

RELIGION AND ITS IMPACT ON WORLD POLITICS

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OCTOBER 2023

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**A PROJECT SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF ARTS (B.A.)
HONOURS DEGREE
IN INTERNATIONAL STUDIES AND DIPLOMACY**

**UNIVERSITY OF BENIN
BENIN CITY, NIGERIA**

OCTOBER 2023

DEDICATION

It is with great Joy I dedicate this project to Almighty GOD, to my family, the Uwuseba/Adegbulu Family and to myself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with Immense Joy and heart filled with Gratitude and Appreciation, I acknowledge these special people, who have contributed greatly in one way or another, no matter how little and no matter how big to my university Journey, you guys are the special ones truly.

First, I want to give all glory and appreciation to GOD almighty, because it is by his mercy and grace I am not consumed. Like the psalmist says; “if it had not been for the lord who was on our side.” It is by his grace I am here and so for that I acknowledge his grace and take it not for granted. This acknowledgement will be incomplete, if I do not thank the most important people to me after GOD; my family, first my Parents, Rev Efe Uwuseba and Rev Bunmi Uwuseba for being the best people and just being there. For supporting me not just financially, but emotionally, intellectually, and just overall being my own personal superheroes, thank you for giving me two of the most important gifts in life, first the knowledge of Christ and an Education, you both rock. Although I don’t say it much, I truly and deeply love you. This is for you. To my siblings, my older sister Abigail Uwuseba, for being a tower of advice, bringing joy to my heart and smiles to my face whenever we speak. To my older brother Joshua Uwuseba for being a pillar of Knowledge and constantly giving me direction in the way of Christ. It is said that you don’t choose your family, but if I am given the chance, I will choose this family in every life. To my roommates, course mates and as well friends, Jane Chukwufumnanya Lotobi, for just being that one person I can be silly around and Ewanlenoise Isinugben, for just

being you, that is the best way I could frame this, thank you for you. I would have gone through this school without you, but I sure wouldn't want to, you filled my everyday with lots of laughs and fun, you are the coolest, there is. To my friend and my forever special girl Fortune Kakshak, thank you for being my seasoned but lengthy gist partner and my biggest cheerleader, you are amazing. To my Church members at All Saints Youth Fellowship and the All Saints Chapel, for being my brethren in Christ. To my Supervisor, Mrs. Itohan I. Igiebor who practically held my hand throughout this project. For your kind words of wisdom and Meticulous scrutiny, I express gratitude. I also extend appreciation to the lecturers who have impacted me with knowledge throughout my stay in the University of Benin, from my first to my final year, thank you for opening my eyes to a whole new world of international and world politics. To every member of BTS; Kim Namjoon, Kim Seokjin, Min Yoongi, Jung Hoseok, Park Jimin, Kim Taehyung and Jeon Jungkook, for your support and your love, through your music. You made me know it is possible to not know someone physically and yet love and support them and receive the same in return. Thank you for believing in my galaxy, teaching me, and showing me, I have reasons to love myself and in turn love others. You guys are truly the best people to exist out there, I hope I made you proud, see you in 2025. Borahae. Lastly, to myself for standing steadfast, persevering and not giving up even when it got so hard and excruciatingly difficult, I stayed true and saw this journey to the end. Thank you, Daveena.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Religion has been a powerful force shaping world politics throughout history.¹ Whether through the influence of religious institutions, the actions of religious leaders, the great influence which religion has on man's thought process or the beliefs and practices of ordinary individuals, it has played a central role in shaping political systems, conflicts, and alliances.² From the ancient world to the present day, religion has been used to justify wars and conquests, to mobilize social movements, and to define cultural identity.³ At times, religion has been a source of division and conflict, fueling sectarian violence and intolerance.⁴ At other times, it has been a force for peace and reconciliation, inspiring social justice movements and promoting interfaith dialogue.⁵ However, some are of the view that politics and religion should be separated. Thus, Milliard Fillmore, the 13th President of the United States, stated that, "Church and State should be separate, not only in form, but fact- religion and politics should not be mingled".⁶

This is merely an idealistic view as opposed to reality, which is such a belief is and has never been the case throughout history.

This complex relationship between religion and politics continues to shape our world today, as nations and communities grapple with the role of religion in state

governance, public life, and the challenges of building a more peaceful and just global society.⁷

During this project, the focus will be narrowed down, reviewing in-depth the many ways in which religion has proven time and time again to be an influencer of States' governing principles, governing structures and international relations amongst States at large. The main focus and aim of this project is to examine the role which religion plays on the international stage. With this project, the goal is to establish the fact that if States are actors on the international stage; religion is the dialogue. Carefully selected events in history in which religion plays an integral role will be used as case studies in the review of this project to portray, shed light and answer the questions which this project topic poses which includes "has religion really influenced States' governing principles and by extension world politics in general and if it has, how and to what degree?"

Religion overtime and throughout history has always been a present force in the advancement and progression of world politics and world events. Due to its strong ability to shape and influence the principles, ideologies and in turn the actions of men, it has played a vital role in world politics; as world politics are handled and carried out by people and whether it is believed or not or seen as a theory; the beliefs, ideologies and principles of people have a way of influencing and being projected on states; their affairs and decision making. Religion has served many purposes in international relations, one of

which is as a motive to wage war with other countries. During the reformation in the 16th century religion played a major role in the constant conflicts between the protestants and Catholics which plagued that time, these religious differences led to wars, political alliances and the formation of new states, many of which characterized the Thirty years war (1618-1648) between the Protestant and the Catholic nations in Europe, this war has been viewed as one of the earliest and largest religious conflicts in history this gave rise to the Westphalia treaty of 1648, which marked the start and definition of state sovereignty and international relations ⁸ The crusades, also an instance in which war broke out amongst states because of religion, was a series of "holy wars" launched by the Catholic Church to recapture the "Holy land" from Muslim control; it had a profound impact on the political and cultural landscape of Europe and The Middle East ⁹

Due to Religion's Power to shape the beliefs, principles, and ideologies of people and in turn their actions and influence human's ability to discern and judge. It has been used by governing authorities as a tool to control the people and ensure their compliance to certain laws. This tactic is employed by Napoleon Bonaparte in France, where he used religion to "keep the people in line". The French revolution had just ended, the people had discovered their new power and ability to design their own fate and displace the tyrannical rule. Napoleon Bonaparte needed a strategy in his taking over the rule of France to control the people and curb their newfound power, but not with force and thus he adopted the use of religion and the influence it had over the people. Like he

said “Religion is excellent stuff for keeping the common people quiet. Religion is what keeps the poor man from murdering the rich”.¹⁰

Religion is a tale as old as time, a concept and construct as old as man himself, but religion is not just old in its practice but also in its ability to shape, influence and build political systems. In the ancient world, many societies were deeply religious, and their political structures were often intertwined with their religious beliefs.¹¹ For example, in ancient Egypt, the pharaohs were considered divine rulers, and their authority was derived from their status as intermediaries between the gods and the people.¹² Similarly, in ancient Greece, the city states were often situated around a temple or shrine, and religious festivals and ceremonies played an important role in the political and social life of the community.¹³ Same also with the Byzantine Empire, it operated under Symphonia, meaning that the emperor was both the head of civil society and the ultimate authority over the ecclesiastical authorities, the patriarchates. The emperor was seen as god’s omnipotent representative on earth, and he ruled as an absolute autocrat. Jennifer Fretland VanVoorst argues.¹⁴ “The Byzantine Empire became a theocracy in the sense that Christian values and ideals are the foundation of the empire’s political ideals and heavily entwined with its political goals”.¹⁵

Religion has not lost its effect and its ability to influence world politics, its ability to start wars and end them, it’s ability to frame and define state’s governing principles, political systems and structures, its ability to make and merge countries, as powerful as its

influence was in time past, so it is today. The ongoing Israeli and Palestine conflict is an example of how religion is still prevalent today and still finds its ability to affect world politics as profoundly as before, today. Another example is the Taliban Afghan take over in 2021, ongoing struggles by the Taliban to takeover Afghanistan has been seen for many years and the quite unfortunate yet successful takeover in 2021, by this religious sect in Afghanistan as another example of religion's prevalence and relevance in world politics today.

Religious leaders and organizations play important roles in shaping public opinion, advocating for social and political change, and influencing government policy. However, the relationship between religion and politics is often fraught with tension and conflict, as different religious groups and individuals hold divergent beliefs and values and thus a clash of opinions leading to conflict is inevitable. This power and ability for religion to retain and secure front row seat in the theater of world politics, to influence the ideologies, principles and judgment of people which sometimes goes unnoticed is still very profound and this is what this project is aimed at, exposing the potential which religion must control, shape and build from the ground up political systems, structures and views. Religion is a concept as old as man himself and so is society, throughout history because of the ideological nature of religion and the fact that religion has been able to influence the actions of man, the state being made of men has given religion the ability to extend its influence from simply over man to the state and has found expression

in the policy formation of states, the political system adopted by states, the governing structures and ruling mechanisms of states; this is going to be an integral part of this project.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this project is to explore and determine the influence religion has over world politics. The specific objectives to be explored in the course of this project include.

1. To examine the concept of religion
2. To explore and analyze specifically the effect religion has on man, state and by extension world politics
3. To determine if the effects of religion on world politics are negative or positive or both.

Scope of Study

The Scope of this study will include specific landmarks in world politics, which will be discussed extensively, and they include. Political systems and governing structures and War.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for this research work is the historical Method of analysis. Whilst researching as well as putting together the research for the work, only

secondary sources were adopted. The secondary sources which were consulted in the course of the research, were online libraries, journals, articles and internet resources, which included News sites, Websites and YouTube Channels.

