

Religion, Politics and International Relations: An Introduction*

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In recent years, scholars have identified a range of religious actors with a variety of political goals. The purpose of this book is to identify and examine recent political activities of a range of selected religious actors in both domestic and international contexts. The book's starting point is also an obvious fact: around the world, numerous religious actors now affect political outcomes in various ways. Both non-state and state religious actors – including, in relation to the first category, various Islamist groups and the Roman Catholic Church and, regarding the second, the government of Iran – have had significant political impacts in and between countries around the world.

This introductory chapter aims to set the scene for the collection: a wide ranging *tour d'horizon* of religious actors with political goals in both domestic and international contexts. The aim is to provide a clear understanding of *why, how and when* selected religious actors act politically both within and between countries. Overall, a key question on which the various contributions to the book focus is: *Why, how and when do selected religious actors seek to influence political outcomes both domestically and internationally?*

Recent decades have seen widespread involvement of religious actors' in politics, especially but not exclusively in parts of the developing world. In this context, the book has twin foci: the relationship between religion and politics and the relationship between religion and international relations. This introductory chapter sets out the concerns of the book and is structured around the following themes. First, I define and discuss the concept of religion and examine its contemporary political and social salience. Second, I examine the notion of religious fundamentalism, not least because it is often associated with religious competition and conflict both within and between countries. Third, I survey examples of religious competition and conflict in the developing world in order to see what impact they have on political outcomes there. Fourth, I consider the extent to which, after 11 September 2001 – that is, the epochal day that the USA was attacked by al-Qaeda terrorists, resulting in the loss of nearly 3,000 lives – international relations has changed by focusing on the recent and current involvement of religion in world politics. In sum, the book examines the recent importance of both domestic and international political issues involving religion in various parts of the world.

Where did all this start? Why are we concerned with it? It seems quaint to think that three or four decades ago issues concerning religion and politics and religion and international relations were noticeable by their absence in public and policy debates. Today, things are very different, with many issues relating to religion and politics and religion and international relations in the public eye. Not least, we can note that today 'quality'—that is, 'broadsheet'—newspapers very often report stories, both from the UK and abroad, that highlight the importance of news stories characterised by the interaction of religious and political dimensions both at home and abroad. For example, regarding the latter a recurring theme is widespread Islamic militancy or 'fundamentalism', particularly in the Arab Middle East. It sometimes seems that the entire region is

polarised between Jews and Muslims—both over the status of holy sites claimed by the two sides and the political and economic position of the mostly Muslim Palestinians.

In Europe, on the other hand, many countries are now discussing the position of Muslims in what were in most cases until recently traditionally Christian environments. This underlines that it is not ‘only’ international relations that is consistently informed by debate about the public role(s) of Islam(s). It is also the case that many countries’ domestic politics, especially but not exclusively in the Middle East, have long been significantly informed by the interaction of religion and politics. For example, for a decade from the early 1990s Algeria endured a civil war between ‘Islamic fundamentalist’ or ‘Islamist’ rebels and the state. The roots of this conflict went back to a contested election and, more generally, highlight the often problematic political relationship between religious and secular actors in the Middle East. In December 1991 Algeria held legislative elections which most independent observers characterised as amongst the freest ever held in the Middle East. The following January, however, Algeria’s armed forces seized power to prevent what was likely to be a decisive victory in the elections by an Islamist party, the Front Islamique du Salut (FIS; English, Islamic Salvation Front). The assumption was that if the FIS achieved power it would then erode or dissolve Algeria’s newly refreshed democratic institutions. In London *The Economist* magazine posed the question, ‘What is the point of an experiment in democracy if the first people it delivers to power are intent on dismantling it?’ (2 January 1992). The answer might well be: ‘This is the popular will, it must be respected—whatever the outcome.’ Instead, Algeria’s military leaders imposed their preference. The FIS was summarily banned, thousands of its supporters were incarcerated, and between 150,000 and 200,000 Algerians died in the subsequent civil war which only came to an end more than 10 years later. Even now, nearly 20 years after the initial outburst of violence, Algeria still endures intermittent attacks from Islamist rebels, unhappy about the nature of the political system in the country.

