

**LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS AND
POLITICAL SCIENCE**

*American Civil Religion and the Puritan Antecedents of
American Foreign Policy*

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Declaration

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For my mother, always in my heart

ABSTRACT

It has been observed by IR scholars that religion and American foreign policy are intertwined. Notwithstanding the separation of church and state in the United States, American presidents have frequently referred to God in their rhetoric as they have explained America's foreign policy to the American public. This has emphasised how Americans are a people with a special relationship with God that has defined the nation's perception of the world and its sense of place within it.

This thesis highlights how religious ideas in presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy predate the founding of the United States and are derived from America's Puritan ancestors. I argue, Puritan ideas and assumptions have been continuously echoed in presidential rhetoric irrespective of a president's religious denomination or degree of religiosity, political party affiliation or America's domestic-international context. In order to explore their continued significance, the thesis draws on a constructivist-orientated framework that combines concepts of political culture and civil religion.

By analysing the rhetoric employed by American presidents at key junctures in the country's history, this thesis argues that Puritan religious ideas and assumptions have historically prevailed and underpinned American politics despite the United States being a non-confessional state. Above all, I demonstrate that the religious underpinnings of American foreign policy have historical origins and therefore while specific foreign policy events are unique many of the ideas used in presidential rhetoric to describe and explain them originate from before the founding of the United States.

My thesis makes an important contribution to the literature on religion and American foreign policy, combining historical insights with contemporary ones. This thesis could be of interest for scholars who focused on American exceptionalism in American foreign policy, American foreign policy traditions and American presidents in American foreign policy. It could also be of relevance to the International Relations literature, whether constructivist literature focusing on the importance of collectively shared ideas or historical-inclined scholarship which has adopted a long-term perspective on international relations.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1 Introduction

‘The cause we serve is right, because it is the cause of all mankind. The momentum of freedom in our world is unmistakable--and it is not carried forward by our power alone. We can trust in that greater power who guides the unfolding of the years. And in all that is to come, we can know that His purposes are just and true’.

(George W. Bush, January 20, 2005)¹

In his eight year presidential term, George Bush did not hesitate to articulate the purpose of his presidency in religious terms. He spoke of America’s cause of promoting freedom in the world as guided by Providence and the United States as such was implementing God’s will (Domke 2004: 3). Bush’s statement about God’s importance in American foreign policy underlines a complex relationship between religion and American foreign policy. It has been suggested that religion shapes America’s perception of the world, at times even determining America’s response to international events (Mead 2006: 24). America’s foreign policy agenda, goals and strategy have been underpinned by religious beliefs (Judis 2005: 2), whether in regard to the pursuit of empire (Bacevich & Prodromou 2004: 44) or the realisation of religious-based utopian ideals of human happiness, restricting evil in the world or bringing about human change in American foreign policy (Boyle 2004). Americans, realist scholar Stephen Walt (2011: 72) recognised, tend to think that ‘the United States is both destined and

¹‘Washington’s Inauguration Address’ see at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=58745>

entitled to play a distinct and positive role on the world stage', having a 'divinely ordained mission to lead the rest of the world'.

Returning to Bush's statement above, one could be tempted to make the argument that given his own religious convictions about being a born-again Christian, he was projecting them onto American foreign policy and adopting an 'evangelical style of presidential leadership' (Berggren & Rae 2002). In this vein, Bush's personal convictions about religion converged with the need to tackle, in the context of the global war on terror, the threat of 'Islamist terror' (Miles 2004: 23).

However, far from being an isolated example of how religious values and ideas can end up influencing foreign policy, it is historically not so uncommon for American presidents to articulate America's place in the world using religious vocabulary. Indeed, every single President since the founding of the United States has referred to religious values and ideas to explain the role of the US in foreign policy. For instance, George Washington, America's first president, recognised that the United States had been guided 'by some token of providential agency' (Inaugural Speech 1789).² Similarly, Teddy Roosevelt's foreign policy rhetoric often suggested the need 'to spread abroad the Gospel and lay the moral foundation upon which all true national greatness must rest' (May 20, 1902)³, and Harry Truman saw freedom as a value that was bestowed by God: 'Our American heritage of human freedom is born of the belief

²'Washington Inaugural Address', See at https://www.archives.gov/exhibits/american_originals/inaugtxt.html

³ 'The Centennial Meeting of The Board of Home Missions of The Presbyterian Church', see at <http://www.theodore-roosevelt.com/images/research/txtspeeches/8.txt>

that man is created in the image of God' (21 December 1949).⁴ The persistence of religious ideas in American foreign across different presidencies over time is striking.

Indeed, with American presidents drawing on religion to explain their foreign policy to the American public (Boyle 2004: 93), it is quite surprising to see that it has not always been accorded its due importance in the literature. The importance of religious convictions of American presidents and how they have converged with and influenced the dynamics of American foreign policy has been somehow set aside (Steding 2014: 1). Biographies of American presidents at times have only made oblique references to the importance of religion that has guided their foreign policy (Rozell & Whitney 2007: 1). For example, Michael Hunt's (1987) seminal study on ideology in American foreign policy focuses on the combination of the American Revolution and enlightenment ideas about freedom without properly connecting it to what he fleetingly acknowledges to be the idea of Americans as a 'chosen people living under providential blessing' (p. 20) as part of the revolutionary rhetoric. Similarly, Quinn's (2010) insightful book on the continued importance of ideology in American foreign policy since the nation's conception in the chapter on the founding fathers ignores how religion underpinned some of their broader foreign policy views and rhetoric during the Founding Era. It is interesting, that in light of the various references by American presidents to religion in their foreign policy rhetoric, the aforementioned literature does not give due attention to religion in American foreign policy and there is a need to further explore the subject matter.

⁴Address at the Unveiling of a Memorial Carillon in Arlington National Cemetery', see at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=13369>

1.2 Research Questions and Argument of the Thesis

Given the importance of religious ideas in presidential utterances on foreign policy over time, and the inadequate attention devoted to religion in the literature, certain questions ought to be explored that can enhance our understanding of the theme of religion in American foreign policy.

- What are the origins of the religious ideas that have underpinned presidential rhetoric?
- How exactly have these religious ideas been expressed in presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy?
- How have religious ideas been important in American foreign policy?

In other words, there is a need to excavate these religious ideas that have been a part of America's history and, moreover, explore the mechanisms through which these ideas have come to the fore in American foreign policy rhetoric. Using from a constructivist approach, this thesis argues that, rather than having a causal and direct influence, religious ideas have been woven into the broader presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy and have underpinned the foreign policy postures of American presidents over time. They have been integral to America's self-understanding and its sense of place in the world, as articulated by American presidents. In other words, while religious ideas have underpinned America's foreign policy perception, they have *not* shaped or determined American foreign policy, nor do they represent the motivation for it.

By focusing on the rhetoric employed by US Presidents throughout different episodes of the country's history, this thesis argues that:

- Religious ideas and assumptions have historically prevailed despite the United States being a non-confessional state
- The highest office in the United States, the US presidency, constantly employs religious references in speeches – as religious ideas have underpinned America’s self-understanding as a people and its sense of place in the world.
- Continuity of American civil religion rhetoric of American presidents as Puritan ideas as have been echoed in the utterances of American presidents since the founding of the United States.
- The relevance of puritan ideas, as part of presidential civil religion rhetoric on American foreign policy, irrespective of the America’s position of power in the world, whether during the founding when the United States was weak in the international system or the sole superpower in the international system during the post-Cold War era.
- The enduring relevance of puritan ideas, as part of presidential civil religion rhetoric, irrespective of the denomination and degree of religiosity of American presidents.

In sum, my thesis demonstrates that the religious underpinnings that have featured in American foreign policy have historical origins and, thus, underlines that foreign policy events are unique, but the ideas expressed in presidential rhetoric that are used to describe and explain these events are part of a long-term trend. These ideas and assumptions derived from America’s Puritan ancestors have been articulated in American presidential rhetoric on foreign policy irrespective of a president’s religious denomination, degree of religiosity, political party affiliation or America’s domestic-international context.

Indeed, no matter if the President of the United States was George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, Harry Truman, Bill Clinton or George Bush Jr., their presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy has been infused with Puritan ideas and assumptions. Although Puritans ceased to be several centuries ago, their legacy has outlasted their own disappearance from America's history. The American scholar Perry Miller (2001:1) has pointed to the importance of the Puritan legacy for America's national identity: 'Without some understanding of Puritanism, it may be safely said, there is no understanding of America'. Puritan ideas and assumptions are at the heart of America's self-understanding as a people as well as their sense of place regarding the world over generations. They have found expression in presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy and imbued it with moral undertones that have resonated with the nation's religiously-infused political culture.

It is noteworthy that this holds notwithstanding the considerable differences between these presidencies. Consider the following factors. Washington was not a member of a political party per se but essentially affiliated to the Federalist Party at the time, Thomas Jefferson was a member of what was known as the Democratic-Republican party, Roosevelt and Bush were members of the Republican Party, whereas Truman and Clinton were both members of the Democratic Party. George Washington and Thomas Jefferson were members of the Anglican Church, Theodore Roosevelt belonged to the Dutch Reformed, Truman was a Baptist, whereas Clinton and Bush Jr. (hereafter Bush) were members of the Southern Baptist Church. Between the first and last presidency explored in this thesis, America grew from a small and weak country following the American Revolution, to ascend to great power status. America

emerged as a superpower during the onset of the Cold War and as the sole superpower in the post-Cold War era.

Indeed, despite the presidents' different political party affiliations, religious denominations and domestic-international contexts, none of them failed to express in their foreign policy rhetoric Puritan ideas and assumptions that have underpinned America's civil religion. Thus, the rhetoric of US Presidents throughout the country's history have echoed America's political culture and, by doing so, they have helped internalise Puritan ideas and assumptions in America's political culture over time.

By shedding light on Puritan religious ideas that have pervaded US public life, how these ideas found expression in presidential rhetoric, and how they enhance our understanding of American foreign policy, this thesis offers a valuable insight into the religious dimension that underpins America's view of its place in the world. This thesis, by focusing on Puritan ideas, makes a relevant contribution to the literature that has explored the relationship between religion and American foreign policy. It does this by offering important insights about the long-term and historical relevance of religiously-derived ideas and assumptions in American foreign policy, helping challenge the view expressed in some American foreign policy literature, that religious ideas in American foreign policy are a recent phenomenon.

1.3 Conceptual Approach of Thesis

The main focus of this thesis is to show that religious ideas and assumptions underpin US presidential rhetoric. To understand the complex relationship of how Puritan ideas underpin

American public life and, in its highest manifestation, the rhetoric of US presidents, I employ in this thesis an overarching constructivist approach. By abandoning the positivist and materialist philosophical underpinnings of realism in IR, constructivist approaches have emphasised that reality rather than being given and fixed, it is interpreted by actors through shared ideas (Wendt 1999: 94-95). Reality, according to constructivism, is ‘socially constructed’. Shared ideas will help an actor determine how they interpret and understand their world and their place within it. They can do so by helping define what is right or wrong, moral or immoral, appropriate and inappropriate which can give them meaning, purpose and stable meanings (Gurowitz 2006). Constructivism helps shed light on the ‘interplay between actors and their social context’ within which they exist and, thus, the very structures they encounter (Ba & Hoffmann 2003: 15).

In order to support my argument about the continued importance of Puritan ideas in presidential rhetoric, I draw on concepts of political culture and civil religion to explore religious ideas as a shared and collective phenomenon. First, the concept of political culture helps illuminate the shared nature of deeper-seated ideas and beliefs within a political entity that can become established over time (Wiadra 2014: 2). It is useful in terms of shedding light on how religion and ideas associated with it enable individuals to comprehend the world within which they exist and allows them to construct stable meanings and purpose as part of the larger polity.

Second, civil religion represents a specific concept of political culture which was developed to describe religious ideas in the United States. It, therefore, has particular relevance to fleshing out the importance of religious ideas in presidential rhetoric in this thesis.

Notwithstanding the separation of church and state in the United States, the concept of civil religion emphasises that certain religious ideas have been entrenched at the national level and are an integral part of the nation's collectively-held self-understanding as a people. Because of certain religious ideas, I argue that there is a sacred dimension to America's self-understanding that defines how America has continued to perceive itself, both domestically and internationally, since the founding of the United States. Thus, civil religion helps to underline how the sacred is woven into the political realm in the United States, highlighting a convergence between the transcendental and the secular that has existed for more than two hundred years and has frequently found expression through presidential rhetoric.

By combining political culture and civil religion, my constructivist approach is well suited for exploring this thesis' two research questions on the origins of religious ideas in presidential rhetoric and how religious ideas have been expressed in presidential rhetoric. In particular, it helps to explore the deeply-held religious ideas and beliefs that have been an integral part of the national understanding notwithstanding the separation between church and state in the United States.

Certain observations ought to be considered regarding the research questions that guide this thesis. First, religious ideas in presidential rhetoric are derived from the era before the founding of the United States and were embedded within the political culture shaped by the nation's Puritan ancestors. Therefore, the very religious ideas the Puritans embraced helped them define how they understood their own experiences upon arrival in America and shaped their understanding of reality within which they existed.

Second and closely related, Puritan ideas which existed within the nation's political culture prior to independence became a firm part of American civil religion that emerged following the American Revolution. Religious ideas that have found expression through presidential rhetoric are part of America's civil religion, which has underpinned America's self-understanding as a people. By drawing on these Puritan ideas as part of America's civil religion, American presidents have, through their rhetoric contributed to the social construction of reality, and helped to further internalise these Puritan ideas as part of the nation's civil religion.

By combining concepts of political culture and civil religion, my conceptual framework enables me to shed light on the importance of deeply embedded religious ideas and assumptions which has defined America's self-understanding as people. With presidential rhetoric unfolding against the backdrop of the social and ideational structures of America's political culture and civil religion, the framework helps me to explore the relationship between American presidents and these structures and how they have interpreted them as they have articulated America's sense of place in the world.

1.4 Research Design and Methodological Approach

The research design of this thesis is divided into three parts. The first part, which consists of chapters 2 and 3, provides insight into the importance of religion in American foreign policy as well as the research framework of this thesis. Religion has been a relatively persistent feature in American foreign policy over time. With the scholarly literature having increasingly

recognised the significance of religion in American foreign policy, the challenge has been to devise a relevant theoretical and conceptual framework for exploring the importance of religion in American foreign policy. A constructivist-orientated framework that draws on the concept of civil religion enables us to explore the importance of collectively-held religious ideas and their importance in American foreign policy.

To be precise, chapter 2 reviews the literature on religion in American foreign policy, discerning three strands, namely post 9/11 period, the cold war period and long-term historical trends. While this literature underlines some of the complexities and the historical dimension of religion in American foreign policy, I point out that religious ideas in American foreign policy have even stronger historical roots that are intertwined with the nation's self-understanding. This thesis argues that the nation's self-understanding is intricately intertwined with America's Puritan ancestors whose ideas have been echoed in presidential rhetoric. This chapter considers American exceptionalism as a conceptual framework for the exploring the link between America's religiously-infused self-understanding and American foreign policy, pointing out that American exceptionalism does not do justice to the religiously-infused dimension of America's self-understanding.

Chapter 3 alludes to the constructivist literature and its recognition of the importance of collectively shared ideas. However, constructivism does not represent a theory in IR that enables us to analyse specific content. The constructivist-orientated framework must be complemented with relevant concepts. To that end, this chapter provides insights about the concepts of political culture and civil religion as a specific concept of political culture. This chapter explores *how*, *why* and *where* within America's political culture civil religion has

been important. The chapter considers the transmission mechanisms of socialisation – family, societal conditions and roles – that enable us to explore how American presidents from different family backgrounds and during different times in America’s history have come to adopt religiously-derived ideas from America’s Puritan ancestors in their rhetoric as they held the office of the American president.

The second part, which encompasses Chapters 4 and 5, provides a historical analysis on how religious ideas, and more specifically, Puritan ideas and values, have become an integral part of American civil religion. These ideas are constantly referred to – one would venture to say, that they are almost a reflex – in US presidential speeches. Thus, these chapters provide historical insights into Puritan ideas and how they were expressed in specific contexts, with the aim of teasing out the relevance of Puritan ideas have had on America’s political culture and civil religion.

More specifically, Chapter 4 focuses on how Puritan ideas became an integral part of American civil religion. For this purpose, in Chapter 4 I trace how Puritan ideas became internalised into America’s political culture during the events of the Great Awakening and the American Revolution. The ideas of America’s Puritan ancestors have been carried forward into America’s history by individuals who were products of America’s political culture that was infused with these ideas and, in turn, echoed them in the public realm. This included individuals like John Winthrop who arrived with the early Puritan settler in 1630 and gave the iconic statement of America as a ‘city upon a hill’, preachers like Johnathan Edwards during the Great Awakening whose fiery sermons in colonial America echoed the early Puritan

arrivals, or the American revolutionaries who interpreted the events of the American Revolution by drawing on Puritan ideas.

Chapter 5 goes one step further by analysing how Puritan ideas were echoed during four different historical presidencies. As I highlight in this chapter, American presidents are important individuals who have further helped internalise Puritan ideas as part of America's civil religion over time. Chapter 5 includes four presidencies – the presidencies of George Washington (1789-1797), Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809), Theodore Roosevelt and Harry Truman (1945-1953) – to explore how Puritan ideas have been internalised as part of American civil religion. These presidencies were chosen because they represented important points of particular eras: the Founding era, the Great Power era and the Cold War era. By exploring these four presidencies, the chapter provides important insights into how Puritan ideas have historically underpinned the rhetoric of US presidents.

The third part of the research design, which encompasses Chapters 6 and 7, presents two in depth case studies that provide empirical evidence on the relevance of Puritan ideas underpinning US presidential rhetoric. They examine the Clinton (Chapter 6) and Bush (Chapter 7) presidencies, respectively, which were selected because they represented two presidencies in the contemporary period. These two case studies are particularly relevant to my analysis as they allow me to explore the importance of Puritan ideas in presidential rhetoric several centuries after the Puritans had arrived in America. There were some distinctions between these two presidencies that allows me to explore the importance of Puritan ideas during two distinct phases of the contemporary period. While the Clinton presidency unfolded after the end of the Cold War, the Bush Jr. presidency took place against

the backdrop of the attacks of 9/11. There were also other differences that characterised these two presidencies. Clinton was a member of the Democratic Party and Bush a member of the Republican Party, with Clinton considered to be less religious than Bush Jr.

In an attempt to explore Clinton and Bush's rhetoric during their respective presidential tenure, I use qualitative content analysis. Qualitative content analysis represents a technique for analysis of texts, with a focus on various forms of recorded communication such as transcripts of interviews, discussion or public speeches.⁵ It is an empirical approach grounded within qualitative social research which is particularly useful for exploring texts and which allows to derive important ideas and themes from these texts. In short, it is a useful way for identifying and extracting information from various texts. Since the case studies of my thesis look at recorded presidential speeches, this technique is particularly useful for deriving relevant insights about ideas and themes that have underpinned the rhetoric of president Clinton and president Bush Jr., respectively. The insights derived from the analysis of presidential rhetoric allow me to probe the importance of Puritan ideas during those two presidencies.

To systematise the data collected in the speeches, I employ NVIVO software, a commonly employed software that is well suited for qualitative content analysis. NVIVO software is particularly useful for organising large amounts of textual material, which enables me to draw insights from these texts more easily than if I employed a non-software based approach to qualitative content analysis. I used NVIVO software for creating and organising a database of

⁵ Mayring, Phillip, 'Qualitative Content Analysis', 2000, see at <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1089/2385%3E>;

presidential speeches for the two respective presidencies, which were subsequently investigated using qualitative content analysis method within the software.

1.5 Structure of the thesis and argument of the chapters

Having explored three strands within the literature on religion in America foreign policy, the post 9/11 period, the Cold War period and long-term historical trends in chapter 2, I draw inspiration from the long-term historical trends analysis in the literature. I make the case that a historically-orientated approach would enable us to appreciate the importance of religion in American foreign policy as part of a long-term trend, as an intrinsic part of America's self-understanding. American exceptionalism provides interesting insights about America's self-understanding as a people that has affected America's foreign policy. America's sense of being exceptional and chosen as a people has religious origins and is derived from America's Puritan ancestors. Given the religiously-infused nature of America's self-understanding, civil religion provides the relevant vocabulary for describing and analysing religious ideas in America's self-understanding and their subsequent relevance in American foreign policy.

Chapter 3 develops the research framework of this thesis, providing in-depth analysis on the concept of civil religion. It explores Bellah's seminal article on American civil religion that triggered a wider debate about civil religion, providing an overview of how different scholars have interpreted the concept. The chapter underlines the similarities and differences between religion and civil religion in an attempt to highlight why civil religion deserves to be regarded as a 'religion'. Civil religion prevails in the secular realm as a result of the separation

of church and state in the United States, being a source of unity within America's religiously diverse society. I consider transmission mechanisms of socialisation – family socialisation, the role the American presidency and societal conditions – in an attempt to probe how Puritan ideas have been adopted in presidential rhetoric over time. Family socialisation focuses on how the family environment shaped the religious worldview of individuals, role concentrates on how an occupation or profession requires an individual to conform to the ethos that particular position (in our case the role of the American presidency and the civil religious expectations associated with it) and societal conditions considers domestic, foreign policy and international system factors that create the material and ideational factors within which an American presidency unfolds.

Furthermore, and in line with the thesis' focus on civil religion in American foreign policy, Chapter 4 proceeds to emphasise the importance of religion in America's contemporary political culture. It seeks to explore the origins of America's civil religion, which has been echoed in presidential rhetoric on foreign policy, among the nation's Puritan ancestors who have bestowed the United States with religiously-infused moral narrative. Puritans interpreted their experience upon arrival in America in the seventeenth century through the Bible, considering their survival in the hallowing wilderness as an affirmation of their status as a people with a covenant with God. They would go on to interpret the social and moral order they had established in the wilderness as the embodiment of 'a city upon a hill' that shone forth in a dark and immoral world. In a world like this, they were compelled to deal with external manifestation of sin, having to fight what they regarded to be the human incarnations of the devil. The Puritan moral narrative, which drew on these ideas and assumptions, not

only survived the period of the Great Awakening in mid-eighteenth century but flourished during it and remained relevant during the American Revolution as it became a part of America's civil religion.

To elaborate on the importance of America's civil religion, with its Puritan derived morality, in American foreign policy, chapter 5 provides historical insight into the issue and focuses on important episodes in America's history. Drawing on the domestic-international nexus of those respective historical episodes, the chapter focuses on America's civil religion under four different presidencies whilst giving due consideration to the religious beliefs of American presidents and how these might have influenced their interpretation of civil religion. To that end, the chapter first explores the George Washington presidency (1789-1797) and the emphasis placed on Providence amidst concerns about avoiding entangling alliances. Then it moves on to analyse Jefferson's presidency (1801-1809) and the civil religious underpinnings of America's territorial expansion. Thereafter, it focuses on the Theodore Roosevelt presidency (1901-1909) and the 'muscular Christian' interpretation of American civil religion and its importance for America's foreign policy as a great power. Finally, the chapter turns to the Truman presidency (1945-1953) and American civil religion in the wake of the onset of the Cold War. In sum, by exploring these four presidencies, this chapter shows the durability of American civil religion, with its Puritan antecedents, which gives a stable meaning and continuity to American foreign policy over time.

In chapter 6 the emphasis is on how, considering the domestic context that questioned the benefits of an internationalist foreign policy following the end of the Cold War, Clinton underlined to Americans the benefits of an internationalist foreign policy that championed

democratic values in the world. In what appeared to be the increasingly interdependent world of the post-Cold War era, Clinton made a rhetorical case, by drawing on civil religious assumptions, that an internationalist foreign policy was linked to America's economic prosperity and, moreover, would enable the United States to become 'a city upon a hill' once more. To explore the relevance Puritan ideas in specific contexts, I analyse Clinton's civil religious rhetoric in the context of America's interventions in Haiti and Kosovo.

The second case study is discussed in Chapter 7, which focuses on Bush's attempt to address the threat of terrorism after 9/11. Using civil religious language, Bush presented America's war on terror as a struggle between America as God's nation and the evils of terrorism. The crux of Bush's rhetorical argument was trying to deal with the threat of terrorism meant eliminating dangerous manifestations of evil in the world. Bush left no doubt that, as a nation with a covenant with God, which he also used to assure Americans, the United States had a special responsibility to deal with the threat of terrorism. Hence, by drawing on America's civil religion, Bush imbued America's foreign policy that centred on the global war on terror with moral significance to the American public. The chapter illustrates this argument with the examples of the Afghanistan and Iraq interventions as part of America's struggle against evil.

Finally, Chapter 8 provides a conclusion of this thesis. It presents a summary of arguments and the main findings derived about the six presidencies explored in this thesis. The chapter discusses the theoretical implications of the thesis' constructivist-orientated framework of this thesis and its relevance for the literature on religion on American foreign policy. Moreover, I present an epilogue on the Obama presidency and how exploring his presidency could help

us further probe this thesis' argument about the continued importance of Puritan ideas as part of American civil religion rhetoric of American presidents

CHAPTER 2 RELIGION AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

2.1 Introduction

In the United States, the public sphere is frequently infused with religion or religiously-derived notions, with American public officials not hesitating to make religious references. ‘God bless the United States’ is a common pronouncement that is frequently uttered by American public officials in the political realm. They have also promulgated that Americans are a people with a special relationship with God, underlining that America is a place where the political realm is infused with religious assumptions and the importance of religion in America’s self-understanding as a people.

America’s self-understanding as people is not simply restricted to the domestic realm and permeates America’s foreign policy. One of the most important public officials of the nation – the American president – has referred to God in their utterances on America’s foreign policy. American presidents have suggested a link between America’s self-understanding as a people and its foreign policy. The theme of religion in American foreign policy has not gone unnoticed. Following 9/11, there seemed to be a greater scholarly appreciation of the importance of religion in American foreign policy (Guth, Green, Kellstedt & Smidt 2005). Studies of American foreign policy focused on how religion has defined America’s place and relationship with the broader world and its importance for American foreign policy after 9/11. For example, Chaplin (2010) highlights the importance of religion America’s perception of the world and how that has influenced American foreign policy regarding international peace

and order after 9/11. Marsden (2008) illuminates the importance of religion by connecting the Christian Right with American foreign policy.

However, religion as a factor in American foreign policy has far stronger historical roots. The American foreign policy literature has emphasised religion as an underlying aspect of America's foreign policy during the ideological contest of the Cold War. Gunn (2008) and Inboden (2008) make the case that religious assumptions were used to justify the ideological contest against the Soviet Union. Other scholars pointed out that religion in American foreign policy has been part of America's long-term historical trajectory. Ribuffo (1998), covering the manifest destiny period from the mid-nineteenth century, America's sense of mission unfolded in the wake of religious sentiments at home. Kagan (2006) recognised the importance of religion in addition to political and economic factors in American history from the period of the American Revolution until 1898.

While these accounts offer interesting insights about the historical importance of religion in American foreign policy, this thesis argues that there is a need to go beyond the founding to the United States. This will enable us to go deeper into America's history and excavate a crucial source of religious assumptions in American foreign policy. Religious ideas that have found expression in American foreign policy, such references to God, are derived from America's Puritan ancestors. Even though the Puritans have long ceased, their ideas have been integral to America's self-understanding and, moreover, have reverberated in American foreign policy over past and present. This chapter reviews the literature on religion and American foreign policy, underlining the inadequacies of existing historical accounts of religion in American foreign policy. It underlines that the values that have mattered in

American history also matter today, highlighting that religious ideas and, in particular, Puritan ideas are part of a long-term trend in American foreign policy.

This chapter is divided as follows. First, it explores the emphasis on the transnational dimension of religion in international relations, especially in the post-Cold War era. This section delves into how arguments about the process of modernisation have reinforced a particular view about the secular nature of the modern state. As a state undergoes modernisation, it develops secular tendencies, with the United States being the example of a state that has defied such trends. Second, I offer a perspective that involves going ‘back in time’ to explore religion and American foreign policy. It starts with the contemporary period, specifically the 9/11 period, then explores the Cold War period and this is followed by a focus on the long-term importance of religion in American foreign policy that allows us a holistic view of American history. Third, this chapter explores American exceptionalism as an integral part of America’s self-understanding as a people and its importance in American foreign policy. Although America exceptionalism recognises the religious dimension of American foreign policy, it does not do justice to it.

2.2 Religion in International Relations

During the last two decades there have been inquiries into how religion has been important in the international realm. The focus has been on the transnational dimension of religion, with religion being a phenomenon that by-passes the state in what has been considered an increasingly global era. Recognising the trend of religious revival in the world, Gilles Kepel

(1991) pointed out that the post-Cold War era broadly witnessed the ‘revenge of God’ that involved the rise of radical beliefs within Abrahamic religions – Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Juergensmeyer (1993; see also Berger 1999: 15; Johnston & Sampson 1994: 4), was concerned about what he discerned as the emergence of ‘religious nationalism’ having the potential to bring about a ‘new Cold War’ along religious lines in lieu of the larger ideological cleavages that prevailed in the international system during the previous era.

Huntington (1996) warned that civilizational identities intersected with religion in the international system to produce violent conflict that could produce instability within it. Religion was an increasingly significant factor that shaped a post-Cold War international system undergoing cultural change, economic globalisation and technological transformation (Bacevich 1996: 10), helping create a world that was characterised by violent conflicts which involved, amongst the many other dangerous cleavages, ‘Jihad vs. McWorld’ that had pitted the threat of terrorism stemming from Islamic fundamentalism against the capitalist consumer culture championed by the United States in the world (Barber 1995).

Yet, it would be the events of 9/11 that emphatically highlighted the devastating impact religion could produce in the international system, underlining religion’s importance as a major factor in violent conflict in the international realm. This had been acknowledged previously, but not fully appreciated until after 9/11 (see e.g., Fox & Sandler 2004: 1; Kratochvil 2009: 5; Petito & Hatzopoulos 2003: 3). Comprehending the importance of religion in international relations seemed to have come about due to the need to deal with the dynamics underlying global terrorism, by scholars and public alike. With the origins of the attacks difficult to explain through alliance politics, polarity, the rise and fall of great powers

or the security pursuit of a particular state or by any economic motivations (Philpott 2002: 66), there was increased appreciation of the need to explore the resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism as a potential threat to the structure of the international system that challenged the principle of the national sovereignty of states (Falk 2003: 191; Haynes 2009: 44; Shani 2009: 308).

Global terrorism was seen as a transnational phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism intertwined with and exploiting the processes of globalisation, which was creating greater interdependence in the world economy, advances in telecommunication and easier travel around the world (Karam 2003). Globalisation reduced the importance of territory and geographical proximity as the sole factors that defined community bonds along religious lines (Shani 2009: 311). With its vast potential to aid rapid communication across the globe, it created a global public sphere underpinned by religious ideas and assumptions that helped generate religious community bonds with a distinct transnational dimension, such as the Islamic understanding of community known as Umma (Shani 2002). With community bonds transcending national and, at times, ethnic boundaries also, there has been a sense of solidarity and belonging with those in the world who were believed to share a similar bond, which shaped the choices individuals, as well as specific groups, have sometimes pursued at home and abroad (Shani 2002).

Religious revival in the world has been associated with the expansion of transnational civil society actors operating across states that facilitated the advocacy and implementation of religiously-infused understanding about community in international relations (Haynes 2001: 144; Rudolph 2005: 191). Transnational civil society actors have had different orientations

and capabilities, as well as maintaining underlying moral purposes shaped by religion. Transnational terrorist organisations such as Al Qaeda have relied on illegal funds and have used violent means in the name of Islamic fundamentalist missions leading a global ‘Jihad’ against the West (Fox & Sandler 2004: 93-5). Motivated by religious benevolence and toleration, organisations such as the multi-faith World Conference of Religion and Peace or the Christianity World Council of Churches have advocated inter-faith dialogue between communities as integral to creating a more peaceful international system (Thomas 2005: 101). Driven by a strong sense of mission to universally improve the human condition, faith-based NGOs have been involved in grass-roots development work as well as conflict mediation (Haynes 2007; Haynes 2014).

The above insights indicate that the role that religion has played in recent times in international relations has been underpinned by a strong transnational dimension, frequently working from outside the state into the state. The process of globalisation – underpinned by modern technologies that enable rapid communication across the world – has helped disseminate religious ideas across state boundaries, contributing to the creation of transnational communities based on religious ideas and beliefs which are not anchored in one state but spread across the world. The process of globalisation has gone hand in hand with transnational civil society actors that have been motivated by religious ideas and purposes – whether certain terrorist organisations or NGOs doing humanitarian or developmental work. The implication of the above scholarship is that the state is a passive actor when it comes to the issue of religion in the international system, being regarded as a victim of the increased

religious dimension of international relations that is challenging the sovereignty of states in an increasingly global age.

2.3 Religion and Modernisation

The transnational dimension of religion and religious ideas in the international system is further reinforced as a result of assumptions associated with the process of modernisation in the state. Modernisation reinforces the view that the modern state is incompatible with religion and, thus, is incapable of propagating a religiously-infused foreign policy. Modernisation has been understood as intricately intertwined with processes of secularisation, and as the state undergoes a process of modernisation there is less need or desire for religious practices and ideas (Bruce 2002; Norris & Inglehart 2004). Hence, modernisation in the state makes the idea of a transcendental power or deity redundant.

However, as the case of the United States and other countries in the world exemplify, religious beliefs can exist alongside the modern state and, moreover, religion can have relevance in state's foreign policy. This section challenges the notion that the modern state is incapable of expressing religiously-informed ideas, underlining the relevance of an 'inside-out' perspective for exploring the importance of religion in international relations, specifically about the United States. The 'inside-out' perspective allows us to look within the American state and appreciate the relevance and importance of religion as a domestic category for American foreign policy (see sections 2.4, 2.5. & 2.6.).

According to secularisation theory, the development of the state brought about a process of modernisation that culminated in a trend toward secularisation, with religion as a belief system expected to decline in peoples' lives and their communities as the state embraces the logic of modernity (Barker, Beckford & Dobbelaere 1993; Stark 1999). In the same vein, important thinkers linked modernisation with secularisation.

One of these thinkers was the German sociologist Max Weber whose insights and analysis continue to have appeal among scholars in the field of sociology (e.g. Turner 1991; Turner 2002; Kippenberg). In his magnum opus *The Protestant Ethic and the 'Spirit' of Capitalism*, Weber observed the emergence of what he referred to in German 'die Entzauberung der Welt' – roughly translated as the 'disenchantment of the world' that implies nothing less than the elimination of magic. Max Weber was convinced: 'religious feelings and experiences are treated intellectually [and] the process of *rationalization* dissolves the magical notions and increasingly 'disenchants' the world and renders it godless' (Weber 1988: 333).

The crux was **1)** Weber equated religion with as a kind of magic and, thus, as a phenomenon associated with the supernatural/mysterious which meant that religion was confined to the sphere of the irrational; and **2)** the rationalisation of the world diminished the significance of the religion and religious assumptions in social reality. The power and appeal of the transcendental in helping explain reality and give purpose to life gradually ceases, with scripture no longer the reference point for knowledge which can provide answers to bigger questions in life and help satisfy mankind's search for meaning. Religion is no longer used to explain events which seem unfathomable or apparently senseless, such as death and the suffering of the innocent.

According to this thinking, life in modern societies was underpinned by ‘worldly’ dynamics rather than otherworldly ones – or as Weber referred to in German as *Verweltlichung* – with human existence considered to be no longer permeated by God’s grace. Logical reasoning, or rationalisation as Max Weber described it, is an integral part of the process of *Verweltlichung* that renders life less transcendental. Put simply, life can be better understood through logical reasoning and seems more predictable as well as easier to master, while religion is nothing less than a charming form of enchantment that distracts from the complexities of reality.

Moreover, as religion fades in importance, and becomes at best confined to the private realm, the enchanted forms of action are subsequently replaced by rational action that unfolds without a transcendental purpose. It is this process of rationalisation within society which helped propel capitalism and ushered in modernity while less modernised societies were stifled by ‘magic’ that impeded their progress (Grosby 2013: 305). Rationalisation, as per Weber’s formulation, ushers in a cultural shift from a religious order towards an order based on rationality that underpins modernity. Rationalisation and the instrumental understanding of life that went hand in hand with it fueled an order based on a mix of bureaucratization, legal authority and capitalism. These three categories are the embodiment of a modernised society that had undergone the process of disenchantment and deemed religion to be of marginal importance.

Max Weber, of course, was not alone in his doubts about the waning importance of religion. Nietzsche’s ‘God is dead’ conjecture implied the end of the relevance of Christian beliefs in a modern state (Turner 1991: 190-192). Durkheim purported that in an industrialised society the Church would cease to serve its social function capacity and would be easily replaced by

the social institutions of the modern state (Aldridge 2007: 67). Comte anticipated that in the modern state the ‘hallucinations’ and ‘passions’ associated with religion would be finally dispelled (Stark, Innaccone & Finke 1996: 433). Hence, in modern, industrialised states there would be no place for religious mysticism, liturgical practices and devotion to the sacred (Norris & Inglehardt 2004:1), with religion being regarded as the feature of a pre-modern, traditional and rather backward societies that pre-dated the modern state.

Industrialisation brought about profound social shifts involving the fragmentation of the community. While religion had flourished in smaller rural communities where people knew each other and, thus, clergy found it easier to reinforce religious beliefs, urbanization not only made it difficult to reinforce the strictures of religion but also permitted people to embrace a variety of sub-cultures, including ones not underpinned by religion (Fox 2015: 19; see also Cox 2013). Moreover, science and technology challenged religious explanations about man’s origin and existence, with the theory of evolution, for example, helping raise questions about the relevance of religion and scripture as sources of knowledge (Norris & Inglehart 2004: 8).

Reason and empirical evidence, underpinned by scientific rationalism, became the basis for knowledge rather than revelation, with individuals less likely to give credence to religious beliefs as result of better education, specifically due to familiarity with science (Stark, Innaccone & Finke 1996: 433; see also Martin 2008). Science enhanced man’s understanding and mastery of the world, being no longer reliant on a higher, external power or concomitant assumptions about fate and destiny (Watson 1994: 25). Echoing the apparent incompatibility between science and religion, neo-atheists such as Christopher Hitchens (2007) and Richard Dawkins (2016) have used scientific logic to refute the existence of God as they have sought

to expose religion as a form of irrationality and human superstition (often a dangerous and reactionary one) that is bound for failure.

It was expected the ongoing process of modernization brought about by urbanisation and scientific progress would result in religion heading towards its inevitable decline, if not its total extinction (Fox 2015: 18; see also Toft et al 2011). At best religion was regarded nothing more than a private issue that mattered in people's personal lives and guided their personal consciousness and practices, being separate from the political realm of the public sphere (Haynes 2013: 51-52).

With economic, political and social institutions opting to remain neutral regarding matters of religion by emphasising a rigid separation of church and state, the influence of religion in the public sphere would further shrink (Thomas 2005: 52).⁶ Indeed, with the weakening of the religion in the public sphere, there was also concern whether this was the result of diminished personal piety (Stark 1999: 252). Yet, as one critic of the secularisation trend inquired, 'where is the society with no traces of religion?', in turn, pointing that neither the West nor states such as China or the Soviet Union, which launched campaigns against religion in pursuit of their secular ideological goals, could eliminate traces of religion (Demerath 2003: 212; Stark 1999: 266). In fact, assumptions in the social science scholarship about the perceived secularisation might themselves be 'serving to legitimise ideologically a particular historical form of institutionalisation of modernity' (Casanova 1992: 20; Madeley 2009: 176). Hence,

⁶ Kemalist Turkey and contemporary France, for example, reflect the embrace of secularism by the state that does not permit the exhibition of religious symbols in public spaces as a means of ensuring the religious neutrality by the state.

it would be misleading, both conceptually and empirically, to suggest that religion does not have any relevance in the modern state.

Contrary to expectations of secularisation theory, there was a strong resurgence of religion within the state during the post-Cold War period; even raising questions as to whether a 'post-secular political order' was about to emerge despite the ongoing modernisation (Barbato & Kratochwil: 2009). In fact, religious practices and attitudes within the state have been on the rise across the worlds since the end of the Cold War, with more people holding religious beliefs than ever before and, thus, representing a growing segment of the world's population (Norris & Inglehart 2004: 5).

However, in some parts of the world, the state has been frequently underpinned Religious vitality in people's lives has relevance in the public realm, being inseparable from the political within the state (Strenski 2010). With religion frequently experienced as a collective phenomenon that involves shared beliefs, rituals and practices, it can help nurture and reinforce a sense of belonging that can create meaning and purpose for the state as a community as a whole (Stark 1999a). In fact, religion has helped generate identities that have shaped people's worldview, determining their perception of political reality and, moreover, is associated with fostering their broader political attitudes within the state (Hayes 1995; Wilcox 1990).

Set against this backdrop, political elites within the state have discovered the benefits of drawing on religiously-based collective identities (Kinvall 2004: 763). Hindu nationalism championed by the Bharatiya Janta Party in India (Bhatt 2001), Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka (DeVotta 2007) and the Islamic identity politics of Turkey's AKP party (Yuvuz 2003)

are relevant examples of political elites instrumentalising the domestic religious revival and the religious affiliations that come with it to legitimise both their domestic and foreign policies. As these examples show, the justification for their policies became infused with religious ideas. In the modernised or modernising state, religion not only mattered in peoples' private lives but also had strong relevance in the public realm. Indeed, religion contributed toward a political order that was not necessarily 'post-secular' but rather remained overwhelmingly secular in character because of the separation of church and state. However, in some parts of the world, the state has been frequently underpinned by religious ideas and assumptions political elites have drawn on. This is also the case with the United States, which I deal with in greater detail in the next section.

2.4 Religion and American Foreign Policy

Few states, despite having undergone extensive modernisation, underline the importance of religious assumptions in the public realm to the same extent as the United States. Indeed, in the United States religious vitality in the lives of ordinary Americans, in conjunction with the confluence between religious assumptions and the political realm – notwithstanding the separation between church and the state – has shaped how the United States thinks about itself (Noll 1990: 4). The overt use of religious vocabulary by public policy officials of the American state, including American presidents, who have not hesitated to invoke religious references to appeal to the religious sentiments of Americans, highlights the importance of religion in public life (Wald & Calhoun-Brown 2007: 38).

Religious ideas and assumptions have a long established tradition, and are an integral part of the American state, with America's Declaration of Independence in 1776, for example, stipulating that 'all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights'.⁷ According to the Declaration of Independence, one of the most important documents in America's political history, the nation's cherished political ideas of freedom and liberty were bestowed by God as 'unalienable Rights'. Historian Paul Johnson (2006: 18) argues in regard to the founding of the United States, 'No one who studies the key constitutional documents in American history can doubt for a moment the central and organic part played by religion in the origins of the development of American republican government'. In brief, religiously-infused ideas and assumptions in the political realm have echoed America's deeper self-understanding of the United States.

Religion and religious assumptions are linked to the American state, whether as a result of historical documents such as the declaration of independence or due to American presidents making references to God. They have been a prevailing aspect of the self-understanding of the American state and have found expression in the public realm because utterances made by state officials. Religion and religious assumptions have not been merely confined to the domestic realm but have found expression in American foreign policy past and present. Most clearly, the inclination of American presidents to intermittently present America's sense of mission in the world as divinely ordained underlines that America's foreign policy is somehow infused with religious assumptions in the past and present.

⁷ 'Declaration of Independence: A Transcription', see at <https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

Given that American presidents have not hesitated to articulate religious assumptions as part of American foreign policy over time, this issue requires further probing and an inquiry into the relationship of religion and American foreign policy. To that end, the literature reviewed below explores the relationship between religion and American foreign policy according to three periods of time: the post-9/11 period, the Cold War period and the longer-term historical trends. Since the literature on religion and American foreign policy is sizable, I focus on these three periods because they offer insights into the importance of religion in American foreign policy whilst being commensurately manageable within the scope of this thesis. Although other periods and themes could have offered interesting insights, these three strands provide depth and breadth on the importance of religion in American foreign policy.

First, the post 9/11 period focuses on the importance of religion in American foreign policy at the state and sub-state-level; second, the literature on the post-Cold War period is illustrative to emphasise that the Cold War rivalry went beyond an ideological conflict and was infused with religious elements; and finally, the literature on long-term historical trends provides insights about how religion was interwoven into the historical domestic-international factors of American foreign policy.

While these three strands of American foreign policy literature help illuminate the importance of religion in American foreign policy, religion and religious ideas have much stronger historical roots that are intricately intertwined with the nation's self-understanding. As this thesis argues, the nation's self-understanding is intricately intertwined with America's Puritan ancestors whose ideas have been echoed in presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy. Staying true to the thesis' theme of 'going back in time', the review of the literature on religion

in American foreign policy commences with the most recent period and then proceed with the Cold War period before exploring long-term historical trends on religion and American foreign policy.

2.4.1 Post 9/11 Period

Chaplin (2010)'s edited volume elaborates on how religion influences America's understanding of the world at the state-level that determines American foreign policy regarding international peace and order after 9/11; moreover, it concentrates on how the Islamic or Jewish faiths, for example, have shaped the different countries the United States has to deal with, but have been given insufficient attention in American foreign policy which has proven to be detrimental to America's own engagement with a world shaped by faith. The book goes on to argue for the benefits of religion for American foreign policy as a source of moral guidance that hasn't been properly understood or appropriately applied, with Patterson (2011) echoing this proposition by emphasising the need for a 'religiously literate U.S. foreign policy' especially in light of religion's positive influence in 'humanitarian assistance, education, peacebuilding...and track 2 diplomacy' (p. 5).

Farr (2008) opts to devote his attention to a narrower aspect of American foreign policy, seeing international religious freedom as an integral component of democracy promotion by the American state that can help better promote peace and security in the world by preventing radical religious forces from dominating. The author points out that at a time when Islamic fundamentalism and liberty appeared contradictory, religion and liberty could complement

each other, and being able to aptly unify them in foreign policy in regard to religious freedom would be beneficial to America's place in the world. Albright (2005), a former Secretary of State under Clinton, confesses how the lack of appreciation of religion in international affairs during her tenure meant that a crucial variable in American foreign policy decision making was ignored, much to America's detriment (as the attacks of 9/11 revealed).

In contrast to the normative position of the previous pieces, the edited volume by Dionne, Elshtain & Drogosz (2004) is more circumspect toward America's use of religious assumptions in its foreign policy interventions after 9/11, revealing some concerns about the influence of religion on strategic and moral questions in American foreign policy relating to America's international interventions after 9/11. As the political philosopher Michael Walzer, one of the contributors, puts it: 'A faith-based foreign policy would be a very bad idea' (p. 34). It would result in deeply flawed foreign policy decision-making and ought to be avoided. To Walzer, religion and morality are incompatible categories, with the former associated with dangerous and unjust interventions, such as that in Iraq in 2003, and the latter being a source of possible constraint and what is right and just in international affairs. It is this blurring of religion and morality in American foreign policy under Bush that proved to be so destabilising for the international system. Hehir, one of the other principal contributors who decisively shapes the debate in the edited volume, proceeds with a more cautionary tone and points out that religion does not impact directly on American foreign policy, but in subtle and nuanced ways in conjunction with other factors whilst maintaining a positive constraining effect on foreign policy.

In addition, the American foreign policy literature has explored the importance of American religious groups and movements. Abrams (2002) focuses on the influence of religious groups in American foreign policy, whether directly through missionary and humanitarian work or indirectly through their involvement in issues such as religious freedom that are also championed by the American state in the international realm. Amstutz (2014) concentrates on the influence of American Evangelicals as a religious group motivated by spiritual concerns that manifested themselves in a moralistic worldview and approach to international affairs, specifically relating to issues such as Third World poverty, Middle East regional politics and HIV/AIDS. Having shaped public discourse around these issues by mobilising grassroots support from ordinary Americans, evangelicals have been staunch proponents of American internationalism in the world and have created an elaborate advocacy apparatus to influence the foreign policy decision making of the United States. Evangelicals have drawn on religious ideas about human dignity, charity and compassion as the source and justification to pursue and champion moral aims in international affairs with a greater sense of urgency and purpose. In so doing, they have echoed as well as helped reinforce America's fundamental values about being an exceptional nation with a special responsibility in the world.

Marsden (2008) underlines these themes in his work that connect the Christian Right and American foreign policy. With apparently almost 60 million Americans, out of a population of 300 million, having exhibited some form of identification with the assumptions of the Christian Right in 2004 (p. 4), he emphasises the broad support and appeal for the ideas of the Christian Right across the United States among white liberals as well as conservative Protestants, African Americans, Hispanics and not only Republicans, but also Democrats. Set

against a backdrop where religious identification and political assumptions about democracy, freedom and justice mixed so seamlessly due to the efforts of the Christian Right, he explores the scope of the influence of the Christian Right in American foreign policy during the presidency of Bush Jr., specifically in regard to America's support for Israel and the Global War on Terror.

Taylor (2005) emphasises the importance of the Christian Right in helping endorse to the wider American public America's imperial ambition during the Bush administration. In line with this argument, Croft (2007) underscores that the Christian Right is prone to support certain issues in American foreign policy – whether human rights on the basis of religious freedom, reticence toward the United Nations and European Union as well as doubts about ties to Europe and the transatlantic relationship – reinforcing a mix of internationalism, unilateralism and nationalism that had underpinned the Bush doctrine. The Christian Right favoured a foreign policy that was moralistic and interventionary, as well as refusing to have constraints imposed by allies in light of America's special mission in the world.

For Croft, following the end of the 'neo-conservative moment', the Christian Right – given its extensive appeal as a result of the mixing of the religious and political in the United States – would be one of the crucial sources of influence in American foreign policy. Moreover, the Christian Right's position in regard to America's transatlantic ties underscored a perceived religious-secular divide, with America being a Godly nation while the Godlessness of Europeans had contributed to their misguided and immoral foreign policy toward the United States. In contrast, Rock (2011) regards religious influence in American foreign policy as more diverse and fragmented, exploring the different policy preferences that emerged among

different Christian groups in regard to international interventions, human rights, Middle East etc. under Bush and their broader influence on American foreign policy. Butler (2006), on the other hand, concentrates on the influence of America's Christian Right at the United Nations, demonstrating how the mixing of religious ideas and conservative American values about family, sexuality and HIV/AIDS from the domestic realm took on a global dimension in the context of deliberations of UN conferences.

The literature on the period following 9/11 has underlined a broad range of views about the influence of religion in American foreign policy, with Walzer (2004) inclined to be pessimistic about the subject matter whereas Chaplin (2010) and Patterson (2011) have formulated more normative positions which emphasise the benefits of giving careful attention to religion in American foreign policy in what was regarded to be an increasingly faith-influenced international context. Marsden (2008), (Taylor 2005), Croft (2007) and Rock (2011), on the other hand, have emphasised America's Christian Right as a potent religious group within the United States that championed and, moreover, reinforced particular positions in America's foreign policy.

The above literature provides useful insights about the importance of religion in American foreign policy at a particular moment in time, underlining the degree and extent to which religion was deemed relevant in American foreign policy after the attacks of 9/11. Some the literature suggests that religion can have a direct impact on American foreign policy, with Walzer (2004), for example, concerned about how religion could impact foreign policy decision-making. Similarly, scholars such as Marsden (2008), Taylor (2005) and Croft (2007) elevated the importance of the Christian Right that has sought to influence and shape foreign

policy decision-making. However, some of the literature on the 9/11 period might overestimate the extent and degree of influence religion might have had on American foreign policy, seeing religion in American foreign policy as part of a strong and sudden resurgence of religion in American foreign policy rather than part of an ongoing and continuing trend.

2.4.2 Cold War Period

According to Gunn (2008), the onset of the Cold War helped create an ‘American National Religion’ that involved the assumptions of American presidents and foreign policy leaders about America as God’s nation to justify the ideological struggle with the Soviet Union. Gunn seeks to explore the prevalent sentiment – in its various shapes and nuances – in the United States during the Cold War that ‘God would be the ‘first line of defense’ against the Soviet Union’ (p. 8). Specifically, this meant governmental theism involving the introduction of an annual National Day of Prayer established in 1952 (p. 54). Having a strong military in the world went beyond just raw material power but was also motivating for the purposes of spiritual and moral cause against a Godless enemy during the Cold War, with a first class military, in turn, helping improve the spiritual and moral character of those part of it (p. 69). Capitalism and the free market were framed as embodying Christian virtues rather than being associated with greed and avarice (p. 76). The harnessing of these factors would help create what he has poignantly referred to as the ‘spiritual weapon’ in the title of his book and remains the overarching theme of his work – religion as a potent force or tool, and a potential source of America’s strength in the world, that would be utilised accordingly in the Cold War struggle against the Godless Soviet Union.

Inboden (2008) frames his central arguments about the instrumentalisation of religion by the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, respectively, that combined a vision of God and country, and was underpinned by Protestant ideas. It allowed both administrations to present a quasi-religious case in American foreign policy for dealing with the Soviet threat. Quoting president Eisenhower from the election campaign in 1952, Inboden underlines the strong religious dimension underpinning America's foreign policy outlook during the Cold War: 'What is our battle against communism if it is not a fight between anti-God and the belief in the Almighty? Communists know this. They have to eliminate God from their system' (p. 258). Inboden, through Eisenhower's rhetorical assertion, illustrates the prevalent assumption that the Cold War was the struggle between those on the side of the 'Almighty' and those on the side of anti-God and, thus, being anti-communist was a quasi-religious virtue and meant championing a Godly cause in the world.

Being, of course, religious was almost a quasi anti-communist attribute in itself that could be harnessed accordingly for the cause of the Cold War, with Eisenhower keen to display his religious credentials in the Cold War struggle during his presidency and was the only president to be baptised in office (p. 99-100). Hence, Eisenhower realised the potential of religion as a tool to reinforce America's 'godly' cause against the Soviet Union in the Cold War context.

Kirby (2002), argues that Truman's Cold War campaign focused on religious imagery to generate international support for an American foreign policy based on globalism and leadership in the world, seeking to create a religious international anti-communist front involving the world's religious leaders in order to deal with the threat of the Soviet Union and its atheist global agenda. According to Kirby, the Cold War was essentially regarded by

Truman as a 'Christian enterprise...[involving]...the defense of western civilisation and Christianity' (p. 77-78). Amidst such high stakes where the survival of western civilisation and Christianity were so seamlessly intertwined – or conflated – in Truman's understanding of the Cold War context, obtaining the support of religious leaders would help reinforce the religious dimension of the Cold war and harness religion, specifically Christianity, as a source of strength for a policy of containment in the Cold War struggle against the very embodiment of evil, the Soviet Union (p. 78).

Herzog (2011), in his institutional perspective that alludes to the importance of religion, emphasises the existence of a 'spiritual-industrial-complex'. This expression represents a conceptual deviation from Eisenhower's 'military-industrial-complex' that pointed to the influence of the military and its strong linkage to the American business world/economy in determining America's strategic posture during the Cold War. Herzog alludes to the 'spiritual' and its linkage to American society that operated systemically, just like the 'factory-based approach' of a large 'industrial complex', shaping America's strategic stance during the Cold War (p.6-7). Thus, the 'spiritual-industrial-complex' consisted of intertwined political institutions, security institutions and societal institutions which sought to weave religion and religious rituals such as worship participation into the lives of ordinary Americans as a means of fostering support for the Cold War struggle against the Soviet Union. The crux of Herzog's argument was that helping orchestrate, by deploying the 'spiritual-industrial-complex', greater religious fervour in the United States would help avert the dangerous moral laxity – normally associated with secular nations that were reluctant to confront – that could have proven to be particularly detrimental in the Cold War struggle against the Soviet Union (p. 4).

Religion would give the United States a purpose and a sense of morality in the world, with Eisenhower unequivocal about the paramount importance of religion for the United States in the context of the Cold War struggle: ‘Our form of government makes no sense unless it is founded in a deeply religious faith’ (p. 8).

These distinct religious features underpinning the Cold War seem to suggest that, far from being just an ideological contest, it was underpinned by strong religious elements within the United States. Yet, while these authors have not pointed to religion as the main motivation for America’s Cold War foreign policy and, thus, that it represented an outright ‘religious war’, religion was nevertheless seen as an integral part of the larger discourse about how to deal with the Soviet Union. Whether Gunn, Inboden, Kirby or Herzog, they have all highlighted religion as a tool that has been used to galvanise and strengthen support for America’s strategic posture in its Cold War struggle against the Soviet Union. The literature highlights the subtleties and nuances of religion in American foreign policy well, placing emphasis on the importance of religion in American foreign policy in a specific context rather than part of a larger historical trend.

2.4.3 Long-Term Historical Trends

Other scholars have taken a long-term historical perspective. Ribuffo (1998) points out that throughout America’s history, with insightful analysis that covers the period from the era of manifest destiny in mid-nineteenth century until the termination of the Cold War at the of the twentieth century, America’s sense of mission in the world unfolded in the wake of strong

religious sentiments at the domestic level. This included the period of 'Manifest destiny' that led to vast territorial expansion in the mid nineteenth century and coincided with the period of Great Awakening which revitalised Protestantism; America's intervention in the Philippines that generated strong support among Protestants within the United States; the Vietnam War was underpinned by religious elements, with the religious establishment voicing its opposition as the war dragged on.

Rather than events in American foreign policy unfolding directly because of religious factors (and at times despite them), the author points out that, in the 'complicated' relationship between religion and American foreign policy, the importance of religion is indirect and subtle (p. 43-48). The ebb and flow of religion within the United States, instead, provides a rich and varying backdrop to the complex history and dynamics of American foreign policy, helping expand and add to our understanding of America's relationships with the world. Religion is one component of the overall dynamics of American foreign policy, yet one without which other components would have been potentially weakened and the overall narrative on America's engagement with the world would make less sense.

There have been interpretations that have alluded to how America's foreign policy, although motivated by material gains, was also underpinned by religious elements. For example, Mead's (2008) *God and Gold* offers a rich narrative of America's relationship with the world that spans across four centuries, from America's birth, rise and successful consolidation of superpower status. The economic imperative, i.e. the pursuit of gold, had been an important driver of America's ascendancy in the world, that was aided by liberal values, a sophisticated

maritime strategy and, moreover, crucially punctuated by a strong Protestant tradition that gave it moral purpose and meaning for transforming the world.

According to Kagan (2006: 16), America's territorial expansion was underpinned by a search for an inseparable set of 'material, spiritual and political benefits'. He argues that America's territorial expansion, stretching from the period of the American Revolution until the American-Spanish War in 1898, was politically sanctioned by the Declaration of Independence that sought to guarantee that the rights of mankind were universal and were applicable beyond America's territory. Set against this backdrop, America's ambition in the world involved the conflation of the expansion of the universal rights of mankind with the pursuit of economic opportunities beyond the existing territories embraced by the American government and reinforced by a commercial, entrepreneurial class (p. 71-72). Such intermingling of the political and economic realm was undercut by a sense of destiny as a nation, with God guiding the United States accordingly in its territorial ambition (p. 86). Yet, overall, Kagan's historical narrative emphasises political and economic factors as dominant in defining America's mission, with religious assumptions being of secondary importance that served to reinforce the convoluted political and economic motivations for territorial expansion.

Placing greater emphasis on the importance of religion in American foreign policy than the previous two scholars, Preston (2012) seeks to explore the 'uniquely intimate relationship' between religion and American foreign policy (p. 4). He offers an impressive historical sweep of three hundred years of the cultural and intellectual history of ideas on how religion was such an integral aspect in American foreign policy, specifically in regard to waging war, from

the arrival of early settlers in America until the contemporary period that ends with the Bush administration. According to Preston's account, American foreign policy military intervention was the outgrowth of the religious-cum-political assumptions of foreign policy decision makers converging with the nation's broader religious outlook that, throughout its history, was shaped by fiery preachers and underwent cycles of revival and awakening. Preston points to the importance of a dominant Protestant worldview, while giving some consideration to the relatively limited influence of Catholic and Jewish elements in small separate sections in various chapters, shared throughout American history and, moreover, voiced by foreign policy decision makers.

To Preston, whether George Washington, Woodrow Wilson, Harry S. Truman, Ronald Reagan or more recently George W. Bush Jr., American presidents have tried to appeal to Americans via an evolving Protestant ethos when formulating America's military involvement with the world, with their own religious convictions offering some relevant insights into how at times they leveraged their beliefs in American foreign policy while seeking to appeal to an American population which over time has been defined by greater religious diversity. Thus, in light of the personal religious convictions of American presidents and those of the American population, Preston emphasises the particularly strong presence of the Protestant worldview in helping shape American foreign policy considerations.

These works have provided relevant insight into the complex historical relationship between religion and American foreign policy. Ribuffo sees the importance of religion in American foreign policy as, at best, subtle and indirect amidst the strategic and economic considerations that determine American foreign policy. Mead and Kagan elaborate on this by emphasising

religion as one component of a larger dynamics in American foreign policy. Preston's in-depth analysis on the importance of religion in American history makes a strong case for the importance of religion in American foreign policy, suggesting that its impact at times was profound in light of the religiosity of American presidents and the Protestant ethos as part of a broad cultural belief system embraced by Americans over time.

In sum, the American foreign policy literature addressed has highlighted the discrete and indirect importance of religion in American foreign policy that goes beyond the attacks of 9/11, being a rich part of America's foreign policy narrative since America's founding. The influence of the Christian Right, the emergence of a 'spiritual-industrial-complex' and power of fiery preachers in public discourse brings to the fore how religious assumptions within the United States converged with America's foreign policy narrative. I argue, American presidents have tried to appeal to Americans by justifying their respective foreign policy on civil religious grounds. They have drawn on civil religious rhetoric to help better explain America's foreign policy to Americans, rather than as the main motivation for foreign policy decisions that have been already undertaken.

While IR approaches have focused on specific events and have offered a narrower parameter for analysis by focusing on the Cold War and 9/11 period, long-term historical approaches have emphasised religion as an enduring aspect of American foreign policy over time. This seems to suggest that religion is an intrinsic part of the United States, with religious ideas prevailing in American foreign policy over time.

Set against this background, the study of religion in American foreign policy could benefit from an emphasis on religion as an enduring aspect of American foreign policy, in conjunction

with a systematic conceptual framework within the discipline of International Relations. This would permit the discipline to go beyond its usual tendency to see international relations as having clear-cut beginnings and endings, overemphasising the importance of change while ignoring the significant degrees of continuity in the wake of even the most profound international events (Wight 2001). Ignoring the degrees of continuity in the wake of highly significant events risks maligning ideas and processes that may have mattered in subtle and nuanced ways in foreign policy. Any understanding of change in foreign policy ought to be complemented by an appreciation of continuity of ideas and values of ideas in foreign policy. A historically-orientated approach would enable us to appreciate the importance of religion in American foreign policy as part of a long-term trend rather than one intertwined with specific events such as the Cold War or the events of 9/11.

If religion has been important in American foreign policy in different eras and during which different priorities were pursued, then it could be that religion is an important part of the United States. Religion appears to be integral part of the nation's DNA, having apparently not ceased to infuse America's perception of the world over time. Yet, how can we make sense of it? I argue, identity or self-understanding offer an interesting avenue for exploring religion as an intrinsic part of the United States and its subsequent relevance in American foreign policy. Identity enables us to discern how religion might flow into who the United States collectively thinks it is and its subsequent relevance in American foreign policy.