Literature Review

Religion has been an integral part of world politics for centuries. It has played a significant role in shaping the political systems and influencing decision-making at all levels. With this project the goal is to discuss and explore the ways by which religion has influenced world politics throughout history, in the course of doing this, specific themes in world politics will be explored, as well as the effect of religion on these themes and they include Political and governing structures and war. These will be discussed extensively in the course of this project with the aim being to arrive at an understanding of religion and its influence on world politics, by exploring specific landmarks of world politics as has already been established. Many works have been done in regard to the above and my work is merely an addition to the knowledge already established by these various works and perhaps a deep dive into some areas which have yet to be explored. Knowledge is a continuous journey we are all on a journey to arrive at and this project is just an additional stop. This literature review aims to examine the impact of religion on world politics through analyzing various studies and scholarly articles.

Religion has been the cause of conflict and violence throughout history, as demonstrated by the crusades and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. *According to a study by a religious studies scholar Mark Juergensmeyer in Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence.* Religious conflicts are often not solely about religion but also involve political and economic factors. He argues that religion becomes a mobilizing force in conflicts, as it provides a sense of identity and meaning to people who feel marginalized or oppressed.¹⁶ *According to political scientist John Esposito in Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam.* He argues that religion has been used as a tool by political leader to justify violence and achieve political goals.¹⁷

Religion has also played a role in shaping democratic systems. *According to political scientist Alfred Stephan in "Religion, democracy and the 'Twin Tolerations'."* *Journal of democracy, vol. 11.* Religion can either be a hindrance or a facilitator of democracy, depending on how it is incorporated into the political system.¹⁸ For example in countries such as Turkey and Indonesia, where religion has been incorporated into the political system through a process of "taming" religion, democracy has been able to flourish.¹⁹ However, in countries where religion is used as a tool to suppress democracy, such as Iran, the political system is characterized by authoritarianism and repression.²⁰ Although this is not a part of the effects, I will be exploring in this project it is important to note the extent of religion's effect on world politics.

Religion has also been a significant factor in shaping international relations. According to political scientist Robert Keohane in *"The Political Economy of International Relations."* *International Organization*, vol. 39, religion has been used to legitimize and delegitimize political actions on the international stage.²¹ For example, the Vatican played a significant role in promoting peace and human rights through its diplomatic efforts.²² Similarly, religious organizations such as world council of churches and the organization of Islamic cooperation has been influenced in shaping global politics and advocating for religious freedom and human rights.²³

According to the article from Berkley center *Religion and Feminism: Is religion an obstacle or opportunity for women's empowerment.* Religion is often seen as institutionalizing and perpetuating patriarchy, thus frustrating many advocates for women's rights and equality.²⁴ Although a point that is often overlooked by many, is early roots of feminism and the fight for women's rights which included religious voices bad faith-based organizations have worked with women and girls in various development activities for decades.²⁵ Although, this is a very present point to be considered many issues which crop up in our society today on the account of women's rights and feminism often see political structures and systems with religion at its core and inception as the root cause of them. For example, the Iran's women rights protest which started in September 2022 with the death of a 22-year-old Iranian woman Mahsa Amini in the custody of the Iranian morality police after being arrested for improperly wearing the hijab.

According to the article Afghanistan: Un experts say 20 years of progress for women and girls' rights erased since Taliban takeover The fight for women's rights in Iran did not just begin today, recent events have only served as a reminder to continue the fight for the rights of women in a Patriarchal society with values stemming from religious norms and culture. Another notable example is the struggle for women's rights in Afghanistan after the Afghan takeover by the Taliban in August 2021, which now features women being wholly excluded from the public office and the judiciary.²⁶ Today Afghanistan's women and girls are required to adhere to a strict dress code and are not permitted to travel more than 75km without a mahram (male relative). They are compelled to stay at home.²⁷ All over the country, women report feeling invincible, isolated, suffocated, living in prison like conditions. Many are unable to have basic needs met without access to employment or aid, including access to medical health care and psychological support for victims of violence, including sexual violence as well as domestic violence. It's a sobering reminder of how swiftly and aggressively women's rights can be taken away.²⁸ Today there is a fight both within and outside Afghanistan of many advocating for the rights of girls and women, chanting "women's rights are human rights".

In conclusion, religion has played a significant role in shaping world politics, from causing conflict to shaping political and democratic systems, to inciting radical social change, specifically the fight for women's rights and the feminist movement as

well as influencing international relations. However as demonstrated by the examples discussed above, the impact of religion on politics can be either positive or negative, depending on how it is incorporated into the political system. It is essential to understand the role of religion in world politics to develop effective policies that promote peace, democracy, and human rights.

Chapterization

Chapter One: Background of Study.

This chapter gives an overview of the study as well as the purpose and direction the study is going to be taking in subsequent chapters.

Chapter Two: Religion; a foundation for Political systems and governing structures.

There is going to be an in-depth examination of religion and how it has found itself at the center of governing structures and at the foundation of political systems.

Chapter Three: Religion as a driving force for war.

In this Chapter, there will be a critical analysis of the concept of war and/or warfare both conventional and unconventional, with a review of insurgency and terrorism as an underlying concept and how religion has stirred the pot of conflict amongst states.

Chapter Four: Conclusion.

This final chapter as the title says, is going to be the converging point of the entire topic of research, where all the factors talked about in the previous chapters will take their last bow on the stage of our project with a final scene that ties this project together and leads us to our conclusion.

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CHAPTER TWO

RELIGION; A FOUNDATION FOR POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND GOVERNING STRUCTURES

Introduction

Religion has been a foundation for political systems and governing structures for centuries. From the ancient empires of Egypt and Rome to the modern nation-states of today, religion has played a role in shaping the way people govern themselves. In this chapter, the relationship between religion and politics will be examined. How religion has been used to justify both authoritarian and democratic regimes, and how it has shaped the development of different political systems will also be discussed. In the course of this chapter, with the aid of selected case studies throughout history and with the aid of some world events, an understanding will be established on how exactly religion intertwines with political systems, governing structures and finds itself at the base of state formation. The power of religion lies in the hands of those who wield it by way of practice, this claim will be become clearer as this chapter progresses.

Religion has some significance when it comes to the shaping of political systems and structures, before dissecting the influence of religion on the formation of the political systems and governing structures of states, First an understanding on its significance, its

importance, why does it and in what ways does it influence political system formation, should be established.

The significance of religion in shaping political systems and structures is deeply rooted in human history and culture. Throughout millennia, religious beliefs and institutions have played a crucial role in influencing the way societies organize themselves, make decisions and establish authority. Some key points illustrating the importance of religion in shaping political systems include:

- **Legitimacy of Authority:** Religion often provides a powerful source of legitimacy for political leaders and governing bodies. Rulers and governments historically claimed divine mandate or the blessing of deities to justify their rule, making it easier to maintain control over their subjects.
- **Moral and ethical framework:** Many religious traditions offer a comprehensive moral and ethical framework that guides human behavior. These principles often find their way into legal systems and codes of conduct within a society, directly impacting the laws and governance of a nation.
- **Social cohesion and identity:** Religions often serve as a unifying force within a community or nation. Shared religious beliefs and practices can foster a sense of belonging and common identity, which can be harnessed to maintain social cohesion and political stability.

- **Social order and hierarchy:** Religious teachings and doctrines have historically reinforced social hierarchies and prescribed roles for different segments of society. This hierarchical structure can extend to political systems influencing power distribution and governance arrangements.
- **Legal and Judicial systems:** in some societies religious laws or religious scholars have been involved in the formulation and application of legal and judicial systems. Religious norms and values can significantly impact legal principles and penalties for various offenses.
- **Conflict and Peace:** Religion has at times been a significant factor in both sparking conflicts and promoting peace. Disputes over religious differences or the interpretation of religious texts have fuelled wars, while religious teachings have also inspired movements for peace and justice.
- **Political Movements and Activism:** Religious movements and leaders have been instrumental in advocating for political change and social reform. They have played critical roles in various social justice movements and in challenging oppressive political systems.
- **International relations:** religion can shape diplomatic relations between nations as it influences cultural interactions and perceptions of foreign policies. Conflicts

between countries with different religious backgrounds can have far-reaching implications for global politics.

It is also important to note and understand that the significance of religion on the political systems of states varies and is peculiar to the state and the religion, but nevertheless religion has in many states and civilizations found itself at the foundation of political system formation.

Religion is a concept as old as man himself and so is society, throughout history because of the ideological nature of religion and the fact that religion has been able to influence the actions of man, the state being made of men has given religion the ability to extend its influence from simply over man to the state and has found expression in the policy formation of states, the political system adopted by states, the governing structures and ruling mechanisms of states; this is going to be the focal point of this chapter, with the aid of case studies; where religion has been an instrumental factor in the ruling system to truly understand the influence religion has in the political structure and governing system of states. It is also important to note that in this overview of religion and its influence on political systems and governing structures of states, the conventional religions such as; Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism etc. will not be the only religions in view but in accordance with what has been understood to be religion in the previous chapter, which is, the belief in a supreme being and/or deity by a group of people and the framing of actions and practices in reverence and in support of their belief

in the existence of this supreme being, other religions ancient religions will be reviewed as well. There are several examples of nations where religion plays a significant role in determining their political structure. In these countries, religious principles and institutions directly influence the governance, legal systems, and policymaking, this amongst the religious practices will be explored in this chapter.

These days, religion and politics are so entwined that many people wonder if there can ever be peace between them. But this is hardly the first time that politics and religion have interacted.¹ This takes us back thousands of years ago, using Egypt.

