UNDERSTANDING SECULARISM IN GLOBAL POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

Secularism is a form of both constitutional arrangement and political philosophy that governs approaches to religious plurality. As a principle within international relations, it can be traced back to the Peace of Westphalia secured in the 17th century through a series of treaties which established the principles of sovereign states. Contemporarily, it is understood as a strategy to establish principles and a shared language through which diverse groups of varying religious traditions and none can work to achieve common goals. In these terms it is not surprising, given the complexity of actors engaged in humanitarian response noted above, that it is a secular framework which has come to characterize the goals, standards and processes of the contemporary humanitarian regime. A secular frame has widely been seen as the key foundation to position the language, goals and processes of humanitarianism outside and above the fray of conflicting beliefs and ideologies. Religion, given its potential divisiveness, alignment to violence and intolerance, and its belonging to the realm of 'ultimate ideals', is not an appropriate domain for humanitarian engagement. In order to 'enjoy the confidence of all',agencies need to operate above the fray of religious ideology and practice, consigning religion's protected free exercise to the private sphere. Secularism is no longer a simple description of the consequence of loss of belief; to many, it represents an alternative way of life that should be satisfying in its own right. The crisis in secularism is in its relationship to religion. Secularism is nowpopular enough that one may consider it a social phenomenon in its ownright. The paper is aimed at inquiring the questions for the future of secularism that, does this strong separation between religion and secularism have the effect of giving religion a monopoly on imbuing human life with depth of meaning? And does it then restrict secularism to mere materialism and relativism? We also come across with another variety of this second form of secularism as "Hallowed Secularism." Although the constitutional theory of this second form of secularism is by no means yet worked out, there is at least the potential here for acceptance of religious imagery in the public square.

INTRODUCTION

The terms 'secular' and 'secularism' are widely used, but with many different meanings to describe very different phenomena. This can significantly confuse discussions on the place of religion in a public sphere, such as humanitarian assistance. A clear understanding of secularism is a pre-requisite for a clear understanding of religion and its potential and legitimate role in such public affairs. There has been increasing scholarship in this area in recent years, but it is

widely recognized that Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age* has served as the most influential thesis in clarifying the nature of secularism. Accordingly, we adopt Taylor's framing of secularism here. He distinguishes between three very different uses of the term. These refer, respectively, to: a form of organization of the state; a reduction in religious belief and practice within a society; and a context of understanding that establishes certain conditions for belief. In the first use, regarding a form of organization within the state, the term refers to constitutional or other bases for separation of religious language and principle from public discussion. This acknowledges circumstances where 'public spaces have become emptied of God' or, more generally, where 'norms and principles as we function within various spheres of activity

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economic, political, educational, professional, recreational generally don't refer us to God or to any beliefs'. Mechanisms of separation or differentiation of religion and public power may reflect discrete purposes. For example, American secularism is historically rooted in the defense of religion from the intrusion of the state; French and Turkish secularism is motivated to defend the state from religious influence; Indian secularism aims to balance the public place of the multiple religious traditions within its borders. However, Taylor's interpretation notes the extension of the norms of such separation of religious and civic language beyond the institutions of the state to the business meeting, lecture room, and concert hall. This form of 'functional secularism' is represented in humanitarian practice by the adoption of a script for professional behavior that, for the most part, comfortably makes no reference to religious ideas. As noted earlier, there are examples of exceptions to this trend, but in terms of Taylor's definition, the crucial observation is that, while humanitarian language *can* make reference to religion and religious institutions, it is generally understood as a sufficiently complete account without this. Taylor distinguishes a second use of the term, which describes trends of decreasing adherence to religious belief and practice within a society. In these terms, 'a secular society' refers to a context with low levels of reported religious affiliation or institutional attendance. In this way, we may describe much of Europe, for example, as increasingly secular. It is important to note that there is no essential linkage between secular in the first sense and in this second sense. Here, the focus is on belief and practice of the individual; in the former instance, it is about the potential exercise of one's belief and practice in public contexts.

Understanding trends towards lower levels of religious belief and practice is relevant to humanitarian work in both strategic and operational terms. The 'secularization thesis' posited reductions in religiosity to inexorably follow from economic development and modernization. However, this expectation has now largely been abandoned. The view that religion will become an increasingly marginal experience in people's lives is simply not borne out by global demographic trends. This has major implications, not just for strategic models of global development and their related humanitarian strategy. At the operational level it highlights the fact that humanitarian agencies rooted in the global north typically within more secularized societies—are predominantly serving populations in a global south of persistent religious affiliation. Those developing policy for refugee humanitarian assistance, those providing technical assistance for implementing those programs and the refugees being supported by them, are therefore typically drawn from contexts of radically different degrees of secularism. The potential implications of such differences of worldview held by individuals and, of concern to us here, the scope, aspirations and character of humanitarian engagement with refugee populations brings us to Taylor's third definition of secularism. He states that secularism can be seen as a 'context of understanding' that establishes certain conditions for belief. In these terms secularization describes: a move from a society where belief in God is unchallenged and, indeed, unproblematic, to one in which it is understood to be one option among others, and frequently not the easiest to embrace... [which determines] the whole context of understanding in which our moral, spiritual or religious search takes place. While the earlier perspectives on secularism are relevant to our analysis, it is this formulation that is potentially

of greatest value to us in understanding the potential for—and barriers to engagement with religion in the public context of humanitarian support to refugee communities. Crucially, it locates secularism not 'out there', in terms of population and societal trends, but 'in here', both in terms of our institutions, our minds and our imaginations. Taylor's work is not principally about spaces, nor about religious affiliation, but the assumptive world that the West has come to share. By focusing his account on a millennium of history with in Western societies shaped by Christendom, his analysis is not truly global. However, given the influence of thinking and institutions from these contexts on the global humanitarian regime (and, as we will argue, the neoliberal principles that shape humanitarian thought) it provides an effective frame for our core purposes. There are many insights of Taylor that are relevant for our subsequent analysis, but we highlight three of the most pertinent here. First, Taylor mobilizes a strong argument that it was trends in assumptions regarding the conditions of belief that led to a reframing of the place of religion in public life rather than the refutation of science. In other words, it was the formulation of the secular frame that led to science being 'read 'in a manner seen to be at odds with religion, rather than the practice and insights of science prompting the evolution of secular thought. As we will observe later, the reading of scientific accounts as opposed to rather than complementary of—religious accounts presents consistent challenges for engagement with religion in the humanitarian sphere. Seeing this as an artifact of current assumptions regarding 'conditions of belief' is potentially a valuable insight.

Second, and related to this, Taylor maps the development of a conceptualization of the individual as influenced by, but in some ways set apart from, the world. The construction of this 'buffered self' is crucial in maintaining a critical, informed and skeptical account of the forces shaping the world while retaining a confidence in rational self-determination. The enchantment of religious worldviews emphasizes transcendence and connection with the world of the spirit(s). In contrast to this transcendent structure afforded the religious believer, secularism assumes an imminent framing in which: 'everything important is this-worldly, explicable in its own terms . . . social and political orders are constructed by humans solely for mutual benefit'. Principles of social justice, human rights, and humanitarian principles are instruments constructed on the basis of utility and contingency. Third, this construction of an imminent frame and 'the buffered self ', which enable self-sufficient humanism, reflects an evolution of understandings squarely within Christian thought. While secularism may be seen as antagonistic to religion, the way that it understands religion and the human condition reflects Christian principles. Each of these observations provides insight into the challenges of engaging with religion for institutions such as humanitarian organizations so shaped by secular thought and principle. We will return to deeper consideration of some of these issues in later chapters, but it is to the out workings of such framing of humanitarian assistance to refugee communities that we now turn. For instance, secularism is growing in America. Perhaps 15 percent of the population has no institutional religion and this number will likely to increase. American secularism has been reflexively anti-religion. This distancing has cut secularism off from the sources of wisdom that religion has traditionally represented. New voices in secularism are calling for a reevaluation of the available sources of meaning for human life, which might lead

to a rapprochement with religion. At this point, no one can foresee the direction in which secularism in America will go. Will it continue in its current direction toward relativism and postmodern humanism or will it seek common ground with our religious traditions? These two crises in the interpretation of the Establishment Clause and within secularism are related. It is not too dramatic to say that strict separation of church and state is currently American secularism's official constitutional position. The concept of constitutional zed separation of church and state provides the normative foundation for secularism's general attempt to distance itself from religion and to treat religion as a merely personal and private matter. What is needed to resolve both crises is a common ground between religion and secularism. If it could be shown that many believers and nonbelievers share certain commitments, those commitments could then be expressed in the public square, even by government, without any violation of the separation of church and state. And perhaps, although this is a more controversial assertion, religious imagery, language, and symbols could be used to illustrate these shared commitments.