2.5 American Exceptionalism, Self-Understanding & American Foreign Policy

One strand of literature that offers an interesting avenue for exploring the importance of identity and American foreign policy is the literature on American exceptionalism. American exceptionalism, having religious origins, has been considered central to America's identity, with Americans from all walks of life – whether politicians or ordinary people – overwhelmingly embracing the notion that America is an exceptional nation. This self-perception as a nation has been potent that it has apparently underpinned America's place in the world.

This section explores the complex relationship between American exceptionalism as an aspect of the nation's identity and America's foreign policy. It also considers manifest destiny as religiously-infused concept that underpinned America's self-understanding and subsequently American foreign policy. In an attempt to probe the relevance of American exceptionalism for this thesis, this section seeks to probe the following questions: Does American exceptionalism do justice to the religious dimension of America's self-understanding? Is it adequate in terms of exploring this thesis' theme of religion as part of a long-term trend in American foreign policy? American exceptionalism, as I argue here, reveals limitations in terms of how it elaborates on the religion dimension of America's national self-understanding. Manifest destiny does more justice to America's religiously-infused self-understanding but lacks as an overarching concept to explore the long-term importance of religion in American foreign policy.

2.5.1. American Exceptionalism and Self-Understanding

American exceptionalism has been enthusiastically discussed by academics and embraced by the American public. The sheer interest this concept has continued to evoke is staggering. One scholar proclaimed that in the recent years '[e]xceptionalism has gone viral' (Ceasar 2013: 1) and another one claiming that a search for 'American exceptionalism' in Google on 21 January 2011 yielded 1,63 million results (Nash 2013: 125), with the same search yielding 3, 37 million results on 22 February 2019. Popular and widespread it may be, but American exceptionalism does not do justice to the religiously-infused values that have continued to underpin American political culture.

American exceptionalism is the belief that the United States is distinct as a people. Americans like to think of themselves as being unlike any other nation in the world. Lipset (1996) regarded the combination of individualism, laissez-faire economic system, anti-statism, and populism as the cogs of American exceptionalism that apparently make the United States unique as a people. Caeser (2012: 9; see also Byron Shafer 1991), elaborating on this point, underlines that 'much evidence has been adduced to show that America is a statistical outlier...[in terms of] size of government, the number of voluntary associations per capita, rates of philanthropic activity, and commitment to personal freedom'. Of course, then again, there are also negative characteristics which are associated with the United States – the number of incarcerated Americans (2018),⁸ gun violence (2018)⁹ etc.

⁸ Kann, Drew, '5 facts behind America's high incarceration rate', <https://edition.cnn.com/2018/06/28/us/mass-incarceration-five-key-facts/index.html>

⁹ Lopez, German, 'America is one of 6 countries that make up more than half of gun deaths worldwide'

In a poll conducted by Gallup in 2010, 80 % of respondents¹⁰ affirmed that the United States had a ‘unique character’ whereas 18 % disagreed and 2 % had no opinion. The fact that 80 % respondents were convinced of America’s uniqueness suggests that Americans are overwhelmingly prepared to embrace the idea of American exceptionalism. However, due consideration ought to be given to phrasing used in this questionnaire: ‘Because the United States’ history and Constitution, do you think the US has a unique character that makes it the greatest country in the world, or don’t you think so?’ The phrasing used could have led respondents to agree with the statement than they might have wished to do so. Another limitation to this poll is the fact that the poll was conducted in a particular moment in time and, thus, it underlines public sentiments only at that specific point.

In the annual polls conducted by the *Pew Research Center*, which asked Americans ‘Which of these statements best describes your opinion about the United States’, revealed the following results over half a decade (Pew Research Center 2017)¹¹:

	‘The U.S stands above all countries’	‘The US is one of the greatest countries in the world, along with some others’	‘There are other countries better than the US’
Jun 2017	29 %	56 %	14 %
Sept 2015	32 %	52 %	15 %
Feb 2014	28 %	58 %	12 %
Mar 2011	38 %	53 %	8 %

According to the results from the above table, Americans are convinced that their nation stands out in the world, because it ‘stands above all countries’ and is one of the ‘the greatest

<https://www.vox.com/2018/8/29/17792776/us-gun-deaths-global>

¹⁰ Results are based on telephone interviews conducted with a random sample of 1019 adults living in continental United State. Random-digit dial sampling was used to select respondents.

¹¹ http://www.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/06-30-17_Greatest_nation_topline.pdf

countries in the world'. The fact that variations in polling data across all three categories have been relatively minor is indicative of the relative strength of these convictions over time. What is interesting is that the category most respondents picked over the years emphasises America's greatness but also the fact that the United States is *one among* the greatest nations of the world. While this casts some doubt about American exceptionalism and that America stands out in the world, the fact that roughly one third of respondents throughout this period believed that United States stands above all other nations underlines the importance of American exceptionalism as a strand in American political culture. This stance has been broadly echoed by American politicians: while Obama asserted that he subscribed to American exceptionalism and, at the same time, accepted that 'Brits believe in British exceptionalism and the Greeks believe in Greek exceptionalism' (4 April 2009), other politicians such as Mark Rubio, Mitt Romney, John McCain etc. have been adamant that only America is exceptional.

2.5.2 American Exceptionalism and American Foreign Policy

This debate about America's self-understanding as an exceptional nation has elicited attention in regard to the domestic context, whether concerning America's lack of interest for 'soccer' (Hellerman & Makovits 2001), excessive food habits of Americans (Paarlberg 2015) or the development of domestic institutions (Lockhart 2012), but more poignantly it is linked to America's foreign policy that is believed to have, one way or another, shaped the world. Scholars have underlined American exceptionalism as central to national self-understanding which, in turn, influences American foreign policy (Restad 2012).

American exceptionalism, as McEvoy-Levy (2001: 23) promulgates, is such an important idea that it ‘underwrites much of American foreign policy’. Given the impact that has been ascribed to this idea in American foreign policy, it is worth exploring why this might be the case. Before addressing the link between the exceptional self-understanding and American foreign policy, it is worth exploring how American exceptionalism defines national self-understanding.

Michael Kammen gave his study of the historical-cultural roots of the American people the fitting title *A Paradox of a People*, ones who seem to be constantly torn by a ‘dualistic state of mind’ (Kammen 1973: 290). The more common expression used to describe American exceptionalism is ‘Janus’-faced, a reference to a two-faced God from Roman mythology that helps underline that there are two contrasting sides to the central idea of America’s self-understanding. It has been argued that these extremes in America’s self-understanding have consequences for America’s foreign policy. As Restad (2012: 56) points out in regard to American exceptionalism, and in terms of how it is explored in the scholarly literature, there exists ‘an identity dichotomy and a concomitant foreign policy dichotomy’. In this vein, American foreign policy literature has underlined that American exceptionalism consists of the ‘exemplar’ and ‘missionary’ variant that subsequently influences American foreign policy (Boyle 2004; McCrisken 2002).

On the one hand, the exemplar variant has emphasised that American foreign policy is characterised by isolationism in the world. It seeks to serve as a moral example to the rest of the world and remains confident that other nations will seek to emulate America’s values (Litke 2013: 50). America prefers keeping its distance from the world because of the

superiority of its values and, moreover, it seeks to avoid corrupting its own values which it exemplifies like no other country as God's chosen nation (Deneen 2012: 37). This has led scholars to characterise America's foreign policy as isolationist (Crockatt 2003: 13-17).

On the other hand, scholars have underlined that American exceptionalism is associated with America's sense of mission to transform the world. America is the chosen nation, being divinely sanctioned by God to pursue a foreign policy that seeks to redeem the world and guarantee the betterment of humanity. The confluence of these religiously-derived ideas and America's democratic values has created lens through which the world is viewed and, moreover, America's role within it. The disjuncture between the superiority of American beliefs and inferiority of the rest of the world was reinforced by American exceptionalism and helped to create America's sense of a worldwide mission (Hilfrich 2012: 77). In other words, America's values were to be the bedrock for the rest of the world, underlining the conviction that they were inherently universal in character and, as a result, the United States ought to pursue a foreign policy that shapes the world.

American foreign policy literature has underlined that America's foreign policy has oscillated between isolationism and missionary zeal (Lieven 2004). Scholars from a range of theoretical and conceptual backgrounds have embraced this dichotomous premise, whether neo-classical scholar Dueck (2006), neo-realists like Layne (2007), constructivists like Campbell (1992), presidential communication studies scholars Edwards (2008) or international historians such as Fousek (2000). The premise that American foreign policy has swung between isolationism and missionary zeal is both widespread as it is entrenched in the literature. Restad (2012; 2014) astutely challenges the Janus-faced nature of America's self-understanding as an

exceptional nation that is intertwined with a dichotomous foreign policy. While I appreciate Restad's considerable contribution to American foreign policy scholarship by highlighting continuities in American foreign policy, I question whether American exceptionalism is the appropriate concept to flesh out America's self-understanding as a nation and, thus, highlight continuities in American foreign policy. To that end, the next section provides a critical engagement with the concept of American exceptionalism and underlines the relevance of Puritan ideas as an integral America's self-understanding. Inspired by Restad's work that links America's self-understanding to continuity in American foreign policy, this thesis opts to place the accent on the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion as a persistent feature of America's self-understanding that has found expression in presidential rhetoric on foreign policy.

2.5.3 American Exceptionalism and its Religious Dimension

There seems to be an intimate relationship between American exceptionalism and American foreign policy, necessitating further analysis of American exceptionalism as an important part of America's self-understanding. Crucially, why do Americans subscribe to American exceptionalism? Where exactly does American exceptionalism's potency come from? American exceptionalism is intertwined with the notion of 'chosenness', a sense that Americans are nothing less than God's chosen people who have been elected to fulfil His will on earth (Tuveson 1968). This is what makes them truly distinguished as a people – in fact, being God's chosen people is a very distinctive category for a people to be that renders

Americans very special. It sets Americans apart from other nations and has inspired their understanding of the world and their actions within it (Webb 2004).

Chosenness emanates from the religious worldview of America's Puritan ancestors and their understanding of millennial theology, representing the 'ongoing and unbroken manifestation of America's Puritan founding' (Deneen 2012: 30). According to international historian Michael Adas (2001: 1692) it was who 'John Winthrop captured the Puritans' sense of the exceptional nature of their undertaking, which they believed to be divinely ordained and without precedent'. America's self-understanding as a people has religious origins that have continued to reverberate over time to render Americans as God's chosen people. Moreover, it is worth remembering that while scholars such as Adas make the link between exceptionalism and America's Puritan ancestors, there were no references to 'exceptionalism' but rather to religious language that draws on the Biblical reference of 'City upon a Hill' which helps affirm the notion that the Puritans as 'God's chosen people'. The potency of America's self-understanding as a people is derived from the religious connotations of chosenness that has inspired America's sense of mission in the world (Ceaser 2012:10).

Given the underlying religious dimension of 'chosenness', it is perhaps best to speak of America's self-understanding as 'God's chosen people'. The religious dimension that underpins American national life, individual and collective level, can help explain why Americans might be more accepting toward religious assumptions and, thus, renders 'God's chosen people' a more fitting category to describe America's self-understanding than the shortened category of 'chosenness' which seems somewhat disconnected from America's religiously-infused political culture. Religion is an integral part of the fabric of the United

States, permeating American life. A *Pew Research Center* study revealed that America is a strongly religiously nation and most religious when compared to wealthy democracies, with Americans more likely to attend religious ceremonies on a weekly and ascribe greater importance to religion in their lives than adults, for example, in Canada, Australia and most European countries.¹²

The origins of American exceptionalism are relatively recent. While scholars have frequently stipulated that Alexis de Tocqueville's work stipulated ideas about American exceptionalism, he made one generic statement relates to why Americans are less likely to cultivate the arts and sciences as the 'situation of Americans is therefore entirely exceptional' (Ceaser 2012: 7; de Tocqueville quoted in *ibid.*). The term American exceptionalism seems to have arisen first in the writings of American communist Jay Lovestone in the 1920s (Litke 2012: 197). Louis Hartz's *Liberal Tradition in America* (1955) makes the case for America as an exceptional nation, as does Max Lerner in his book titled *America as a Civilization* (1957). This would suggest that American exceptionalism was not worthy of scholarly attention before the 1950s and, moreover, underlines the need to consider historical concepts that explore the link between America's religiously-infused self-understanding and American foreign policy.

¹² Fahmy, Dalia, 'Americans are far more religious than adults in other wealthy nations', <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/07/31/americans-are-far-more-religious-than-adults-in-other-wealthy-nations/>

2.5.4 Manifest Destiny & American Foreign Policy

Manifest destiny perhaps does more justice to America's religiously-infused self-understanding as people than American exceptionalism. The term manifest destiny was coined in 1845 by John L. O'Sullivan, a New York journalist with Irish ancestry, amidst the territorial expansion involving the annexation of Texas and Oregon, and as James Polk assumed the presidency with the promise to help expand America's territory.¹³ According to O'Sullivan, America had 'a manifest destiny to overspread the continent allotted by Providence for the free development of our yearly multiplying millions' (1845: 5).¹⁴ The United States, he added, ought to 'possess the whole of the continent which the Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federated self-government entrusted to us' (*ibid.*). To O'Sullivan, manifest destiny sought to capture the population movement of settlers, missionaries and trader across the American continent. An integral part of manifest destiny was the notion that America's territorial expansion was inevitable, and that Providence legitimised it.

The implication was that America's history and geographical borders were governed by nothing less than divine laws, with the United States preordained by God to expand its territory to spread the very values enshrined in the American Revolution (Pratt 1927: 796-

¹³ There is also the backdrop of the Jackson presidency. In 1832 Andrew Jackson assumed the presidency asserting himself to be the heir of Jeffersonian Republicanism. Jackson's National Republican Party was linked to a worldview that was premised on cleavages involving 'producing' and 'non-producing' strata of society. Jackson's message resonated with newly franchised voters of the ever-growing West who pushed for territorial expansion.

¹⁴ O'Sullivan used the phrase manifest destiny for the first time in the summer of 1845. At that point three thousand Americans, originating mainly from the states in the Mississippi Valley, went on the Oregon Trail shifting their homes to western parts of Oregon. As the population continued to grow, a provisional government was created that echoed the model of the American state.

97). United States had been given vast land, as the assumption went, by God to do exactly that and, thus, embark a foreign policy of territorial conquest. Manifest destiny infused the narratives surrounding America's territorial expansion with a transcendental purpose and underlined the notion that God had a special plan for the United States, as well as helping capture the popular mood and aspirations at the time. Manifest destiny suggested that God had had a hand in helping transform the United States from a fledgling state to one that occupied half of the continent, with even greater deeds apparently still ahead in America's foreign policy.

While manifest destiny had strong religious elements, it was multi-faceted. The territorial acquisitions were regarded as an affirmation of national and racial superiority, with the racist strand being so strong that the question arose whether territorial expansion was primarily motivated by racism (Hietala 1997). The territorial assertiveness has been linked to a calculated racialized imagery to justify territorial conquest, with label 'manifest design' deemed more a fitting to describe and conceptualise continental expansion than manifest destiny which emphasises the transcendental dimension of it in the first instance (Hietala 1985). The expansion was the outgrowth of Anglo-Saxon civilizational racism, infused with Providential elements, that helped perpetuate a hierarchical understanding of progress which pitted the superior Whites who were entitled to seize the lands of the inferior non-Whites (Horsman 1981). Albert K. Weinberg (1935) presents manifest destiny as an expression of American nationalism. To Johannsen (1997:3) manifest destiny constituted 'Romantic nationalism with the realistic, practical consequences of extraordinary technological and economic developments'. Frederick Merk (1963) argues that manifest destiny had ideological origins rather than being grounded in nationalism, being part of the nation's deeper

commitment to spreading freedom. These insightful, yet thematically varied, accounts underline that the expression manifest destiny obscures more than it reveals.

While Coles (2002) decided to link manifest destiny to with a sense of mission in American foreign policy in the contemporary period, the Persian Gulf War in 1990 and Kosovo intervention in 1999, he acknowledges the manifest destiny as part of America's broader national self-understanding rather than a standalone category. Manifest destiny as an idea of American foreign policy pertains to a limited period and had a much shorter shelf-life. One leading scholar of American foreign policy history pointed out, 'manifest destiny' was an expression that 'arose suddenly, flourished briefly, and then vanished' (Brauer 1999). While the origins of manifest destiny have been located the 1840s, the term is the outgrowth of an established tradition that has perpetuated arguments that linked America's self-understanding as a people with Providence and echoed the rhetoric of American Revolution (Guyatt 2007: 218).

The central ideas associated with manifest destiny have been around much longer in American foreign policy, with the distinction made between 'old manifest destiny' of earlier periods of American history and the 'new manifest destiny' of the 1840s (Bennett 2002: 386). The origins of manifest destiny, specifically the link between American settlers and land acquisition that was partly premised on providential arguments, has been located in the Jeffersonian period (Owsley & Smith 1997). The Jefferson presidency witnessed a wave of land acquisition such as the Louisiana Purchase and annexation of American Indian territories pursued by settlers and facilitated by the government, with Jefferson's presidential rhetoric

helping underline that these processes were divinely sanctioned (see Jefferson presidency in Ch. 4).

In sum, while American exceptionalism touches on the religious dimension of American self-understanding, it needs further probing and elaboration. With chosenness such a potent part of American exceptionalism, it might be worthwhile to instead focus on the more accurate category of ‘God’s chosen people’ to do justice to the religiously-infused dimension of America’s national self-understanding. American exceptionalism acknowledges America’s Puritan ancestor but does not deal with them in greater depth and how their ideas and strands of their ideas have been an embedded part of the United States. Manifest destiny does greater justice to the religiously-infused dimension of America’s self-understanding than American exceptionalism. It represents a much narrower historical concept and although it has been applied to other periods it lacks the scope to describe America’s religiously self-understanding over time. Hence, there is a need to draw on a concept that enables us to describe and analyse transcendental narratives in a manner that links a specific period with a broader and religiously-derived strand at the heart of national self-understanding.

A conceptual framework is needed that offers us the vocabulary to describe the religious origins of America’s self-understanding, and also enables us to reconcile the religious dimension of America’s self-understanding as people with the fact that the United States maintains a strict separation between church and state. Where exactly does one locate America’s religiously-infused self-understanding as a people and how does it operate? Given that America’s national self-understanding is infused with the religious idea God’s chosen

people, can one speak of religion of sorts? The concept of civil religion in chapter 3 offers us the opportunity to find some meaningful answers.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter, commencing with a broader treatment of religion in international relations, has underlined how religion operates at the domestic realm. Religion is an intricate part of the United States, be it the founding of the United States which is considered have a religious dimension, with American public officials past and present not hesitating to make religious references in their public pronouncements. This chapter also underlined the importance of religion in American foreign past and present whilst highlighting the need to delve further into America's history to excavate religious ideas which have been important in America's self-understanding and, moreover, American foreign policy.

As I will develop in the next pages, America's self-understanding is infused with religious ideas that have Puritan origins and relevance in American foreign policy. In the next chapter I will lay down the research design that guides this thesis. It provides an analytical framework to explore how religion has permeated American foreign policy. The analytical frame, constructivist in orientation, draws on the concept of civil religion as a sub-concept of political culture that enables me to establish the link between religion and America's national self-understanding, and the its subsequent relevance in foreign policy. Then, Chapter 4 will go on to explore the role of America's Puritan ancestors as part of America's self-understanding.

CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN: CONCEPTS & METHOD

3.1 Introduction

Religion has been a persistent feature in American foreign policy, and no American president has failed to acknowledge the importance of ‘God’ in their public pronouncements. They have asked for God’s guidance as well as blessings regarding America’s place in the world. American presidents, holders of a public office that is non-religious, have underlined Americans are a people with a special relationship with ‘God’, a people with a self-understanding that has a transcendental dimension and with relevance for America’s foreign policy. The intertwining of the self-understanding and the transcendental that has been echoed in presidential rhetoric in American foreign policy is linked to America’s Puritan ancestors whose ideas have permeated America’s political culture before the founding of the United States.

This chapter focuses on developing this thesis’ conceptual and methodological framework for exploring *how* Puritan ideas have been important in American foreign policy. American presidents have echoed the religiously-grounded ideas of a people i.e. the Puritans who ceased to exist a long time ago. Yet, how did Puritan ideas end up becoming embedded into America’s national consciousness and subsequently having relevance in American foreign policy? Interestingly, American president have made religious references notwithstanding the separation of church and state. The American public expects them to do so. Religion for Americans is not simply a personal matter but one very present in the public realm and, as a

result, significant at the collective level, with American presidents prepared to adhere to these expectations.

This chapter proceeds as follows. **First** it explores constructivism as overarching framework that can help explore the importance of religious idea at the collective level, but it needs to be complemented with the concept of civil religion as a sub-concept of political culture. **Second** it explores in greater detail the importance of civil religion and the integrative function it fulfils in a religiously diverse societies like the United States. **Third** it highlights the transmission mechanism that may have led American presidents to embrace a religious worldview. **Fourth** it presents this thesis' methodological approach, focusing on how the concept of civil religion can be applied to explore how Puritan ideas have been important in presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy and, thus, allowing us to probe how civil religion has been important in American foreign policy.

3.2 Constructivism, Political Culture & Civil Religion

Religion is something Americans from different religious traditions, whether Christians or non-Christians, hold dear, having embraced the notion of a deity or higher power in their lives (Pew Forum).¹⁵ While religion as a phenomenon involving a person's relationship to God can be experienced at the individual level in an emotionally intense manner (Davies 2011), its importance extends beyond the personal remit. Even the most profound individual religious experience is given meaning through socially existing symbols and has significance due to

¹⁵ 'Belief in God', <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/belief-in-god/>

culturally shared understanding of such experiences (McGuire 2008: 6), with Spiro (1966: 96) seeing religion nothing less than an ‘institution consisting of culturally patterned interaction’. With religion in the United States unfolding in the context of the broader established cultural dynamics of American society, there is a strong social dimension to the phenomenon of religion. Crucially, Americans have embraced a national identity as God’s chosen people, convinced that their political institutions were divinely bestowed and, thus, morally superior. America’s national self-understanding has been infused with the ideas of America’s Puritan ancestors, and it these which have been echoed in American presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy.

So, how to best proceed within IR to explore the importance of Puritan ideas in America’s foreign policy? Theories of realism and neoliberalism/neo-institutional would be better suited for exploring material factors in American foreign policy rather than ideational ones. Constructivism’s broader emphasis has been on the socially constructed nature of reality and, thus, the importance of shared ideas and values, with the accent placed on how human experience goes beyond material factors. This should make constructivism a potentially relevant framework for exploring common beliefs and ideas that define national identity. Constructivism has demonstrated ample potential in terms of exploring the importance of identity in American foreign policy (e.g. Campbell 1992; Doty 1996; Widmaier 2007; Weldes 1996, 1999). With the aforementioned scholars exploring the importance of secular ideas in American national identity, to what extent does constructivism enable us to consider the importance of shared religious ideas, such as the ones from America’s Puritan ancestors, regarding American national identity in American foreign policy?

In this section, I review the fundamentals of constructivism to develop the conceptual framework of the thesis which emphasises the intersubjective nature of reality as a result of religious ideas. While the section recognises the strength of constructivism in helping shed light on the broader importance of ideas regarding the social construction of reality, constructivism needs to be complemented with other concepts to explore the importance of religious ideas. To that end, this section proceeds with a constructivist-orientated approach that draws on the concepts of political culture and civil religion, highlighting that civil religion is a sub-concept of political culture that helps explore the religiously-informed social construction of reality stemming from America's Puritan ancestors in the United States.

3.2.1 Fundamentals of Constructivism

In opposition to the dominance of rationalist theories such as realism, neo-realism and liberalism, with their methodological individualism that has emphasised utility maximisation and a materialism that sees physical objects as having a direct impact on political outcomes as an integral aspect of the conduct of states, constructivism emerged as an alternative school of thought in the 1990s in what has been described as the 'constructivist turn' (Checkel 1998; see also Hopf 1998). According to Ruggie, 'constructivism concerns the issue of human consciousness in international life' (1998: 878-9; see also Adler 1997: 322). In his poignant observation, Ruggie reveals the essential feature of constructivism as an approach which emphasises that international reality, rather than being fixed in terms of how it is understood and seen by human beings, is open to interpretation and is socially constructed as a result of the efforts involving 'human consciousness' that helps determine the goals and aims pursued.

Yet, constructivism does not reject material reality and Ruggie points out that its importance and relevance in the world is contingent on the process of social construction. Constructivism seeks to explore how and why international reality, by emphasising the importance of ideational factors, is understood in a variety of ways and the significance this has for the practice of international relations.

Constructivism has pointed to the importance of collectively-held beliefs regarding what social life is and what it ought to be (Finnemore & Sikkink 2001). According to constructivism, ideas are intersubjective macro-level phenomena, being 'embedded not only in human brains but also in the 'collective memories', government procedures, education systems, and the rhetoric of statecraft' (Legro 2005: 5). Ideas, as explored by constructivism, are not merely confined to the beliefs of individuals but are broadly shared among people, thereby rendering them inherently 'social' and, therefore, important in the very process of the social construction of reality. They are analysed in terms of their overall collective significance and relevance for the practice of international relations rather than exclusively specific individual-psychological ones (Klotz & Lynch 2007: 47; Legro 2005: 5). As Farrell (2002: 60) unequivocally puts it, 'constructivists are not interested in the beliefs actors hold so much as the belief actors *share*'.

As such, constructivism has emphasised shared knowledge involving norms, discourse and ideology (see, e.g, Bukovansky 2009; Keeley 1990; Price 1995). Yet, with shared knowledge existing by virtue of individuals prepared to embrace certain beliefs and ideas, there is also a recognition that individuals and their private beliefs prevail as the process of societal socialisation cannot ensure that only shared knowledge exists and, in light of this context,

private convictions can come to bear and impact on the dominantly held shared knowledge (Wendt 1999: 188). Constructivism's emphasis on collectively embraced ideas and values does not necessarily exclude the individual from its analysis of the social dimension underpinning international life.

The social construction of reality involves the complex interaction between agent and structure. As Barnett (2005: 509) points out: 'Reality does not exist out there waiting to be discovered; instead, historically-produced and culturally-bound knowledge enables individuals to construct and give meaning to reality.' The implication is that, as actors are prepared to collectively subscribe to certain temporal and place-specific ideas and beliefs, they can give them meaning by being prepared to act in accordance with them. It is these actions, derived from these shared beliefs, that can become 'institutionalised into practices' and can create constraints in regard to future actions and, thus, define what is deemed permissible for purposive actors across time (Adler 1997: 325-26).

Actors over time help establish and entrench these ideas and beliefs as existing and real 'social facts' as part of a broader social structure that underpins reality (Ruggie 1998: 12). Actors interpret and shape ideas and beliefs and, at the same time, are constrained by them in what, according to constructivist analysis, is the co-constitution of agent and structure which can help expand our understanding of an actor's involvement in the world (Wendt 1995: 73). Constructivism offers insight into the social continuity and change that influences and is influenced by an actor's outlook and conduct at the international level, shedding light onto how actors seek to operate as part of a larger whole within which they exist and the patterns of conduct that can emerge.

Although constructivism provides an insightful framework in terms of exploring the social dimension of international life, it is essentially a broad metatheoretical point of departure that operates in conjunction with social theory to emphasise the general importance of ideas for comprehending the dynamics of the social fabric of reality (Adler 1997: 320). Constructivism is not a concrete theory of international politics and, as such, does not shed light on the specific content of ideas and beliefs (Finnemore & Sikkink 2001: 393; Ruggie 1998: 856, 879). Constructivism is an IR approach to inquiring about the dynamics of international relations by exploring the relevance of ideational factors.

Building on the theoretical assumptions of constructivism as the foundation of inquiry, specific content must be derived from some different source in order to explore how reality is socially constructed. Constructivist analysis is to be linked to concepts which have served as a source of the content of ideas and beliefs that can help specify who the actor is and what the actor subsequently wants to achieve. These concepts need to be able to capture the intersubjective dimension of international relations that informs constructivism (see e.g. Klotz & Lynch 2007: 16). They should help explore *why* and *how* actors are willing to embrace certain meanings over others, specifically *why* and *how* have religious ideas of America's Puritans ancestor have been embraced within the United States.

3.2.2 Religion as a Phenomenon of Political Culture

This section presents the concepts of political culture as part of the constructivist-orientated framework of this thesis. The next two paragraphs provide a survey of the political culture

literature that highlights the broader importance of beliefs and values. This section, then, explores religion as an aspect of political culture with a specific reference to the United States, highlighting how religion informs political culture because of its broader relevance within society. It highlights that Americans have drawn on religion in regard to broader societal issues and by doing so they have echoed some of the religious ideas of America's Puritan ancestors.

The concept of political culture helps further elaborate on the socially constructed nature of reality (Wiarda 2014: 162). Verba (1965: 513), one of the pioneers of the concept of political culture, defined it as 'a system of empirical beliefs, expressive symbols, and values which define the situation in which political action takes place'. Political culture emphasises the importance of enduring, general values and beliefs in political analysis (Fuchs 2007: 3; Wilson 2000: 246). Inglehart (1988: 1228) has reiterated that 'given societies tend to be characterised by durable cultural attributes', with the same author (1990: 18) emphasising in a book which elaborates on his article that political culture involves a 'system of attitudes, values and knowledge that is widely shared within society and transmitted from generation to generation'. Political culture echoes attitudes and values that have wider resonance in a country's citizenry over time, helping discern the distinctive and entrenched patterns of attitudes held among the people of a country and, thus, elaborating on the relationship between the citizenry and the state. Political culture underscores the subjective underpinnings of politics that can give a polity meaning and purpose over time (Pye 1965: 7). It brings to the fore not what is actually happening in the world, but rather what people broadly believe might be taking place in the world as a result of the values and beliefs of their particular country.

Deviating from the positivist approach to political culture that focuses on empirical investigations of democratic values (Jackman & Miller 1996; Putnam 1993; Reisinger 1995), scholars have used interpretive approaches to explore the importance of religion in political culture – a combination of the ‘culturist’ and ‘hermeneutic’ approaches. The culturist approach has evolved from the anthropological tradition that avoids individual orientations but focuses on collective orientations that exist in a political system and determine its social cohesiveness (Wilson 2000: 252, see also e.g. Douglas & Wildavsky 1983; Thompson, Ellis & Wildavsky 1990; Wildavsky 1987). The ‘hermeneutic’ approach emphasises the symbolic underpinnings of politics, with a focus on the significance of rituals in any given society (Dittmer 1977; Edelman 1988).

In line with these particular approaches to political culture, according to Berger’s (1973: 37) religion is nothing less than the ‘human enterprise of world-building’ in the process of the social construction of reality, being underpinned by ‘the farthest reach of man’s self-externalisation...[that involves]...his infusion of reality with his own meaning’. The assumption is that most human beings, as they encounter and deal with reality, have ‘a relatively coherent, overarching, and articulated ‘Weltanschauung’, ‘world-view’, ‘perspective’ [or] ‘value orientations’ regarding the world that is based on religion (Bainbridge & Stark 1981: 1). Religion represents a ‘system of ultimate meanings’ in people’s lives that helps shape their broadly shared outlook, sentiments and feelings about the very world within which people exist (Wuthnow 1976: 2-3). Religion in political culture can provide essential tools and guidelines to human beings as they seek stability in life. In the search for meaning and purpose in life, it can help human beings explore questions about their

existence and, thus, stabilise it through transcendental answers to their existential queries (Waever & Lausten 2000: 738; see also Fox & Nukhet 2013: 148).

Americans have recognised the power of the transcendental in their lives. According to a poll from 2017, 47 % of Americans are convinced that the Bible is ‘inspired by the word of God’ while another 24 % believe that the ‘Bible is the literal word of God’ (Saad 2017).¹⁶ Nearly half of Americans believe that ‘God determines what happens all the time or most of the time’ (Pew Polls 2018).¹⁷ Almost eight-in-ten adults in America are convinced that a ‘higher power has protected them’ while another ‘two-thirds say they have been awarded by the Almighty’, with another six-in-ten American convinced a ‘higher power will judge all people on what they have done’ (*Ibid.*). American life is intricately connected to the transcendental, and the protection, rewards and judgement Americans have elicited from a higher power is reminiscent of America’s Puritan ancestors who regarded themselves as a people with a covenant with God who embraced divine favour and protection whilst fearing damnation.

Geertz (1973: 89) sees religion as a ‘cultural system’ involving sacred symbols that determine how believers interpret their world and lives that, in turn, helps establish their common value orientations. As Geertz (*ibid.*) emphasises, religion helps ‘synthesise a people’s ethos – the tone, the character, and the quality of their life, its moral and aesthetic style – and their world view – their picture they have of the way things in sheer actuality are, their most comprehensive idea of order’. To Geertz, religion helps fuse personal outlook about morality

¹⁶ Saad, Lydia (2017), ‘Record Few Americans Believe Bible Is Literal Word of God’, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/210704/record-few-americans-believe-bible-literal-word-god.aspx>

¹⁷ ‘When Americans Say They Believe in God, What Do They Mean?’ (2017) <https://www.pewforum.org/2018/04/25/when-americans-say-they-believe-in-god-what-do-they-mean/>

and conduct with broader values and conceptions about the world in people's minds that creates specific collectively-held assumptions about what *ought to be* in the world in terms of order. Americans regard religion as a source of moral guidance that can help them deal with personal as well as societal issues. It has determined how Americans have viewed sexual relationships (with some Americans professing to live a life of celibacy before marriage) (Uecker 2008); the institution of marriage is regarded by some Americans as one between man and woman on religious grounds (Olson et al 2006); anti-abortion policies are presented to be based on religiously-derived understanding of the meaning of life (Hoffmann et al 2005); school education where the teaching of evolution in science classes remains controversial and a Biblical understanding of the creation of the world is preferred (Antolin et 2001). Like their Puritan ancestors Americans continue to be inspired by religion to live a life of morality and virtue, echoing the Puritan notion of what was believed to be a morally superior 'city upon a hill'.

With Americans having looked to religion provide answers to existential questions, a religiously-infused political culture can emerge that provides collective understandings and meanings about the world. Hans Mol (1976) argues that religion is so fundamental to identity that religion ultimately involves the 'sacralisation of identity'. In man's search for stability and predictability in life, religion through its culturally-embedded symbols and rituals crucially helps satisfy the basic 'demand for order and sameness, and an abhorrence of disorder and chaos' (p. 14). Religion, in Mol's view, is a source of coherence within society that contributes to social and cultural integration as the search for order and meaning in life via religious symbols and rituals is intertwined with the creation of shared identities. Through

rituals, members of a group, as a result of a common experience, develop a sense of affiliation, however brief and temporary, that delineates those sharing the experience and those outside such experiences. Religion helps generate what Max Weber referred to as *Zusammengehörigkeitsgefühl*, a sense of togetherness, that creates sentiments of believed connectedness and commonality (Brubaker & Cooper 2000: 20). Religion can play a significant role in helping society satisfy its needs for social cohesion among what is a group of people with disparate interests and ideas (Kratochwil 2005: 115; Weissbrod 1983: 189). Americans from different religious and socio-economic backgrounds have embraced the notion that Americans as a people are God's chosen people, convinced that the United States maintains a special relationship with God. Americans have embraced the nation's self-understanding that is infused with the Puritan idea of a sacred covenant with God.

3.3 Religious Aspect of Political Culture: Civil Religion

Religion in political culture is best elaborated through the concept of civil religion. Civil religion, because of its depth and complexity, provides the vocabulary for exploring the significance of religion in political culture. The relationship between religion and political culture in the United States can be further refined and elaborated through the concept of civil religion which emphasises the culturally embedded nature of religious ideas. Civil religion enables us to explore perennial references such as 'God bless the United States' or 'city upon a hill' that are embedded in America's political culture in all its manifestations. It treats such vocabulary as if it were part of a state's 'religion' and, thereby, helps excavate the social meaning and significance such vocabulary carries for a people. While political culture as a

concept is broad, civil religion is a specific concept within political culture. The concept of civil religion has focused on religiously-infused values and assumptions of a society, offering us the possibility of elaborating, analysing and interpreting in this thesis the importance of religion in American political culture, specifically Puritan ideas and their relevance in American foreign policy. The purpose of this section is to proceed with broader insights on the emergence of the American civil religion literature, and the meaning of civil religion. It, then, locates civil religion in the secular realm, being embedded within America's political culture. This section underlines the broader appeal of civil religion as a result of the integrative function it serves.

3.2.1 The Significance of American Civil Religion

Garrett (1974:190) has pointed out that Robert Bellah's article 'Civil Religion in America' (1967) 'sounded the gong whose reverberations keep resonating'. Robert Bellah's (1967) article, writing against the backdrop of America's involvement in Vietnam, inspired the subsequent research that sought to explore the complex relationship between religion and shared beliefs in political culture, specifically in the United States. Bellah (1967:1) started his article by quoting president John Kennedy's inauguration speech:

'We observe today not a victory of party but a celebration of freedom—symbolising an end as well as beginning – signifying renewal as well as change. For I have sworn before you and Almighty God the same solemn oath our forebears prescribed nearly a century and three quarters ago.'

Bellah observed that this speech by Kennedy – among various others from American presidents ranging from George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams, James Madison, Abraham Lincoln, Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower to Lyndon Johnson he took stock of in his article – referred to God that suggested a religious and spiritual dimension to the United States. He pointed out that in the United States ‘the separation of church and state has a not denied the political realm a religious dimension’ (p. 3),¹⁸ contributing to a civil religion that involved ‘a collection of beliefs, symbols and rituals with respect to sacred things institutionalised in a collectivity’ (p. 8). He noted that an important aspect of civil religion in the United States is that at the collective level American’s are convinced that they have ought to ‘carry out God’s will on earth’ (p. 5). Since America’s founding civil religion has been a ‘genuine vehicle for national religious self-understanding’ (p. 8). Bellah (1974: 26-27), further elaborating on his seminal article on American civil religion several years later, underlined that American Civil Religion meant a firm belief in God’s existence in political life, with the United States being subject to God’s will, enjoying both divine guidance and judgement. Such assumptions are reminiscent of America’s Puritan ancestors who were convinced that they had a special relationship with God, and whose purpose was to fulfil God’s will on earth. This special relationship with God was entrenched in a covenant that led them to take comfort in the fact they had been saved by through divine intervention during

¹⁸ The First Amendment of the United States Constitution from 1789 stipulates that: ‘*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*’ The separation between the church and the state (first thing to be mentioned in the amendment) is regarded as one of the fundamental guarantors of an individual’s freedom of expression in the United States.

their errand in the wilderness, yet remained fearful of divine punishment if they did not uphold the highest moral standards.

With religious ideas being so important in the public realm, it is worth clarifying civil religion. The central assumption of civil religion is that a collectivity is underpinned by religious undertones within the secular context of national political culture. The implication is that a transcendental power is somehow involved in the unfolding of the political life in the United States. Cristi (2001:3) affirmed that societies, drawing on culturally-based sacred and religious symbols derived from religious tradition, tend to 'sacralise certain aspects of civic life by means of public rituals and collective ceremonies' that become expressions of the 'self-identity of a collectivity'.

Civil religion, as another author puts it, is the 'religious symbol of system' which relates to a 'society place in space, time and history to the conditions of ultimate existence and meaning' (Coleman 1970:69). It involves the utilisation of 'God language with reference to the nation', whether the inscription 'In God We Trust', the pledge of allegiance to what is the nation 'under God' or when 'God blesses the United States' (Wuthnow 1994: 130). In essence, civil religion is about the relationship between religion and politics, specifically the religious link between citizens and state.

This includes various historically derived Judeo-Christian themes such as America as a New Jerusalem that is intertwined with the belief that Americans are God's chosen people (Agus 1971), liberty and freedom as God's gift to America (Hatch 1977), the sacred aspects of the symbols of American life (Hellberg 1960) and the moral superiority of the American way of life and its order emphasised in Memorial Day celebrations (Warner 1962). Thanksgiving

Day, Memorial Day, Veterans Day, Columbus Day and Independence are regarded as sacred ceremonies in America's political culture (see e.g Gardella 2013). Verba (1965: 352), one of the foremost scholars of political culture, made the following observation about the Kennedy assassination:

‘the close meshing of the sacred and secular in the top institutions of a political system...the close linkage of religious institutions to the events of the crisis weekend is particularly striking...a larger proportion responded to the assassination with prayer or attendance at special church services and religious ceremony at special services and religious ceremony and imagery abounded in the events of the weekend’.

Verba underlines that the public response to Kennedy's assassination was shrouded with religious undertones, suggesting that American governmental institutions such as the presidency at times can have religious significance. Thus, as per American civil religion America as a nation, its values, its celebrations, symbols and its way of life are somehow sacred. Mead (1963) summed up the complexities of this phenomenon wherein the political and the religious converge to form the ‘religion of the republic’.

There is a religious dimension to America's political culture that affects how America's institutions are understood and perceived by the American population and American presidents, with civil religion characterised by an intertwined top-down and bottom-up dynamics. What gives civil religion a ‘religious dimension’? If we consider a definition of religiosity, then we might gain insights into why civil religion constitutes a kind of ‘religion’. Concerning what constitutes religion, Glock (1962) put forward four aspects of religiosity (1)

experiential and this includes feelings and emotions (2) ritualistic and this pertains to overt religious behaviour (3) ideological relates to beliefs (4) intellectual pertains to knowledge.

American civil religion constitutes the religion of the American nation, and as this thesis argues, one that has been infused with the Puritan ideas of America's ancestors and have had relevance in American foreign policy. We can draw the following insights about religion in American political culture using Glock's criteria about religion: (1) American civil religion creates feelings and emotions among ordinary Americans as well as the political class, with Americans having embraced the familiar notion of 'America as God's nation'. (2) There is a ritualistic element to American public holidays, with Americans congregating in person or in front of their radios, their television screens or more recently over the internet to listen to their political leaders; memorials to commemorate American values, heroes and icons become infused with the sacred through the very services that take place to celebrate them. The rhetoric of American president has frequently referred to or echoed Puritan ideas such as the 'city upon a hill' or 'God's nation' on public holiday as well as during memorial services which American presidents have helped deliver.

(3) American civil religion, rather than having insular existence, is intertwined with broader American beliefs such as freedom, liberty and democracy. Puritan ideas about 'city upon a hill' or 'incarnations of the devil' have converged, amongst others, with the American values about democracy and freedom in the foreign policy rhetoric of American presidents. (4) American civil religion as such does not constitute a form of knowledge that has been articulated through a written text such as the Bible, but rather it involves a set of ideas which Americans at times draw on to understand the world. American presidents have drawn on

Puritan ideas such as Americans as a covenanted people to explain to Americans America's place in the world. Hence, civil religion has some similarities to organised religion and, therefore, deserves to be referred to as a kind of religion.

Given some of the similarities between religion and civil religion in the United States, the question is where exactly is American civil religion, with its Puritan antecedents, located? The next section further discusses the concept of civil religion and its significance in the United States, with specific references to the empirical investigations that have been conducted in the American civil religion literature. It explores the emergence of civil religion in the secular realm in the United States as a result of the separation of church and state that is guaranteed by the American constitution and related to this issue is the need to do justice to America's religious diversity. Thus, American civil religion, with its Puritan antecedents, could not have emerged without these two factors complementing each other.

3.3.2 Locating American Civil Religion

There has been some controversy surrounding civil religion. Some scholars have challenged the existence of civil religion in American political culture on the grounds that the existence of civil religion had not 'been clearly established by the data made available' (Bowden 1975: 498). The evidence provided was apparently insufficient to support the powerful claim made in the civil religion literature. Indeed, Bellah pointed to 'certain common elements of religious orientation...a majority of Americans share' (1967: 3) and they could be observed in the 'life of every people' (Bellah 1975: 3). The implication was that American civil religion is visible

and somehow well-entrenched. However, Bellah left the task of undertaking empirical investigations on civil religion in the United States to others.

To highlight the existence and the relevance of civil religion in the United States, scholars have conducted empirical investigations. To that end, Thomas and Flippen (1974) conducted a content analysis of editorials of newspapers published across the nation during July 4, 1970. While they were only able to find few references that were important in Bellah's civil religion concept, they admitted that their findings did not necessarily disapprove Bellah's concept and there was a need for further investigation considering these ambiguities. However, it is worth pointing out, as Wimberley et al (1976) astutely do, that Thomas and Flippen use an indirect method of inquiry rather than a direct such as surveys to inquire into whether American's embrace civil religious beliefs.

Wimberley et al (1976) decided that if civil religion was to be found, then, it would be among those revivalist-themed events of evangelist Billy Graham, particularly the ones President Nixon had frequented. Questionnaires were sent to 220 people who had attended a Billy Graham preaching in May 1970. In this questionnaire a specific set of categories were used to explore the significance of civil religion in the survey, with these categories either relating to Bellah's work or large number of ones the scholars considered to be relevant to the subject matter at hand.¹⁹ While the survey was able to empirically confirm the existence of civil

¹⁹ '1. We should respect the president's authority since his authority is from God. 2. National leaders should not only affirm their belief in God but also their belief in Jesus Christ as Saviour and Lord. 3. Good Christians aren't necessarily good patriots 4. God can be known through the experience of the American people. 5. The founding fathers created a blessed and unique republic when they gave us the Constitution. 6. If the American government does not support religion, it cannot uphold morality. 7. It is a mistake to think that America's is God's nation today. 8. To me, the flag of the United States is sacred.'

religion as a separate category from organised religion, it restricts itself by focusing on members of the conservative Protestant faith and, thereby, underlining that American civil religion is important among a particular strata of American society rather than broad segments of it.

To that end, Christensen & Wimberley (1978) investigated whether Americans from different religious, political, social and economic backgrounds subscribed to civil religion. Data was obtained from a survey conducted involving 4,504 potential respondents, with 3,054 individuals (68 %) responding to the survey. Four items were adopted from past research on civil religion indicators.²⁰ While there was some variation in respect to education, religious behaviour, religious beliefs, and few other things, the dominant findings revealed that there was a strong consensus about civil religion across all social strata.

While religious conservatives were perhaps more civil religious than liberals, with 60% of liberals already scoring higher than the midway point of the civil religion scale. Similarly, the results revealed that increased church attendance was correlated with a belief in civil religion. Moreover, Democrats outperform Republicans whereas independents seem less civil religious. The poor, the least educated, the unemployed, old aged pensioner and the elderly were particularly civil religious. White and non-whites revealed similar scores on civil religion. Overall this study helped underline that civil religion is widespread among the masses and Americans generally tend to support it. It crucially highlights that civil religion is

²⁰ This included 'America as God's chosen nation today', 'To me, the flag of the United States is sacred', 'Human Rights come from God and not merely from laws' and 'If government does not support religion, government cannot uphold morality'.

common among those who are religious as well as less religious liberals which suggests that civil religion is a category of its own.

Where exactly does civil religion exist? According to Hammond civil religion, or 'civic religion' as he refers to it, is seen competing with 'church religion' (Hammond 1963: 103), with Bellah (1967:1) echoing this thought when he pointed 'there actually exists alongside of and rather clearly differentiated from the churches an elaborate and well institutionalised civil religion in America'. Civil religion, Bellah added, while 'sharing much in common with Christianity' it was 'not in itself Christian' nor was it 'anticlerical or militantly secular' (Ibid.: 4 & 5). The implication is that civil religion is separate from organised religion and enjoys the status of a 'religion'. Civil religion, however, does not represent a substitute to 'revealed religion but runs parallel to it' (Toolin 1983: 39). The implication of the above scholarship for this thesis is that American civil religion, with its Puritan antecedents, exists in parallel to the different organised religions that have prevailed in the United States.

Moreover, Bellah (1974: 29) argues that even though the symbols of American civil religion are often laden with Biblical imagery, they are distinct from organised religion, noting that American civil religion 'was neither sectarian nor in any specific sense Christian' and that founding fathers such as Franklin, Washington and Jefferson had sought a clear distinction between American civil religion and organised religion (in this instance Christianity). As Bellah delves on the emergence of American civil religion, he emphasises that religious freedom meant that personal piety was in the hands of the churches and 'churches were neither to control the state or be controlled by it'. American founding fathers sought the separation of church and state that ensured that the state is prohibited from interfering in religious

organisation, yet the state was still subject to religious influences (Wimberley & Christensen 1981: 39). This would suggest that a complete separation of church and state as envisaged by the American constitution does not take place in America's political culture and, moreover, has enabled Puritan ideas to flourish over time.

The emergence of civil religion is intertwined with the complexities of religious pluralism. Mead (1967: 277) stipulates that in the United States there are 'three hundred collectively incoherent religious institutions whose claims cancel each other out'. In this vein, Cole & Hammond (1974:178) argue that religious pluralism prevents a particular religion from being dominant and, as a result, it is unable to become the 'source of generalised meaning' for all people in a state. However, as Cole & Hammond also point out, people's desire to imbue their activities with meaning, especially when these activities bring people together of diverse religious background, can result in a different meaning system to be sought and once discovered it can help facilitate people's activities. The implication is that civil religion rises above particularistic religious differences in the United States. Cole & Hammond's argument underlines *why* civil religion emerges and *where* exactly it emerges. In other words, American civil religion with its Puritan antecedents must be broad enough if it is to rise above the particularistic religious fragmentation that prevails in the United States.

Hammond (1963: 103) had suggested earlier that civil religion cannot exist without the separation of church and state. Bellah (1967: 3-4) in his seminal article stipulated that the separation of church and state as integral to the existence of civil religion as it helps 'segregate the religious sphere, which is considered to be essentially private, from the public'. The implication is that the separation of church and state ensure particularistic religious affiliation

are confined to the private realm while civil religion with its Puritan antecedents thrives in the public realm, allowing particularistic religions and civil religion to exist in parallel in the United States. In sum, American legal system helps create framework where religious diversity can thrive and, thereby, contributes to the emergence of civil religion that seeks to unify a religiously diverse people. Developing arguments about civil religion and unity further, the next section probes how exactly civil religion can help create unity among a people and, thus, its importance as a source of America's national identity that is infused with Puritan ideas.

3.3.3 Integrative Function of American Civil Religion

In the sociological analysis of religion it has been argued that in a relatively undifferentiated society integration via religion is possible, whereas in highly differentiated societies the possibility of integration is less likely (Fenn 1972: 16; see also Luckman 1967). Religious diversity, enabled through the separation of church and states promised by American constitution, makes it difficult for a religious symbol to become dominant. Hence, religion does not serve a broader societal purpose and, as a result, does not have significance in the public realm, for that matter is not regarded to be important in America's political culture.

This stance has been challenged. There is a concern that there is a need for societal cohesion and unity as religious symbols are deemed imperative to maintaining social order in society. As the argument goes, the need to maintain social order, has given rise to civil religion as universal meaning system. To be precise civil religion has emerged against the backdrop of

‘problematic pluralism’ (Markoff & Regan 1981). Civil religion helps overcome religious differences that have the potential to create disunity in American society, offering the possibility of social integration in America’s political culture. The integrative function of religion unfolds outside organised, church-based religions.

The existence of civil religion is intertwined with its ability to perform functions that serve society and, thereby, underlines its profound societal significance. Gardella (1970: 76) goes as far as to assert that ‘[b]y definition, civil religion is a religious system given to the social integration of society’ that helps foster a ‘national identity’. Fairbanks (1981: 221) has inferred that civil religion provides a common frame of reference that helps ‘unify members of a political community and give meaning to their collective existence’. Through its mix of non-sectarian inclinations and universalist language that emphasises the importance of the sacred in national life, civil religion helps transcend the divergent religious and denominational dynamics of a pluralist society and, thus, unites a diverse citizenry (Coleman 1970: 76; Cristi & Dawson 1996: 323; Demerath & William 1985: 157). The implication is that civil religion, because of its capacity to unify a highly diverse people in the United States, is more widespread than denominational religions. Yet, what makes civil religion so widespread? It is Puritan ideas, with their emphasis on the transcendental nature of American life derived from the fact that the United States maintains a sacred covenant with God, that help satisfy large number of Americans’ collective search for meaning and purpose. Americans are a people who are convinced, in one shape or form, that the United States maintains a sacred covenant with God.

It has been suggested that civil religion is a source of national unity. Emile Durkheim's classic assertion in *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* is evidently reminiscent of the tenets of civil religion. Durkheim underlines the capacity of religion to integrate society as it infuses its sacred aura upon the symbols of the nation. According to this Durkheimian point of view, religion helps foster social integration through the belief system which fosters individual and social moral values, with rituals engendering identification with national values. Durkheim alluded to the capacity of civil religion to unify a people: 'particular religions are ordinarily only special forms of a special religion which embraces all; these restricted Churches are in reality only chapels of a vaster Church which, by reason of this very extent, merits this name all the more' (Swain Anthology 2008: 44).

In this vein, the purpose of civil religion is to build, affirm and champion a shared, historically derived national heritage (Bellah 1967). Civil religion helps unify Americans in what is regarded a moral community. It evokes solidarity and commitment to the overarching goals of the nation (Coleman 1970). Americans have frequently regarded themselves to be a people with a superior order that seeks to uphold the highest moral standards, seeing their nation in the very manner their Puritan ancestors once did and who considered themselves to be a 'city upon a hill' that shines forth in the world. American civil religion, with its Puritan antecedents, has been a source of national purpose for Americans to achieve greater things as a people by creating a religious self-image that needs to be upheld.

American civil religion is the glue that binds Americans together as a people, with religious organisations unable to provide the same level of social integration in the United States. Richard Fenn (1972: 18), who asserts that the United States has no source of societal

integration, argues that modern religion does not go beyond a personal system of meaning and, thus, does not serve a wider societal function. Civil religion helps fill a void that religion is not able fill. Civil religion, echoing the Durkheimian functionalist approach, is the source of integration that is grounded in a shared 'moral understanding rooted in a conception of a divine order under a Christian, or at least an deist, God' (Cf. Bellah 1975: ix-x). Moreover, it is this shared moral understanding, based on religious symbols, which helps explain, lend meaning to and legitimise American society (Gehrig 1981: 57-58).

Individuals, to varying degrees, sustain their distinct and discrete religious identities as members of a particular religion or denomination while embracing civil religion as part of their national identity (Wimberley & Christenson 1981). To help unify a nation consisting of such diverse religious groups and denominations, civil religion in the United States has been sufficiently broad and, thus, avoids taking sides with one religious tradition over another that could risk creating a sense of alienation (Chapp 2012: 58). Civil religion appeals to the American population, irrespective of specific sectarian or denominational affiliations because, despite borrowing certain aspects from organised religion, it is intertwined with secular institutions which have emphasised the 'American experience that creates the commonality of the civil faith' (Cherry 1998: 14). Existing in the secular realm, with an emphasis on a sense of nationhood that is infused with transcendental elements, it does not conflict with America's apparent sectarian and denominational diversity and, thus, helps contribute to national unity and solidarity in what is otherwise a highly diverse society. Hence, civil religion is an integral part of America's national identity formation.

This section highlighted the relevance and confirmed the existence of American civil religion. It underlined how religious ideas at the collective-level can matter to Americans, being important to them through via culture political culture and with Americans prepared to treat these religious ideas as part of the religion of the state. These religious ideas, which are derived from America's Puritan ancestors constitute American civil religion, and because of their non-sectarian outlook are able to unify Americans from different religious backgrounds and denominations.

Moreover, American civil religion rather than being a recent phenomenon, it is an established part of America's political culture and its Puritan antecedents have prevailed over time, having had relevance in American foreign policy in America's history. American Civil Religion has existed during different eras, with different material and social conditions, with different individuals and leaders exerting influence. The next section seeks to underline the processes that have helped to establish the Puritan ideas of American civil religion in America's political culture over time.

3.4 Transmission Mechanisms of American Civil Religion

The continued existence of Puritan ideas in American civil religion, and moreover its importance as force for integration in the United States, begs the question *how* have these Puritan ideas prevailed across America's history. Specifically, how have these Puritan ideas been transmitted from one generation to the next in American civil religion? Shedding light on how Puritan ideas have prevailed over time, is integral to understanding the dynamics of

American nationhood over time in the wake of the integrative function civil religion fulfils in the United States. Rather than considering Puritan ideas of American Civil Religion to be an intrinsic part of America's political culture which American presidents have automatically articulated or echoed in their presidential rhetoric, we must consider the processes involved to account for the contingent nature of Puritan antecedents of American civil religion. In this vein, different processes of socialisation will help explore how Americans, specifically their presidents, might come to embrace Puritan ideas of America's civil religion.

Before delving into the dynamics of socialisation, it is imperative to understand what exactly is 'socialisation'? Socialisation represents a 'way through which a society transmits attitudes and values from one generation to the next, contributing to the continuity or change in a nation and its political culture' (Pye 1965: 10). It is the process of how society is induced into a political culture and, moreover, underlines the tenacity and adaptability of values and attitudes, being integral to the social construction of nationhood over time. Once a nation has been established – whether as a result of war, revolution or strife – it needs to sustain its integrity by consistently creating support among its population.

Each generation emerges within a nation as a quasi tabula rasa, upon which the nation's symbols must be imprinted in order to ensure the nation's central tenets on which it was established continue to persist (Easton & Hess 1962: 232). Even nations where beliefs and attitudes are relatively stable over generations, must engage in the process of ensuring that the next generation learns these values accordingly (Verba 1965: 130). There is a need to ensure that a 'potentially anarchic individual is harnessed to society through the internalisation of norms and values' (Cancian 1975: 5). Norms of a political culture are learned over time rather

than genetically bequeathed over generations (Wiadra 2014:1). The implication is that American civil religion, with its Puritan antecedents, do not just happen but must be nurtured and implemented, undergoing a constant process of social (re)construction. As Bellah (1978: 21) recognised, American civil religion involved ‘not only for the assertion of high ethical and spiritual commitment, but also for molding, socialising, educating the citizens in those ethical and spiritual beliefs’.

People interact with a variety of vehicles of socialisation over the course of their lives that can shape an individual’s worldview, amongst them religious and civil religious perceptions. These socialisation agents are known to be actively involved in the transmission of values and attitudes, whether deliberately or non-deliberately. Individuals develop their worldview in what is a process of cumulative formation, with experiences from different realms of life converging to shaping an individual’s worldview (Bennich-Björkman 2007: 5). There have been some competing explanations in terms of how an individual’s worldview manifests itself. The complexity to the formation of an individual’s worldview requires a conceptual and theoretical unpacking of the different vehicles of socialisation before we can explore their importance regarding the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion in the empirical chapters of this thesis.

One formulation has been that an individual’s worldview is formed during childhood, with childhood and adolescence experiences being a dominant factor in an individual’s worldview. The implication is that childhood experiences become entrenched during the early years of an individual’s adult life and beyond. When it comes to understanding an individual’s worldview, as Putnam (2000: 251) pointed out, it is important to remember that it is ‘*not how*

people are now, but when they were young'. If we are to fully understand an individual's worldview, we ought to explore his or her childhood influence. Another formulation is that the prevalent social structure is not static and can underpin an individual's worldview, underlining that socialisation is a life-long process that adjusts to existing conditions. Throughout an individual's life the different social experiences and positions can supersede the initially accepted values.

3.4.1 Family Socialisation

It has been argued that the most important socialisation occurs during childhood and adolescence (Greenstein 1965). This includes values about political authority and legitimacy, political interests and loyalties regarding the nation (Wasburn & Covert 2017: 4). According to the childhood and adolescence perspective on socialisation, the prevalence of Puritan ideas in American civil religion is intertwined with socialisation during the early part of an individual's life. Childhood socialisation tends to be effective because the source of socialisation generally proves to be a trusted and esteemed connection, with the family being integral to child's nurture from an early age (Easton & Hess 1962: 235). The family's importance regarding an individual's worldview is derived from the fact a family satisfies a child's fundamental and innate needs, with a child likely to echo his or her parent's worldview (Davies 1965). Such assumptions are influenced by psychoanalytical models of learning that have been incorporated into models of socialisation. The logic is that under familial circumstances a child is likely to develop a worldview of his/her parents as in a situation of emotional and physical deprivation he or she is likely to develop habits of reliance, including

in regard to which kind of worldview to embrace. It is the emotional attachment and the bonds of solidarity and belonging that emerge within the parental arrangement which increase the likelihood of a child emulating the worldview of his/her parents later in life. In this way a broad set of beliefs and values can be passed on from one generation to the next through the institution of the family.

While it has been recognised that an individual's beliefs during childhood are influenced by teachers and schooling, religious beliefs are unlikely to come from outside the family and the specific religious denomination chosen by the family (Gimpel, Lay & Schuknecht 2003: 122). The family is quite distinctive in regard to a child's religious socialisation, with family considered to be the main source of information in regard to supernatural ideas and assumptions. Research has confirmed that parents are deemed to be important actors in influencing an individual's religious commitment later in life (Acock 1984; Willitis & Crider 1988). This is contingent on the extent of unity within the family, with parental discord likely to result in lower degree of religiosity (Nelsen 1981). Children who have weaker emotional attachments to their parents and, therefore, don't see their parents as role models are less likely to emulate the religious worldview of their parents. Instead, they might seek ways to deviate from the religious values of their parents in an attempt to reaffirm their identity independent of their parents.

Assuming there is stability within a family, religious socialisation is stronger. There are several ways in children are socialised by their parents. Parents determine the social context within which a child's socialisation unfolds, broadly deciding the kind of environment their child is going to grow up in (Davies 1965: 10). Frequent church attendance is likely to be

initiated by parents, and it is bound to result in religious socialisation within the religious community chosen by the parents (Hunsberger 1984). This can include religious observance, scripture reading, religious instruction and interaction with other members of the religious community.

Part of the impetus to bestow religious beliefs upon one's child is to instil a moral code and ethos that will positively shape his/her worldview as well as conduct. The assumption is that religion could give meaning and purpose to the child's current and prospective life. The early religious learning is so potent that the subsequent learning in life is based on and, thus, interpreted through the religiously-infused worldview acquired during childhood. The religious values acquired during childhood can endure because an individual becomes accustomed and comfortable with the values bestowed during childhood. Hence, the religious background of an individual's family and the moral worldview of that individual later in life are deeply intertwined.

3.4.2 Societal Conditioning and Roles

In contrast to the childhood socialisation, the lifetime openness socialisation perspective has underlined the importance of an individual's age and the phase they find themselves in which influences the creation, maintenance and alteration of a person's worldview. The implication is that the religiously-infused values an individual encounters during childhood are less relevant, with individuals open to change during their lifetime. There are few or no remnants from childhood learning that remain during adult life, with the individual considered to be

susceptible to changing his/her orientation over the course of his/her life. There are no physiological or psychological factors that prevent an individual from changing, with individuals capable and also willing to change in later life (Jennings & Niemi 1975: 334). There appear to be no serious impediments to an individual's learning during his/her adult life, with considerable scope for an individual to be resocialised during his/her adult life. An individual's life undergoes a constant process of (re) structuring that influences his or her worldview. Sigel & Hoskin (1977) stipulated: 'As humans age and develop, so do their needs. These needs in turn restructure what individuals expect and demand of society...their expectations in turn reflect the social structure in which they live'.