Egyptian Civilization

Religion was determined to be vital in ancient Egyptian civilization after a thorough examination of the mythology and cultus of the Sun-God, the apotheosis of the Pharaoh, and the cult of the dead.² Religion and politics were inextricably interwoven in ancient Egyptian civilization.³ Religion was closely interwoven with power, culture, and governance in ancient Egypt. The ancient Egyptians were deeply religious. Social and political life was deeply influenced by religion;⁴ in comprehending how this is so, as well as in an assessment of Egypt's political structure and political system, which has been determined to be theocratic. First, a look at the ruler, the Pharaoh, who was at the pinnacle of Egyptian administration, acting as both god and king.⁵

The word 'Pharoh' means 'Great house' referring to the Pharaoh's palace.⁶ While early Egyptian monarchs were referred to as "Kings," the term "Pharoh" became more popular throughout time.⁷ The Pharoh's in ancient Egypt were both the heads of state and the religious leaders of their people, they handled both roles. They were regarded as the divine bridge between the gods and the Egyptians. The Pharaoh's position as religious leader included maintaining religious peace and participating in religious ceremonies.⁸ As a statesman, the Pharaoh enacted laws, conducted war, collected taxes, and ruled over all of Egypt (which was owned by the Pharoh).⁹ Central to ancient Egyptian politics was the concept of divine kingship. Every Pharoh reigned as the reincarnation of the falcon-god Horus in this world, and upon his death became Osiris in the afterworld, as the monarch of Egypt was considered a divine entity, the earthly representation of gods on Earth.¹⁰ The divine status bestowed the Pharoh with absolute authority and legitimized their rule. The ancient Egyptians believed that the gods chose the Pharoh to lead the nation, ensuring political stability. The Pharoh had ultimate power to 'do an undo' in Egypt, he was the "morning and the evening star, if he says day is night, then it will be written"¹¹ they were the final and absolute authority, due to their connections with the gods, it was believed that every decision that was made by the Pharoh was on instruction and direction from the gods and thus had to be agreed to and acted in accordance with. This was the power which was held by the Pharoh in Egypt. The Pharoh was the soul of the state, the lord of the land, the master of the fields, and the controller of the Nile, which he compelled to

flow incessantly by his magical power and immortal divinity.¹² He was the great and terrible one who ensured the universe's order. He was divinely omniscient. "He is god," a late-fifteenth-century B.C. chief minister declared, "by whose dealings one lives, the father and mother of all men, alone by himself, without an equal."¹³

His word was law as the leader of all Egyptians and the dispenser of all justice, and his call had to be executed without question. The legal system lacked codification. In contrast to much of Sub-Saharan Africa, its orientation was individualistic rather than communal. It was founded on custom and use as exemplified by the king.¹⁴ As "the dispenser of wealth and the regulator of trade," the king was, according to a tomb inscription, "superintendent of all things which heaven gives, and the earth produces."¹⁵ As a result of this god complex which the Pharaoh's had, everything and anything surrounding Egypt was determined by him, the political hierarchy was also set by him, where he was assisted by a host of officials, who ranked below him in descending order of power. Nobles, deputies, priests, scribes, artisans, laborers, and peasants were the god-king's instruments in carrying out his many functions.¹⁶ Which I have categorized into 10 subheadings, and they are.

1. **Divine Authority:** as has been discussed before, Pharaoh's were believed to be living gods on Earth, with a divine connection to the gods on Earth, with a divine connection to the gods and the afterlife. They were seen as the bridge between the mortal world and the divine realm. This concept of divine authority bestowed

upon pharaohs gave them unparalleled and unmatched power. It made the Pharaoh's the center of everything that concerned Egypt, he was considered a living god that walked amongst the people, he was already seen to be a superior being even before his kingship or king title, he was first a god, who was revered and greatly respected by the people, and this led to the absolute authority bestowed on him. Nothing moved in Egypt, no decision was made without the seal or "go ahead" of the king. And the amazing thing about this is that the people gave the king this level power, not grudgingly, but willingly, to them it was only natural and right, because again, like I mentioned, he was a superior being, a god who walked amongst mere men.

2. **Political Leadership:** Pharaoh's were the supreme rulers of Egypt and held absolute political power. They controlled the centralized government, made laws, collected taxes, and oversaw the administration of justice. Their word was law, and their decisions were final. He was given total and absolute authority and political freedom to make decisions without having to consult anyone as he was seen to have a direct link with the gods, so whatever decision was made politically, it was right by the gods.
3. **Military Command:** In times of war, pharaohs were the ultimate commanders as leaders of the military forces. The king was personally responsible for the state's defense.¹⁷ They led campaigns, strategized military operations, and defended the

kingdom from external threats. Defeats and victories were attributed to him thus military success further solidified their status as powerful rulers. The Pharaoh was the protector of the nation and the people, he was “the father and mother of all men”.

4. **Economic Control:** The Pharaoh wielded considerable economic power. They possessed huge tracts of land, mines, and resources. They oversaw the manufacture and distribution of products, as well as the regulation of trade. This economic clout increased their total authority. With all of Egypt's treasures, the Pharaoh was the controller and dispenser of this tremendous wealth. Foreign trade, mining, quarrying, manufacture, and distribution were all state-controlled industries, according to available information. Though the king held all decision-making and control over material resources in theory, power and responsibilities were delegated to a full hierarchy of officials in fact.¹⁸ This delegation was made by the king, so as said before in theory and ultimately, it was the king who was still in control. Because if a decision was made by an official who was appointed by the king and the king disagreed with such a decision, it would be changed to suit the king's desire. So, on paper, these officials might have been in charge, but the king was the one pulling the strings behind the curtain. These officials were frequently rewarded with estates and titles, some of which were passed down through families. Deities and their priests, nobility, and warriors were also given

land. The focus on divine legitimacy of royalty, as well as the need to maintain god-worship, compelled the king to share his political and economic authority with the temples and the priests who served them.¹⁹

5. **Cultural and Religious Roles:** Pharaohs played a vital role in religious ceremonies and rituals. They were considered the high priests of Egypt and were responsible for maintaining the balance between the gods and the people. Many of the monumental structures, such as temples and pyramids, were built to honor the gods and the Pharaohs themselves.

6. **Monumental Architecture:** The construction of grand architectural projects like the pyramids and temples showcased the Pharaoh's power, wealth, and ability to mobilize vast labor forces. These structures served as lasting symbols of their authority and divine connection. The mastabas were gigantic, sun-baked mud-structures intended to contain the Pharaoh's bones after embalming them, and they were meant to stay forever. From the time of Djoser, the mastabas gave place to the pyramid. The step pyramid, the world's first enormous stone edifice, was built under the supervision of his vizier Imhotep, the supreme priest of the sun cult and an excellent sculptor and architect. This was a significant change, indicating the emergence of the Pharaoh as Egypt's undisputed ruler. Other pyramids followed in subsequent centuries that were more huge, ornate, and immeasurably more

elegant in design and construction, testifying forcefully to the divine aspirations and unparalleled authority of the god-king.²⁰

7. **Symbolic Titles:** Pharaohs were associated with a myriad of titles that emphasized their power, such as “Lord of the Two Lands,” signifying control over Upper and Lower Egypt, and “Son of Ra,” linking them to the sun god Ra, a supreme deity.
8. **Legacy and Afterlife:** Pharaohs were concerned with their legacy in the afterlife as well as their worldly control. The building of grandiose tombs, like as the pyramids, and the fabrication of burial artifacts showed their belief in an afterlife and desire to continue wielding power beyond death. The average Egyptian's devotion to life and all the pleasant things it brought led to the belief that the afterlife would be a re-enactment of the best moments of life on earth.²¹ "Paradise" was meant to be the theme. Following in the tradition of the rebuilding of Osiris' dismembered body, it was established that immortality was predicated on the flawless preservation of the body upon death.²² This resulted in a lifelong fascination with death and burial ceremonies. Every Egyptian with sufficient wealth set about creating a tomb as a proper abode for forever, complete with food and drink to sustain him on his passage to the next world. The preservation of the body and detailed preparation for the afterlife became a matter of urgency for the god-king, on whom the maintenance of cosmic order hinged.²³

9. **Cult of Personality:** Pharaohs were surrounded by a complex web of rituals, symbols, and ceremonies that enhanced their status. They were often depicted in art as larger-than-life figures, highlighting their importance and might.
10. **Dynastic Succession:** The concept of dynastic succession ensured that Pharaohs' power was passed down within the royal family. The notion of a divine bloodline further solidified their divine rights to rule. Succession was usually by primogeniture, with the sun-god Re's oracles naming and recognizing the new monarch.²⁴

From the above an understanding has been established of the political system and/or governing structure of Ancient Egyptian civilization. It is understood that the Pharaoh was at the head and the center of the governance in Egypt, government began and ended with him, he was Egypt and Egypt was him. The identity of the Pharaoh, the very embodiment of his character, stemmed from religious beliefs and thus religion finds itself at the foundation of the governing structure and political system of ancient Egypt.

Religion at the base of the foundation of the political and governing structure of a state did not start nor did it end with ancient Egypt, but rather continued and evolved overtime, this will be seen in the next case study that will be explored.

IRAN

Iran is an Islamic republic with a single parliamentary body. Although Iran is a self-proclaimed Islamic Republic, scholars have used or developed names to describe it, including democratic theocracy, oligarchic theocracy, religious despotism, and mullocracy.²⁵ The country's constitution of 1979 established a mixed system of government in which the administration, legislature, and judiciary are monitored by a number of entities headed by the clergy. A leading cleric known as the *rahbar*, or supreme leader, is at the helm of both the state and the monitoring institutions, with duties and authority comparable to that of a head of state.²⁶ Islam has always been an inherent religion right from the inception of Iran to its development as a modern society and this is evident in its political structure as will be discussed during this chapter.

