

***Soli Deo Gloria?* What glory and which god in secular-sacred unions between
state and church in international politics**

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Abstract

In this paper, I argue that a more systematic examination of the role of religion in international politics is long overdue. Specifically, I focus on the puzzle why secular states would pursue secular-sacred unions with religious actors like the church. I examine how different theological traditions and ecclesiastical interpretations lead the state and church actor to pursue two different types of strategies, resulting in four types of secular-sacred equilibria. Then I suggest two ways that the secular-sacred union affects international politics; it has a monadic effect on the rise of great powers, and a dyadic effect in determining the degree of cooperation and conflict between dyads. Finally, I suggest an operationalization strategy, focusing on archival methods by which to reconstruct the evolution of theology and ecclesiastical thought over time and across localities.

Introduction

In 2000, a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the rebuilt Cathedral of Christ the Savior was consecrated in Moscow.¹ It is the largest Eastern Orthodox church in the world, and marked the concrete manifestation of renewed cooperation between the Russian political state and the Russian Orthodox Church. Later that year, the Cathedral would serve as the site where Nicholas II, the last Russian czar, was canonized by the Russian Orthodox Church. Considered together with the personal involvement of Russian leaders like Putin in the restoration of Russian Orthodox churches in Israel,² it appears that more than ever, the link between the Russian state and Orthodox Church has been restored, not just in domestic state-society relations but also in the practice of international politics.

According to the secularization and modernization thesis, this should not be happening. The Enlightenment was supposed to usher in a new age of reason and the rise of secularism as the substitute to the declining importance of religion. While the secularization thesis is increasingly challenged as studies in sociology and history highlight the resurgence of religion, religion continues to have a minor place in the study of international politics, with a few exceptions.³ Most existing studies of the roles and effects of religion in international relations share two common research approaches.⁴ First, they focus on religion exclusively as an ideology, doctrine, and idea. Second, the emphasis is on the role of religion after World War Two and especially the past few decades marked by events like the Islamic revolution in Iran, 9/11, and global jihad. But religion is more than just non-material ideas, as it is intrinsically intertwined with material actors, structures and institutions. Also, if religion increasingly matters in the postmodern post-Enlightenment “secular” world, surely it must have mattered when the world was “less secular;” how appropriate is to claim that “the increasing role of religious leaders, religious institutions, and religiously motivated lay figures in [politics] is a *modern phenomenon*” [my emphasis].⁵ In other words, emphasizing the resurgence of religion seems misleading, as it is unclear that religion ever faded from the practice of international politics, even if it from the study of international politics.

¹ For more on the politics surrounding the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, see Kathleen Smith (1997) “An old cathedral for a New Russia: The symbolic politics of the reconstituted church of Christ the Saviour” *Religion, State and Society*, 25(2), 163-175.

² “Where piety meets power” *Economist*, 17 December 2009. [http://www.economist.com/world/middleeast-africa/displaystory.cfm?story_id=15108627]. Accessed 26 December 2009.

³ Daniel Philpott (2000) “The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations” *World Politics*, 52(2), 206-245; Timothy Shah and Monica Toft (2006) “Why God is Winning” *Foreign Policy*, 155, 39-43; Kenneth Wald and Clyde Wilcox (2006) “Getting Religion: Has Political Science Rediscovered the Faith Factor” *American Political Science Review*, 100(4), 523-529; Michael Horowitz (2009) “Long Time Going: Religion and the Duration of Crusading” *International Security*, 34(2), 162-193; Daniel Nexon (2009) *The Struggle for Power in Early Modern Europe: Religious Conflict, Dynastic Empires, and International Change*. Princeton, Princeton University Press; see also Palgrave-MacMillan’s ongoing series *Culture and Religion in International Relations*—notable titles include Jonathan Fox and Shmuel Sandler (2006) *Bringing Religion into International Relations*, Fabio Petito and Pavlos Hatzopoulos, ed (2003) *Religion in International Relations: The Return from Exile*, and Scott Thomas (2005) *The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Relations: The Struggle for the Soul of the Twenty-First Century*.

⁴ Nexon (2009) is an exception to both of these generalizations, while Philpott (2000) and Horowitz (2009) look not at contemporary settings but on the immediate aftermath of the Peace of Westphalia and the Crusades respectively.

⁵ Edward Luttak (1994) “The Missing Dimension” in Douglas Johnston and Cynthia Sampson, ed. *Religion, The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*, New York, Palgrave-Macmillan. p. 16

Research Puzzle

The puzzle that animates this project is why states and churches so often seek secular-sacred unions. The state, defined here as the relevant elites or actors that deliberate, formulate, and execute politics, has a thoroughly temporal and earthly agenda; the glory it seeks is of this world. By contrast, the church, defined here as the actors, structures, and institutions that are the representatives of religious communities, has a transcendent and heavenly agenda; it seeks the glory of God. While the state values national sovereignty and seeks personal allegiances to the political nation-state, the church represents a transnational movement that advocates a personal allegiance to and faith in God that trumps earthly allegiances. These preferences and recognized forms of sovereignty are not obviously complementary, if not directly contradictory. There is “a tension between, on one hand, modern understandings of political sovereignty and on the other hand, a supreme principle or set of commitments involving beliefs that are invested with sacred or religious qualities.”⁶ This paper proposes a research framework by which to explain why, when, and how secular-sacred unions are constructed. There are four types of secular-sacred unions; as will be explained below, this varies from no union to the state constructing itself as the church. In this paper, I do not examine religion as an ideology but focus on the church as the relevant political actor that interacts, bargains, and cooperates with the state actor.