It is worth noting at this point that there is no obvious reason why political Islam cannot compete for power democratically. Political Islam refers to a political movement with often diverse characteristics that at various times has included elements of many other political movements, while simultaneously adapting the religious views of Islamic fundamentalism or Islamism. In both the Palestinian authority and Iraq in recent years, as well as in Turkey, Islamic political parties have gained power either alone (Hamas in the Palestinian authority and the Justice and Development Party or AKP in Turkey) or as part of a ruling coalition (present-day Iraq, ie, once the politicians have sorted out how to share power after a close and closely fought election in 2010). In all of these examples Islamic political actors were willing to play by the democratic rules of the game.

Elsewhere in the developing world, Islamists are also politically active. For example, in Africa, Nigeria sometimes appears politically polarised between Muslim and Christian forces, Somalia – a fragmented and failed state – may eventually have an Islamist government, while Sudan has also experienced long-running, not yet completed, political travails between Muslims and non-Muslims. In all these cases Islamists have not sought to use the ballot box to achieve power; but then again that particular option not been available as a result of constitutional restrictions or constraints or wider political factors.

But it is not only Muslims who pursue political goals related to religion. For example, in officially secular India, growth in militant Hinduism was highlighted by, but not confined to an incident at the Babri Masjid mosque at Ayodhya in 1992, which saw a Hindu mob destroy an old Muslim mosque. This incident was instrumental in transforming the country's political landscape. The mosque, according to militant Hindus, was built on the birthplace of the Hindu god of war, Rama. As long ago as 1950, the mosque was closed down by the Indian government, for militant Hindus wanted to build a Hindu temple there. Since then, Hindu militants or 'fundamentalists', whose primary political organisation is the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), have grown to political prominence. From 1996 to mid-2004, the BJP was the dominant party in three ruling coalition governments. Although at the current time (late 2010) political power is held by the secular Congress Party government it is likely that at some future stage the BJP will regain power, as it remains a political force to be reckoned with. In addition, in Israel, the country's politics are heavily affected by what Jewish political parties do and say. Although they never acquire power on their own, such parties have been important players in Israel's political system for decades. Finally, Christians have also been active politically in various parts of the world with variable political results. For example, the Roman Catholic church was a leading player in the turn to democracy in Latin America and elsewhere in the 1980s and 1990s, while in the USA the Christian Right has been an important social and political influence for decades. Overall, we can conclude that (1) The last three or four decades have seen widespread involvement of religion in politics, especially in many countries in the developing world; (2) Several religious traditions have experienced increased political involvement; and, (3) Religion and democracy do not always seem compatible, although religious actors from various religious persuasions have undoubtedly contributed to recent democratisation in various parts of the world.

Religion and Politics

Before proceeding, it is necessary to define 'religion'. Throughout the chapters of this book, religion has two analytically distinct, yet related meanings. In a *spiritual* sense, religion pertains in three ways to models of social and individual behaviour that help believers organise their everyday lives. First, it is to do with the idea of *transcendence*, that is, it relates to supernatural realities. Second, it is concerned with *sacredness*, that is, a system of language and practice that organizes the world in terms of what is deemed holy. Third, it refers to *ultimacy*: it relates people to the ultimate conditions of existence.

In another, *material*, sense, religious beliefs can motivate individuals and groups to act in pursuit of social or political goals. Very few—if any—religious groups have an *absolute* lack of concern for at least *some* social and political issues. Consequently, religion can be 'a mobiliser of masses, a controller of mass action ... an excuse for repression [or] an ideological basis for dissent' (Calvert and Calvert 2001: 140). In many countries, religion remains an important source of basic value orientations; and this may well have social and/or political connotations.

A further point needs to be made regarding the relationship between religion and ethnicity, not least

because they are often conflated. As several of the chapters in this book make plain, for example, Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8, religion is a very common component of ethnic identity. For instance in India, Sikh ethnic identity is usually defined in terms of adherence to a common religion. It could seem then that ethnicity is the overarching concept and religious identification is one sub-type. However, there are situations where people sharing a single religion are divided by ethnicity, as for example in Pakistan, Afghanistan or east Africa where people share a common Islamic faith but are ethnically divided on the basis of both region and language. Moreover appeals to religion often seek to transcend particular local or ethnic identities in the name of a supposedly universal ideal. It is wisest, therefore, to see ethnicity and religion as terms whose potential meaning and content overlap but remain distinct.