As previously noted, the official term of Iran, "Islamic republic of Iran," perplexes many experts; yet many political scientists believe that the Iranian political system is a theocracy.²⁷ Iran has basically nine political institutions which make its political system what it currently is, as of 2017.

The first of these nine organizations are the Assembly of Experts, which is made up of 88 *mujahids* and *Ayatollahs*, the majority of whom are male. While it is nearly impossible to find a female mujahid, it is de jure feasible. They are directly elected by the people for an eight-year tenure. According to a law passed by the Iranian parliament,

members of the assembly must be specialists in Islamic jurisprudence.²⁸ The assembly is to meet twice a week and is also in charge of appointing and removing the supreme leader from office. Nonetheless, they have never openly defied any of the supreme leader's choices, let alone impeach him.

The Iranian Parliament, known as the "Islamic Parliament of Consultation," is unicameral and has 290 members. The Parliament is the legislative body in Iran, according to the Iranian Constitution, and it legislates on all topics within the scope of the Constitution. It gives final approval to all international treaties, agreements, and cabinet nominees proposed by the President. It has the authority to impeach cabinet officials as well as the president. The impeachment of the president requires one-third of the votes of Parliament members (PM). After these criteria is reached, another vote is held, and if two-thirds of the Prime Ministers vote in favor of impeaching the President, the case is sent to the Supreme Leader.²⁹

The Supreme Leader is elected by the Assembly of Experts for an eight-year term and can be re-elected indefinitely. He has more authority and is more respected than the president, having appointed numerous high-level bureaucrats in the military, judiciary, and government. He can impeach the president with the support of two of the three members of the Assembly of Experts.³⁰ He appoints the head of the judiciary for an eight-year term, members of the Expediency Council for five years, six of the twelve members of the Guardian Council for six years, the head of the state radio and television

channel for a six-year term, the Friday prayer Imams of each province for a lifelong term, all Commanders in Chief of the Armed Forces, the General Directorate of Security, and the head of the Intelligence Unit. According to the Iranian Constitution, the Supreme Leader must be an Islamic scholar who is, religious, brave, a social and political genius, and possesses common sense, foresight, administrative, and leadership qualities.³¹ Ruhollah Khomeini was the first Supreme Leader from 1970 to 1989, and Sayyid Ali Khamenei has been the second since 1989 to date.³²

It is also important to note that the Iranian Parliament has generally been held by conservative Islamists, who in turn nominate half of the members of the Council, mainly from among the conservative members of the judiciary. Because of this vicious spiral, the Parliament was kept at a safe distance from popular opinion in favor of the official ideology, and therefore the conservative Islamist character of the Parliament and the laws was preserved. Because the Supreme Leader picks half of the Council members, only a change in the Supreme Leader can cause significant change in the Council. As a result, the Council has been extensively and rightly criticized for impeding Iran's democratic process.³³

The Presidency is Iran's fifth main political entity. The president is the highest elected political authority in Iran.³⁴ Although the president is responsible for many things, including signing treaties with other countries and international organizations, ratifying the budget, appointing vice presidents and cabinet members, this role requires the

permission of parliament. Although the president has all these powers and functions, he is still subordinate to the supreme leader; he is not the ultimate authority when it comes to the Armed Forces, foreign policy, and nuclear energy policy; the Supreme Leader is the ultimate authority on these critical issues. He is the cabinet's leader, the deputy commander-in-chief, the chairman of the National Security Council, and the chairman of the Cultural Revolution Council. He may declare war because he has the authority to suspend all laws and proclaim martial law.³⁵ According to the Iranian Constitution, the president must be of Iranian origin, an Iranian citizen, have a clear account of history, be trustworthy and pious, and believe in the basic principles of the Islamic Republic of Iran and the state's official sect, Shi'a Islam.³⁶ He is chosen for a four-year term by a single majority in general elections and may not serve more than two terms.³⁷

The sixth institution is the cabinet, which contains 22 ministries but no prime minister because it is led by the president. Ministers are thus directly responsible to the president, but they can be removed from office by a no-confidence vote in Parliament and the president's decision.³⁸

The Expediency Council is the seventh key institution, tasked with determining Iran's interests when the Parliament and the Guardian Council cannot agree. It also serves as a consultation council for the Supreme Leader on overall regime policies.³⁹

The head of the judiciary is the seventh institution. This institution differs from a ministry of justice in that the Iranian judiciary system is founded on Shi'a Islamic law, and hence the judiciary system is led by a senior cleric selected directly by the Supreme Leader for a five-year term. He appoints the president's minister of justice and the six non-clerical members of the Guardian Council to the parliament, as well as many high-level bureaucrats involved in judicial affairs.⁴⁰

The Armed Forces, which are divided into the Revolutionary Guards and the Republican Army, are Iran's final major political entity. The Revolutionary Guards work directly under the Supreme Leader to prevent any future coup attempt by the regular army and hence wield significant influence over the state's security apparatus.⁴¹

The Iranian Islamic state's constitution is also very indicative of the religious foundation on which the state is constructed, with a pompous, five-page lengthy preamble in which the regime's religious worldview is constantly emphasized. It claims that the state has an official philosophy that is truly Islamic. It describes Iranian society as a "Muslim nation" led by "*militant ulama*" and the Supreme Leader.⁴² There are also certain Qur'anic passages cited. The preamble includes a separate title for women and the ideological army, as well as a variety of ideological terms such as "Islamic justice," "extending God's sovereignty throughout the world," "ideological mission of jihad in God's way," "consumerism and exploitation of women," and "human rights and the creation of an Islamic society." According to the section titled "Mass-Communication Media," "mass

communication must serve the diffusion of Islamic culture." The preamble concludes, "this century will witness the establishment of a universal holy government and the downfall of others." In effect, this prelude provides a brief overview of the ideology of the founders of the Islamic Republic of Iran, particularly Khomeini.⁴³ which is the establishment of a government where Islam reigns supreme above all else.

Following the preamble, **Article 1** of the Iranian Constitution stipulates that the Islamic Republic is the form of governance. **Article 2** proclaims that sovereignty is solely God's and states, "*La ilaha illallah* (There is no God except Allah)." It also states that ultimate leadership and guidance are eternal. **Article 3** outlines the regime's objectives. Based on those objectives, one might conclude that the Iranian dictatorship is totalitarian, slightly socialist, certainly anti-imperialist, irredentist, *ummatist*, and collectivist. According to **Article 11**, all Muslims naturally constitute a single nation. The Shi'a sect of Islam is mentioned for the first time in **Article 12**, which states that "the official religion of Iran is Islam and the Twelver *Ja'fari* School," adding that "other schools are accorded full respect and can perform their religious rites." **Article 13** states the officially recognized minorities: Zoroastrian, Jewish, and Christian Iranians (but not the Baha'i strain of Islam, which Shi'i Muslims consider heretical) who are free to practice their religion. **Article 15** declares Farsi to be Iran's official language, however any language may be utilized in the press and mass media. Article 16 states that Arabic language education in basic and secondary schools is mandatory because Arabic is the language of the Qur'an. The *Hijri*

Calendar is the official calendar, and Friday is the weekly holiday. According to **Article 57**, the executive, legislative, and judicial departments of state power are independent of one another.⁴⁴

It is evident from the political institutions of the Iranian State, that Islam is a very recurring theme in their political institution, first in the constitution of Iran where Islam is a dominant and major theme surrounding the laws of the state, with all laws catering towards the religion and its demands as well as elevation and glorification. And being a criterion by which the supreme leader is chosen, who is also similar to the Pharaoh in Egypt, being the highest religious and political authority and possessing of great power to do and undo within state, who cannot be questioned but is allowed to question all things. The Supreme Leader is above all the institutions and responsible to no-one since he is regarded as perfect and holy. A high-level Iranian bureaucrat even argued that the Assembly of Experts does not elect the Supreme Leader, but they “discover” him. There is a blatant similarity between the evidence of religion in the Iranian political system that is uncannily familiar to that seen in the ancient Egyptian civilization, the only difference is that there is a little less archaic approach to governance, but a more modern, sophisticated, and advanced approach, with the existence of governance, this is seen in the regime’s official ideology change from universal Islamism to nationalist Islamism, to structure it as a more modern society, with more modern structures and systems, although there is a change, the gist is still the same religion is still at the heart of it.

It is evident from the two case studies which have been discussed extensively in this chapter, that religion has been the foundation of political system and governance in the past as seen in Ancient Egypt and still is today a foundation for the political system and governing structures of today as seen in the Iranian Islamic state. Religion whether past or present still has the same effect it has on the ideology and by extension actions and decisions of man, because it becomes an ideology that influences the mind of man, and visible are the stains of its influence on the canvas that is the actions and decisions of man.

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CHAPTER THREE

RELIGION AS A DRIVING FORCE FOR WAR

Introduction

In the grand tapestry of human history, few forces have proven as potent and divisive as religion. While it has been a wellspring of hope, providing solace and guidance to countless individuals, religion has also been an unwitting catalyst for some of the bloodiest and most protracted conflicts ever witnessed. This duality of religion as both a source of profound spirituality and a cause for war is a complex phenomenon that has left an indelible mark on the course of civilizations.

The association between religion and warfare is not a recent development; it stretches back to the dawn of organized faith systems. Ancient texts and oral traditions recount battles fought in the name of gods and the struggle for religious supremacy. From the Crusades in medieval Europe to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the modern era, the annals of history are replete with instances where religion served as a cause, motive, or justification for warfare.