Plan of paper

There are five substantive sections in this paper. First, I present a short history of the evolution of the roles and effects religion has had in politics. Then, I conceptualize the state and church as actors, focusing on their different preferences and ordering principles. This does not only illuminate the tension inherent in secular-sacred unions, but also provides conditions by which such unions are not only feasible but rational. Third, I define a typology of different secular-sacred unions and suggest some examples of each type. Fourth, I hypothesize the monadic and dyadic effects of different types of secular-state unions. Fifth, I present an operationalization framework to track and examine changing ecclesiastical theology.

Religion and politics

A short history of the role of religion in politics

It seems extraneous to suggest that in pre-Enlightenment Europe, the state and church perpetuated in close cooperation if not collusion. Indeed, “the possibility of alliance between religion and the defense of the European Old Regime seems all too obvious. Tautology though it may be, it nonetheless boasts an imposing mass of empirical evidence.”⁷ From the Holy Roman Empire to the adoption of Lutheranism and then Calvinism by German princes, to Henry VIII’s formation of the English Anglican Church and the French monarchy’s usurpation of ecclesiastical authority and property from Rome, everywhere the church was seen as a conservative force that solidified the rule of the existing monarchy or principality. During this period before Westphalia, the modern nation-state had not been consolidated as the primary

⁶ John Carlson and Erik Owens (2003) “Reconsidering Westphalia’s Legacy for Religion and International Politics” in John Carlson and Erik Owens, ed. *The Sacred and the Sovereign: Religion and International Politics*, Washington, Georgetown University Press. p. 5

⁷ James Bradley and Dale Van Kley (2001) “Introduction” in James Bradley and Dale Van Kley, ed. Notre Dame, Notre Dame University Press. p. 18

means of organizing society. Potential tensions between the church as a supranational institution demanding transnational allegiance did not seriously conflict with the very limited ideas of national sovereignty that was perpetuating throughout Europe.

Just as the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 marked the modern era of the nation-state, so it sparked a drastic transformation of state-church relations. Faith and religion became a national political issue. Instead of transnational religion, “the faith of the rulers of particular polities became the determinant of a country’s religious dispensation, breaking the unity of a universal church. *The Church* was superseded by many nationalized churches.”⁸ Second, states began to manipulate and bargain with newly national churches because religion was a potent source of regime legitimacy and political authority. The decline of the Catholic Church as an external source of legitimacy meant that “each state and dynasty sought to give itself legitimacy by [establishing a national] confessional church [that could] provide the confessional unity and motives for obedience which were widely thought to be indispensable to political unity and stability.”⁹ The third change is that there arose for the first time a strong counterbalancing perspective that sought to separate the union of the temporal and spiritual. The French Revolution is the most violent attempt to “emancipate” the state from the church, though its immediate aftermath spawned an upsurge in European monarchies adopting “local versions of ‘God Save the King’ and flags based on the Union flag’s crosses rather than threatening colors of three colors [as] religion restored seemed a compelling alternative to reason rampant.”¹⁰ Within confessional traditions, there was increasingly debate about the role of church in state politics. Intra-confessional debate concerning “the interplay between ecclesiastical and civil politics, and the related questions of the status of established religions, religious minority rights, and toleration” marked religious conflict in the 18th century¹¹ as increasingly, “energies of [many] churches and religious believers...were invested in the struggle to loosen the juncture of spiritual and temporal realms.”¹² Yet it was a time marked by conflicted views on how to frame secular-state unions, if at all. Edmund Burke’s position on church-state and state-church relations exemplifies the growing tension among politicians of this era. While on the one hand “Burke detested the idea of separating Church and state, regarding disestablishment as almost as pernicious as the French Revolution’s ‘Atheism by Establishment,’ he was also hostile to the very notion of ‘alliance’ between throne and altar—commonplace in most Restoration conservative thinking.”¹³

In the immediate aftermath of the Enlightenment, it seemed as if religion had indeed faded. In Victorian England, the Anglican Church lost its monopoly on ecclesiastical matters and social influence as Victorian morality seemed to take precedence over religious conviction. Unlike France or elsewhere in continental Europe, where liberals were distinctly anticlerical, “no British political party espoused either anticlericalism or the confessional politics [as] major political parties undertook piecemeal reforms, whose cumulative effect was to dismantle the

⁸ Susanne Rudolph (2003) “Religious Concomitants of Transnationalism: From a Universal Church to a Universal Religiosity” in John Carlson and Erik Owens, ed. *The Sacred and the Sovereign: Religion and International Politics*, p. 140

⁹ Bradley and Van Kley (2001) p. 34

¹⁰ Michael Burleigh (2005) *Earthly Powers: The Clash of Religion and politics in Europe, from the French Revolution to the Great War*, New York, Harper Collins, p. 115

¹¹ Bradley and van Kley (2001) p. 26

¹² Fred Dallmayr (2003) “Sacred Nonsovereignty” in John Carlson and Erik Owens, ed. *The Sacred and the Sovereign: Religion and International Politics*. p. 258

¹³ Burleigh (2005) p. 121

single-creed state that the century began with.”¹⁴ Throughout Europe, church attendance decreased while liberal theology that challenged religious orthodoxy became increasingly dominant.

