arrow overwhelmingly flows one way from the religious "identity", "value" or "norm entrepreneur" to the political outcome investigated and rarely the other way round. Meanwhile attempts to integrate religion within other paradigms seem to flounder in the face of the overwhelming materialist nature of Liberal, Realist, and Marxian approaches

²¹⁶ For a good discussion about the secular liberal bias of much constructivist research see: Adamson (2005); Phillips (2010).

²¹⁷ See for example the following constructivist inspired work: Hurd (2008); Philpott (2001); Sandal (2011); Sheikh (2012)

to theory.²¹⁸ If it is interests, politics or economics which determine religious beliefs and communities' structures, then why take religion seriously in the first place?

As Daniel Nexon has argued elsewhere: “fetishizing religion is as much a danger as not taking it seriously enough” (2011, p.161). This thesis has attempted the difficult and delicate balance-act called for by the Georgetown University-based scholar. By putting attention on processes of desecularization it has sought to capture a distinctive feature about the global resurgence of religion for international relations. This framework highlights how boundaries between “the secular” and “the religious” are becoming increasingly contested, re-examined, and re-negotiated by actors in the ivory tower of academia as well as pundits and practitioners of American foreign policy embedded and responding to processes of resurgence. New possibilities for political as well as religious outcomes are emerging.

Simultaneously this project has relied on a HS FPA theoretical framework that takes seriously social forces, but also states. It is an ontologically pluralist framework, one that gives weight to both ideational and material variables, as well as one that takes both change and continuity as central to its enquiry. In a sense this approach is a promising *via media*, it helps mitigate some of the excess of Constructivist enthusiasts about the independent power of religious variables, without sliding as easily into the skepticism of more materialist-based theories. By grounding my empirical research in such a theoretical framework, and integrating it with insights from FPA, I have carefully sought to explore why, how, when, and to what extent the resurgence of religion is bringing about change in the secular practices and institutional and normative policy-making structures of the United States.

The resurgence has indeed brought more religion into the international system, and important and substantial changes are occurring in American foreign policies that

²¹⁸ While Realists and Liberal scholars have largely continued to ignore religion, Marxian oriented ones have taken up the challenge. These however have often been quite sceptical about religion often seen as a dependent variable of more concrete economic forces and interests, or no more than an ideological instrument leaders use at their whims to legitimize themselves and mobilize masses. See: Shaffer (2006).

testify to this. These however appear to be falling short of the post-Westphalian prospect some see on the horizon. This thesis, rather than echoing ongoing pronouncements about Westphalia's impending demise, which may be as imprudent as past ones about the "death of God", suggests that much more sound conceptual and especially theoretically robust empirical work is still needed. Especially when it comes to exploring in more nuanced and complex ways the relationship between religious dynamics and the state across space and time. This thesis has offered some new and hopefully useful tools in pursuing what appears to be an arduous, but promising and fascinating research program.

ANNEX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Name Surname	Title, Institution
Elliott Abrams	Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)
Akbar Ahmed	Ibn Khaldun Chair of Islamic Studies, American University
Mark Brinkmoeller	Senior Director U.S. Community Partnerships, The One Campaign
Beth Chapman	Director of Outreach and Advancement, The Trinity Forum
Michael Cromatie	Vice President, Ethics and Public Policy Center (EPPC)
Maryann Cusimano Love	Associate Professor, The Catholic University of America
Thomas Farr	Director of the Religious Freedom Project, Georgetown University
Irina Faskianos	Vice President National Program & Outreach, Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)
Stan Fornea	Chaplain U.S. Navy Commander, White House Military Office
Anne Gallespie	Clergy Director, Christ Church in Alexandria
Stephen Glain	Freelance Journalist
Stephen Grand	Director Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, The Brookings Institute
Joseph Grieboski	Founder, The Institute on Religion and Public Policy
Brian Grim	Senior Researcher, PEW Forum on Religion & Public Life
Tom Hart	Senior Director of U.S. Government Relations, The One Campaign
Allen Hertzke	Presidential Professor, The University of Oklahoma

Dennis Hoover	Vice President for Research and Publications, Institute for Global Engagement (IGE)
William Inboden	Assistant Professor, The University of Texas at Austin
Douglas Johnston	President, International Center for Religion & Diplomacy (ICRD)
Asma Lateef	Director Bread for the World Institute, Bread for the World
Luis Lugo	Director, PEW Forum on Religion & Public Life
Kristen Lundquist	Program Officer for Religion, Security & Gender, Institute for Global Engagement (IGE)
Bob Maginnis	Senior Fellow, Family Research Council (FRC)
Katherine Marshall	Executive Director World Faiths Development Dialogue (WFDD), Georgetown University
Paul Marshall	Senior Fellow Center for Religious Freedom, Hudson Institute
Aziz Mekouar	Ambassador to the United States, Kingdom of Morocco
Thomas Metallo	Associate Professor, Liberty University
David Meyer	Associate Professor, Regent University
Andrew Natsios	Professor, Georgetown University
OIRF Official	U.S. Department of State
Pauletta Otis	Professor, Marine Corps University
Policy Planning Official	U.S. Department of State
Elizabeth Prodromou	Assistant Professor, Boston University
Mark Rodgers	Principal, The Clapham Group
Melissa Rogers	Director Center for Religion and Public Affairs, Wake Forest University Divinity School
George Roller	Executive Director, Center for Christian Statesmanship
Chris Seiple	President, Institute for Global Engagement (IGE)
Justin Vaïsse	Senior Fellow, The Brookings Institute

USCIRF Official-1	U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
USCIRF Official-2	U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom
USAID CFBCI Official	USAID
USAID Senior Official	USAID
Peter Wehner	Senior Fellow, Ethics and Public Policy Center (EPPC)
WHFBO Official	White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships

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