In the course of this chapter there is going to be going an in depth examination of the Arab-Israeli conflict, first understanding it's history, to understanding the many ways in which the conflict has been manifested; this is the events which make up the conflict

from past to present, to understanding the nature of the conflict, and finally reviewing the many factors which have banded against and prevented the resolution of the conflict. Every one of these areas will be discussed almost exhaustively, to arrive at our final destination, which is understanding, truly understanding in depth what the matter is about the Arab-Israeli conflict and the many factors that surround and constitute. And in understanding the Arab Israeli conflict, I will be able to bring to light how religion has been a motive of war in the past and today; in the present.

The Origin of the Conflict

The Arab-Israeli conflict is a case of territorial dispute; simply put, it is a territorial dispute between these two groups of people (Palestinians and Israelis) over the area known as the "Holy city," but more of the nature of the conflict will be discussed under the nature subheading, but for now the focus is on the origin and history of the conflict. Many will agree that discussing the Arab-Israeli conflict, or rather its history, origins, and roots, requires going back a few thousand years, specifically before Christ.

In 1700 BC, three Israeli Patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, settled in a land known as Canaan, which now comprises the Land of Israel, Gaza and the West Bank, parts of Lebanon, Jordan, and Israel. It was known as the Land of Israel, a promise land given to the Children of Israel by GOD. As time goes forward, the three major rulers of Israel enter the picture: King Saul, who founded a monarchy in the country of Israel,

King David, who made Jerusalem the capital of the kingdom of Israel, and King Solomon, David's son, who constructed the first temple in Jerusalem. After King Solomon's death, the Land of Israel was divided into two kingdoms: the Kingdom of Israel in the north, with Samaria as its capital, and the Kingdom of Judah in the south, with Jerusalem as its capital. The land became home to many Jews and was later subject to many conquests, many of which resulted in a decrease in the number of Jews who called this land their home. The Roman Empire was a major leader of conquests in the land of Israel, changing the name of the Kingdom of Judah to Palestine to differentiate it from the kingdom of Israel. Christianity: A Jewish sect began to develop and spread as a major religion as the Roman Empire declined. With the spread of Christianity came an era of conquests, which also featured the spread of another religion known as Islam in the 7th century. The Dome of Iraq was erected over the ruins of Jerusalem's second temple, making Jerusalem a holy city for three separate religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Many Christians in Europe embarked on a series of crusades in the 11th century, coming to Jerusalem to reclaim the land from the Seljuk Turks, an Asian empire seeking to expand its territory. During this time, many Jews were killed, and others embarked on pilgrimages, particularly in West Europe. Between the 16th century and World War I, the Holy country was administered by the Ottoman Empire, an Islamic powerhouse that gave the country the unofficial name Palestine. During this period, many Jews in Europe began and joined a movement known as Zionism, which intended to establish a Jewish state and

nationality in the Holy Land, which was now known as Palestine under the Ottoman Empire. Following the tremendous explosion known as World War I, which rocked the entire world to its core, came the British defeat of the Ottoman Empire. The British took over and gave Iraq and Jordan more independence; the territory that remained under British authority was known as the British mandate for Palestine, where the British committed to establish a Jewish state in the Balfour Declaration, which went into force in 1923. Following this, tensions between Jews, who believed the land was their birthright and belonged to them, and Arabs, who claimed rightful possession of the area, erupted, resulting in major acts of violence. Around the 1930s, due to the Nazi regime in Germany and fear of persecution and death, many Jews in Europe began to flee, increasing the population of Jews in Palestine. As a result of this increase in population, the British began to restrict Jewish immigration into Palestine, forcing the Jews to fight off the Arabs and resist the British. Then came the Holocaust in Nazi Germany, a bloody and gruesome event in Jewish history that resulted in the death of nearly 6 million Jews. As a result, many Jews began to flee from Europe in search of a homeland, leading to an even larger Jewish population in Palestine, which exacerbated tensions between Israelis and Arabs. The British, overwhelmed by the surge in Jewish population, departed from the region. Following WWII, the United Nations suggested dividing Palestine into two independent states: an Arab state and a Jewish state, with Jerusalem becoming an international zone with special status. Because the Jewish population was smaller than

the Arab population, they were allocated greater territory; this was rejected by the Arabs, who began to form small rebellious factions across Palestine. Less than a year after the UN's intervention, the British began to leave from the region, and in 1948, Israel declared itself an independent state, which infuriated the Arabs, ushering in a new age of conflict, death, and war. And this is where the Arab-Israeli conflict began to manifest, although it was conflict whose seeds had been sown years before.

Manifestations of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Arab Israeli conflict throughout history has been one plagued by numerous wars and displays of violence between the two parties, with each retaliating the other's attack. These many wars which make up the Arab-Israeli conflict are known as the manifestations of the conflict and they will be discussed extensively under this sub-heading. The many violent events which made up the Arab-Israeli conflict, include.

The 1948 Arab Israeli War

The 1948 Arab Israeli war was one of the earliest conflicts between the Arabs and the Jews and one of the first manifestations of the conflict between the two groups. It was also one of the bloodiest and most gruesome events in Arab and Jewish history with many of the casualties and collateral damage of the war still evident today. The causes of the war are going to be examined as well as the consequences on the holy land, on the Arabs and the Jews and the world at large.

There are many things that can be said gave rise to the war, but one of the most notable and immediate cause of the war, would be the desire of the Jews to establish themselves as an independent state and in a way claim ownership of the holy land, now the Jews after the holocaust in Nazi Germany and the rise of the Zionism movement, which was the desire of the Jews to have a nationality, to be recognized as a people, they needed a territory, a place they could call their own, a place where they could establish themselves as a people and as a nation. Due to their historical ties to the Holy land, they decided to settle there and thus establish their independent state there, this did not sit right with the Arabs, who also had a movement of their own known as the Arab nationalism movement, which believed that the holy land Palestine, was theirs, it is theirs now and will always be theirs, the Arabs also felt cheated under the Balfour accords by the British, which had the Jews owning more territories than the Arabs and now with the declaration of independence by the Jews, the Arabs saw this as a threat to their movement and their claim of rightful ownership to the land and thus war broke out, with other Arab forces joining the Palestinian Arabs in attacking the territory. On the eve of May 14, the Arabs launched an air attack on Tel Aviv, which the Israelis resisted. This was followed by the invasion of the former Palestinian, adnate by Arab armies from Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. Saudi Arabia sent a formation that fought under Egyptian command. British trained forces from Transjordan intervened in the conflict, but only in areas that had been designated by the UN as a part of the Arab state partition plan and the corpus separatum

of Jerusalem. After tense fighting, the Israeli forces were able to gain the offensive. Though the United Nations brokered two ceasefires during the conflict, fighting between the two groups continued into 1949. An armistice agreement was not reached between the two until February of the same year. Under separate agreements between Israel and the neighboring states of Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Syria, these bordering nations agreed to formal armistice lines. Israel gained some territory formerly granted to the Palestinian Arabs under the UN resolution in 1947. Control was retained by Egypt and Jordan over the Gaza strip and the west bank respectively. These armistice lines held until 1967 and that is what is known today as the Arab-Israeli war. It was a fierce and gruesome battle between the two, which resulted in the Jews victory and the Arabs defeat.

The Suez Crisis of 1956

The ascent to power of Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasse, an ardent pan-Arab nationalist, heightened tensions around the Arab-Israeli conflict. Nasser adopted an anti-Israel stance. Nasser seized the Suez Canal in 1956, a vital waterway connecting Europe and Asia that was mostly owned by French and British companies. France and Britain replied by reaching an agreement with Israel, whose ships were prevented from using the canal and whose southern port of Elat had been sealed by Egypt, in which Israel would invade Egypt; France and Britain would then intervene, apparently as peacemakers, and seize possession of the canal. Israel invaded Egypt's Sinai Peninsula in October 1956.

The Israeli army seized Gaza, Rafah, and Al-Arish in five days, seizing thousands of captives and occupying most of the Peninsula east of the Suez Canal. The Israelis were then able to establish naval communication via the Gulf of Aqaba. Following the joint Anglo-French intervention in December, a UN Emergency force was stationed in the area, and Israeli troops departed in March 1957. Even though Egyptian forces had been beaten on all fronts, Arabs saw the Suez crisis as an Egyptian win. Egypt lifted its blockade of Elat. A UN buffer force has been deployed to the Sinai Peninsula.¹

The Six-Day War

One of the wars that comprised the Arab-Israeli conflict was the six-day war, commonly known as the June war. Six eventful days, known to Israelis as the Six-Day War and to Arabs and others as the 1967 War, fundamentally altered the face of the region. It is also referred to as the third Arab-Israeli conflict, or Naksh. It was a brief conflict that lasted six days, from June 5th to June 10th, 1967, as the name suggests. The war ended with Israel's victorious victory and the seizure of the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, West Bank, Jerusalem Old City, and Golan Heights; ownership and claim to these lands became a key subject of contention in following Arab-Israeli wars.

Prior to the start of the war, attacks on Israel by young Palestinian guerrilla groups based in Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan had risen, resulting in expensive Israeli retaliation. An Israeli raid on the Jordanian west bank village of Al-Samu in November 1966 killed 18

people and injured 54 others, and the Israeli Air Force shot down six Syrian MiG fighter jets during an air battle in April 1967. Furthermore, in May, Soviet intelligence reported that Israel was planning a campaign against Syria, and while the information was found erroneous, it was still enough to increase tensions between Israel and its Arab neighbors. Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser was previously chastised for failing to assist Syria and Jordan in their fight against Israel; he was also accused of hiding behind the (UNEF) United Nations Emergency Force stationed at Egypt's borders with Israel in Sinai. Now, however, he moved to declare and demonstrate support for Syria: on May 14, 1967, Nasser mobilized Egyptian forces in Sinai; on May 18, he previously requested the removal of the UNEF stationed there; and on May 22, he closed the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli shipping, effectively blocking the port city of Elat in southern Israel. On May 30, Jordan's King Hussein visited Cairo and signed a mutual defensive pact with Egypt, placing Jordanian forces under Egyptian command; shortly thereafter, Iraq joined the alliance.