In this section the importance of societal conditioning and roles in socialising individuals is considered, with view of establishing their characteristics as potential transmission mechanisms of American civil religion. The aim is to clarify how these mechanisms operate and how they contribute to the continuity of civil religious assumptions. While societal conditioning represents macro-level, time-related transmission mechanisms of socialisation involving a set of circumstances that increase the likelihood of certain ideas gaining importance, roles represent institutional-level transmission mechanisms relating to how individuals are led to embrace certain worldviews as a result of the positions they occupy.

3.4.2.1 Societal Conditions

In society individuals are likely to encounter a unique set of social contexts, with the broad belief patterns of one generation differing from those of previous generations as each generation develops its own distinct priorities (Riley 1973: 36). Society's worldview is

adjusted to the existing political, economic and social conditions of the respective period. Society's experience is historically contingent on a distinctive set of material and ideational circumstances and, therefore, is different to a greater or lesser degree from the previous generation (Dennis 1968: 101-02). Entrenched beliefs about American civil religion are interpreted through and shaped by the complexities of the existing societal conditions. Hence, American civil religion will unfold amidst a distinct set of problems and challenges facing a society at a specific point in time.

Societal conditions can lead to varying degrees of transmission of civil religious ideas. Events can serve as agents of socialisation that condition a society. Wars, economic depressions and government crises – but not exclusively – can have a profound impact in terms of the worldview each generation is likely to embrace that can be conducive to the transmission of American civil religion. With public communication focusing on the issues associated with these events and individuals facing increasing exposure to them as a result of the commensurate political discussion and discourses, certain worldviews are bound to become more salient while these events unfold (Sears 1983). Events create a strong information flow that can help galvanise and, moreover, entrench attitudes based on certain ideas (Converse 1962). Socialisation through events is an exogenously-induced process that tends to be abrupt rather than gradual and incremental, with each generation responding to the altering realities they encounter (Sears & Valentino 1997: 47).

To that end, in my thesis I provide a multi-level analytical framework of societal conditions in the United States, considering internal and external factors in order to do justice to the complexity of contexts during which American presidencies have unfolded over time. I have

focused on domestic conditions which consider material factors such as economic issues, as well as ideational issues from the religious and non-religious realm. In addition, I have considered America's position of power in the international system which enables me to pay attention to material conditions the United States was exposed to in the international system over time.

Moreover, I have elaborated on the foreign policy agenda during the different presidencies, highlighting the distinct priorities and strategies of different American presidents. The combination of these internal and external factors considered in my analytical framework on societal condition provides a holistic view of the contexts which were important during a presidency and subsequently influenced it. It allows me to consider presidential rhetoric on civil religion against the backdrop of the complex societal conditions that impacted a presidency.

3.4.2.2 Roles and Religious Socialisation

Individuals are socialised by the roles they are currently occupying, with their worldview and response to the world they live in mediated by them. Roles constitute a 'particular set of norms that [are] organised about a function' (Bates & Harvey 1975: 106). In this sense, albeit not exclusively, roles can refer to occupations and the values associated with them that socialise those exercising a particular profession into embracing certain ideas and ways of conduct (Moore 1970). The individual is socialised by the position and office they hold which create the parameters of expectations regarding the worldview which ought to be embraced (Nye 1976). Positions and offices often come with preordained ideas and notions that exert

influence on the individual holding them. For example, a priest will embrace the values associated with his religious denomination, the training received through his/her seminary and the priesthood association which stipulates standards of morality and conduct. This suggests that a priest's role is associated with specific characteristics that gives it an element of predictability about a priest's worldview and subsequent utterances.

Expectation are understood by those occupying a position but also by those who don't hold the position yet acknowledge or recognise its significance (Biddle 1986: 68). Roles are mutually constituted and, thus, come into existence as a result of being recognised by other role holders that creates external role expectations (Lyman & Scott 1975). This dynamic of shared knowledge creation makes roles inherently social. The role of the priest is co-constituted through the role of the believers who attend the priest's sermons. An individual becomes the priest *because* of those willing to listen to his or her sermons. Hence, roles are intertwined and interlinked, representing social positions within a broader social structure and the outgrowth of the processes within it (Burt 1976). While roles respond to the pressures of the social structure within which they exist, the internal role expectations as well as the interpretation of the role by the respective role holder generates some scope for agency.

Individuals are not confined to one role but change them over their life time. An individual tends to relinquish one role and embrace another, adapting and conforming to the new role expectations (Prewitt, Eulau & Zisk 1966). The role perspective, while underlining the influence of a role on the individual, has alluded to the distinction between the role and the individual. Turner (1978: 1) has gone as far as to suggest that 'some roles are put on and taken off like clothing without lasting personal effect'. The individual is a separate and independent

entity from the role he or she occupies, apparently ‘wearing’ them like a piece of clothing for a certain period until some else has a go at wearing it. Sticking with this metaphor, one could be led to conclude that the piece of clothing itself broadly does not change but simply the person who wears it and the manner he/she decides to wear the clothing. The implication is that roles are underpinned by a strong degree of continuity, yet there is some scope for a role to evolve and change.

In this vein, the role of the American presidency is considered in my research framework. The role of the American presidency comes with certain expectations derived from America’s religiously-infused political culture. It fulfils a civil religious function within America’s political culture. The holders of the American presidency are expected to utter or echo the civil religious dimension of America’s political culture. These individuals are expected to make references to God in their public utterances and express their belief in a higher power with full conviction. Individuals who can that do are deemed to possess the moral virtues to occupy the American presidency and successfully serve as priests of American civil religion. Each holder of the office of the American presidency is likely to interpret the role differently – they will adjust the role to different contexts and leverage their administration’s priorities and their personal style. Yet, they are likely to operate within the broader confines of the expectations pertaining to the role of the American presidency. American presidents are socialised by the office they occupy.

In sum, this section helped underline how different processes of socialisation – at the family, societal and institutional level – may influence an individual’s worldview during the different stages of their lives. These insights are helpful for exploring in this thesis how ideas can

prevail over time, providing us with a useful framework for probing the factors that may have contributed to the continued importance of Puritan antecedents of American civil religion in America's political culture during different eras. This enables us to underline how Puritan ideas as part of American civil religion have been broad and flexible enough to have been expressed or echoed over time. Thus, having provided a conceptual and theoretical framework based on civil religion in conjunction with processes of socialisation, the question that needs to be answered is how have Puritan ideas been important in American foreign policy? Addressing this question offers us the opportunity to highlight that Puritan ideas are not restricted to the domestic realm but can be important in American foreign policy and, thus, helps us address the broader importance of religion in American foreign policy.

3.5 Methodological Approach

The American president is one of the most important individuals in the United States, with Americans prepared to listen to what their presidents have to say (even if they disagree). An American presidents' speeches carry considerable weight in the United States. American presidential rhetoric – infused with Puritan ideas – has echoed and shaped American civil religion, being an integral part of the social construction of reality within the United States. To probe the importance of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy, this section first elaborates on *why* American presidents and their rhetoric has been important. It, then, proceeds with a discussion of the constitutive and causal logics to probe the significance of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy stemming from presidential rhetoric. The subsequent focus is the on the case study selection criteria utilised to probe Puritan ideas from the

founding of the United States until the contemporary period. It then proceeds with the benefits of using qualitative content analysis to provide in-depth insight of presidential rhetoric which will help us evaluate the relevance of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy in the contemporary period.

3.5.1 American Presidents and Civil Religion in Presidential Rhetoric

One of the main ways in which Puritan antecedents of American civil religion are present in the United States is through the figure of the US president. The American president is a central figure in giving expression to America's civil religion through their rhetoric. To a nation that has embraced its Puritan ancestors' idea of God's chosen people, presidential speeches are nothing less than national sermons by the very person who is deemed to be the 'priest' of American civil religion. Hence, presidential rhetoric offers a rich avenue for research to uncover Puritan ideas American presidents have conveyed to American citizens in different foreign policy contexts.

Presidential rhetoric, and its importance in the United States, must be considered against the backdrop of the functions American presidents fulfil in America's political system. In addition to the constitutionally defined functions of the American president as the chief of state, chief executive, chief legislator, chief diplomat and commander in chief, there are other functions that are grounded in America's political culture and underpinned by a distinct religious dimension that relates to America's civil religion. Scholars, amongst others, have referred to the American president as 'pontiff' (Novak 1974: xv), 'principal prophet', 'first preacher',

‘chief pastor’ (Pierard & Linder 1988: 25) or ‘the high priest of national faith’ (Hart & Pauley 2005: 34). These references highlight that, in the nation’s political culture, the American president represents the highest authority – a kind of religious leader – when it comes to matters of public faith in the United States, specifically America’s civil religion (see e.g. Gustafson 1970).

While church leaders’ appeal is limited to specific religious communities and, hence, they have far less significance in broader public discourse, the American president is a national figure to whom millions of Americans turn to regarding matters of morality (Henderson 1975: 484). The speeches of American presidents often attract a vast audience in the United States. Bill Clinton’s first state of union address in February 1993 was seen on TV by a record number of 67 million Americans while 51.8 million Americans watched George W. Bush’s state of union in January 2002 following the attacks of 9/11.²¹ Americans look to the American president for religiously-grounded moral guidance and reassurance in a national life that has been historically infused with religious ideas and assumptions. American presidents are the central figure in what, according to G.K Chesterton (1922: 12), has been described as a ‘nation with the soul of a church’. They are the products of the America’s civil religion which they try to echo in the context of their presidency, creating a mutually constitutive relationship between agent and structure. Hopf (2002: 37; see also Breuning 2011: 24) has pointed out that a nation’s leader such as a president ‘is as much a member of the social cognitive structure [and values] that characterises her society [and state] as the average citizen’. Hudson (1999:

²¹ Longley, Robert, ‘State of Union Address’, See at <https://www.thoughtco.com/the-state-of-the-union-ratings-3368197>

769) added that a 'nation's leaders rise in part because they articulate a vision...that corresponds to the deep, cultural beliefs about the nation'.

An American president must be able to clearly communicate to the American public not only his or her belief in God, but also America as a nation blessed by God (Hutcheson 1988). American presidents are expected by Americans to demonstrate that they have embraced the ideas of the nation's Puritan ancestors, be it in the domestic or the foreign policy realm. In this vein, Americans, according to survey data for the period from 1958 until 2012, have professed that they would be less prepared to vote for a presidential candidate who was an atheist than for a candidate who was either Jewish, Catholic, Black or female (Gallup Poll June 2012).²² A presidential candidate is expected to subscribe to religious beliefs, with Americans exhibiting a greater acceptance towards religious diversity or minorities such as Black than to atheists. An atheist, however, is considered a cultural 'other' or an outsider who does not conform to the outlook of American society (Edgell, Gerteis & Hartmann 2006). Such an individual would not fulfil the societal expectations that American presidents ought to be the high priests of American civil religion – a task no American president has refused to fulfil in America's history. This is important as American presidents have drawn on civil religious ideas of America's Puritan ancestors to explain America's foreign policy to Americans.

American presidency unfolds and truly comes into existence through presidential rhetoric (Ceaser, Thurow, Tulis & Bessette: 1981). The potency and power of presidential rhetoric is

²² See here at: http://news.gallup.com/poll/155285/Atheists-Muslims-Bias-Presidential-Candidates.aspx?utm_source=tagrss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=syndication

derived from the fact that it ‘defines political reality’, with the American president being able to determine how particular events and contexts are perceived by the American public through his or her public speeches (Zarefsky 2004: 611). Presidential rhetoric has been infused with religious ideas and assumptions to present events and contexts in a manner that contributes to and echoes America’s civil religion. Hence, American civil religion is socially produced through the very language used in presidential rhetoric. American presidents have made, amongst others, references to ‘God’ or ‘Providence’ regarding the United States, ascribing a sacred quality to the United States which implies a shared spiritual link via Puritan ideas that connects all its citizens. The merger between religion and nation in presidential rhetoric has helped ensure that the United States maintains a national self-understanding with distinct religious underpinnings that has been the source of the nation’s moral righteousness (Domke & Coe 2010: Chapter 3).

This section helped underline the importance of American presidents and their rhetoric in terms of shaping and reinforcing the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion, with the lingering question being how to explore the relevance of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy? The debate about causal and constitutive logics has pitted positivist and post-positivist epistemological and methodological stances against each other. The next section, linking civil religious identity via presidential rhetoric to American foreign policy, seeks to find a middle-ground position by drawing on the approach known as ‘constitutive causality’ as a means of probing *how* Puritan ideas have been important in American foreign policy through presidential rhetoric.

3.5.2 Beyond Positivism and the promise of Constitutive Causality

With America's Puritan ancestors having existed long before the founding of the United States, it is particularly interesting to explore the significance of their ideas in American foreign policy long after they ceased. Do Puritan ideas, which are embedded in America's civil religion and find expression through presidential rhetoric, have a direct impact on American foreign policy? Or is it subtle and nuanced? This thesis underlines that the importance of Puritan ideas is subtle and nuanced, being intertwined with the nation's civil religious self-understanding that finds expression through presidential rhetoric amidst the different factors that determine American foreign policy.

American presidential rhetoric helps create a complex narrative that underlines a Puritan-infused national self-understanding which has served to reinforce and support America's different foreign policy stances. The link between Puritan ideas and American foreign policy is best explored through the epistemological and methodological stance described as 'constitutive causality' which enables us to explore the extent to which America's Puritan-infused self-understanding mattered. This section proceeds with broader insights about the positivist and post-positivist debate before addressing the relevance of 'constitutive causality' for this thesis.

In IR, helped trigger by the emergence of constructivism and the Third Debate associated with it that challenged rationalist theories (namely realism, neo-realism and neo-liberalism), there has been an epistemological disagreement concerning the way we analyse and understand international politics (e.g. Lapid 1989; Wendt 1998: 108). This disagreement involves broadly speaking two epistemological stances – positivist and post-positivist. The positivist stance

stipulates that social sciences ought to emulate the methods of the natural science to derive at the truth about the international realm as best as possible; whereas the post-positivist stance stipulates this is difficult, even more so using methods that emulate the natural sciences (e.g. Smith, Booth & Zalewski 1996). As Martin Hollis and Steve Smith (Hollis & Smith 1991: 1) argue:

‘One story is an outsider’s, told in the manner of a natural scientist seeking to explain the workings of nature and treating the human realm as part of nature. The other is an insider’s, told as to make us understand what events mean, in a sense distinct from any meaning found in the unearthing of the laws of nature’.

The aim of the ‘outsider’s story’ is to derive at causal mechanisms to explain international politics. It seeks to discover ahistorical and universal patterns that would enable us to objectively validate the truth about international politics (e.g. Klotz & Lynch 2007: 14). This method is deemed to be more objective, accurate and, thus, more scientific. The aim of the ‘outsider’s story’ is to help explain behaviour and probe ‘why’ something happens, specifically what triggers an event to unfold. According to this logic ‘X causes Y’, with the assumption being that a) x and y have an existence independent of each other b) X predates Y c) without X, Y could not have taken place (Wendt 1998: 105). The outsider’s story helps illuminate processes in international politics and the relationship and dynamics between different entities (referred to as the relationship between dependent and independent variables).²³

²³ Causal analysis has focused on questions, albeit not limited to these, such as what causes war (Vasquez 1993), whether democracies have engaged in wars (Doyle 1997) or the causes of global terrorism (Bjørge 2004).

In this vein, Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba in their widely-cited *Designing Social Inquiry* have emphasised that causal insights can help ‘explain’ international relations using empirical methods that emulate the natural sciences. Causality is grounded in positivism which is a combination of empiricist epistemology and naturalism that stipulates that the natural and the social science realm are the same thing (Hollis 1996). Positivism, in an attempt to emulate the natural sciences, seeks to provide insights about patterns and generalisations about the social world that are verifiable through observation (and ideally also refutable).

Is the positivist approach that emphasises causality appropriate for exploring the importance of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy? It would overemphasise the extent to which Puritan ideas have mattered in American foreign policy by alluding to the direct causal impact of Puritan ideas via presidential rhetoric. Moreover, the positivist methodology suffers from the fact that it treats human conduct in an overly mechanistic manner, with actors regarded as sources of input which in turn deliver certain outputs (Ashley 1984).²⁴ American presidents would be regarded as mere vessels of Puritan antecedents of American civil religion with little scope for interpretation of America’s values. As one positivist scholar acknowledges that at times ‘generalisations about human behaviour may be very unstable and the patterns of behaviour very fluid’ (Nicholson 1996: 146). The social world remains much more indeterminate than suggested by the positivist position, with law-like insights (in our case regarding Puritan antecedents) difficult to come by.²⁵

²⁴ Ashley’s insights about the limitations of positivism are grounded in his comprehensive critique of neorealism.

²⁵ In addition, causality per se cannot be observed and inferred through a process of elimination that a cause can be derived as the prerequisite for an outcome (Ruggie 1998: 92). Positivism reveals limitations in terms of emulating the natural science methods based on Newtonian logics, failing to acknowledge that it relies on

While the positivist method can illuminate the dynamics of processes in international politics and help shed light on *why* an event in American foreign policy might unfold, according to this method American presidents would be reduced to non-reflexive entities without judgement. Questions about an American president's identity and, thus, *who they* are historically is brushed aside as the emphasis is on their response to inputs from America's religiously-infused political culture. This positivist position is over-deterministic and does not do justice to the contingent and complex nature of the processes involving agent and structure in America's religiously-infused political culture.

The 'insider's story' reveals greater promise in terms of exploring the importance of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy. The 'insider's story' is centred on the assumptions that shared and individual meanings can underpin an actor's action and, thereby, challenges assumptions about objectivity and truth (D'Amico 1986: 139). The method would seek to delve into America's self-understanding as people and the characteristics of American presidents by reference to the existing social structures. This 'insider's story' seems to explore the central constructivist premise of 'what makes the world hang together', being concerned about what something and/or who someone is. According to the 'insider story' meanings in turn create predispositions and conditions that make certain modes of conduct more likely, albeit not always determine an action but rather make it more likely (Barnett & Finnemore 1999: 719). The emphasis is on comprehending the conditions and context for actions, with

inferences. Thus, positivism is grounded in the 'objectivist position' involving the objective understanding of the world which is nevertheless based on observations that are subjective (Smith 1996: 16).

the attention devoted to understanding the processes of American foreign policy in a manner that eschews causal analysis.

The focus is on *how something is possible* and *what it is?* Co-constitution of people and their society pertains to the core beliefs of an identity and its subsequent importance regarding social action are the central themes here. The aim is to enhance our understanding of American foreign policy by shedding light on social action from within. In other words, addressing the importance of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy requires exploring the role of the presidency over time in conjunction with the social structures at the time of the presidency. This enables us to explore the complexity of the agent-structure constitution and how American presidents have ended up echoing and embracing Puritan ideas in their presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy.

Moreover, in attempt to explore how Puritan ideas may have mattered in American foreign policy, it is worth remembering that presidential rhetoric can have consequences. There are, of course, different kinds and degrees of consequences which presidential rhetoric could produce. There are situations where ‘ordinary language meaning of whatever antecedent conditions...are ‘significant’ in producing or influencing an effect’ (Ruggie 1998: 94). In their analysis on the mutual constitution of agent-structure and how structures can constrain an actor’s action, Klotz & Lynch (2007: 15) speak of ‘conditional causality’ according to which people are likely to act in a highly predictable manner and reproduce practices given ‘a particular set of social, historical, and/or spatial conditions’. The implication from these insights is that Puritan ideas find expression through presidential rhetoric and, thus, underline a self-understanding that can lead to certain foreign policy actions. I argue that Puritan ideas

in presidential rhetoric can facilitate explanations on American foreign policy that can help support a stance rather than have a direct causal impact on decision-making.

To proceed in a methodologically fruitful manner regarding Puritan ideas in American foreign policy, Geertz's (1973: 312) distinction between 'thin' and 'thick' descriptions from his seminal article is worth embracing. While 'thin' descriptions pertain to the actions being undertaken regarding an event or a situation, 'thick' descriptions relate to a deeper analysis of 'hierarchy of meaningful structures' pertaining to these events and situations. While events in American foreign policy ought to elicit 'thin' descriptions, far greater emphasis ought to be to 'thick' descriptions and, thus, establishing where Puritan ideas stands in the 'hierarchy of meaningful structures' in American foreign policy that consist of a complex mix of political, economic and social factors.

Geertz (1973: 311) affirms Max Weber's notion that 'man is an animal suspended in webs of significance he himself has spun' over time in different situations and contexts, whilst acknowledging that ultimately 'culture to be those webs' and 'analysis is to it to be therefore not an experimental science in search of laws but interpretive one in search of meaning'. Given the complex nature of how Puritan antecedents of American civil religion are infused into American foreign policy, an interpretive method rather than one that seeks to discover law-like findings represents a suitable way of proceeding. An interpretive method enables us to explore the possible meaning and significance of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy.

A focus on meaning of Puritan ideas should not exclude the possibility that meanings can have certain consequences, even if we avoid law-like statements about Puritan ideas and American foreign policy. This thesis' interpretive method for exploring the importance of

Puritan ideas in American foreign policy ought to be underpinned by a nuanced version of causality. ‘Constitutive causality’, as Lebow (2009: 4) calls it, helps us illuminate ‘social processes and interactions, confluences, accidents and agencies’ and permits us to ‘develop layered accounts of human behaviour in lieu of law-like statements’. Lebow (2009: 4) added that ‘outcomes – and their meanings – almost always depend on idiosyncratic features of context’. ‘Constitutive causality’, in philosophical and methodological terms, is firmly based in post-positivism, combining insights about an actor’s constitution with causality. It avoids the rigid causal claims of positivism which would seek to derive at quasi- mechanistic insights about reality.

Using an analytical framework that draws on ‘constitutive causality’ enables us to explore *how* Puritan ideas, as an integral part America’s self-understanding, have been important in American foreign policy. Rather than emphasising the direct causal impact of Puritan ideas on American foreign policy along the lines that ‘x’ causes ‘y’, my approach helps us to explore how presidential rhetoric infused with Puritan ideas might have supported certain foreign policy stances in subtle and nuanced ways. I argue that because Puritan ideas do not have a direct causal impact in the sense that they are the main motivation for a foreign policy and, thus, help support certain foreign policy stances that one ought to merely speak of ‘soft causality’. My analytical framework, inspired by Geertz (1973), combines ‘thin’ descriptions pertaining to the actions being undertaken regarding an event or a situation with ‘thick’ descriptions of hierarchy of structures of meaning pertaining to these events and situations. My approach helps us avoid overemphasising the degree and extent of importance of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy, instead enabling us to highlight the subtle nature of Puritan

ideas in American foreign policy. This allows us to underline that the importance of religious ideas in American foreign policy is nuanced.

3.5.3 Case Study Selection

In this thesis a series of four shorter historical case studies and two contemporary in-depth case studies were chosen to explore the importance of Puritan antecedents of American civil religion in American foreign policy.

The shorter historical case studies focused on the Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt and Truman presidencies. A focus on these specific presidencies at different pivotal junctures of America's history allows us to see the relative importance of Puritan ideas in American civil religion. Analysis of these presidencies, which span three historical eras – the founding era, the great power era and the Cold War era – provides general insights into American civil religion in different contexts, which each had their own distinctive themes, vocabulary and priorities as well as different configurations of America's positions of power in the international system. These presidencies offer us the opportunity to provide a sweeping overview of the importance of Puritan ideas of American civil religion across America's varied history that spans from the emergence of the United States as an independent and weak state to its rise as a superpower in the international system.

Presidencies from the manifest destiny period, American civil war or 1890s could have offered interesting insights about Puritan ideas in presidential rhetoric. The manifest period would have enabled me to explore Puritan ideas in the context of presidential rhetoric that

focused on America's territorial ambitions. Instead, the Thomas Jefferson presidency was selected in this thesis because of its importance in the founding era and the territorial ambitions of this period represented the early manifestations of the manifest destiny period. However, future research on Puritan ideas in presidential rhetoric ought to consider manifest destiny presidencies. The American civil war period, while a poignant moment regarding America's self-understanding as people and, therefore, it could offer interesting insights about Puritan ideas in America's political culture. However, the civil war was a domestic event rather than a foreign policy event and, thus, less important to this thesis. Presidencies from 1890s, particularly William McKinley's presidency from 1897-1901, were not considered. Instead, Teddy Roosevelt was selected who had inherited from some of his foreign policy from the assassinated McKinley. Teddy Roosevelt's presidency captures some of foreign policy dynamics from the 1890s and, moreover, offers us the fruitful opportunity to explore the importance of Puritan ideas.

For the purposes of exploring the relationship between the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion and American foreign policy in presidential rhetoric in the contemporary period, several considerations were given to selecting the two detailed case studies. First, the case studies focused on the contemporary period, specifically on the Clinton and Bush presidencies, to demonstrate the continued importance of the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion in recent times – several centuries after Puritans had arrived in America – and their relevance to American foreign policy. Due attention was given to the fact that these two presidencies unfolded at relatively important junctures in American foreign policy, the post-Cold War era of the Clinton presidency and the 9/11 era of the Bush presidency.

These two case studies were selected on the basis that the two presidents were members of the two major political parties in the United States, Clinton being a member of the Democratic Party and Bush being a member of the Republican Party. The case selection helps this study demonstrate that American civil religion and its importance in American foreign policy in presidential rhetoric transcends political party affiliations. The two presidents exhibited varying degrees of religiosity, with Clinton considered to be less religious than Bush. Thus, even apparently less religious presidents have embraced America's civil religion when explaining American foreign policy to the American public.

There were some other contemporary presidencies that were worthy of consideration but, in the end, were not chosen. While Bush Sr.'s presidency to some degree unfolded in the post-Cold War era and it would have been interesting for fleshing out the importance of Puritan ideas in presidential rhetoric because Bush's Sr. was deemed to be less religious, he was not a full-fledged post-Cold War president like Bill Clinton who was also deemed to be less religious. The Obama presidency was not chosen when I commenced with this project his tenure had not come to an end and, thus, a full set of presidential speeches was not available. Trump's erratic presidency is still unfolding and, therefore, was not be selected.

3.5.4 Qualitative Content Analysis of Presidential Rhetoric

Insights about Puritan ideas and assumptions in these two case studies are informed by a qualitative content analysis of presidential communication, specifically their recorded rhetoric. Qualitative content analysis is a 'systematic way of describing meaning from

qualitative material', and it does this by ascribing categories to the material analysed (Schreier 2012: 2). This allows us to extract values, ideas and policy positions from presidential speeches which can, then, be evaluated and subsequently interpreted in regard to Puritan ideas and assumptions. This section proceeds with how this method was applied to presidential rhetoric and the relevance it had for exploring the importance of Puritan ideas and assumptions.

First, the material to be analysed using qualitative content analysis was selected. Given the importance of the American president as a public figure in the United States, his communication carries great importance regarding the nation's self-understanding in public discourse and perception. Presidential rhetoric is one of the most powerful ways for a president to communicate directly with Americans, with American presidents using it to give expression to national ideas and symbols. In contrast, written communication, which the American public is less likely to engage with by reading the relevant documents, tends to be technical and tends to be less about values. One very powerful form of rhetoric that makes frequent references to national symbols and ideas are presidential speeches. Presidential speeches were selected on the following grounds:

- Recorded spoken communication that highlights the importance of the occasion whenever a president speaks and fulfils the symbolic function as the representative of the United States and, thus, as the voice of the American people. It is often discussed in news and the media.
- Message control – American President in control of message i.e. messages that are calculated and, as a result, this limits the possible influence of personality or personal

idiosyncrasies that might otherwise come to the fore in off-the-cuff remarks, interviews and debates.

- Time frame – Only messages delivered as president of the United States to limit the influence of personality traits or personal idiosyncrasies that usually come to the fore, for example, more strongly during presidential campaigns.
- No selection criteria in terms of length – Short (minimum of 200 words – otherwise it becomes meaningless) and long messages (no limitations) were treated equally as both might contain relevant insights for our research.

Second, a database of presidential speeches, for both Clinton and Bush Jr., was created. Presidential speeches were derived from the website (<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>) of the *American Presidency Project*, a non-profit organisation dedicated to gathering presidential documents in an online archive that is hosted by the University of California, Santa Barbara. *American Presidency Project* is widely used for conducting research on American presidents, enjoying a strong reputation for providing accurate and comprehensive presidential documents. Their online archive provides full transcripts of all the speeches delivered by Clinton and Bush.

Speeches for the two respective presidencies were selected from the online archive on the basis that they were likely to contain references to national values, ideas and policy positions. In order to limit the scope of the sample for conducting qualitative content analysis for each presidency, the following speeches were included: presidential inaugurations, state of unions, farewells, annual United Nations General Assembly addresses, Independence Day

celebrations, Martin Luther King Jr. day remembrance as well speeches delivered to the American military.

Several aspects are noteworthy about this sample. First, the sample was chosen to allow me to extract data from variety of contexts when the two respective presidents communicated with the American public. Second, the sample was sufficiently large, with 76 speeches selected for the Clinton presidency and 82 for the Bush presidency, for a range of values, ideas and policy positions to be extracted using qualitative analysis method. Third, the sample includes speeches that were spread across each presidential tenure, allowing us to extract data across the presidency and draw generalisable insights about each presidency. This sample included highly important speeches such as state of unions that were delivered on a yearly basis or annual United Nations General Assembly addresses, but also farewell addresses which were delivered at the end of the presidential tenure, Independence Day and Martin Luther King Jr. which were intermittently delivered as well as speeches to the American military which were given throughout the presidency.

Third, presidential speeches, which were chosen according to the aforementioned selection criteria, were retrieved from the *American Presidency Project* online archives. The transcripts of these speeches were placed in NVIVO, a coding software for qualitative content analysis, to create a database of speeches for each respective presidency. The NVIVO database files of presidential speeches and material content analysed within the software is available upon request.

Fourth, having created a database of presidential speeches for each respective presidency, I read the speeches and discerned certain themes from them. These themes were, then, used to

create codes grouping together certain references. Qualitative content analysis utilises coding as the main method to find common patterns across discrete sets of texts (Asen 2001: 757). The process of content analysis has been described as ‘essentially a coding operation’ (Babbie 2001: 304) or as two scholars have proclaimed it is the ‘heart and soul’ textual analysis (Ryan & Bernard 2000: 780). According to Krippendorff (2012: 82), coding analysis involves ‘a repeated search within a data set for generalisations, patterns that appear to permeate the data’. Through coding data is disaggregated into more manageable pieces of information, known as codes. Content analysis helps create codes which help break down large textual data, helping provide condensed descriptions of social phenomenon.

Presidential speeches were ‘hand-coded’, a traditional technique in qualitative content analysis, within NVIVO software. This non-automated and human judgement-based approach to coding can improve the validity of the data collected by giving attention to the meaning, purpose and context of language (Charnysh, Lloyd & Simons 2015: 337). An automated approach, on the other hand, can lead to decontextualised assertions from the meaning of a text and moreover is more suited for analysing larger quantities of textual data in a rigorously quantitative fashion (Wilson 1993:1).

The process of coding used in my case studies allows codes to be derived from the presidential rhetoric rather than impose it on speeches, as done by quantitative content analysis (Cf. Forman & Damschroder 2007). This is a process of inductive content analysis, or at times referred to as ‘open coding’, that allows codes to be created from the textual material analysed (Elo & Kygnäs 2007: 109). The presidential speeches were read by the author of this thesis and coded in NVIVO software in regard to references concerning the main values, themes

and priorities during each administration. References had to be at least one sentence long in order to avoid taking expressions out of context and distorting their meaning. The references derived from the presidential rhetoric were tabulated in NVIVO software by placing them in 'code containers' of the programme.

I will illustrate how these 'code containers' were used in regard to a particular code that emerged through the qualitative content analysis approach applied here and which involved reading presidential speeches and looking for dominant themes in Clinton's and Bush's presidential rhetoric. It is worth noting that this process was undertaken simultaneously in regard to several codes as the speeches were read, but in order to shed light on how the 'code containers' were used I refer to a specific code. So, for example, as the speeches were read, the coder came across references to 'God' or 'Almighty' as part of complete sentence, then, these references were placed in a particular 'code container' within the software. As further speeches were read and the coder encountered any other references to 'God' or 'Almighty', then these were placed in the same code container as the other references which referred to 'God' or 'Almighty'. Once all the presidential speeches were read and the references to 'God or Almighty' were collected in a particular container, then, the code container was provisionally named to reflect the dominant theme of the references. The textual material is subsequently read again, to derive at further references for the provisional code to describe the content (Elo & Kygnäs 2007: 109). Any references that were outliers and which did not cohere with this code were eliminated in order to assure of the reliability of the code created.

Fifth, the codes derived from the qualitative content analysis conducted on speeches of those two presidents were subsequently explored in regard to their relevance to Puritan ideas and

assumptions. These codes were used to explore how the rhetoric of these two presidents, while seldom making direct references to the Puritans, nevertheless echoed Puritan ideas and assumptions. The patterns in the rhetoric of these two presidents suggests that both American presidents paid homage to Puritan ideas and assumptions as they explained their respective foreign policies to Americans. Hence, the aim of the two case studies is to explore the how the codes derived from the qualitative content analysis of Clinton's and Bush's speeches, and the foreign policy narrative they underlined, resembled the ideas and assumptions of America's Puritan ancestors.

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter sought to present the conceptual framework and research design of this thesis for exploring the importance of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy. This chapter developed a constructivist-orientated framework that draws on the concept of civil religion for understanding the importance of religious ideas, specifically Puritan ones, within America's political culture. While civil religion shares certain similarities with organised religion, it is a separate and distinct category of its own that exists as result of the legal separation of church and state in the United States and, moreover, because of the religious diversity within the United States. Set against this backdrop, civil religion serves as source of national identity in the United States.

This chapter considered various transmission mechanisms – family socialisation, societal conditioning and roles – to help explore how American presidents might have come to

embrace or echo Puritan ideas in their rhetoric. Moreover, it underlined the relevance of ‘constitutive causality’ as a nuanced understanding of causality for exploring how Puritan ideas have mattered in American foreign policy. ‘Constitutive causality’, grounded in post-positivist method, links identity and context with causality, enabling us to explore how America’s Puritan-infused self-understanding may have mattered in American foreign policy.

In the next chapter, I delve deeper into the origins of Puritan ideas and assumptions that have been an integral part of America’s self-understanding, shedding light on how these ideas been echoed in America’s history as Puritan gradually faded into history. It would be events like the Great Awakening in 1740s or the American Revolution underlined that Puritan ideas and assumptions still resonated in America’s political culture. The next chapter commences this thesis’ journey through America’s history, which begins with the arrival of the Puritans in America and end with the Bush administration’s war on terror strategy.

CHAPTER 4 THE PURITAN ORIGINS OF AMERICA'S CIVIL RELIGION

4.1 Introduction

A sense of mission to shape the world is integral to America's foreign policy vision, with the nation's public officials underlining that it is underpinned by strong moral undertones which have defined America's sense of place and understanding in the world. The implication of such assumptions is that America is the beacon and harbinger of morality in the world. Scholars such as Brands (1998), McCriksen (2003) and McEvoy (2001) put forward the view that America's sense of mission is linked to the idea of exceptionalism which emphasises America's special and unique role in the world. Pointing to the Janus-faced nature of exceptionalism, they suggest that America's mission is intertwined with the 'crusading' variant that champions involvement in the world, rather than the exemplarist variant which extols American values for other nations to emulate. This has led to a dichotomous understanding of America's involvement in the world, with America's foreign policy being perceived as either isolationist or internationalist.

However, there have been disagreements about this point. The Janus-faced character of American exceptionalism has been questioned, empirical evidence pointing to America's relatively continuous historical involvement in the international system (Restad 2012; Restad 2015). This debate has helped to challenge strongly entrenched assumptions within the scholarship on American foreign, providing new insights about America's sense of place in the world and, indeed, its historical relationship with it. While this debate has enhanced our understanding on American foreign policy, some additional insights to this debate on

America's involvement in the world could be provided from a perspective that is cognizant of the sacred dimension of America's self-understanding which gives the nation its sense of continuity regard to the world. As this thesis argues, the sacred dimension of America's self-understanding has underpinned how the United States sees itself in regard to the world and its place in it, finding expression in America's political culture through the civil religious rhetoric of American presidents on foreign policy.

In this chapter I argue that America's sense of place in the world is linked to the nation's civil religion that is derived from America's Puritan ancestors. Puritan ideas and assumptions have been significant part of America's political culture. As McKenna (2007: 4) reminds us: 'It may be an exaggeration to characterise the Puritans as America's original founders, but it would not be out of place to call them the founders of political culture and rhetoric'. Richard Hofstadter, one of America's leading political scientists, concurred that Puritans were 'as close to being an intellectual ruling class America has ever had' (Quoted in Morone 2006: 34). While Puritans may not have been the political founders of the United States, as McKenna rightly recognises, their religious ideas became entrenched in the nation's political culture after the American Revolution and has bestowed America with a civil religion that has been associated with the nation's moral conviction to somehow try to shape the world.

This chapter seeks to proceed as follows: First, it highlights the importance of the religious aspects of America's contemporary political culture. Second, the chapter explores the origins of Puritan ideas about the sacred covenant with God, 'a city upon a hill' and fighting incarnations of the devil during the period when the first Puritan settler arrived in America. Third, it highlights how these Puritan ideas during the Great Awakening helped set the

trajectory toward the American Revolution and their significance in the wake of the American Revolution in helping establish America's civil religion.

4.2 Puritans and America's Political Culture

The French scholar De Tocqueville noted in 1835 the linkage between religious vitality and nationhood from America's earliest origins: 'It must not be forgotten that religion gave birth to Anglo-American society. In the United States, religion is, therefore, mingled with all the habits of the nation and all the feelings of patriotism, whence it derives its force' (Tocqueville quoted in Marsden 2008: 13). Foreigners have continued to be intrigued how religion powerfully converged with America's sense of itself as a people. In the 1890s, Viscount James Bryce (1891: 577), an English jurist and Liberal politician, was equally impressed by the importance of religion in the nation's outlook as a people and was convinced that it echoed America's consciousness 'more than it does in any other modern country, and far more than it did in the so-called ages of faith'. Similarly, upon appointing Andrei Gromyko as the Soviet Ambassador to the United States in 1943, Stalin requested him to pay close attention to the influence of religion on the American mindset (Inboden 2008: 1).

Today, the importance of religion in the United States has apparently not waned. This suggests that the basis for contemporary observers to come to a similar conclusion as foreign observers did in the past is still in place. Gallup Poll surveys reveal that in 2001 and 2004, 90% and

94% of Americans believed in God, respectively (Gallup Survey Website).²⁶ In 2004, 61% of Americans saw religion as a solution to their day-to-day problems (Gallup Survey Website).²⁷ According to a survey conducted in May 2001, 68% of Americans from all possible political inclinations, regions, educational backgrounds and age groups believed in the existence of the devil (Gallup Survey Website)²⁸ while almost 75% of Americans in 2014 believed that the Bible was the word of God (Gallup Survey Website).

These polls underscore the enduring religious character of the United States, with most Americans concurring regarding the general significance of God as part of their belief system more strongly than on the importance of organised religion. Such a large percentage of Americans believe in God that the memorable assertion by George Gallup, the founder of modern polling, is still relevant more than a decade later: ‘So many people in [the United States] say they believe in the basic concept of God, that it almost seems unnecessary to conduct surveys on the question’ (Quoted in Bishop 1999: 421). God, as an expression of America’s religious consciousness, is so inseparably woven into the fabric of American life that one does not need to question God’s significance in the United States.

While this polling data suggests that Americans might have a strong tendency to be religious as people, it leaves out the complexity of religion in the United States. Americans have surprisingly little knowledge about religious doctrine and have a rather superficial

²⁶Newport, Frank, ‘Most Americans still believe in God’, June 29, 2016

http://www.gallup.com/poll/193271/americans-believe-god.aspx?g_source=RELIGION_AND_SOCIAL_TRENDS&g_medium=topic&g_campaign=tiles

²⁷Newport, Frank, ‘Majority Still says religion can answer today’s problems’, June 27, 2014

http://www.gallup.com/poll/171998/majority-says-religion-answer-today-problems.aspx?g_source=RELIGION_AND_SOCIAL_TRENDS&g_medium=topic&g_campaign=tiles

²⁸Robinson, Jennifer, ‘The Devil and the Demographic Details’, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/7858/devil-demographic-details.aspx>

comprehension of it (Prothero 2007). Nor does the large number of Americans who have frequently expressed belief in God as an indication of their religiosity entirely match up with church membership and attendance in the United States (Hadaway & Marler 2005). Instead, one ought to consider that the high-levels of religiosity Americans have expressed in the above Gallup polls are perhaps more to do with the strength of religiosity as part of the nation's broader outlook that has championed the notion of Americans as God's people and is more broadly accepted than any deeper and inner religious convictions of Americans.

What foreigners have been observing over centuries and what many Americans have expressed in the polls is the Puritan idea embedded in America's political culture and echoed in the civil religious rhetoric of American presidents – that Americans are a people who have a sacred covenant with God. American presidents will refer to God in their rhetoric because of the meaning it has for all Americans, irrespective of whether they are Democrats or Republicans, conformists or dissenters, or the religious affiliation they might have. Whether Woodrow Wilson fighting World War I, Franklin Roosevelt fighting World War II, or Jimmy Carter tackling international communism, they have all uttered references of America fulfilling its duty to God. American presidents have underlined that the United States, as a nation with a sacred covenant with God, sees its cause as saving humanity from itself for its failings and defects and feels obliged to bear the burden and sacrifice of divine responsibility for tackling a down-trodden world (Ivie & Giner 2015).

Within the nation's political culture that emphasises the sacred covenant with God, the almost obsessive focus on notions of virtue and vice, as well as salvation and sin has meant that it has developed the longstanding traits of what has been described as a fiery 'Hellfire Nation'

in constant fear of damnation (Morone 2006). In the search for heaven and virtue, the United States has been desperately seeking to avoid moral decline as a nation (Murphy 2009).

There are other tropes in America's political culture Americans that have been adopted from the Puritans. Like the Puritan ancestors, American presidents have wholeheartedly embraced the phrase 'a city upon a hill' from the Bible (Matthew 4: 15) to describe America. John F. Kennedy, addressing the Massachusetts state legislature on January 9, 1961 as the first Catholic president of the nation, echoed the America's Puritan heritage:

‘I have been guided by the standard John Winthrop set before his shipmates on the *Arabella* three hundred and thirty one years ago, as they, too, faced the task of building a new government on perilous frontier “We must always consider”, he said, “that we shall be a city upon a hill – the eyes of the world are upon us”. Today the eyes of all people are truly upon us – and our government’.²⁹

Two decades later Ronald Reagan (a Presbyterian), in his farewell address, echoed the idea of ‘a city upon a hill’ when he described America as ‘proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, windswept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace; a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity.’³⁰ To Kennedy and Reagan it was unquestionable that America was a distinct entity that shone forth in the world, for the entire world to behold and admire. Reagan further underlined how this ‘city upon a

²⁹ ‘Massachusetts General Court’, John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum, see at <https://www.jfklibrary.org/Asset-Viewer/OYhUZE2Qo0-ogdV7ok900A.aspx>

³⁰ ‘Farewell Address to the Nation’, see at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29650>

hill' was built on firm ground and had a stable foundation that could not be perturbed by natural powers. Both presidents, almost three hundred years after the Puritans had arrived on the shores of America, echoed the Puritan conviction that America is a Biblical 'city upon a hill'.

Americans have also emulated their Puritan ancestors in fighting the various manifestations of the Devil that have appeared throughout their country's history and posed a threat to national order and American self-image (Poole 2009). There is a tendency for American presidents to 'moralise' interactions with others while trying to explain America's action against its enemies based on the need to deal with evil (Kennedy 2013). Exorcising different manifestations of evil has become part of the presidential rhetoric for engaging in acts of violence as a moral cleansing exercise for the nation to deal with its enemies (Ivie 2007). The rhetoric of American presidents underlines a mix of angst and energy toward what amounts to an enactment of a morality play to shape the world to destroy evil (Chernus 2006).

In a nation where a large number of citizens have affirmed their belief in God, it is worth noting such affirmations are inextricably linked to the nation's political culture where public discourse is often underpinned by a strong sense of morality in regard to the world. The moral outlook, and at times outrage, in America's political culture echoes America's Puritan ancestors and their worldview. American presidents over time have not hesitated to refer to Puritan ideas and the Puritans themselves as they have articulated America's place in the world. Given the relevance of Puritan ideas to America's self-perception and global outlook there is a need to explore their origins. The next section investigates the history of these ideas and how they have reverberated in America's political culture.

4.3 The Morality of America's Puritan Ancestors

As the previous section outlined, various tropes in America's political culture that found expression through presidential rhetoric are derived from America's Puritan ancestors and, thus, predate the political entity known as the United States. According to Greenfeld (1993: 402), America's political culture has 'predated not only of the formation of the specific identity (the American sense of uniqueness), but of the institutional framework of the American nation'. The 'idea of America' and the moral significance of it was already in place before the United States had come into existence. It was defined by America's Puritan ancestors. Sacvan Bercovitch's (1975) seminal study of America's political culture before the American Revolution explores the importance of Puritans in creating a spiritualised and religiously-infused idea of America. Bercovitch argues that Puritans, through their rhetoric that had been meticulously written down and passed down over generations in America's political culture, established their theologically-grounded interpretation of their experiences in the wilderness as Biblical agents of divine will into an enduring component of America's 'theological imagination' (p. xi). Puritans, according to their chronicler Cotton Mather, regarded their arrival in America intertwined with the creation of a 'New Jerusalem in America' (p. 108). America was the Promised Land, with Puritans seeing themselves as the people of God (Jue 2008: 269). It seems that America's Puritan ancestors, through their ideas, have considerable significance in America's political culture.

Yet, how did the Puritans gain such importance in America's political culture? Not only was their existence in history far from certain, there were also other influential Protestant sects in

colonial America. America's political culture could have turned out to be different. Would America's political culture, then, have been infused with the notion that Americans are God's chosen people? It might have been so. The idea of 'God's chosen people' originates from Protestant Calvinist thought which formulated the notion of a special covenant between a believer and God – an idea that aligned with the worldview of other Protestant sects such as the Quakers or Baptists in colonial America who believed that they had an intimate relationship with God as they believed they could directly experience His grace (Brachlow 1985; Endy Jr. 2015: 79).

However, if it had not been for the Puritans, a different understanding of this notion might have emerged within America's political culture, one with less fervour and zeal. More importantly, presidential rhetoric – which draws on Puritan ideas – to explain America's place in the world would have lacked its explanatory potency. Quaker pacifism would hardly fit the bill in explaining America's foreign policy interventions. It is worth tracing the historical backdrop to the religious significance of the Puritans settling and remaining in America – an event that would cast a long shadow on America's political culture.

Puritans had migrated during the 1620s and 1630s to America from England following their persecution for their radical interpretation of Protestant beliefs which involved trying to purify English society of its sins and immorality in worldly life under the ungodly regimes of James I and Charles I that had not managed to fully eradicate the vestiges of Catholicism and apparently lacked religious devotion (Daniels 2012: 4-5). Puritans had emerged following the turbulence of the English Reformation. After Henry VIII ceded from the Catholic Church in Rome, Mary Tudor decided to reintroduce Catholicism (1553-1558) but following her brief

reign Elisabeth who decided to restore the Church of England in 1559. With the English Church maintaining the habits and some of the rituals of Roman Catholicism, there were those Englishmen who advocated a purer form of the Anglican Church and, thus, became known as the Puritans.

Under the prevailing circumstances in England, coupled with the fact that they did not regard the church rituals and piety per se as the right path to redemption but an individual matter that involved a sinner opening his or her soul to God's grace, they found it difficult to live a morally virtuous life in accordance with their religious beliefs (Morone 2006: 36-37). Hence, Puritans arrived in America with a religiously-based morality on their minds that would define their existence and cast a long shadow on America's political culture. Having failed in their endeavour to create the moral conditions for divine action to unfold in England, Puritans turned their eyes to America as a place they would sacralise and where they would seek to establish a purer society devoted to morality and the eradication of sin (Bremer 2008: 127). Puritans settlers were opposed to the doctrine of predestination of Catholicism which stipulated that the fate of man's soul and his ability to achieve redemption was no longer determined solely by God's will. They had arrived in America to seek to live in accordance with the notion that redemption was increasingly in man's own hand, convinced of their ability to shape their own destiny in the world (Block 2002: 42). The implication of the Puritan religious beliefs were that man's role in the world was elevated, whereas God's ability to determine an individual's ability to achieve redemption was commensurably diminished – albeit not abolished (Miller 1962).

Other important Protestant denominations – such as the Quakers and Baptists – prevailed in pre-colonial America and sought a morally virtuous life. Yet, for example, nobody speaks of the Quaker or Baptist legacy in America’s political culture. This is particularly interesting because there are several hundred thousand Quakers and millions of Baptists in the United States today, but no Puritans.³¹ So, why is that the legacy of America’s Quaker or Baptist ancestors has not prevailed in America’s political culture and those of the Puritans has? The Quakers, like their Puritan brethren, had sought exile in America as their attempt to challenge the religious doctrine of the Church of England by stipulating that redemption was in an individual’s hand rather than the churches led to their religious prosecution in England.

Once in America, their understanding of religion and religious practices clashed with that of the Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay colony who regarded them as dangerous dissenters and heretics.³² In contrast to Quakers who eschewed violence on religious grounds, Puritans embraced it claiming it would help exorcise worldly manifestations of the devil. Puritans were prepared to kill and execute Quakers, convinced that doing so meant fulfilling religious duty of eliminating evil and achieving status as a morally virtuous people (Morone 2006: 70). Quakers focused on internalising their relationship with God through prayer and sermon,

³¹ There are very few Quakers when compared to the overall American population (Hamm 2002: 62). It is estimated that more than half of America’s population subscribes to the Protestant faith. While almost a third of those Protestants don’t ascribe to a specific denomination, fifteen percent of Americans identify with the Baptist denomination. Hence, Baptists constitute a large portion of the American population and, moreover, represent very important denomination among Protestants in America. See, ‘Religious Affiliation in America: Many Answers, Mostly Christians’, July 2001, <https://abcnews.go.com/images/PollingUnit/855a3Religion.pdf>

³² In 1656 two Quaker missionaries arrived in Boston harbour, only to be captured and put in prison, with their possessions confiscated and their books burnt. They were suspected of practicing witchcraft. See Pestana (1993)’s account on the Quakers and their encounters with the Puritans. Quakers were convinced, much to the dismay of the Puritans, that they capable of directly receiving God’s grace. This ran counter to the notion that Puritans were God’s chosen people.

whereas for the Puritans the relationship with God also had a strong external dimension and involved a divine mission to fight different manifestations of evil in the world such as the Quakers. There are some apparent parallels to the presidential assertions which underlined the need to deal with the different manifestations of evil, be it Thomas Jefferson who highlighted the need to redeem the world of the American Indians, Harry Truman or Ronald Reagan who emphasised the need to fight the evils of communism or George Bush Jr.'s who underlined that the global war on terror as part of the nation's struggle against evil.

It is unlikely that Puritans' ideas would have gained such importance in presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy if the Puritans hadn't maintained the moral fervour of their own religious microcosm. Puritans loathed Baptists, seeing them as petulant heretics whose piety and morality they questioned, being suspicious of their ideas about religious toleration (Pestana 1983: 335). In fact, the creation of the first Baptist congregation in North America is linked to the story of Puritan minister Roger Williams who was forced to leave the Puritan Massachusetts Bay colony for inciting heresy.³³ Anne Hutchinson was famously accused of heresy during her trial in 1638, being punished with banishment from the Puritan community.³⁴ Puritans were less tolerant of other Protestant sects or those who might challenge their religious doctrine. They had a strict and very narrow understanding of what it

³³ Roger Williams, born in London, England around 1603, was a Puritan minister whose views on religious toleration and the separation of church and state were at odds with the Puritan hierarchy of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.

³⁴ Anne Hutchinson, born in Lincoln, England in 1591, was a Puritan religious leader who was implicated in the Antinomian Controversy in the Massachusetts Bay colony between 1636-38. The controversy centred on a theological debate that pitted the covenant of grace against the covenant of works. While Anne Hutchinson embraced the covenant of grace which stipulated that a sinner could directly experience God's grace, the Massachusetts Bay colony magistrates upheld the covenant of works that stipulated that the grace of God can only be experienced by maintaining the sacred covenant with God. Hence, Anne Hutchison's religious worldview was challenging the central notion to the Puritan religious order – the notion that they had sacred covenant with God that had to be maintained.

meant to be God's chosen people. Unlike the colonies of other Protestants sects which were characterised by greater social stratification, Puritans maintained firmly established patterns of governance and cultural organisation that contributed to the rigidity of their ideas (Green 2015: 63). They were the most active among the Reformed, with a fanaticism in their own beliefs that found expression in a rigorous adherence to a disciplinarian and frugal day-to-day life style no other Protestant groups in colonial America could match. This, coupled with their readiness to use violence, gave them such a formidable and feared presence in pre-colonial America. While other Protestants sects, too, were convinced that they had a special relationship with God, it was the Puritans who firmly embraced this notion and wholeheartedly sought to live by it by undertaking commensurate measures, convinced that *only they* were truly God's chosen people.

Puritan preachers used Scripture as a source of an authoritative code for beliefs and righteous conduct to exhort members of their congregation to tackle worldly forms of sin and immorality (Habegger 1969: 344). Their interpretation of the Bible encouraged persistent action in life. Life, according to them, was to be underpinned by a staunch adherence to a 'doctrine of preparation' that involved a sinner trying to undertake commensurate action in the world to achieve redemption (Delbanco 1989). *The Application of Redemption*, a sermon by the influential Puritan preacher Thomas Hooker from ca. 1630, emphasised that by overcoming strife and challenges through commensurate action in life a sinner could redeem himself in God's eyes and, thus, expedite God's arrival on earth that would help establish the Kingdom of God on earth:

‘There must be contrition and humiliation before the Lord comes to the possession; the house must be aired and fitted before it comes to be inhabited, swept by brokenness and emptiness of spirit, before the Lord will come to set up his abode in it. This was typified in the passage of the children of Israel towards the promised land; they must come into, and go through a vast wilderness, where they must be bruised with many pressures, humbled under many overbearing difficulties they were to meet withal before they could possess that good land which abounded with all prosperity, flowed with milk and honey’.

(Heimart & Delbanco Anthology 1985: 177)³⁵

Guided by a Biblically-justified moral righteousness, Puritans sought to clean up the very mess mankind had created in the world. The Biblical language emboldened their conviction that they were indeed the ancient Israelites who had arrived in America to fulfil their special mission of alleviating humanity of its immorality and depravity through commensurate action. In short, Puritans regarded their existence in America intertwined with a Biblical quest for bettering and improving humanity (Bozeman 1988: 14-17). They saw themselves as the central actors in the history of mankind whose sought to bring a fallen world in reconciliation with God’s will, as expressed in the Bible.

Several centuries later, American presidents, in their foreign policy rhetoric, have voiced these Puritan tropes as they have highlighted America’s distinct role in the world no other nation can even remotely fulfil. While America’s Puritan ancestors highlighted the need of

³⁵ On further insights into the Puritan morality see also e.g. Thomas Hooker: *The Soul’s Preparation for Christ* (1626), John Cotton: *Christ the Fountain of Life* (1628), Thomas Shepard: *The Sound Believer* (1633).

redeeming humanity within the remit of New England, American presidents over time have emphasised the need to redeem a morally inferior world by helping make sure that it somehow mirrors America's superior values. Without the ideas of America's Puritan ancestors, American presidential rhetoric on foreign policy would have lacked its moral fervour. The next section seeks to excavate the most important Puritan ideas.

4.4 Central Ideas to Puritan Morality

To begin with, Puritan morality was defined by a mix of chosenness as God's people, the superiority of the Puritan moral order and the need to fight incarnations of the Devil. These ideas were the outgrowth of their religious belief system that was shaped by the experiences Puritans had upon arrival in America and found expression in their rhetoric which gave meaning and purpose to how they understood reality and their place within it. Puritans frequently marshalled the rhetoric of the jeremiad to condemn corruption and vice (Miller 1952: Chapter 2; Miller 1956: 2). Jeremiad derived its name from the seventh century B.C. Biblical Jewish Prophet Jeremiah who, like the Puritans and the subsequent generation of Americans, had used his sermons to admonish his followers for not living up to the divine ideals and succumbing to immorality. The search for the most despairing and sinful qualities in humanity was inextricably intertwined with generating conditions for uprooting all kinds of vices in life and creating virtuous Christians who could present themselves to God to receive appropriate judgement (Block 2002: 56).

These assumptions have had resonance in the contemporary period. America's political culture has featured various modern-day Jeremiahs, such as the fiery evangelist preachers Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson, who continued to admonish Americans for their sinful ways, seeing issues such as abortion as the manifestation of national sin. Falwell and Robertson reminded Americans of the need to maintain higher standards of morality. Similarly, America's foreign policy discourse also underpinned by questions about moral and immoral, right and wrong. The worldwide view of America's Puritan ancestors has infused American presidential rhetoric, it is therefore important to look at the central Puritan ideas in greater detail to broaden our understanding of American foreign policy outlook over time. The next section is devoted to reviewing the most important Puritan ideas in American foreign policy discourse: covenant with God, 'a city upon a hill' and fighting incarnations of the devil.

4.4.1 The Sacred Covenant with God

Puritan settlers believed their arrival in America was part of a providential grand design. They had embraced the idea derived from the teachings of John Calvin during the Reformation that had introduced a historical dimension to Christianity and that God acts inside of time, with history being divinely guided and God opting to act through history via a particular people on earth to fulfil His work (Ceaser 2013: 21). Drawing on the Biblical story of Moses' Exodus of Israelites from Egypt after four centuries of servitude, they interpreted their Atlantic migration as nothing less than a Babylonian flight of the ancient Israelites as part of the unfolding of scriptural prophecy in America. Their experiences in the harsh environment of New England were regarded as a confirmation of their belief that they were God's chosen

people (Kagan 2006: 8). While God – according to the Bible – seemed to have damned the rest of humanity through ‘fires, droughts, bugs, crop failures...and diseases’, divine Providence had had a hand in ensuring that the Puritans were spared (Morone 2006: 40-1). Following their near-death experience in the wilderness, Puritans believed that they had entered a sacred covenant with God which they would formulate into written contracts that were displayed in their towns, convinced that they were the chosen people of God and had a special connection with God.

Peter Bukleley, a Puritan preacher, in 1640 underlined the significance of having entered a sacred covenant with God for the Puritan self-understanding many Americans today would undoubtedly be familiar with (albeit without perhaps knowing the origins of such statements): ‘Thou shouldst be a special people, an only one – none like thee in all the earth’ (Heimart & Delbanco Anthology 1985: 118). Having a covenant with God had two implications. On the one hand, Providence had guided the Puritans and helped secure their survival in the wilderness, and God might continue to exhibit his benevolence toward the Puritans and continue to bless them. On the other hand, living up to the expectations as a special people was no modest task and, of course, breaking the sacred covenant with God, risked disappointing God: ‘heaven and earth, angels and men, that are witnesses to our profession, will cry shame upon us, if we walk contrary to the covenant which we have professed and promised to walk in’ (Heimert & Delbanco Anthology 1985: 120). Anxiety about the ‘danger of desertion’ in the wilderness by God was ever present in the Puritan consciousness (Heimert & Delanco 1985: 62-66). The Puritan preacher Michael Wigglesworth, in his celebrated

jeremiad *God's Controversy with New England* in ca. 1662, reminded his audience of the ramifications of failing to maintain the sacred covenant:

‘Beware, O sinful Land, beware;
And do not think it strange
And sorer judgements at hand,
Unless thou quickly change.’

(Cherry Anthology 1998: 52)

The sacred covenant with God was not guaranteed but was conditional and had to be constantly maintained to avoid being abandoned by God in the wilderness of New England.

Puritans, having survived in the hallowing wilderness of New England, ascribed to the belief that they had been saved by God and interpreted this event as the creation of a covenant with God. They were convinced they were God's chosen people, a special people like no other in the world. Their covenant with God meant that while God favoured the Puritans as a people, it was by no means guaranteed, with Puritans fearing that they could be abandoned by God. This Puritan idea of a covenant with God has perpetually featured in presidential rhetoric on foreign policy, with American presidents frequently underlining that Americans are a people with a covenant with God. They have emphasised in their rhetoric that Providence has guided the United States in its foreign policy as well as the need to preserve the covenant with God. While Washington and Jefferson in their rhetoric strongly emphasised Providence guiding America's foreign policy during the founding of the United States, Bush in the age of terror was adamant about maintaining the covenant with God.

4.4.2 'A city upon a hill'

According to the Puritan worldview America was sacred and, therefore, a place that was somehow special and exceptional (Rivett 2012: 399). Having a sense that they were 'God's own people in God's own country' (Kane 2008: 10), they sought to create a morally superior religious and social order that would help fulfil God's plan on earth (Morone 2006: 33). It is associated with the figure of John Winthrop who was 42 years old when he arrived in America with the pilgrims in 1630, having left behind his life as a lawyer in England. Upon arrival in America he became the founder and governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony,³⁶ a position he held for 19 years until his death and, thus, remained at the heart of the Puritan enterprise in America. He envisaged a social order that was defined by adherence Biblical scripture. He articulated the moral righteousness of the Puritan order in his iconic statement – which American presidents many centuries later would refer to in their speeches to the American public – to describe the new Puritan commonwealth in New England: 'For we must consider that we shall be 'a city upon a hill', the eyes of all people are upon us'. The phrase drew on a specific passage from the Bible: 'You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hidden' (Matthew 4, 15). Winthrop rephrased this passage from the Bible to refer to a Biblical polity the Puritans sought to create in America – one that was truly committed to morality in the hitherto immoral and flawed history of mankind (Miller 1953: 7-8).

In this 'a city upon a hill', life was constantly defined by overcoming sin and immorality, with Puritans persistently trying to bridge the gap between the moral ideals of their religious belief

³⁶ For more on Winthrop as a historical figure see e.g. Bremer 2003.

system derived from literal interpretations of the Bible and existing reality (Noll 2012: 9). This meant tackling any thinkable forms of human corruption or depravity within a Puritan commonwealth which – through ‘overexact’, ‘excessively scrupulous’ and ‘stiffly correct’ rules of moral conduct – strove to achieve virtuousness and pureness unmatched in humanity (Bozeman 2012: 4). In a world that was wicked and corrupt, Puritans created and sought to maintain a morally righteous order that relentlessly strove to shine as an uncontested beacon of morality in the world. As ‘a city upon a hill’, convinced of their own morality as a people, the Puritans sought to illuminate and expose the world’s immorality (Daniels 2012: 191).

Puritans were convinced that they had created a morally superior order that was grounded in Biblical principles that set extremely high moral standards for its members, shining forth as a beacon of hope and morality in a world that was immoral and downtrodden. Presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy has echoed this Puritan idea, highlighting the moral superiority of the United States that went in hand in hand with projecting America’s values in a world that was deemed immorally inferior and had to be redeemed, accordingly.