Literature Review

The critique of the secularist bias has served to highlight that secularism within International Relations and global politics is primarily a product of the Western experience, both in terms of the emergence of a secular states-system at the global level and the very nature of secularism itself (Hurd 2008; Jones 2004). Yet while the Western origins of this secularist bias have been noted, they have rarely been problematized. How did the secularist bias emerge in the West to begin with? What impact has this bias had on how we understand religion in the context of the West? What are the implications of this understanding for our appreciation of religion's influence on Western and global politics more broadly? How can we address the limitations of the secularist bias and move towards a more nuanced, comprehensive understanding of religion and politics in the West and globally? Having destabilized the seemingly natural logic of secularism within International Relations, as recent critiques of secularism have so ably done, there is a need to present and suggest 'other ways of talking about and enacting the relations between "religion" and "secularism"' (Pellegrini 2009: 1345). It is not enough simply to note that a bias exists, that religion has been excluded and subordinated in enquiries about global politics. This performs the important task of highlighting what International Relations does not do, but does not provide a way forward. The critique of secularism says that our understanding of religion has been obscured by the secularist bias, but it offers little with regard to how religion might be reconceptualized so that its influence on global politics might be better perceived. This paper offers one possible way of rethinking religion in order to move beyond the secularist bias that exists within International Relations. Building on the important and sophisticated critiques of secularism that have been produced in the decade since 9/11, this paper suggests that dominant understandings of religion in International Relations have been restricted by dualistic thinking that rests at the very heart of the secular worldview. The paper argues that dominant conceptions of secularism have catalysed the emergence of an understanding of religion based on three dichotomies – institutional/ideational, individual/communal and irrational/rational. Through the influence of secular dualism, one element of each dichotomy is subordinated to the other. This process has resulted in a definition of religion as institutional, individual and irrational

which dominates much International Relations scholarship, especially research focused on the West. I offer an alternative framework for understanding religion and its relationship with politics that attempts to overcome the limiting effects of mainstream secularism's dualistic logic. Although the problem of the secularist bias is widespread within International Relations, I focus particularly on the effect that this bias has had on perceptions of religion's role within the politics and societies of Western states. Secularism itself is a very 'Western' phenomenon (Hurd 2008). While significant effort has gone into developing a more nuanced understanding of the role religion plays in the politics of non- Western states, attempts to explore religion's impact on politics in the West continue to be hindered by assumptions of secularism and a limited understanding of religion itself. Definitions of the West are highly contested within International Relations, being influenced by a variety of factors and emphasizing different, sometimes contradictory, experiences (Ifversen 2008). While frequently spoken of as a holistic singular cultural unit, the West is not homogeneous (Kuru 2007: 574–5). The West is highly complex, incorporating numerous cultures and states that are often in conflict with one another. It is as much (and perhaps more) a rhetorical invention as it is a geographic and political entity (GoGwilt 1995). Often defined as a civilization (Galtung 1996; Huntington 1993; Ifversen 2008), the West also consists of a social imaginary or collective subconscious. The collective subconscious informs the way individuals and groups within the West think and act, influencing what is considered 'normal' and 'natural', legitimate and acceptable, though again, often with significant variations across communities and nation states within the West. I focus specifically on the definition of the West as 'secular' and the historical, cultural,economic (insofar as the 'West' is generally considered 'developed') and political contexts in which this definition has emerged. My understanding of the West therefore encompasses Europe, the United Kingdom, former British colonies – such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada – and the United States of America. It is the Western experience of secularism that has been most influential on International Relations approaches to the question of religion (Fox 2001: 57), thus the focus on the West is historically pertinent as well as relevant to current political contexts. In turn, the Western experience of secularism is intimately connected with the Judeo-Christian tradition.

As such, Judeo-Christianity forms the primary reference point for understanding religion in International Relations and is the main religion of focus for this paper. Within this broader historical, cultural and political context, the paper explores how dualistic thinking within secularism has contributed to the prominence of a limited understanding of religion in International Relations as primarily institutional, individual and irrational. Combined with the dualistic division of society into public and private realms, defining religion by these three characteristics serves to position religion within the private realm, permanently separated from politics (Hallward 2008: 3) and thus of little relevance to International Relations analysis, particularly with regard to 'secular' Western states. The dominance of this definition in International Relations has meant that analysis of religion has often focused on the role of religious institutions, the beliefs of individuals in key positions of power, the decline in practice of religion by individuals within society as an indication of secularization, and religion's influence on conflict and violence. Influence of religious ideas and doctrines, imagery and narratives, religion's role in

shaping community identities and an acknowledgement of religion's more rational components, particularly in Western contexts, have generally been overlooked or downplayed within International Relations scholarship. The limited definition of religion also ignores the historical relationship that exists between religion and politics, particularly within the context of the West. Religious ideas, actors and events had important influence on the development of concepts and norms that underpin modern Western and international politics, including the rule of law, sovereignty, democracy, freedom and secularism itself. Drawing on sociological and political critiques of secularism as well as insights from reflectivist theories of International Relations, such as constructivism, historical sociology and feminism, I suggest that religion is not static and is not permanently separated from politics through the public/private divide as is generally assumed, implicitly or explicitly, in much International Relations scholarship. Rather, religion exists in a dynamic, fluid relational dialogue with various aspects of politics. This view of religion calls into question ideas of a decline and resurgence of religion. Insights from these reflectivisttheories suggest that religion has always been present in politics and the public realm, its influence manifesting and being interpreted in different ways. Conceiving religion's relationship with politics in this way requires moving beyond the dualistic division of society into public and private realms, instead viewing all aspects of society as constantly interacting, influencing and shaping one another.

In order to address the influence of dualism on International Relations approaches to religion, the paper proposes an alternative framework that circumvents the mainstream secularist bias. Combining insights from Julia Kristeva's (1986) dialogism and RaiaProkhovnik's (2003) relational critique of dualism, I develop a framework based on what I refer to as relational dialogism. This framework offers one way for overcoming many of the limitations placed on religion by secular dualism. It also provides one model of analysis that can be applied to questions regarding religion and global politics. The framework focuses particularly on drawing out the influence of religious ideas, imagery, values and narratives around community and identity, as these elements have been traditionally excluded by the dominant approach of secular dualism to religion. The framework is then applied to a case study of one of the states that forms the cultural, historical and political context of the West – the USA. The case study shows the unique insights to be gained from moving past the secular dualist bias and employing a relational dialogic understanding of religion. Throughout the paper, I emphasize that religion influences politics in multiple ways through values, norms, identity and narratives told about the US and the West more broadly, as well as stories told about other states and the international community as a whole. Further, the analysis highlights that religion and politics are not separated by the public/private divide, but interact and influence one another. In these ways, the paper contributes to the important work of questioning the dominance of secular logic in International Relations and also offers one possible way of reconceptualizing religion in order to subvert the secularist bias and gain a more nuanced, comprehensive appraisal of the role of religion in global politics. Dominant modes of secularism within International Relations are, I suggest, inherently dualistic. The 'secular' is primarily used as a category to differentiate from the 'religious' (Casanova 2009: 1049). This immediately establishes a dualism between what is

'secular' and what is 'religious', although, as shall be highlighted throughout the paper, categories such as these are not fixed. What is secular and what is religious shift depending on socio-historical, political, cultural, economic, theological and environmental circumstances. It is important to distinguish between the secular, secularism (and secularist) and secularization. The three are obviously related and all, in large part, are indebted to the Enlightenment commitment to reason and logic over seemingly irrational superstition and belief (Berger 1999: 2; Casanova 2009: 1049–51; Fox 2001: 56). Following Hurd (2008: 12–3) and Taylor (2007: 2), I understand secularism as 'the public settlement of the relationship between religion and politics'. This public settlement is by no means consistent or homogeneous across the geographical and cultural contexts within the West and takes on numerous forms. Nonetheless, secularism as a public settlement is broadly considered a defining societal characteristic of the West (Taylor 2007: 1). Associated with this public settlement may be other characteristics, such as the gradual decline in religious belief and practice alongside a shift in the nature of belief itself, where belief in God (in particular the Judeo-Christian God) used to be considered essential and is now but one among many possibilities (Taylor 2007: 2–3). In this sense, secularism refers to the possibilities for choosing for oneself what religion to believe in, if any at all. Secularism as a public settlement of the relationship between religion and politics both makes possible and is facilitated by the decline in religious belief and the shift in the nature of belief (Taylor 2007: 4).