When Israel saw her Arab neighbors banding together and creating an alliance against her, she knew she needed to move swiftly, so on June 5, Israel launched a pre-emptive air assault that destroyed more than 90 percent of Egypt's air force on the tarmac. A similar air offensive was conducted against Syrian soldiers. The Egyptian army was vulnerable to attack because it lacked an air force. Within three days, the Israelis had won a major ground success, seizing the Gaza Strip as well as the Sinai Peninsula up to the east bank

of the Suez Canal. Jordanian forces began firing west Jerusalem on June 5, despite Israel's requests to King Hussein to keep Jordan out of the fighting. Israel responded with a devastating counterattack. By June 7, Israeli forces had successfully forced Jordanian soldiers out of east Jerusalem and the majority of the West Bank, securing another victory over the Arab alliance. The UN Security Council called for a cease-fire on June 7, which Israel and Jordan quickly accepted. The next day, Egypt accepted it, but Syria, still determined to break Israel's victory streak, resisted and continued her attacks on communities in northern Israel. Syria's attacks were responded on June 9th with an Israeli attack on the fortified Golan heights, which Israel captured after a day of severe warfare. Syria finally conceded defeat and the ceasefire on June 10th. The Arab countries' deaths were in the thousands, as opposed to Israel's losses in the hundreds, while the Arab armies sustained severe losses in armament and equipment. Nasser announced his resignation on June 9, but was swiftly overruled by a mass crowd calling for him to remain in office. Israel, having demonstrated that it was the region's premier military power, was ecstatic. The completion of the six-day battle not only demonstrated to the world Israel's military wit, astute tactics, and power, but it also signaled the beginning of a new era in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Because of the occupied regions, the conflict drove many Palestinians from their homes, resulting in hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees and bringing millions of Palestinians under Israeli control. The United Nations enacted UN Resolution 242 in November, months after the conflict, calling for Israel's

withdrawal from the regions it had captured in the war in exchange for enduring peace. That resolution served as the foundation for Israel's diplomatic endeavors with its neighbors, notably the Camp David accords with Egypt and the push for a two-state solution with the Palestinians.²

1973 Yom Kippur War

The occasional combat that followed the 1973 Six-Day War. On October 6, the Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur (thus, the "Yom Kippur War"), Israeli forces were caught off guard by Egyptian forces crossing the Suez Canal and Syrian forces crossing into the Golan Heights. The Arab armies were more aggressive and combative than in prior wars, and Israeli forces suffered considerable fatalities. The Israeli army, on the other hand, reversed many of its early losses and advanced into Syrian territory, encircling Egypt's third army by crossing the Suez Canal and deploying soldiers on its western bank. Nonetheless, it never reclaimed the seemingly impenetrable defences along the Suez Canal that Egypt had destroyed in its early victories. The conflict, which lasted throughout the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, ended on October 26. On November 11, 1974, Israel signed a formal cease-fire deal with Egypt, and on May 31, 1974, with Syria. On January 18, 1974, Israel and Egypt signed a disengagement deal in which Israel agreed to withdraw into Sinai west of the Mitla and Gidi crossings, while Egypt agreed to reduce the bulk of its forces on the canal's east bank. Between the two armies, a UN peacekeeping force was formed. Another agreement, signed on September 4, 1975,

reinforced this one. On March 26, 1979, Israel and Egypt signed a peace treaty, thus ending a 30-year state of war between the two countries. Under the provisions of the treaty, which resulted from the signing of the Camp David Accords in 1978, Israel handed the whole Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in exchange for Egypt recognizing Israel's right to exist. Following that, the two countries established normal diplomatic relations.³

1982 Lebanon War

Increased tensions between Israelis and Palestinians resulted in the Israeli bombardment of Beirut and southern Lebanon, where the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) maintained a few strongholds, on June 5, 1982, less than six weeks after Israel's total withdrawal from Sinai. The next day, Israel invaded Lebanon, and by June 14, its land troops had reached the outskirts of Beirut, which had been encircled, but the Israeli leadership agreed to halt its advance and initiate talks with the PLO. The PLO fled the city under the command of a multinational force after much delay and intense Israeli pounding of west Beirut. Israeli troops eventually withdrew from west Beirut, and the Israeli army had left Lebanon fully by June 1985.⁴

The First and Second Intifada

The intifadas, also known as "Shaking off," were two Palestinian uprisings against Israel, one in the late 1980s and one in the early 2000s. The intifadas had a major impact on Israeli-Palestinian relations; the second is usually regarded as the end of the 1990s-

period diplomatic process and the beginning of a new, darker era in Israeli-Palestinian relations.

The first intifada was a mostly spontaneous series of Palestinian demonstrations, nonviolent acts such as mass boycotts and Palestinians refusing to work in Israel, and attacks on Israelis (with rocks, Molotov Cocktails, and occasionally firearms). As a result of the Israeli military's robust response to the protests and attacks, Palestinian fatalities far outnumbered Israeli fatalities.⁵ Just as the PLO shifted to pragmatism, a new movement, Hamas, took the opposite path, articulating a vision of an Islamic state throughout historical Palestine. In order to derail peace talks, Hamas rejected the Oslo Accords and launched a series of suicide strikes against Israeli targets⁶

The second, and far bloodier, intifada erupted in response to the failure of the peace talks in 2000. Negotiations between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat failed, and the intifada began soon after. Typically, Israelis attribute the outbreak of the intifada to Arafat's deliberate choice to resort to violence, while Palestinians refer to a purposely provocative visit to the contested Temple Mount by Israeli politician (and soon-to-be Prime Minister) Ariel Sharon. While both Arafat and Sharon played a role, the major cause was most likely a fundamental mistrust between the two sides, which made war unavoidable after peace efforts failed. A series of Palestinian protests that Israeli forces shot on ignited this explosive keg. Palestinian militants then escalated into larger-scale violence, and the PA refused to rein them in.

Unlike the first intifada, Palestinian tactics relied on suicide bombers, rocket strikes, and sniper fire, which Israel responded to with even more lethality. Although the battle ended in 2005, 1000 Israelis and 3200 Palestinians were slain. The second intifada, as well as the flood of rocket fire from Gaza following Hamas's takeover, had a profound impact on Israeli attitudes regarding the conflict. The classic Israeli peace camp notion that Israel will someday be repaid for giving land for peace became much less popular. Skepticism about the peace process grew, hindering future efforts to reach a two-state solution.⁷

The Second Lebanon War 2006

The 2006 Lebanon War was a conflict between Israel and Hezbollah (a political party and militant group that first emerged as a militia during Lebanon's civil war after the Israeli invasion of that country in 1982) that occurred after Israeli forces invaded Lebanon to suppress Hezbollah attacks on Israeli settlements.

Following Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982, during Lebanon's civil war, Lebanese Shia clergy formed the Hizb Allah ("Party of God") militia, which later became known as Hezbollah. Its suicide bombers effectively forced Israel out of its buffer zone in southern Lebanon. Rocket assaults on Israeli settlements, albeit often incorrect, have sparked calls for retaliation from residents. But the final straw came on July 12, 2006, when Hezbollah ambushed an Israeli patrol, killing three soldiers and apparently capturing two (who most

likely died in the ambush). A bungled rescue attempt claimed the lives of five additional soldiers.

Israel imposed a severe naval blockade on Lebanon, launched targeted air strikes against Hezbollah institutions and residential homes, and advanced ground troops to demolish their bases in southern Lebanon. Despite the destruction of many missile launchers, Hezbollah's rocket attacks grew in scale. Hezbollah warriors were keen to demonstrate that Israeli technology could not compete with them.

The fighting surrounding Bint Jubayl was exceptionally severe, often hand-to-hand, and Israeli forces were never able to completely drive Hezbollah out of the town. The Israeli Air Force destroyed most of Lebanon's infrastructure, with cluster munitions rendering portions of southern Lebanon unusable. An Israeli retreat was eventually agreed, with UN peacekeepers stationed to prevent more missile strikes, but they failed to smash Hezbollah. The 2006 Lebanon War claimed the lives of an estimated 120 Israeli soldiers and over 1,000 Hezbollah fighters.⁸

The 2021 Crisis

In the month of May 2021, the most recent in the Arab-Israel war, tensions between Israel and Palestine flared into bloodshed, while the former was strengthening connections with her Arab allies. The right lost control of the government in Washington and Jerusalem, but this momentous upheaval did not necessarily empower the left to

make significant changes in the conflict. Instead, Israeli and US leaders intended to put the Palestinian problem on hold and retain the "status quo," despite the COVID-19 crisis and other crises that were growing at the time.