4.4.3 Fighting Incarnations of the Devil

Puritans encountered external enemies – immoral and dangerous sinners – who stood in their way to sanctification. In 1692 Cotton Mather captured these fears and warned that, having owned parts of the Promised Land, the Devil could try to reassert himself and reclaim his territory in America: ‘The New Englanders are a people of God settled in those, which were the devil’s territories; and it may easily be supposed that the devil will be exceedingly

disturbed' (Heimert & Delbanco Anthology 1985: 339). The American Indians were regarded as incarnations of the Devil in the Promised Land – a savage and uncivilized people with a non-Christian worldview that rendered them beyond redemption (Fassenden 2007: 25). Puritans were convinced that their moral and religious worthiness was being tested by worldly incarnations of the Devil during the Pequot War of 1637-38 and King Philip's War of 1675-76 against the American Indians. Cotton Mather, together with his father Increase, opined on King Philip's War that Indians were 'so Devil driven as to begin an unjust and bloody war against the English' (Mather 2009: 514). 'Extermination, blotting out, and annihilation were linguistic lynchpins' in terms of dealing with American Indians who were compared to the Biblical Amalekites that had threatened the Israelites during their exodus and, thus, had deserved to be eradicated (Corrigan 2012: 112).

In the search for morality, violence served the purpose of exorcising evil and helping achieve sanctification. During their time in the wilderness Puritans replaced 'the dark landscape of America [and its native inhabitants] for the mental landscape of the [Puritan] sinner' (Conin 1973: 147). Often, the sentiments and modes of conduct Puritans tried to suppress or alter within themselves were blamed on the devil and subsequently projected onto their foes (Simmons 1981: 58). As Pearce (1952: 217) points out: 'Always the Puritan mind had worked from inside out, from God and Scripture and reason to man and nature. Whatever he saw outside, the Puritan had somehow already seen inside'. The devil, as the incarnation of evil, was the outgrowth of Puritan morality derived from the Bible through which Puritan enemies were constructed and understood. For Puritans, the devil, in the form of the Americans Indians, had to be exorcised to maintain Puritan virtuousness.

Interpreting their experiences in America through the Bible, Puritans regarded their encounters with the American Indians as dealing with nothing less than manifestations of the devil. American Indians were, to the Puritans, the embodiment of evil that threatened the virtuousness of the Puritan community, necessitating commensurate action to be undertaken against them. Few American presidents, in their rhetoric, have echoed this Puritan idea with such persistency as Bush after the attacks of 9/11 who referred to terrorism and terrorists as the embodiment of evil who to be dealt with through a commensurate strategy of war on terror.

Puritan ideas about the covenant with God, ‘a city upon a hill’ and fighting incarnations of the devil have underpinned presidential rhetoric on foreign policy (as explored in the subsequent three chapters). Yet, before they were echoed in presidential rhetoric they went through a period of gestation during the Great Awakening which helped disseminate them in colonial America. The next section is dedicated to exploring how Puritan ideas were disseminated in colonial America amidst the religious revival of the time.

4.5 The Great Awakening in Colonial America

Puritan influence in America was by no means guaranteed, with their morality becoming increasingly established in colonial America’s political culture during the religious revival of the Great Awakening (1730-40s) that shaped colonial America. The Great Awakening was a religious mass movement involving outbursts of spirituality across colonial America that produced societal and political upheaval as ordinary Americans frantically sought to

reconnect with God amidst concerns about whether the idea of the ‘a city upon a hill’ in colonial America was still valid. While morality was down to the individual, the Puritan logic had been that the entire community was responsible as a sinful soul undermined its spirituality and, thus, the community had to create mechanisms to promote virtuousness (Block 2002: 65-66; Clark 1994: 311; Morone 2006: 48). As personal sin translated into the decline of a community and spread like a dangerous contagion, a just order would promote virtue and create a sound community that would pacify individual sinfulness, preventing the kind of moral decay in society witnessed during the colonial period that was stifling human progress (Morgan 1967: 18-19; Walzer 1963: 88).

The religious fervour, with its emphasis on man’s sinfulness and the subsequent need for redemption, was directed against the corruption of colonial institutions of the pre-revolutionary period (Hatch 1977). Jonathan Edward, a descendent of a notable Puritan family in Connecticut that could trace its ancestry to the Winthrop, Hooker and Mathers families, was a key figure in emphasising Puritan ideas embedded within the colonial political culture to a larger population. He was a staunch Calvinist who believed in an elect set of humans as agents of God, fearing that the sacred covenant with God his ancestors had helped establish was being undermined by religious institutions that prevented individuals from properly experiencing the grace of God in colonial America.

He helped champion a discourse that emphasised the significance of personal morality, criticising hierarchy and ritual within churches in an attempt to give individuals greater control of how to achieve redemption (Cohen 1997: 712; Heimert 1966: 532; McLoughlin 1967: 106-7; Preston 2012: 5). A free and liberated individual, someone not constrained by

the rigidity of ecclesiastical institutions that focused on rituals instead of promoting true piety and morality, was more likely to achieve redemption (Block 2002: 194; Clark 1994: 148-49). The alternative was damnation by a scornful God. As per one of Edwards' fiery jeremiad *Sinner in the Hands of Angry God* from 1741: 'Consider this, you that are here present, that yet remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fierceness of his anger, implies that he will inflict wrath without any pit [...] he will have no compassion upon you, he will not forbear the executions of his wrath...' (Kinnach, Minkema & Sweeney Anthology 1999: 59-60).

Amidst such religiously rooted language that would be used to explain resistance against church authority, the idea of the sacred covenant with God, which had been largely confined to New England, took on increasing national significance as Americans sought the presence of God in their lives (see e.g. Bloch 1985: 15; McKenna 2007: 42). God, while scornful, was also merciful and, as Edwards pointed out in his sermon above, Americans would 'not suffer beyond what strict justice requires'. One important message during the Great Awakening was that individuals were capable of a special relationship with God if they were prepared to make changes in their lives (Stout 1988: 145). Individuals were encouraged to defy church authority whenever it did not reflect the conscience of the individual and did not seem to champion Godly ends, with obedience being deemed sinful and Americans, thus, required to challenge church authority (Hatch 1977).

The aim of such religious dissent was to put an end to the influence of the devil within ecclesiastical institutions that stood between the covenanted people and God. Edwards warned, Antichrist and his followers, acting as agents of the Devil, had transformed the church

into an institution of deceit, superstition and pomp that prevented individuals from experiencing the grace of God (Fuller 1995: 67). He voiced his trepidations about the Antichrist's endeavour to position 'himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God' (Fuller 1995: 68).

At a time when three fourths of colonial America subscribed to some variant of the Puritan faith (Morone 2006: 33), piety meant providing resistance against tyranny to lead a morally virtuous life. When God's grace was everything, the political corruption of colonial institutions was seen as the outgrowth of morally bankrupt individuals, with institutions and individuals reinforcing each other. Conversely, the right institutions would help recalibrate human conduct by producing a morally superior citizenry that would do justice to the idea of 'a city upon a hill'. Rhetoric against the church establishment frequently connected issues pertaining to religion with civil liberties in a more explicit manner than before (Bonomi 2003: 152-53). As the power of the church was challenged and incrementally diminished, the importance of the individual in colonial political culture was elevated. Riots and mobs became an expression of resistance that would help people take matters into their own hands in regard to their own piety across colonial America.

The Great Awakening shaped the political culture of colonial America by crucially linking the ideas of the early Puritan arrivals of Winthrop's generation with the revolutionary period. With the status quo of the most dominant institution – the church – challenged, the Great Awakening helped accelerate the pace towards the revolution (Stout 1977: 520). The politicisation of the religious realm went hand in hand with the seamless spill over of religious

assumptions over into the political realm. British imperial and domestic institutions that constrained liberty were increasingly regarded as the outgrowth of an oppressive system that stifled individual morality (McLoughlin 1977).

The Great Awakening, being a trial run for Americans in terms of offering resistance against authority and engaging in political activism based on religious conviction, helped embed Puritan morality in the colonial period into America's political culture. Jonathan Edwards' sermon *The Latter-Day Glory Is Probably to Begin in America* – convinced that sin could be overcome and the sacred covenant with God still maintained – captured the mood and significance of the Great Awakening for the future of colonial America: 'It is not unlikely that this work of God's Spirit, so extraordinary and wonderful, is the dawning, at least a prelude of that glorious work of God, so often foretold in scripture, which, in the progress and the issue of it, shall renew the world of mankind...' (Cherry Anthology 1998: 54). Edwards was confident that America would be the place where God's plan could finally come to fruition. The Great Awakening created a sacred communal identity that centred on notions of sin and salvation in colonial America, culminating in political upheaval and demands for political reform that resembled the reviving the Puritan ideal of 'a city upon a hill'.

The search for morality by the early Puritan settlers in America was intertwined with a Biblically derived understanding about their initial experiences in America that found expression in the sermons of Puritan preachers. The Puritan settlers sought to realise a life of morality that would please God to sustain their covenant with God, regarding the order they established and sought to sustain was something of 'a city upon a hill' and existing in a world where they encountered incarnations of the devil during their errand in the wilderness. It

would be the events of the Great Awakening that ensured Puritan morality and its cognate ideas were disseminated in colonial America. They became embedded in America's political culture, gaining even greater importance in the wake of the American Revolution at the national level.

4.6 Richard Gamble's Counterargument about Puritan Ideas

Before considering the importance of Puritan ideas during the American Revolution in the next section, here I explore Roger Gamble's *In search of City upon a Hill* (2012) that questions the importance of Puritan ideas in American history and, thus, offers an interesting counterpoint to my thesis. Gamble – in the wake of the increased recognition by politicians, journalists and academics of the importance of Puritan ideas in America's political culture – challenges the notion that John Winthrop delivered the iconic sermon 'city upon a hill', as opposed to simply writing it. He argues that the expression was generally not well known to the American public, being only rather intermittently and briefly mentioned in a manuscript in 1838. Considerable time elapsed again before Ronald Reagan provided a full public rendition of city upon a hill and, thus, became entrenched as a crucial myth within America's self-understanding.

Gamble's work argues that the Puritan idea of 'City upon a Hill' was perpetuated – amongst others – by Ronald Reagan and American studies scholars such as Perry Miller, the prominent 20th century historian of the Puritans. The Puritan idea of a city upon a hill is a recent phenomenon and, according to Gamble's analysis, in 400 years of America history it did not

have the importance it has been ascribed to have. Only in hindsight did the city upon a hill gain importance as part of American civil religion, with Americans prepared to believe that the city upon a hill always had been important to the nation's ancestors since John Winthrop's arrival in America in 1630.

Gamble further argues that the original meaning of the city upon a hill has been lost, with Americans at different stages of history transforming the '[B]iblical metaphor into a national myth' of American civil religion (p. 165). Seeing America as a Christian nation, Gamble questions the use of idea of city upon on hill in secular contexts, convinced that its true potency is derived from its religious connotations. He professes that: 'As a Christian, I believe that for the health of the Church it is necessary to unmake a national myth in order to reclaim it as [B]iblical metaphor' (p.13). In other words, the religious realm needs to reclaim the idea of city upon a hill from the from America's political culture, specifically it needs to be decoupled from American civil religion. To Gamble, city upon a hill is a religious idea that firmly belongs in the religious realm.

Gamble's work makes an important contribution to the debate on Puritan ideas. By challenging the work of scholars such as Perry Miller, Andrew Delbanco, Sacvan Bercovitch or Robert Middlekauff, Gamble has underlined that the importance of Puritan ideas in American history should not be taken for granted. Moreover, Gamble rightly makes the point that the Puritans could not have envisaged what was to become of America, with their ambitions limited to their own immediate environment within which they were trying to survive in (p.23). According to Gamble, to regard the Puritans as 'global revolutionaries', as Robert Kagan does in his book *Dangerous Nation*, is misleading (Kagan 2006: 7-8 quoted on

p. 173). To suggest that Puritans were ‘global revolutionaries’ with whom America’s ascendancy in the world commenced misses the complexity of American foreign policy which was the outgrowth of domestic and international factors. Instead, Puritan ideas, as this thesis has reiterated, were subtly infused into American foreign policy and did not constitute the central drivers of it.

Although Gamble makes the argument that over time Americans have not done justice to the religious dimension of the Puritan idea of city upon a hill, he acknowledges that Americans over time they have drawn on it, implicitly or explicitly. Gamble writes about Johnathan Edwards, the fiery preachers from the Great Awakening:

‘[Edwards] developed his understanding of the city on a hill independently of anything Winthrop wrote in the Model of Christian Charity, but he spoke out of shared tradition and carried the habit of mind forward in a way the Puritan governor and the early generation of settlers would have recognised’ p. 75.

Here Gamble underlines that Edwards quite naturally resorted to Puritan ideas because these had been entrenched into the values and belief system of the time and, therefore, Edwards did not have to read Winthrop’s Model of Christian Charity to do so. Furthermore, Gamble alludes to how John Adams, a Unitarian founding father of the American Revolution, was engaged in diplomatic engagement in Paris and asserted: ‘America is the city set upon a hill. I do not think myself guilty of exaggeration, vanity or presumption, when I say, that the proceedings of Congress are more attended than those of any court in Europe, and the motions of our armies than any theirs’ p. 86.

These examples affirm that Puritan ideas were readily embraced in America's history even before America's founding, with Edwards echoing the idea of city upon a hill in a religious context whereas John Adams did so in the political realm. In effect, Gamble's work, although this is not his objective, confirms my thesis' argument about the importance of Puritan ideas in American history. Whereas Gamble sees it as a weakness that Puritan ideas have been interpreted in a variety of ways in different contexts because it meant a deviation from the original idea of city upon a hill as understood by John Winthrop, I see it as the strength of Puritan ideas. Puritan ideas have been flexible enough to be interpreted by different individual, as this thesis points out, in a variety of contexts in American history. Gamble's work ignores the fact that ideas, rather than being static, are adaptable to different circumstances. The strength of Puritan ideas has been that rather than being limited to the religious realm, as Gamble would prefer, it is part of American civil religion and, thus, has national relevance via America's political culture. The next section explores how Puritan ideas gained significance at the national level during the American Revolution.

4.7 American Revolution and American Civil Religion

Religion and politics have never been far apart in American history as religious assumptions converged with political ones, combining reason and revelation, as they do today. Religion was a factor that inspired Americans to fight for independence against Britain and created a united front, being a source of emotional energy for dissent during the revolution that helped to motivate colonial America to engage in a violent struggle (Bonomi 2003; McLoughlin 1967; Stout 1977). With the American Revolution at times presented solely as a rational

political undertaking (Bailyn 1992; Maier 1997; Wood 1969), these accounts have risked emphasising that American history began anew with the American Revolution and, thus, ignoring the Puritan legacy in American political culture. By singularly focusing on relatively new Enlightenment beliefs that have centred on assumptions around freedom and liberty they have underestimated the importance of religious ideas in America's political culture.

They have provided an incomplete understanding of America's political foundation that was intricately intertwined with the sacred and crucially provided the basis of American civil religion. This section looks at the religiously-infused moral narrative during the revolutionary period that helped establish the different components of America's civil religion which echoed the outlook of America's Puritan ancestors and, moreover, would underpin America's sense of place in the world.

4.7.1 Moral Narrative of the Revolutionary Struggle

According to Novak (2002:1) 'humble faith', regrettably often forgotten, was a crucial category in conjunction with 'plain reason' from enlightenment rationalism that brought America's democratic political order to fruition. A mix of liberal, Whig and republican beliefs were important to the revolutionary cause that culminated in the Declaration of Independence. Yet, it was religious beliefs and ideas that would be significant insofar as they helped Americans persevere in their struggles and, thus, contributed to the success of the revolution (Davis 1994: 710). At a time when 60 percent of the adult white population attended church regularly (Bonomi 2003: 217) and 98 % of Americans of European descent identified with

Protestantism (Dreisbach 2013: 60), with a majority of them subscribing to a Puritan-influenced variant of it (Davis 1994: 715), the religious ideas of America's political culture resonated in the lives of ordinary Americans.

Religious ideas would add a crucial degree of determination, confidence and persuasive rationale for mobilization during the revolution (Stein 1975: 221). The revolutionary clergy's rhetoric helped to ensure that morale remained high in harsh conditions that included long marches, food shortages and squalor in the camps, emphasising the Godly cause of liberty and that being a patriotic American by supporting the war effort was fundamental to being a morally righteous Christian (Preston 2012: 85-86). With political developments of the revolutionary period being presented through religious rhetoric, the 'American national cause' for independence was understood as nothing less than a 'crusade' in God's name (Marsden 1991: 26). Thus, the quest for political rights during the revolution carried strong religious importance that contributed to the sacralisation of the political realm and shaped America's self-perception as a community fighting in the name of moral righteousness.

For Americans, the stakes during the revolution could not have been higher in what appeared to be a sacred war about liberty between the forces of Christ and Antichrist as the representative of the devil in the form of King George.³⁷ King George's government was described as 'venal', 'corrupt', 'wicked', 'diabolical' or 'infernal', something that was part of the devil's continuing ambition to expand his power on earth against the forces of righteousness (Bloch 1988: 61). Such assumptions echoed the smaller struggles of Puritans in

³⁷ By the 1760s, the Great Awakening as well as the anti-Catholic French wars had familiarised Americans with the art of fighting the forces of the Satan.

the wilderness against the American Indians, being updated to the historical juncture of the revolutionary period. They were also a precursor for American presidents articulating America's struggle against evil dictators, whether Clinton in regard to the Cedras regime in Haiti or the Milosevic regime in Kosovo, or Bush dealing with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan or Saddam Hussein in Iraq.

By framing the revolutionary struggle as the cosmic struggle between good and evil on earth, a strong sense of grand historical occasion prevailed, with the revolution seen as having broader significance for the 'wellbeing of the whole of mankind' (Hatch 1977: 88). Americans were convinced that the unfolding of the secular history of the American Revolution had transcendental meaning and purpose. Contemporary preachers drew parallels between irredeemable Biblical villains such as the despotic king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon who was known for his cruelty against the Israelites and King George's cruel and irredeemable rule in America (Valeri 1989: 763). It was difficult for Americans to avoid the conclusion that British rule was the embodiment vice and evil which corroded the moral fabric of American society and, thus, violated God's laws, diminishing the prospect of the chosen people maintaining their sacred covenant with God that had been bestowed by the nation's Puritan ancestors.

Moreover, the language underscored that the new state Americans during the revolution were aspiring to was tantamount to a kind of Kingdom of God on earth. To a deeply religious American public, only such a conception of the new state made sense. Tyranny was the cause of the devil whereas liberty was the cause of righteousness and ultimately that of God. Americans had a religious duty to fight the British. The religiously-infused understanding of what is Godly and the cause of the devil from America's political culture proved so potent

because it provided authoritative language to explain the need for political change during the revolutionary period, helping establish fighting incarnations of the devil as a fixture in American civil religion.

4.7.2 Moral Narrative of the Founding of the United States

Revolutionary leaders sought to realise America's existence as a morally superior entity, seeing the American Revolution not only as a political undertaking but also one that helped to fulfil the moral vision of their Puritan ancestors who had arrived in America two or three generations earlier (Preston 2012: 74). The Founding Fathers remembered all too well the noble cause of liberty of their forefathers that led them to embark upon a dangerous journey across the Atlantic to escape religious persecution in England (Fuller 1995: 70; McKenna 2007: 70). The desire to uphold the noble cause of their ancestors who had established 'a city upon a hill' and, thus, created a radically new polity during the revolutionary period was aided by fact that they had an intricate relationship with America as a place. With few exceptions, the Founding Fathers were the sons of men who had considerable influence and wealth, and as a group were far more established than previous generations and, thus, ensured a great degree of generational continuity (Bailyn 1992: 162; Hofstadter 1979: 74). 86 per cent of the Founding Fathers were born in America, with another 64 per cent of them hailing from families that had resided in the colonies before 1700 and 26 per cent of them coming from families which had arrived before 1640 i.e. those families that came during the first settlement phase (Brown 1976: 466). Hence, existing beliefs of the political culture of colonial America, one that was shaped by the Puritans, would find expression in the new state.

The Founding Fathers drew on religiously-infused language. References to the Bible featured heavily in the political rhetoric of the Founding Fathers who frequently referred to both known and lesser known passages, confirming that they studied the Bible and were well grounded in Christian theology and practice relating to man's attempt to achieve morality in life (Dreisbach 2013: 62). The Founding Fathers embraced the notion of God, accepting that their world was governed by the forces of religion from which their morality for the political realm was derived. While the *extent* of the religiosity of the Founding Fathers is open to debate, yet, there is little denying that they were products of a God-fearing social reality of their times. According to Lutz's extensive survey (1984: 192) of American political literature from 1760 to 1805, which included a total of 3154 citations from 916 items (books, pamphlets, monographs and newspaper articles), the Bible was cited most frequently, a total of 34 per cent of citations, whereas ideas of Enlightenment from European thinkers tallied a total of 22 per cent of citations. Given that Lutz focused on political writings which were longer than 2,000 words, references to the Bible in texts which were shorter than 2,000 words were possibly side-lined. Lutz's work nevertheless provides useful insight into the significance of the religion dimension of America's political culture within which the founding fathers operated.

The Founding Fathers were convinced that God had had 'a hand' in the new political order, seeing themselves as agents of God (McKenna 2007: 47-48) as they were trying to appeal to a religious American public (Morgan 1967: 4-5; Preston 2012: 89).³⁸ The success of the

³⁸ For a discussion on religion and the Founding Fathers see, e.g., Frazer, Gregg L., *The Religious Beliefs of America's Founders*, Kansas: Kansas University Press, 2012; Munoz, Vincent Phillip, *God and the Founders, Madison, Washington and Jefferson*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

American Revolution had vindicated some of the beliefs of the early Puritan settlers that America was a divinely chosen nation (Clebsch 1979: 83-84). The American Revolution (1776-83) and the Constitutional Convention (1787) that led to the world's first free government were perceived as divinely brought about, representing an affirmation of the nation's covenant with God. In fact, the success of the American Revolution took the Founding Fathers by surprise, so much so that they could not explain its ultimate outcome except in terms of divine ordinance (Restad 2015: 37). This was the sort of divine intervention that enabled America's Puritan ancestors to survive in the hallowing wilderness of New England. Hence, when independence was obtained in 1783 and the constitution finalised, Congress ordered days of prayer and fasting for the divine intervention that had aided the cause of freedom (McDougall 1997: 17; see also Berens 1978: Chapter 4).

Benjamin Franklin confided following the revolution how he and his associates had prayed for the revolutionary cause, believing that their prayers had been 'graciously answered' (Burns 1957: 14). Political events of the American Revolution were widely framed in America's political culture through the Biblical narrative of Moses leading the chosen people out of bondage in Egypt. In short, America had become the New Israel – the chosen people of the modern period. Highlighting the parallels between the Bible's chosen people and the United States, Minister Samuel Langdon proceeded to emphasise:

'If I am not mistaken, instead of the twelve tribes of Israel, we may substitute the thirteen states of the American union...The God of heaven hath not indeed visibly displayed the glory of his majesty and power before

our eyes, as he came down in the sight of Israel on the burning mount...[to save] us from the vengeance of a powerful irritated nation'.³⁹

Likewise, the Founding Fathers did not shy from using religious symbolism to make this point. When Benjamin Franklin was asked to devise a seal following the Declaration of Independence, he used Biblical iconography of the ancient Israelites to cement the underlying belief of the American revolution that liberty was the cause of heaven and tyranny that of hell: 'Moses standing along the shore, and extending his Hand over the Sea, thereby causing the same to overwhelm Pharaoh who is sitting in an open Chariot, a Crown on his Head and Sword in his Hand. Rays from the Pillar of Fire in the Clouds reaching to Moses, to express that he acts by Command of the Deity. Motto, Rebellion to Tyrants is Obedience to God' (Clebsch 1979: 88; Meacham 2006: 81). Thus, these Biblical interpretations, following the revolution, had bestowed the newly created republican government with a sacred status, underlining the convergence of the new political order and the nation's self-understanding as a godly community that was analogous to ancient Israel and the Puritans. The Founding Fathers, through their religiously-infused language and iconography, established the notion of the United States as a nation that had a covenant with God as an integral part of American civil religion.

The American Revolution was without precedent, so novel that it defied the course of history. John Adams, along with numerous other Founding Fathers, observed that the United States was a 'singular example in the history of mankind', a quasi-fresh start for the world through

³⁹ Langdon, Samuel, *The Republic of the Israelites as an Example of the American State*, 1788, see at <http://consource.org/document/the-republic-of-the-israelites-an-example-to-the-american-states-by-samuel-langdon-1788-6-5/>; see also Mellen, John. *The Great and Happy Doctrine of Liberty*, Boston, 1795.

the creation of the first free government (Cf. Onuf 1998: 72). According to Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* the United States was the only outpost of freedom in a world where, '[f]reedom hath been hunted from the globe. Asia and Africa have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart' (Paine 1918: 39). The crux of the narrative was that there was no state that was its moral equal in a world where freedom had been 'expelled'. Newspapers envisaged an America that would shine 'brighter and brighter' and ought to, under God's protection, 'bid defiance to every oppressor throughout the world' (Quoted in Bloch 1988: 79). America was a 'city upon a hill' that shone as a beacon of hope for humanity, but unlike Winthrop's interpretation of the phrase which implied shedding light on the immorality of the world the suggestion after the American Revolution was that America would seek to transform humanity.

As the Founding Fathers tried to create a new political order, they were guided by religious assumptions about morality that considered mankind predisposed to sin. Madison and Hamilton cautioned in the *Federalist Papers* that 'If men were angels, no government would be necessary'. The Founding Fathers sought to mitigate the effects of human fallibility and, thus, nurturing people's moral standards through the new democratic polity was among one of their main political tasks (Diamond 1979: 70-72; Frazer 2012: 179-182). Having considered freedom's ability to improve man's morality, they embraced a vision that involved compensating for the existing fallibility of mankind in the world through America's superior values of freedom and liberty. The logic was that freedom had been granted by God and, as result, ought to be enjoyed (more or less) by everyone in the world. Robert Ivie captures the dynamics America's moral narrative, specifically its sense of moral superiority, created:

language that is ‘ethically surcharged’ and leans towards ‘moral perfectionism’ tends to culminate in a certain desire and eagerness for ‘self-justification’ through commensurate acts (2007: 237; Sichertman 2007: 114). America’s ideals about liberty and freedom in the aftermath of the American Revolution, in conjunction with its sense of chosenness, have helped create a perceived moral hierarchy in the world that has contributed to the nation’s ambitions in the world.

In sum, the ideas of the Puritan settlers sustained their relevance during the colonial period, coming to fruition during the Great Awakening because of preachers like Jonathan Edwards and becoming entrenched within the nation’s political culture that helped set the trajectory toward the American Revolution. The American Revolution further affirmed the importance and strength of Puritan ideas, with the revolutionaries convinced that Providence had helped to bring about the success of the American Revolution.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has explored the Puritan origins of America’s political culture and civil religion. It focused on how Puritan ideas and assumptions became internalised in America’s political culture and America’s civil religion over three generations. Puritan ideas and assumptions, expressed through sermons, are inextricably intertwined with the arrival of the Puritans in America in the 1630s where their unexpected survival in the wilderness of New England culminated in their belief that they had entered a covenant with God, convinced that they had established a special relationship with God and, thus, had become God’s truly chosen people.

They were convinced that they had established in America a Biblical ‘a city upon hill’ – a polity that was shone forth in a world that was immoral and corrupt. Interpreting their experiences in the wilderness through the Bible, they understood their struggles against the American Indians as part of the need to fight incarnations of the Devil.

As I have shown in the chapter, Puritan ideas and assumptions became further internalised into the political culture of colonial America during the Great Awakening because of preachers like Johnathan Edwards. Edward’s fiery sermons, echoing the Puritan ancestors and their morality, emphasised the need for colonial America to avoid damnation as well as tackle prevailing forms of evil and in order for America to become a ‘city upon a hill’ once again as they challenged ecclesiastical institutions on the basis that they did not enable individuals to achieve redemption.

The Great Awakening shaped the political culture of colonial America, crucially linking the ideas of the early Puritan arrivals of Winthrop’s generation with the revolutionary period. With the status quo of the most dominant institution – the church – challenged, the Great Awakening helped accelerate the pace towards the revolution (Stout 1977: 520). The politicisation of the religious realm went hand in hand with the seamless spill over of religious assumptions over into the political realm. British imperial and domestic institutions that constrained liberty were increasingly regarded as the outgrowth of an oppressive system that stifled individual morality (McLoughlin 1977).

American revolutionaries would echo these Puritan ideas as they interpreted the events of the revolution, seeing the revolutionary struggle against Britain in terms of a struggle against evil and the outcome of the American Revolution as an affirmation of America’s covenant with

God. Thus, the American Revolution helped to entrench the ideas and convictions of the early Puritan settlers as part of the nation's civil religion. Puritan ideas would define America's self-understanding and its sense of place in the world in strong moral terms, imbuing the nation's presidential rhetoric with fervour and zeal. The next chapter is devoted to providing historical analysis to how these ideas and assumptions of America's civil religion explored in this chapter found expression in presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy across four different presidencies that stretched from the founding era to the beginning of the Cold War.

CHAPTER 5 AMERICAN CIVIL RELIGION AND AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY IN HISTORICAL CONTEXT

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided insights into the Puritan origins of America's civil religion and how Puritan ideas became historically established in America's political culture. Building on that chapter, and probing this thesis central argument that Puritan ideas are deeply intertwined with the American presidency, here I investigate, *first*, how different American presidents over different periods in history came to embrace Puritan antecedents of American civil religion in presidential rhetoric on foreign policy and, *second*, the relative significance of these Puritan antecedents for American foreign policy. The first part enables me to explore – by probing the domestic-international context, the family background and the role of the American presidency – how Puritan ideas have found expression under a broad range of circumstances. This helps demonstrate the strength of Puritan antecedents of American civil religion varied circumstances. The second part enables me to evaluate how Puritan antecedents of American civil religion, as a source of societal integration in the United States, have been important in helping explain American foreign policy to Americans.

To that end, this chapter focuses on the Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt and Truman presidencies. A focus on these specific presidencies at different pivotal junctures of America's history allows us to see the relative importance of Puritan ideas in American civil religion. Analysis of these presidencies, which span three historical eras – the founding era, the great power era and the Cold War era – provides general insights into American civil religion in

different contexts, which each had their own distinctive themes, vocabulary and priorities as well as different configurations of America's positions of power in the international system. These presidencies offer us the opportunity to provide a sweeping overview of the importance of Puritan ideas of American civil religion across America's varied history that spans from the emergence of the United States as an independent and weak state to its rise as a superpower in the international system.

This chapter proceeds as follows. First, it explores the presidency of George Washington and the importance placed on Providence at a time when American foreign policy sought to avoid entangling alliances. Washington's childhood involved being nurtured in the teachings and rituals of the Anglican church, with Washington, however, inclined to embrace Deism during his adult life. Second, the chapter devotes attention to the Jefferson presidency, focusing on Providence as intertwined with assumptions about civilizational progress that would result in territorial expansion. Jefferson, like Washington, grew up in an Anglican family, but also exhibited deist tendencies as an adult. Third, Roosevelt's emphasis on the Christian muscularity of American civil religion was intricately intertwined with assumptions about racial hierarchy, with Roosevelt's religiously-based upbringing contributing to his strong sense of mission during adulthood. Fourth, the chapter sheds light on the Truman presidency and emphasises the linking of the Godly with America's ideas about freedom in American civil religion in the wake of the ideological contest with the Soviet Union at the onset of the Cold War. Truman's religious teachings during his childhood contrasted to his religious worldview as an adult which involved dispensing with unnecessary rituals and embracing religion as a source of morality.

5.2 George Washington⁴⁰ & American Civil Religion

As the first president of the United States, Washington was thrust with the task to be the first major spokesperson of the nation's civil religion. Washington was not afforded the privilege of being able to follow the rhetorical template of previous American presidents. How would the man, who was brought up in an Anglican household during the age of the Great Awakening and during his adult life emerged as a heroic general of the American Revolution, chose to speak to the American public regarding the nation's place in the world? Washington, as he sought to establish America's place in the world, opted for rhetoric that was infused with the civil religious idea of a covenant with God that had been bequeathed by the nation's Puritan ancestors. Did childhood and/or adult religious worldviews come to bear on Washington's presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy? What was the significance of his presidential rhetoric on the nation's foreign policy?

The domestic-international context created the foreign policy exigencies against which Washington's foreign policy rhetoric unfolded. When the United States came into existence following a gruelling war of independence, it was small and weak in an international system that was dominated by European powers (Allen 2011: 4-5). In fact, the union was created as a means of harnessing the necessary strength to deal with the power dynamics of the international system that was defined by the balance of power system of European powers, being regarded as the only feasible solution to the conundrum to produce peace and stability

⁴⁰ Quotes from presidential speeches (unless stated otherwise) derived from online presidential speeches database *American Presidency Project*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/index.php>

(Quinn 2010: 41). The Union was meant to facilitate the process of engaging in international diplomacy and establishing relations with other states (Onuf 1998: 71). Even so, there were persistent fears about the breakdown of the union of what was a disparate set of colonies (Fitzsimmons 1995: 571; Herring 2008: 83; Onuf 1998: 78; Winik 2008: 149).

These were compounded by concerns about the economy. The revolution and the period afterwards were characterised by disruption of commerce, with the war having disrupted production capacity, and battlefield casualties and emigrating loyalists further reducing the labour force needed to generate economic output (Stefanelli 2012: 475). There were further concerns as a result of rebellions such as the Shay's Rebellion, triggered in 1786-87 by farmers in Massachusetts who objected to tax collection (Szatmary 1980). Externally, fears pertained to European powers that posed an economic and military threat to America's territory (Bemis 1934: 251; Winik 2008: 13). In light of the precarious domestic-international backdrop, the subsequent sections consider the factors that have may have flowed into Washington's presidential rhetoric of foreign policy that was infused with Puritan ideas. The next section explores Washington's religious upbringing during childhood and the context within which it unfolded, with the subsequent section focused on his religious worldview during adulthood before we proceed to consider Washington's civil religious rhetoric and its significance.

5.2.1 The Context of Washington's Upbringing

George Washington was born in 1732 in colonial America, overlapping with the religious revivalism of the Great Awakening that had gripped America and defined the nation's

political culture beyond the revivalism itself. Washington was born when colonial America that was seeking the kind of moral and spiritual rejuvenation through religion promised to the masses by evangelical preachers like Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield (see Chapter 3 of thesis). Colonial America was desperately trying to leave behind the moral corruption and decay of ecclesial institutions that was stifling the progress of society. It was striving for spiritual purpose that emphasised individual and personal redemption over church-led manifestations of it that prevented the nation from being the iconic city upon a hill proclaimed by the nation's Puritan ancestors a century earlier.

Washington's family ancestors arrived in America from England in 1657 (Cf. Brown 1976: 476) and, thus, he was a third generation descendent. Washington's great-great grandfather had been an Oxford-educated minister whose son John (who migrated to America) became a vestryman in the local Parish in Virginia (Thompson 2012: 559). Washington's grandfather and father continued to play an important role in the church (Thompson 2012: 559). Thus, Washington was part of a Virginia family that ascribed to faith of the Church of England, placing a strong emphasis on religious lessons, prayer and regular attendance of Sunday service (Novak & Novak 2007: Chapter 1). His father was keen to teach the son about religiously-derived ideas about morality and integrity (Thompson 2012: 563). The local parish priests would have been a familiar figure to Washington as well as an important source of his moral education (Holmes 2006: 36). Washington was brought up, like many of his contemporaries, by parents to whom religion was important while his immediate environment fostered a strong sense of piety.

The majority of adults in colonial America during the eighteenth century were regular churchgoers, with churches being places where community life unfolded, government proclamations were announced from the pulpit and politics was discussed in churchyards (Bonomi 2003: 87-88). The revivalism which Edwards and Whitefield helped stoke resulted in a rapid increase in the number of people joining a church, underlining the surging importance of churches in colonial life (Noll 1992: 97). Thus, Washington was born and grew up during a time when colonial America's political culture was strongly infused with religious impulses.

This also included the influence of Puritan intellectuals such as Cotton Mather. At the height of his career his publications accounted for almost quarter to a third of religious works published in colonial America (Noll 1992: 22). His widely published *Magnalia Christi Americana* from 1702 was a vast history and biography of America's genesis, affirming to the colonialists how generous God had been to their ancestors. In his magnum opus Cotton Mather underlined the power Providence had in guiding the first Puritan settlers following their arrival in America. He pointed to:

‘...the *Wonders* of the CHRISTIAN RELIGION, flying from the Deprivations of *Europe*, to the *American Strand*...the *Wonderful Displays* of [God's] Infinite Power, Wisdom, Goodness, and Faithfulness, wherewith His Divine Providence hath *Irradiated* an Indian Wilderness’ (Heimart & Delbanco Anthology 1985: 319).

Such assertions about the importance of Providence represented familiar assumptions. During the first half of the eighteenth century, clergyman throughout colonial America emphasised the potency of Providence, with believers reminded that their lives were dependent on God's

grace and mercy (Noll 2002: 28). God structured society through and through, with believers expected to find their place within it. It was Johnathan Edwards, the known voice of the Great Awakening, who in 1731 captured the extent to which God determined life: ‘it was from the exertion of the Almighty will and power of God, that we at first came into being...[and]... continue to exist, to think and act’ (Quoted in Noll 2002: 28). Edwards, in turn, echoed John Winthrop’s words from 1630 on the omnipresent nature of God: ‘God Almighty in his most holy and wise [P]rovidence hath so disposed of the condition of mankind, as in all times some must be rich, some high and eminent in power and dignity’ (Heimart & Delbanco Anthology 1985: 82). During his childhood Washington was socialised within the ethos of the Anglican Church and, moreover, had exposure to the Puritan ideas that prevailed at the time. With time Washington’s religious worldview changed and during his adult life he adopted a religious worldview that can be described a ‘theistic rationalism’.

5.2.2 Washington’s Religious Worldview

By the religious standards of the time, religion also played an active role in George Washington’s adult life. During his entire military career Washington frequently attended church, providing reading services for his soldiers when no chaplain was available and asking his soldiers to attend service whenever they could (Holmes 2006: 60). There has, however, been some debate as to how religion mattered to Washington. Washington’s religious beliefs aligned in some ways with deism – a combination of Christian assumptions about God as the creator of the world, coupled with enlightened rationalism. Deism subscribes to the belief that, through rational inquiry, an individual can understand and follow theological ideas. There is

only one God and His powers are exhibited in the world through divinely sanctioned natural laws (both moral and physical), but it is through their rational nature rather than in the hope of divine intervention or a miracle that men can know their duty and seek truth in life (Novak & Novak 2007: 151-52).

According to deists, God does not intervene or play an active role in human affairs, preferring to remain distant from the very world God helped to create. God was nothing more nor less than a ‘watchmaker, who wound up the world and retired’ (Brookhiser 1996: 146). Deism runs counter in one fundamental aspect to Washington’s religious belief system – his belief throughout his life in Providence and the notion that there was a God who guided human affairs. Perhaps a more fitting label would be ‘theistic rationalism’ which combines ‘religion, Christianity, and rationalism’, and despite the dominance of the rational part, this religious belief system embraced the notion that God was involved in human affairs (Smith 2006: 26). Rather like the Puritan ancestors who embraced God’s influence in human affairs (specifically their belief that God had had an important role in ensuring their survival in the wilderness), Washington embraced the notion that God was involved in human successes and failure.

During his adult life Washington’s religious beliefs about Providence that echoed America’s Puritan ancestors, and which were widely prevalent during his childhood, existed alongside his acceptance of enlightened rationalism about religion. Childhood exposure to Puritan ideas and adult religious worldview flowed into his rhetoric as president as Washington sought to construct a national identity grounded in the notion that Americans are a people with a common fate that was underpinned with the Puritan idea of a sacred covenant with God.

5.2.3 Washington's Civil Religion Rhetoric

In his first inaugural address in 1789, he asserted to the American people 'I assure myself that [Providence] expresses your sentiments not less than my own'. He continued by emphasising that the United States was the benefactor of God's favour, reiterating the religious origins of America's founding: 'No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the Invisible Hand which conducts affairs of men more than those of the United States.' His recognition of the 'providential agency' that had guided the United States and was used to explain America's existence as part of God's plan went hand in hand with the need to seek 'His divine blessings' for the success and greatness the United States aspired to achieve in the world. Echoing the ideas of the nation's Puritan forefathers Washington had been exposed to during childhood and continued to embrace as an adult, he reminded Americans that they are a people with a special relationship with God.

In fact, Washington's rhetoric often linked together 'piety and patriotism, God and country, and divine benevolence with the well-being of the nation' (Pierard & Linder 1988: 77). For a people still in search of common values following the revolution, what made them distinct from other nations were ideas about Providence that underpinned American nationhood (Berens 1978: 6). Being God's chosen people was the ultimate accolade of national distinctiveness that was meant to unite Americans. By using non-specific and ambiguous references to God in his inaugural address, such as 'Almighty Being who rules over the Universe',⁴¹ Washington helped create a common religiously-based language Americans

⁴¹ See Novak & Novak (2007: 327-330) for more than a hundred non-specific references to God used by Washington in his political communication both private and public.

from different denominational and sectarian backgrounds could not reject. As a consequence, Washington, of course, did not utter his own Anglican religious views he had grown up with and instead opted to echo Puritan ideas of America's forefather of his childhood and adult life. In his annual message to Congress in 1794, Washington rallied Americans to 'unite [...] in imploring the Supreme Ruler of Nations to spread his holy protection' upon the United States and, moreover, adhere to the conviction that Providence would guide it in its struggle against evil by altering the 'machinations of the wicked to the confirming of our Constitution'.

Washington, reminiscent of the nation's Puritan ancestors who persistently admonished members for not upholding moral standards, did not fail to recognise the issue of national sins. When he established November 26, 1789 as the day of national thanksgiving, he sought to offer, in a style that was reminiscent of a sermon by a preacher who feared God's wrath, 'prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech him to pardon our national and other transgressions'. Such assumptions about the godly nature of American nationhood in his farewell address of September 1796 went hand in hand with the recognition of religion as a source of morality in the nation's political culture: '[o]f all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable support'. To that end, Washington inquired, '[w]here is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice?' and left no doubt that for the United States 'reason and experience both forbid [it] to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle'. Washington was essentially confirming the importance of the civil religion of the nation, with its Puritan antecedents, that had become firmly entrenched following the revolution.

Thus, a religiously-infused morality was to be at the heart of the American political system, with a pious citizenry seen as an integral element to fostering republican virtues in the union (Munoz 2009: 50). Washington was convinced that fear of damnation would propel men to act in a morally righteous manner within the new political system, seeing religion as a positive factor that would help shape America's national character and, thus, help avert acts of national sin in the political realm (Munoz 2009: 56). Religious ideas in Washington's rhetoric helped him to sanctify America's new political system, as well as allowing him to communicate with his audience in a manner that was comprehensible to them. It also reinforced the assumption that America's political values concerning freedom are 'subject to God's laws' in light of the fact that they were derived from God (Green 2015: 159). Washington reiterated in his inauguration, which drew on civil religion, America had been bestowed by God with the task of preserving 'the sacred fire of liberty' and 'destiny of the Republican model of Government'. Washington's rhetoric helped imbue the American political system with a sense of religious and cosmic significance that was intertwined with the expectation that the United States, as God's instrument and chosen people, ought to play a special role in the world and help redeem it.

5.2.4 George Washington's Foreign Policy

Washington was convinced that America's civil religion, specifically the idea of maintaining the sacred covenant with God, meant that it ought to have greater importance in the international system. Yet, he was aware of existing circumstances that had to be addressed before the United States could realise this covenant. It had to proceed with caution in its

foreign policy in the wake of the anxieties and fears of the post-revolutionary period (Siracusa & Warren 2016: 1). It sought to develop its national strength, which included stabilising an economy crippled by war debt, consolidating its territory in the light of incursion by a foreign power and developing a well-regimented army and a new navy, before pursuing a more ambitious foreign policy. This was to be done either through the Proclamation of Neutrality in 1793 that involved maintaining neutrality towards belligerent powers, or the Jay Treaty of 1795 which sought to establish amicable relations with its former colonial master.⁴² These measures were intended to help ensure that the United States avoided conflict with France and Britain. They met with only partial success. Angered by the Jay Treaty, France would implement decrees which meant that American ships no longer enjoyed safe passage, with more than three hundred American ships being seized (DeConde 1958: 488).⁴³

The strategic motivations for keeping out of the European balance of power system aside, it was *also* meant to ensure that the United States avoided being part of a morally inferior and out-dated way of engaging in international relations that suited European monarchies but was unfit for the New World based around ideas about liberty that the United States represented. It was even less suited for a nation that was convinced that it had a sacred covenant with God. The premise was that the American Revolution had ushered in a new age, European nations would be influenced by the very ideas of liberty championed by the United States rather than by European ones (Palmer 2014: Chapter 9). America's moral distinctiveness allowed it to

⁴² The Jay Treaty with the former colonial master proved controversial, generating widespread protests throughout the nation.

⁴³ In addition, France unsuccessfully attempted to bring about the defeat of the treaty in the Senate and House by offering bribes and, moreover, tried to meddle in the elections of 1796.

defy the fundamental logics of the international system, with history having reserved a unique path just for the United States. Being God's chosen people meant that God would also favour the United States in its foreign relations (Guyatt 2007: 14).

George Washington's often quoted admonishment from his farewell address in 1796, with its parallels to a Puritan jeremiad that warned the Puritan community about the dangers of damnation, has been frequently misinterpreted. '[S]teer clear of permanent alliances of any portion of the foreign world', is misleadingly understood to imply a policy of isolationism (DeConde 1958: 504; Dunn 2005: 252-3; Herring 2008: 83). Whenever Washington is quoted, it is forgotten that the United States sought to remain disengaged only from Europe and its balance of power system: 'Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of *any part of Europe*, entangle our peace and prosperity *in the toils of European ambition*, rivalry, interest and humour and caprice?' Avoiding permanent entangling alliances prevented the United States from being dragged into France's revolutionary wars that had engulfed Europe. 'Temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies', however, were permitted, according to Washington's Farewell Address, as the United States wanted to maintain its sense of mission in the world. By any measure, Washington's Farewell Address was '*not* an isolationist document', with '*isolationism*' not becoming part of the American political jargon until the twentieth century (Herring 2008: 83).⁴⁴ Washington's cautionary tone was motivated by his ambitious vision for the United States rather than lack thereof. It was meant to match America's prevailing capabilities rather than being dictated by an isolationist foreign policy

⁴⁴ Original emphasis by Herring.

that stood in contradiction to the precepts of American civil religion which stipulated Americans as a people with a covenant with God and, thus, destined for greatness in the world.

Washington, in his correspondence with Alexander Hamilton, confided that: '[t]wenty years peace with such a population and resources as we have a right to expect; added to our remote situation from jarring power, will in all probability enable us in a just cause, to bid defiance to any power on earth' (Quoted in Kagan 2006: 128). His correspondence with Hamilton coheres with Washington's rhetoric that alluded to America's sacred covenant with God far more than his ambivalent and humble assertion about avoiding 'entangling alliances', which emphasised temporary restraint out of pragmatism to help develop America's national strength. Hence, Washington's pronouncement on avoiding 'entangling alliances' ought to be understood within the broader context of the prevailing religiously-infused assumptions of America's political culture following the revolution, rather than a discrete statement of its own. The idea of America's sense of mission that cohered with the moral narrative of America's civil religion was assured under Washington, with the focus being rather on gradually developing the national resources for achieving greater status in the international system. A cautious approach was integral to Washington's views on foreign policy. Such views were not entirely incompatible with America's sacred covenant with God that had emphasised the importance of human agency over sole reliance on God's benevolence.

What would American foreign policy have been like if American civil religion didn't exist at the time? It may have made little difference in Washington's foreign policy as strategic imperatives to survive as a state amidst imbalances of power in the international system were paramount. United States had to avoid being dragged into the European balance of power

system by maintaining what was essentially a strategic posture of neutrality by avoiding entangling alliances. Hence, without American civil religion, the aim would still have been to secure the achievements of the American Revolution in the immediate-term by ensuring the survival of the republic at all costs. The broader strategic strands of American foreign policy under Washington would have been the same without American civil religion at the time.

So, how exactly was American civil religion, with its Puritan antecedents, significant? Although American civil religion may not have underpinned strategic decisions in American foreign policy per se, it may have helped create unity within the fledgling state. Washington's civil religious rhetoric linked American nationhood with notions of Providence to promote unity in the young and relatively weak republic. The emphasis was on the moral distinctiveness that helped create confidence in the nation's place in the world as God's chosen people. Washington was convinced that God would play His part in eventually guiding the United States to success as a nation, with the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion providing a vision for what America eventually ought to be in the world. Notwithstanding the sacred covenant with God, he recognised that the young republic had to proceed with caution in its foreign policy. It had to avoid being dragged into the European balance of power system by maintaining what was essentially a strategic posture of neutrality through avoiding entangling alliances.

However, Washington's foreign policy, while undeniably an astute way of aligning foreign policy strategy and resources, did not reflect America's self-perception as a great nation whose revolution was an event of global significance. Washington's religious upbringing in the Anglican Church was replaced by a religious worldview that combined Deism and

assumptions of Providence during his adult life. Given his position as the first president of the United States exerted influence on him to subscribe to the nation's religiously-infused political culture, he chose to emphasize Providence to a religiously-inclined American public as he sought to unify Americans under the umbrella of American civil religion at a time when the United States' position in the international system was weak. Moreover, Washington left the task of incrementally taking forward the foreign policy vision stipulated in American civil religion to his fellow founding father, Thomas Jefferson.

5.2 Thomas Jefferson & American Civil Religion

Before assuming the presidency in 1800, Jefferson faced questions about his religiosity and whether he was fit to be the spokesperson of American civil religion and, thus, the right person to articulate a vision for America's place in the world. How would the man, who was brought up in an Anglican household during the Great Awakening and had been tasked to compose a draft of America's Declaration of Independence, choose to speak to the American public regarding nation's place in the world? Jefferson, notwithstanding his hesitation to give expression his religious worldview in order to maintain the separation between church and state, opted for rhetoric that was infused with the civil religious idea of 'city upon a hill' that had been bequeathed by nation's Puritan's ancestors. Did childhood and/or adult religious worldviews come to bear on Washington's presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy? What was the significance of his presidential rhetoric on the nation's foreign policy?

The Napoleonic Wars that had engulfed Europe still loomed large in the international system as a potential source of instability when Thomas Jefferson became president in 1800. There were concerns that France, having defeated Britain and conquered various countries in Europe, could see the United States as the next victim of her universal aspirations (Tucker & Hendrickson 1990: 74).

At home, this produced a crisis over how to best respond to the international situation that had exacerbated the divisions in the young republic between the Federalists, associated with Alexander Hamilton who were anti-French, and the Republicans associated with Thomas Jefferson, who expressed pro-French sentiments. The XYZ Affair (1797-98)⁴⁵ was a diplomatic episode involving French agents, identified as X, Y and Z, who requested that the United States pay a bribe of \$250,000 and loan France \$12 million in return for the commencement of negotiations aimed at a peaceful settlement of a dispute between the two nations (Stinchcombe 1981: 35). The United States and its public were so incensed by the offer that it resulted in what is known as the ‘Quasi-War’ with France – a war of words with France rather than involved actual fighting (Ray 1983).

The sense of crisis was further exacerbated by the national debt resulting from the revolutionary war, rampant corruption and fiscal reforms. Perkins (1998: 115), a leading diplomatic historian who makes the case for studying America’s foreign policy during the founding era, reminds us that ‘foreign policy was perhaps more important for the union’s future than at any other time until the twentieth century’. Yet, regrettably, this seems to be a

⁴⁵ The name is derived from the letters X, Y, and Z being substituted for the names of the French diplomats Hottinguer (X), Bellamy (Y) and Hauteval (Z) in documentation publicised by the John Adams administration.

period that has attracted limited attention in the study of American foreign policy (Kaplan 1994: 453). Hence, it is worth analysing in greater detail, specifically against the backdrop of civil religion as it helps us tease out the religious-derived Puritan ideas that underpinned presidential rhetoric and, moreover, were voiced to reaffirm America's self-understanding as a people.

In the wake of the burden created by the domestic-international context, the subsequent sections consider the factors that have may have flowed into Jefferson's presidential rhetoric of foreign policy which was infused with Puritan ideas. The next section explores Washington's religious upbringing during childhood and the context within which it unfolded, with the subsequent section focused on his religious worldview during adulthood before we proceed to consider Jefferson's civil religious rhetoric and its significance.

5.3.1 The Context of Jefferson's Upbringing

Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence and the third president of the United States, was born in 1743 in the Colony of Virginia. His birth overlapped with the religious revivalism of the Great Awakening that gripped America. He came from an Anglican family that had a strong religious ethos, with his father Peter having served as a vestryman in the local parish (Gaustad 1996: 32). Jefferson's mother taught him to pray, and at times asked him to recite prayers to guests (Smith 2006: 55). During his youth Jefferson read the Bible, the Book of Common Prayer and Anglican liturgy (*Ibid.*: 55). Under the guidance of the Reverend William Douglas during his schooling and years in college Jefferson immersed himself in the study of the Bible (Peterson 1970: 7). Like his prominent contemporary George

Washington, Jefferson underwent religious socialisation through his family, with religion being an integral part of his moral reasoning and worldview from early childhood. Jefferson was influenced by a family environment that embraced religion. He was the product of an era where majority of adults in the colonies during the eighteenth century attended church, with religion being an integral part of an individual's life (Cf. Bonomi 2003: 87).

Born a decade later than Washington, Jefferson was exposed to some of the same Puritan ideas that prevailed at the time because of popular Puritan works such as Cotton Mather's *Magnalia Christi Americana* that retold the narrative of the arrival of America's Puritans ancestors in Biblical terms. Cotton Mather's book affirmed the notion that Americans were a people with sacred covenant with God and, moreover, were nothing short of a 'city upon a hill' notwithstanding their precarious existence in New England. These ideas found greater resonance in America's political culture because of the Great Awakening which helped unleash an unprecedented religious fervour in colonial America and, thus, meant that religious ideas were more readily accepted. While Washington was born when the Great Awakening commenced, Jefferson was born at a time when the Great Awakening was coming to an end and the religious fervour in colonial America was dwindling, but there was never any doubt about the importance of religion in peoples' lives and in the public realm.

During his childhood Jefferson was socialised within the ethos of the Anglican Church and, moreover, had exposure to the Puritan ideas that prevailed at the time. With time, however, Jefferson's religious worldview changed and during his adult life he adopted a religious worldview that was increasingly underpinned with assumptions from the Enlightenment.

5.3.2 Jefferson's Religious Worldview

Jefferson viewed Jesus as a reformer and moral exemplar, and did not consider him to be a saviour and regarded miracles attributed to Jesus nothing more than religious exaggerations (Holmes 2006: 83). Jefferson used scissors and razor to eliminate from his New Testament the passages which deviated from Jesus' original teachings about morality (*Ibid.*, 83). Jefferson regarded religion as a crucial source of morality that would provide guidance to mankind and enable it to find the right path in life. Even so, Jefferson was the product of his times that witnessed the increasing influence of the Enlightenment. He was familiar with the logic and method of Francis Bacon, the science and mathematics of calculation and the politics and philosophy of John Locke (Gaustad 2006: 50). Thus, his appreciation of religion was underpinned by enlightened ideas and rationalist assumptions that cast doubts about the miracles associated with religion. Reason may have led Jefferson to challenge religious doctrine and, thus, imposed limitations on his religious worldview, but it never completely negated the importance he personally ascribed to religion. He understood the importance religion could serve in his own life as well as how intricately it was woven into America's political culture.

During his adult life Jefferson's religious beliefs, which he regarded as an important source of personal and societal morality, existed alongside his acceptance of enlightened rationalism about religion that led him to question the notion of miracles. As such, Jefferson's religious worldview, in contrast to Washington, was not so strongly underpinned by notions about Providence. Jefferson's exposure to Puritan ideas about the sacred covenant with God, and therefore also assumptions about Providence during his childhood mattered little in his

religious worldview as an adult. So, how would Jefferson reconcile his personal religious worldview from his adult life with the religious expectations of the American presidency?

5.3.3 Jefferson's Presidential Campaign & Issue of Religion

In contrast to George Washington whose belief in God was seldom questioned by his contemporaries, Thomas Jefferson was at times accused of being irreligious. During the 1800 presidential campaign, Federalists objected to a Jefferson presidency as it implied that an atheist would assume the highest office in the country (Smith 2006: 53). Alexander Hamilton, Jefferson's Federalist arch rival, accused him of being 'an atheist in religion and fanatic in politics'.⁴⁶ His opponents were trying to exploit the fact that America's religiously-infused political culture regarded atheists as lacking the necessary moral grounding to perform the role of the American president and, thus, were deemed untrustworthy to lead the nation.

One Federalist newspaper highlighted that the American public stood at a crossroads: 'GOD – AND A RELIGIOUS PRESIDENT...(OR) JEFFERSON AND NO GOD' (Lambert 2011: 14).⁴⁷ William Linn, a clergyman from New York, was adamant that a Thomas Jefferson presidency was irreconcilable with America's political culture, stating that even though 'neither the constitution, nor law forbids his election [...] yet the public opinion ought to disqualify him', as his candidacy represented 'a rebellion against God' (Quoted in Lambert 1997: 39).⁴⁸ An irreligious president did not reflect the religious character of a nation that, at

⁴⁶ For the letter from Alexander Hamilton to John Jay, see Founders Archive <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Hamilton/01-24-02-0378>

⁴⁷ For the significance of the 1800 presidential election in American history see e.g. Ferling (2004).

⁴⁸ For insights into the life of Linn both as a revolutionary and anti-Jeffersonian see e.g. Anderson (1977: 391).

the convention for the ratification the constitution in 1787-89, had considered the possibility of religious tests for public officials to reflect the religious ethos of the United States, specifically a Christian one, but had ultimately decided to ban them (Dreisbach 1996).⁴⁹

The debate surrounding Thomas Jefferson's religious outlook during the presidential election of 1800 suggests that it was far from resolved, having moved from the constitutional realm to the sphere of political culture, with the public outraged about Jefferson's possible atheism. The implication of public opinion was that only a president who exhibited certain religious qualities would be able to fulfil the nation's sacred covenant with God. In effect, Americans were asking Jefferson to conform to the idea of the sacred covenant the Puritans had embraced almost hundred fifty years earlier.

Such impulses must be seen against the backdrop of the broader societal impulses that helped foster a strong sense of religiosity at the time. The Second Great Awakening, commencing in ca. 1790 and gaining momentum by the end of the decade, led to a wave of religious revivalism within the United States that resulted in thousands of converts joining the Christian faith (Balmer & Winner 2002: 42). Similarly to the First Great Awakening of the 1740s, preachers were telling their listeners what they had to do in order to achieve personal morality (Noll 1992: 169). This time around, they imbued the nation with a greater sense of spirituality that challenged enlightenment precepts of democracy as sources of cultural corruption,

⁴⁹ Despite the fact that the federal constitution banned religious tests for public office holders, various state constitutions maintained them until the nineteenth century, with some even including them right into the twentieth century.

introducing an evangelical dimension into national life as the revivalism quickly spread across the nation's expanding frontier (Mathews 1969: 23).

Noll (1992: 169), points out that the Second Great Awakening, in the long-term, culminated in a series of organisations that sought to give an evangelical dimension to national life and concurrently champion societal reform. This included the founding of the American Board of Foreign Missions (1810), the American Bible Society (1816), the Colonialization Society for liberated slaves (1817), the American Sunday School Union (1824), the American Tract Society (1825), the American Education Society (1826), the Society for the Promotion of Temperance (1826) and the American Home Missionary Society (1826). The Second Great Awakening and its aftermath, particularly in the form of the creation of these organisations, revealed the extent of the religious fervour in the young nation that had embraced political ideas of the Enlightenment in the wake of the American Revolution.

Jefferson was partly to blame for how his views on religion were understood by the American public. His admiration for the French Revolution was viewed with circumspection (Lambert 1997: 776). The French revolution was considered a 'godless' revolution that sought to abolish religion as a societal phenomenon, with the American clergy vilifying it as a 'source of impiety and social disorder' in the United States (Nash 1965: 392). This contrasted with the American Revolution, which was guided by Providence and underpinned by religious ethos. In the chapter on religion of his 1787 book *Notes on the State of Virginia*, Jefferson made specific references that made it easy for his opponents and rivals during the presidential

election campaign to construe him as an atheist: 'It does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods, or no gods' (Library of Congress Document: 155).⁵⁰

However, to reduce Jefferson's views on religion to statements such as these, as his opponents did, misses the complexity of the issue and how he interpreted the precepts of America's civil religion ideas that have been bequeathed by the nation's Puritan ancestors. Jefferson helped draft the *Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom* in 1786⁵¹ that enshrined the principle of freedom of conscience that paved the way for the First Amendment, which constitutionally established freedom of religion in the United States (Peterson & Vaughan 1988). Rather than being opposed to religion, he recognised the importance of religion in American society and sought to help create parameters that enabled freedom of religion to flourish. In his letter to the *Danbury Baptist Association* of 1802, he reiterated the central pillars of religious freedom in the United States: 1) 'religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God'; 2) man 'owes account to none other for his faith or his worship'; and 3) 'a wall of separation between Church and State' (Library of Congress Document).⁵²

Religion also mattered profoundly to him at a personal level. Having had a formal education that strongly featured a religious curriculum, he frequently read the Bible and regularly attended church throughout his entire life (Buckley 2009: 89). He did not blindly accept religion, rejecting theological doctrines such as original sin, the virgin birth and resurrection of Christ, and other religious ideas that were deemed irreconcilable with sound logic and

⁵⁰'Notes on the state of Virginia', <https://cdn.loc.gov/service/gdc/lhbcb/04902/04902.pdf>

⁵¹ Jefferson felt strongly about religious tolerance, having grown up in a colonial Virginia that was characterised by religious intolerance. The Church of England's hegemonic authority in Virginia had resulted in the discrimination and prosecution of Quakers, Presbyterians and Baptists, see Buckley (2009: 88).

⁵² For Jefferson's Letter to the Danbury Baptists see at <https://www.loc.gov/loc/lcib/9806/danpre.html>

reasoning (Smith 2006: 61). Jefferson was prepared to accept those aspects of religion that helped and guided mankind to live a morally righteous life, seeing religion as the root of morality and regarding it as complementary to enlightenment ideas and beliefs that were central to his worldview. Jefferson was more interested in Jesus' ethics and parables as practical pointers to a morally superior life⁵³ rather than the Biblically-based prophecies and miracles that had become rigid dogmas and did little to contribute to life in society (Holmes 2006: 82).

Yet, there were limitations to the degree to which Jefferson denied the importance of miracles. Jefferson subscribed to the belief that Providence continuously played a role in human affairs, with God exercising his benevolent influence in the world (Gaustad 1996: 72). As a man who was a firm champion of liberty and freedom, having also written the Declaration of Independence, he considered these ideas to be compatible with his belief in Providence which underpinned American nationhood, albeit being reluctant to make explicit references to Christianity in his public pronouncements. Jefferson strictly understood his presidential rhetoric to be civil religious in character rather than religious in nature, seeking to ensure that his civil religion rhetoric had broader appeal in the United States by avoiding references to specific denominations. Moreover, following a strongly-contested presidential election campaign in 1800, Jefferson was all too aware of the burden of the role of the American president and the expectations it created for those occupying this public office. Jefferson's

⁵³ Jefferson wrote a composition entitled *Syllabus of an Estimate of the Merit of the Doctrines of Jesus, Compared with those of Others* which focused on the moral lessons that could be drawn about Jesus' life from the New Testament. Jefferson on one occasion read four Gospels, separating what he regarded to be the authentic messages from Jesus from those that emphasised miracles (Buckley 2009: 90).

childhood religious socialisation and his religious beliefs during his adult life were superseded by the imperatives created by the American presidency.