An important part of this public settlement is the identification and separation of what Taylor (2007: 15–6) and Casanova (2009) refer to as the immanent and the transcendent or the natural and the supernatural. As Charles Taylor (2007: 15) has argued, 'one of the great inventions of the West and, I would argue, of secularism in particular was that of an imminent order in Nature, whose working could be systematically understood and explained on its own terms' without reference to a transcendental order. From a dualistic secular perspective then, politics and the secular make up the realm of the imminent, while religion constitutes the realm of the transcendental. The public settlement between religion and politics has in part facilitated and been facilitated by the distinction and separation of the immanent and the transcendent and the predominant removal of the transcendent from Western society and public life. Yet, as Hurd (2008) has emphasized, the public settlement of the relationship between religion and politics has gradually taken on a form of discursive, ideological and productive power in many contexts within the modern West, particularly within the discipline of International Relations. 'Secularism produces authoritative settlements of religion and politics, while simultaneously claiming to be exempt from this process of production' (Hurd 2008: 16). As such, mainstream secularism, understood in an ideological sense, in some measure attempts to exercise control over the ways in which religion manifests in politics and public life. In part, this is achieved by the separation of the immanent and transcendent and the exclusion of issues pertaining to the transcendent in public life. The transcendent is not permitted within the public sphere, partly because it is seen as irrational, partly because the nature of the transcendent is highly contested. With regard to personal, private beliefs about the transcendent, as much as secularism produces public settlements that open up opportunities for choice concerning religious commitment, it also frequently carries an implicit

assumption that, when given the choice, most people will choose non-belief (Taylor 2007: 3, 12). 'The presumption of unbelief has become dominant in more and more … milieux; and has achieved hegemony in certain crucial ones, in the academic and intellectual life, for instance; whence it can more easily extend itself to others' (Taylor 2007: 13). What this paper is particularly interested in is how dominant modes of secularism within International Relations, such as those identified by Hurd (2008) as forms of discursive, ideological and productive power, have limited the way we conceptualize religion and the implications of this for International Relations analysis. I propose that secularism has produced a highly limited yet dominant and permeating definition of religion within International Relations as primarily institutional, individual and irrational, concerned only or primarily with the transcendent and consequently of little relevance to politics and public life. Secularism is strongly influenced by the Western experience and the Judeo-Christian tradition (Hurd 2008: 6, 23), making an analysis of secularism's effect on understanding religion in the context of Western politics especially apt. Secularism is also intimately connected with the political philosophy of liberalism (Fox 2001: 54; Thomas 2005: 39). As such, the paper includes an analysis and critique of liberal approaches to religion and its relationship with politics, since these have played a critical part in the formation of secularist thinking and its manifestation in the social sciences, including International Relations. Through Western colonialism, this particularly Western experience of restricting religion became more widespread, interacting with and influencing 'the many different ways in which other civilizations had drawn boundaries between "sacred" and "profane", "transcendent" and "immanent", "religious" and "secular"' (Casanova 2009: 1063). This process has in part contributed to notions that secularism and secularization are universal experiences and natural phenomena (Casanova 2009: 1052–3; Eberle 2002a: 312–4; Hurd 2008:14–6). I use secularization to refer to the observable historical process of managing the relationship between religion and politics in the Western social and political context and to distinguish this process from the ideological project of secularism (Hurd 2008: 13).

Secularization involves the gradual restriction or removal of religious influences in the public realm, the separation of the transcendent and supernatural from the immanent and natural, through various institutional, political, legal, social and even theological mechanisms. The process of secularization is driven in part by a commitment to the overall principles of secularism. Hence the process of secularization takes on different forms, depending on which variant of secularism is driving it as well as depending on other political, economic, cultural, geographical and historical factors. Several authors have suggested that although the West is generally characterized as 'secular', it is a very religious, especially Judeo-Christian, type of secularization. They highlight this through emphasizing specific Western liberal values, such as equality, tolerance, the rule of law and the separation of church and state, that have strong connections to values in the Judeo-Christian tradition (Hurd 2008; Samantrai 2000: 105, 118; Wilson 1992: 208; Zacher and Matthew 1995: 111). 6 While secularization occurs differently in different national and regional contexts, even in France, perhaps the most staunchly secular nation in the West, (or at least the nation which most staunchly claims to be secular) its secularization is acknowledged to be influenced by the Judeo-Christian

tradition, both in theory and in practice (Jones 2003; Jones 2004: 154–5), and Catholicism still plays a significant role in French society, culture and national identity (*The Economist*, 9 April 2005). The secularization of the West, then, is not as straightforward as the somewhat simplistic understanding of secularization as the absence of religion from politics in the public sphere or the separation of church and state, though these are still important facets. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that Western processes of secularization involve the overt disassociation of certain public values with the Judeo-Christian tradition while still retaining the general spirit of those values: there modal of the transcendent while retaining the imprint of the transcendent on the imminent. This suggests that dualism is an important part of secularism and processes of secularization, promoting the separation of the public and private spheres, of church and state, the natural and the supernatural, and the exclusion of explicitly religious ideas from the public realm. Secularism and processes of secularization are consequently important in understanding why religion's influence on politics has been and continues to be problematic within International Relations. It further highlights the centrality of dualism within the secularist bias that obscures understandings of religion in International Relations.

Secularism and Secularization Theory

Once taken for granted as a natural phenomenon and state of being, secularism is increasingly being recognized by sociologists and International Relations theorists as one form of ideological power among many others (Casanova 2009; Hurd 2008; Kuru 2007). Yet many of its assumptions, particularly regarding the nature of religion and its 'proper' relationship with democratic politics, remain unquestioned in academia and broader public discourse, highlighting the power that secularism has obtained (Casanova 2009: 1058–9). This is not to say that secularism is homogenous. Secularism is highly complex with multiple manifestations and meanings. Daniel Philpott(2009: 185) has identified no fewer than nine different meanings, though these nine different meanings encompass the 'secular', 'secularism' and 'secularization'. He divides these nine different meanings into two main categories – those that encompass a positive or neutral attitude to religion and those that are openly hostile. Hurd (2008: 5), in her groundbreaking work *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, also identifies two dominant types of secularism – *laïcité*and Judeo-Christian secularism. These two types correspond with Kuru's (2007) assertive and passive secularisms. *Laïcité*or assertive secularism actively advocates the total exclusion of religion from the public realm. 'The state excludes religion from the public sphere and plays an "assertive" role as the agent of a social engineering project that confines religion to the private domain' (Kuru 2007: 571). Judeo-Christian or passive secularism 'does not attempt to expel religion, or at least Judeo-Christianity, from public life' (Hurd2008: 5–6), but rather 'requires that the secular state play a "passive" role in avoiding the establishment of any religions, allowing for the public visibility of religion' (Kuru 2007: 571). Despite their differences, however, both types of secularism aim at some level to control or limit the presence and influence of religion in politics and public life. Thus, dominant modes of secularism, particularly in International Relations, may in part be understood as attempts to exert power over religion, to control what is considered reasonable and rational and what is not. Both Casanova (2009: 1052) and Taylor (2009: 1147)

point at the inherent dualistic thinking that lies at the heart of mainstream secularism. Exploring how secularism has become 'taken for granted' and permeates 'the phenomenological experience of ordinary people', Casanova outlines the critical point in the manifestation of secular ideology: Crucial is the moment when the phenomenological experience of being 'secular' is not tied anymore to one of the units of a dyadic pair, 'religious/secular,' but is constituted as a self-enclosed reality. Secular then stands for self-sufficient and exclusive secularity, when people are not simply religiously 'unmusical,' but closed to any form of transcendence beyond the purely secular immanent frame. (Casanova 2009: 1052) Taylor (2009: 1147) charts an historical development of secularism through a series of 'dyads', where the religious is always the opposite of the secular, but the value assigned to both alters. To begin with, the dyad is merely descriptive, highlighting two 'dimensions of existence'. Over time, however, the dyad shifts. The 'secular' comes to refer to the 'immanent sphere', while 'religious' refers to the transcendental realm. From there, the 'secular' comes to refer to what is 'real' and the 'religious' to what is invented or imagined until finally the 'secular' 'refers to the institutions we really require to live in 'this world,' and 'religious' or 'ecclesial' to optional extras that often disturb the course of this-worldly life' (Taylor 2009: 1147). Through this series of historical shifts in meaning, religion becomes subordinated to the secular.