But is there ‘more’ religion around now compared to the past. A few years ago, an American commentator, George Weigel, claimed that there is what he calls an ‘unsecularization of the world’, that is, a global religious revitalization.¹ For Weigel, this is manifested in a worldwide resurgence of religious ideas and religion-influenced social movements, which are not confined to one faith or a few countries. If Weigel is correct – and we should note that not all interested scholars agree with him – how can we explain this unexpected development? To start with, we need to note that no simple, clear-cut, one size fits all, reason or theoretical explanation covers all cases. On the other hand, most scholars would accept that religious actors’ undoubtedly widespread social and/or political activities are linked to the impact of modernisation. I understand modernisation as the prolonged period of historically unprecedented, diverse, massive change, characterised by urbanisation, industrialisation, and influential technological developments that people around the world have experienced in recent times. Modernisation appears not only to undermine traditional value systems but also to allocate opportunities—both within and between countries—in highly unequal ways. The result is that many people feel both disorientated and troubled and, as a result, some at least (re)turn to religion for solace and comfort. In doing so, many seek a new or renewed sense of identity, something to give their lives greater meaning and purpose.

A second, although linked, explanation for apparent religious resurgence moves away from the specific impact of modernisation to point to a more generalised ‘atmosphere of crisis’ characteristic of the times in which we live. A key factor is said to be widespread popular disillusion with the abilities of political leaders to lead their countries in ways which appeal to the mass of ordinary people. Popular disappointment and disillusionment can easily feed into perceptions that these leaders hold power illegitimately—a sense bolstered when leaders resort to political oppression to gain or retain political power. Adding to the sense of crisis is widespread popular belief that society’s traditional morals and values are being seriously undermined by the corrosive effects of modernisation – including, globalisation and secularisation— which has the effect of reducing or even removing religion’s influence from the public realm. These circumstances are said to provide a fertile milieu for many people’s ‘return’ to religion.

¹ George Weigel as quoted by Samuel P. Huntington in ‘The Clash of Civilizations?’ (1995), an article produced for the Olin Institute’s project on ‘The Changing Security Environment and American National Interests’. Available at <http://www.scribd.com/doc/7906042/The-Clash-of-Civilizations-Samuel-Huntington> Last accessed 5 October 2010.

As a result, it seems likely that the influence of religion will not be seen ‘only’ in relation to personal issues. Above, we noted what might be called the *political* effects of the ‘return of religion’. Most countries now have highly politicised religious groups, institutions, and movements that have emerged—or adopted a higher profile—in recent years. Such actors are found in many different faiths and sects and what they have in common is a desire to change domestic, and in some cases international, arrangements, so as to (re)instate religion as a central societal and political influence. They adopt a variety of tactics to achieve their goals. Some confine themselves to the realm of legitimate political protest, seeking reform or change via the ballot box; others may resort to violence and terror to pursue their objectives.

Some commentators are not convinced by the argument that there is a widespread, even global religious revival and revitalisation. They contend instead that rather than a religious resurgence *per se*, what we are seeing is greater visibility today of politicised religion compared to the past. In other words, politicised religion is now more visible—largely as a consequence of the global communications revolution, a key component of a wider development: globalisation. In other words, religion is not a novel political actor, so much as a stubbornly persistent one of which we are now more consistently aware than we were a few years ago. Thus what has changed in recent times is growing awareness that there are increasing manifestations of political religion in and between many countries, and that they can make a difference to our lives. Such perceptions are not doubt increased by advances in communications technology and availability, an important component of globalisation, which is itself a multifaceted process of change, significantly affecting not only governments but also communities and individuals. Religious actors are not of course exempted from globalisation’s influence and some become skilled at using the media to spread their message. Academic and policy discussions of religion and globalisation often highlight trends towards cultural pluralism² partly as a result of globalisation, examining how various religions respond to its impact. Some believers react ‘positively’, accepting or even endorsing pluralism, including some Christian and Muslim ecumenical movements. Others emphasise inter-religious differences, sometimes confronting non-believers in attempts to preserve their particular values from being eroded (further) by globalisation. So-called religious fundamentalists – with examples drawn from, *inter alia*, the Christian, Muslim, and Jewish faiths – can be noted in this regard.