However, on closer inspection, religion as an ideology and church institutions continued to be very influential. In Russia, the Russian Orthodox Church experienced resurgence both among the populace and in elite circles. Whereas before the church had always been seen as an ally of conservatism, “de facto alliances [such as between Russian Orthodox white clergy and Catherine the Great, and between Presbyterian and Independent ministers in England] suggest that something like a religiously inspired political radicalism was still possible.”¹⁵ In Prussia, Bismarck’s campaign first to denounce the Catholic church and then reconcile with it elevated the importance of religion in politics. It became increasingly difficult to differentiate German nationalism from Protestantism, an unholy alliance that would echo a few generations later as Protestant voters overwhelmingly voted for Hitler and the National Socialists to prominence. In Prussia and elsewhere, confessional centrist parties were forming and redefining the political landscape.¹⁶ Meanwhile, the ill-fated Crimean War erupted over a conflict over religious sites in the Middle East, foreshadowing the modern conflicts of the latter 20th century. Personal faith may have been declining, or increasingly privatized, but religious ideas and language continued to dominate politics. Regardless of how “religious in inspiration it may or may not have been, ideology was overtly religious in the sense of positing “faith” and obedience to the dictates of religion as the prime constituent of social order, and, opposing the notion of popular or national sovereignty head on, deriving sovereignty and hence all legitimate political authority ultimately from God as mediated by the papacy and Christian kingship.”¹⁷ Therefore, while secularism continued to expand, so too did religiosity and the role of religion in society and politics; while it may not have been expanding, the rate of its withdrawal from politics was glacial. In fact, authority as divinely ordained may have remained in place until the early 20th century as it was only “following the treaty of Versailles [that] self-determination replaced the divine right of kings [as the basis for political legitimacy and authority].”¹⁸

In contemporary post-modern society, religion has again become prominent. The American foreign policy community that had so depressed the role of religion thus could not predict the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Before the rise of global jihad, 9/11, and the international struggle against terrorism, there was the growing role of Catholic actors in providing both the ideology (liberation theology) and material support for national movements in the Philippines, Africa, and Latin America. Religious communities and the religious thought it espoused gave “individuals and communities the added strength to act independently, or to defy the state, such as the confessing church in Nazi Germany or in the German Democratic Republic, the Catholic Church in communist Poland, or in the anti-apartheid struggle of the Christian Churches in South Africa.”¹⁹

This short history reveals a story not of the declining influence of religion, but of the changing roles of religion and religious institutions in society and politics. Religion “is a two-edged sword that can support both the government and those who oppose it [as] religious elites

¹⁴ Burleigh (2005) p. 312

¹⁵ Bradley and van Kley (2001) p. 18

¹⁶ Stathis Kalyvas (1996) *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press.

¹⁷ Bradley and van Kley (2001) p. 20

¹⁸ Fox and Sandler (2004) p. 37

¹⁹ Scott Thomas (2000) “Religion and International Conflict” in K.R. Dark, ed *Religion and International Relations*, New York, Palgrave-Macmillan. p. 4

do not always support the state [but can also] decide to oppose the state.”²⁰ The influence of religion is embodied in the changing relationships between state and church. It is a narrative of changing cooperation, suppression, and collusion between state and increasing varieties of church institutions. Indeed, more than being one of “the oldest of the transnational [institutions, the church has] long claimed a role equivalent to or transcending the political—before nation or state were even articulated concepts. On the other hand, churches were not and are not always transnational, operating above or extending across states [and] have a history of being subsumed by states or collaborating with them.”²¹ Ecclesiastical diversity is matched only by the different ways that religious thought influenced politics, politics became the battleground for ecclesiastical conflict, and church actors struck bargains with state actors.

Why religion is so influential

Religion as an ideology has had such a profound and continual influence on politics because it is one of the few ideologies that has a corresponding material manifestation in the institutions and structures of the church; as such, it is an especially salient political ideology. There is no obvious institution or structure by other ideologies, like capitalism, democracy, nationalism, or liberty, is proliferated. There are democratic institutions and capitalist structures, but none share the same close relationship between idea and realization as religion and church. Religious thought and doctrines are preached to the masses in churches, undergo intellectual criticism and revision in seminaries, brought to foreign lands and the underprivileged by missionaries, taught to a nation’s youth through education faculties dominated by religious facilities until recently, funded by weekly tithing and wealthy patrons, and often brought to bear on infidels at the tip of a sword and spear.

Conceptualization: Religion, church, and state

Religion and theology

Religion is not a uniform, unchanging ideology, and the church not a static institution. Within Christian Europe, tensions abound within theological thought and religious practice, not only of the appropriate manifestation of personal faith into religious practice, but also of the role that the church should play in politics.²² While it is beyond the scope of this paper to fully summarize the changing debates and intellectual history of Christian theology, I focus on theological and doctrinal tensions as they relate to the state actor and church actor. Specifically, I determine the degree to which both types of actors are pursuing secular or sacred agendas. While not all state actors are religious, nor all political leaders persons of faith, they often invoke religious doctrine or theology to justify their political actions.²³ Conversely, not all church institutions have predominately sacred priorities, and some have periodically, such as the Catholic Church and Russian Orthodox Church, been almost exclusively secular in their involvement in politics despite the wearing of the cassock, clerical collar, or biretta. The core issue for the state actor is the degree to which politics is just earthly or if politics is intertwined with a sacred destiny. For church actors, two issues animate the tension between existing as a

²⁰ Fox and Sandler (2004) p. 40

²¹ Rudolph (2003) p. 139

²² For now, I have focused on Europe and Christendom; but I am fairly certain that such tensions exist in non-Western, non-Christian contexts and religious thought.