Both Casanova and Taylor demonstrate that dominant conceptions of secularism are based on an inherent dualism of 'religious/secular', a model of thought which then affects the ways secularism makes sense of other aspects of social and political reality, including religion itself. However, this dualistic thinking is used to subordinate one unit of the 'dyadic pair'. It is thus an exclusionary dualism, a dualism that establishes 'antagonistic bipolar opposites' (Bleiker 2001: 181) and then elevates one unit while excluding the other. This exclusionary dualism has manifested in various other areas of social and political theory and practice, including within International Relations. For our purposes, the most significant manifestation of this exclusionary dualism has occurred with relation to the nature of religion itself, which we will investigate in depth. 'Secular' and 'secularism' have been and continue to be significant characteristics ascribed to the West within International Relations. It is important to remember that 'secular' and 'secularism' are uniquely Western concepts, emerging out of Western historical and philosophical traditions (Casanova 2009; Hurd 2008). For the most part, 'religion' (as opposed to 'secularism') is rarely mentioned in discussions of Western politics and identity. When religion is mentioned, it is in relation to religious freedom and pluralism. Religious freedom is ostensibly guaranteed in the West by the separation of church and state, an overt manifestation of the public/private divide, and a key characteristic of the modern secular condition (Taylor 2007). Describing the West as secular is often used to illustrate the unique circumstances in which religious freedom is guaranteed in the West. Religious freedom is upheld by the separation of church and state through the strict division of the public and private realms and the restriction of religion to the private sphere alone. This description also serves to differentiate the West from other actors and civilizations in world politics. Yet, as José Casanova emphasizes, it is not merely Western historical and philosophical influences that have contributed to the emergence of the 'secular' and 'secularism' as important concepts in contemporary politics: We should remind

ourselves that 'the secular' emerged first as a particular Western *Christian theological* category, a category that not only served to organize the particular social formation of Western Christendom, but structured thereafter the very dynamics of how to transform or free oneself from such a system. (Casanova 2009: 1063, emphasis added) It seems a great irony that the strident efforts to separate religion and politics and remove religion from public life were, in part, first instigated as a result of passages in Christian scripture and Christian theology. The religious origins of the 'secular' and 'secularism' call into question one of secularism's core claims – that it is possible to separate religion and politics – when in fact the political project of secularism is underpinned at its origins by Christian thinking.

Liberalism and secularism

At this point, it is also important to note the connection between liberal political theory and secularism. Jonathan Fox (2001) has suggested that the lack of attention to religion in International Relations throughout much of the history of the field may be attributed to the influences of liberalism, secularism and secularization theory. Many of the assumptions about the relationship between religion and politics and religion itself, inherent in mainstream secularism, are closely linked with various tenets of liberalism, such as tolerance, freedom (including religious freedom), individualism and the separation of church and state (Arblaster 1984: 55; Fox 2001: 57; Geuss 2001; Ingersoll, Matthews and Davison 2001; Manent 1994: xvi–xviii; Nelson 2002: 197; Viotti and Kauppi 1999: 201). A general distrust and at times open hostility towards religion is evident in much liberal scholarship and thought. The work of Thomas Hobbes, David Hume, Richard Rorty and John Rawls all provide examples of this attitude. Liberalism sees the presence of religion in the public realm as a source of intolerance, inequality, chaos and violence. Religion in the public realm is also seen as an infringement on individual liberty in terms of the right to choose one's own beliefs and values (Dombrowski 2001: 4; Thomas 2000: 819). Thus, liberal authors view the exclusion of religion from the public realm as a necessity for the realization of individual freedoms and a properly functioning, fair and equitable society based on the impartial implementation of the rule of law (Cudd 2002: 125 n. 19; Dombrowski 2001: 4). There are two main approaches to the exclusion of religion from the public realm in liberalism: comprehensive liberalism, associated primarily with David Hume, and non-comprehensive liberalism, whose principal exponent is John Rawls (Dombrowski 2001: 3, 5). Comprehensive liberalism not only seeks to exclude religion from the public realm but also desires to replace universal religious beliefs and moral values with a system of widespread secular beliefs and moral values (Dombrowski 2001: 5). Arguably, comprehensive liberalism underpins *laïcité* and assertive versions of secularism. Morality is seen to be accessible by everyone who is 'morally reasonable' and 'conscientious' (not just clergy or other religious individuals). Consequently, moral order should arise from human nature, rather than God, and humans should bring themselves in line with morality without the need for judgement pertaining to heaven and hell (Dombrowski 2001: 5). Non-comprehensive liberalism, as the name implies, does not desire the complete replacement of religion. It prohibits the use of religion as public justification for policies and decisions on the grounds that religious justifications are not convincing or acceptable to all members of a polity. Non-comprehensive liberalism argues

that secular, rational justifications provide a more acceptable method of validation to the majority of members of a polity, even if the members of the polity are not entirely in agreement with the arguments presented (Dombrowski2001: 3, 9; Eberle 2002a: 13; Rawls 1999: 151–2). Although obviously related to Judeo-Christian and passive secularisms, non-comprehensive liberalism still pushes for the exclusion of religion from public life, whereas Judeo-Christian and passive secularisms do not. Each promotes different type and extent of control over religion by the secular public sphere and political institutions. Both forms of liberalism are underpinned by the secularist assumption that religion is largely irrational and therefore inconsistent with the principles that liberals maintain should govern public political decision making, namely the exercise of human reason. This is related to a further assumption about religion stemming from Enlightenment thought, that religion is a primarily historical, premodern phenomenon. In line with these dominant liberal secular assumptions, early social scientists such as Émile Durkheim (2008 [1915]: 438),3 Max Weber (1918: 139, 142–3) and Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1992 [1848]: 24), among others, concluded that religion, or perhaps more accurately Christianity and other forms of theism, was a spent force in the world and would eventually disappear altogether (Fox 2001: 54–5; Hadden 1987: 590; Shupe 1990: 19). Marx and Engels argued that the belief in Christianity was a hindrance to 'the development of genuine proletarian consciousness' (Turner 1991: 136) and that secular industrialization was 'necessary and progressive' (Turner 1991: 136). Auguste Comte held that the overtly religious society of the medieval period, with the power and dominance of the Catholic Church, would give way to a new system in which reason and logic, embodied in the sciences and industrialization, would be dominant (Turner 1991: 134). 4 Max Weber's *The Sociology of Religion*, while exploring the interconnections of religion, society and economics in depth (Turner 1991: 10), also presented the view that the relationship of religion to society and economics would gradually decline.

Weber's work is highly significant because he recognized the importance of understanding religion's influence on the development of human social systems, value systems, politics and economics. In particular, Weber (1963 [1922]: 245) emphasized the influence of Christianity and Judaism on the development of modern economics and politics. Thus, Weber's work may in some ways be seen as a precursor to the approach of the English School of International Relations scholarship, with its focus on the historical development of the states-system and an emphasis on the role of culture. There is also a focus in Weber's work on the development of ideas and values within various different areas of society. Weber's conception of religion and its relationship with and influence on other aspects of human social life was primarily evolutionary (Parson 1963: xxvii; Weber 1963 [1922]: 1–19). Weber (1963 [1922]: 2) saw belief in religion as an attribute of mainly 'primitive' people. As human society developed and modernized, people were able to discern more readily rational explanations for social phenomena, rather than continue to rely on religious, supernatural or magical explanations (Weber 1963 [1922]: 2). While recognizing the benefits to social scientists of exploring religion's influence on varying aspects of modern society, the undercurrent to Weber's work is that with modernization, human society will evolve beyond the point of requiring religion to understand or explain social phenomena (Parsons 1963: lx–lxi). Thus, religion becomes increasingly irrelevant to studies of politics and public life.