In his presidential inaugural speech in 1801, Jefferson recognised an ‘overruling Providence [that] delights in the happiness of man here and his greater happiness hereafter’ and, moreover, there being an ‘Infinite Power which rules the destinies of the universe [including America’s prospects of] peace and prosperity’. Jefferson went on to argue that Providence had bestowed upon the United States advantages as ‘a chosen country, with room enough for our descendants to the thousandth and thousandth generation’. Reminiscent of the gratitude the Puritans expressed to God for their survival in the wilderness, in his first address to Congress Jefferson pointed out ‘we devoutly return thanks to the beneficent Being’ who had guided the United States through ‘perilous a season’ and, thus, helped it preserve peace with other nations, thereby ensuring the continued existence of the young republic. This was the same ‘Being’, as Jefferson reminded Americans of the Puritan ancestors’ errand in the wilderness more than a century earlier in his second presidential inauguration in 1805, ‘who led our fathers, as Israel of old, from their native land...and has covered our infancy with His Providence and our riper years with His wisdom and power’.

Knowing that the United States was beholden to God, Jefferson asked Americans to join him in praying for ‘peace, friendships, and approbation of all nations’. Here, Jefferson seems to suggest that Providence had a hand in the dynamics of the international system. Yet, Jefferson acknowledged in his first inaugural address that the nation’s morality at home, as well as American statecraft abroad, was merely ‘enlightened by a benign religion’ as opposed to being singularly determined by it. Having served as an envoy to France (1784-89) and secretary of

state (1790-93) under George Washington, Jefferson understood that he had to balance America's civil religion with rational calculation and astute statecraft when devising the foreign policy of the young republic.

5.3.4 Thomas Jefferson's Foreign Policy

As the 'chosen' people of God who had a covenant with God, Jefferson believed, Americans were entitled to possess the vast land during the early years of the republic (Cf. Joy 2003: 29-31; Perkins 1993: 113-18). This was to be achieved through a combination of astute diplomacy and territorial conquest that was labelled by the French diplomat Turreau in 1805 as 'to conquer without war' in the name of liberty. The phrase captures the seamless compatibility between conquest and liberty in American foreign policy, underpinned by America's moral righteousness to transform the world by championing liberty. Jefferson confided in a letter to Joseph Priestley, a political theorist whom the president had befriended, the moral narrative of civil religion that underpinned American foreign policy during his presidency:

'We feel that we are acting under obligations not confined to the limits of our own society. It is impossible not to be sensible that we are acting for all of mankind; that circumstances denied to others, but indulged to us, have

imposed on us the duty of proving what is the degree of freedom and self-government [in the world]’. (June 19, 1802)⁵⁴

The suggestion here is that as a nation that had been bestowed with freedom, America had an obligation to champion freedom. To Jefferson America was a moral beacon in what was an immoral world where freedom did not exist. His rhetoric emphasised America as the champion of freedom. He echoed the civil religious idea of a ‘a city upon a hill’ John Winthrop, the Puritan governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, had articulated almost 180 years earlier to underline the importance of the Puritan arrival in America for the world: ‘[America is the] solitary republic of the world, the only monument of human rights [and] the sole depository of the sacred fire of freedom [and] self-government from hence it is to be lighted up in other regions, of the earth’ (March 4, 1809). The implication of Jefferson’s assertion was that America could transform the world through its values that centred on ideas of freedom.

Jefferson’s Louisiana Purchase in 1803 meant that France sold territory of roughly 828,000 square miles between the Mississippi river and the Rocky Mountains at a cost of \$ 15 million, doubling American territory which until then had been confined to a tiny part of the continent (Mayers 2007: 13).⁵⁵ Jefferson celebrated the Louisiana Purchase using civil religious language of ‘a city upon a hill’, underlining America’s conviction regarding the greatness and superiority of its own values: ‘The world will here see such an extent of country under free

⁵⁴ ‘From Thomas Jefferson to Joseph Priestley’, Founders Archive Online: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-37-02-0515>

⁵⁵ France had ceded Louisiana to Spain in 1762 in an attempt to draw Spain into the Seven Years’ War. By the time the Second Treaty of San Ildefonso was signed in 1800, Spain had been forced to relinquish Louisiana to France in return for an expansion of Spanish interests in Italy.

and moderate government as it has never seen yet' (September 17, 1803). The Louisiana Purchase was welcomed as it helped promote the moral goals of establishing an 'empire of liberty', representing the early origins of the nation's territorial expansion westwards that would unfold at an accelerating pace in subsequent decades. Federalists expressed dissent about the notion that the Louisiana Purchase represented the cause of liberty and, thus, the notion that it would render America 'a city upon a hill'. They argued that: 1) a republic must not occupy too vast a territory lest it should opt to undermine its own virtues and, thus, jeopardise the American experiment in its entirety; and 2) the Louisiana Purchase would help perpetuate slavery on a larger territory (Mayers 2007: 19-22).

The cause of liberty of the Louisiana Purchase quickly spread and triggered a rapid wave of migration in North America. By 1805, Ohio had become a state and Americans were quickly moving into Southern Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri while setting their sights on what would become Alabama and Mississippi (Cayton 2012: 248). The Jefferson presidency set the precedent for the American government's strategy of turning a blind eye when their citizens acquired territory illegally at the expense of the indigenous population, prepared to protect them in their undertaking. Settlers often moved ahead of government surveyors and officials, settling on land even before it had become available for purchase, with thousands of migrants settling on territory west of the Appalachian Mountains. The *Northwest Ordinance* of 1787, drafted by Jefferson, allowed new territories to be incorporated into the union, promising rights of self-government to new settlers that would create the political momentum for territorial expansion (Kagan 2006: 75). By 1809, agents of the Jefferson administration, such

as Governor William Henry Harrison, managed to acquire 200,000 acres of land as result of 32 treaties with approximately 12 American Indian groups (Cayton 2012: 248).⁵⁶

These settlers, echoing the civil religious idea of a covenant with God, saw themselves as part of the unfolding of Providence in America that was linked to the rise of a superior civilisation (Horsman 1981: 84). An uncivilised, savage and undemocratic people who inhabited the territory in question had to be dealt with either through conversion, or annihilation (Cf. Herring 2008: 63). While people living under the Spanish yoke could be galvanised with great effort to rise up and embrace freedom in the territories bordering the young republic, there was almost no hope for the "irredeemably backward" American Indian population (Kagan 2006: 76; Onuf 2000: 19). Their demise was part of historical inevitability as they encountered the 'more sophisticated and advanced American civilisation' (Cogliano 2006: 235). The American Indian economy, one based on hunting and gathering, did not make adequate use of the land (Joy 2003: 29-31), with Jefferson trying to persuade the American Indian chief Handsome Lake that 'it may be as advantageous to a society [...] who has more land than he can improve, to sell a part'.⁵⁷

As a people with a covenant with God, American settlers believed they were endowed with special human qualities by God, convinced they were destined – in the name of the moral purpose of progress for mankind and the benevolence that came with it – to civilise an inferior people (Burns 1957: 187). Some scholars, such as Patricia Limerick (1987: 190), have gone

⁵⁶ In 1814, to facilitate the settlement demands of an increasing population, the *Pre-Emption Act* allowed settlers to purchase illegally occupied land once it went on sale, see Joy (2003: 32).

⁵⁷ 'From Thomas Jefferson to Handsome Lake', 3 November 1802, see at: <https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/01-38-02-0563>

on to argue that the wrongdoing seemed to be on the part of the American Indians for having embraced their particular means of livelihood: 'it was not that white people were greedy and mean-spirited; Indians were the greedy ones, keeping so much land to themselves, and white people were philanthropic and farsighted in wanting to liberate the land for proper use'. The prevalence of the ideas of innocence as God's chosen people meant that westward expansion was interpreted as a progressive feat rather than one which wreaked havoc on the American Indian population (Cf. Sheehan 2013).

As the main orchestrator of territorial expansion that resulted in the dispossession of American Indians, Thomas Jefferson assured his citizens that the territorial conquest represented an organic process of the history of nations that would result in the inevitable demise of the American Indians, confirming the superiority of Americans by affirming the worthlessness of the people who were dispossessed (Cayton 2012: 239). Referring to the American Indians in his Second Inaugural address, Jefferson expressed his 'commiseration their history inspires'. Jefferson was suggesting that American Indians could not be part of the nation that regarded itself as 'a city upon a hill'. To him, their progress was stifled by the fact that they were 'combated by the habits of their bodies, prejudices of their minds, ignorance [and] pride'. As America's territory grew and the nation's security and prosperity improved, these assumptions underlined that America's civil religion ideas contained distinct racial elements. It was established that the republic was 'a white Anglo-Saxon republic' and that, while white races could be assimilated, non-whites were to be systematically excluded, being intertwined with the notion that only American Anglo-Saxons could bring political and economic progress that created pressure on neighbouring territories (Horsman 1981: 189). White Anglo-Saxons

were the embodiment of a people with a covenant with God and members of the ‘a city upon a hill’, non-whites considered inherently incapable of embodying these civil religious ideas.

What would American foreign policy have been like if American civil religion didn’t exist at the time? The basic desire for territorial expansion may have continued given that territorial expansion pursued by American settlers was to some degree motivated by the desire to acquire land for farming. From the point of view of the American government, territorial expansion helped bolster the territory of what was a weak state surrounded by imperial powers. America’s territorial expansion would have unfolded in some shape or form. Jefferson’s civil religious rhetoric gave the territorial expansion greater zeal and fervour insofar that it reinforced the notion to American settlers that they were God’s chosen people entitled to the land that belonged to American Indians.

Jefferson, whose religious beliefs had been politicised by opponents to cast doubt on his moral integrity as a presidential candidate, found himself facing a dilemma. On the one hand he saw himself as an ardent champion of religious freedom through the separation of church and state while, on the other hand, he sought to appeal to a deeply religious nation. There was also some desire to make his personal religious conviction, which were real contrary to what political rivals might have tried to construe it, made known. Jefferson firmly believed in the purpose and moral compass religion has given him, subscribing to the Deist notion he embraced during his adult life. Yet, in order to maintain the separation of church and state as principle, he made sure to avoid overemphasising his own religious beliefs.

However, if John Adams, who had been the incumbent president Jefferson who had been defeated in the election of 1800, had won the presidency, presidential rhetoric might have

been slightly different. During the election campaign of 1800, John Adams made sure portray himself as the more religious and devout than Jefferson. While Adam's party, the Federalists had opposed the territorial expansion that unfolded under Jefferson, one should not naturally assume that they might have pursued a similar course of action if they had assumed the presidency. What is certain is that John Adam's presidential rhetoric is more likely to have been punctuated with civil religious references. John Adams had a strong sense of religiosity and did not hesitate to make it clearly known in the public realm despite the established separation of church and state. John Adams may have not hesitated, amidst the ongoing religious dynamics of the Second Great Awakening, to infuse civil religious rhetoric with elements from organised religion. Not only did he believe in miracles, Providence and to some extent in the Bible as revelation (Frazer 2012: Chapter 4), he was brought up in what has been described as Puritan household (Howard 1940). He may have resorted to Puritan antecedents in his civil religious rhetoric with greater intensity and frequency than Jefferson.

Counterfactual arguments aside, it is worth remembering that Jefferson perhaps realised that a strict adherence to the separation between church and state was impossible, especially since it would have meant denying a historically crucial aspect of America's political culture. He recognised in public the importance of the civil religious idea of a 'a city upon a hill' in explaining to Americans the nation's foreign policy trajectory based on notions of championing freedom in the world. The Louisiana Purchase chimed well with the larger providential narrative of a nation that believed it had a covenant with God. The civil religious utterances for territorial expansion, which resulted in the displacement of an indigenous population, were further linked to the racially underpinned civilizational progress of a free

people, underscoring the racial dimension to America's civil religion ideas. Jefferson's rhetoric helped contribute to commencing a process of territorial expansion that would culminate in the United States occupying the vast majority of the north American continent by the end of the nineteenth century. This left Theodore Roosevelt with the responsibility of explaining to Americans the nation America's status as a great power.

5.4 Roosevelt and American Civil Religion

Before unexpectedly assumed the presidency in 1901 following the assassination of President McKinley, few Americans doubted that Roosevelt was well-suited to be the spokesperson of American civil religion. Yet, how exactly would the man of great privilege, who was brought up in Dutch Reformed household and taught the importance of moral obligation of religion from a very early age, decide to speak to Americans regarding the nation's place in the world? Convinced of the moral purpose of religion for American society, Roosevelt made sure that his civilisation rhetoric – which was laden with racial assumptions – was infused with the civil religious idea of the 'city upon a hill'. Did childhood and/or adult religious worldviews come to bear on Roosevelt's presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy? What was the significance of his presidential rhetoric on the nation's foreign policy?

By the start of the twentieth century, America's territory stretched from the East Coast to the Pacific Ocean. In just over a century, the nation grew from 4 million in 1790 to more than 76 million people by 1900 (Quinn 2010: 61). With Western expansion complete and the nation connected by railroads, industrial and commercial success ensured that the United States was

transformed into one of the great economic powers in the world (Hunt 2007: 23). By the end of the nineteenth century, the United States ranked first in the world in terms of industrial output, with its factories producing more than the United Kingdom, France and Germany combined (Rabe 2011: 279).

America's increasing self-confidence was undeniable in a world still largely dominated in political and military terms by European powers. It was the Spanish-American War of 1898 that marked the arrival of the United States as a great power in the international system. With Spain's control over its Cuban colony weakening amidst a local rebellion, the United States saw this as an opportunity to reassert its dominance in the Western Hemisphere through successful military action against a morally abhorrent European colonial power. In the end, the war increased America's territory beyond its existing borders, with the peace treaty signed in December 1898 transferring Puerto Rico and Guam, and in exchange for \$20 million (\$ 16 billion as GDP in 2008), also the Philippines to the United States (Rockhof 2008: 50). Seeking to expand the parameters of Western civilisation at the dawn of the twentieth century, under Roosevelt 'muscular Christianity' was a defining feature of America's civil religion and helped to present the imperialist impulse and established America as a great power in the international system. 'Muscular Christianity', linking nationhood and character with Christianity, was indicative of energetic and aggressive outlook that involved crusading tendencies in the world in the name of righteousness (Rego 2008: 35). America would not have to rely on Providence as the founding fathers had done, but would move forward in history through its own efforts, harnessing the nation's material capabilities to do justice to its sense as God's chosen people. Theodore Roosevelt is crucial to comprehending the

development and the nation's understanding of its role as a great power at the turn of the twentieth century.

In the wake of the opportunities created by the domestic-international context, the subsequent sections consider the factors that have may have flowed into Roosevelt's presidential rhetoric of foreign policy that was infused with Puritan ideas. The next section explores Roosevelt's religious upbringing during childhood and the context within which it unfolded, with the subsequent section focused on his religious worldview during adulthood before we proceed to consider Roosevelt's civil religious rhetoric and its significance.

5.4.1 The Context of Roosevelt's Upbringing

Roosevelt was born in 1857 in New York City, United States – four years before the American Civil War commenced. The era, witnessing a crescendo moment of American Civil War that highlighted the deep ruptures within the union, was defined by Victorian anxieties about the loser morals and apparent sin in American society (Morone 2006: 219). This included issues ranging from sexuality (Friskin 2000), temperance (Hyslop 1976) to social ills like poverty (Gonce 1996). Religion was a source of morality that would help inspire the rectification of this situation by guiding Americans to higher ethical and social standards. The era resonated the Puritan obsession with moral virtue. In fact, religious devotion had a significant presence in the United States, being interwoven into American life. According to one estimate, during the period from 1860 until 1870 the percentage of Americans who attended church averaged 36 % (Finke & Stark 1986: 187).

Set against this backdrop, Roosevelt came to appreciate the importance of religion very early on. He was brought up in a well-established and wealthy family that had been in America over eight generations, with his family's religious background instilling in him a strong sense of faith. His family prayed together each morning and regularly read the Bible, with the children required to summarise sermons they had heard in church (Hawley 2008:13). As a child, Roosevelt had learnt several passages of the Bible by heart. Roosevelt joined the Dutch Reformed church at the age of sixteen as an affirmation of his faith in Christ. He spent three years teaching at a mission in New York City before going to Harvard and, as an adult, he regularly attended church (Preston 2012: 210). The strong sense of religious obligation was derived from his namesake father Theodore Sr. whom the son thoroughly admired and tried to emulate (Hawley 2008:13). Roosevelt's father, being a devout Christian, taught poor children at Sunday school and helped to set up New York Children's Aid Society and various charity organisations (Smith 2006: 130). Moreover, Roosevelt's father made sure that his children accompanied him to the various missions where he was active.

From a very early age Roosevelt underwent a strict religious socialisation in an age that echoed the moral angst of America's Puritan ancestors. In addition to regular church attendance and prayers at home, Roosevelt's father was adamant to teach his son the moral virtues of religion and underlined the importance of charity. Roosevelt Jr. keenly followed during his youth his father's lessons and the example he had set. Hence, to Roosevelt religion was always somehow intertwined with a strong sense of a moral mission. Growing up in an age that resonated the Puritan anxieties about morality, Roosevelt did not seek to dispense

with the religious socialisation from childhood, but rather sought to build on it during his adult life.

5.4.2 Roosevelt's Religious Worldview

He regarded morality derived from the Bible as integral to the life of an individual (including his own) and the nation at large. Roosevelt avidly read the Bible and saw it as a source of inspiration in his own life, which included a strict adherence to the Sabbath (he did not fish, hunt, play sports or conduct business on the holy day). He hoped that his fellow Americans would follow suit. The American Bible Society's message contained words from Roosevelt that underlined the relevance of scripture within America's political culture: 'The social fabric of modern states has no surer foundation than the Bible, especially in a republic like ours which rests on the moral character and educated judgement of the individual'. Here, Roosevelt's religious worldview from childhood and adult life seamlessly converged as he addressed the nation. His personal religious and moral ethos was a natural fit for a nation's political culture that embraced religiously-derived morality.

Like a Puritan preacher Roosevelt admonished Americans that fewer Bibles would 'seriously menace the highest interest of civilized humanity'⁵⁸ and, moreover, encouraged them to attend church as often as possible.⁴⁰ He was very consistent about this matter throughout his life, suggesting his childhood religious upbringing had a lasting impact on his religious worldview.

⁵⁸ For insight into the origins of the American Bible Society and the history of its influence in American society see Fea (2016)

So, long after Roosevelt's presidency had ended, he reminded Americans of why religion continued to be important to him and why it also ought to be important for his fellow Americans. Roosevelt highlighted the importance of attending church in an interview with the *Ladies Home Journal* in 1917.⁵⁹ He offered the following reasons for attending church: 1) Creates an improved sense of community 2) Instils a sense of moral responsibility 3) There are enough holidays during the year, with Sundays, however, to be devoted to attending church 4) The only true form of worship of God is by attending church 5) Attending church will give an individual the opportunity to listen to sermons 5) Worshipers will get to listen to passages from the Bible 6) Participate in the singing of hymns 6) Worshipers will have the opportunity to interact with their neighbours and undertake charity work.

Having a strong sense of right from wrong, Roosevelt preached about the dangers of moral laxity for the nation, echoing the warnings about damnation of Puritan preachers who rued worshippers for violating the sacred covenant with God. His moralism ranged from concerns about declining birth rates to rising divorce rates, the dangers of birth control devices that reduced the population and encouraged prostitution to immoral material that corrupted the youth (Rego 2008: 136). His views on religion coincided with the Social Gospel movement, a popular movement led by Protestant preachers who championed Christian beliefs as integral to fighting the social ills and injustices of the rampant industrialisation of the age, with a distinct Protestant understanding of how social reform and progress were intertwined (Gorrell 1988; Hopkins 1982). Proponents of the movement were postmillennialists who considered

⁵⁹ 'Holy Cross Lutheran Church', See at <http://holycrosstrumbull.org/why-go-to-church/>

people as God's collaborators in eschatological history, with an obligation to help foster progress through man's efforts on earth (Will 1990: 167). Roosevelt concurred that the moral compass faith provided had to be matched by commensurate human effort to help guarantee the progress of American society (Hawley 2008: 127; Smith 2006: 144). This was reminiscent of Roosevelt's childhood religious education and upbringing that was encouraged by his father and, moreover, which emphasised a sense of moral responsibility derived from the Christian faith. Hence, Roosevelt's religiously-derived morality underlined the potency of childhood socialisation as a transmission mechanism.

Roosevelt, like a Puritan preacher delivering a jeremiad to instigate Americans to adhere to higher moral standards, placed enormous importance on good character in America's political culture which would help define its place in the world during his presidency. His speech at the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) in 1903 pointed to the importance of a 'good citizen', 'good neighbour' and 'good father or son', reminding Americans that an 'efficient man' who is physically and intellectually overpowering could be dangerous to himself and the community if he were not guided by a 'proper sense of moral responsibility'.⁶⁰ Roosevelt concluded, 'strength of any kind' whether 'physical' or 'mental' ought to be 'guided aright'. In short, Roosevelt was convinced that power and strength ought to be intertwined with a sense of responsibility and purpose in national life. Power had to serve a moral purpose, rather than be pursued for its own sake. While firmly convinced that the source of good character was Christianity and Americans in their relationship to the nation ought to embrace the notion

⁶⁰ Roosevelt was well-versed on the importance of character in national life, having written a twenty-five page essay entitled 'National Life and Character' in 1894.

of 'Christian Citizenship' (December 30, 1900/ YMCA), he also found personal inspiration from the religious-cum-political leader and staunch proponent of Puritanism in England, Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658). Having written biographies before as a means of studying character, he published one of Cromwell in 1900 where he was critical of Cromwell's role during the English Civil War, yet thoroughly admired the English Puritan for trying to 'make the great laws of righteousness living forces in the government of the world' (Roosevelt 1900: 240-41). Like the Puritan man he admired for his moral righteousness, Roosevelt sought to strengthen the moral fabric of society through commensurate action both at home and abroad.

5.4.3 Theodore Roosevelt's Foreign Policy

Once again in the manner of a fiery Puritan preacher delivering a jeremiad, in his 'Strenuous Life' speech, which underlined his worldview about America's place in the world, Roosevelt suggests that the virtues of good character meant embarking on a path of toil and challenge as a nation. 'I wish to preach [...] that the highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil [...] Thrice happy is the nation that has a glorious history'. Championing national adventurism and capturing the general mood of the nation, he proceeded to argue that it is better 'to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even checkered by failure, than to take rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy much nor suffer much' (April 10, 1899). Hence, for the United States to have a passive foreign policy and to accept the status quo of its economic power in the international system was unchristian as well as unmanly, and

ultimately unworthy of the nation's sacred covenant with God. According to Roosevelt's muscular Christian understanding of civil religion, America's crusading internationalism that led to American expansionism was wholly Christian.

Furthermore, a 'muscular Christian' dimension of American civil religion was intertwined with assumptions about racial hierarchy in international affairs. Set against a domestic backdrop that ushered in the era of segregation⁶¹ and an immigration policy that discriminated against specific groups,⁶² it was easy to divide the world into 'civilised' and 'barbaric' races, with 'Slavic', 'Oriental', 'Africans' and Native Americans considered to be part of the latter while the Anglo-Saxons were part of the former (Patterson 2011a: 399).⁶³ Roosevelt, influenced by theories of Social Darwinism, was nonetheless convinced that the status of barbaric races was not preordained but the outcome of lack of progress that could be rectified, allowing these races to move up the racial hierarchy over time (Chin 2011: 419; see also Burton 1965). The logic was that a race that had been nurtured in the values of democracy held by a nation that regarded itself as 'a city upon a hill' would eventually develop a more advanced political culture that would allow it to eventually join the ranks of 'civilized' people. Universalist assumptions about democracy were intertwined with ideas about race in Roosevelt's civil religious worldview.

⁶¹ Plessy v. Ferguson (1896) and Williams v. Mississippi (1898) sanctioned racial segregation by the United States Supreme Court, depriving African-Americans the right to vote. This allowed Southern states to further cement their segregation regime that coincided with a record number of lynchings of African-Americans.

⁶² A series of treaties and congressional measures were instituted between 1880 and 1904, creating the legal foundation for discrimination against Chinese workers and immigrants.

⁶³ Conversely, it would be interesting to consider how racial attitudes in American foreign policy impacted on race dynamics within the United States.

In tune with the muscular Christian vision of American civil religion at the turn of the century, the United States expanded and upgraded its military capability, particularly its navy, to enhance the nation's global outreach in an era when France, Germany and Great Britain were fervently developing their own powerful navies. The feeling was that if the United States had not had the military means to act in Cuba, Latin America, the Philippines or Hawaii, then one of the great European powers might have done so (Colluci 2012: 78). The strategic aspect aside, Roosevelt was convinced that the nation's military was intricately intertwined with creating a manly fighting spirit in the United States and, moreover, echoed the nation's moral righteousness derived from America's civil religion. Hence, Roosevelt viewed the military as an important tool for fostering a sense of responsibility that would provide justice in the international system, one that would be used with ambition, humility and prudence in accordance with his dictum 'speak softly and carry a big stick: you will go far'.

The dictum had special relevance to the situation in the Philippines. Following the Spanish-American War 1898-1901, the United States had to look after the Philippines just as a parent looks after a child, having to care for and educate it in the art of democratic government through a mix of benevolence and disciplinarian parenting until the end of the Second World War. American cartoons frequently depicted Filipinos as children who had to be looked after by an adult, Caucasian male (Hilfrich 2008: 44). There were several dimensions to such depictions. As a politically and racially superior civilisation, the United States felt obliged by the Christian morality of good neighbourly conduct to attempt to ensure the political progress of Filipinos. The intervention, however, also generated opposition. Anti-interventionists used race as the premise that Filipinos were incapable of democratic government, with race seen

as a stumbling block to American imperialism (Love 2004). Organisations such as the *Anti-Imperialist League* argued that the use of force and conquest of foreign territory was degrading to the United States and, moreover, threatened to undermine the republican values of domestic institutions (Mayers 2007: 198). It seems that they were concerned that the intervention in the Philippines would undermine the civil religious idea of ‘a city upon a hill’ rather than reinforce it.

While most religious leaders were not opposed to the war and many of them were convinced that America’s civilising mission would help eradicate centuries of Catholic superstition that had contributed to the backwardness of the Philippines, others questioned whether there was anything benevolent, let alone Christian, about annexing another country for the sake of promoting its civilizational progress (Preston 2012: 224). Set against this backdrop, being able to school Filipinos in democratic government reinforced the civilizational motives that had led to intervention in the first place and was deemed wholly worthy of America’s ethos as a Christian nation as articulated by Roosevelt’s civil religious rhetoric.

Roosevelt’s Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine of 1904 elaborated on America’s sense of place in the world. It implied that a civilised nation such as the United States, a democratic and freedom-loving nation that was the embodiment of the civil religious idea of ‘a city upon a hill’, had an obligation towards states that lacked civilisation. The United States had a right to intervene to help improve the political and social order of those states that lacked civilisation by championing freedom and justice (Gilderhus 2006: 11). The civilizing obligations of America’s great power status as defined in Roosevelt’s Corollary amounted to a reiteration of the ‘white man’s burden’ (Ricard 2006: 19). Thus, in his fourth annual address

to Congress, Roosevelt highlighted the importance of the United States as humanity's policeman that was prepared to fight for justice:

'All that this country desires is to see the neighbouring countries stable, orderly, and prosperous....Chronic wrongdoing, or an impotence which results in general loosening of the ties to civilised society, may in America, as elsewhere, ultimately require intervention by some civilised nation, and in the Western Hemisphere the adherence of the United States to the Monroe Doctrine may force the United States, however reluctantly, in flagrant cases of such wrongdoing or incompetence, to the exercise of an international police power.'

(December 6, 1904)

Echoing a mix of benevolence and the universality of democratic values, Roosevelt went on to emphasise the intentions of America's mission in the world: 'We are not trying to subjugate a people; we are trying to develop them and make them law-abiding citizens, industrious and educated people, and we hope ultimately a self-governing people'. This rationalisation echoed America's stance towards the American Indians during the period of the continental territorial expansion in the eighteenth century which had required the United States to redeem a savage and racially inferior people with a backward political and economic system (see, e.g., Williams 1980). Similarly, in regard to the building of the Panama Canal, in which Roosevelt tried to separate Panama from Colombia, Roosevelt was convinced that Colombia's 'wildcat republic' had acted selfishly by refusing to make financial concessions in regard to the sale price of the Panama Canal and, thus, denying humanity a progressive feat (Smith 2006: 152).⁶⁴

⁶⁴ Following independence from Spain in 1821, Panama oscillated between its status as a sovereign state and as part of a federation that was annexed by Colombia in 1886.

With the European powers excluded from the region as a result of the Monroe Doctrine, American foreign policymakers at the time had inherited an entrenched air of superiority vis-à-vis the Latinos that flourished in the wake of America's attempt to impose itself on the region (Hunt 1987: 62). Colombians were viewed as an inept, corrupt, stubborn and irrational people whose childish behaviour during the Panama Canal crisis was detrimental to humanity. In response, Roosevelt felt convinced that the broader needs of the world had to trump Colombia's reckless demands, pointing out that the United States served mankind by acting as nothing less than a selfless 'guarantor of the canal and of its peaceful use by all of the world' (January 4, 1904).⁶⁵ Convinced of America's benevolence, he also argued that the United States, by separating Panama from Colombia, was motivated in terms of helping Panama obtain freedom and self-government against the oppressive rule of the Colombian government (Sánchez 2007: 50).

What would American foreign policy have been like if American civil religion did not exist at the time? It would have undoubtedly made a profound difference in American foreign policy. In contrast to the Washington presidency where America's survival as a state was at stake and Jefferson's presidency where the United States was a weak state, when Theodore Roosevelt assumed the presidency America was about to embark on becoming a great power and its territory was vast as well as secure. United States was less compelled to pursue an interventionist foreign policy from a strategic point of view. Without American civil religion, the missionary zeal in American foreign policy may have been much weaker at the time.

⁶⁵ 'Special Message to the United States Congress', 4 January 1904, see at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=69417>

While American civil religion may not have been the singular cause of an interventionist foreign policy, it contributed to it. American civil religion, set against the backdrop of Social Gospel movement at home, helped perpetuate a self-image as God's chosen people that reinforced the need for an interventionist policy abroad to deal with inferior civilisations. American civil religion lent American foreign policy a powerful sense of purpose regarding an intervention.

Roosevelt saw his interpretation of faith, one he had nurtured during his childhood, as a template for American civil religion that would help explain America's foreign policy at a time when the nation was on the cusp of becoming a great power. Seeing Christian values as a source of the nation's good character, Roosevelt believed that the United States could not be satisfied with its sheer economic power in the world. To be idle in international relations would be unchristian and unmanly according to America's civil religion at the time, with the nation expected to display muscular Christianity by embracing a life of toil and challenge in the world. Hence, the United States had to embrace responsibility in the international system. Being a nation with good and moral character, or in civil religious terms 'a city upon a hill', it had no choice but to use its power for what it perceived to be moral ends in the world, which implied selectively championing the civilizational progress of inferior peoples. A sense of responsibility derived from American civil religion was intricately linked with ideas about race in Roosevelt's explanation for America's foreign policy.

Did it make a difference to how American civil religion was interpreted in light of the fact that Roosevelt assumed the presidency instead of McKinley who was assassinated in 1901 (six months into his second presidential term)? Roosevelt was undoubtedly a larger than life

personality who enjoyed much popularity at the time. His thunderous civil religious rhetoric was potent because of the popular perception that he was man who did not shy from the challenging life filled with action he himself embraced and championed for the nation, coupled with his own sense of Christian faith that guided him and underpinned his outlook about America's place abroad. If it hadn't been for Roosevelt's religious socialisation during childhood, then, he might not have delivered his civil religious rhetoric with such conviction. His personal admiration for the Puritan leader of English Revolution Oliver Cromwell contributed to the fact that he echoed Puritan antecedents in his rhetoric.

What if McKinley had survived the assassination attempt to finish the second presidential term? McKinley, soft-spoken and with a calmer demeanour than Roosevelt, did not lack religious conviction. He grew up in a deeply religious environment that included very devout parents, church attendance, Bible reading, conversion experience as well as ardent support for missions (Smith 2015: 160). What is interesting is the similarity between Roosevelt and McKinley regarding religious socialisation during early childhood. Moreover, McKinley's religious conviction may have influenced his decision to commence the Spanish-American War. McKinley, had he lived, he would not hesitated to infuse American foreign policy with missionary zeal using civil religious rhetoric. Irrespective of whether McKinley had lived, civil religion would have infused American foreign policy with missionary zeal in one shape or form. However, the great power status of the United States, explained through civil religion under Roosevelt, would be dwarfed by America's superpower status under Truman who had to explain to Americans the nation's unprecedented importance in the international system.

5.5 Harry S. Truman & American Civil Religion

After assuming the presidency in 1945 following the death of Franklin Delano Roosevelt – a national icon whose presidency profoundly shaped American domestic and foreign policy – Americans were curious to see how Truman would speak about American civil religion? How would the man of humble upbringing, who was brought up in a Baptist congregation in the socially conservative and strongly religious state of Missouri, decide to speak to Americans regarding America's place in the world? Convinced of the moral purpose of religion for American society in the wake of the onset of the Cold War, Truman's presidential rhetoric on the Cold War contest was infused with civil religious idea of a sacred covenant with God that had to be maintained in the wake of the Soviet threat. Did childhood and/or adult religious worldviews come to bear on Truman's presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy? What was the significance of his presidential rhetoric on the nation's foreign policy?

The Cold War commenced amidst a substantial improvement in America's material position in the international system, leaving the existing great powers, Germany, France and the United Kingdom, considerably weakened. Compared to these countries, and despite being weakened by the war that had led to a total of almost 27 million civilian and military casualties (Gaddis 2011: 9), the Soviet Union still managed to establish satellite states in Eastern Europe and, thanks to the development of the atomic bomb, to quickly achieve superpower status.

Yet, in all respects, it was dwarfed by the United States. The war had resulted in economic growth within the United States, with gross national product tripling between 1939 and 1945 while the production of goods represented almost 50 % of global production (Kennedy 1987: 358). In military terms, the United States had an army of 12.5 million men, while its navy was

larger than the navies of all other nations combined. Domestically, American society had been gripped by a patriotic fervour during the Second World War that resulted in a wave of euphoria for the anti-communist struggle amidst the backlash of McCarthyism (Freeland 1971). Yet, how exactly did America's hegemony and, hence, the notion of providing leadership in the world, which became an integral – albeit evolving – part of American foreign policy for many future decades, come into existence? Crucially, how was America's foreign policy to be explained to Americans, who a generation before had rejected American leadership in the international system? The United States consisted of a large portion of believers and churchgoers. According to Gallup Poll from 1947, 94 % of respondents expressed a belief in God.⁶⁶ Church membership in the United States had risen to almost 70 % within a generation (Morone 2006: 381). The United States had a religiously-infused political culture, with American hegemony to be explained as the outgrowth of values around freedom and liberty that were underpinned by civil religious ideas.

In the wake of the complexities of the domestic-international context during the onset of the Cold War contest, the subsequent sections consider the factors that have may have flowed into Roosevelt's presidential rhetoric on foreign policy that was infused with Puritan ideas. The next section explores Truman's religious upbringing during childhood and the context within which it unfolded, with the subsequent section focused on his religious worldview during adulthood before we proceed to consider Truman's civil religious rhetoric and its significance.

⁶⁶ See at <http://news.gallup.com/poll/1690/religion.aspx>

5.5.1 The Context of Truman's Upbringing

The emergence of American hegemony is associated with the eventful presidency of Harry Truman. He was born in 1884 in a small town in Missouri in the mid-West of the United States. At the time religion was an integral part of communal life in the United States. According to one estimate 35 % of Americans were affiliated to a church at the time of his birth, with that figure rising to 45 % by 1890 (Finke & Stark 1986: 187). Viscount Bryce, an English jurist and Liberal politician, was a well-versed observer of the United States who in his book *The American Commonwealth* from 1888 alluded to the 'religious habits of the people, and the part they play in forming and colouring whole life of the country'.⁶⁷ The country was infused with religious fervour, not only at the individual and communal level but also at also at the societal level where it had an impact on the nation's political culture.

America was undergoing a religious revival in the form of the Third Great Awakening that witnessed the rise of the Social Gospel movement which would create a religiously-derived moral purpose to fight social ills in American society towards the end of the century. The Social Gospel movement placed emphasis on Christian obligation over personal redemption, seeking to challenge inequality, poverty, crime and issues such as alcoholism (Morone 2006: 220). This movement, with its emphasis on social responsibility derived from Christianity, sought to create a compelling moral vision for societal change in the United States. The crux of the Social Gospel movement was that America was a Godly nation in search of redemption,

⁶⁷ See '*The American Commonwealth*' at <https://archive.org/stream/americancommonw18brycgoog#page/n27/mode/2up/search/religion>

seeking to uphold the Puritan idea of 'city upon a hill' idea in an age characterised by social ills and economic inequality.

Truman was exposed to religion from a very early age. Three of Truman's grandparents were Baptists, with one being from a Protestant congregation in western Missouri. Truman's father John professed a strong faith in God, ensuring that many of the family guidelines were derived from the Bible (McCullough 1992: 47). Truman's parents, having located to Missouri in 1890, regularly took him to Sunday school at First Presbyterian Church in Independence. At age 18, Truman was baptised in a Baptist church in Kansas City, accepting of Christ as his saviour. Having grown up in what was a religious background, however, he eschewed his family's understanding and practice of religion. Truman accused his family members of hypocrisy due to their excessive displays of spirituality, underlining that there were certain limits to religious socialisation via one's family. This would suggest that the family as transmission mechanism of socialisation was relatively weak. As far as Truman was concerned, his family members were not genuine regarding religion, having not fully harnessed the possibilities religion offered an individual. Truman believed that religion ought to have a deeper purpose and meaning in an individual's life than merely providing comfort in rituals and a sense of belonging that went with it.

From a very early age Truman underwent a strict religious socialisation in an age that was experiencing religious-cum-moral fervour of the Third Great Awakening that echoed the familiar tropes of angst of America's Puritan ancestors. Truman's view was that his childhood religious socialisation was too strongly steeped in routines that lacked a deeper moral purpose.

Truman sought to dispense his childhood religious socialisation, seeking to find religion's deeper moral purpose during his adult life.

5.5.2 Truman's Religious Worldview

As an adult Truman developed an understanding of religion in opposition to what he had experienced as a child. He only intermittently went to church, but he frequently read the Bible as a guide to a morally righteous life and prayed daily throughout most of his life (Spalding 2006: 205). Truman was convinced that religion was significant insofar as it would shape an individual's moral character and would provide man with the guidance, purpose and integrity in life necessary to undertake the right actions in order to achieve good in the world (Spalding 2007: 98). His daily prayer for divine guidance underlined such notions: 'Oh, Almighty and Everlasting God, Creator of heaven, earth and the universe. Help me to be, to think, to act what is right, because it is right [...].'⁶⁸ To Truman religion, echoing the Social Gospel movement notwithstanding his rejection of his childhood religious upbringing, ought to be purpose-driven and, thus, ought to underpin an individual's thought as much as his/her actions.

Truman's understanding of religion flowed into his interpretation of American civil religion. He regarded Jesus's example of self-sacrifice for humanity and his teachings as a source of moral inspiration both for his personal and political professional life (Smith 2015: 229, 231).

⁶⁸ 'Harry Truman's favourite prayer', see at Truman Library website: <https://www.trumanlibrary.org/kids/prayer.htm>

Truman was open about his beliefs regarding Jesus, not hesitating to quote John 3:16 in his Christmas message in 1952 to the American public: ‘God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believeth in Him should not perish...’ (December 24, 1952). Contrary to the separation of church and state entrenched by the American constitution, Truman’s civil religious message resonated with America’s Christians and affirmed his belief that America was a Christian nation. His recognition of Jesus as the redeemer suggests the importance Truman placed on Christian morality in his understanding of American civil religion. Specifically, Truman subscribed to the belief that man was the creation of God and if he was prepared to believe in God and act in a manner that involved choosing right over wrong, good over evil he could realise a meaningful existence on earth. According to Truman’s understanding of faith (which did justice to the civil religious idea of the nation’s covenant with God), man’s righteous action on earth was nothing short of the manifestation of God’s will. To Truman, such assumptions about faith created a strong sense of obligation to try to do what was right as president of the United States, which in the aftermath of the Second World War meant dealing with the Soviet threat in the world.

5.5.3 Truman’s Foreign Policy

Providence, according to Truman, had helped ensure that the United States found itself at a historical juncture where it ought to embrace responsibility in the international system: ‘We are faced now with what Almighty God intended us to be faced with in 1920. We are faced with leadership of the free peoples of the world’ (April 17, 1948). One implication was that providing leadership in the international system was godly because it had been mandated by

God, whereas lack thereof in the 1920s was ungodly, borderline sinful on the part of the United States. Truman left no doubt that America was ‘a city upon a hill’, perhaps more than ever before in the nation’s history, being ‘the greatest nation the sun ever shone upon’ (May 1, 1948). He added that America had ‘grown from a small country in the wilderness [of the Puritan ancestors] to a position of great strength’ (October 30, 1949). Truman paid homage to the Puritan ancestors and their humble origins as he tried to make a case for American leadership in the world. While the Puritans were long gone, their ideas permeated Truman’s civil religious worldview. America was God’s creation and its divinely bestowed power intertwined with the assumption that the United States was to be held accountable to higher moral expectations than other nations: ‘God had created [America] and brought [it] to our present position of power for some great purpose’ (3 April 1951). In short, providing leadership in the international system was America’s calling to fulfil its sacred covenant with God. The United States had been graciously given a second attempt at providing leadership and, thus, could now redeem itself for its strategic posture in the 1920s by saving the world from the Soviet threat.

While the United States and the Soviet Union could both lay claim to universal ideas about human progress as part of their respective belief systems, only America could claim God as a part of its belief system. Combining faith and freedom in his civil religious rhetoric to reiterate this point to Americans, Truman emphasised that ‘[o]ur American heritage of human freedom is born of the belief that man is created in the image of God and therefore is capable of governing himself’. He was adamant that the idea of freedom was ‘derived from the word of God’ and, thus, enjoyed divine legitimacy (21 December 1949). Convinced that freedom was

to some extent the cause of God, Truman regarded faith and freedom as complementary categories that ensured ‘the worth and dignity of the individual man and woman’ which guaranteed citizens a moral and, thus, a superior way of life (March 6, 1946). Being able to exercise one’s religious faith, something that was important to an American president who voiced it quite openly, and was integral to the American political system is apparently what made the United States morally so much more superior to the Soviet Union, which rejected faith and freedom. Hence, the United States and the Soviet Union were not only at odds with each other regarding their respective political and economic systems, but also in terms of religion.

In the context of the Cold War, the nation’s dictum, ‘In God We Trust’, became an important source of moral guidance, as well as a psychological shield, as the United States sought to promote what it considered to be the godly cause of freedom against a Soviet foreign policy that strove to undermine it. Avoiding the religiously neutral language of the nation’s motto that referred to ‘God’ in general terms and, thus, risking excluding non-Christians in the United States, Truman was unequivocal that the United States was a ‘Christian nation’ (August 28, 1947)⁶⁹ whose ‘greatest bulwark [was] a moral code expressed in the 20th Chapter of Exodus and the Sermon on the Mount’ (May 14, 1950). He was adamant that ‘the basic source of [national] strength is spiritual’ (January 7, 1948), with religiously-based morality to be the guide to how the United States sought to conduct itself in international relations.

⁶⁹ ‘Written exchange with Pope Pius XII’, 28 August 1947, see <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=12746>

Members of America's religious community expressed their scepticism about Truman's civil religious rhetoric, highlighting that elements within America's political culture did not always welcome Truman's attempt to use religious ideas to as part of America's foreign policy outlook. The editors of *Christian Century*, a highly influential non-denominational Protestant magazine of the time, were not entirely convinced that by following the example of Christ the United States would help deal with the wrongs in the world, particularly given that Christ's teachings in the Sermon on the Mount set too high moral standards for the international system (Cited in Smith 2015: 252).

Reinhold Niebuhr, exploring America's foreign policy situation from the perspective of Christian belief, was critical of the attempt to define the Cold War in spiritual terms. He provided a pithy warning that 'God-fearing men of all ages, are never safe against the temptation of claiming God too simply as the sanctifier of whatever we most fervently desire'. Claiming that God was on America's side in the Cold War, further opined one of the nation's most celebrated theologians, was not only immodest but was potentially dangerous as the United States became 'blind to see all the hazards of the conflict' (Niebuhr 1952: 173-4). The Federal Council of Churches, rejecting the religious premise for pursuing the Cold War, went even further in its *Positive Program for Peace* of 1948, arguing for a reduction in military spending, higher expenditure on welfare programmes at home and ultimately some form of rapprochement with the Soviet Union.⁷⁰

⁷⁰ 'A Positive Program for Peace', National Archive website <https://archive.org/details/positiveprogramf00fede>

Truman had opted to proceed in an alarmist fashion. His religiously-infused rhetoric divided the world in terms of moralistic categories of good and evil and framed the Cold War as an apocalyptic scenario involving the dangerous ascendancy of the Soviet Union that threatened the survival of humanity to explain America's policy of containment. Truman's speech on March 12, 1947, which established a foreign policy doctrine in his name, argued that if America's cherished values were to survive and the world (including America's territorial security) was meant to escape unscathed in the wake of the global threat of communism, then the United States had to maintain global order: 'The free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms. If we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world – and we shall surely endanger the welfare of our own Nation'.

Melvyn Leffler (1992) has highlighted that America's national security was dramatically adjusted to encompass the entire world. Truman's rhetoric helped to underline the global scope of American foreign policy. Having rhetorically established apocalyptic scenarios as potentially imminent, any form of instability in the world could pose a threat to the United States and was deemed a national security concern that could affect security and stability at home. This required, according to Truman's State of Union Address in 1947, that '[America's] goal is the collective security of mankind', with the United States prepared to promote collective security in the world. It rejected the notion of a balance of power conceived of spheres of influence, preferring instead to provide leadership to contain the Soviet threat in the world. The definition of America's national security was broadened to include the promoting of a liberal international order that ensured the 'growth and expansion of freedom and self-government' (22 February 1950).

Truman appreciated that a religiously-infused understanding of the Cold War resonated well with a nation that consisted of churchgoers and believers and gave the United States a crucial dose of emotional and psychological fervour in the Cold War contest. He also recognised the importance of America's military and economic strength to deal with the Soviet threat and help avert a dangerous apocalypse. America's moral leadership in the world was to be complemented with power that underscored the necessary convergence between his idealism and realism, with Truman recognising that 'We must face the fact that peace must be built upon power' (Autumn 1945). In order to contain communism's vast military strength, prodigious military spending was advocated by internal documents such as NSC-68 in April 1950. The United States had to be prepared to use force on a global scale whenever appropriate. To that end, with the aim of devising a long-term approach, Truman created an elaborate national security apparatus, including the inauguration of the Department of Defense, National Security Council and a network of intelligence agencies, which formed the bedrock of American leadership in the world against communism and brought about lasting organisational routines and practices with a global outreach (Bacevich 2007). Internationally, NATO and an elaborate network of alliances throughout the world supported America's role as hegemon during the Cold War.

What would American foreign policy have been like if American civil religion didn't exist at the time? An integral part of the Cold War narrative in Truman's presidential rhetoric was the distinction between the Godly United States and Godless Soviet Union. Without American civil religion, in which these narratives were grounded, the ideological enemy images the United States perpetuated would have been weaker. Lack of civil religious assumptions may

not have averted the onset of the Cold War as purely ideological enemy images would have been sufficiently strong to escalate the conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union, but it is highly likely that America's Cold War narrative would have been bereft of an added emotive intensity that may have made it easier to explain and justify the conflict to the American public.

Did it make a difference to how American civil religion was interpreted that Roosevelt died in 1945 (three months into his fourth presidential term) and, thus, Truman assumed the presidency? Truman was convinced that his civil religious rhetoric, at times infused with references from organised religion, ought to serve a higher moral purpose. Given his own religious upbringing, he was adamant that religious ideas ought to have real world application rather being the source of rituals. While recognising the strategic dynamics during the onset of the Cold War, Truman sought to imbue American foreign policy with the moral purpose derived from (civil) religious ideas. A Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) presidency would have eventually led to an increasingly firmer stance against the Soviet Union. While FDR initially adopted a compromising stance toward the Soviet Union, he was growing increasingly exasperated with Stalin's aggressive foreign policy. Given Roosevelt's religious upbringing and his rhetoric as president, one should not exclude the possibility that he may have utilised civil religious rhetoric during the onset of the Cold War.

In sum, Truman's civil religious rhetoric, through its persistent distinctions between America's divinely bestowed values that centred on freedom and the Soviet Union's godlessness and authoritarianism, helped spiritualise the strategic contest between the United States and the Soviet Union. For Americans, who tended to be quite religious, such

explanations reduced the complexities of the Cold War conflict to categories of godly and ungodly, which they could easily understand. American leadership in the name of God converged with the deeper and timeless understanding of America as a nation having a sacred covenant with God, but also with Truman's own deeply entrenched religious conviction about acting in a morally righteous manner in life. Not everybody was convinced that anything short of full-hearted support for the Cold War cause, which Truman's rhetoric seemed to have implied, would compromise their personal faith, with some critics seeking to suggest more nuanced positions to dealing with the Soviet Union that were to be decoupled from civil religion. Hence, Truman's civil religious rhetoric helped create an emotional fervour, generated a more pronounced anti-communist stance that – in the wake of America's preponderant power in the international system – exacerbated tensions with the Soviet Union, and entrenched the Cold War contest, producing lasting consequences for American foreign policy.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated the importance of America's civil religion, with its Puritan derived assumptions as an important aspect of America's foreign policy rhetoric. The table on the following page summarises the religious background and worldview of American presidents as well as their rhetoric while in office. It traces how these presidents, notwithstanding the different family environments and eras in which they were socialised, they adopted religiously-infused presidential rhetoric that echoed Puritan ideas.

	Childhood Religious Socialisation	View on Religion during Adulthood and the role of the presidency	Societal Conditions: Domestic-International Context	Embedded Values in Presidential Foreign Policy Rhetoric & Puritan Antecedents	What if American Civil Religion did not exist?
WASHINGTON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of Birth: Great Awakening • Member of the Church of England • Washington’s grand-father and father had strong religious affiliations • Religious lessons, prayer and Sunday church service 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deism: a mix of Christian assumption that God is the creator of the world and enlightened rationalism • Washington was the first president of the United States, feeling compelled to articulate America’s civil religion following independence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The United States came into existence following a gruelling war of independence • There were perpetual fears about the break-up of the union and that the young republic might not survive • The United States had a weak position in the international system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providence guided human affairs • ‘[Providence] expresses your sentiments not less than my own’; ‘invisible hand’; ‘Supreme Ruler of Nations to spread his holy protection’ • While Providence may have guided the United States, there was a need to preserve the sacred covenant with God by ‘steering clear of entangled alliances’ 	<p>It may not have changed the strategic dimension of American foreign policy.</p> <p>However, the Puritan idea of sacred covenant with God helped create unity within the fledgling state and there was no doubt in Washington’s mind what America was to be.</p>
JEFFERSON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age of Birth: Great Awakening • Member of Church of England • Father served as vestryman in local parish • Mother taught him to pray and recite prayers to guests. Avidly read the Bible during his childhood & schooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jefferson’s appreciation of religion went hand in hand with enlightened ideas, refusing to believe in religious miracles. • Regarded religion to be a source of human morality, but championed a strong separation between church and state • Jefferson was under public pressure to conform to the religious nature of the American presidency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Napoleonic wars loomed large in the international system, generating concerns that the United States might become victim of France universal aspirations • Tensions between the ‘anti-French’ and ‘pro-French’ camps in the United States • Sense of crisis was exacerbated by national debt stemming from the revolutionary war as well as rampant corruption 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providence guided human affairs • ‘overruling Providence [that] delights in the happiness of man’; ‘Infinite Power which rules the destinies of the universe [including America’s prospects of] peace and prosperity’; ‘a chosen country’. • Providence guiding the United States at a time of peril was reminiscent of the Puritan survival during the errand in the wilderness; territorial expansion considered the fulfilment of a sacred covenant with God, with 	<p>The desire for territorial acquisition would have continued without the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion.</p> <p>Jefferson’s civil religious rhetoric gave the territorial expansion greater moral fervour insofar that it reinforced the notion that American settlers were God’s chosen people entitled to the land that belonged to the American Indians.</p>

				America being nothing less than a 'city upon a hill' trying to redeem a backward people	
R O O S E V E L T	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of Birth: Age of Victorian Morality Dutch Reformed Church Roosevelt's family prayed regularly, Roosevelt read the Bible regularly & learnt passages by heart. Accompanied his father who taught poor children at Sunday school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarded the Biblical morality as an integral part of individual and national life A strong sense of moral obligation to do what is right, avoiding moral laxity. Strength & morality went hand in hand. There was little pressure on Roosevelt to conform to the religious nature of the American presidency, as he was deemed sufficiently religious by the American public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The completion of Western expansion, with the United States transforming itself into the great economic power of the world America's rising self-confidence in an international system dominated by European powers The United States increasingly accepted its role as a great power 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'Muscular Christianity' and its missionary zeal were manly & Christian 'I wish to preach [...] that highest form of success which comes, not to the man who desires mere easy peace, but to the man who does not shrink from danger, from hardship, or from bitter toil' Being 'a city upon a hill', the United States sought to champion the civilizational progress of inferior peoples 	<p>America's position of power in the international system created the parameters for the United States to aspire to great power ambitions. Without American civil religion, America's position of power may still have created the temptation to become a great power.</p> <p>Roosevelt's presidential rhetoric, with its Puritan antecedents, potentially helped reinforce America's self-image as a superior civilization that sought to redeem humanity.</p>
T R U M A N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Age of Birth: Social Gospel movement Member of the Baptist Church Three of Truman's grandparents were Baptists; father emphasised the need to adhere to Biblical teachings. Parents took him to Sunday school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Saw religion as beneficial to a person's moral character Admired (at the personal and professional level) Jesus' self-sacrifice for humanity and moral lessons Man's righteous action was the manifestation of God's will Truman was convinced that the role of the American president required Christian dimension 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commencement of Cold War in the wake of America's and USSR's emergence as super powers in the international system The patriotic fervor that had been stoked during the Second World War mingled with the McCarthyism as a wave of anti-communism spread in the United States There was an increasing religious resurgence in the United States 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providence guided the United States 'God had created [America] and brought [it] to our present position of power for some great purpose'; 'American heritage of human freedom is born of the belief that man is created in the image of God' American leadership in the name of God 	<p>Lack of American civil religion may not have prevented the escalation of the Cold War.</p> <p>However, American civil religion created potent enemy images of the Soviet Union that added an emotive intensity to the Truman's foreign policy explanations.</p>

				converged with the deeper and timeless understanding of America as a nation having a sacred covenant with God	
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Thus, the civil religious political rhetoric of American presidents – notwithstanding the different societal conditions, childhood socialisation and the role of the American presidency – has continued to be part of the explanation for their respective foreign policies since the founding of the United States. The analysis revealed differences between the four presidencies:

1. Both Washington and Jefferson were brought up in Anglican households, being raised in an age that was underpinned by the Great Awakening and during which the original writings of Puritan scholars such as Cotton Mather were widely popular. During their adult life their religious worldview was increasingly underpinned by Enlightenment ideas, although it seems Jefferson exhibited stronger Enlightenment inclinations. While Washington’s views about Providence flowed naturally into his civil religious rhetoric, it seems that Jefferson was prepared to embrace religious ideas in presidential rhetoric because the expectations created by America’s political culture on the holders of the office of presidency. Washington’s civil religious rhetoric was a source of unity

whereas in Jefferson's case it reinforced the notion Americans are God's chosen in the wake of the territorial expansion.

2. Roosevelt, brought up in a devout Dutch Reformed congregation household, stands out as a president whose religious socialisation during childhood converged with his religious worldview during his adult life. In fact, Roosevelt, being a popular national figure, managed to channel his religious worldview into civil religious rhetoric. Moreover, Roosevelt refrained from relying on Providence and instead focused on human effort, toil and the nation's military power as an integral part of America's sacred covenant with God. He underlined that Americans were God's chosen people who sought to redeem a civilisation ally backward people.
3. Truman, brought up in a strict Baptist household, shunned his earlier religious socialisation because it was too strongly based on routines. So, as an adult he sought a higher moral purpose from religion which he channelled into his civil religious rhetoric. Dealing with the global communist threat, as per his rhetoric, was part of preserving the sacred covenant with God. The Cold War had pitted the Godly United States against the Godless Soviet Union, with the United States divinely mandated to redeem the world of this immoral and dangerous threat.
4. Emphasis on Providence and lack thereof could be correlated with America's weak position in the international system during the presidencies of Washington and Jefferson, whereas a strong position in the international system would suggest there was less need to rely on Providence. What is equally interesting is that America's civil religion still mattered when the United States was very powerful in the international

system. This suggests that civil religion assumptions had relevance within the nation's foreign policy during times when the United States could have avoided American civil religion altogether. Unlike the two founding fathers who used more neutral language in defining America's civil religion, Roosevelt resorted to rhetoric based on Christian principles and Truman made explicit references to Christianity when communicating with the public that sought to explain America's foreign policy during the onset of the Cold War.

Thus, there were differences in how these American presidents interpreted civil religion in their rhetoric. However, their use of civil religious rhetoric with its Puritan ideas, in itself suggests that the rhetoric of American presidents on foreign policy over time unfolded within the confines of America's political culture. Their explanations of American foreign policy to the American public over time echoed America's political culture. The next two chapters provide in-depth case studies that seek to explore America's civil religion during the post-Cold War period, focusing on the Clinton and Bush Jr. presidencies, respectively, to further demonstrate the enduring importance of American civil religion in American foreign policy.

CHAPTER 6 AMERICAN CIVIL RELIGION & GLOBAL LEADERSHIP UNDER CLINTON

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter highlighted the continued importance of American civil religion which was underpinned by Puritan ideas. Through presidential rhetoric American civil religion gave meaning and purpose to American foreign policy from the founding of the United States until the beginning of the Cold War. This chapter, the first case study of two on the contemporary period, focuses on the aftermath of the Cold War and how these ideas also featured in Clinton's presidential foreign policy rhetoric. When Clinton became the 42nd president of the United States, the Soviet Union had ceased and the threat that had preoccupied Washington for almost half a century was no longer. America was the sole superpower in the international system, and with scholars like Francis Fukuyama arguing that the world had arrived at the 'end of history'.

Amidst such profound changes in the international system, would the United States under Clinton provide leadership? Clinton apparently struggled to find a foreign policy to replace the Cold War policy of containment, being unable to develop a sense of mission, direction and priorities in the new era. So much so, that Clinton, according to Hitchens, was accused of having 'no big plans, no grand thoughts, no noble dreams' (Quoted in Dumbrell 2009: 3; Stuckey 1995: 222-23). Clinton's presidency and personality created the impression that the United States during his tenure lacked purpose (Durrant 2006: 346). Another analyst was far

more positive. Stephen Walt (2000) offered ‘two cheers’ for Clinton’s foreign policy for managing to balance an insular domestic context with the challenges abroad.

Contrary to detractors like Hitchens and against the backdrop of a domestic context that did not see the benefits of America’s international involvement in the world, Clinton sought to ensure that American foreign policy was internationalist in outlook and championed democratic values in the world. Yet, does Clinton fit the bill of an American president who drew on Puritan ideas in his presidential rhetoric on foreign policy? Set against the backdrop of post-Cold War era and a domestic audience hungry for economic progress, he used the familiar language of civil religion to explain Americans the nation’s need to embrace responsibility and leadership in what was presented as an increasingly interdependent world. Clinton’s notion that America was an indispensable nation, a nation that stood out in the world and that this carried with certain responsibilities in the world, was his version of the ‘city upon a hill’. Indispensable nation neatly fit into the civil religious narrative of America as a ‘city upon a hill’. Hence, the crux of Clinton’s rhetorical argument was that an internationalist foreign policy was linked to economic prosperity that would enable the United States to be a ‘a city upon a hill’ at home once again. When it came to the rest of the world, Clinton underlined that America was ‘a city upon a hill’ that had a strong sense of responsibility and desire to provide leadership in the world.

This chapter proceeds in three sections. First, I present the post-Cold War context, highlighting the intricacies of the international and domestic environment of the post-Cold War era that formed the backdrop to Clinton’s presidential rhetoric. Second, by examining Clinton’s presidential rhetoric, I highlight the importance placed on democratic values in

American foreign policy and the nation's historic sacred cause of liberty. This section also explores how Clinton updated the civil religious idea of a 'a city upon a hill' to the increasingly interdependent age of the post-Cold War era. Finally, by analysing Clinton's speeches in specific contexts, I explore the link between civil religious rhetoric and America's internationalist foreign policy during America's interventions in Haiti and Kosovo.