²³ It is also outside the scope of this paper to determine whether or not state actors really “believe” what they say or invoke in justifying their politics.

religious community (spiritual) or an earthly institution (secular). The first concerns the right obedience and reverence for political authority; the second concerns the means and capacities such that “[God’s] will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”²⁴

Religion, theology, and the state

The central doctrinal challenge for political actors is determining the appropriate balance between imbuing politics with religious significance (sacred) and establishing an earthly kingdom independent of religion (secular). For much of European history, the divine right of kings was the foundation of political legitimacy and authority.²⁵ If authority was from heaven, then surely the king had a responsibility to use this divinely instituted power for a sacred agenda. Echoing the Old Testament history where Israel served as the chosen instrument of God, so countless monarchs have proclaimed themselves instruments of God’s will and protectorates of the faith; some may have genuinely believed the righteousness of the cause, others simply co-opted the language of the monarch as divine instrument. On the other hand, state actors must grapple with Christ’s teaching that that “My kingdom is not of this world;”²⁶ this is a theme that is constantly affirmed in Paul’s epistles.²⁷ Political leaders who pursue secular politics make concerted efforts to separate national political aspirations from divine destiny. Even states with deeply religious political elites thus deny the temptation to imbue earthly politics with religious or eternal dimensions; instead, they leave issues of religion and salvation to the church. Without denying the existence of temporal realms or the eternal ramifications of their actions, state actors with a secular perspective focus on being responsible stewards of the power entrusted to them.

Religion, theology, and the church

For church actors, the tension between being a secular institution and a sacred representation of the faith centers around two issues, the right understanding of political authority, and the appropriate capacity of the church as institution. Finding balance between submitting to the authority of man ordained by God (secular), and obedience to God regardless of the existing authority (sacred) is a central debate in Christian theology and exegetical interpretation. On the one hand, teachings like Christ’s instructions to “give to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s,”²⁸ and Paul’s admonition that “everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities”²⁹ seem to indicate that even religious institutions should be obedient to secular authorities. As Peter writes, obedience to God requires reverence for authority as Christians should submit “*for the Lord’s sake* to every authority instituted among men [and] honor the king.”³⁰ However, on the other hand, the Bible is filled with examples of disobedience to secular authority when the decrees of the king led to sin and disobedience to God. In Egypt, Israelite midwives did not kill all Israeli males, as Pharaoh had ordered; instead, they “feared God and did not do what the king of Egypt had told them to do; they let the boys

²⁴ Matthew 6:10

²⁵ Fox and Sandler (2004, p. 37) argue that it was not until the treaty of Versailles after World War One that self-determination replaced the divine right as the basis for political authority.

²⁶ John 18:36

²⁷ “I declare to you brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God, nor does the perishable inherit the imperishable” (1 Corinthians 15:50); “For our struggle is not against flesh and blood [but] against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12).

²⁸ Matthew 22:21

²⁹ Romans 13:1

³⁰ 1 Peter 2:13, 17; emphasis mine

live.”³¹ Similarly, Daniel continued to pray to Jerusalem despite the prohibition of Nebuchadnezzar,³² while his three friends Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego refused to bow down to Nebuchadnezzar’s idol.³³ Unconditional obedience to the authorities reflects a church that views itself first as a secular institution while the willingness to disobey authority when it contradicts their religious convictions reflects a church that views itself as predominantly a sacred community. Ultimately, the question of submission to earthly authority is a reflection of the understanding of the omnipotence and sovereignty of God. By becoming secular and seeking to engage in earthly politics, the church was “suckered...into a Pilate-style geopolitics, with the result that the presumed omnipotence of God became nearly indistinguishable from the might of a Genghis Khan [as the church assigned God] the position of an absurd emperor of the world.”³⁴

The second tension concerns the appropriate level of wealth that the church should hold. How the church interprets and exercises Christ’s call not to “store up for yourselves treasure on earth...but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven” has varied.³⁵ This has a direct impact on the capacities and material wealth of church institutions, and to a related degree, its power and influence on society and politics. This tension led to the Reformation, as Luther and his Reformist contemporaries believed that the Roman Catholic Church had overstepped its boundaries in focusing too much on accumulating material wealth. The sale of indulgences, motivated by the desire to expand church coffers, highlights the dangers of focusing too much on material possessions, leading to the watering down of salvation and core Christian theological doctrines. On the other hand, the church has at times emphasized its purpose first and foremost as a religious community called to evangelize and bring about the personal salvation of lost souls. While some religious communities have literally applied the call to poverty that Christ uses when sending out the Twelve,³⁶ this is perhaps better reflected in the difference, at least in outward manifestations of worship and church construction, between “austere” Protestantism and “extravagant” Catholicism. Thus, when the church focuses on amassing material wealth and expanding its societal influence, it is becoming more secular; conversely, when the church emphasizes personal spiritual growth and the salvation of the individual as its paramount interest, it is becoming more sacred.

Conceptualizing secular-sacred unions

Four of a kind, or four types of the same kind?