This interpretation of Weber's work is supported by the fact that, among all the examples Weber (1963 [1922]) utilizes in discussing religion's influence on modern society, he does not refer to modern Western societies. He mentions India, Asia, Iran, Egypt, ancient Israel, China (Weber 1963 [1922]: 19), ancient Greece and Rome (Weber 1963 [1922]: 12, 15), to name a few. While ancient Greece and Rome are foundational cultures of the West (McNeill 1991: 337, 585–8; Osiander 2000: 761), there is little consideration given to the relationship between religion and politics in modern Western states in Weber's work. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber (1930) examines the connections between strands of Protestant theology and capitalist economic theory, focusing particularly on capitalism's economic principles and social consequences. While this has some bearing on political activity, he does not examine explicitly the connections between religion and political values and institutions in the West. Further, Weber's approach continues the trend of treating religion as only historically relevant to the West. The implication of Weber's work is that the West has achieved the evolutionary point where rational thought has replaced religion in explaining social and natural phenomena. Consequently, the influence of religion is significantly reduced, if not absent altogether, and therefore only of historical importance. This assumption about the increasing irrelevance of religion permeated the social sciences, including political science and International Relations, throughout much of the twentieth century. 'Especially in the 1950s and 1960s, political scientists believed that modernization would reduce the political significance of primordial phenomena such as ethnicity and religion' (Fox 2001: 55). This belief in the declining political significance of religion is a central component of mainstream secularization theory.

Secularization theory

Secularization theory has been an underlying assumption of the social sciences and International Relations for much of their existence. Though somewhat discredited in many sectors of academia as a result of the seeming resurgence of religion in the post-Cold War era (Berger1999; Casanova 2006a: 9; Habermas 2008: 17–8; Haynes 2007: 27–8), its ideas and assumptions in many ways continue to pervade contemporary research on religion (see, for example, Abrams, Yaple and Wiener 2011; Greene 2011). As Jonathan Fox has highlighted, the social sciences were founded on the rejection of religion. Scholars in this area and, by extension, in International Relations were concerned with finding 'rational' explanations for social phenomena to replace religious ones (Fox 2001: 56). This focus on secular rational explanations as opposed to religious ones echoes the ideological trends prevalent at the time when liberalism emerged, as well as the core assumptions of mainstream secularism within International Relations and the social sciences. Religion is an irrational, historical phenomenon, increasingly privatized, excluded and therefore irrelevant to politics and public life. In its crudest formulation, the secularization thesis refers to the decline in influence of 'religion', generally taken to refer to religious institutions and beliefs (Herbert 2003: 4; SwatosJr and Christiano 1999: 213–4). A key assumption of this theory, building on Weber's concepts of enchantment and mystery, is that religion is often irrational, based on superstition and illogical beliefs (see, for example, Apter 1965; Smith 1974; SwatosJr and Christiano 1999: 212). Consequently, secularization theorists argue that because religion is irrational, it will gradually be excluded

from society through the process of modernization. Secularization theory contains both an empirical component and an explanatory component (Eberle 2002a: 24). The secularization theorist seeks to identify 'facts' about the decline of religion and must then connect and explain these facts through 'an empirically adequate and otherwise convincing narrative' (Eberle 2002a: 24). As Eberle and others have noted, however, the exact nature of the decline of religion – whether it refers to influence from religious institutions, individual beliefs or another form altogether – is much debated (Eberle 2002a: 24; cf. Fox 2001: 56; Stark 1999: 251–2). Throughout the late nineteenth and most of the twentieth centuries, secularization theory was frequently used in a 'predictive' sense to suggest that the decline of religion would take place as societies became more modernized. Secularization has traditionally been seen as a consequence of modernization. In turn, modernization has often been understood as the process through which political, cultural and economic institutions of society become more autonomous, less entwined with each other and with religion (Berger 1997: 974). This view is particularly characteristic of secularization theorists of the 1960s (Berger 1997: 974; Stark 1999: 250–1). The mainstream secularization thesis states that as society's become more modernized, the authority and influence of religious beliefs and institutions will eventually disappear from public life and will only be relevant to individuals on a private level, if at all. 'The principal thrust in secularization theory … has been a claim that in the face of scientific rationality, religion's influence on all aspects of life – from personal habits to social institutions – is in dramatic decline' (SwatosJr and Christiano 1999: 214). Scholars have debated whether secularization is defined as individuals becoming less religious, or whether it refers to the decline in influence of religion on social and political institutions (Fox 2001: 56). However, the key assumption has been that religion's influence in the public realm (and often the private as well) will abate. In recent years, however, the predictive use of the secularization thesis has been challenged. The perceived growth of religious violence and religious nationalism during the 1990s led scholars to re-examine the secularization thesis. In many parts of the world, secularization has not occurred as expected.

This includes the United States of America, which has been seen as something of an anomaly among the general trend of increasing secularization in the West (Berger 1997: 32). Yet, other authors suggested that perhaps the USA was not so much of an anomaly that secularization was not the inevitable force it had so long been presumed to be (Bruce 1992) and that Europe was not quite as secular as some authors considered it to be. These disagreements seemed to stem from different conceptions of exactly what secularization was. Bruce (1992) suggests that secularization and pluralism are similar parts of the one phenomenon. The presence of multiple religious traditions within a society, such as the USA, is just as much evidence for secularization as the absence of religious traditions within a society, as in Europe. Bruce (1992) does not suggest that religion plays a greater role in US public life in this essay. Rather, he argues that secularization has occurred in the USA, only in a different way from how secularization had occurred in Europe. This fits with both Hurd's and Kuru's typologies of secularism, the USA being influenced by Judeo-Christian/passive secularism and Europe being predominantly influenced by assertive secularism. However, Bruce (1992) does not challenge the overall dominance of secularism within

the Western context. For Bruce (1992), the West is still most accurately conceptualized as secular, with religion of only marginal or historical interest for anyone other than sociologists of religion. By contrast, Peter Berger (1997), contradicting his own previous assertions (Berger 1967), has suggested that secularization theory's prediction concerning the disappearance of religion with modernization is largely inaccurate. Berger (1997: 34–5) mentions the USA as an example tosupport this argument. Europe, Berger (1997: 34–5) posits, is an exception to the 'anti-secularization' thesis, with declining levels of church attendance and altered moral codes. Yet, as Berger (1997: 35) points out, evidence suggests that 'despite widespread alienation from the organized churches', there is a pervasive survival of religious belief in some form or another in Europe, and that this belief is predominantly Christian. Berger's argument with regard to Europe has been somewhat affirmed recently, with Berger himself and others noting a slight increase in religious participation across Europe (Berger 2006; Douthat 2007: 42).

Further, the significant debate over including reference to common Christian heritage in the European Constitution and more particularly the ongoing unease around Turkey's membership in the European Union suggests that Europe's secular nature cannot be assumed (Challand2009; Hurd 2008; Jakelic´ 2006: 133; Leustean and Madeley 2009). Foret (2009: 38) has acknowledged that while religion in Europe is constrained by the predominantly pluralist and relativist nature of contemporary politics in most European states, it still exercises political influence 'as a cultural raw material'. Indeed, Casanova (2006b: 66) has claimed the very formation of the European Union is rooted in Christian thought and practice: 'The initial project of a European Union was fundamentally a Christian Democratic project, sanctioned by the Vatican, at a time of a general religious revival in post-World War Two Europe, in the geopolitical context of the Cold War when "the free world" and "Christian civilization" had become synonymous. ' Yet there is little contemporary acknowledgement of this apparently intimate relationship between Christianity and modern European identity, owing to the ongoing secularist bias that sees the presence of religion in public life as problematic, premodern and even embarrassing or shameful (Casanova 2009: 1058–9; Leustean and Madeley 2009: 4). Europe's secular nature is emphasized over its Christian connections and the dominant narrative told about Europe's historical development is the successful separation of religion from politics and law to establish communities of peace and tolerance (Willaime 2009: 24). This highlights the ongoing influence of dominant modes of secularism and secularization theory in International Relations. It also emphasizes the dualistic thinking that underpins secularism, with society separated into public and private realms and Europe only able to be 'secular', its Christian heritage confined to the past, with little recognition of any ongoing influence from religion on political identity, values or practices. The work of Lilliane Voyé provides an example of how religion's influence is often downplayed or overlooked by many sociologists and secularization theorists, which in turn has influenced approaches within International Relations. Voyé implicitly assumes that the religious is weaker than and subordinated to the secular in her work. She argues that religious institutions have only maintained any sort of public influence by 'secularizing' their beliefs (1999: 275). 'Instead of speaking of "the laws of God," "the rules of the church," more and more frequently representatives of the Catholic