But they are not *sui generis*. In the developing world, various religious traditions— including, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam—all experienced periods of pronounced political activity in the first half of the twentieth century in Africa, Asia and the Middle East. During the first half of the twentieth century, religion was frequently used in the service of anti-colonial nationalism, a major facet of emerging national identity as a key component of burgeoning indigenous opposition to alien rule. In various Muslim countries, such as Algeria, Egypt, and Indonesia, Islamic consciousness was the defining ideology of nationalist movements during this time. In addition, immediately after the Second World War, in 1947, Pakistan traumatically emerged from India as a Muslim state, religiously and culturally distinct from Hindu-majority India. A decade later, Buddhism was politically important, *inter alia*, in Burma, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. In the 1960s in

² Cultural pluralism is a term used when smaller groups within a larger society seek to retain what they see as their singular cultural identities. Ideally, the larger society will respect this desire and facilitate it.

Latin America, both Christian democracy—the application of Christian precepts to politics—and liberation theology—a radical Christian ideology employing Jesus’ teachings as a basis of a demand for greater socio-economic justice for the poor—were politically consequential. Most recently, diverse countries, including Iran, the United States, and Nicaragua, have all seen political religion (re)appearing as an important political actor. Overall, we can note that recent and current manifestations of political religion should be seen in the context of a historical continuum of religion’s public and political involvement which stresses *continuity* rather than *change*.

Four points conclude this section. First, religion has spiritual, material, and in some cases political, aspects. Second, religion played an important political role in many developing countries during the last years of colonialism. Third, patchy modernisation and/or a more generalised ‘atmosphere of crisis’ are said to underpin an extant ‘religious resurgence’. Fourth, while it is often claimed that there is a near-global religious revival, it may be that globalisation – especially the accompanying communications revolution – may be rendering religion in politics more visible and to some more worrying than before.

The book’s structure

The book is divided into two sections. Following this introductory chapter, the first section – Chapters 2-8 – examines various issues collected under the rubric ‘religion and politics’. Chapter 2 discusses the current position of both secularism – that is, the idea that governments should rule separately from both organised religion and/or religious beliefs – and secularisation – that is, the activity of changing the public realm so that it is no longer under the control or influence of religion. As we have noted, recent years have seen the unexpected return of the political significance of religion in most countries, which involves most extant religious traditions. Years of dominance of ‘secularisation theory’ – that is, the belief that as societies ‘modernise’ they ‘inevitably’ became more ‘developed’, more secular and less religious – have given way to a realisation that things are not as clear cut and linear as once widely thought. Put another way, given the intellectual predominance of secularisation theory for much of the twentieth century the apparent ‘return’ of religion was unexpected and for secularists, inherently undesirable. This was because, since the eighteenth century and the subsequent formation and development of the ‘modern’ (that is, secular) international state system, religion was a key ideology stimulating political conflict between societal groups both within and between countries. Yet, following the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and subsequent development of centralised states first in Western Europe and then via European colonisation to the rest of the world, the political importance of religion declined as an organising ideology both domestically and internationally.

In the early twenty-first century, however, many religious entities also have political concerns, including but not limited to those often characterised as ‘religious fundamentalist’ actors. We look at this issue in detail in Chapter 3. The chapter explains why, how and when religious fundamentalists seek to be politically influential in countries around the world, with emphasis on the post-Cold War era, that is, since the late 1980s. This was the time when the four decades long, ideologically-polarised, secular conflict between the USA and the Soviet Union came to a sudden halt with the political fragmentation of the latter and the concomitant birth of numerous new states. Religious fundamentalists are noted among all the world religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism) and seem active in all regions of the world, including

the one routinely described as the most secular: Europe. Chapter 4 looks at how, especially since September 11, 2001, a conflict has emerged, the so-called ‘clash of civilisations’ between the radical Islamists of al-Qaeda and the secular but Christian-influenced West.

Two chapters that follow, Chapters 5 and 6 look at a region of the world with many examples of the political involvement of religious actors: Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Each of these chapters examines a particular aspect of this bigger picture. Chapter 5 focuses explicitly upon the role of both Christian and Muslim religious actors in relation to the region’s attempts at democratisation in the 1990s and early 2000s. Chapter 6 looks at religious identity as a component of civil war in Sudan and Uganda.