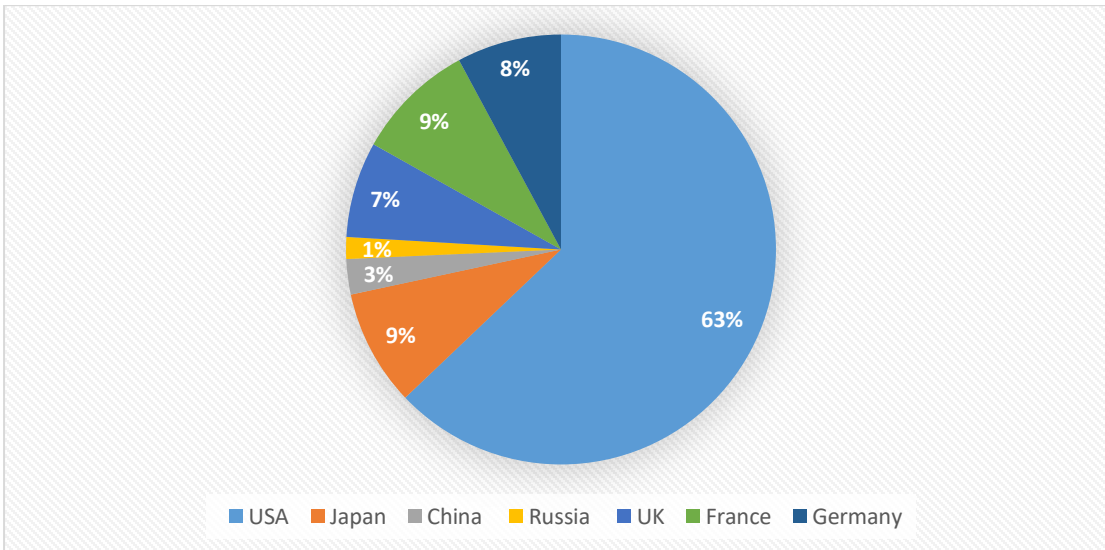
6.2 Context of Clinton's Presidency

6.2.1 The Contradictions of the Unipolar Age

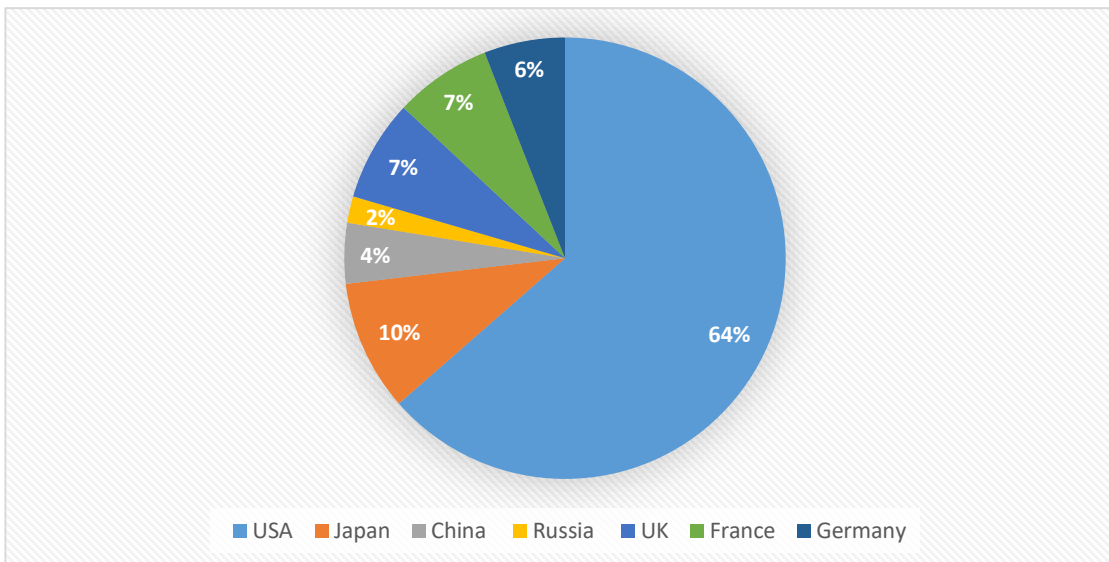
The demise of the Soviet Union resulted in the overwhelming concentration of power in the United States. The United States became the 'unchallenged superpower', enjoying a glorious 'unipolar moment' in the international system (Krauthammer 1990). While the longevity of the unipolar moment has been the topic of considerable debate (Huntington 1998; Kupchan 1998; Layne 1997; Mastanduno 1999; Mearsheimer 1990; Mearsheimer 1992), the 'quantitative and qualitative' superiority of American power in the international system was undeniable (Wohlforth 1999: 9). The subsequent graphs reveal America's overwhelming material preponderance in 1993 and 2000, at the beginning and end of the Clinton administration, relative to the potential great powers in the international system. Graphs 1 and 2 show that America's military spending constituted almost two thirds of the total military spending for 1993 and 2000, respectively. Graphs 3 and 4 underscore the dominance of the American economy. It represented nearly half of the total economies shown in the table for

1993 and 2000, respectively. Hence, none of the states referred in the tables were able to compete in military and economic terms.

Graph 1. Military Spending of Leading States 1993 in %⁷¹



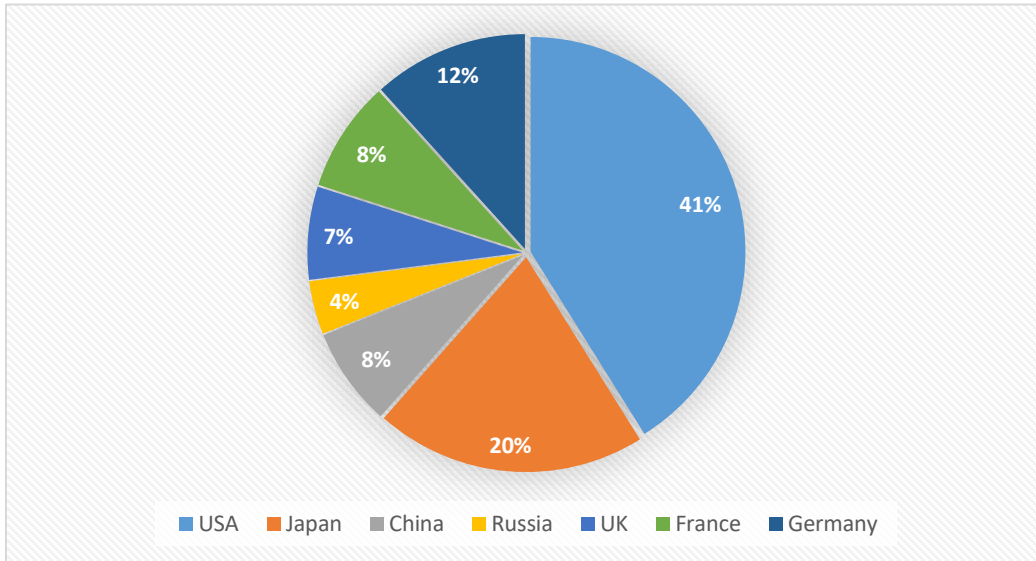
Graph 2. Military Spending of Leading States 2000 in %⁷²



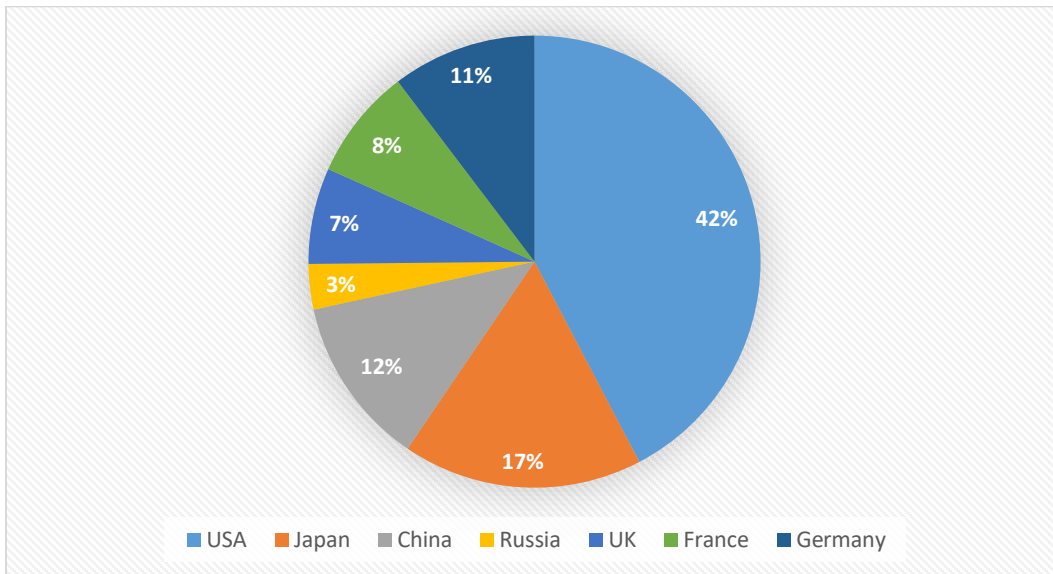
⁷¹ Percentages derived from figures in current USD prices, converted for at exchange rate for the given year. Derived from 'Data for all countries 1988-2015' Report at <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>. Percentages derived from total military expenditure of USA, Japan, China, Russia, UK, France and Germany.

⁷² *Ibid.*

Graph 3. Total Gross National Income of Leading States in 1993 in %⁷³



Graph 4. Total Gross National Income of Leading States 2000 in %⁷⁴



⁷³ Derived on 19 October 2016 from Google Public Documents that use World Bank Statistics. Percentages derived from constant USD figures (2000). Percentages derived from total Gross National Income of USA, Japan, China, Russia, UK, France and Germany.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Being able to exploit the ‘command of commons’, relative to any other state, enables the United States project its military power and resources globally in a quick and flexible manner.⁷⁵ America’s unprecedented economic base as a portion of the international system was matched by its sheer sophistication.⁷⁶ The American economy has been one of the most advanced economies in the world in the post-Cold War era.⁷⁷ Such material advantages created a situation in the international system that made it prohibitive for major powers to balance against or for other states to seriously challenge the United States (Ikenberry 2010: 551-52).

While American foreign policy makers were optimistic about the fact that external constraints on American foreign policy were considerably diminished, they soon discovered the complexities of the new era within which American foreign policy unfolded. The structured world of the Cold War era gave way to an unstructured and unpredictable one characterised by a ‘global loosening’ and the subsequent ‘deregulation’ of the international system (Haass 1997: 25-27). This was a contradiction of unipolarity. America’s overwhelming power in the international system was beset by a range of challenges within it that left the United States bewildered and, rather ironically, feeling powerless.

⁷⁵ Barry Posen’s ‘command of commons’ article (2003), by dividing up military capabilities into ‘realms that belong to no one state and that provide access to rest of globe’, namely sea, air and space, offers insight into to the prevailing military sophistication in the international system in the post-Cold War era. For example, space dominance allows the United States to survey vast landmasses and gather large amounts of information on how to best implement large-scale military deployments by finding the right targets with greater accuracy. Air power, whether from military bases or aircraft carriers, enables it to hit targets far into the mainland (Posen 2004: 9).

⁷⁶ These two mutually reinforcing realms have also been critical to national security issues insofar that civilian technologies such as microelectronics, computers and telecommunications have crucial applicability in the defense sector. See, Inman & Burton Jr. 1992.

⁷⁷ Technological innovation through intensive research and development helped generate economic growth in highly lucrative sectors (OECD 2004: 15).

The international system was in a state of flux and transformation. New opportunities in a world without a superpower rival coincided with the anxiety about potential threats. Rather than the world being flat, as a Thomas Friedman (2005) optimistically argued in his bestselling book, it was uneven. Pockets of democracy, prosperity and peace were overshadowed by areas of destitution and (violent) conflicts that threatened to cause instability in the international system (Barber 1992; 1995; Gaddis 1992: 193; Krauthammer 1990: 32-33). The scope for 'geopolitical slack', or 'room for error' was limited (Trubowitz 2011: 5), despite America's unipolar position in the new international.

The world was increasingly fragmented, and rather than there being one conflict there was an enormous diffusion of them. In February 1993, a mere month after Clinton's inauguration, the New York times discerned some 48 serious world conflicts. (Gaddis 1993: 151). The borderless threat of political violence was an ongoing theme in the post-Cold War era. Robert Kaplan's 'coming anarchy' thesis (1994), made assumptions about state dysfunctionality associated with ethnic, religious and tribal animosities. It went beyond being seen as a caricature of the situation in various crisis hotspots in the world and gained popularity within the broader public as well as the Clinton administration. Kaplan captured the fearful mood about the dangers of fragmentation within states that were preyed upon by terrorists, drug cartels and criminal organisations.

The 'New Wars' thesis did likewise by describing the fragmentary dynamics within the international system. It emphasised a dramatic qualitative shift of violent conflict when compared to the Cold War period, pointing out that 'new wars [should] be contrasted with earlier wars in terms of their goals, the methods of warfare and how they are financed' (Kaldor

2001: 6). Violent conflict resulted from a weakening of the state and its inability to provide authority due to processes of globalisation (Jung 2003: 2). New Wars were essentially a violent phenomenon caused by 'global dislocation' (Kaldor 2001: 70). In weak social environments private groups, often criminal in nature, colluded with state actors. They exploited power vacuums along ethnic and identity lines in an attempt to obtain natural resources and rent seeking opportunities within and beyond their respective state.

The points raised by the New Wars literature were echoed through popular concepts such as 'state failure', 'failed state', 'collapsed state', 'stressed states' and 'troubled states' which captured the existing ills of conflict spill over (Bayart, Eillis & Hibou 1999; Call 2008; Reno 1995; Richards 1996). So, despite enjoying a unipolar advantage in the international system, there were reasons to be concerned that American foreign policy could unfold in a highly fragmented international environment.

6.2.2 Morality of American Society, Clinton's Childhood & Presidential Role

Following the demise of Soviet communism, a weakened American economy did not bode well for American leadership. Americans believed that they had contributed a disproportionate share to providing leadership in the world (Kull & Ramsay 2000: 107). These doubts about American foreign policy were fuelled by a sense of domestic and social malaise. Hundreds of thousands young Americans had risked their lives in the Persian Gulf to secure vital energy supplies to power the very homes and cars many of their generation could not afford (Peterson & Sebenius 1992: 85). Almost 10 percent of the population was on food

stamps, one third of America's children received some form of public assistance and 35 million Americans were without health insurance (Garten 1993: 22). America had the highest ratio of prisoners to its population in the world. Some 3.7 million Americans were under some form of police incarceration, representing 2 per cent of the American population (Peterson & Sebenius 1992; 68). The Los Angeles riots in April 1992 – triggered by the acquittal of four white policemen who were charged of brutally beating African-American motorist Rodney King – led to fifty people being killed, 4,000 injured, 12,000 arrested and \$1 billion of damage to property (Murphy 2009: 78).

The moral fabric of American society was in decay. There was a growing concern about a looming 'culture war' in America's political culture. Ahead of the 1992 presidential elections, religious conservatives flocked to the Republican primaries and caucuses, eager to listen to how America's morality could be restored. Pat Robertson, a nationally-known evangelical preacher who had previously failed in his bid to become the Republican presidential candidate in 1988, delivered a fiery keynote speech entitled 'God and Country' at the Republican Convention. Pat Buchanan, the nationalist firebrand, in turn reminded his Republican audience what was really at stake during this election: 'In the struggle for the soul of America, Clinton [is] on one side, and George Bush [Senior] is on our side'⁷⁸. Buchanan was adamant, '[t]here is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America. It is a cultural war, as critical to the kind of nation we will one day be as was the Cold War itself'. Voting for Clinton would undermine the moral values of what Americans, according to him, regarded as

⁷⁸ Buchanan speech at Republican Convention August 17, 1992, see at <http://buchanan.org/blog/1992-republican-national-convention-speech-148>

‘God’s country’. Randall Terry, a conservative pastor and leader of the evangelical group Operation Rescue, echoed such sentiments when he had leaflets distributed commencing with the words ‘Christians beware, to vote for Bill Clinton is to sin against God’.⁷⁹ One lamentation was that Clinton did not believe in God and, as a result, was morally misguided.

This is reminiscent of Thomas Jefferson’s election campaign where doubts were raised in a Federalist newspaper about Jefferson’s faith: ‘GOD – AND A RELIGIOUS PRESIDENT...(OR) JEFFERSON AND NO GOD’ (Lambert 2011: 14). What is remarkable is that these two presidential elections took place almost two hundred years apart. While during Jefferson’s time America was a tiny nation on the eastern seaboard of the North American continent and relatively insignificant in the international system, two hundred years later it had a population of almost 300 million people and was the only remaining superpower in the world. Between these two eras a multitude of defining domestic and international events had taken place, whether in the domestic realm; e.g. the abolition of slavery, the American Civil War and the American Civil Rights movement or in the international realm; e.g. the First World War, Second World War, the Vietnam War. Yet, these two episodes highlight that both presidents were expected to conform to America’s political culture and affirm to the American public their belief in God. This underlines the enduring strength of America political culture and that an American president’s rhetoric can be constrained by it.

Contrary to his critics, Clinton was an individual who believed in God. Growing up in the state of Arkansas, at the very heart of America’s Bible Belt that encouraged a life of piety,

⁷⁹ Applebombe, Peter, ‘Religious Right Intensifies Campaign for Bush’, October 31, 1992, see <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/31/us/religious-right-intensifies-campaign-for-bush.html>

Clinton was a Southern Baptist who attended church regularly and had been apparently ‘born-again’ during his youth (see e.g. Espinosa 2009). During his childhood and youth, church service and Sunday school provided the young Clinton an escape from the brutal and chaotic family environment created by his alcoholic and abusive step-father (Penning 2007: 193-194). At age 6, following his family’s relocation to Hot Springs, Arkansas, Clinton’s faith was so strong that he walked almost a mile to attend Park Place Baptist Church (Smith 2015: 332).

Clinton’s family was hardly a paragon of piety. Yet, it was his mother – a woman who drank, gambled and had married four times and, therefore, deviated from moral expectations of the Bible Belt – who always took him to Sunday School (*Ibid.*). What is interesting that although Clinton’s mother was not religious, she felt compelled to send her son to Sunday School. Perhaps she saw the value of religion in a person’s life, although not her own and the need for herself to conform to the religious dynamics of the Bible Belt. So, even though Clinton’s mother was not religious, she contributed to her son’s religious socialisation.

Clinton would find plenty of religious influences beyond the remit of his own family, as Clinton acknowledged several years after his presidency had ended. At age 9, influenced by Pastor James Fitzgerald, Clinton accepted he was a sinner and professed his faith in Christ, asking to be baptised (Clinton 2004: 30). Clinton regarded church as an important source for moral teaching that ought to guide man. While Clinton’s family might not have been pious, his family’s housekeeper/nanny Cora Walter was deeply religious and had some religious influence on him (*Ibid.* 23). In 1959, at the age of twelve, Clinton attended a crusade organised by America’s most famous evangelist Billy Graham, eagerly seeking to hear his preaching (*Ibid.* 39). During his childhood and his adolescent life Clinton was exposed to some strong

religious influences, happily embracing religion as a source of morality that helped him find meaning and purpose amidst the chaos of his family life.

However, as Clinton sought to assume the American presidency, doubts about Clinton's religiosity emerged. Did Clinton have the religious credentials to do justice to the role of the American presidency? Clinton's assertion that 'I pray virtually every day',⁸⁰ sat uneasily with persistent accusations about his philandering, womanising and sexual harassment during the 1992 presidential election. His presidency witnessed the Monica Lewinsky sex scandal that culminated in impeachment proceedings through the United States Congress. These moral contradictions outraged not only Christian America but Americans in general, raising concerns about Clinton's moral authority. Towards the end of his presidency, 43 % Americans felt that Clinton was simply 'not that religious', as per a Wall Street Journal/NBC poll (Cited and Quoted in Smith 2015: 366). Perhaps what this survey also suggested is that religion was important to them and that America was still, to quote the famous phrase, 'a nation with the soul of a church' at the end of twentieth century.

Clinton did his best to affirm his religiosity which seemed genuine, especially considering his upbringing at the heart of the American Bible belt. During his adult life religion was still important to Clinton and he claimed to have read the bible several times cover to cover, and regularly prayed and attended church. Thus, he continued to recognise the importance of religion when he held the office of the American president. This came rather naturally to Clinton and stemmed from the conviction that religion was important in his life. Edward

⁸⁰ Gergen, David, Cooper, Matthew, Baer, Donald, 'Bill Clinton's Hidden Life: There is much more to the Democratic nominee than meets the eye,' July 20, 1992
<https://www.usnews.com/news/national/articles/2008/05/16/bill-clintons-hidden-life>

Dobson, a former executive of the evangelical *Moral Majority* organisation who had been a posterchild for the Christian Right and, who therefore could hardly be described as a Clinton supporter, argued that the democrat was ‘more deeply spiritual than any president we’ve had in recent years’ (Cloud 2000).

Yet, at times when Clinton sought to affirm his religious credentials, there were doubts. In July 1992, he tried to imbue his presidential candidacy acceptance speech at the Democratic Convention with religious significance by making scriptural references. This provoked condemnation from the Christian Right.⁸¹ Jerry Falwell, the evangelist who had endorsed George Bush Sr. as the Republican Party presidential candidate, argued that ‘manipulating the Holy Scripture for political purposes should be offensive to millions of Americans’, while fellow evangelist Pat Robertson warned about Clinton’s ‘pseudo-Christianity’.⁸² The implication was that Robertson was not a genuine Christian and, therefore, unfit to hold role of the American presidency. Evangelists like Robertson saw themselves as custodians of Christian American, being concerned by Clinton’s pro-abortion and pro-gay rights stance which ran counter to their understanding of traditional family values.

This episode highlighted the importance of religion, specifically the Bible, in American political culture. It was imperative that future holders of the role of the American presidency to establish their credentials in American politics as individuals who believed in God. Here,

⁸¹ Clinton made the following two references: ‘Where there is no vision, the people perish’ and “our eyes have not yet seen, nor our ears heard, nor minds imagined” what we can build’. ‘Address Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Democratic National Convention in New York’, see at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25958>

⁸² Goldman, Ari L., ‘Religion Notes’, July 25. 1992, see at <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/07/25/us/religion-notes.html>

Clinton was not simply addressing evangelical Christians, but America's broader political culture that exhibited a propensity to prefer presidents who convincingly underlined the importance of God as part of their personal moral narrative and the moral narrative of the nation.

Consequently, despite Clinton's strength being to remind Americans of the failure of the economic policy of George Bush Sr. during the presidential election in 1992, he realised he had to couch his election programme for rejuvenating America in religious terms. He proposed moderation on social issues and establishing welfare reforms as part of policy initiatives known as the 'New Covenant' to bring about the moral revival of the nation. The New Covenant emphasised individual choice and responsibility for Americans that went hand in hand with greater market competition. Clinton borrowed ideas from the Puritan playbook to explain to Americans his welfare policies for America's revival in a manner that resonated with America's religiously-infused political culture obsessed with morality. Fusing assumptions about God and American nationhood, Clinton underlined that Americans had a 'responsibility to rise as far as their God-given talents and determination can take them and give something back their [...] country' (State of Union Address 1995, Jan 24). Clinton, more often than not, did justice to the notion that American presidents ought to give expression and affirm America's religiously-infused political culture, even if there were intermittent doubts about Clinton's personal religiosity and subsequently his moral authority as American president.

Clinton's religious socialisation during his childhood was strong and as an adult he continued to recognise the importance of religion in his life. Contrary to evangelicals such as Pat

Robertson who challenged Clinton's religiosity, Clinton's religiosity was genuine. However, Clinton's efforts to do justice to the religious dimension of the role of American presidency were questioned not only because of evangelicals like Pat Robertson but also because of his philandering which created accusations about sexual harassment prior to and during the presidency. Thus, the role of the presidency set strict moral standards in terms of how American presidents ought to conduct themselves, with sexual impropriety and misconduct frowned upon. In light of these challenges created by role of the American presidency, how exactly would Clinton give expression to civil religion in his rhetoric regarding America's foreign policy? Before proceeding with analysis regarding Clinton's presidential rhetoric, the next section is devoted to providing context regarding the foreign policy mood in the United States.

6.2.3 Neo-isolationist Doubts about America's Place in the World

Amidst fears about moral decay in the United States, there was a growing tendency towards neo-isolationism. Various commentators raised alarm about America's involvement in the world. They advocated an American foreign policy approach that became known as 'neo-isolationism'. Jeanne Kirkpatrick (1990), America's former ambassador to the United Nations under Reagan, and who had been a staunch advocate of American internationalism in the 1980s, advocated that the United States ought to 'give up the dubious benefits of super power status' and instead focus on 'pressing problems of education, family, industry, and technology'.

Similarly, Pat Buchanan argued: '[the United States is] not the world's policeman, nor its political tutor' (Buchanan Quoted in Hulsman 1997:47). Buchanan promulgated an isolationism that was nativist and protectionist in outlook as much as it was morally righteous. He sought to appeal to nationalist sentiments as he argued against immigration and multiculturalism. According to Buchanan, internationalism was ruining the moral fabric of what he regarded to be God's nation. In his moral indignation about American foreign policy, he articulated his solution to America's moral revival at home, 'What we need is a new nationalism, a new patriotism, a new foreign policy that puts America first, and, not only first, but second and third as well' (Buchanan 1990). Thus, there were doubts about America's internationalist foreign policy throughout the political spectrum.⁸³

The domestic environment, despite the Cold War triumphalism, demanded greater attention to be devoted to economic issues, at the expense of foreign policy. Rather than representing a complete withdrawal from the international system, there were subtleties to 'neo-isolationism' (see, e.g., Dumbrell 2005). It implied far greater restraint and avoiding foreign policy activism, representing a dramatic shift in American foreign policy vision by advocating an essentially minimalist foreign policy outlook. Earl Ravenal argued that the United States should only 'encourage regional balances of power', even 'messy ones will do' as the United

⁸³ Democratic Senator Bob Kerrey could be seen in a campaign commercial that showed him as an ice-hockey goalkeeper, courageously stopping the Japanese from shooting Sony televisions and Honda cars into the American goal (Muravchik 1996: 10). Likewise, the independent presidential candidate, Ross Perot, opposed the North America Free Trade Agreement because it had apparently meant 'sending jobs overseas' 'THE 1992 CAMPAIGN; Transcript of 2d TV Debate Between Bush, Clinton and Perot', October 16, 1992, see at <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/16/us/the-1992-campaign-transcript-of-2d-tv-debate-between-bush-clinton-and-perot.html>

States should look on and avoid ‘the power-balancing role’ that ought to be reserved for regional actors (1990: 8).⁸⁴

It was no longer in America’s security interest to be involved internationally, with the nation’s geopolitical location making it ‘strategically immune’ from the dangers and threats in the world (Nordlinger 1994: 6). In the post-Cold War era ‘nuclear weapons assure great power sovereignty’ and, as a result, could guarantee America’s security by making the cost of conquest prohibitive (Gholz, Press & Sapolsky 1997: 6). The United States found itself at a rare historical juncture where it could meet ‘its most critical goals’ without having to send American troops abroad (*ibid*: 7).⁸⁵

For neo-isolationists, a more modest and humble foreign policy was one that combined strength with autonomy to meet the realities of the new era. America would pursue a foreign policy that kept the nation’s moral impulse for military adventures abroad in check. While neo-isolationist doubts helped trigger a debate about America’s place in the world, it remained to be seen whether this would alter America’s foreign policy under Clinton. Arguably, the neo-isolationist stance was part of a foreign policy discourse that had juxtaposed ‘full blown

⁸⁴ He argued in favour of non-intervention during the Persian Gulf crisis 1990. In the short-term the United States might suffer from ‘resource denials’ and ‘price fluctuations of certain commodities’ (namely oil), but in the long-term this stance would be more advantageous than a military option (1990: 8).

⁸⁵ Moreover, a considerably lower and narrower force structure was now possible. The end of the Cold War permitted reductions in military expenditure beyond the ones promised by Bush Sr whose administration wanted to reduce the defence budget by \$243 billion between 1991 and 1994 (a 3.3 % reduction after inflation). See Healy, Melissa, ‘1992 Defense Budget to Continue Military Cutbacks Despite Gulf War: Spending: Bush is expected to propose a sharp 3.3% reduction after inflation. The Pentagon is ‘banking’ on peace,’ February 1, 1991, see at http://articles.latimes.com/1991-02-01/news/mn-362_1_gulf-war

internationalism [against] know-nothing isolationism' (Clarke 1996: 43 quoted in Dunn 2005: 244). This would make it difficult for the neo-isolationist stance to prevail.

Support for an internationalist foreign policy came from the neoconservative camp amidst dissatisfaction with Bush Sr.'s foreign policy realism. Joshua Muravchik, a scholar of the conservative American Enterprise Institute, made the point that he would be backing Clinton during the election because of 'his speeches to democracy and human rights [underscore his appreciation for] the idealism that must inform U.S. policy'.⁸⁶ Other neoconservatives, including Richard Schifter (an ex-assistant secretary of state under Reagan), Ben Wattenberg (affiliate of the American Enterprise Institute), Bill Bennett (ex-education secretary under Reagan), agreed with the essence of Muravchik's statement; whereas neoconservative grandees such as Irving Kristol (the philosophical founder of American neoconservatism) and Norman Podhoretz (editor of the influential neoconservative *Commentary* magazine) were less persuaded by Clinton.⁸⁷ Bill Kristol, son of Irving Kristol and the chief of staff of then incumbent vice-president Bush Sr., reiterated that neoconservatives were to maintain their existing party affiliation: '[a]ny neocon who drifts back to the Democratic Party is a pseudo-neocon'.⁸⁸

Despite what was labelled as a glorious 'unipolar moment', the international environment was turbulent. Borderless, violent conflicts were rising, with the potential to produce instability in the international system. In domestic terms, a weak economy, lack of health-care and high crime rates provoked debate about America's moral condition. Clinton's religious

⁸⁶ Muravchik, Joshua, 'Conservatives for Clinton', *The New Republic*, November 2, 1992, p. 22.

⁸⁷ Barnes, Fred, 'They are back! Neocons for Clinton', *The New Republic*, August 3, 1992, p. 12-14.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

socialisation during his childhood was strong and as an adult he maintained his belief in God. His religiosity was overshadowed by philandering and accusations of sexual harassment, underlining his contradictory interpretation of religion that made Americans question whether Clinton possessed the required moral qualities as American president. He, in turn, did his best to echo the prevailing sentiments of the nation's political culture, using religiously-infused language to reinforce his moral credentials as a man who believed in God. He sought to do justice to the religious expectations society had generated for the role of the American presidency during his tenure. Set against this backdrop, the next section is devoted to Clinton's presidential rhetoric that was infused with civil religious assumptions from America's Puritan ancestors which sought to explain the nation's foreign policy to Americans.

6.3 Wither America's Foreign Policy in the post-Cold War era?

Contrary to Clinton's election image that he would primarily focus on domestic issues as president, he embraced a foreign policy of engagement that sought to prevent America from drifting into isolationism (Cox 1995: 22-23). Clinton was more inclined to adjust America's foreign policy to the conditions of the post-Cold War period to maintain international order rather than abandon it. A close analysis of Clinton's presidential rhetoric explores how he used the language of civil religion that echoed the idea of 'a city upon a hill' and 'sacred covenant' to champion the idea of freedom in the world. Clinton used it to explain to Americans the adoption of an internationalist foreign policy in the post-Cold War era.

A database was created of Clinton's presidential speeches (76 in total) delivered during his tenure. These included presidential inaugurations, state of unions, farewells, annual United Nations General Assembly addresses, Independence Day celebrations, Martin Luther King Jr. day remembrance as well speeches delivered to the American military.

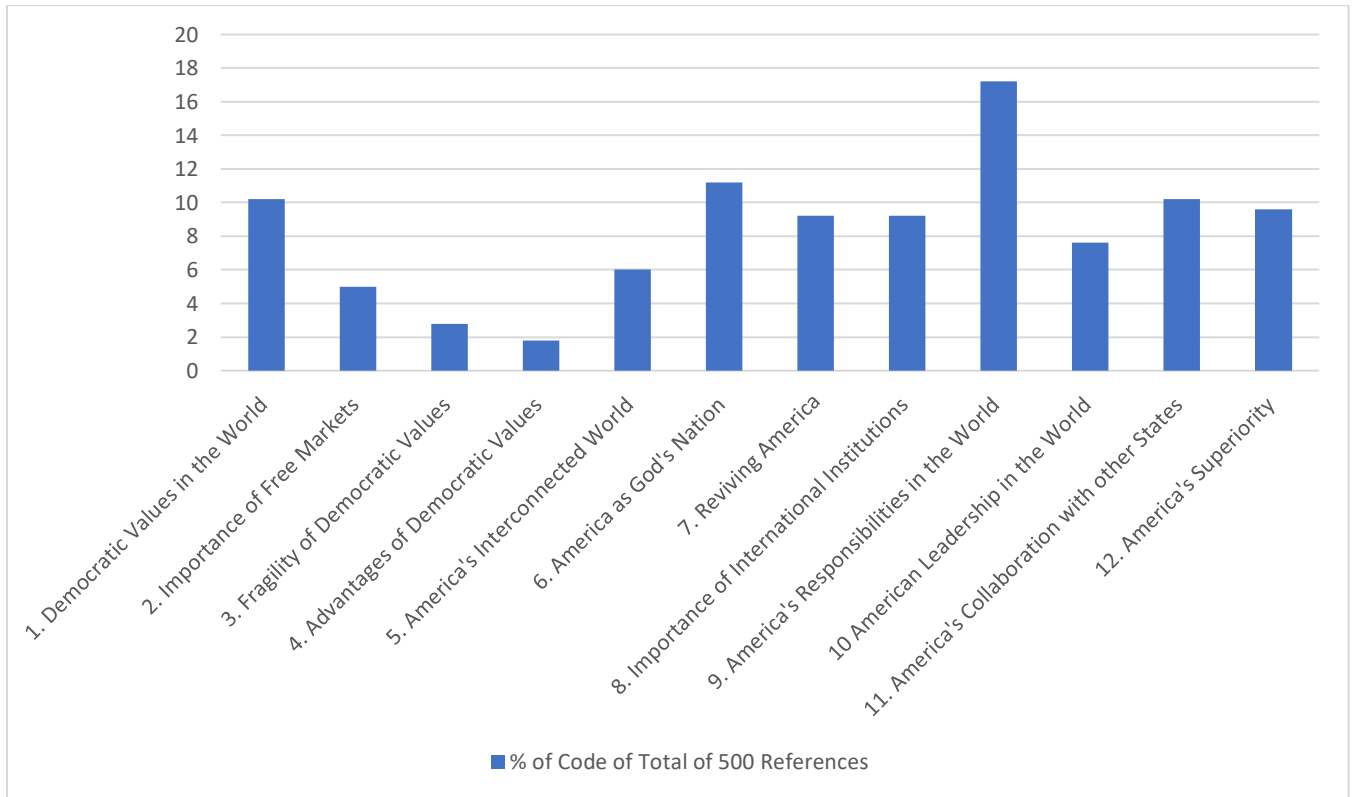
The sample enabled me to extract data from variety of contexts when the Clinton communicated with the American public. It was sufficiently large for a range of values, ideas and policy positions to be extracted using qualitative analysis method. The sample includes speeches that were spread across each presidential tenure, allowing us to extract data across the presidency and draw generalisable insights about each presidency. This sample included speeches such as state of unions that were delivered on a yearly basis or annual United Nations General Assembly addresses, but also farewell addresses which were delivered at the end of the presidential tenure, Independence Day and Martin Luther King Jr. which were intermittently delivered as well as speeches to the American military which were given throughout the presidency.

These speeches were analysed using qualitative content analysis methodology. This involved myself reading these speeches and deriving 15 themes. These were, then, used to group together similar references and create 12 codes in graph 5 & 6. The codes cover dominant values, themes and priorities articulated by Clinton. The references used had to be at least one sentence long. For the purposes of organising the coding, NVIVO coding software was used. Speeches were read within the software and references that represented a potential code were placed, using the drag and drop function, in a 'code container' within the software.

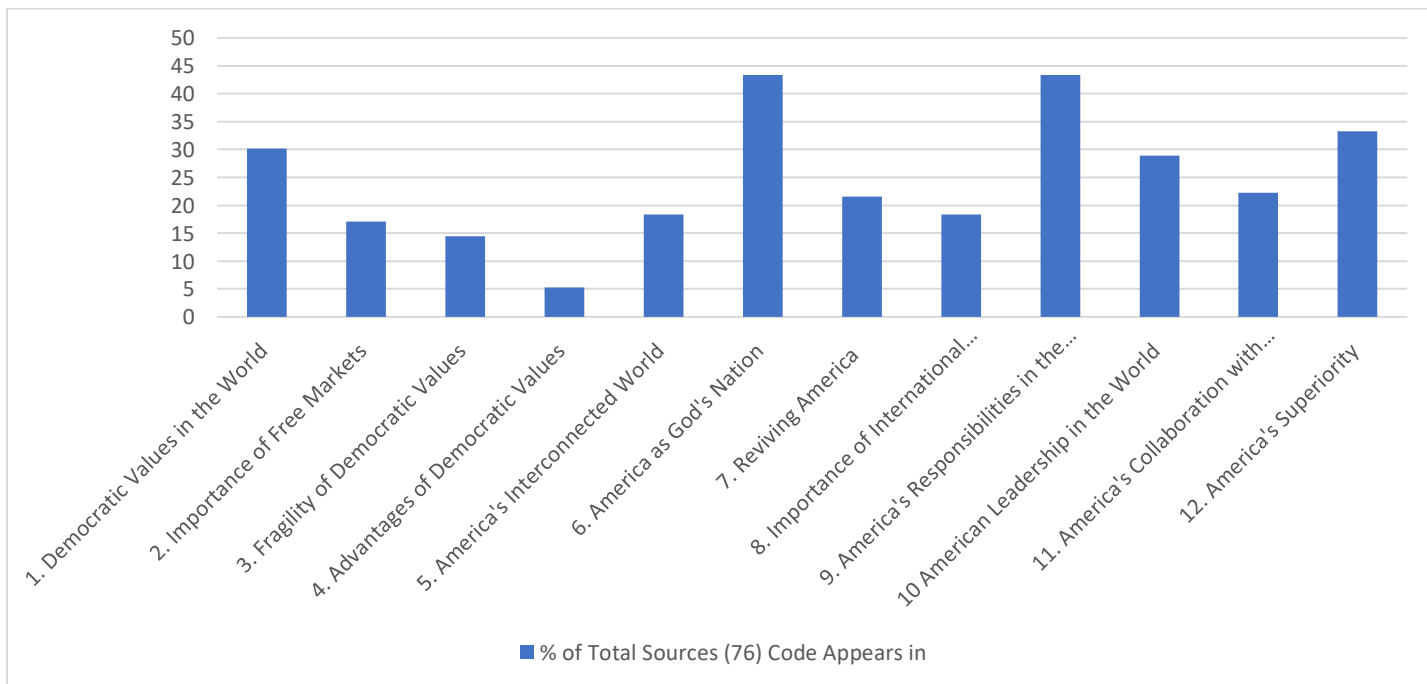
This process was performed simultaneously regarding several codes, but for purposes of illustrating how ‘code containers’ were used I will here focus on one particular code. So, for example when I came across references involving a complete sentence that referred to ‘God’ or ‘Almighty’, then, these references, which I grouped together because they were based on a common theme, as described above, were placed in a particular ‘code container’ within the software. As further speeches were read and the coder encountered any other references to ‘God’ or ‘Almighty’, then these were placed in the same code container. Once all of Clinton’s presidential speeches that were selected were read and the references to ‘God or Almighty’ were collected in a particular container, then, the code container was provisionally named to reflect the dominant theme of the references. The textual material was subsequently read again, to derive further references for the provisional code to describe the content (Elo & Kygnäs 2007: 109). Any references that were outliers and which did not cohere with this code were eliminated in order to assure of the reliability of the code created.

This process of coding of Clinton’s presidential speeches in NVIVO software revealed 12 codes, with each respective code representing a dominant theme and the references from all the codes adding up to 500 references (see Graph 5). Rather than directly affirming the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion in Clinton’s presidential rhetoric, these codes highlight the values and priorities of the Clinton administration regarding American foreign policy, with Puritan ideas subtly infused into presidential rhetoric. The next section explores the codes derived from Clinton’s presidential rhetoric. It also examines, together with the subsequent two sections, how Puritan ideas might have been significant in Clinton’s presidential rhetoric.

Graph 5. Clinton's Presidential Rhetoric, 1993-2001



Graph 6. Clinton's Presidential Rhetoric, 1993-2001



6.3.1 Clinton's Sacred Cause of Freedom

The coding revealed an emphasis on certain themes in Clinton's rhetoric. According to Clinton's presidential rhetoric, consisting of 76 speeches which were content analysed, Code 1 *Democratic Values in the World*, Code 2 *Importance of Free Market*, Code 3 *Fragility of Democratic Values* and Code 4 *Advantages of Democratic Values* constitute 19 % of the total 500 references. These codes represent the international processes and values that preoccupied the Clinton presidency, in interplay with the prevailing dynamics of the expansion of democratic values in the post-Cold War period, that were integral to his democratic enlargement agenda, an agenda that essentially represented Clinton's 'grand strategic concept' (Dumbrell 2009: 42), or also known as the 'Clinton Doctrine' of American foreign policy (Brinkley 1997).

In Code 1, which covers 10 % of the total references and 30 % of the 76 speeches analysed, Clinton welcomes the spreading of democratic values in the world, pointing out 'our heart, our hands are with those on every continent who are building democracy and freedom' (January 20, 1993). To underline the importance of democratic values which included neutral language such as 'democracy is spreading' (June 8, 1998) or '[f]reedom is expanding' (February 26, 1999). He also used emotive language to express it in terms of American identity and history during his two respective inaugurations. He pointed out that 'America's bright flame of freedom [was] spreading' (January 20, 1993) and during the two World Wars and the Cold War the United States had 'saved the world from tyranny [and] reached out across the globe to millions who [had] longed for the blessing of liberty' (January 20, 1997).

Several things stand out about these two remarks. First, Clinton's delight that America's vision of democratic values is spreading in the world and is expressed powerfully using the metaphor of 'flame of freedom'. Second, America's actively contributed to spreading freedom in the world at highly pivotal junctures of international system, with the suggestion being that the post-Cold War era was another such juncture. Third and crucially, the civil religiously infused-language underscores that the political idea of freedom (used interchangeably with the expression liberty or democracy), derived from the narrative of America's historical experience from the independence struggle, is somehow granted by God. The suggestion is that democracy is godly and, therefore, represents a morally superior political system in the world for the betterment of humanity, and having such a system was allowed individuals and societies to become 'blessed'. Moreover, because the United States helped to promote the godly values of democracy in the international system, the implication is that the United States has served as an instrument of God that 'saved the world', with the suggestion being that America is God's nation and the saviour of the world. Notwithstanding what is presented to be the sacred cause of freedom in the world by God's nation according to Clinton's rhetoric, he maintained that he did not seek 'some crusade to force [the] American way of life' (September 27, 1993).

Having established the general importance of democratic values through civil religious language, Code 4 emphasises a combination of utilitarian and moral benefits associated with democracy. Clinton believed that democracies were 'far less likely to wage war on each other nations than dictatorships' (April 1, 1993) that created 'greater prospects of peace and prosperity' (April 18, 1996) and the prospect of 'nations working and learning together' (June

8, 1998). His assertions represented an affirmation of precepts of democratic peace theory. A theory which stipulates that conflict between democratic states is unlikely because of the legitimacy of their governments that creates mutual respect and overlapping interests and aspirations (Maoz & Russett 1993; Russett 1990; Weede 1984).

As security motivations in Clinton's foreign policy outlook converged with ideational imperatives, he expressed concern about the fragility of democratic values in Code 3. He reiterated that while 'new free states now grapple with the burden of freedom' (May 25, 1994) it was necessary that 'the mission of freedom goes on' (June 6, 1994). There was an obligation to ensure that the sacred cause of liberty, which was integral to America's founding and which had been historically championed in the world, would flourish. The idea of championing freedom in American foreign policy to help transform the world under Clinton derived some of its potency from the nation's religiously-infused historical narrative associated with America's Puritan ancestors. Clinton avidly affirmed this in his message on the observance of the Jewish holiday of Passover:

'We began our nation's journey to freedom more than two hundred years ago, a journey that is still not complete. Now we look forward to a new century and a new millennium, strengthened by the knowledge that we, too, have been blessed by God with the vision of a land of great promise set aside for those who cherish freedom.'

(April 21, 1997)

This section examined the codes derived from the content analysis of Clinton's presidential speeches, highlighting the importance of the value of freedom as part of what was known as Clinton's democratic enlargement agenda. Clinton went on to couch these assumptions in

civil religious terms as he sought to explain his foreign policy ideas to the American public. He sought do justice to the expectations of the role of the American presidency. However, Clinton's childhood at the heart of the Bible Belt helped him to put things into perspective. During his childhood he had experienced the power of religion in his own life which provided him consolation from the chaos of his dysfunctional family. He came to appreciate the importance religion had in the lives of ordinary Americans – even if his own family was hardly the embodiment of religious devotion. These insights underlined to Clinton why it mattered to give expression to the civil religious dimension of the American presidency and the need to persist with the civil religious rhetoric to explain America's foreign policy. The next section is devoted to exploring how the Puritan idea of city upon a hill was infused into Clinton's presidential rhetoric that sought to explain the link between American foreign policy and domestic prosperity.

6.3.2 American Civil Religion in an Age of Interdependence

In the wake of American public's reluctance about American internationalism, Clinton's foreign policy that centred on championing freedom in the world was linked to American prosperity at home. According to Code 2 that emphasised the importance of free markets, the direct benefits of global free markets that would offer the United States 'a fair chance to sell America's products and services around the world' (November 19, 1994) and was considered 'vital to [America's] prosperity' (November 10, 1998). Linking the importance of free markets with the ongoing democratic processes in the international system emphasised in

Code 1, he went on to underline the mutual ‘benefits of freedom and prosperity [that would keep America’s] economy and social fabric strong’ (November 10, 1998).

The democratic processes taking place in the international system would enhance America’s prosperity and to achieve national prosperity the United States would have to champion freedom in the world. There was a moral imperative to champion freedom in the world, as it would revive America’s decaying ‘social fabric’. This helped reinforce the civil religious idea of America as the ‘a city upon a hill’– the Puritan notion of a special people with morally superior order that became firmly entrenched in America’s political culture following the American Revolution. Clinton’s rhetoric underlined that to become a ‘a city upon a hill’ once again, the United States would have to champion freedom in the world of the post-Cold War era.

To that end, Clinton went on to place the idea of ‘a city upon a hill’ in the context of what was an increasingly interconnected world. Emphasising the importance of the link between freedom and prosperity to the American public, Clinton pointed out that ‘[America’s] security is tied to the stake other nations have in the prosperity of staying free and open’ (May 31, 1997). In code 5, which had 6% of total references and covered 18.4% of sources, Clinton highlighted the interconnected nature of the post-Cold War world. America was living in an age of ‘interdependence’ (May 25, 1994), a word that would feature a total of nine times in this code, where the ‘world is becoming a global village’ (October 25, 1995). He continued that ‘threats [America faces] will cross national boundaries’, warning about the dangers of ‘terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, drug trafficking, or environmental degradation’ (May 31, 1997). His assertion about the dangers of an

interconnected world of the post-Cold War era fitted some of the descriptions formulated by concepts such as 'New Wars', 'state failure' and 'coming anarchy'.

In addition, there was an emphasis on the interconnected nature of the global economy. He added that there was 'no clear dividing line between what is foreign policy and what is domestic policy [especially] when everybody's job depends on whether the [United States] can compete in the global economy' (November 16, 1994). The interconnected nature of the international system had implications for the prosperity of the United States that could not be ignored. The crux of Clinton's formulation was that the United States would have to address the challenges created by the interconnected dynamics of the international system to create international conditions conducive to American prosperity at home. This would also help offset the apparent moral decline that had created doubts whether America was still the 'a city upon a hill'.

Clinton's formulation to rejuvenate America ought to be placed in the context of the fact that the American economy was already globalised. One in seven jobs was associated with trade and America's investments totalled several billion dollars (Cox 1995: 23). Clinton spurred this process on by emphasising the importance of 'trade' in Code 2, an expression that would feature a total of eleven times in this code. In one instance, to reiterate to Americans the significance of trade for American prosperity, he linked it to a value integral of American identity whilst underlining the political benefits of it echoed in Code 4: 'our great sage Ralph Waldo Emerson said that trade was the principle of liberty, that it made peace and keeps peace' (May 25, 1995). Once more Clinton highlighted that American prosperity and peace in the international system were linked, implying that one could not be addressed without the

other and both would have to be addressed simultaneously for the United States to become the ‘a city upon a hill’ again.

As Clinton sought to open-up the American economy on the basis that it would generate American prosperity – which included creating the National Economic Council (NEC) in 1993 for coordinating domestic and international economic policy (Destler 1998) and signing 500 or more bilateral and regional free trade agreements (Dumbrell 2009: 48) – he sought to assure Americans that the revival of America’s communities was one of his priorities according to Code 7 that had a value of 9.2% and covered 20.5% of sources. To persuade Americans of his domestic agenda, Clinton presented the revival of America’s communities through religiously-infused language, in terms of America’s need for a ‘New Covenant’. Clinton’s welfare agenda powerfully chimed with the notion of America as God’s nation, as featured in Code 6 that had the second highest value of total references (11.2 %) and covered the highest percentage of total sources (43.4 %) together with Code 9. Although in Code 6 Clinton pointed out that God has ‘blessed’ the United States a total of three times, he went on to emphasise that God may continue to ‘bless’ the United States a total of 40 times.

The implication is that God’s blessings were not guaranteed. Instead that they had to be achieved through commensurate effort as part of a sacred covenant with God that had defined the lives of the Puritan ancestors who had sought to please God to maintain their covenant with Him in the future. In language that was reminiscent of Puritans, Clinton adamant that ‘by our dreams and labors, we will redeem the promise of America in 21st century’ (January 20, 1997). There was a need to renew America’s sacred covenant with God through the ‘New Covenant’, according to Code 7, which involved recalibrating the relationship between citizen

and government to revive America's communities on the basis that citizens 'have a right to certain opportunities, but in return [...] must exercise personal responsibility in return for those opportunities' (January 16, 1995).

The notion of reviving America through the 'New Covenant' should also be seen in light of evangelical Christian groups that regarded Clinton to be anti-Christian, with Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition arguing that Clinton was 'a repudiation of [America's] forefathers' covenant with God'.⁸⁹ Clinton, using civil religious language that centred on the idea of America's sacred covenant with God which America's Puritans ancestors had established, was keen to demonstrate his credentials as a president who appreciated the nation's enduring religious cultural heritage. Polls highlighted that during the 1990s while two-thirds of Americans thought that religion was a 'very important' element in their lives and one-third considered it to be 'fairly-important', almost two-thirds of Americans expressed concern that religion was 'losing its influence' in American life and, as a result, moral standards in the nation were dwindling.⁹⁰ Given such trends, the number of times that Clinton addressed this is noteworthy and suggests a strong correlation between demands in America's political culture for a more religiously-infused public realm and civil religious nature of Clinton's presidential rhetoric.

Having linked several themes simultaneously to mutually reinforce them to the American public with the help of language of civil religion, Clinton went on to make the moral revival of the United States a part of American internationalism: '[The United States had] charted a

⁸⁹ Rhodes, Tom, 'Clinton hits back at religious Right after Video Tirade', *The Times*, June 27, 1994.

⁹⁰ Gallup Poll News, 'Religion', see at <http://news.gallup.com/poll/1690/religion.aspx>

new course...designed to preserve both the American dream and the American community at home and America's leadership for peace and freedom and prosperity around the world' (10 November 1998). In the interconnected world the United States was living in, reviving the nation's communities and the shattered American dream (an indictment of America's moral decline as people) required American leadership in the world. Hence, the crux of Clinton's rhetorical explanation was that to become 'a city upon a hill' and maintain the 'sacred covenant with God' meant providing leadership in the world.

6.3.3 America's Foreign Policy Narrative as 'a city upon a hill'

Clinton linked American internationalism to the renewal of the United States and sought to further elaborate on his administration's foreign policy agenda through language that was intermittently infused with civil religion ideas. Codes 8 to 11 added up to 39 % of the overall references of the speech set. These spelled out America's priorities, strategies and instruments to meet the challenges and opportunities in the post-Cold War period. Code 9 alluded to America's Responsibilities in the World, and Code 10, which pointed to American leadership, are two complementary codes insofar that they emphasised America's expectations regarding managing the international order.

Code 9 had the largest percentage of references, 17.2 %, and covered the largest number of sources, 43.3%. It highlighted the range of responsibilities Clinton felt that the United States needed to embrace in the post-Cold War era. According to Code 9 the United States, having promoted the cause of peace during both World Wars and the Cold War, had the historic opportunity to create a more peaceful world and to serve as the *promoter of peace* (9 % of references in Code 9). Embracing this responsibility in the international system could affect

America's domestic strength. The idea of *promoter of domestic strength* was mentioned in 11 % of Code 9 references. As Clinton reminded Americans: '[W]e'll never be strong at home if we withdraw from our responsibilities around the world' (November 16, 1994). Global responsibilities to maintain international order were akin to America's domestic responsibilities. America had unique responsibilities as the *promoter of economic issues in the world* (15 % of references in Code 9), and 'an indispensable role in promoting freedom and free trade throughout the world' (November 10, 1998). These two categories emphasise Clinton's attempt to show Americans the stake they had in a foreign policy.

Americans were assured that the United States would serve as a *promoter of democracy* in the world. With 22 % of references in Code 9 devoted to this idea and, thus, having the highest value in this code, it was an integral part of America's conception of responsibility in world under Clinton. He insisted that the United States had to re-adjust its 'definition of national security and to promote it and to foster democracy and human rights around the world' (February 26, 1993). Supporting democratic processes would contribute to maintaining stability in the international system: '[America] will do what we can to help civil societies emerge from the ashes of repression, to sustain fragile democracies, and to add more free markets to the world, and of course, to restrain the destructive forces that threaten us all' (September 26, 1994). The emphasis was on creating the relevant economic, security and political environment favouring democracy while trying to strengthen democratic infrastructure within states that were already democratic.

According to Code 10, which had 7.6 % of total references and covered 28.9 % of sources, the United States' sought to provide leadership in the international system. What stands out

here is that both the percentage of references and coverage of sources is lower than Code 9, highlighting that America's sense of responsibility was greater than the actual desire to provide leadership in the international system. This raised the question whether the United States was always prepared to lead, Clinton adamant that the United States would only selectively deal with crisis in the world: 'The United States intends to remain engaged and to lead. We cannot solve every problem, but we must and will serve as a fulcrum for change and a pivot point for peace' (September 23, 1993).

Nevertheless Codes 9 and 10 suggest that responsibility and leadership, respectively, were exclusive to the United States (with no other states mentioned), implying that only the United States could and should tackle the challenges of managing international order. According to Code 6, one could argue that American responsibility and leadership in the world was derived from America's sacred covenant with God that had to be maintained, accordingly, in the post-Cold War era. As God's nation, the United States was called upon to rise to the occasion and embrace responsibility and leadership in the post-Cold War era. Clinton, using language of scripture one would associate with a priest rather than an American president, summoned Americans: 'From this joyful mountaintop of celebration we hear a call to service in the valley. We have heard the trumpets. We have changed the guard. And now, each in our own way and with God's help, we must answer the call' (January 20, 1993). Clinton's powerful metaphor that America was located at a 'mountaintop' is a further affirmation of the notion of 'a city upon a hill'. Its people had a moral responsibility to descend into the 'valley', (the rest of the world), to selflessly do 'service' to humanity. Clinton's discourse suggests that

people around the world expected the United States to embrace responsibility and provide world leadership.

While Clinton's rhetoric had underlined doubts about whether America was still 'a city upon a hill' at home, when it came to the world at large this notion was expressed with unparalleled confidence. Code 12 is a relatively significant with 9.6 % of total references and 33.3% source coverage that emphasises America's superiority. The code contains at least 50 superlatives to describe America's superiority in the world. Clinton was unequivocal that America was the 'greatest nation on Earth' (February 17, 1993) that 'stands alone as the world's indispensable nation' (January 20, 1997). Clinton continued, emphasising his nation's special place in the history of the international system, 'America is far more than a place. It is an idea, the most powerful idea in the history of nations' (February 4, 1997).

Such assertions about America's normative superiority went hand in hand with an affirmation of America's material superiority in the world. The emphasis was on America's economic superiority in 23 % of references in Code 12. Clinton alluded to America's 'economy that is still the world's strongest' (January 20, 1993) that was 'the world's mightiest industrial power' (January 20, 1997). Clinton also underlined America's military superiority in 29 % of the references in Code 12, highlighting that America's military power was a dominant aspect of America's superiority in the world. He left no doubt that America's military was 'the best trained, the best prepared, the best equipped fighting force in the world' (February 17, 1993).

America's global superiority, which echoed the notion of 'a city upon a hill', formed the basis of America's sense of responsibility and leadership in the world. The implication of Clinton's rhetoric was the United States ought to have special rights, privileges and responsibilities in

the international system. This was further reinforced by the idea that democracies are more peaceful towards each other and that promoting democracy would contribute to stability in the international system. It implied a hierarchy between states in the international system based on the practical and moral superiority of democratic states as result of their general non-aggression towards one another.

There were established parameters to America's sense of responsibility and global leadership that suggested how its sense of mission in the world as 'a city upon a hill' would unfold. Code 11, with a value of 10.2 % of total references and coverage of 22.3 % of sources, reflects America's past, present and future international collaborative efforts, with the United States taking on a dominant position in regard to other nations mentioned in the references. This is best summed up with Clinton asserted: 'We have to be at the center of every vital global network, as a good neighbor and a good partner' (January 27, 2000). Code 8 highlights America's recognition of the benefits of international institutions in creating a more stable and prosperous international order in the international system whilst being ambivalent about its stance toward those international institutions. Commitments to international institutions was contingent upon whether they could help serve America's interests. Code 8 and 11 reflect the modus operandi with the familiar premise 'together if we can, alone, if we must'. While Codes 8 to 11 underlined America's desire to legitimately engage in the international system, there was a desire to avoid being constrained when it did not suit its mission in the world. American internationalism was defined and, moreover, justified internally through the language of civil religion, with less importance given to external expectations.

Clinton's rhetoric linked America's economic prosperity with the need to pursue an internationalist foreign policy in the increasingly interconnected world of the post-Cold War era. Clinton was keen to establish himself as a president who was aware of America's religious cultural heritage that had been passed down by America's Puritan ancestors. He used the language of civil religion to underline to Americans that an internationalist foreign policy based on championing freedom in the world would result in the moral rejuvenation of the United States and would enable it to become 'a city upon a hill' once again. Moreover, the idea of 'a city upon a hill' was linked to American material and political superiority that underpinned Clinton's assumptions regarding America's world responsibility and leadership. Rather than civil religious ideas dominating Clinton's rhetoric, economic prosperity and democratic enlargement were central to his rhetoric because they were an integral part of his foreign policy agenda. Clinton's rhetoric presented his agenda on economic prosperity and democratic enlargement to the American public in a manner that echoed Puritan tropes of 'city upon a hill'. Clinton's presidential rhetoric was infused with Puritan ideas rather than driven or motivated by them. Even without Puritan ideas, American foreign policy would have unfolded as it did given the complexities of economic challenges at home and the instability in the international system. However, infusing presidential rhetoric with Puritan ideas enabled Clinton to explain his foreign policy in a way that resonated with the American public. By echoing the narrative structure of revival and rejuvenation of the 'city upon a hill' of America's Puritan ancestors Clinton was able to simplify a highly complex subject matter to the American public.

If George H. W. Bush had been elected president instead of Clinton in 1992, then, there is little doubt that he, too, would have embraced the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion. Unlike Clinton, George H. W. Bush's religious conviction and the moral credentials to occupy the role of the American president were not doubted by evangelicals such as Pat Robertson. George H. W. Bush's rhetoric may not have been so strongly infused with the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion. While George H. W. Bush had undergone religious socialisation during childhood, which included regularly attending church, his appreciation of religion was weaker than Clinton's religious devotion to escape the turbulence of family life. This might have meant that George H. W. Bush's appreciation of civil religion might not have been so strong.

6.4 America's Interventions in Haiti and Kosovo

Investigating the relationship between American internationalism and civil religion during the Clinton presidency, required a close examination of specific contexts. Using presidential speeches, I analysed two contexts – America's interventions in Haiti (1994) and Kosovo (1999), respectively – in regard to managing order in the post-Cold War era.⁹¹ As these military interventions represented pivotal foreign policy decisions involving considerable risks, they had to be justified to an American public generally sceptical of military

⁹¹ Foreign military interventions are different from wars insofar they pertain to intrastate rather than interstate interventions, seeking to alter the political authority structure rather than strive for conquest and the fundamental strategy is motivated by political underpinning in the first instance and military underpinnings in the second (Jentelson & Levite 1992: 5-6; Kapur 2002: 98).

interventions and ‘pretty prudent’ about interventions during the years of the Clinton administration (Jentelson 1992; Jentelson & Britton 1998).

America’s negative experience in the Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia in October 1993 brought back memories of the Vietnam War (Morales 1994: 91). Images of American soldiers being dragged through the streets of Mogadishu horrified the American public and could be easily interpreted by Americans as ‘another Vietnam’ (Dauber 2001: 655; 2001a: 213). In fact, seldom did such one moment of involving American soldiers have ‘such an exaggeratedly negative impact’ on American foreign policy, with the American Congress requesting for America’s military withdrawal from Somalia as well as UN peacekeeping in general (Murray 2007: 552). Following the debacle, Presidential Decision Directive 25 (3 May 1994) sought to placate Americans’s fears by clarifying acceptable risks and objectives for American interventions (Murray 2007: 566; Ware 1997). In such a climate, how would Clinton use his speeches to explain America’s intervention in Haiti and Kosovo, respectively, to the American public?

6.4.1 American Internationalism & the Haiti Crisis

A mere nine months after the first democratic elections in September 1991, Haiti’s democratic government was ousted. Bush Sr. imposed trade sanctions on Haiti and tried to repatriate refugees trying to flee to the United States by boat. Over 34,000 Haitians seeking political asylum in the United States between September 1991 and April 1992. Clinton continued his predecessor’s controversial refugee repatriation policy and damaging economic sanctions that

reduced Haiti's GDP by 25 to 30 percent between 1991 and 94 (Malone 1997: 138). He was generally reluctant to deal with the crisis when he first referred to it in March 1993. Clinton was afraid to create the impression of being a foreign policy president so quickly after being elected as he tried to implement domestic reforms involving the American economy. The Congress' Black Caucus put pressure in regard to the crisis and how the America's repatriation of Haitian refugees mounted to outright racism (Malone 1997: 131), the American public was less interested.

Although the race riots in Los Angeles in 1992 and the OJ Simpson trial in the summer of 1994 had made racism a hotly debated topic, Haiti left most Americans relatively unaffected. The issue was deemed so unimportant that it was not mentioned in opinion polls. When it was recorded in August 1994 only one percent of Americans deemed it as the most significant issue, well behind crime (30 percent), healthcare (21 percent) and the economy (13 percent). The American Congress was reluctant to intervene in Haiti. In the year between October 1993 and the deployment of troops in October 1994, House and Senate members cast fifteen votes relating to the deployment of American troops to Haiti. The debates associated with those votes suggested that Democrats and Republicans were generally opposed to an intervention (Schultz 2006: 119). The onus was on Clinton to use his speeches to make a case for an intervention in Haiti.

Amidst trying to define his foreign policy outlook during the early stages of his presidency, Clinton went on to emphasise the importance of democracy promotion in Haiti as he reminded Americans of the nation's moral character and superiority. From the beginning until its conclusion, the Haitian crisis was justified to the American public as a struggle for democracy

where the United States served as a *restorer of democracy* (27 references). Clinton emphasised the need to uphold democratic values in the region as a distinct American responsibility: '[I want to] speak to the American people and to the people of Haiti from the Oval Office to emphasize how important it is to me personally and to the United States to restore democracy in Haiti' (12 March 1993). Clinton also insisted that promoting democracy in Haiti had global significance, echoing the civil religious idea of 'a city upon a hill' that was seeking to transform the world and, thus, shining a light of hope onto an inferior world that was undemocratic but striving for the blessings of freedom the United States enjoyed. Thus, he remarked: '[W]e have helped to give the people of Haiti a chance to remake the democracy they earned, they deserve, and they so plainly wish. President Aristide's return to Haiti is a victory for freedom throughout the world' (14 October 1994).