A brief Gaza war and escalating West Bank and Jerusalem unrest began in Jerusalem, where Palestinian residents were protesting the scheduled deportation of Palestinian families from the Shimon Hatzadik area. Israeli police stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque, one of Islam's holiest sites, and shot tear gas and rubber bullets at Palestinian worshippers. Clashes erupted between Palestinians and Israeli police, spreading to other districts of Jerusalem and other Palestinian territories, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In response to the fighting, Palestinian militant groups in Gaza, including Hamas, launched rockets at Israel, prompting Israeli airstrikes. The violence raged on for several days, killing roughly 250 Palestinians and 12 Israelis. The crisis prompted international censure and requests for a cease-fire, which Egypt eventually mediated on May 20, 2021. All of this served as a stark reminder that the war is never static and is always on the verge of exploding at any moment. Although there were small oases of hope in the desert that was the heat of the crisis, there seemed to be a lack of progress in the grand scheme of things, including an apartheid campaign, a war crimes probe, and an ice cream boycott; a Vermont-based global ice cream chain; Ben and Jerry's set a precedent when it came to settlement boycotts by targeting a franchise located in southern Israel within the pre-1967 lines. Its independent board of directors notified the contract termination in July, thereby

ending the 35-year franchise at the end of 2022 because it sold ice cream over the pre-1967 limits. The board issued a statement saying, "We believe it is inconsistent with our values for Ben & Jerry's ice cream to be sold in the occupied Palestinian Territory."

It was a move that effectively turned the decision into a boycott in Israel. This is intriguing to me because it demonstrates the strength and ability of non-state players to affect global politics.

However, tensions between Israel and Palestine remain high, and the conflict's underlying concerns, such as the status of Jerusalem and Palestinian refugees' rights, remain unsolved.⁹

The Nature of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

The Arab-Israeli conflict is a complex and long-running conflict with profound historical, political, cultural, and religious origins. As previously said, this is a protracted war that has proven intractable due to a lack of a longstanding solution that can resolve the issue once and for all. While it is true that this conflict is based on territorial disputes and the struggle for the holy land, it also has religious undertones in its plot, with each of the parties involved in the conflict having some significant religious tie to the Land, with the Israelis claiming it is the land which GOD promised to their ancestors and also due to the significant religious history as well; which is Islam's third holiest location, belongs to them and should be theirs and theirs alone because it was inhabited by their forefathers

and hence is also their birthright. These religious and ancestral claims served as the cornerstone of the battle, as a driving force and motive to continue fighting until one individual decided to submit and give up. The conflict is also not just between Israelis and Palestinians; yes, it is a conflict between Israelis and Palestinians, but it is also a fight between Israelis and her Arab neighbors, the Arab states that surround the land, who also believe that the land belongs to the Palestinians due to their religious and cultural ties to the land and in alignment with their sibling Arab state, this is another way in which the conflict has religious undertones, because other Arab states, because they share similar religious and cultural beliefs with the Palestinians, come to Palestine's aid and engage in conflict with the Israelis, forming the Arab-Israeli conflict. The conflict is known to have manifested with the 1948 war, after the Israelis declared their independence in 1947, leading to an outbreak of war in 1948 and has further spilled into other skirmishes that have framed the Arab Israeli conflict, despite many interventions by foreign bodies and states, such as the United Nations, the United States of America, and Britain in a bid to end the war, but as previously stated, there has not been a lasting solution, as it is still happening now, with minor eruptions here and there. At its core, this is a dispute between two distinct groups of people, each with their own set of views, philosophies, religions, and claims to a piece of land that they each believe is their holy birthright.

Militants against the resolving of the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Throughout our review of the Arab-Israeli conflict and its many manifestations we have been able to see although in snippets the many ways and measures that have been put in place by the parties involved in the conflict; the Arabs and the Israelis, International organizations, such as; The UN, Independent States such as; the United States of America, Britain, France etc. in order to resolve this conflict, in detail will be reviewed, the militants against the resolving of the conflicts, those measures which were and have been put in place, that pose as threats to the resolving of the conflict and have created scenarios which have prevented the resolving of the conflicts and they include;

1. Historical Grievances: Both Israelis and Palestinians have long stood historical grievances against each other that have fuelled the conflict. Israelis see themselves as having returned to their ancestral homeland, which they believe is their birth right promised to their ancestors by GOD and feel that their existence is constantly being threatened by Arab hostility. Palestinians on the other hand, also see the land as their birth right, one belonging to their ancestors passed down to them and thus they see themselves as having been displaced from their land by Jewish immigration and feel that they have been denied their rights to self-determination and statehood.

2. Territorial Disputes: the conflict is fundamentally a territorial dispute over who has the right to claim the land of Israel/Palestine as theirs and thus gets to control it. Both sides have claimed the same land as their own, and negotiations over borders and settlements have been difficult and contentious and have often escalated into great displays of violence cascading into full blown wars.
3. Political divisions: there are deep political divisions within both Israeli and Palestinian societies that have made it difficult to reach a resolution to the conflict. Israeli politics are deeply divided between left wing and right-wing factions, with each side having very different visions for the future of the country. Palestinian politics are similarly divided between Fatah and Hamas, with each faction having its own agenda and interests.
4. Regional Dynamics: The Arab Israeli conflict is also influenced by broader regional dynamics, including the relationships between Israel and its Arab neighbors, the role of the United States and other international powers, and the influence of Islamic extremist groups like Hamas.
5. Violence, terrorism, and extremist groups: Over the years both Israelis and Palestinians have resorted to violence and terrorism as a means of advancing their political goals. This has further entrenched mistrust and suspicion between the

two sides and made it difficult to reach a lasting peace agreement. Some of which include.

- a. Hamas.
- b. The PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization).

Hamas

Hamas is an Islamic Resistance Movement, a militant Palestinian nationalist organization in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with a single goal in mind: the establishment of an independent Islamic state in ancient Palestine. Founded in 1987, Hamas opposed the (PLO) Palestinian Liberation Organization's non-religious approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and denounced any attempt to cede any part of Palestine.

Beginning in the late 1970s, activists affiliated with the Islamist Muslim Brotherhood developed a network of charities, clinics, and schools and began active in the regions captured by Israel following the 1967 Six Day War (the Gaza Strip and West Bank). They were active in several mosques in Gaza, but their efforts in the West Bank were mostly limited to universities. The Muslim Brotherhood's operations in these areas were mostly nonviolent, but numerous tiny groups in the occupied territories began to call for jihad, or holy war, against Israel. Hamas (which means "zeal" in Arabic) was founded in December 1987, at the start of the Palestinian Intifada revolt against Israeli occupation, by members of the Muslim Brotherhood and religious sections of the PLO, and the new

group immediately gained a broad following. In its 1988 charter, Hamas stated that Palestine is an Islamic homeland that can never be given to non-Muslims and that fighting a holy war to wrest control of Palestine from Israel is a religious obligation for Palestinian Muslims. This put it at odds with the PLO, which accepted Israel's right to exist in 1988.

Hamas quickly began to operate independently of other Palestinian organizations, causing friction between the group and its secular nationalist opponents. In 1989, Israel arrested several Hamas officials, including the movement's founder, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, in response to increasingly aggressive Hamas attacks on civilian and military targets. In the years afterwards, Hamas has reorganized to strengthen its command structure and keep key commanders out of Israel's grasp. In 1996, a political bureau in Amman, Jordan, was founded to handle the organization's foreign contacts and fundraising, with Khaled Meeshal as its leader, and the group's military wing was renamed the Izz al-Dn al-Qassm Forces.

In 1999, Jordan removed Hamas leaders from Amman, accusing them of using Jordanian offices as a command center for armed operations in the West Bank and Gaza. The political bureau built a new headquarters in Damascus, Syria, in 2001. It relocated to Doha, Qatar, in 2012, when the leadership refused to back the Assad government's crackdown on the Syrian uprising.¹⁰ Amongst many of the Hamas' extremist activities which have significantly militated against the resolution of the conflict, some that are

quite notable would be its opposition to negotiations that would cede any land and its denouncement of the 1993 peace agreement between Israel, the PLO and, the Islamic Jihad group, which subsequently intensified its terror campaign using suicide bombers and also its many skirmishes with the Israelis across the years, which include the 2007 crisis, which featured the head to head collision at the Jabalia camp between Israeli trucks and Palestinian vehicles, as well as the 2014, tensions following the disappearance of three Israeli teenagers.

The PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization)

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) is a political umbrella organization that claims to represent the world's Palestinians, Arabs and their descendants who lived in mandated Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. It was established in 1964 to consolidate the leadership of different Palestinian organisations that had previously operated as covert resistance movements. It rose to prominence only after the Six-Day War in June 1967, and it fought a protracted guerrilla war against Israel in the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s before beginning peace talks with Israel in the 1990s.

Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict, Arab states, particularly Egypt, took the lead in the political and military campaign against Israel. The Palestinians having been divided throughout a number of nations, and in the absence of an organized central leadership,

many Palestinians created tiny, diffuse resistance organizations, frequently with the support of other Arab states; as a result, Palestinian political activity was restricted.

The PLO was established in 1964 at an Arab summit meeting to bring together disparate Palestinian parties under one organization, but it initially did little to advance Palestinian self-determination. The Palestine National Council (PNC) of the PLO was composed of civilians from various Palestinian communities, and its charter (the Palestine National Charter, or Covenant) set out the organization's goals, which included the complete elimination of Israeli sovereignty in Palestine and the destruction of the State of Israel. Nonetheless, the PLO's first chairman, a former diplomat named Ahmad Shuqayri, was closely associated with Egypt, its military force (the Palestine Liberation Army, formed in 1968) was integrated into the armies of neighboring Arab states, and the militant guerrilla organizations operating under its auspices had only limited influence on PLO policy. Similarly, while the PLO was funded by taxes collected on Palestinian workers' salaries, the organization relied significantly on contributions from favorable countries for decades.¹¹ The PLO played a significant role in the First and Second Intifadas in 1987-1993 and 2000, respectively. They were also involved in the signing of the first peace treaty between Israel and the PLO, known as the Oslo Accords, on September 13, 1993, between Arafat and Israeli government authorities.