Through a stylized rational choice bargaining actor framework, echoing the growing use of rational choice or economic models in the sociology of religion,³⁷ I model the interaction

³¹ Exodus 1:17

³² Daniel 6:10

³³ Daniel 3:1-30

³⁴ Dallmayr (2003) p. 258

³⁵ Matthew 6:19-20

³⁶ Mark 6: 8-9

³⁷ Stephen Warner (1993) “Work in Progress Towards A New Paradigm for the Sociological Study of Religion in the United States” *The American Journal of Sociology*, 98(5), p. 1044-1093; Laurence Iannaccone (1995a) “Voodoo Economics? Reviewing the Rational Choice to Religion” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 34(1), 76-89; Mark Chaves (1995) “On the Rational Choice Approach to Religion” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 34(1), 98-104; N.J. Demerath (1995) “Rational Paradigms, A-Rational Paradigms, and the Debate over Secularization” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 34(1), p. 105-112; Philip Mellor (2000) “Rational Choice or Sacred Contagion? “Rationality,” “Non-rationality” and Religion” *Social Compass*, 47(2), 273-292. An example of using a stylized rational choice actor-interest framework is Anthony Gill and Arang Keshavarzian (1999)

between the state actor and church actor, and the two preferences that each actor has depending on the prevailing theological interpretation and other non-religious interests. As mentioned above, theological and doctrinal tensions vary from a secular to a sacred perspective; both actors thus have two sets of archetype strategies to play, Secular or Sacred. The State actor chooses the Secular strategy when it seeks to demarcate the differences between political objectives and divine destiny. Conversely, when it seeks to agglomerate and imbue its political agenda with sacred connotations, it chooses the Sacred strategy. The Church actor chooses the Secular strategy when doctrinal values favor the establishment of the church as an earthly institution. Conversely, when its focus is on winning souls and pointing its members towards the heavenly realm, it plays the Sacred strategy. The possible outcomes of this interaction are summarized in the matrix below.³⁸

State	Church	
	<i>Secular</i>	<i>Sacred</i>
<i>Secular</i>	(A) De-establishment	(B) State-church tension
<i>Sacred</i>	(C) Political Religion	(D) Civic Religion

Figure 1: Equilibrium outcomes of State-Church interaction

As the table above reveals, there are four types of secular-state outcomes.³⁹ Each equilibrium condition is described below.

(A) De-establishment

When both the State and Church pursue secular strategies, the resulting secular-sacred union is de-establishment, or separation of church and state; this separation can be de facto or de jure, depending on the difficulty of passing legislation to officially sanction the changing realities and roles of the state in the church and the church in the state. The church represents itself as another civic and political domestic institution, seeking to maximize or maintain its resources, wealth, and influence. It emphasizes the communal societal responsibilities of the church, and deemphasizes personal spiritual transformation. The church willingly engages in the political realm as a civic organization, but does not claim extraordinary access to divinely ordained leaders as the earthly manifestation of the divine. Its focus is not missionary, but seeks to be an institution that facilitates the mission of the state. The state demarcates its political agenda from any divine inspiration, empowering, or destiny. Elites in power may have strong personal faith and religious convictions, but they recognize the differentiation between communal politics and

“State Building and Religious Resources: An Institutional Theory of Church-State Relations in Iran and Mexico” *Politics & Society*, 27(3), 431-465.

³⁸ I am as of yet undecided on the other structures of this game; for example, whether or not it is a simultaneous move or sequential game, and the payoff matrices associated with each outcome. I had also thought about representing the state-church relationship through a principal-agent framework, but I am not certain which actor is the principal and which is the agent. Finally, I am also debating whether or not these are Weberian ideal-types, or if these are ideals on a continuum or spectrum of variation.

³⁹ Some scholars, especially Emilio Gentile, have argued that civil religion and political religion are indistinguishable. I am still grappling with whether the differentiation I am making is tenable, especially given the intervening variable of nationalism, which often has strong religious influences, both in rhetoric but also theory. If nationalism and religious zeal are indistinguishable, then it might be impossible to differentiate between political and civil religion as the church’s emphasis on the sacred (personal salvation and redemption) may be empirically indistinguishable from the church’s secular preference to be a crucial vehicle by which to influence a burgeoning nationalism.

personal faith. According to Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms, there is the earthly realm, which is political, and the heavenly realm, which is spiritual; the two realms are independent of the other, as they exist simultaneously but as parallel realms. There is therefore no tension between allegiance to the state and to God, as the church does not challenge the earthly authority of the state while the state focuses on its earthly realm, abstaining from interfering or invoking ecclesiastical or spiritual dimensions. [Examples?]

(B) State-church tension

In this equilibrium, the State pursues a secular strategy but the Church emphasizes its role as a sacred institution. This exacerbates conflicting allegiances to state and God. While the state focuses on politics, and demands that all of its citizens focus on the mission of the state, the church is emphasizing eternal priorities like salvation, emphasizing the mission for souls. The church is more hesitant to acquiesce to political authority because its perceptive lens is predominantly us versus them, while the church's perceptive lens is of saved and unsaved souls; the sacred demarcation often cuts across national and political differentiation, undermining the religious' unquestionable devotion to the state's agenda. The church is also hesitant to participate within the national political process as a civic institution, as that can undermine its redemptive mission emphasizing not corporate and social religion but personal and spiritual salvation. It can even become a source of opposition to the state, as the church seeks to emphasize the transnational fellowship of believers and sovereignty of God over the political exclusion of other principalities and the sovereignty of the state. As such, tension arises between the state and the church, often resulting in the state's suppression of the church. State-church tension can also result in increased intra-confessional conflict, as the state seeks to empower more sympathetic religious actors within the church to make it more cooperative in participating, or at least not opposing, the state's political agenda. [Examples?]