Chapters 7 and 8 turn attention to the role of religion in conflict, conflict resolution and peace building in various countries. Chapter 7 is concerned with the potential of religion to help encourage peaceful relations between Israel and the Palestinians as a step towards building permanent peace between them. We have already noted that religion has made a notable return to political prominence in recent years, both domestically and in international relations. Religion has a durable and perhaps growing significance as a strong source of identity for millions of people around the world. Both religious individuals and faith-based organisations are notable as purveyors of ideas, which can encourage either conflict or conflict resolution and peace-building. In particular, scholars have noted increased religious involvement in so-called ‘inter-civilisational’ conflicts, in relation to protests and increased tension between the Muslim world and the West following September 11, 2001, and publication of the ‘Mohammad cartoons’ in September 2005 in Denmark. The chapter (1) argues that, despite the potential for religious differences to lead to or exacerbate conflicts, religion can also be an important potential bridge in helping to resolve them, and (2) examines the role of religion in inter-civilisational conflict in relation to 9/11 and its aftermath.

Chapter 8 is concerned with the role of religious actors in conflict, conflict resolution and peace-building in Mozambique, Nigeria and Cambodia. The chapter argues that in these three countries, religion can both encourage conflict and help to build peace, reflecting growing evidence that religious leaders and organisations can play constructive roles in helping to resolve conflicts. Religious leaders and organisations are the carriers and purveyors of sets of ideas that can play important roles, not only as a source of conflict, but also as a tool for conflict resolution and peace-building. They may do this by, among other things, providing early warnings of conflict, good offices once conflict has erupted, and eventually contributing to advocacy, mediation, and reconciliation. Brief case studies of religious peacemakers – from Mozambique, Nigeria and Cambodia – demonstrate such attempts, which are characteristically partially successful, to reconcile previously warring communities. As a result, they can help achieve improved social cohesion, providing a crucial foundation for progress in enhancing human development.

Section Two, concerned with religion and international relations, encompasses chapters 9-16. The overall theme of the second section of the book is that the dynamics of the new religious pluralism influences the global political landscape, with sometimes significant impacts upon international order. Chapter 9 looks at the key issues involved in a survey of ‘religion and international relations’. I argue that there is widespread agreement about three recent changes in international relations that relate to religion. First, religion has to large extent replaced secular ideologies — especially socialism — as a key source of identity for many people, significantly changing many affiliations and antagonisms in world affairs. Second, there has been a resurgence of religion in societies all

over the world, except perhaps for Western Europe, although this supposition is increasingly contested. Third, the nature of international conflict has changed, with a relative scarcity of interstate wars. Of the 110 major conflicts during the 1990s — that is, those involving more than 1,000 fatalities each — only seven were interstate wars: 103 were civil wars. Of those 103, more than 70% are classified as communal wars: that is, wars among ethnic and other national groups, very often with religion playing an important role in hostilities.

Chapters 10 and 11 turn attention to the role of religion in state foreign policies. Chapter 10 looks at religion and foreign policy making in the USA, India and Iran. The chapter introduces the concept of what I call ‘religious soft power’ in foreign policy making through a focus on these countries’ recent and current foreign policies. I suggest that, if religious actors ‘get the ear’ of key foreign policy makers because of their shared religious beliefs, the former may become able to influence foreign policy outcomes through the exercise of religious soft power, that is, the ability to get policy makers to adopt policies because they believe they are religiously appropriate to do so. In relation to the USA, India and Iran, the chapter argues that several named religious actors do significantly influence foreign policy through such a strategy. It also notes that such influence is apparent not only when key policy makers share religious values, norms and beliefs but also when policy makers accept that foreign policy *should* be informed by them.

Chapter 11 is concerned with a survey over time of politics, identity and religious nationalism in Turkey. It starts from the observation that when there is a close or even synonymous relationship between religion and nationalism, then it is customary to use the term ‘religious nationalism’. Religious nationalism is an important component of present-day international life, defining the nation in terms of shared religion, although not necessarily exclusively; it may also be connected to other components of identity, including: culture, ethnicity, and language. Religious nationalism is identified in various contexts, leading to different outcomes. When the state, as in present-day Iran or Saudi Arabia, or in Afghanistan under the Taliban (1996-2001) derives its political legitimacy primarily from public adherence to religious not secular doctrines, then what we have is a theocracy: the state is dominated by officials who believe themselves or are widely thought to be divinely guided. Overall, we can note several ways in which religion and nationalism interact, identifying a number of degrees of influence which religion has on nationalism. A key category would be *religious nationalism*, where religion and nationalism are inseparable. Another category covers circumstances where religion plays a less influential although still significant role. The chapter focuses explicitly on the role of ‘religious nationalism’ in the recent and current foreign policy of Turkey. Turkey has had a government with its roots in political Islam for nearly a decade, since mid-2002, under the auspices of the Justice and Development Party (AKP). The article seeks to examine how religion has interacted with nationalism in relation to both countries’ foreign policies, and to trace the development and course of this development in relation to specific foreign policies and outcomes during the 2000s.