The prevailing situation in Haiti represented a violation of the democratic world order Clinton championed. The Cedras dictatorship, its human rights violations, terror tactics and the havoc wrecked on innocent Haitians were all primary agents of the crisis that contributed to the refugee crisis that affected the United States. Clinton made specific references to the Cedras regime, singling it out for the suffering and brutality brought upon the Haitians:

'Haiti's dictators, led by General Raoul Cedras, control the most violent regime in our hemisphere...[with]...General Cedras and his accomplices *alone* are responsible for this suffering and terrible human tragedy...[which

included a]...reign of terror, executing children, raping women, killing priests' (15 September 1994).⁹²

According to the moral narrative of Clinton's rhetoric, Cedras was the embodiment of evil, an incarnation of the devil in the civil religion sense of the idea. He was the savage enemy who prompted the United States to pursue a foreign policy to defend and champion democratic values in the region as part of a larger global struggle for democracy that was unfolding in the post-Cold War era. Clinton's sharp and targeted language, which focused on Cedras, limited the number of options available to deal with the crisis and helped legitimise a specific course of action. It raised the question whether any other genuine alternatives to solve the problem were proposed by his rhetoric. For Americans not to be repulsed by the savagery of the undemocratic Cedras regime was tantamount to moral complicity with a brutal regime that had created a large humanitarian crisis and was contrary to America's sense of moral superiority as 'a city upon a hill'. America's own reputation as a democratic and, hence, civilised nation was on the line in Haiti, helping rescue the beleaguered Haitian population and alleviating their desperate humanitarian situation appeared to be America's democratic duty.

Clinton was cognizant of his foreign policy-averse domestic audience. The desire to promote democracy to deal with the situation in Haiti could be interpreted in terms of America's fears and anxiety about the threat of global instability in the post-Cold War era. Such instability could jeopardise America's much sought domestic prosperity to become 'a city upon a hill' at home once more. These fears were compounded by an increased awareness of the physical

⁹² Emphasis added by the author.

proximity of the crisis in Haiti to the United States, Haitian refugees trying to reach the United States by boat. With concerns emerging about domestic instability and the dangers posed by the crisis to America's borders, amidst prevailing anti-immigration and nationalist sentiments, Clinton underlined America's *national interest* (12 references) in Haiti. He also alluded to *economic issues* (9 references) at stake in the crisis in Haiti, a dubious claim given Haiti's poverty-stricken conditions. Promoting democracy in Haiti could help create political stability that would generate economic prosperity. Similarly, democracy in the world would help create stability in the region and, thus, be conducive to America's prosperity and moral condition at home.

With the United States having embraced responsibility as a *promoter of peace* (11 references) in Haiti, Clinton sought to underline to the American public intervention internationally to gain support from the American public. Of a total of 19 references regarding *collaboration with other nations* 11 references were made in the advent of the use of force between 15 and 18 September 1994. While the civil religious idea of being 'a city upon a hill', which represented a beacon of hope for humanity and the rest of the world, belonged singularly to the United States, the attempt to strive for collaboration with other nations suggests that the global responsibilities this idea implied were to be best shared with other nations. The American public's support for an international intervention generally increased if the intervention was multilateral rather than unilateral (Kreps: 2007: 468; Kull 1995: 105; Murray 2008: 12; Schultz 2006: 121). Moreover, according to Clinton, in the interconnected world of the post-Cold War era, a crisis like the one in Haiti could also affect the security of faraway states in completely different regions of the world:

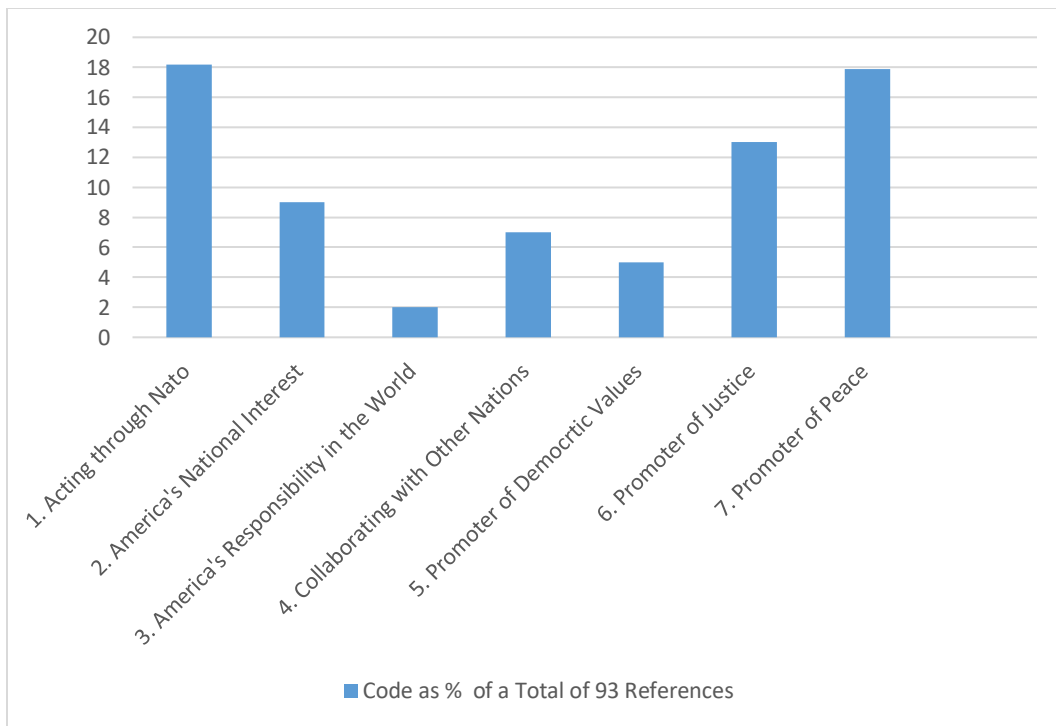
‘More than 20 countries from around the globe, including almost all the Caribbean community and nations from as far away as Poland, which has recently won its own freedom, Israel and Jordan [...] have joined nations like Belgium and Great Britain. They have all agreed to join us because they think this problem in our neighborhood is important to their future interests and their security.’ (September 15, 1994)

6.4.2 American Internationalism & the Kosovo Crisis

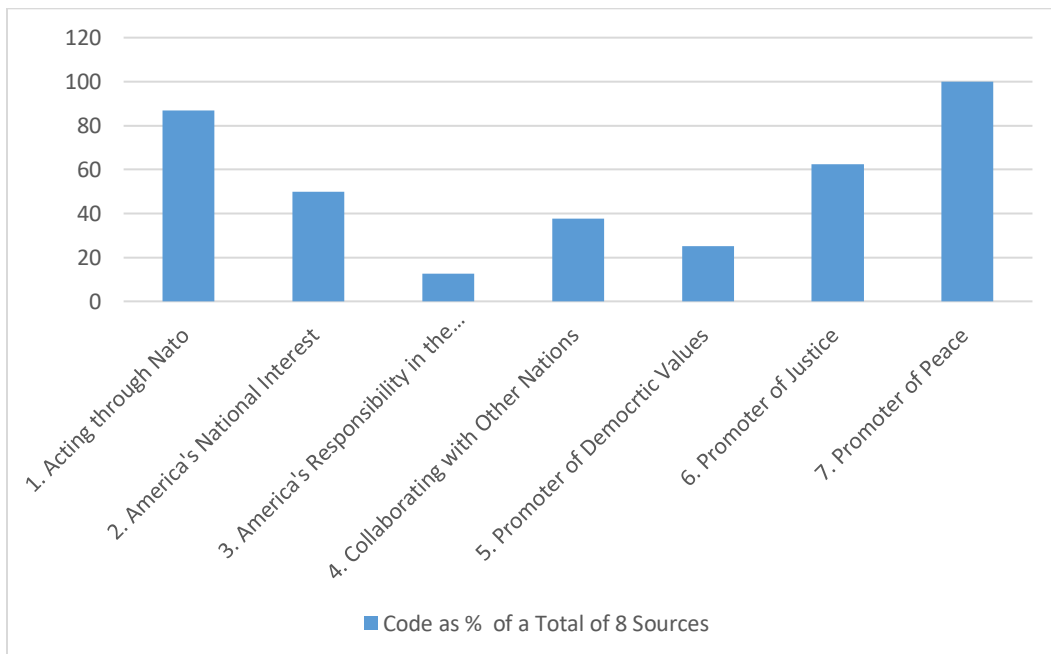
The conflict in Kosovo erupted in the summer of 1998 following Milosevic’s offensive against the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). Although the KLA had initially taken over vast swathes of territory, the Serbian regime regained much of it and in that process displaced tens of thousands of Albanian Kosovars. Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic was conducting an ethnic cleansing campaign against the Albanian Kosovars. Throughout 1998, the Clinton administration monitored the deteriorating situation in Kosovo and decided to freeze Yugoslav assets and prohibit Americans from doing business in Yugoslavia. With winter approaching and civilians in danger of being exposed to freezing temperatures, the threat of NATO airstrikes in October 1998 temporarily halted the Serbian military offensive. Serbian leaders backed down and withdrew their troops from Kosovo, but in March 1999 launched another military campaign against Albanian Kosovars notwithstanding international insistence not to do so. Once more Albanian Kosovars fled the Serbian military offensive.

Scholarship that explores the link between elections and the foreign policy of a democratic state has inquired whether second term presidents have greater liberty to define their foreign policy as they are not concerned about re-election (Ostrom & Job 1986: 543; Smith 1996). While this could be one of the reasons for Clinton's confidence to intervene, a second term president is unlikely to want to squander his/her legacy for the sake of dangerous adventurism. The American Congress feared an intervention in Kosovo could become tantamount to another Vietnam War experience (Paris 2002: 443-47). Moreover, Clinton was under close public scrutiny in the wake of the Lewinsky scandal, which had involved the American president lying to the American public about his sexual improprieties, and seeking a way to divert attention from the affair. Set against this backdrop, America's internationalism would be presented to the American public by drawing on the language of civil religion to generate a moral narrative to explain the intervention in Kosovo.

Graph 9. Clinton's Speeches in regard to Kosovo, 12 Oct 1998 - 25 May 1999



Graph 10. Clinton's Speeches in regard to Kosovo, 12 Oct 1998 - 25 May 1999



There are several aspects to consider when looking at the civil religious dimension of Clinton's rhetoric and the moral narrative it sought to articulate in regard to the intervention in Kosovo. The overall percentage of references to America as a *promoter of democracy* was small (a value of 5 %), with references to democratic values placed in the poignant context of the America's use of force to deal with the situation in Yugoslavia in summer 1999: 'But when we fight, we fight to prevail—to prevail in this conflict and to build the undivided, democratic Europe that the founders of NATO envisioned 50 years ago' (April 23, 1999). Clinton added, 'A final challenge will be to encourage Serbia to join its neighbors in this historic journey to a peaceful, democratic, united Europe' (10 June 1999).

In addition to apparently creating stability in Europe, the notion of being the promoter of democratic values, that is to say a champion of the sacred cause of liberty that had been the cornerstone of the nation's history, allowed the United States to rationalise its own involvement in the Kosovo crisis. There was a clear enemy who had brought about the crisis upon the United States – Slobodan Milosevic. He was the undemocratic and dangerous incarnation of the devil who stood in opposition to the democratic values at the heart of a nation that regarded itself as God's nation and hoped to continue to enjoy God's blessings through commensurate deeds that would please Him. Set against this backdrop, Clinton's speeches, by focusing on Milosevic, helped simplify and render understandable the complexities the situation in Kosovo and reduce it to the actions of a single individual to explain the military intervention. Milosevic stood in 'the way of peace' (March 22, 1999) that went hand with his regime's morally reprehensible and inhumane acts against innocent civilians:

‘[Serb forces] started moving from village to village, shelling civilians and torching their houses. We've seen innocent people taken from their homes, forced to kneel in the dirt, and sprayed with bullets; Kosovar men dragged from their families, fathers and sons together, lined up and shot in cold blood. This is not war in the traditional sense. It is an attack by tanks and artillery on a largely defenseless people whose leaders already have agreed to peace.’

(March 24, 1999)

The Serbian leader was the primary culprit of the Kosovo crisis according to Clinton’s rhetoric – a dangerous, calculating and ruthless individual whose actions defied humanity. Clinton left no doubt that the acts committed were not those of a civilised agent rather those of undemocratic and violent dictatorial regime. Fighting the undemocratic devil (in the form of Milosevic), coupled with the democratic tradition embedded in national consciousness, meant that the United States felt entitled to engage in military action in Kosovo.

In fact, Clinton felt he had no other option, believing that global stability – due to Kosovo’s location in Europe’s backyard and the perceived proximity to Asia and the Middle East – hinged on dealing with the crisis (Cf. Paris 2002: 433). Clinton emphatically emphasised the importance of America as the *promoter of peace* (17.9 % of total references and covering all sources), with five references from that code highlighting the importance of the United States as a *regional stabiliser in Europe*. Clinton evocatively tried to convey what he believed to be a volatile situation that posed a threat to stability in Europe, as it had dangerously done in the past: ‘We act to protect thousands of innocent people in Kosovo from a mounting military offensive. We act to prevent a wider war, to defuse a powder keg at the heart of Europe that

has exploded twice before in this century with catastrophic results. And we act to stand united with our allies for peace' (24 March 1999).

Clinton recognised America's *responsibility in Kosovo* (2% of total references) in preventing regional instability. The language suggested that there was a need to respond to the situation with urgency to 'defuse' the dangerous 'powder keg at the heart of Europe'. He implied through his rhetoric the consequences of inaction during the Kosovo crisis would be horrific, for Europe and the international system (and therefore also the United States) in what was a highly interconnected global age. He underlined how the failure of democratic states to deal with the crisis in the Balkans on two separate occasions demonstrated the need to do so now and, thus, firmly stand up to a dictator like Milosevic. To that end, Clinton asked his audience to see the Kosovo crisis from a historical perspective: 'Sarajevo, the capital of neighboring Bosnia, is where World War I began. World War II and the Holocaust engulfed this region' (24 March 1999).

Once peaceful means had been exhausted the United States was prepared to *use force to promote peace* (6 references) to help bring an end to atrocities that were said to amount to a re-enactment of the Holocaust. With the human rights violations and the dire humanitarian situation in Kosovo presented as a regional stability issue, Clinton believed that the use of force could help establish peace. The United States would also do justice to the civil religious idea of 'a city upon a hill' that selflessly served humanity by helping create peace and doing the work of a good Samaritan:

 '[W]e must be sure the Serbian authorities meet their commitments. We are prepared to resume our military campaign should they fail to do so. Next,

we must get the Kosovar refugees home safely. Minefields will have to be cleared; homes destroyed by Serb forces will have to be rebuilt; homeless people in need of food and medicine will have to get them. The fate of the missing will have to be determined.’ (June 10, 1999)

Clinton placed America’s *national interest* (9 % of total references) in Kosovo within the nation’s broader moral and social consciousness to underline that its intervention helped rectify the symbolic desecration caused to the European moral order by Milosevic. Thus, Clinton’s morality infused rhetoric underlined that the United States could help alleviate the desperate humanitarian situation in Kosovo, in what amounted to a struggle between good and evil. Dealing with the humanitarian situation was presented in terms of America’s national interest. Clinton appreciated that: ‘Ending this tragedy is a moral imperative. It is also important to America's national interest’ (March 24, 1999).

The moral narrative of the interventions in Haiti and Kosovo were underpinned by civil religious ideas of ‘a city upon a hill’ fighting incarnations of the devil and, to a lesser degree, America as God’s nation championing freedom in the world. Both crises represented a threat to the stability of the international system in the increasingly interconnected age of the post-Cold War era, the United States seeking to do justice to its self-perception as ‘a city upon a hill’. While the crisis in Haiti was linked with regional instability, refugees arriving on boats in the United States, the Kosovo crisis was associated with causing regional instability in Europe. The implication of both crises was that undemocratic incarnations of the devil, dictators like Cedras in Haiti or Milosevic in Serbia, was linked with creating instability that had to be dealt with by the use of force.

6.5 Conclusion

This chapter explored how Clinton, amidst a combination of neo-isolationist assertions and domestic concerns about the moral decline of the United States, sought to explain to Americans an internationalist foreign policy using rhetoric infused with civil religion ideas that have been part of America's political culture over centuries. In fact, Clinton did not hesitate to explicitly reference Puritan ideas, calling his agenda to revive America as the 'New Covenant'. As the holder of the role of the American presidency, Clinton was aware of the importance of presenting his policy agenda to Americans by drawing on Puritan ideas. His childhood experiences may have reinforced the importance of religion, specifically civil religion, in America's national self-understanding. During his childhood Clinton came to appreciate religion as a source of strength and consolation from his chaotic family life. Growing up in the Bible Belt made Clinton appreciate the importance religion had in the lives of ordinary Americans. Although Clinton was deemed irreligious by his detractors such as Pat Buchanan and Pat Robertson, he fit the bill of an American president who openly embraced religiously-derived ideas, specifically Puritan ones.

Moreover, Clinton's rhetoric suggested that America's economic revival was linked with its need to embrace an internationalist foreign policy that centred on championing freedom in the increasingly interdependent world, emphasising that an internationalist foreign policy would help rejuvenate the moral fabric of the United States and enable it to become a 'a city upon a hill' once more. Doubts about whether America was still 'a city upon a hill' at home contrasted with the confidence with which this civil religious idea was projected on the world, forming the basis of America's sense of responsibility and leadership. During the

interventions in Haiti and Kosovo, in addition to alluding to the idea of 'a city upon a hill', the focus was on fighting undemocratic incarnations of the devil that had become a source of instability in the international system. Overall, Puritan ideas were not central to Clinton's rhetoric, especially when compared to themes such as democratic enlargement or economic prosperity that were integral to his presidency. However, Clinton's rhetoric was subtly infused with Puritan ideas that enabled him to present democratic enlargement and economic prosperity in a manner that was familiar to Americans. By echoing the revivalist theme of the 'city upon a hill' of America's Puritan ancestors in an attempt to underline the link between economic rejuvenation in the domestic realm and the American leadership in the international realm, Clinton was able to simplify a highly complex subject matter. This ensured that while Puritan ideas were not the drivers of American's foreign policy itself, Puritan ideas continued to be echoed in presidential rhetoric.

CHAPTER 7 AMERICAN CIVIL RELIGION & GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR UNDER BUSH Jr.

7.1 Introduction

Clinton's presidency had provoked accusation that it lacked a clear vision for America's place in the world. Bush, on the other hand, left with no doubt following the attacks of 9/11 that as the 43rd president of the United States he had a bold vision for American foreign policy. America's use of force in the war on terror raised concerns about America's direction in the world (Dumbrell 2010: 147), triggering a debate about whether the United States was not just pursuing imperial ambition in the international system (Suall 2008) but had, in fact, transformed itself into an empire (Cox 2003; Cox 2004). American foreign policy became associated with recklessness which led to large military and civilian casualties, violated international law, accepted the use of torture and alienated close allies. As skepticism grew over excessive use of power, there was a debate about whether Bush had paved the way for the demise of American hegemony (Buzan 2008; Calleo 2009).

This chapter concentrates on the Bush administration's attempt to tackle the threat of terrorism in the international system after 9/11, and how Bush sought to explain the dramatic shift in American policy to the American public. Bush used language of civil religion to help express America's global war on terror as a struggle between America as God's nation and the evil embodied by terrorism and terrorists. The rhetorical logic of Bush's public utterances was that a foreign policy that dealt with the threat of terrorism would help exorcise dangerous

manifestations of evil in the world. Moreover, as a nation with a covenant with God, the United States had a special responsibility to pursue a foreign policy that dealt with the threat of terrorism. While Puritan ideas were not the drivers of America's foreign policy following the attacks of 9/11, Bush's Puritan-infused rhetoric helped strengthen to the American public the case for the global war on terror.

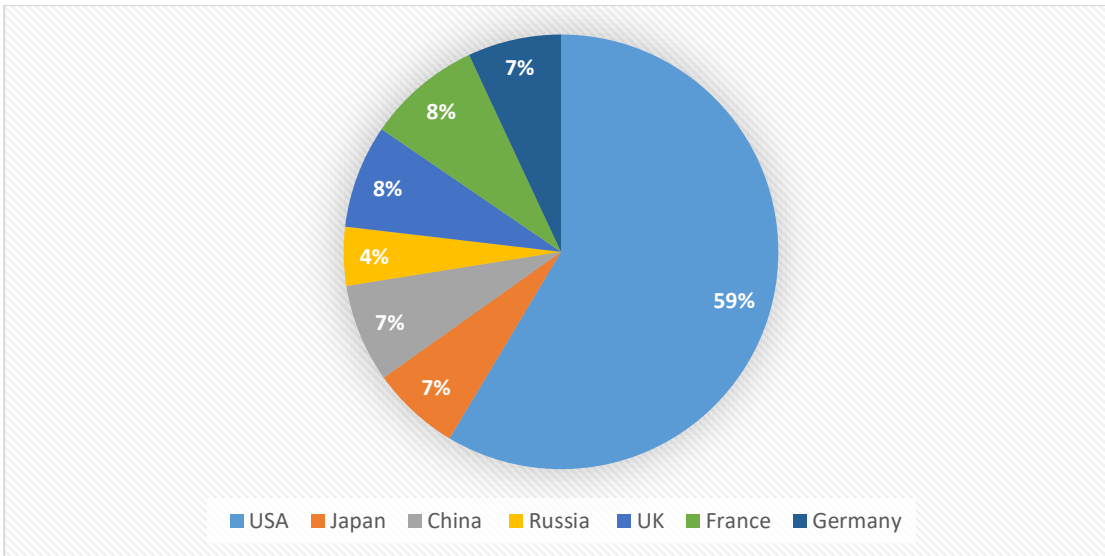
This chapter proceeds as follows: First, it focuses on the international, foreign policy and domestic context before the attacks of 9/11 to provide insight into the background to Bush's presidential rhetoric that helped to underline the dramatic shift in American foreign policy. Second, I explore the main themes and priorities expressed in Bush's rhetoric. Bush reiterated the notion of America as God's nation to help reassure and comfort Americans in the wake of the tragic events of 9/11. Dealing with the threat of terrorism, through the strategy of war on terror, was imbued with a profound moral significance as it represented the nation's struggle against evil that justified the use of force. Third, this chapter concentrates on America's intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq as part of that struggle. Bush's rhetoric highlights the civil religious underpinning of America's intervention in Afghanistan to deal with the evils of terrorism. Bush's rhetoric portrays Saddam Hussein as an incarnation of evil who had to be toppled.

7.2 9/11 Context and American Foreign Policy

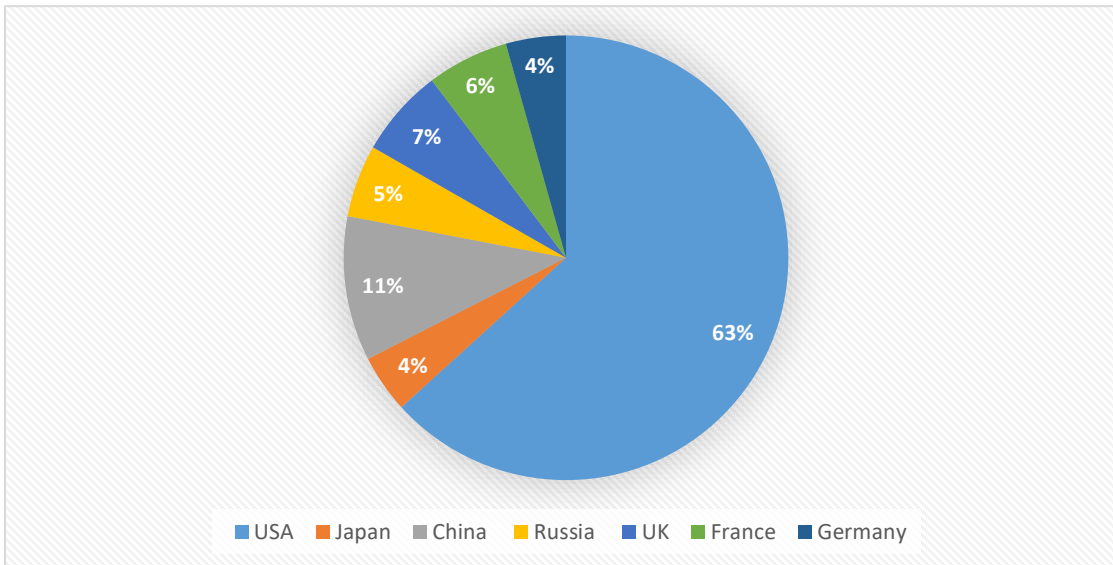
7.2.1 International Setting in an Age of Unprecedented Superiority

When Bush assumed the presidency, the concentration of power in the international system favoured the United States even more than when Clinton took office. A peer competitor in military or economic terms was not in sight. Irrespective of whether one questioned the effects of unipolarity on the dynamics of the international system (Ikenberry, Mastanduno & Wohlforth 2009) or the conceptual categorisation to depict American power in terms of hegemony or empire (O'Brien & Clesse 2002), the extent of America's power in the international system was undeniable. Graphs 1 and 2 highlight America's military spending, which constitutes roughly two thirds of the military spending in relation to Japan, China, Russia, Great Britain, Germany and France for 2001 and 2008, respectively. By the time Bush left office, military spending had increased by 4 % in relation to the aforementioned states. By 2009, \$ 683 billion had been spent on the intervention in Iraq and \$ 227 billion on the intervention in Afghanistan (Belasco 2009: 1-2). Even so, Graphs 3 and 4 underscore the sheer proportion of the American economy, notwithstanding the fact that its strength fluctuated and its share of the global economy had ultimately dwindled by the time Bush left office. In the first two years of the Bush administration, the stock market lost nearly \$ 5 trillion in value following the attacks of 9/11, with America's budget surplus becoming a budget deficit of \$ 1.8 trillion by 2003 and the value of the dollar had dropped by 13 % by 2003 in comparison to 2001 (Murphy 2003: 607).

Graph 11. Military Spending of Leading States 2001 in % ⁹³



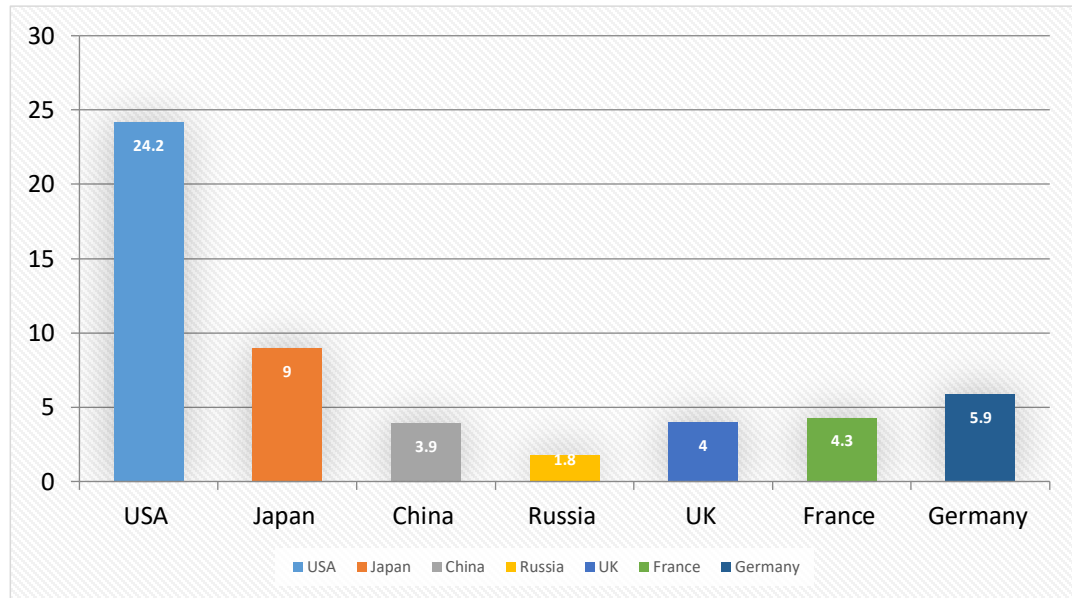
Graph 12 Military Spending of Leading States in 2008 in % ⁹⁴



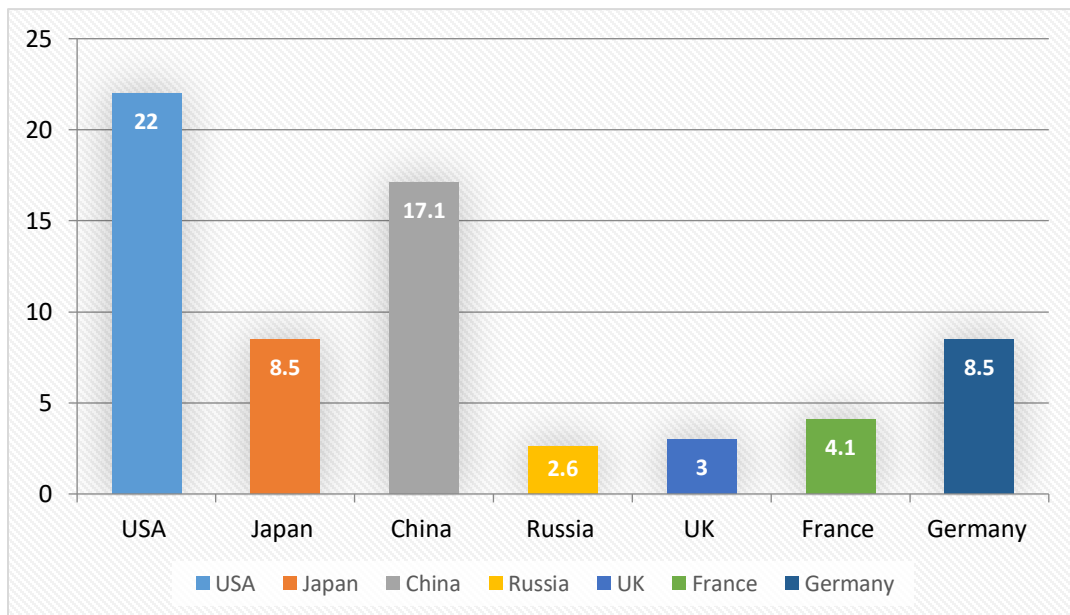
⁹³ Percentages derived from figures in current USD prices, converted at the exchange rate for the given year. Derived from 'Data for all countries 1988-2015' Report at <https://www.sipri.org/databases/milex>. Percentages derived from total military expenditure of USA, Japan, China, Russia, UK, France and Germany.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

Graph 13 Total Gross National Income of World Economy 2001 in %⁹⁵



Graph 14 Total Gross National Income of World Economy in 2008 in %⁹⁶



⁹⁵ Derived from <http://databank.worldbank.org/data/home.aspx>. Percentages are constant USD figures (2000).

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

America's unipolar superiority in the international system⁹⁷ was overshadowed (although not challenged) by the attacks of 9/11.⁹⁸ The threat of terrorism also highlighted the dangerous interplay between the political and religious realm in the international system. 9/11 was inspired by Osama Bin Laden's extreme understanding of Islam and his hostility toward Americans, Jews and 'Crusaders' for having occupied the Holy Lands of Islam (Falk 2003: 184). The attacks were intended to execute 'punishment for the perceived sins the United States has committed' through its foreign policy in the world (Fox & Sandler 2004: 107).

Bin Laden's extremism ought to be placed in the context of broader trends in the world. The inability of a 'secular, modernizing state to produce democracy and development' gave way to the increased importance of religion in the world (Thomas 2005: 40). 'Sacred rage', according to Robin Wright (2001), became a defining feature of the age. Terrorism motivated by an extreme interpretation of Islam posed a challenge to the secular Western liberal order dominated by the United States, using violent means to challenge as well as offer an alternative to the existing international order on behalf of those who rejected globalisation as a principle and practice (Phillips 2011: 284).⁹⁹ While the events of 9/11 were undeniably tragic for the United States, its overall position in the international system was relatively unaltered (Waltz 2000). With IR scholarship preoccupied with why counterbalancing had not

⁹⁷ United States had not been attacked on its own soil since the torching of the White House by the British in 1812.

⁹⁸ With a death toll of 3,000 on American soil, it was the largest terror attack the world had ever witnessed (Pillar 2003: vii; see also Art 2003: 15). In fact, the United States had been the victim of terrorist attacks during the tenure of Bush's predecessor. In 1993 an attack involving a minor explosion was carried out at the World Trade Center, the Murrah Building was bombed in Oklahoma City in 1995 and U.S. embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam were bombed in 1998.

⁹⁹ Bin Laden's extremism seemed to be taking advantage of broader trends in the international system. There was an increase in the importance of religion due to the inability of a 'secular, modernizing state to produce democracy and development' (Thomas 2005: 40).

occurred (Lieber & Alexander 2005; Waltz 2000), Brooks & Wohlforth (2008) declared that the ‘World was Out of Balance’ and, thus, balancing had become inoperative.

One implication of the debate was that the United States was so powerful in the international system that systemic influences had become largely inoperative to induce the United States to have a strong sense of mission in the world. Others disagreed, highlighting the dangers of the 9/11 era. Cronin (2002: 58), writing one year after 9/11, warned that terrorism posed such ‘a powerful non-state threat to the international system’ that even the United States could not ignore it. 9/11 had exposed the ‘soft underbelly of American primacy’, highlighting how ‘Americans [had] overestimated the benefits of primacy, and terrorists [had grossly] underestimated them’ (Betts 2002: 466).

7.2.2 The Moral Narrative of a ‘Born-Again’ Christian

Even in the wake of the ‘good times’ associated with globalisation, there were those who painted a darker picture of it. Ralph Nader, a consumer protection lawyer of America’s green party, voiced concerns about America’s economic internationalism during the Clinton presidency: ‘The worsening concentration of global corporate power over our government has turned that government frequently against its own people, denying its people their sovereignty to shape their future’ (Nader quoted in Harold 2001: 586). Pat Buchanan, who ran as an independent for the Reform Party after having left the Republican Party in disgust in 1999 for its inability to champion a moral agenda that was befitting of the United States, agreed with Nader’s conclusion. However, he linked his moral indignation about neoliberalism, that was

ruining America, to anti-immigration sentiments. Bush picked up on the national mood. During the election campaign, he advocated the implementation of domestic reforms based on his agenda of ‘compassionate conservatism’ that involved tax cuts, reforming social security and education, and advocating faith-based initiatives that would help rejuvenate America’s communities (Pfiffner 2004: 4-5).

Bush’s election campaign was geared to trying to echo to the growing evangelical strand in America’s political culture using specific religious ideas that strongly resonated with them. While, in the mid-1980s, some 33% of respondents informed Gallup Poll they were ‘born again’ evangelicals, by the early 2000s the number had increased to 44 - 46% (Phillips 2006: 106). Bush regarded himself as a Conservative with strong evangelical Christian values (Dulk & Rozell 2011: 73; Smith 2006: 372-73), not hesitating to publicly declare how his faith shaped him and how he had achieved personal redemption by overcoming alcohol abuse.¹⁰⁰

Religion was not always important to Bush. What is interesting is that he was raised by devout parents. His father George H.W. received Christian instruction through the Episcopal Church and chapel service at prep school while his mother Barbara growing up in a wealthy family New York that had close ties to the evangelical preacher Billy Graham. Although his parents were devout, and Bush attended church as a child and youth, he did not recognise the importance of religion in his own life, avoiding church attendance during his time at Yale University (Smith 2006: 367). During his childhood, youth and early adult life religion did

¹⁰⁰ Having unsuccessfully campaigned for a seat in the US Congress in 1978 and failed as an oil entrepreneur in a sector that faced tough times, Bush resorted to heavy drinking. He saw faith as a way for him to redeem himself. He also started to participate in collective Bible reading sessions with the theologically conservative *Community Bible Study*.

not have great importance. The impact of childhood religious socialisation on Bush was weak, with Bush not fully appreciating the power and potency of religion in the manner Clinton did as a child and youth. Although Bush participated in religious rituals during his child, it did not have a strong impact on him.

This occurred much later in Bush's life – when he was faced with adversity. Bush's religious conversion experience – the moment an individual accepts Jesus in his/her life and becomes born-again – occurred in 1984 following a sinner's prayer (where a sinner confesses his sins to God) with the evangelist priest, Arthur Blessitt. This occurred against the backdrop of Bush's years of alcoholism, his failing oil company which was massively in debt and not generating income as well as his drink driving arrest. These personal failings and professional difficulties over the years meant that Bush eventually came to recognise the importance of religion that would enable him to redeem himself. As such, at a Republican Party presidential debate in 1999, when asked about his favourite philosopher, he instead chose to emphasise his faith: 'Christ, because he changed my heart' (Quoted in Durham 2004: 147). On another occasion during the election campaign, he confessed to his televangelist friend James Robinson: 'I feel like God wants me to run for president. I can't explain it, but my country is going to need me'.¹⁰¹ His understanding of faith, which gave him moral purpose, led him to firmly believe that he was the right man for the presidency.

While Bush was accused of 'playing the Jesus card' for political purposes (Dowd 1999), and it was laid bare that his statement had a strategic motivation for mobilizing Christian

¹⁰¹Harris, Paul, 'Bush says God chose him to lead his nation', November 2, 2003, see at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2003/nov/02/usa.religion>

evangelical voters, it was also undeniable that his religious convictions were genuine and his own. Anyhow, no other Republican nominee managed to speak about his religious beliefs with such authenticity. He was rather good at it, and it generated vast number of votes. During the 2000 presidential election Bush had 68% support from fellow Christian evangelicals, with that number rising to 78% in the 2004 presidential election (Durham 2006: 204). Christian evangelicals were undeniably an integral part of Bush's political base.

Bush also managed to echo broader strands of America's political culture, and not just the Christian Right. In fact, Bush was trying to do justice of the role of the American presidency which came with the expectation that American presidents ought to affirm their belief in God. American voters found his religiously-derived moral narrative of a man overcoming the sinful habit of alcoholism endearing and some even hoped that he would undo the moral laxity of the Clinton years (Balmer 2012: 146). Guided by his moral sensibilities, he pledged to restore honesty to the White House following the scandal-ridden years of the Clinton administration that had generated public distrust in public officials (Robinson & Wilcox 2007: 225). A Gallup Poll conducted in January 2000, the year of the presidential election, revealed that in addition to poverty and homelessness (72%), the number of Americans without health insurance (73%) and federal policy on crime prevention (71%), they regarded presidential integrity (74%) and the moral standards of the country (71%) as important issues in the upcoming presidential election.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Gallup Poll: Setting the Stage for the Election (January 22, 2000) see at <http://news.gallup.com/poll/9895/setting-stage-election-2000.aspx>

Following the continuing fallout from the Clinton impeachment in 1999-9, Bush sought to present himself as a presidential candidate who could restore moral standards to the American presidency and, as a result, to national life. In other respects, Bush's moral narrative echoed the ethos of the Republican Party and its large evangelical strand. He was engaged in party politics rather than trying to do justice to the role of the American presidency. Perhaps no issue reflected the convergence of the Conservative and religious ethos of the Republican party as well as his deeper moral convictions than the abortion debate. In the national abortion debate, whether to 'be pro-choice' and accept abortion or to be 'pro-life' and reject it, he sought to avoid controversy from the Republican Party and picked the latter stance on abortion: 'I think that the Republican Party ought to keep its pro-life plank the way it's written now'.¹⁰³

7.2.3 National Conservative Foreign Policy

With foreign policy issues largely relegated to the opinions of experts, the initial impression revealed more overlap in the broad grand strategic areas with the Democrats than Republicans themselves were willing to acknowledge. Rice (2000: 46), Bush's foreign policy advisor for

¹⁰³ Bush quoted in New York Times article (January 23, 2000). See <http://www.nytimes.com/2000/01/23/us/2000-campaign-platform-bush-says-he-supports-party-s-strong-anti-abortion-stand.html>

He remained consistent about the 'pro-life' issue throughout this presidency. On the first day as president during his first term he reversed the Clinton administration's funding for abortion. In 2002, Bush signed the Born Alive Infants Protection Act and in November 2003 he signed the partial-birth abortion ban passed by Congress. Moreover, during his second term Bush refused federal funding for new cell lines, even vetoing a bill from Congress that permitted human embryonic stem cell research in 2006. In March 2005 Congress agreed, and Bush signed, a bill that required federal courts to reconsider whether feeding tubes should be reinserted into a woman in Florida who was in a 'persistent vegetative state' after a Florida court had permitted her husband to remove them (Foreman 2008: 280).

the 2000 election campaign, argued that the following areas ought to be America's concern:

1. 'promote economic growth and political openness by extending free trade'
2. 'to renew strong and intimate relationship with allies who share American values',
3. 'to deal with rogue regimes and hostile power'.

Rice's concern was that, while under the Clinton administration America's position in the international system had improved, without a real enemy in the form of the Soviet Union the United States lacked focus and purpose in the post-Cold War era. The Clinton administration was unable to distinguish 'the important from the trivial' in its foreign policy as it developed a 'crisis by crisis' approach (Rice 2000: 45).¹⁰⁴ The implication was that Clinton's civil religious rhetoric had reinforced an internationalism that had created a disconnect between America's resources and the challenges in the international system that appeared to benefit the rest of the world more than the United States itself. Rice's suggestion to recalibrate American foreign policy had subtle hints of a nationalist twist. Although it resonated with the conservative values of the Republican Party, the desire for a more modest foreign policy was far removed from Pat Buchanan's nationalistic and jeremiad-like 'America First' rhetoric that championed the moral revival of the United States. The question of abandoning America's internationalist foreign policy, as Buchanan had frequently suggested, was not even remotely entertained by the incoming administration.

Within the Republican party there were two foreign policy factions, the conservative nationalists and neo-conservatives. They were overlapping factions that agreed on the

¹⁰⁴ This concern was also echoed by Robert Zoellick (2000: 64-65) who further lamented that Clinton had lacked a 'guiding strategy'.

importance of America's pre-eminence, the rejection of multilateralism and the need to increase military spending as well as developing a national missile defense system (Hurst 2005: 78; Homolar-Riechman 2009: 184-188). Both factions exhibited a strong sense of national and military pride about America's place in the world. What distinguished them was that neo-conservatives considered the promotion of democratic values ought to be integral to American foreign policy, with conservative nationalists reluctant to agree on this issue (Hurst 2005: 82). The neoconservative vision broadly combined America's expanding military strength with a stronger sense of moral clarity about the universal validity of its values and international responsibility to provide global leadership, seeking a foreign policy that merged American values and power in the manner the neoconservative hero Ronald Reagan had done when confronting the Soviet Union, or Theodore Roosevelt had done at the beginning of the twentieth century (Kristol & Kagan 1996).¹⁰⁵

It would be the conservative nationalist faction that proved to be dominant, leaving neo-conservatives, whose ideal Republican candidate had been Senator John McCain, dissatisfied. *The Weekly Standard*, a mainstream mouth-piece for neo-conservatives, was highly supportive of McCain until he was defeated in the primaries by Bush, appreciating his unflinching support for the intervention in Kosovo and the fact that he even supported the idea of ground troops (Ryan 2010: 159). McCain, echoing the neoconservative vision about America's place in the world, in March 1999, had pointed out: 'we have every intention of

¹⁰⁵For more insight on the need for moral purpose in American foreign policy championed by neoconservatives e.g. See Project for New American Century (PNAC) 'Statement of Principles' (1997); PNAC 'Letter to President Clinton on Iraq'; Kristol, William, Kagan, Robert, eds., *Present Dangers: Crisis and Dangers in American Foreign and Defense Policy*, Encounter Books, 2000.

continuing to use our primacy in world affairs for humanity's benefit. Given that our experiences in this century will inform our leadership in the next century, we should prove to be an even abler champion for mankind'.¹⁰⁶ McCain was beaten by Bush in the Republican primaries, having had a turbulent relationship with the dominant evangelical faction in the Republican Party, the influential Christian Right, that regarded Bush as their ideal Republican presidential candidate.

McCain had launched an attack on the Christian Right, singling out Pat Robertson (founder of the evangelical *Christian Coalition*) and Jerry Falwell (founder of the evangelical *Moral Majority*) as nothing less than 'union bosses who have subordinated the interests of working families to their own ambitions' and argued that they engaged in trying to smear his reputation in regard to his opposition to abortion. Bush, in defense of the Christian Right, tritely argued 'This is a political game that Senator McCain is trying to play by pitting one group of people against another'. While Bush saw himself as 'a problem-solver', he thought that the episode had highlighted that McCain was something of a 'finger-pointer'.¹⁰⁷ The neoconservative vision for American foreign policy had been impeded by the Christian Right that had supported Bush and he, in turn, had not forgotten to express his allegiance to them during the election campaign. Once more Bush was engaged in catering to the evangelical strand in America's political rather than trying to do justice to the role of the American president.

¹⁰⁶ See Kansas State University Website:

<https://www.k-state.edu/media/newsreleases/landonlect/mccaintext399.html>

¹⁰⁷ See New York Times, February 29, 2000

<http://www.nytimes.com/2000/02/29/us/2000-campaign-arizona-senator-mccain-denounces-political-tactics-christian-right.html>

Bush marched to the conservative nationalist drumbeat. In a debate in 2000 with democratic presidential candidate Al Gore (who concurred) he pointed out that: ‘If we’re an arrogant nation, they’ll resent us; if we’re a humble nation, but strong, they respect us. And our nation stands alone right now in the world in terms of power, and that’s why we’ve got to be humble, and yet project strength in a way that promotes freedom’ (Bolton 2008: 141-42). The scope of America’s foreign policy was to be limited, with humanitarian intervention and nation-building ventures to be best avoided to pursue a more cautious foreign policy.

At the same time, Bush did not hesitate to point out that the American military was there primarily to win wars, exhibiting a strong sense of national pride in America’s military superiority.¹⁰⁸ To that end, Bush also pledged to establish a technologically more sophisticated system of deterrence known as the national missile defense system¹⁰⁹ as integral for maintaining and, moreover, engaging in foreign policy from a position of strength – Clinton had apparently failed to do so.

Bush sought to find the middle ground between the posture that rejected American leadership and a too internationalist posture to shape international order that was conducive to American interests and values (Hurst 2006: 42-47). The Bush administration rejected the ‘Clintonian premise that geoeconomics were now more important than geopolitics’, preferring to focus on the ‘management of threats to national security’ based on assumption of realism which had

¹⁰⁸ There was evidently still some scope for the use of the nation’s military might in American foreign policy whether to deter rivals, project American power or merely in order to help create peace and stability, emphasising the need to maintain America’s military pre-eminence in the world through increased military spending that would help harness the potential of ‘revolution in military affairs’ (Hurst 2005: 84). Republicans have frequently not shied away from advocating high expenditure for military research and development (Cronberg 2005: 47).

¹⁰⁹ This included creating new weapons technology that would guarantee America’s dominant position in regard to the militarization of space (Dunne 2003: 309).

more in common with the Reagan administration than the Clinton administration (Dunn 2003: 283; Wolf 2011: 197). The focus of American foreign policy was to be primarily on great power relations (Hermann & Reese 2004: 191). This became clearer when he opted to ignore certain international regimes and multilateral mechanisms in an attempt sustain strategic flexibility and reassert America's national sovereignty over international issues.¹¹⁰

America's position of power in the international system was unrivalled at the turn of the millennium, and continued to be so even after the events of 9/11 that brought to the fore the complex interplay between the political and religious realms in the international system. 9/11 had also exposed some of America's vulnerabilities. As presidential candidate Bush left no doubt, echoing the evangelical strand of America's political culture that overlapped with the ethos of the Republican Party, that his politics and rhetoric would be infused with a religiously-derived morality. By expressing his religiosity during the first presidential campaign Bush was not merely appealing to the evangelical strand in America's political culture, but also tried to justice to the role of the American presidency by underlining to the American public that he was a man who believed in God and, thus, had the moral credentials to be American president. Bush's childhood socialisation was less significant than his conversion experience during his adult life which made him appreciate the power of religion at a deeply personal level. Bush's religious experiences and journey of redemption resonated with America's religiously-infused political culture. In foreign policy terms Bush was a national conservative who felt that America's relationship with the world would be

¹¹⁰ The Bush administration argued that the Kyoto Protocol was 'dead' and withdrew America's signature from the treaty in support of the International Criminal Court, undermined protocols of the 1972 Biological and Chemicals Weapons Convention and withdrew from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (Busby & Monten 2012: 105).

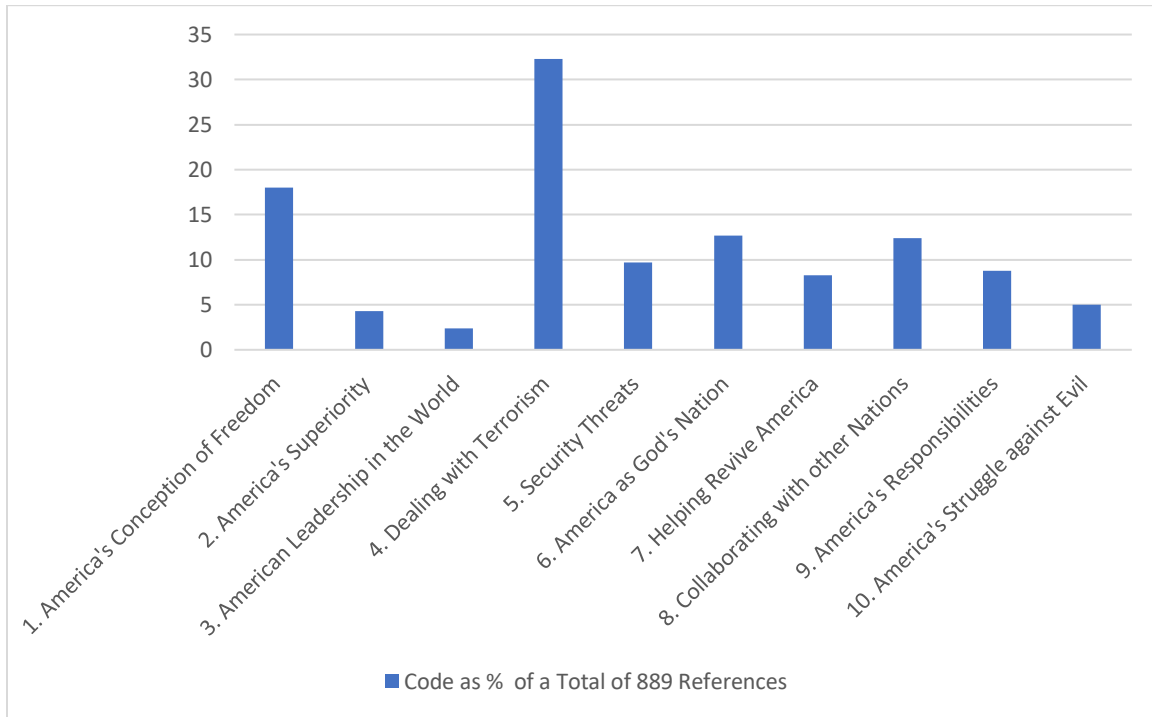
determined by great power relations, with humanitarian intervention and nation-building ventures to be avoided as he envisaged a foreign policy defined by the narrow parameters of national interest rather than internationalism. To Bush, injecting the United States at home with a powerful moral narrative was a far greater priority than the nation's foreign policy.

7.3 American Civil Religion in the Age of Terror

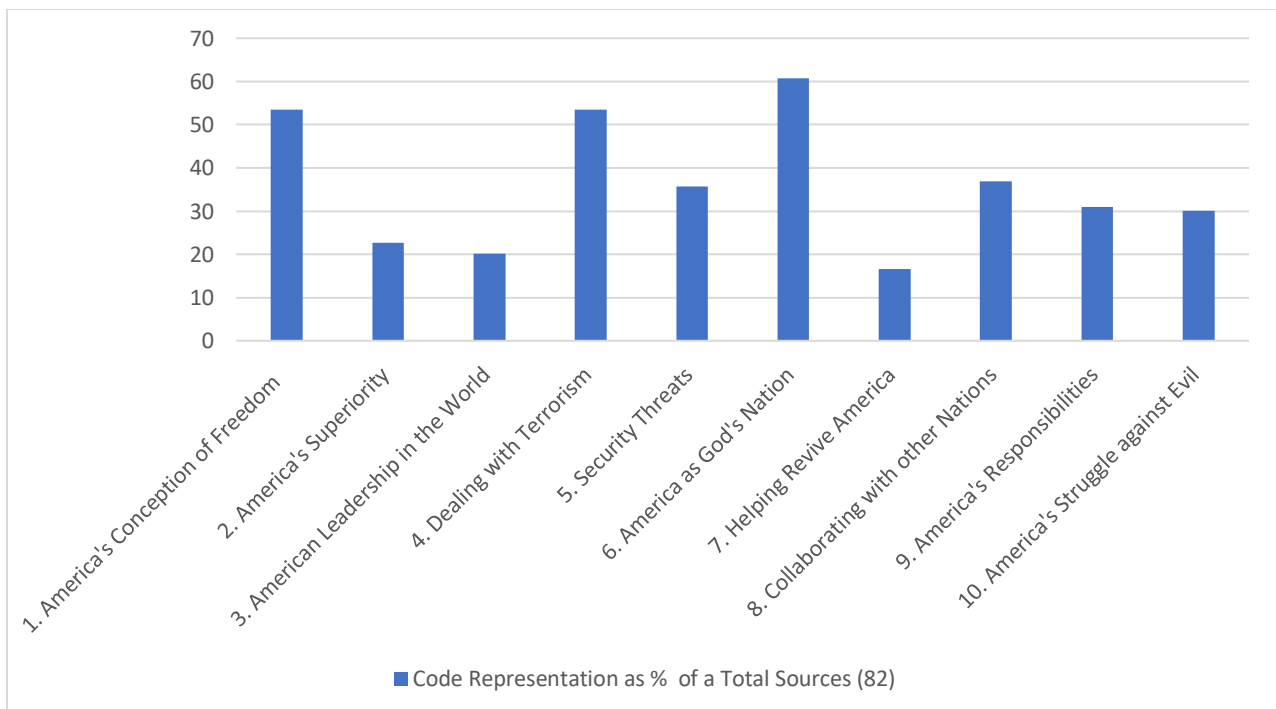
In America's consciousness, 9/11 became a great tragedy that would be 'replayed on television over and over again [...] becoming copied into the national brain' (Chernus 2006: 137). It was a deeply traumatic event for the United States that created an atmosphere of fear, anxiety and looming threat. 78 % of the respondents asked between 20 and 23 September 2001 by CBS/New York Times Monthly Poll feared another attack in the coming months and another one third of the respondents expressed some form of personal fear (Wolf 2011: 200). Bush exhibited the very qualities Americans were looking for during the crisis, becoming the unexpected symbol of national unity (Dimock 2004: 65; Gregg II 2004: 88). Bush's presidential speeches were crucial in terms of expressing America's civil religion following one of the most dramatic events in American history. By framing the post-9/11 context and what America's response ought to be to the threat of terrorism in terms of the nation's civil religion, he helped create the moral narrative for explaining America's anti-terrorism strategy as part of a foreign policy shift from a conservative nationalist posture to hegemonic internationalism.

To explore the importance of Bush's civil religious rhetoric for America's foreign policy, a total of 82 speeches delivered during Bush's tenure were selected. This sample included speeches such as state of unions that were delivered on a yearly basis or annual United Nations General Assembly addresses, but also farewell addresses which were delivered at the end of the presidential tenure, Independence Day and Martin Luther King Jr. which were intermittently delivered as well as speeches to the American military which were given throughout the presidency. I used the same coding procedure involving the use of code containers in NVIVO software as I used for the Clinton case study (discussed in section 5.3). My analysis revealed 10 codes consisting of 889 references (Graph 5) and the percentage coverage of each code in relation to a total of 82 sources (Graph 6). These interlinked codes reinforce and at times contradict each other as they help constitute the complex moral narrative of America's civil religion conveyed through Bush's rhetoric.

Graph 15 Bush's Presidential Rhetoric, 2001-2008



Graph 16 Bush's Presidential Rhetoric, 2001-2008



7.3.1 American Civil Religion in the Age of Terror

Bush sought to articulate America's civil religion in the context of tackling the threat of terrorism. Code 4 *Dealing with Terrorism* underlines the Bush administration's preoccupation with finding an appropriate solution to tackling terrorism after 9/11, 28.9 % of the 889 references come under this code and it cover 53.3 % of the total sources (82 speeches). While the former highlights the *intensity* of preoccupation with the issue of dealing with terrorism, the latter underscores the *persistency* of the issue in Bush's rhetoric and the fact that the American president was convinced during both presidential terms that the process of dealing with the terrorism 'will be long' (17 April 2002; 30 August 2006). The need to tackle the threat of terrorism must also be placed in the context of the moral significance 9/11 acquired for the United States from the onset, partly because of Bush's rhetoric.

On the day of the attack Bush pointed out to traumatised Americans that they 'will be comforted by a power greater than any of us, spoken through the ages in Psalm 23: Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil for You are with me' (September 12, 2001). Bush had placed the experience of 9/11 into a Biblical context, assuring Americans that God would look after America (Murphy 2003: 661; see also Bacevich & Prodromou 2004). Bush was not speaking as a priest or religious figure but as the American president whose religious pronouncements, given the context, were not meant to testify to God but echoed American civil religion. Bush served the 'priestly' function of American civil religion, with Bush's religious words having successfully provided comfort and consolation to a larger American audience rather than a specific religious group following the attacks of

9/11. Tony Carnes lauded in *Christianity Today*, Bush ‘led the nation with a spiritual presence that radiates solidarity with people of all faiths’.¹¹¹ His approval ratings increased from between 50 % and 60 % in July and August to between 85 % and 90 % in mid-September 2001 (Huddy & Feldman 2011: 455; see also McCormick 2012: 159). Bush managed, using religiously-infused language, to shine during what were dark times for the nation. Polls revealed that 71% of respondents felt depressed by the attacks, 53 % stated that they had difficulty concentrating and another 42 % asserted that they suffered from insomnia following the attacks (Huddy, Khatib & Capelos 2002: 423). A year later, Americans continued to feel highly uncomfortable about the threat of terrorism, 50% adults surveyed by CBS News feeling anxious or possibly under danger from terrorism, with 62 % of respondents asserting that they still thought about 9/11 (Phillips 2006: 204). The significance of the events of 9/11 on America’s national consciousness was undeniable, further elevating the importance of the function Bush’s civil religious rhetoric that served to unite Americans in the wake of the national tragedy.

Following the attacks of 9/11, there was sense of ‘apocalyptic revelation’ about the imagery and meaning of the events that had just taken place (Bousquets 2006: 739). With images of large amounts of smoke emanating from the burned down World Trade Twin Towers circulating over the internet, there were those who saw the events as the advent of a ‘Christian apocalypse’ and the proximity of the end of time (Gunn 2004:1). According to a poll conducted by Time Magazine, 59% of respondents affirmed that a passage from the Book of

¹¹¹ Carnes, Tony, ‘Bush’s Defining Moment’, November 12, 2001, see at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2001/november12/1.38.html>

Revelations predicted 9/11 (Gibbs 2002).¹¹² Of course, Bush's Biblical reference referred to above, 'I walk through the valley of the shadow of death', may also have reinforced the apocalyptic undertones of the nation's political culture following 9/11. Right-wing evangelist firebrand, Jerry Falwell, was adamant that 9/11 was God's wrath for America having departed from the path of moral righteousness and embraced a culture of sinfulness, blaming 'pagans and the abortionists and the feminists and the gays and the lesbians who are actively trying to make that an alternative lifestyle, the ACLU [American Civil Liberties Union]...who have tried to secularize America'.¹¹³ His speech was reminiscent of a fiery jeremiad delivered by Puritan preachers to admonish members of their community for not maintaining higher moral standards. Bush distanced himself from the remarks of the man of the Christian Right who had frequently provided political support to him and whose words after 9/11 suggested that Americans were to blame for the attacks.¹¹⁴ Falwell, seeing himself as the champion of the righteous cause of Christian America, was implying the need for a crusade against the forces at home in the context of what he regarded to be the nation's ongoing culture war. In contrast to the extreme views expressed in Falwell's statement, alluding to enemies within, Bush was trying to underline through his on civil religion rhetoric underlined the importance of national unity in the wake of the enemy from without after 9/11. Bush's priority was reassuring Americans to help create national unity.

¹¹² Gibbs, Nancy, July 1, 2002 'Apocalypse Now, The Biggest Book of the Summer is about the end Of the World. It's also a sign of our Troubled Times', see at <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1002759,00.html>

¹¹³ *Abc News* September 14, 2001, see at <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/story?id=121322&page=1>

¹¹⁴ *The Guardian* September 19, 2001, see at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2001/sep/19/september11.usa9>

7.3.2 Reassuring Americans through Civil Religion

According to Bush's civil religion rhetoric, America as God's nation, represented in Code 6 *America as God's Nation* that covered 60 % of sources and had the highest percentage coverage of sources, had been violently attacked. Contrary to Falwell's statement, America was God's nation even before the attacks, with Bush recognising during his inauguration that Americans 'are guided by a power larger than ourselves' (January 20, 2001). The implication was that America, as a nation, had a sacred covenant with God. The American public after 9/11 concurred. In a survey, respondents were asked whether they agreed with the following statement 'Some religious leaders have said that the terrorist attacks on the United States signal that God is no longer protecting the United States as much as in the past'.

Americans, according to the survey, overwhelmingly disagreed with the statement. A breakdown for those in the category 'completely disagree' with the statement revealed the following results: evangelicals (63%), non-evangelicals (76%), Catholics (81%), Secular (75%) and Non-Whites (75%).¹¹⁵ There are several interesting aspects to the survey: 1. non-evangelicals and secularists had very similar results, underscoring that the notion of America as a nation that enjoyed God's protection appealed to people of faith as well as those of no faith; 2. Evangelicals had the lowest result, possibly seeing the attacks as signifying God's withdrawal of protection to the United States whereas non-evangelicals and Catholics had non-evangelicals had much higher results; 3. The diversity of people who ascribed to the belief that America enjoyed God's protection. The results, notwithstanding the variations,

¹¹⁵ Pew Forum, 'Post-9/11 Attitudes: Religion more Prominent, Muslim Americans more Accepted' see <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/legacy-pdf/144.pdf>, p.2

underline a broader consensus in the United States about the idea that America enjoys God's protection. Its strong appeal among secularists suggests this is not a religious idea *per se* but a civil religious one that is grounded in America's political culture which can also appeal to religious elements in American society.

Civil religion has borrowed religious elements and made them part of its own narrative. For example, America as God's nation echoed the Protestant belief that God acts through agents on earth, with Americans being His chosen people who were being tested, according to Bush immediately following 9/11, 'in this trial' against terrorism (September 14, 2001). Bush continued to remark, 'the world has seen that our fellow Americans are generous and kind, resourceful and brave'. America's struggle against terrorism would reveal the goodness of Americans and the moral righteousness of the nation. 9/11 was an opportunity for the United States to rise to the occasion and do justice to the superiority of its own character echoed in Code 2 *America's Superiority* that included references to Americans as 'greatest', 'best', 'bravest', 'finest', 'hardest working' etc. This echoed John Winthrop's famous sermon four centuries earlier: 'We shall be as city upon hill – for the eyes of all people are upon us'. The implication of 9/11, according to Bush's rhetoric, was undoubtedly the 'a city upon a hill' and Americans were once again cast as actors to play an important role in history as it had done over centuries and had to prove to the world once more their worth as a nation. In the hour of America's great tragedy, Bush recognised, 'in grief, and anger we have found our mission, our moment' (September 20, 2001).