church refer to "human rights" and to "human values," without mentioning a specific doctrinal background. Using such neutral language, the Catholic church seems to enlarge its credibility in the eyes of the political actors' (Voyé 1999: 278). Voyé's argument provides justification for questioning mainstream dualistic notions of what constitutes 'religion' and acknowledging that what is 'religious', just like what is 'secular', is not fixed and constant, but continually shifting and altering. Voyé positions secular attitudes as 'neutral', suggesting that they are normal and natural, while religion is not, thus giving the secular immense power over the religious and failing to acknowledge that so-called 'secular' values such as human rights and human values are largely a cultural product of the West (Eberle2002a: 314). Such a view is problematic. Attitudes and behaviors that Voyé and other social scientists consider secular may be different from what a faith community considered 'religious' a century ago, for example, but are entirely consistent with what they consider 'religious' today. Further, such a shift in the beliefs and values of religious communities may not necessarily be a secularizing of their beliefs but a 'reclaiming' of beliefs and values previously lost. Voyé's example of human rights as a more neutral, secular concept is somewhat ironic in this context. Carlson (2003) has highlighted that the concept of human rights is underpinned by a belief in the sanctity and sacredness of the human being – a belief that stems directly from the Judeo-Christian doctrine of humanity that all human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (Carlson 2003: 199–200; see also Erickson 1998: 518). As such, the notion of human rights may be considered to be both 'religious' and 'secular' at one and the same time. Further, Jürgen Habermas has acknowledged that Christianity is the cultural source of democracy, tolerance and human rights in Europe (cited in Philpott 2009: 184). Thus, Christian churches employing the language of human rights and human values does not necessarily indicate a watering down of their beliefs, as Voyé suggests, nor the co-opting of ideas from ancient pagan religions and claiming them as their own, as Osiander (2000) has argued, but may alternatively be seen as efforts to reclaim a lost heritage. Efforts to reclaim this lost heritage may be instigated in response to challenges from secularism, but they do not necessarily represent a 'secularizing' of religious belief.

The inability of many mainstream International Relations and social science scholars to consider this possibility reflects a somewhat excessive emphasis on religion's institutional dimension and neglect of its ideational. It also suggests that a lack of engagement with the historical internal theological and philosophical debates of different religious traditions and their influence on contemporary contexts may to some extent affect dominant understandings of the relationship between religion, politics and the secular in International Relations. Further, what is considered 'religious' and 'secular' or 'worldly' often differs from religion to religion, denomination to denomination and congregation to congregation. Some Christian congregations consider an emphasis on social justice, human rights and equality as entirely consistent with their religious beliefs (Keller 2010; Shupack 1993), while others view human rights as a 'secular' worldly construct. Workers at faith-based organizations, for example, sometimes have to frame human rights issues in theological language and concepts, such as humanity being made in the image of God in order to make their message more appealing to religious congregations (Wilson 2011: 555). In relation to human rights, this shift in emphasis means some religious institutions are placing more

importance on issues of social justice, compassion and mercy than on judgment and sin. Yet Voyé describes this shift as an attempt by religious institutions to maintain their relevance in a society that is moving inexorably forward towards greater secularization. While the apparent dominance of secularism may have some influence on shifts in what are seemingly the most important beliefs for religious communities, it is equally possible (and indeed acknowledged by theologians and church/religious historians (see, for example, Erickson 1998: 68–70)) that some theological/religious philosophical doctrines enjoy predominance and popularity at different times throughout the history of a religion for reasons that are both external and internal. However, in sociological accounts of religious change, such as Voyé's, this possibility is overlooked. She seems to focus mainly on institutional practices and individual beliefs rather than ideational trends within the religious tradition. As such, sociologists who hold a secular worldview see religion as controlled and influenced by secularism, subordinated to secular ideas, rather than considering religion an equally significant ideational force. In addition, what is considered 'secular' and 'religious' also shifts depending on your position in relation to particular faith communities. An 'insider' – someone who is a believer and member of a religious community – may have a different perspective of what is 'religious', for example, from that of an 'outsider' (Kunin and Miles-Watson 2006: 10). How these categories are defined shifts depending on worldview and beliefs. Along with this shift based on position and perspective, historical and cultural shifts in meaning also affect what is considered 'religious' and what is considered 'secular'. Yet this focus on individual church membership and personal beliefs highlights mainstream secularism's efforts to control what is 'religious' and keep it marginalized from politics and public life.

The central point to emerge from these critiques of secularization theory is that religion's influence on society and politics has not necessarily declined, but rather has taken on different forms. This challenges many of the assumptions on which predictive secularization theory and mainstream secularism were based. Rather than revisiting these assumptions, however, many social scientists have instead employed the secularization thesis in what Peter Beyer (1999) describes as a descriptive sense. 'The value of secularization theory is not and never has been in predicting outcomes, but rather in offering a useful description of the societal situation in which we find ourselves with respect to religion' (Beyer 1999: 299). In the view of some theorists, secularization theory does not predict what will happen to religion as a result of modernity, but actually describes the current situation and provides an opportunity for explaining the challenges that face religion in the present time. Scholars promoting this use for secularization theory focus primarily on church attendance figures and the number of individuals who continue to profess personal religious beliefs. Attention also tends to be on formal, established traditional religions, particularly Christianity. Rodney Stark (1999) has taken issue with defenses of secularization theory such as Beyer's (1999). Stark (1999: 251–2) suggests that secularization theorists alter the parameters of the theory in order to conveniently ignore or escape facts that contradict it. Stark (1999: 252, 264) seeks to disprove the foundations of the secularization theory, arguing that while there has been a decline in the institutional influence of religion, personal religious beliefs are as strong and widespread as ever. He also makes the point that while there

may have been a shift away from traditional Christian beliefs to more new age beliefs, this does not equal the secularization of society (Stark 1999: 264). Stark's comments and the debate over whether secularization theory is predictive or descriptive indicate a broader and more central problem with dominant forms of secularization theory and secularism that has been emphasized recently. Understandings, definitions and terms of reference for secularization, secularism and the secular are debatable (Casanova 2009; Hurd 2008; Taylor 2009). The contested nature of secularization has significant ramifications for how religion's relationship with politics in the West is conceptualized and how religion itself is understood. Many theorists, both who support and oppose the secularization thesis, draw on statistics regarding church attendance and personal belief statements to argue for or against a trend of secularization (Bruce 2002; Dark 2000; Stark 1999). These theorists view declining church attendance and reduced numbers of people holding personal religious beliefs as evidence of a trend towards secularization in society. As Stark (1999: 251) notes, however, the theorists who present these statistics as evidence for secularization often do so in order to avoid having to address more 'inconvenient facts' concerning the prevalence of both individually and socially held beliefs and values that contradict the secularization thesis. This hints at the contested nature of the definition of secularization theory itself (Stark 1999). It also suggests that simply looking at individual religious beliefs and practices does not provide an adequate assessment of the ways in which religion continues to operate within society. It ignores embedded cultural assumptions in a society's collective subconscious that has been significantly affected by religion. These religiously influenced cultural assumptions then in turn affect interpretations of and responses to important events in Western and global politics. This overview highlights both the shortcomings and implicit assumptions within mainstream secularism and secularization theory that have affected how religion and its relationship with politics is perceived and understood within International Relations. Neither secularism nor secularization theory are as 'natural' or 'universal' as they have been considered to be. Yet dominant modes of secularism still exercise significant influence and control over perceptions and understandings of religion and politics.

Secularism and International Relations

Understanding secularism as an ideological discourse rather than objective truth throws into question prevailing assumptions within International Relations about the nature of religion itself as well as assumptions about its importance for studies of Western and global politics. Dominant modes of secularism within International Relations aim to establish clear boundaries between what is religious and what is secular, thereby enabling to some extent the control and exclusion of religion from various areas of public life, including politics. In doing so, mainstream secularism also sets up a fixed dichotomized definition of religion as institutional, individual and irrational that enables it to be excluded from politics and public life. The dominance of this dualistic definition, combined with continuing assumptions regarding the secular nature of Western and global politics, helps to explain why analysis of religion in International Relations continues to be disproportionate to its role in global news and events (Philpott 2009).