(C) Political religion

If the State pursues a Sacred strategy but the Church is playing a Secular strategy, then the state creates a political religion that corresponds to the sacred destiny its politics seeks to achieve.⁴⁰ The church is interested in advancing its material interests within society, and is less willing to embrace its original identity as an ecclesiastical and spiritual authority. This results in a religious vacuum, as the dominant religious institution shies away from the heavenly realm to focus on expanding its earthly interests. Finding no religious partner that can promulgate the integrated vision of the nation as sacred, the state creates one. Instead of trying to convince a preexisting religious institution to advance a particular divine doctrine, the state chooses its most reliable partner, itself. The state, in effect, elevates itself to be the church. The state is now "God and [the] proper object of unsurpassable and comprehensive allegiance."⁴¹ Political elites become the high priest, the monarch or leader the (demi)god, and the state institution becomes both the executor of politics and the vessel that divines and proclaims the political agenda as sacred destiny. The political religion equilibrium can also exist when there is no church actor, either because of atrophy and natural decline of church, or because in a previous period, the state had so effectively suppressed the church such that it had ceased to be a viable actor. Prominent

⁴⁰ The concept political religion was first coined by Christopher Wieland and the Marquis Condorcet during the French Revolution to describe the Revolutionary regime.

⁴¹ Paul Griffiths (2003) "Religious Allegiance and Political Sovereignty: An Irreconcilable Tension" in John Carlson and Erik Owens, ed. *The Sacred and the Sovereign: Religion and International Politics*. p. 249

examples of political regimes that have constructed political religions, specifically by elevating the state to be church, include the French Revolutionary regime, Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, and Stalinist Soviet Union.⁴² One scholar even argues that political religions characterize the dominant type of state-church relations in the 20th century.⁴³

(D) Civic religion

The civic or civil religion equilibrium emerges when both Church and State actors pursue their respective Sacred strategies. The state integrates its political agenda with sacred and divine significance, either out of the genuine belief among political elites that they were doing God's work or as an instrument to engender greater support. The state frames its political objectives as transcendental; it positions itself within a divine narrative of history, present, and future, seeking to establish itself as a chosen instrument, for such a time as this, to bring about God's will on earth. The integration of the sacred into secular politics is complementary to the church's focus on personal salvation and redemption. As the state pursues what appears to be its divine purpose, it coalesces and resonates with the church's efforts for redemption but within a larger social context. The result of this civic religion is a secular-sacred union where the church proclaims the state as the chosen instrument of God, the state as God's elect. There is no tension between allegiance to the state and God as "allegiance to the core interests of the state, however exactly these interests are construed, is understood as a proper part of the demands of religious sovereignty [and obedience]."⁴⁴ This results in the integration of the politics of the state with the individual redemptive process for individuals. This is evident in how German preachers, on the eve of World War One declared the sudden cohesion of German unity as "the coming of the Holy Spirit on the German people, just like the first Pentecost that had witnessed the very beginning of the Christian Church."⁴⁵ Examples of the emergence of civil religion include ancient Macedonia, Greece and Rome, Henry VIII's Protestant regime, Wilhelm Germany in World War One, post-war Italy, and modern-day America.⁴⁶

Secular-sacred states and international politics

Monadic effect: state-church cooperation and the rise of great powers

State-church cooperation is essential in explaining the rise of great powers. One of the common explanations for the rise of great powers is that economic growth and technological

⁴² See Emilio Gentile (1990) "Fascism as Political Religion" *Journal of Contemporary History*, 25(2/3), 229-251; Philippe Burrin (1997) "Political Religion: The Relevance of a Concept" *History and Memory*, 9(1/2), 321-349; Emilio Gentile (2005) "Political Religion: A Concept and its Critics—A Critical Survey" *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 6(1), 19-32; Renato Moro (2005) "Religion and Politics in the Time of Secularization: The Sacralisation of Politics and the Politicisation of Religion" *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 6(1), 71-86.

⁴³ Marina Cattaruzza (2005) "Introduction to the special issue of *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions: Political Religions as a Characteristic of the 20th Century*." *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 6(1), 1-18.

⁴⁴ Griffiths (2003) p. 250

⁴⁵ A.J. Hoover (1995) "German Nationalism and Religion" *History of European Ideas*, 20(4-6), 765-771. p. 768

⁴⁶ Robert Bellah (1967) "Civil Religion in America" *Daedalus*, 96(1), 1-21; John Coleman (1970) "Civil Religion" *Sociological Analysis*, 31(2), 67-77; Michael Minkenberg (1997) "Civil Religion and German Unification" *German Studies Review*, 20(1), 63-81; John Markoff and Daniel Regan (1981) "The Rise and Fall of Civil Religion: Comparative Perspectives" *Sociological Analysis*, 42(4), 333-352; Stephen Gundle (2000) "The civic religion of the Resistance in post-war Italy" *Modern Italy*, 5(2), 113-132; Michael Angrosino (2002) "Civil Religion Redux" *Anthropological Quarterly*, 75(2), 239-267;

progress accelerates the material capabilities of a state, leading to a rising great power.⁴⁷ While perhaps a necessary condition, it is overly deterministic. My first hypothesis claims that states can only rise to great power status if they also achieve sacred-secular (political religion) or sacred-sacred (civil religion) unions. Given the difficulty and risks inherent in seeking to become a regional hegemon and global power, a state must imbue its political objectives with divine destiny and sacred connotations. I posit three explanations for this.

Hypothesis 1: Secular-sacred unions are a necessary condition for a state to rise to the ranks of regional and great powers

First, when elevating its earthly agenda with a transcendental religious vision, the state engenders greater support for its political machinations through negotiated cooperation with the church. Religious institutions do not serve only to “[deliver] the support of their constituents [but they also give] the government an aura of religious legitimacy. Thus, there is essentially a social contract of mutual support between political and religious elites.”⁴⁸ Preempting potential conflicts of allegiances, the state that negotiates a secular-sacred union recruits the church as an ally, or at the very worst, prevents it from emerging as a critical force.