It has been established throughout this chapter and the review of the central theme; the Arab Israeli conflict, what exactly and truly is the Israeli conflict, its origin,

manifestations, the nature of the conflict, and the many militants who have posed and continue to pose significant threats to the resolution of the conflict between these two groups of people. The reasons for this dispute have been defined in the review of this conflict. It has been established that beyond the wars, uprisings and many crisis' that surround the years long conflicts, are two groups of people; one who believe that the land is their birth right and has always been right from the time of their religious ancestors, with nowhere to go and no region to call their home but here and another group of people who believe strongly and lay claim to a land, that they believe their ancestors earned after years of being under the Roman rule, a place that their people already call home. And at the root of each of these convictions is their religion, the fact that they both have some religious tie to this land which has inspired the war, which has encouraged the parties involved to continue fighting and not relenting until their goal is achieved which is the rightful occupation and ownership of that land.

It is also important to note that, the Arab Israeli conflict is not just a dispute between two groups of people; the Israeli and the Palestinians over a land, but also between the Israelis and the Arab nations surrounding it at large, as is seen in the Suez Crisis, First Lebanon war of 1982 and the second Lebanon crisis of 2006. The interventions by international organizations such as the UN and independent sovereign states, such as the US, Britain and many others in the attempt to resolve the crisis is also seen in the course of this war, as well as the roles of the latter in the creation of this crisis; the Nazi Germany and the

Holocaust which influenced the Zionist movement and the migrating of many Jews to the land of Palestine. The roles of insurgency as a concept in the crisis, with the rise of Extremist religious groups such as the Hamas Islamic movement and independent not quite extremist (PLO) Palestinian Liberation Organization has been explored. The role of non-state actors is also visible, as well as their ability to influence world politics, in the case of the Ben & Jerry's ice cream Boycott. The struggles of both people to keep this land, has been identified, as well as their determination to remain in a land they both believe to be their heritage.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is not just a conflict over land, but at the heart of this conflict is religion, it is evident how religion has been a recurring theme throughout the conflict right from its inception till date, how religion constantly finds itself as a driving force contributing to the intractability of the war, serving first as a reason to lay claim of the land which has contributed greatly to the cascading of this desire into full blown war and violence, coupled with the activities of religious extremist groups such as the Hamas, who have contributed greatly to the extended period of the war, due to their deep religious beliefs, which has been contorted into violence and has formed significant aspects of the ongoing war. From the first Chapter, it has been established that religion deals with ideologies and beliefs and it is also understood in the study of conflicts and intractable conflict that one feature of an intractable conflict is ideology which in the case of the Arab Israeli conflict involves an ideology that is framed by religion which has

served as a driving force for the conflict and has enabled it last so long. Hence, the Arab-Israeli conflict is a very accurate example of a conflict with religion as it's driving force.

Overall, it is also understood that the Arab-Israeli conflict is one that is not static but rather a ticking time bomb that is just biding its time and could explode at any moment if not detonated in time.

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CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION

In the course of this Project, a profound exploration of the intricate relationship between religion and world politics has been carried out. It is evident that religion remains a potent force in shaping the global landscape, influencing the behavior of nations, and sometimes even serving as a catalyst for both cooperation and conflict.

In the first Chapter, which served as an introductory chapter to this project , the topic was introduced giving a concise, brief and comprehensive, yet detailed and expound overview of the topic religion, where it was established that religion was an ideological construct which is as old as man himself, because religion was an ideological construct that deals with and is centered in the mind of people it has a way of finding itself as an underling, a subplot in the story that is man's life and his decision making and it was set in stone that if religion dealt with the mind and had its influence on decision making of man and the state is made up of men and international relations which makes up the international system is made up of the decisions of state, so by virtue of the state being made up of men, the decision making of man which can be influenced by religion is reflected upon the state, therefore the decision making of the state can be influenced by religion and thus religion serves as a factor which can influence and alter world politics and happenings in the international system. Examples of areas in world politics

throughout history, where the footprints of religion can be found were explored and this served as our historical background of study. But due to how vast the topic is, three key areas were chosen which made up our focus and the very core of this project and they included.

Religion: a foundation for Political systems and Governing structures, this made up the second Chapter of this study, where key points illustrating the importance of religion in shaping the political systems of states before moving on to exploring the Ancient Egyptian civilization and Iran which were used as case studies to further buttress the influence which religion has on the formation of Political systems and Governing Structures. In this chapter, a journey through time and geography was embarked on, exploring the profound influence of religion as a foundation for political systems and governing structures, as exemplified by the Ancient Egyptian Civilization and modern-day Iran. The chapter revealed the enduring impact of religious beliefs on the architecture of governance and the societal norms that shape nations.

Ancient Egypt, with its rich tapestry of gods and pharaohs, provides an illuminating historical lens through which to examine the integration of religion and political authority. The concept of the divine kingship, where the pharaoh was both a political leader and a divine figure, highlights the ancient Egyptians' deeply ingrained belief in the divine order as the basis for their governance. This fusion of religious and political authority manifested in the construction of monumental temples, the institution of religious rituals,

and the development of a complex bureaucracy to manage both religious and secular affairs.

Turning to present-day Iran, it is observed that religion continues to be a central pillar of governance. The Islamic Republic of Iran, established in 1979, enshrined Shia Islam as its official state religion, giving religious clerics significant influence in the political sphere. This case study exemplifies the intricate interplay between religion and politics in contemporary times, where religious authorities shape legal systems, cultural norms, and foreign policy decisions.

In both historical and contemporary contexts, the study has highlighted that religion serves as more than just a moral compass; it can also be a tool of legitimation, social cohesion, and control. The intertwining of religious beliefs and political power can be both a source of stability and a potential source of tension, as it poses challenges in balancing religious freedom with the diverse beliefs of a nation's citizens.

As this chapter was concluded, it became evident that the relationship between religion and political systems is far from static. It evolves with time, context, and the prevailing sociopolitical dynamics. Understanding the nuances of this relationship is crucial for policymakers, scholars, and global citizens alike. In an era marked by increasing religious pluralism and globalization, acknowledging the role of religion in political structures is not only an academic exercise but also a pragmatic necessity. It

calls for a delicate balance between respecting religious diversity and upholding democratic principles, human rights, and the rule of law. In summary, our exploration of religion as a foundation for political systems and governing structures in the context of Ancient Egypt and contemporary Iran has shed light on the enduring and dynamic nature of this relationship. It invites us to engage in nuanced discussions and decision-making processes that can shape the future of governance in an increasingly interconnected and diverse world.

Religion as a driving force for war, the third chapter. Religion and how it has served as a driving force, a motivation, a key factor in the inception and start of wars, which have greatly defined and affected world politics was examined. In this chapter the Arab- Israeli conflict was used as a case study. During this chapter, the nature and manifestations of the Arab-Israeli conflict as well as the militants which have contributed to make this conflict an intractable and unsolvable one was reviewed.

The Arab-Israeli conflict stands as a poignant testament to the intricate interplay between religion and geopolitical strife. This chapter has offered an in-depth exploration of how religious narratives and identities have been woven into the fabric of this protracted conflict, providing both motivations for peace and catalysts for war. At its heart, the Arab-Israeli conflict is a complex tangle of historical grievances, territorial disputes, and competing national identities. However, religion, with its deep roots in the region, has played a pivotal role in shaping the conflict's dynamics. The shared religious ties to the

land of Israel/Palestine by Jews, Christians, and Muslims have not only fuelled the aspirations of respective communities but have also been leveraged as tools for mobilization, resistance, and, at times, justification for violence. The contestation over religious sites in Jerusalem, such as the Western Wall, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, has frequently ignited tensions and contributed to outbreaks of violence. Religious leaders and institutions on all sides have often found themselves entangled in the political disputes, further complicating prospects for reconciliation. However, it is important to note that religion has not solely been a source of division. Throughout the history of the conflict, religious leaders, theologians, and interfaith groups and religio-political groups such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization (The PLO) have also played roles in promoting dialogue, peace initiatives, and coexistence efforts. These efforts highlight the potential for religion to serve as a bridge between conflicting parties, rather than a barrier. The Arab-Israeli conflict serves as a stark reminder of the complexities and nuances inherent in the relationship between religion and conflict. While religious narratives can be used to justify violence, they can also be harnessed for peacemaking and reconciliation. The key lies in the interpretation and application of religious teachings and the recognition of the diverse perspectives within religious communities.

In conclusion, the Arab-Israeli conflict represents a compelling case study of how religion can be a driving force for war, but it also underscores the essential role of

diplomacy, dialogue, and conflict resolution in mitigating the impact of religious tensions. The path to a peaceful resolution in the region requires an acknowledgment of the religious dimensions of the conflict while fostering a deeper understanding of the shared values and aspirations that transcend religious boundaries. This case study serves as a vital reminder that religion, like any potent force, can be harnessed for both destructive and constructive purposes. The challenge before us is to work toward a world where religious beliefs become a source of unity and compassion rather than a rationale for conflict and division.

Throughout this project religion has been examined. An understanding of the concept religion has also been established and there has been an in-depth exploration of religion and its profound, undeniable effects on various aspects of world politics. Religion is a concept as old as man himself and so is society, throughout history because of the ideological nature of religion and the fact that religion has been able to influence the actions of man, the state being made of men has given religion the ability to extend its influence from simply over man to the state and has found expression in the policy formation of states, the political system adopted by states, the governing structures, ruling mechanisms of states, political and governing decisions of states as well as has served as a reason why states go to war, this is what has been the focal point and the center piece of this project. In the examination, exploration and understanding of this intricate parts and

details of world politics, it has been proven without a shred of doubt that religion has and continues to be a great influencer of world politics.

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