I further suggest that despite important studies that have endeavored to address this gap in International Relations literature, a dualistic understanding of religion continues to underpin much scholarly work, limiting our ability to appreciate the multiple ways, subtle and explicit, that religion has and continues to influence politics in the West and globally. In particular, the secularist assumption that religion is a private, personal and largely irrational phenomenon is deeply embedded within much International Relations theory, maintaining secularism's four moves regarding the separation of religion and politics and the exclusion of religion from public life through processes of modernization. Consequently, studies of Western and global politics which take seriously the multiple ways in which religion impacts on identity, policy and political practice remain marginal in the field. Yet there are a number of reasons to reconsider this dominant definition of religion in International Relations. Firstly, this definition is primarily a product of mainstream secularist thinking that is becoming an increasingly unsustainable set of assumptions in International Relations and political science more generally (Casanova 2009; Hallward 2008; Hurd 2008; Kuru 2007; Pellegrini 2009; Philpott 2009). If secularist logic is recognized as unsustainable, then the definition of religion that it has spawned must also be reconsidered. Secondly, and in line with constructivist and feminist critiques in International Relations more generally, understandings of religion should not merely be reconsidered as a result of the critique of secularism, but because understandings of religion are not fixed. Understandings of what is 'religious' and what is 'secular' are constantly negotiated and renegotiated, depending on social, historical, cultural, political, geographical, economic and religious context (Lynch 2003; Thomas 2000, 2005). Maintaining an understanding of religion as institutional, individual and irrational does not enable an accurate analysis of the role of religion in politics, but helps to maintain religion's marginal status within the study of International Relations. Thirdly, within International Relations itself, there have been a number of voices, increasing in recent years, which have endeavouredto emphasize the complex and multifaceted nature of religion. Importantly, these scholars have often had personal connections with various religious traditions. These personal connections, while often not directly influencing their analysis, no doubt facilitated a willingness to engage with religion as a serious and significant influence in Western and global politics, not simply to dismiss it as an outdated worldview that has been surpassed by the superior logic of liberal secularism.

I begin here by outlining six key aspects of religion as it has been discussed across a broad range of International Relations literature. While each of these six elements is present to some degree, I suggest that they exist in three dichotomous relationships – institutional/ideational, individual/communal and irrational/rational. Through the influence of dualistic secularism, the ideational, communal and rational elements have been subordinated to the institutional, individual and irrational. This means a limited definition of religion has informed and dominated much mainstream International Relations scholarship. I then analyse the effects of this limited definition of religion through examining some canonical works from within International Relations. Mainstream International Relations, generally taken to encompass realism, liberal internationalism and to a lesser extent constructivism, is heavily influenced by an understanding of religion as institutional, individual and irrational. This definition of

religion has emerged in International Relations largely owing to the influence of Enlightenment and liberal thought, with their emphasis on rationalism and the autonomy of the individual (Smith 1992: 209). As a result, International Relations scholars have downplayed or ignored religion in their explorations of Western and global political processes despite contexts where analysing religion would be appropriate and important. Alternative definitions of religion exist at the margins of International Relations and in the work of sociologists and anthropologists. While these works acknowledge a place for religion in political and social science analysis and draw in religion's ideational and communal aspects, a prevailing emphasis on religion's irrationalism colours much of this work. It also maintains the logic of secularism by reinforcing the assumptions in secularism's four moves, especially religion's association with premodern and developing contexts. This upholds the implicit view that religion is irrelevant to studies of mainstream Western and global political processes. This dualistic definition of religion stems from the secularist desire to clearly demarcate between what is religious and what is secular, a desire which itself has an exclusionary dualism at its heart. Secularism promotes an *either/or* model of thinking. Something is *either* religious *or* secular, but cannot be both. The public sphere is 'secular' and cannot be 'religious'. By clearly distinguishing between what is secular and what is religious, it becomes easier to separate, subordinate and exclude the religious from the secular. The same is true for definitions of religion itself that underpin much International Relations thinking on religion – religion is *either* predominantly institutional *or* ideational, but not both. Religion is *either* individual *or* it is communal, but not both. Religion is *either* irrational *or* rational, but it cannot be both. Through using the either/or model of thought, dualism enables the separation, subordination and exclusion of the religious from the secular, of religion's institutional aspects from its ideational, its individual from its communal and its irrational from its rational elements. This has resulted in a prevailing definition of religion as institutional, individual and irrational. This definition of religion has significantly limited understanding of the ways in which religion and politics interact in International Relations.

It promotes a focus on the actions of religious institutions, such as the Catholic Church, and an emphasis on the personal beliefs of political elites. Over and above this, however, it encourages the neglect of religion, since religion is irrational and therefore has no relevance to the rational realm of politics. Yet, religion is not made up solely of institutions, but also ideas, beliefs, values and narratives that influence how people, societies, nation states and civilizations interact with and respond to other actors and events within global politics. Religion is not just an individual concern, but shapes communities of believers, establishes commonalities across disparate groups, in short providing a way of life for people to coexist (Thomas 2000). Finally, while religion may be deemed 'irrational' because of its promotion of belief in unseen forces and/or assumptions about the nature of reality that cannot be tested or proven, equally, religion contributes to contesting the nature of what is irrational and rational by offering its own logical, rational explanations for human existence as well as standards on which law, social behavior and relationships can be and have been established. Thus, religion is not just institutional, individual and irrational, but is also ideational, communal and rational. Through the influence of secular dualism, however, these six elements have been arranged in

three dichotomies – institutional/ideational, individual/ communal, irrational/ rational – with the institutional, individual and irrational elements privileged and the ideational, communal and rational subordinated, thus enabling the exclusion of religion from politics and public life. Here, I outline the dualistic definition of religion as institutional, individual and irrational that both facilitates and is reinforced by the four moves of secularism. In line with secularism's first move – the possibility and necessity for separating religion and politics – International Relations scholars (and liberal Enlightenment thinkers before them) conceptualize religion as a clearly defined institutional entity. This focus on religious institutions and their influence in politics and society speaks to the strong Judeo-Christian experience that has influenced the emergence of Western secularism (Hurd 2008; Kuru 2007), since organized, institutionalized religion is a hallmark of the Western Christian tradition, while institutions hold far less significance in other religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism. By accentuating the institutional nature of religion, it becomes easier to separate the influence and authority of religion from the influence and authority of secular political powers. Framing religion as an individual, rather than communal, matter also helps to establish the possibility for separating religion and politics. A private individual matter has no place in politics, which is concerned with the pursuit of the common good. Finally, casting religion as irrational reinforces the necessity for separating religion and politics. Irrational influences, such as religion, but which have also included emotions, culture, ethnicity and women, bring disorder and chaos to public life and must therefore be restricted to the private realm. Once this definition of religion as institutional, individual and irrational is established, the remaining three moves of secularism become more feasible.

Focusing on religion's institutional aspect leads to policies supporting the actual separation of religious institutions and the state and the assumption that once these two are separated, religious influence has effectively been removed from politics. The sidelining of religion from public life is achieved through the public/private divide, which further reinforces the notion that religion is a private, individual, irrational matter that has no place in public communal life. The final move, the juxtaposing of religion with processes of development and modernization, is then also supported by the definition of religion as irrational. The four moves of secularism did not occur immediately but developed gradually over time. The same is true for prevailing assumptions about the nature of religion in International Relations. These assumptions have developed gradually and have rarely been explicitly articulated within International Relations. Without identifying and acknowledging these underlying preconceptions concerning the nature of religion, it becomes more difficult to question the logic of secularism and to recast our understanding of religion and its relationship with politics. Thus it is important to highlight and acknowledge dominant assumptions and definitions of religion that lie embedded within much International Relations theory and practice. How religion is defined by International Relations scholars often depends on what countries and regions are the primary focuses of study, the theoretical allegiances of the scholars and also seems to be influenced by the level of religious engagement of the scholars analysing religion. On the whole, realist and liberal internationalist scholars who analyse Western and international politics tend to hold a view of religion that is institutional, individual and irrational. They emphasize the importance of

reason and rational decision-making and therefore see little place for religion in their efforts to make sense of global politics. These perspectives dominated International Relations in its early stages up until the end of the Cold War and continue to be strong within the discipline. Scholars who take a more multidisciplinary approach to the study of world politics, influenced by sociology and anthropology, often utilize an alternative understanding of religion, focusing on the influence of religious ideas and beliefs on society and politics, its influence on the development of nationalism, community identity and affiliation and, while they may not regard religion as rational, are more open to acknowledging religion's role, rather than dismissing it as irrelevant. Yet within International Relations, these scholars have predominantly focused on non-Western, underdeveloped and developing areas of the world, areas deemed not yet 'modernized'. This perspective then is still consistent with the assumptions of mainstream secularism, particularly the belief that religion is only relevant to premodern developing states. This view is present in some early International Relations work, but mainly in the work of post-Cold War scholars urging an expansion of International Relations' research agenda to include typically marginalized issues such as culture, gender, emotions and religion. Only a small number of scholars in International Relations have considered religion in a broader way when analysing Western and international politics. These scholars, many of whom are affiliated with the English School of International Relations, incorporate an understanding of religion as institutional, ideational, individual, and communal and do not view religion as wholly irrational, but allow that religion may have some rational elements. Often these authors have engaged with aspects of theology as part of their analysis, endeavouring to critically analysethe impact of the different dimensions of religion on politics. These studies provide some evidence of the benefits to be gained by utilizing a broader definition of religion unconstrained by dualism for understanding global politics, benefits.