Securing a secular-sacred union is also a costly tying hands signal. As one scholar points out, “when religious institutions are in the service of the state, such as the Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus or the Russian Orthodox Church in post-Soviet Russia, state policy can become more uncompromising.”⁴⁹ Politics become increasingly intransigent since policy change or compromise with an adversary becomes a challenge not only to the state, but also to the church, not only to a particular political agenda, but to a truth paradigm. In effect, a secular-sacred union raises the stakes, raising the opportunity cost of appeasement, and making it more difficult for the state to back down. This strengthens the resolve of the state and increases the bargaining power of the state that has such a secular-sacred union compared to a state that lacks a comparable union.

Finally, a secular-sacred union allows the state to imbue its politics with profound meaning. The pursuit of great power is no longer the mere acquisition of material capabilities, but meaningful as the fulfillment of national *and* divine destiny. It is not just the securing of security today, but a crucial spiritual milestone in a state’s transcendental history linking past to present and future. By injecting such meaning and purpose into its politics, the state can encourage greater ideological cohesion and provide justification for the potential challenges and difficulties of seeking greater power.

Empirically, it appears that both in history and in contemporary contexts, this hypothesis is plausible. All of the great powers, especially on the eve of war, sought to imbue their politics with sacred and religious connotation. In pre-19th century Europe, European leaders justified their campaigns by declaring themselves defenders of the faithful, establishing a civic religion that elevated the state as a chosen instrument of God; in more modern times, Nazi Germany and Stalinist Soviet Union established political religions as a key component of the machinery of war. The counterfactual to this hypothesis can be found if there are states that underwent the process of great power rise without seeking a secular-sacred union. For example, one could look at the emerging great powers in society today, such as the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and

⁴⁷ Paul Kennedy (1987) *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers*, New York, Vintage Publishers.

⁴⁸ Fox and Sandler (2004) p. 40

⁴⁹ Thomas (2000) p. 3

China), and determine the degree to which they have sought secular-sacred unions. Another testing strategy is to test the implications of this hypothesis. One implication I make is that powerful states without secular-sacred unions cannot become more powerful than they are. One could test, for instance, whether the lack of secular-sacred unions can explain the stagnation if not decline of European powers like Great Britain, France, and Germany.

Dyadic effects: secular-sacred unions and conflict between states

There are five possible types of secular-sacred unions, the four I discuss above and a fifth type, of no union at all. Of the ten possible types of dyadic combinations, I focus on the five dyadic pairs that contain at least one sacred-secular (political religion) union or one sacred-sacred (civic religion) union. Since the first hypothesis argues that those two types of secular-sacred unions are necessary for rising powers, it is crucial to understand the interaction of such rising states and how their secular-sacred unions constrain or enable international cooperation.

Hypothesis 2a: A full dyad of states with civic religion unions has the highest probability of conflict.

Hypothesis 2b: A mixed dyad where one state has a political religion union and one with civic religion union has a high probability of conflict

Hypothesis 2c: A full dyad of states with political religion unions has a moderate probability of conflict

Hypothesis 2d: A mixed dyad where one state does not have a secular-sacred union has a low probability of conflict

If the states in a dyad both have civic religion state-church unions, the probability of conflict is highest because both states view themselves, or have irreversibly portrayed themselves to be, God's chosen instrument. Both states have high opportunity costs for backing down, high stakes as their political agendas are imbued with divine destiny, and strong public support. To use Fearon's framework, there are greater chances of miscalculation, decreases the bargaining space for compromise, and lowers the probability of issue divisibility. I expect that this type of dyad is most conflict-prone because both will act decisively with either genuine belief or bravado that God is on their side to give a victory that is divinely ordained. Examples of this type of dyad are found among the major powers involved in WWI; each of the states believed they were instruments of God, and each set off to war with the confidence that victory and providence had been divinely ordained.

A mixed dyad where states have different types of secular-sacred unions have a lower, but still high, probability of conflict. There is still one state who believes that it is a chosen instrument of God. If the theological and religious difference between the state that believes itself the chosen instrument and the state that has constructed the state as church are significant, then the probability of tension increases. Ideological and theological conflict easily translates into political conflict; there is greater space for cooperation, but issue divisibility is still relatively low as the state with the civic religion has low willingness to compromise. An example of this type of dyad may be the US-China bilateral link. According to Bellah, the secular-sacred equilibrium in the US most closely represents a civic religion, while the Chinese system can be conceived as a political religion, where the state (Chinese Communist Party, CCP) is the church. The probability of outright conflict is low, but tensions remain high; willingness to

compromise remain low as there is still an undercurrent of American exceptionalism and moralizing, such as on human rights or Tibet, in US-Sino bilateral relations.

A full dyad where both states are established as the national church exhibit a moderate probability of conflict. Both states lack the belief that they are God's chosen instrument; they are instead focused on consolidating domestic political authority and legitimacy, and less willing to engage in foreign policy adventurism or high stakes games. Many political religion states have a history of suppressing preexisting religions. These states must diligently perpetuate and strengthen the state as church doctrine. The potential for conflict with other political religion states is still there, often as diversionary war to consolidate domestic allegiance to the state (church), but it is in their interest to shy from conflict. Instead, through a process of bilateral recognition and mutual respect of sovereignty, states with political religions can mutually solidify their regime legitimacy by recognizing the political authority of states that also share political religion unions. An example of this type of dyad is the China-USSR dyad during the Cold War; there were tensions, but no concerted efforts to undermine each other's political legitimacy as both states derived their political authority from similar sources, the elevation of their respective communist parties to be the church and holder of divine destiny.