To provide evidence for the claim that (1) transnational religious actors are increasingly influential in international relations and (2) what they do is important for international order, Chapters 12-16 focus on transnational religious actors. Collectively, the chapters examine these cross-border, non-state, actors with a religious focus. Such entities are active in various parts of the world. It is sometimes claimed that they affect international order in various ways. The concept of international order centres on two main themes: (1) more or less consensual international acceptance of common

values and norms – including the body of international law, and (2) development of institutions geared to preserve and develop international order. The combination of structures and processes – involving various actors, rules, mechanisms and understandings – serves overall to manage the co-existence and interdependence of states and non-state actors in the context of ‘international society’. In the literature there is no consensus about the impact of transnational religious actors on international order, although there is generally acceptance that various religious actors can influence international order outcomes in various ways. Overall, Chapters 12-16 provide both theoretical examination and empirically-focused case studies which allow us to assess the impact of selected transnational religious actors on international order and by extension international relations more generally.

Chapters 12 and 13 look at the phenomenon of transnational religious actors, focusing on the Roman Catholic church and the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) which, while made up of states, has an existence of its own which transcends individual or collective state preferences. The Roman Catholic church has sought to develop its transnational influence in recent years, especially by encouraging numerous authoritarian governments – in Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe – to democratise and more generally to improve their human rights regimes. We also look at the OIC, a transnational Muslim organisation with both religious and political concerns. It was established in 1969 to promote dialogue and cooperation between Muslim and Western governments. In sum, these transnational religious actors all wish to see the spread and development of certain values and norms, with variable impacts on international order and, more widely, international relations. Chapter 14 looks at groups of American Evangelical Protestants, entities which are sometimes referred to as the ‘new internationalists’, because of their concern with human rights, especially ‘international religious freedom’. Over the last 15 years, some US Evangelical Protestants have developed an international agenda focusing on improving human rights, especially religious freedoms, in various parts of the world.

It is unclear the extent to which US Evangelical Protestants, the Roman Catholic church and the OIC affect international order. It is obvious however that some transnational religious actors present significant challenges to international order, especially the extremist Islamist organisation, al-Qaeda, the focus of Chapter 15 and, more generally, the post-9/11 US-directed ‘war on terror’, which is also a key focus of the following chapter, Chapter 16, which examines the rise of Islamist militancy in a strategically important world region, east Africa. The post-9/11 focus on al-Qaeda has more generally reignited the debate on the ‘Clash of Civilisations’ controversy, while at the same time serving to obscure the emergence of what many regard as a new transnational religious landscape marked by both interreligious conflict *and* cooperation, and involving a number of broadly human rights and development issues. Informing this development are the impact of globalisation and the accompanying communications revolution. This is a key factor in encouraging recent and continuing dynamic growth of transnational networks of religious actors. In addition, over the past two decades or so, global migration patterns have also helped spawned more active transnational religious communities. The overall result is a new religious pluralism that has impacted upon international relations in two key ways. First, there has been an emergence of what might be called ‘global religious identities’ that may lead to increasing interreligious dialogues, involving greater religious engagement around various issues, including international development, conflict resolution, and transitional justice. On the other hand, this globalising environment is also

said in some cases to encourage greater, often more intense, interreligious competition, for example between Muslims and Christians in Sudan and Uganda (examined in Chapter 7). Chapter 16 looks directly at the rise of 'Islamic militancy' in east Africa, a direct but partial result of the influence of al-Qaeda.

The concluding chapter, Chapter 17, sums up and concludes the preceding chapters which, collectively, seek to provide a survey over time of the interaction of religion and politics, both domestically and internationally, in relation to a variety of issues of topical importance.

*** From "Religion, Politics and International Relations. Selected Essays" (London, Routledge, 2011).**

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