Dualism between Politics and Religion

The dualism present within secularist approaches to religion and politics endeavours to remove this uncertainty and to establish fixed understandings of particular ideas. As part of this process, dualism separates concepts that in fact exist in close relationship with each other. In separating the public realm from the private, man from woman, reason from emotion, politics from religion, dualism disguises the relationship between each of these dichotomous pairings that is integral to their definition. 'Woman' is central to definitions of 'man', just as 'man' is central to definitions of 'woman'; 'emotion' is central to definitions of 'reason', just as 'reason' is a critical part of definitions of 'emotion'; and so on. The two concepts are intimately and interdependently connected. In contrast to dualism, Prokhovnik (2003: 14) highlights that relational thought seeks to emphasize the connections that exist within these dichotomous pairings, arguing that there are numerous 'intellectual and social benefits' in recognizing the relationships that are present both within and across existing dualisms. Thus, religion and politics are not separated from one another but are in constant relationship and dialogue, both contributing to shaping what we understand as 'politics' and 'religion', to the norms and values that constitute 'politics' and 'religion', and the identities and goals of political and religious actors within the international system. In contrast to dualism's restrictive 'either/or' pattern, relational thought proposes a

'both-and' approach, assisting transcendence of barriers established across existing dualisms. As an example of how these two contrasting models of thought operate, dominant dualistic thinking has separated 'man' from 'woman', placing 'man' in the privileged position and 'woman' in the subordinated position. In doing so, 'man' has become associated with the dominant attributes of other dichotomies and 'woman' has become linked with the subordinated elements. Thus, 'man' is positioned in the public sphere and connected to reason and the mind, while 'woman' is positioned in the private sphere and associated with emotion and the body. In contrast to these stark divisions, relational thought promotes connections across the dichotomies. 'Man' is affiliated with emotion and the body; 'woman' is related to reason and the mind, along with the traditional established associations of 'man' with reason and the mind and 'woman' with emotion and the body (Prokhovnik 2003). Prokhovnik's model translates easily to religion and politics. Politics has been situated within the public sphere of domestic state societies and the public international sphere. Largely since the Peace of Westphalia, a view of religion has developed where it is considered a private state affair and within states a private individual affair (Strenski 2010: 26; Thomas 2000). As such, dualistic thinking has separated politics and religion. Thus the first effect of dualism is the separation of religion and politics through mainstream secularism's four moves and the positioning of politics within the public realm and religion in the private. The second effect of dualism occurs with regard to religion itself. Within dominant understandings of religion, the institutional, individual and irrational elements of religion have been separated from its ideational, communal and rational elements. Relational thought enables recognition of relationships among these traditionally separated aspects of religion. Thus, using a relational thought model, it is not a question of whether politics and the public realm should be 'secular' or 'religious'. Elements of both exist within the public political realm and should be recognized as such. The secular and the religious shape and define one another so that what is considered secular is affected by what is considered religious.

Further, regarding religion itself, it is not a question of whether religion is primarily institutional or ideational, primarily individual or communal, or primarily irrational or rational. Religion is made up of all six of these elements, although obviously the manifestation of these elements differs across religions. At different times and in different contexts, some aspects of the relational dialogist understanding of religion will be more important to consider and analyse and will have more significant influence on aspects of politics than others, but all should be incorporated into the way in which religion and its relationship with politics are understood within International Relations. Combining Kristeva's (1986) interpretation of dialogism and Prokhovnik's(2003) model of relational thought develops a framework that acknowledges connections among elements in religion that are not fixed, but are fluid, shifting and changing as they interact with each other, with other ideas and other texts, and with people's practical experiences, past, present and future. This opens up possibilities for rethinking and reassessing traditional secularist assumptions about the relationship between religion and politics and the nature of religion that have restricted much International Relations analysis on this issue. Relational dialogism proposes a 'both-and' model of thinking that differs from dualism's 'either/or' pattern. A 'both-and' approach opens up ways for addressing

secularism's four moves and expanding our understanding of religion to appreciate more fully the ways in which religion influences politics through both explicitly and implicitly embedded cultural assumptions. Relational thought recognizes that important relationships exist between more than two concepts or objects. Dualism assumes that objects are situated in hierarchical pairings (Prokhovnik 2003: 27–30). Although Kristeva's (1986) discussion of dialogism endeavours to avoid hierarchy, the concept of *dia*logism suggests dialogue between only two concepts or objects. Relational thought allows theorists to identify important relationships across multiple concepts or objects. Combining relational thought and dialogism highlights relationships across all six elements of religion – institutional, ideational, individual, communal, irrational and rational – not just between pairs of ideas, and values each element equally. It also enables recognition of the relationships that exist across religion, politics and the secular, across the public/ private divide and across the historical and philosophical processes that have contributed to the development of contemporary Western and global political norms and values. Combined with dialogism, relational thought removes hierarchies in the organization of ideas and equally values all the elements within and across both religion and politics. Relational thought and dialogism propose a 'both-and' model of thinking that differs from dualism's 'either/or' pattern. This is not to say that relational thought and dialogism are superior to dualism or that they should replace dualism.

This would simply set up another binary opposition between relational thought and dialogism against dualism (Prokhovnik2003). Dualism remains a useful thought model in particular contexts, and there are a number of other thought patterns besides relational dialogism that offer alternatives to dualism. Yet the relational dialogist mode of thought is appropriate for addressing questions of religion's role in politics, since such analysis should take account of both existing dominant seculardiscourses and modes of thought as well as the alternative perspectivesof religious actors and discourses. This will become particularly relevant in discussions of the influence of the irrational and rational elements of religion in the case study, since secular and religious actors have different views on what is considered rational and what is irrational. Developing and applying the relational dialogist model for understanding and analysing religion within International Relations thus involves rethinking the two key sets of assumptions about religion that I have outlined thus far – assumptions regarding religion's relationship with politics and assumptions about the nature of religion itself. These assumptions currently underpin dominant secularist approaches to questions about religion and politics in International Relations. Rethinking these assumptions contributes to addressing the secularist bias within International Relations.

Conclusion

To sum up, the actual exclusion of religion from public life is negated by the changes relational dialogism brings to how we understand religion. The separation of religion and politics was primarily justified through defining religion as mainly institutional and establishingthe legal requirement for the church and state to be separate. I am not suggesting that political authorities should be able to exercise authority and influence over doctrinal issues within churches, nor am I saying that religious groups should be able to dictate the laws

of any particular country. What I am suggesting is that, like it or not, the ideas from the one do permeate and influence the other. Aspects of political philosophy and practice influence how religious believers, institutions and communities exercise their faith (such as, for example, democratic principles that now govern church synod meetings and the election of vestry members for congregations). Equally, however, elements of religion permeate and influence the way we think and talk about politics and public life. Understanding religion as both institutional and ideational enables recognition of these multiple influences. Relational dialogism also helps to circumvent secularism's third move, enforcing religion's exclusion from politics through the establishment of the public/private divide. Part of reviewing secularist assumptions about the relationship between religion and politics involves rethinking the division of Western society and international politics into public and private spheres, the primary method by which religion and politics have been kept separate. Relational dialogism reveals that these two spheres are not separate but interact in multiple ways. If the nature of the connection between religion and politics is to be more comprehensively understood, then the public/private divide also has to be thought of as fluid and shifting, rather than permanently fixed. Indeed, it may be beneficial to entirely do away with the categories of public and private realms and instead view global politics and Western society in more relational terms. Again, dialogism's emphasis on history is useful here. Ways in which religion and politics have interacted in the past continue to influence how they interact now and into the future, rendering the relatively recent imposition of the public/private divide even more problematic. Finally, by breaking down barriers between concepts traditionally positioned in binary opposition to one another, relational dialogism undermines the assumption that religion is incompatible with modernization and development. Religion is not purely historical but is an important influence on contemporary politics. Relational dialogism also challenges assumptions about what 'modernization' and 'development' mean, encouraging a rethinking of these concepts in International Relations. Religion's separation from modernization and development is also undermined by the changes relational dialogism brings to how we understand religion itself. Through a relational dialogist framework, religion is no longer considered purely 'irrational'. Neither are contemporary politics and public life considered purely 'rational'. Consequently, this opens up space for acknowledging religion's presence in the modern public sphere and its influence on various dimensions of politics, particularly embedded implicit cultural assumptions, in the West and globally.

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