Finally, in the two types of mixed dyad where only one state has a secular-sacred union (either as political religion or civil religion), the probability of conflict is lowest. The state with no such union is, according to hypothesis 1, weaker and less able to increase its power. It is thus less threatening to a state with a secular-sacred union, either as political religion or civic religion. This means that there is more willingness to compromise, lower costs of backing down, and more probability of issue divisibility, all factors that reduce the probability of conflict (at least within a rational choice model of conflict).

Operationalization

Beyond religiosity

In examining the impact of religion on international relations, I adopt a stylized rational choice framework that focuses on state and church actors, and their choice of two strategies, Secular or Sacred. This does not only enable greater of the idea-power nexus, as integrated within state and church actors, but it also facilitates operationalization. In reviewing existing measures of religion used in the literature, Fox and Sandler find them either to be arbitrary and non-transparent, or more robust but only for very small samples of states. Their suggestion is that "the more promising avenue of research...is to focus on state institutions and behavior as a surrogate variable for religiosity."⁵⁰

However, focusing solely on exhibited behavior of states is problematic for two reasons. First, it can be endogenous with the outcome I want to examine, the practice of international politics; as Figure 1 below shows, there could be dual causality between the type of secular-sacred union achieved and the probability of conflict because other states can act in anticipation of an emergence of a particular secular-sacred union. What is needed is an instrumental variable that can predict the type of secular-sacred union but is not related to international politics. The instrument I use is theology. Theology, as one scholar sums up, "affects [the faithful's] social and political outlook. [How they then] view this world in relation to the kingdom of God

⁵⁰ Fox and Sandler (2004) p. 174

undergirds their support for political activism or quietism.”⁵¹ In other words, theology is the frame or cipher through which faith and religion intersect in politics and society.

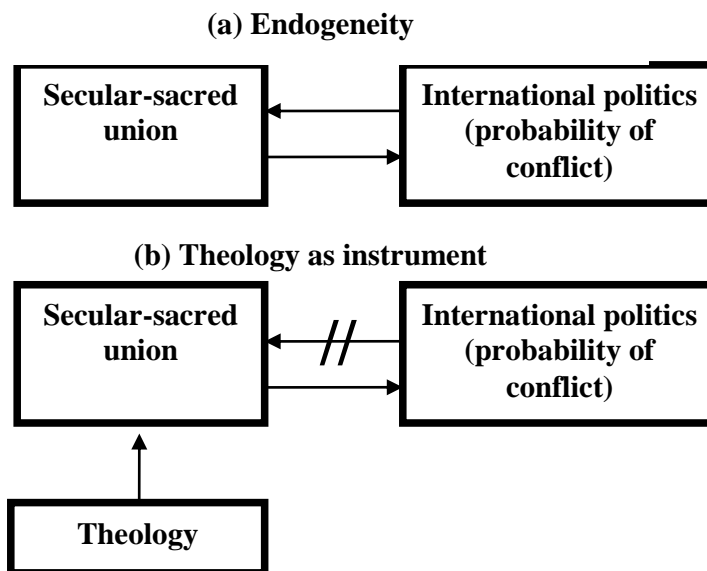


Figure 1: Theology as instrumental solution to endogeneity

Changing theological developments have a significant effect on how ambiguous or seemingly contradictory passages in the Bible are interpreted and applied. Theology addresses the key concerns of secular-sacred tensions such as balancing submission to man and obedience to God, the right form and material capacity of the church as a social institution, and the degree to which the earthly kingdom is to reflect and be an extension of the heavenly realm. Theology is a framework by which biblical meaning is consolidated and then applied to understand society and politics.

Measuring theology

There are two main ways to measure change and continuity in theology. The first is to examine records of sermons preached. There are two key aspects to a sermon, the biblical passage reference and the text itself. A lot of sermon text has not been archived, and there may be non-randomness in the selection mechanism determining which sermons are reprinted and which are forgotten. Nonetheless, the biblical reference contains significant insight into the prevailing theological mood and doctrinal consensus. Different theological positions derive exegetical support from different passages. In coding and then juxtaposing the variation and concentration of bible passages used in key churches over time, it is possible to reconstruct the theological climate of the time using first-hand archival data.

The second archival measure of theology is to compare the key biblical commentaries and theological textbooks printed and used in different localities and space. Starting from national bibliographies such as the Catalogue of English Books and its counterparts for other European countries, I first identify key commentaries and theological books that represent

⁵¹ Harriet Harris (2000) “Theological Reflections on Religious Resurgence and International Stability: A look at Protestant Evangelicalism” in K.R. Dark, ed *Religion and International Relations*, New York, Palgrave-Macmillan. p. 25

different ecclesiastical traditions and theological schools. I then combine data on publication records, the number of re-issues, and translated versions; then I translate that information into a cognitive and intellectual map of the consolidation, constancy, and change of theology and religious thought over time and across localities. For example, comparing the relative sales and publications of Calvin's books versus Luther's books can help determine if in the immediate aftermath of the Reformation, German states adopted Lutheran theology or Calvinist theology. Finally, depending on the availability of personal correspondences, I can map the exchange letters geographically to recreate the networks of intellectual exchange, catalog the flow of ideas from a theologian's city of residence to location of publication and translation, and examine which theological doctrines and ideas became dominant when and where.