On another level, Bush's religious beliefs and remarks such as 'God wants me to run for president' in 1999 merely fuelled speculation about the president's role after 9/11. One

commentator, a journalist, seriously considered the notion whether Bush, in typical Protestant fashion, saw himself as an instrument of divine Providence following the attacks of 9/11 (Didion 2003).¹¹⁶ Bush's evangelical supporters concurred. Janet Parshall, a Christian broadcaster, asserted 'I think that God picked the right man at the right time for the right purpose' (Quoted in Williams 2010: 255). Another commentator, a self-professed evangelical, inquired whether Bush was an '[a]pocalyptic president' and, then, went on to debunk this notion as highly unlikely as result of the complexity of influences on Bush's ideological worldview, while not questioning the sincerity of Bush's personal beliefs (Jacobs 2004).¹¹⁷ In an interview with Bob Woodward during which Bush was moved close to tears by the events of 9/11, he pointed out: '[I have got] a job to do, and I intend to it. And this is a terrible moment. But this country will not relent until we have saved ourselves and others from the terrible tragedy that came upon America' (2002: 47 & 48).

There is little denying that the American president and the nation's mission became intricately intertwined during a moment of historical tragedy. Bush was deeply committed to protecting American lives, with his political language infused with religiously-derived notions of morality. Whether he regarded himself as a full-fledged instrument of God as president is highly debatable, but some of his language (both prior to his presidency and after 9/11) does suggest that to some *extent* he did, while having great respect for the sanctity of the office of the president which he regarded as unequivocally political rather than religious. What is

¹¹⁶ 'Mr. Bush & the Divine', New York Review of Books from November 6, 2003.

¹¹⁷ 'Apocalyptic president? How the left's fear of a right-wing Christian conspiracy gets George W. Bush -- and today's evangelical Christians -- all wrong'. See Boston Globe at http://archive.boston.com/news/politics/president/bush/articles/2004/04/04/apocalyptic_president/

undeniable is that Bush was strongly convinced that America was God's nation, as firmly confirmed by Code 6, and was part of God's plan. The reference from Code 6 from the State of the Union address 2003, underscores America's special relationship with God: 'We do not know—we do not claim to know all the ways of Providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all of life and all of history. May He guide us now. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.' While similar assertions had frequently been uttered by American presidents before, one religious publication, *Christian Century*, voiced its concerns, 'What is alarming is that Bush seems to have no reservations about the notion that God and the good are squarely on the American side' (Quoted in Wallis 2005: 141). The publication may have confused Bush's own religious conviction with an established idea from American civil religion that Bush articulated in his rhetoric as he sought to fulfil the function as the high priest of American civil religion. Yet, Bush, due to his religious beliefs, may have upheld this civil religious idea with greater conviction.

7.4 American Civil Religion & American Foreign Policy

One aspect of Bush's civil religious rhetoric that stood out was his strong focus on evil in regard to dealing with the threat of terrorism. Code 10 *America's Struggle Against Evil*, despite only representing in 5% of the 889 total references, appeared in 31.7 % of the 82 speeches analysed underscoring its relatively strong presence across the speeches in Bush's rhetoric on civil religion. This code, because of the power and potency of assumptions about evil carried by Bush's moral narrative in regard to America's foreign policy, deserves closer attention. In addition to the notion of America as God's nation, his rhetoric on evil is

particularly significant insofar that Americans confirmed in various polls that they believe in the devil, the incarnation of evil, as an idea and powerful symbol in America's political culture.

While, in the 1990s, fewer than 60% of Americans affirmed that they believed in the devil, three surveys conducted since 2001 highlighted that that number had increased to 70%, with Gallup Poll warning that the increase might either be because of a change in religious beliefs, or possibly due to the method of polling.¹¹⁸ By any measure, a relatively significant number of Americans believe in the devil. The reason why Americans might believe in the devil are complex and can be attributed to a combination of psychological comfort involving the human desire to see events in life as not senseless or random, but rather as a result of a higher power that can cause suffering and, moreover, existential angst where amidst the ambiguities of life which people find dangerous, they prefer a narrative that involves God and the Devil and, thus, helps simplify the complexities of the world in which they exist (Zuckerman 2013).¹¹⁹

Bush's articulation of America's struggle against evil in this code can be broken down into three mutually intertwined themes that provided a powerful explanation for dealing with the threat of terrorism: the repulsive nature of evil, the strength of character in the face of evil and the need to tackle evil. The repulsive of nature of evil includes references to 'victims of

¹¹⁸ Gallup Poll News, 'Americans More Likely to Believe in God Than the Devil, Heaven More Than Hell', June 13, 2007, see <http://news.gallup.com/poll/27877/americans-more-likely-believe-god-than-devil-heaven-more-thanhell.aspx>

¹¹⁹ In addition, Zuckerman includes socialisation, with individuals raised by their parents to believe in the devil, and group membership, with people are who are members of religious groups or cultural settings more likely embrace the idea of the devil. See at: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-secular-life/201509/the-devil-seriously>

September 11th were innocent [and who] murdered them were instruments of evil' (October 17, 2001), 9/11 was the act of 'evil and deluded men' (June 1, 2002), 'evil men obsessed with ambition and unburdened by conscience' (November 19, 2005), 'murderers and beheaders [...] are the face of evil' (August 27, 2007) etc. His language helped to create a distinction between 'us', Americans as the 'civilized people' of the world who were innocent, and the 'uncivilised' and 'barbaric' individuals who had acted during 9/11. Bush also left no doubt that during 9/11 the United States had become the victim of evil, describing it as a powerful and profoundly devious force that takes over individuals and leads them to engage in terrorist activities that are violent and murderous, being bereft of any sense of morality. He also points out that 'murderers and beheaders' are the personification of evil, suggesting that they are the quasi-representation of the devil ('face of evil') who, through their acts during 9/11, wreaked havoc not just on the United States, but also humanity. Bush highlights the historical importance of the 9/11 era, with 'face of evil' having been seen before 'in overseas death camps and gulags' (July 4, 2004).

Bush emphasised, that despite the evil that had been brought upon the United States by the attacks of 9/11 'it was as if our entire country looked into a mirror and saw our better selves' (January 29, 2002) and it resulted in 'incredible goodness' (February 16, 2002), with the nation vowing to 'never surrender to evil' (January 31, 2006). Bush placed the struggle against evil into a providential context: 'history has an author who fills time and eternity with His purpose. We know that evil is real, but good will prevail against it' (November 10, 2001). America exhibited a mixture of composure, calm and superior morality and values that were

worthy of a great nation in the face of the tragic events of 9/11. America would be guided by Providence as the struggle against evil in the world represented the Godly cause.

Bush was convinced that America would have to tackle evil that prevailed in the 9/11 era by fighting, opposing, confronting and overcoming it. While his descriptions of evil, terrorism and terrorists had been used in an interchangeable way in his descriptions, he further emphasised the link between them by pointing out that the United States was engaged in a ‘new war against terror and against evil’ (October 17, 2001). Evil and terrorism were synonymous with each other – by tackling terrorism one would also be tackling evil in the world. Given the nature of the struggle and the character of the enemy, Bush was adamant that in ‘this current conflict [its] either us versus them, and evil versus good. And there is no in-between. There’s no hedging. And if you want to join the war against evil, do some good’ (February 16, 2002). By speaking in moral absolutes regarding good versus evil, Bush sought to achieve moral clarity as well as rigidity about the threat of terrorism and what it meant for the United States. His black and white language helped underline the urgency of the situation and the subsequent need to act with decisiveness, force and full commitment to deal with what was regarded as the evil of the 9/11 era. This was Bush’s understanding of ‘do some good’, which involved eradicating and expunging evil in the world to protect God’s nation in the age of terror.

Bush gave the task of tackling evil emotive meaning by equating it with a ‘crusade’ during an impromptu question and answer interview (September 16, 2001). Although he would never use the expression again because of the negative historical connotations involving Christian crusaders engaged in military expeditions to conquer the Holy Land, he had given the need to

fight evil a quasi-religious importance. While Bush might not have appreciated the historical connotations of the word 'crusade', it echoed his own personal religious beliefs about cleansing evil and achieving redemption in life. However, Bush would also not use the expression again because it suggested a conflict between Christianity and the Muslim world in the international system as the basis for formulating American foreign policy. Moreover, it implied an exclusionary interpretation of American civil religion that would marginalise American Muslims whom Bush was trying to reassure following 9/11. This instance highlights that Bush, while prepared to use civil religious rhetoric, did not consider dealing with terrorism as a religious matter but ultimately one pertaining to America's foreign policy. The religious dimension of American foreign policy under Bush was much weaker than has been assumed, underlining that the importance of religion had been subtle and nuanced rather than direct and causal, with Bush prepared to use civil religious rhetoric to unite Americans and explain America's foreign policy to them. At the personal level, Bush might have temporarily thought that America was engaged in a 'crusade', but he did not use the expression again as he sought to do justice of the civil religious expectations that come with the American presidency. This incident highlighted that the role of the American presidency, and conforming to the expectations of the broader strands of America's political culture, were far more important than some of own religious beliefs.

However, some evangelicals saw things differently, regarding religion as the motivation for America's foreign policy based on the global war on terror. They considered 'crusade' to be a fitting description as they embraced the notion of an inevitability of conflict between Christianity and Islam, with the latter seen as a source of terrorism and a religion that was

dangerous. Jerry Vines, a Baptist Pastor and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, referred to the Prophet Mohammed as ‘demon-possessed’ while Pat Robertson regarded Islam as a religion that sought to dominate and ‘if need be, destroys’ others.¹²⁰ Franklin Graham, the evangelical pastor who delivered the opening prayer for Bush’s 2001 inauguration, went on to refute the president’s claim that Islam was a ‘peaceful’ religion by asserting that it was ‘wicked’ and ‘evil’. Graham’s assertion underlined the emerging Islamophobic tendencies after 9/11 and the nation’s fixation with evil. Such assertions underline that there were elements in American society that saw Islam as the possible enemy after the attacks of 9/11 and evangelicals were not entirely convinced of Bush’s attempt to create a civil religious rhetoric that was inclusive toward American Muslims and, at the same time, morally justified the need to deal with the threat of terrorism in the world without also alienating the Muslim world. Evangelicals like Vines, Robertson and Graham were fully convinced that America was engaged in nothing less than a religious war following the attacks of 9/11, a notion that Bush tried to refute by retracting his ‘crusade’ remark. They were not satisfied that Bush limited himself to civil religious rhetoric which they believed did limited justice to the nation’s religious self-understanding, instead seeing America as a Christian nation that was involved in a crusade against Islamic fundamentalism. Their understanding of America as a Christian nation was exclusive and exclusionary towards large number of Americans who were not Christians. Bush, by not referring to expression ‘crusade’, tried to

¹²⁰ Sachs, Susan, ‘Baptist Pastor Attacks Islam, Inciting Cries of Intolerance’, June 15, 2002, see at <http://www.nytimes.com/2002/06/15/us/baptist-pastor-attacks-islam-inciting-cries-of-intolerance.html>

justice to the civil religious dimension of America's self-understanding which was much broader and more inclusive.

With Code 10 having intricately linked evil and terrorism and, thus, underlined the moral urgency of the situation and the need for swift action to fight against evil, Code 4 further emphasises the 'war on terror' as the central strategy for dealing with terrorism, with references to 'war on terror' being included in 40% of the sources from code 4. The United States found itself thrust into this 'war [it] did not choose' (July 1, 2003). Bush's rhetoric implied that it was legitimate for the United States to resort to the use of force to defend itself and its citizens against terrorism, being left with no other choice. He left no doubt about the paramount importance of engaging the war on terror: 'We are in a war that will set the course for this new century and determine the destiny of millions across the world' (October 14, 2006). Bush emphasised the importance of the war on terror as a strategy of necessity rather than of America's choosing that echoed America's self-professed innocence as God's nation, while also leaving little room for alternative strategies. Posen, writing several months after the attacks of 9/11, suggested that from a strategic point of view, in the 'war on terror' 'diplomacy' ought to 'loom larger than military operations' and 'defensive activities' ought to 'loom larger than offensive and punitive ones' (2001: 42).

Framing 9/11 as a murderous 'criminal act' would have produced specific strategic implications for American foreign policy in the aftermath (Jacksons 2005). It would have implied 'police action against a crime' rather than America's use of military power (Brown 2004: 52). Such strategies, more nuanced in terms of dealing with the threat of terrorism, would not have reflected the condition the United States, according to much of Bush's rhetoric

that centred on the notion that ‘America is at war’ (July 1, 2003). Bush’s presidential rhetoric echoed the moral narrative of American civil religion which stipulated that it was God’s nation fighting the evils of terrorism, the incarnations of the devil in the world through the use of force. Bush’s rhetoric, with its dichotomous explanations about evil that echoed the narrative of America’s Puritan ancestors, created potent and contrasting explanations about the challenges facing the United States that rendered a highly complex subject matter more understandable to Americans.

7.4.1 The Moral Narrative of the Use of Force and Freedom

There was a moral imperative to deal with the evils of terrorism through the use of force if God’s nation was to triumph and good was to prevail, with Code 5 *Security Threats*, which covered 35.7 % of total sources, alluding to the dangers of terrorism to the United States and to the general dangers of terrorism in the world. 60 % of sources from the code referred to the threat of terrorism to the United States, with Bush asserting with unwavering certainty, ‘the enemy wants to hit [the United States] again’ (February 16, 2002) or at some point may ‘strike [it] again’ (July 4, 2007). Such potent language of imminent threat and danger was emblematic of the fact that, during his tenure, he saw himself as a ‘wartime president’ (August 22, 2007) and Bush also used it to create a moral narrative that was linked to the extraordinary measures at home to protect the United States from the evils of terrorism.

For Bush, keeping America safe meant setting-up a vast domestic homeland security infrastructure.¹²¹ Americans were ambivalent, to say the least, about gaining security at the expense of civil liberties. In a poll conducted in January 2002, 47 % of respondents agreed with the idea that in the war on terror ‘take all steps, even if liberties violated’, with 49 % preferring the idea ‘take steps but not violate liberties’. In June 2002, 40 % of respondents agreed with the former statement whereas 56 % favoured the latter.¹²² The polls underline that support for the war on terror was contingent and evolving, with Bush having to underline the meaning and importance of the war on terror through his civil religious rhetoric, accordingly. Having established the threat of terrorism to the United States in the national consciousness in Code 4, Bush further went on to emphasise the dangers of terrorism in the world in Code 5. The implication was that the United States simply could not ignore the threat of terrorism in the world because the United States was also at risk. With Bush adamant that there would be ‘no safety for any nation in the world’ (March 18, 2004), which effectively also meant that anything that the United States perceived as a threat in the world, other states would perceive as a threat as well, he went on to underline the broader threat stemming from Al Qaida and other terrorist organisations acquiring biological, chemical and nuclear weapons. Moreover, he specified and, thereby, extenuated the very kind of threat the United States and the world faced by singling out Iraq as a place associated with the threat of terrorism in 29.8% of the

¹²¹ This involved the creation of the Transportation Security Administration to enhance security at airports, the creation of the Department of Homeland Security in November 2002 to help coordinate the efforts of over forty federal agencies and the USA Patriot Act of October 2001 which, for example, permitted searches and large-scale surveillance by the executive branch. Patriot Act permitted law enforcement agencies to wiretap potential suspects, monitor foreign students and allowed the FBI to obtain information on peoples’ library and bookstore records if they were under suspicion of a terrorist activity. This act would be renewed with little dissent in the American Congress in 2006. In addition, the Electronic Surveillance Act allowed the FBI to obtain customer records from telephone and internet companies (Lind & Tamas 2007: 40-41).

¹²² Gallup Poll on ‘Civil Liberties’ see at <http://news.gallup.com/poll/5263/civil-liberties.aspx>

references and 50% of the sources from that code, respectively. The emphasis on Iraq in Bush's rhetoric represented the concretisation of the abstract concept of the war on terror and America's struggle against evil. Bush insisted that 'Saddam Hussein [the Iraqi leader] aids and protects terrorists, including members of Al Qaida' (February 13, 2003) long after the invasion when he referred to Iraq as 'a country that [had provided] support for terror' (December 9, 2008) to underline the use of force pre-emptively as part of the ongoing war on terror. He was adamant after the invasion 'we must take threats seriously before they fully materialize' (August 31, 2004). The need to act immediately and decisively echoed the Protestant belief in 'action in the present' rather than avoid it and accept pre-destination (Domke 2004: 84). Bush's pre-emption strategy in the war on terror was steeped in the belief that 9/11 was an act of inherent evil against God's nation, with the immorality of terrorism pitched against the morality of the United States. There was no real middle ground to be found in what was a deadly conflict between good and evil. Amidst Bush's language that emphasised the security threats associated with terrorism, there were only two options: either the United States attacked or would be attacked.

Code 3 *American Leadership in the World* underscores that American leadership in the world was far less important than the priorities emphasised in Code 4 *Dealing with Terrorism*, with the former code covering 2.4 % of total references and 20.2 % of sources as opposed to 32.3 % and 53.3 % for the latter. When American leadership was mentioned in Code 3, it referred, for example, to America's fight against terrorism: 'The United States is committed to defeating terrorism around the world... We lead in this cause' (March 18, 2004). The United States would lead with 'confidence and moral clarity' (August 16, 2004), underlining a

distinct sense of moral righteousness in providing leadership. One possible assumption of American foreign policy was: Who would oppose the cause of God's nation? With terrorists recast as 'God's enemies' in the war on terror it would be ungodly to do so (Lincoln 2002: 31). Either the rest of the world would rally behind the United States in the noble struggle against terrorism or was simply not needed in view of America's military preponderance.

Code 1 *Championing Freedom in the World* represented the second highest percentage of references at 18 %, coming second to Code 4 *Dealing with Terrorism* which had 53.3 % of references. It covered 53.5 % of the sources, whereas Code 4 was marginally lower with 53.4 %. This underscores the strong salience of both dealing with terrorism and championing freedom in Bush's rhetoric. In code 1, the combined emphasis on championing freedom and America's military might represented the re-articulation of the *Nation Security Strategy* (2002), known as the Bush Doctrine, to underline to the American public about the nation's pursuit of hegemonic internationalism in the post-9/11 era. Code 1 placed emphasis on America helping establish democracy in the world, covering 16 % of total references and 21 % total sources. Bush emphasised that the aim of the United States was to 'seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions' and the United States 'will not impose [its] style of government on the unwilling' (January 20, 2004), portraying the United States as liberators who 'freed women and children' in Afghanistan (February 16, 2002) and sought that nations – along with Iraq – become 'peaceful and democratic societies' (August 16, 2004). These references were intended to suggest the benevolence of America as God's nation in championing freedom in the world.

This contrasted with a sense of pride in the importance of America's military in championing freedom in the world, which made 26 % of references from code 1 and covered 21 % of total sources. The need to achieve the goal of spreading freedom in the world would require America's military might. Bush pointed out that '[f]ree nations are in debt to the long, distinguished line of American veterans' (November 11, 2002) who were 'serving in the cause of freedom and peace around the world [and] are our Nation's finest citizens' (November 11, 2006). The importance of the military in championing the cause of freedom in the world is accentuated by the fact that Bush draws on the significance of soldiers in American nationhood, referring to them as the 'finest citizens'.

Another implication is that the benevolence of the American military in carrying out the noble cause of championing freedom was not in doubt as it was being undertaken by individuals of superior character, individuals who were the embodiment of America as the 'a city upon a hill'. The moral clarity with which Bush presented his case for using America's military for championing freedom was matched by a strong sense of moral righteousness and missionary zeal: 'We will persistently clarify the choice before every ruler and every nation: The moral choice between oppression, which is always wrong, and freedom, which is eternally right' (January 20, 2004). Bush's morally righteous language exposes his rather vain attempt to present the world with a real choice about the issue of freedom. The world was expected to embrace America's understanding of freedom that was 'eternally right'. There was no neutral ground, with no opportunity to express dissent, which underpins the very idea of freedom. What is interesting is that Code 8 *Collaborating with Other Nations* representing 8.1 % of total references and source coverage of 36.9 %, highlights a fair amount of importance being

ascribed to the issue. Bush's rhetoric about freedom suggests that the United States was prepared to collaborate with other nations insofar as they were prepared to ideologically align themselves with Washington. The German daily newspaper *Tageszeitung* voiced some of the forebodings about Bush's approach and came up with the pithy headline: 'Bush Threatens: Even more Freedom'.¹²³

Moreover, the expression 'eternally right' echoed the conviction that 'freedom is the Almighty God's gift to each man and woman in this world' (August 31, 2004). Freedom represented the godly cause that was being championed in the world by a people that saw themselves as God's nation and, hence, also saw themselves as sitting at the top of the hierarchy of the international system. This assumption, combined with America's military might, generated a strong impulse to impose freedom through force. In the post-9/11 context freedom, according to various references in Code 4, was seen as an antidote to terrorism, that was explained as requiring the use of force: 'We have an historic opportunity to win the war on terror by spreading freedom and peace. Our commitments are being kept by the men and women of our military' (August 16, 2004).

Bush assumed the American presidency at a time when the United States was unrivalled in the international system and his administration's priorities were domestic issues rather than foreign policy. This changed with 9/11 that led Bush to underline, by drawing on the nation's civil religion, a commensurate strategy to deal with the threat of terrorism that was linked with a dramatic shift in American foreign policy from a conservative nationalist posture to hegemonic internationalism. In the wake of the tragic events of 9/11 that created anxiety, fear

¹²³ Quoted in Lieven (2004), with the original headline stating 'Bush Droht: Noch mehr Freiheit'.

and uncertainty – with America’s political culture presenting it as a potential apocalypse – he assured them with the notion that guided the United States throughout its history: America as God’s nation. His rhetoric, because it was infused with religious notions and certain Biblical references, raised the issue (by supporters as well as detractors) of whether he saw himself as an instrument of God to carry out America’s mission in the world after 9/11. Bush recognised the political nature of the role of the American presidency, seeking to protect the United States after 9/11 and using religiously-infused rhetoric to help frame American foreign policy in a moralistic fashion that was emblematic of America’s civil religion. Bush recognised that the role of the American president was far more important than his own religious convictions.

Framing terrorism as a form of evil – something that resonated powerfully in America’s political culture because it conjures association with the devil as a cultural and symbolic figure Americans seemed to believe in – helped Bush underscored the case for resorting to ‘war’ as a viable strategy to deal with the threat of terrorism after 9/11. The crux of his rhetoric was that the war on terror would help eradicate evil and protect God’s nation against the threat of terrorism. This assumption was further underpinned by the notion of America as the champion of freedom, promoting an idea that Americans consider to be ‘God’s gift’ to humanity.

The implication was that nobody in the world could deny the moral virtues and righteousness of freedom because it was derived from God. Nor could one object to the use of force to what was represented as the noble cause of championing freedom in the world, particularly if it was implemented by the ‘finest citizens’ of God’s nation. Bush’s rhetoric fused the nation’s morality and military might to explain the nation’s shift toward America’s hegemonic

internationalism after 9/11. In fact, Bush's dichotomous language underlined that the need for the world to embrace America's godly cause of freedom in the 9/11 era.

What if Bush hadn't used civil religious rhetoric to explain America's foreign policy? This would not have changed the fundamental dynamics of American foreign policy given that attacks of 9/11 shook American society in the most profound manner. Without civil religion, the need to respond to the attacks of 9/11 and resort to a more assertive American foreign policy to defend America would still have prevailed. The global war on terror was the outgrowth of societal vulnerability and the foreign policy imperative to deal with the threat of terrorism in the wake of America's material preponderance in the international system. America's global war on terror was motivated by security imperatives and a perceived sense of imminent threat. Bush's civil religious rhetoric did help reinforce America's self-understanding as a people with a sacred covenant with God at a time of national tragedy. It served to unify a devastated nation. The civil religious rhetoric concerning the incarnations of the devil proved to be potent in terms of explaining America's foreign policy to Americans by simplifying a highly complex subject matter.

Would Al Gore, Bush's democratic rival during the presidential campaign in 2000, have avoided civil religious rhetoric if he had been successfully elected president? Al Gore was Southern Democrat and whose upbringing in Tennessee (one of the more religious states in the United States) led to his exposure to religion. During the presidential campaign in 2000 Gore did not hesitate to underline that he was a man who believed in God and that he had

been born-again in his early 20s.¹²⁴ Gore was prepared to conform to the civil religious expectations of the American presidency. In contrast to Bush, Gore's flip-flopping on abortion provoked the ire of evangelicals who would have regarded him as lacking the religious-cum-moral credentials to be American president.

7.5 Fighting the War on Terror – Intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq

The meaning and significance of the war on terror gained for Bush's civil religious rhetoric are explored in the context of America's intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq in this section. Using additional sets of Bush's presidential speeches, I explore America's military intervention in Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), respectively. So, at a time when domestic support for stronger American involvement in the world was at its highest level since the end of the Second World War (Kull 2001) and given the large degree of international sympathy immediately that led the French daily newspaper to declare on its front page on 12 September 2001 'We are All Americans Now' but would eventually fade as American credibility declined (Goldsmith & Horiuchi 2009: 866), how exactly did Bush, through his rhetoric, express America's sense of mission in the world during each intervention, respectively? First, by presenting the fight against terrorism as part of the struggle against evil, and underpinning it with the idea that this was a legitimate war that had strong humanitarian manifestations, Bush helped to create a powerful moral narrative regarding America's intervention in

¹²⁴ Henneberger, Melinda, 'THE 2000 CAMPAIGN: SPIRITUAL SEEKER; Gore Has Explored a Range of Beliefs From Old Time to New A', October 22, 2000, <https://www.nytimes.com/2000/10/22/us/2000-campaign-spiritual-seeker-gore-has-explored-range-beliefs-old-time-new-age.html>

Afghanistan. Second, with Bush's rhetoric emphasising Saddam Hussein as an evil and immoral dictator who could not be trusted, the case for intervention was made on the basis that Saddam's support for terrorism and possible possession of WMDs rendered him extremely dangerous to the United States and the world.

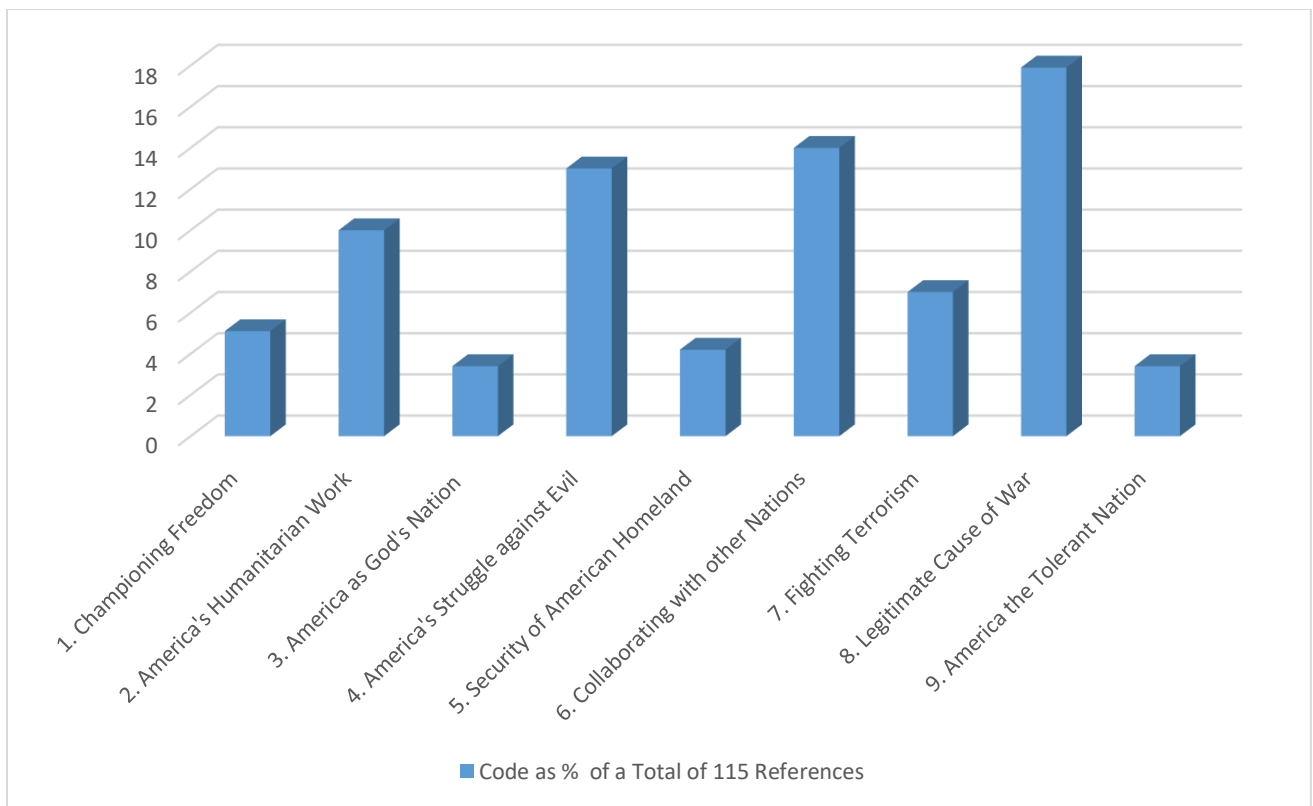
7.5.1 US Intervention in Afghanistan

Following 9/11, the United States identified the Al-Qaida network and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan that had hosted the network as responsible for the attacks. While Clinton had opted for cruise missile attacks in Sudan and Afghanistan following the terrorist attacks on American embassies in East Africa in 1998, Bush opted for a full-fledged military operation in Afghanistan that included the use of ground troops in what became America's first military intervention as part of the war on terror. This was a time when 80% of Americans supported the use of force in Afghanistan (Gershkoff & Kushner 2005: 530), representing an incredibly high-level of support for an intervention. While such strong support for an intervention may be traced back to the attacks of 9/11, Bush was still required to explain the intervention to the American public at the start of the nation's 'war on terror'.

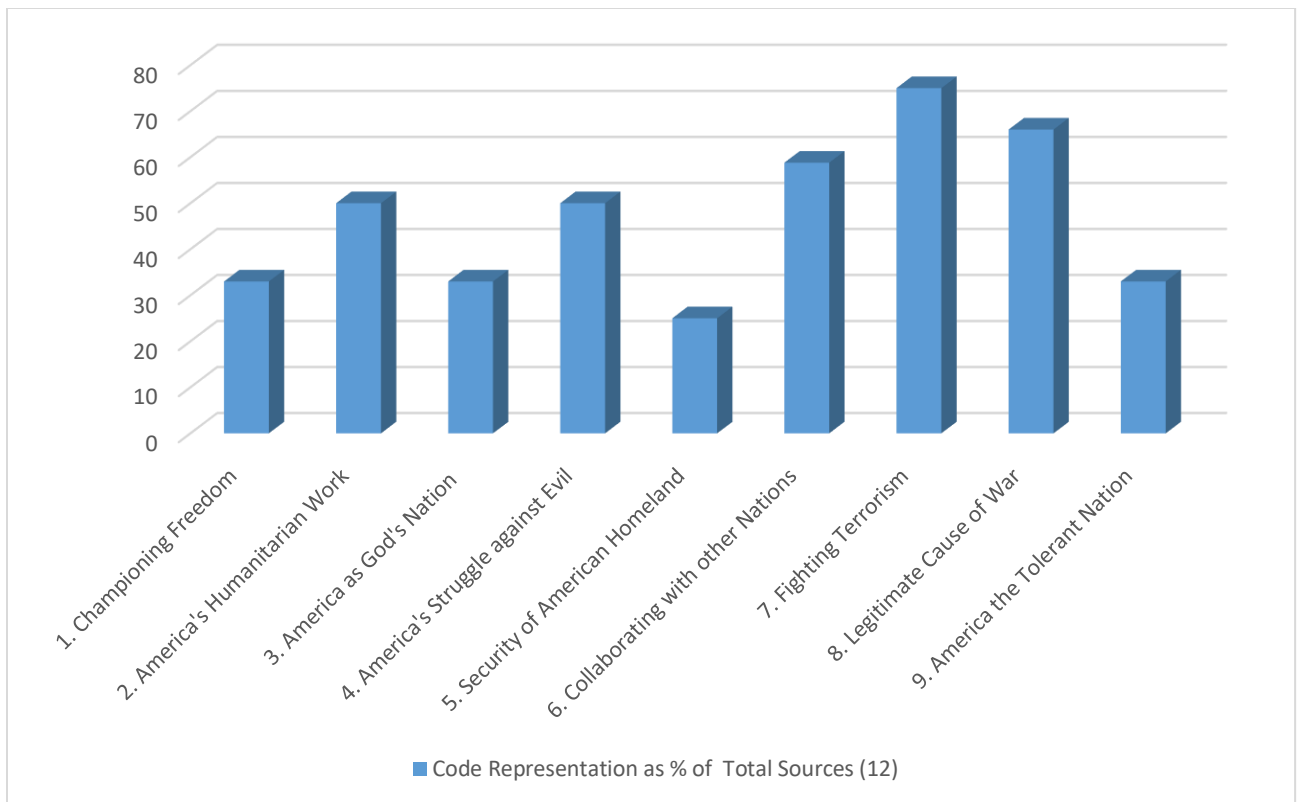
My examination of Bush's speeches relating to Afghanistan (25 September – 16 October, 2001) revealed 9 codes and a total of 115 references (Graphs 7 & 8). Code 7 *Fighting Terrorism* had 7% of total references and covered 75 % of sources. In addition to the non-military means (law enforcement and financial monitoring), the code emphasised targeted and decisive military action in 'strikes against Al Qaida terrorist training camps and military

installations’ (October 7). Bush underlined the moral significance of the strikes for the international system: ‘United States is presenting a clear choice to every nation: Stand with the civilized world, or stand with the terrorists’ (October 6). Hence, any nation that considered itself to be part of the ‘civilised world’ would support America’s calling to fight against terrorism in Afghanistan through military action.

Graph 17 Bush's Speeches in regard to Afghanistan, 25 Sept 2001 - 16 Oct 2001



Graph 18 Bush's Speeches in regard to Afghanistan, 25 Sept 2001 - 16 Oct 2001



The low percentage of references of 3.4 % from Code 3 *America as God's nation*, should be seen in the light of the build-up to the intervention as Bush was speaking to an American audience as well as an international one. Instead, the emphasis was on opposite incarnations of the godly – manifestations of evil which the United States sought to overcome. This allowed Bush to explain to an international audience the need for support for the intervention in Afghanistan while ensuring that the American audience understood evil as a manifestation that lacked the morality of God's nation. In Code 4 *America's Struggle against Evil* Bush made several references to 'evildoers'. He insisted that the United States was 'engaged in a noble cause [against] evildoers' (October 4) who had killed innocent individuals during the attacks of 9/11. The implication was that as terrorists violated the values of the civilised world the United States represented, they could be annihilated by America's military. Bush referred to America's 'campaign to drive out the terrorists out of their hidden caves' (October 11). The suggestion here was that terrorists represented an enemy that was cowardly and inhuman, quasi-animalistic, permitting the United States to eradicate it in what was the nation's struggle against evil.

He went on to assert: '[America] will fight evil, but in order to overcome evil, the great goodness of America must come forth and shine forth. And one way to do so is to help the poor souls in Afghanistan' (October 4). One interpretation of the religiously suggestive language Bush used could be that the United States saw itself as the salvation of 'the poor souls in Afghanistan', saving the Afghan people from the clutches of the evils of terrorism. Such an interpretation would suggest the intervention in Afghanistan represented a self-affirmation of America as God's nation, possibly motivated by it after 9/11, with the United

States seeing itself as the saviour of the Afghan people. Amidst such religiously-charged language, Bush underscored that in this fight against evil America was, according to Code 9, a nation tolerant of other religions. In order not to be seen as religious invaders, Bush pointed out that the United States was ‘friends of almost a billion people worldwide who practice the Islamic faith’ (October 7).

In addition, Bush went on to emphasise America’s humanity and benevolence during the intervention in Code 2 *America’s Humanitarian Work*, which had a value of 10 % of the total references and, thus, ranked fourth. Bush emphasised that America was a nation that had ‘compassion for the Afghan people’ (October 13) and ‘fewer children in Afghanistan [likely to] suffer this winter’ because of the humanitarian efforts of the United States. These references implied that America was a benevolent and noble super power that acted in a responsible manner in the world. Yet, even Bush could not deny that America’s humanitarian acts, which included committing \$302 million for humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan, were deeply intertwined with the use of force, highlighting a symbiotic relationship between America’s morality and military might in the world. Bush opined: ‘As we strike military targets, we’ll also drop food, medicine, and supplies to the starving and suffering men and women and children of Afghanistan’ (October 7).

Bush’s assured the rest of the world that there was nothing to fear as the United States was engaged in a legitimate war as per Code 8. With 17.9 % of total references this code had the highest percentage of references in the speech set, underscoring the emphasis placed Bush placed on framing the intervention in Afghanistan as legitimate. The code emphasised that the United States was acting in self-defense in Afghanistan following the unprovoked attacks

of 9/11 that killed civilians from almost 80 nations. Against the backdrop of NATO evoking its collective defense article 5, Bush pointed out that ‘an attack on [the United States] is really an attack on legitimate government and on freedom’ (October 10). With the United States ‘offering help and friendship to the Afghan people’ (October 6) and prepared to fight ‘until justice is delivered’ (October 11), Bush left no doubt that the intervention in Afghanistan was morally explained as well as legitimate. Bush further went on to reinforce the legitimate nature of the intervention and the broad support the intervention enjoyed in Code 6 *Collaboration with Other Nations*, which covered 14 % of total references, the second highest percentage of references. Code 6 included references to ‘NATO nations are acting together [...] against terror’ (October 10) or ‘nations from every continent on the Earth have offered help’ (October 11).

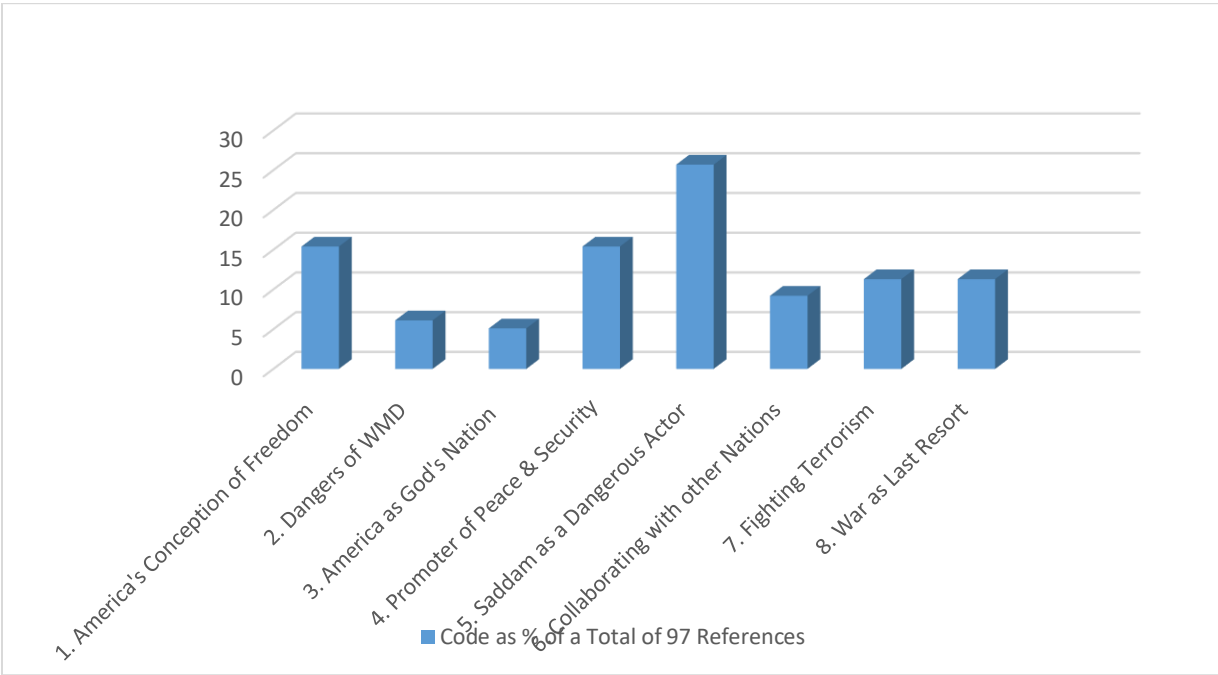
Such assertions about collaboration contrasted with aspects of Code 7 *Fighting Terrorism* that emphasised the civilisational stakes in the fight against terrorism, with Bush adamant that civilised nations would, therefore, support America’s military venture in Afghanistan. Code 4 *America’s Struggle against Evil* further reinforces this point. The strong emphasis on the moral underpinning of the intervention in Bush’s language, suggests that the United States ascribed such profound moral significance to the intervention that it would have been equally content undertaking the intervention in Afghanistan on its own. Hence, Bush’s strong moralistic language helped create a foreign policy narrative that lent support to America’s hegemonic internationalism.

7.5.2 US Intervention in Iraq

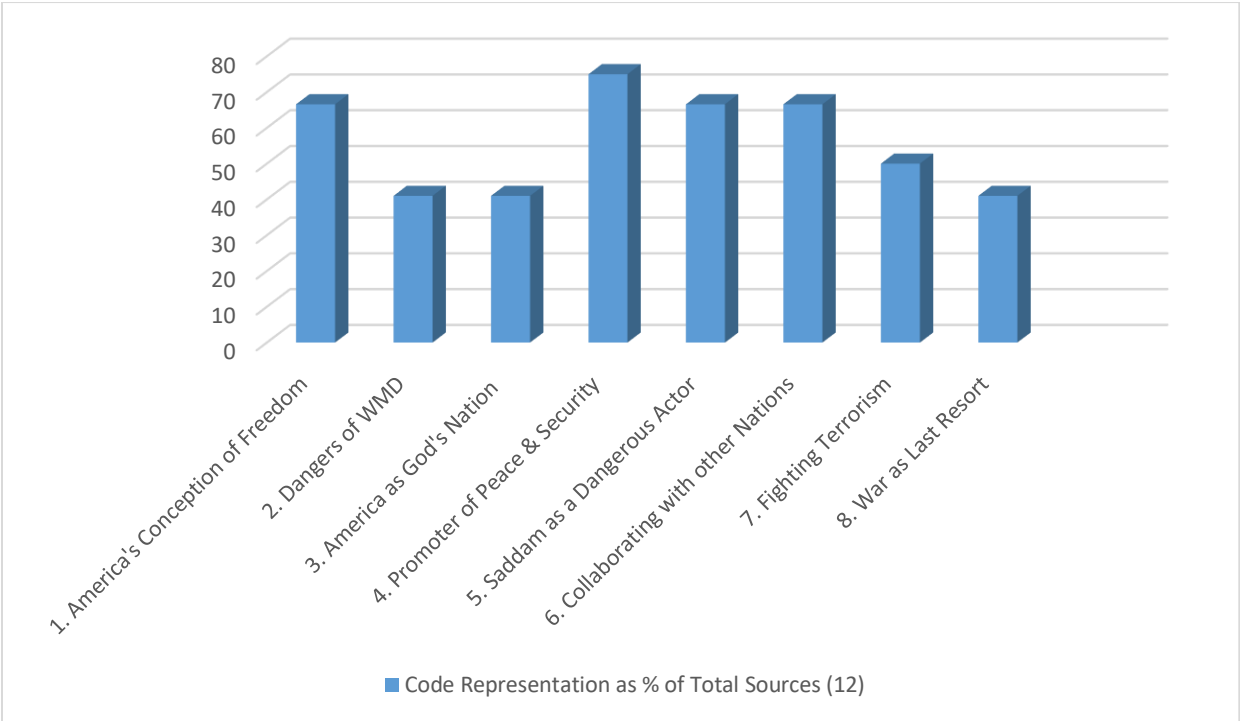
Unlike the intervention in Afghanistan, Bush's decision to intervene in Iraq in March 2003 produced considerable controversy. Realist scholars in the United States voiced their objections (Mearsheimer & Walt 2003; Mearsheimer 2005) and, internationally, important allies such as Germany and France refused to support the intervention, with world-wide protests taking place in opposition to it. Yet, crucially, polls conducted showed that more than 70% of the American public supported the use of force to oust Saddam (Holsti 2011: 30) while the United States Congress voted in favour of an intervention. Bush was convinced of the need to demonstrate America's ability and willingness to act incisively after 9/11 (Haass 2009: 234).¹²⁵ Through his rhetoric, Bush underlined to Americans that an intervention would take place almost one and half years after 9/11 and support was not at the same level as for the intervention in Afghanistan.

¹²⁵ Harvey (2012) questions, through historical counterfactual analysis, whether a presidency of the Democrat Al Gore would have also resulted in an intervention in Iraq while convinced that Gore would have opted for an intervention in Afghanistan.

Graph 19 Bush's Speeches in regard to Iraq, 2 Oct 2002 - 25 March 2003



Graph 20 Bush's Speeches in regard to Iraq, 2 Oct 2002- 25 March 2003



My examination of Bush's speeches relating to Iraq between 2 October 2002 and 25 March 2003 revealed 8 codes and a total of 97 references (Graphs 9 & 10). Code 5 *Saddam as a Dangerous Actor* was most prevalent in terms of the number of references with a value of 25.7 %. It also second highest in terms of coverage across sources with a value of 66.6 %. Hence, this code was integral to Bush's rhetoric on intervention. Bush's speeches focused on Saddam instead of the Iraqi government as the representative of a sovereign state in the international system, with 'Saddam' mentioned 22 times, 'dictator' 22 times and 'regime' 9 times whereas 'government' of Iraq was not mentioned once. Creating an enemy image based around a clearly identifiable individual such as Saddam, Bush reduced the complexities of the situation in Iraq to easily comprehensible plotlines that often centered on him.

Bush pointed out, using graphic description to underline the brutality and vileness of the Iraqi leader, that because of Saddam's instructions 'opponents have been decapitated and their heads displayed outside their homes' (October 2) and Iraq has become 'a prison, a poison factory, and a torture chamber for patriots' (February 6). In the final lead-up to the intervention, Bush pointed out that Saddam has used 'innocent men, women, and children as shields' (March 19). The acts of the Iraqi leader echoed the fact he was a 'student of Stalin' (October 2), 'murderous tyrant', 'homicidal dictator' (October 7), 'deadly foe' (March 17) etc. The implication of these references was that Saddam was a brutal and ruthless individual. Bush's emotive language, far stronger than during the Afghanistan intervention, left no doubt about the immorality of Saddam and his regime, implying that if one possessed any humanity one would be unequivocally opposed to Saddam's barbarity and to him as a ruler in Iraq. While, in this code, Bush made no references to 'evil', yet his descriptions underlined the fact

that he regarded Saddam as a manifestation of evil, possibly an incarnation of the devil, who stood in contradiction to the values of humanity which the United States embodied. The question Bush helped raise through his rhetoric was: how long could America, being God's nation (code 3), tolerate Saddam's immoral regime in Iraq?

36 % of the references from code 5 highlight the link between Saddam and terrorism, with Bush adamant that 'Saddam Hussein has longstanding, direct, and continuing ties to terrorist networks' (February 6). By alluding to Saddam's tenuous links with terrorism Bush had helped frame the intervention as part of America's response to the attacks of 9/11, with the president adamant that the 'terrorist threat to America and the world will be diminished the moment that Saddam Hussein is disarmed' (March 17). As Gershkoff & Kushner (2005: 525) have pertinently highlighted, while Bush never openly blamed Saddam for the attacks of 9/11, the link between Saddam and terrorism, at times specifically Al Qaeda, created the parameters within which linkages and associations could be conjured among the American public. According to polls conducted in the wake of the Iraq intervention in 2003, 9 in 10 Americans were inclined to think that Saddam supported international terrorism, with this being one of the reasons for supporting a military intervention in Iraq.¹²⁶ Whether this was as a direct result of Bush's rhetoric is open to speculation, but one should not exclude the possibility that his rhetoric may have contributed to how Saddam was perceived. Given that Bush's approval ratings at the time were generally favourable, one should consider the possibility that the president's rhetoric could have influenced the Americans' views about Iraq.¹²⁷ Anyhow,

¹²⁶ Newport, Frank, Moore, David W., Jones, Jeffrey, 'Special Release: American Opinion on the War', March 21, 2003, see at <http://news.gallup.com/poll/8068/special-release-american-opinion-war.aspx>

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

Bush's language unequivocally underlined that America's intervention in Iraq was part of the nation's ongoing war on terror.

In an age defined by the dangers of WMD, as per Code 2, and where 'Iraq could have produced enough biological and chemical agent to kill millions of people' (October 2), the United States had to act pre-emptively to help create peace in the international system as outlined by the references in Code 4 *Promoter of Peace & Security* and, thus, help make the 'world more peaceful' (October 2). In fact, set against the backdrop of Code 5, references within which underscored that Saddam's personality made him untrustworthy and Code 2, references within which underscored the risk WMDs posed to the international system, Code 4's references underscored the need for the United States to intervene to secure the 'peace of a troubled world' (March 19). To secure the peace, that had been dangerously undermined by Saddam, the United States had to resort to the use of force. According to the references in Code 8, which alludes to the various measures that had been undertaken by the international community to deal with Saddam Hussein, Bush insisted that 'every measure had been taken to avoid war' (17 March). Bush's rhetoric suggests the United States had done everything to deal with Iraq in a fair and reasonable manner, reiterating its own innocence and using language (in marked contrast to the one used to describe Saddam) that is calm and measured to reinforce that the United States is a rational actor seeking peace rather than war. War subsequently was seen as necessary to fight evil and ultimately maintain peace and protect the world from Saddam.

Bush's rhetoric during the intervention in Afghanistan and Iraq echoed his presidency's broader emphasis on America's struggle against evil in the context of the nation's war on

terror. While his speeches during both interventions made few and scattered references to America as God's nation, the strong emphasis on evil suggested a strong sense of moralism that was emblematic of this notion. In addition to the strategic logic for these interventions, there was a strong desire for self-validation as God's nation by dealing with the threat of evil during both interventions.

Regarding the intervention in Afghanistan, Bush's description of evil was vague, with the American president frequently referring to terrorists as 'evildoers'. His speeches presented terrorists as the embodiment of evil that rendered them inherently immoral and beyond the realm of the civilised world, allowing Bush to create a strong moral case for the use of force against terrorists in Afghanistan as part of the nation's struggle against evil. In addition, Bush's rhetoric emphasised that the United States was a benevolent and compassionate nation which was seeking to provide humanitarian assistance to the Afghan people in the wake of the invasion.

In terms of the intervention in Iraq, Bush was much more specific in his language about evil. He cast Saddam Hussein as a manifestation of evil whose brutal behaviour and excessive violence against his own people rendered him morally repulsive and unpredictable. While Bush left no doubt that Saddam was the source of terrorism in the world, implying his involvement in the attacks of 9/11 although never explicitly mentioning it, yet, it was the prospect of him possessing WMDs that required the United States to intervene in Iraq.

7.6 Conclusion

This chapter sought to explore how Bush's civil religious rhetoric was used in the context of a shift in American foreign policy from a nationalist conservative outlook that objected to the idea of the United States exhibiting a strong sense of mission in the world to hegemonic internationalism after the events of 9/11. The analysis revealed that Bush emphasised America as God's nation as a means of reassuring Americans in the wake of tragedy in a manner that had overt religious undertones. The notion of America as God's nation was juxtaposed against evil, in the form of the terrorist threat, the United States faced after 9/11. Aside from affirming America's moral superiority as God's nation, linking terrorism and evil enabled Bush to underline the moral urgency of the war on terror. Hence, Bush's presidential rhetoric, which drew on the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion, helped strengthen his case for a foreign policy that centred on the global war on terror. Bush's civil religious rhetoric was not the cause of his foreign policy but helped explain and provide support for the foreign policy decisions that had been already taken.

A popular perception was that Bush's own religiosity, and not least because of assertions such as 'God wants me to run for president' from his election campaign in 1999, was linked to his foreign policy that was grounded in the global war on terror. Christian broadcasters such as Janet Marshall was convinced, in the wake of the attacks of 9/11, 'God had picked the right man' to guide America through the difficult times of the post-9/11 era. Yet, even some self-professed evangelicals, had doubts whether Bush an 'apocalyptic president' and the extent to which religion was the driver of his foreign policy, appreciating the complexity of his ideological worldview. While Bush exhibited a strong level of personal religiosity, he fully

accepted the fact that the role of the American presidency was a political office rather a religious one. So, when he overstepped the line by referring to America being involved in a 'crusade', he quickly retracted that remark and never repeated it. Bush underlined, notwithstanding his civil religious rhetoric to explain America's foreign policy to Americans, through this very incidence that he did not consider the global war on terror as a religious war. He elicited the ire of evangelicals such as Vines, Robertson and Graham who were convinced that following the attacks of 9/11 America was a Christian nation that was engaged in a religious war. Ultimately, dealing with the global war on terror was a foreign policy issue rather than a religious one, even if Bush used civil religious rhetoric to explain his foreign policy to the American public. Bush opted for a religiously-infused national self-understanding that was much broader than the notion of a Christian nation proposed by evangelicals.

CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSION

The literature on American foreign policy has revealed an increased recognition of the importance of religion in America's foreign policy, yet, it has not been possible to clearly establish *how* religion has been important in foreign policy. While it has been generally accepted that religion has a special place in the public realm in the United States and has been important in domestic politics (especially regarding social issues), *how* religion has mattered in American foreign policy remains hotly debated, especially after the events of 9/11. Some scholars highlighted the negative consequences of religion in American foreign policy, whereas others have pointed out that religion either does not matter or matters a great deal. Amidst such a range of views that obscure more than they clarify, the issue of religion in American foreign policy requires further probing from a different angle for greater clarity.

To offer new insights on this debate this thesis adopted a political culture perspective, examining America's religiously-infused self-understanding as a people and its significance for presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy. It explored the origins of America's religiously-infused self-understanding in political culture that is derived from America's Puritan ancestors. I have shown that Puritan ideas have been central to America's self-perception as a people, being embedded in America's political culture, and that they have influenced American foreign policy.

This concluding chapter is divided into the following parts: first, it reviews the central argument of thesis that focused on the prevailing importance of Puritan ideas in America's political culture; second, it explores the findings of this thesis which underline *how* Puritan ideas have been important under different presidencies; third, it highlights the theoretical

implications of thesis to further underline *how* Puritan ideas have been important; fourth, combining insights from the previous sections, it highlights the value added of this thesis to the American foreign policy literature; finally, it seeks to highlight the importance of Puritan ideas during the Obama presidency, considering his tenure to be a relevant area of future research on American civil religion and American foreign policy that could be fruitfully explored using the analytical framework I developed in this thesis.

8.1 Review of the thesis' argument

This thesis made the following argument. While Puritans have long ceased, the ideas of the early Puritan settlers have been compelling and versatile enough to be perpetually affirmed within America's political culture. It demonstrated how these Puritan ideas emerged and were echoed in America's political culture in different contexts over time. It provides insights into the historical background within which Puritan ideas emerged and probes their importance during six presidential administrations (four historical presidencies and two contemporary ones) that unfolded against the backdrop of America's different positions of power in the international system and domestic configurations.

8.1.1 Historical Backdrop to the Emergence of Puritan Ideas

As I have argued, following their arrival in America in the 1630s, Puritan pilgrims viewed their survival in the wilderness as nothing less than the affirmation of their covenant with

God, convinced that Providence had had a hand in guiding them through the harsh and unforgiving environment of New England. They believed that they had become God's favoured and chosen people. Puritans were further convinced that they had created a morally superior order grounded in Biblical principles, seeing America as 'a city upon a hill' that shone forth in a morally bankrupt world. Such affirmations of morality went hand in hand with the conviction that the values and order they had established was perpetually threatened by incarnations of the Devil that had to be exorcised.

These Puritan ideas became a recurring theme in America's political culture over time as the Puritans gradually faded into history. During the Great Awakening in the 1740s, preachers including Johnathan Edwards ensured that Puritan ideas reverberated throughout colonial America. By using religious language that echoed Puritan tropes of the sacred covenant with God, 'city upon a hill' or the need to fight incarnations of the Devil in the wake of the revivalist fervour to challenge the morality and virtuousness of ecclesiastical institutions, Edwards ensured that Puritan ideas reverberated in the political culture of colonial America. Edwards admonished his followers about the dangers of immorality and sin, just the way Puritan preachers who arrived with the first settlers had warned members of the Puritan community about committing acts that would anger God. Almost hundred years after the first Puritan settlers had arrived in America and John Winthrop gave his iconic 'city upon a hill' statement about the Puritan order, Puritan ideas resonated within America's political culture.

Crucially, the American Revolution echoed these Puritan ideas louder than ever as the political and the religious realm submerged in America's political culture to give rise to American civil religion. The struggle against King George was regarded as a struggle that

amounted to fighting incarnations of the Devil, rendering the cause of freedom as a Godly cause to preserve the sacred covenant with God. American revolutionaries sought to comprehend the success of the revolution as an act of providence, with a benevolent God having had a hand in guiding them to independence that was reminiscent of the survival of the Puritans in the wilderness. The revolution became an affirmation of the sacred covenant with God, with Americans being nothing less than God's chosen people.

8.1.2 Probing Historical and Contemporary Presidencies

This thesis demonstrated the importance of American civil religion, with its Puritan antecedents, in presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy. It explored the rhetoric of four historical presidencies – George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Harry Truman – that covered the founding era, great power era and cold war era in order to provide insights on American civil religion in presidential rhetoric over time.

First, Washington's civil religion rhetoric emphasised how Providence continued to guide the United States, with the accent placed on keeping out of the European balance of power system on strategic grounds but explained it in terms of civil religion. The suggestion was that a balance of power system was not suitable for a nation with a sacred covenant with God. The tone of Washington's civil religious rhetoric suggested a gratefulness to Providence that had allowed the United States to become an independent state during the American Revolution and the need to rely on Providence because of America's weak and vulnerable position in the international system.

Second, Jefferson's religiosity was easily misconstrued by the Federalists as result of his remarks he made in regard to the importance of religious freedom in his book *Notes on the State of Virginia*: 'It does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty gods, or no gods' (Library of Congress Document: 155).¹²⁸ Taken out of context, Federalists accused him of being an atheist and, thus, lacking the moral credentials to be president. While Jefferson was perhaps slightly less religious than George Washington, he, too, affirmed American civil religion in his presidential assertions. He, too, subscribed to the notion that the United States had a sacred covenant with God and, thus, was a nation guided by Providence.

Unlike his predecessor's humbler rhetoric, Jefferson's rhetoric emphasised the superiority of America's values of freedom and, thus, echoed the Puritan idea of a 'city upon a hill' that shone forth in a morally inferior world. Jefferson's rhetoric exhibited greater confidence about America's place in regard to its immediate environment, projecting America's values of freedom and liberty upon its immediate environment. Hence, America was 'a city upon a hill' that shone forth in the world and its values of freedom and liberty were not restricted to the United States, as the Louisiana Purchase and the territorial expansion associated with it underlined. The civilisational and the racial dimension that underpinned the discourse of territorial expansion underlined that the civil religious idea of a 'city upon a hill' had a civilisational and racial element. The implication was that only individuals who were white could be members of a nation that regarded itself as a 'city upon a hill'.

Third, Theodore Roosevelt's presidential rhetoric on civil religion, unlike Washington and Jefferson during the founding era, avoided the Puritan idea of Providence but instead focused

¹²⁸ <https://cdn.loc.gov/service/gdc/lhbcb/04902/04902.pdf>

on preserving the covenant with God that involved emphasising 'muscular Christianity'. The suggestion was that America had greater agency in international affairs as a result of its material power and, therefore, was less reliant on Providence, instead, seeking to do justice to its special relationship with God. Roosevelt's rhetoric, resembling the jeremiad of a Puritan preacher who admonished his fellow Puritans for not abiding to higher moral standards, exhorted Americans that in the great power era Americans as a people ought to seek a life of challenge that was worthy of a great and strong people. Roosevelt's 'muscular Christian' was intertwined with assumptions about racial hierarchy. Echoing the notion that America was a 'city upon a hill' and that its values of freedom and liberty could transform the world (in this sense resembling Jefferson), Roosevelt emphasised that 'inferior races' could be transformed if properly educated in American values, underlining the political and racial superiority of Americans as a people.

Fourth, Truman's presidential rhetoric emphasised the importance of Providence in having guided the United States to a position of power in the international system. One suggestion was that such Godly mandated power in the international system was intertwined with greater responsibility in the international system and the need to provide leadership during the onset of the Cold War. Brought to a great position of power once again, the United States could redeem itself for not having provided leadership in the international system following the First World War. Hence, providing leadership was seen as a means of preserving the covenant with God. With freedom considered a God-given value and, thus, representing the cause of God, the onset of the Cold War was interpreted as a struggle of the godly values of freedom

embodied by the United States and the godlessness of the Soviet Union which rejected freedom.

Fifth, the implication about Clinton's broader rhetoric was that the United States needed to embrace responsibility in the world. Clinton, amidst a combination of neo-isolationist assertions and concerns about America's moral decline, underlined to Americans the importance of an internationalist foreign policy using rhetoric infused with civil religion ideas. Clinton's rhetoric underlined America's economic revival with the need to embrace an internationalist foreign policy that centred on the championing of freedom in the increasingly interdependent world. It emphasised that an internationalist foreign policy would help rejuvenate America's moral fabric and make it 'a city upon a hill' once more. Doubts about whether America was still 'a city upon a hill' at home contrasted with the confidence with which this civil religious idea was projected onto the world by Clinton. Alongside this, Clinton's rhetoric regarding his interventions in Haiti and Kosovo focused on fighting undemocratic incarnations of the devil that had become a source of instability in the international system.

Sixth, the analysis revealed that Bush emphasised America as God's nation as a means of reassuring Americans in the wake of tragedy, underlining the Puritan idea that America was still a nation with a covenant with God. In line with this notion Bush juxtaposed America as God's nation against the evils of terrorism that threatened the United States. Aside from affirming America's moral superiority as God's nation, linking terrorism and evil enabled Bush to underline the moral significance of the war on terror, with the interventions in Afghanistan and Iraq presented as part of America's struggle against evil.

8.2 Key Findings

The key findings of my thesis can be summarised in four points. *First*, Puritan ideas have been articulated in a variety of domestic and international contexts, but they have not been the central drivers of American foreign policy. If the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion did not exist, then, some of the crucial strategic decisions would still have been made during all six presidencies considered here. So, given that Puritan ideas found expression in presidential rhetoric, the question remains: how have the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion been important in American foreign policy? Puritan ideas have been important in American foreign policy in subtle and nuanced ways that made them relevant:

- Washington's presidential rhetoric, which focused on the sacred covenant with God, helped to create unity within the fledgling state;
- Jefferson's civil religious rhetoric gave the territorial expansion greater moral fervour insofar that it reinforced the notion that American settlers were God's chosen people entitled to the land that belonged to the American Indians;
- Roosevelt's presidential rhetoric, with its Puritan antecedents, potently helped reinforce America's self-image as a superior civilization that sought to redeem humanity;
- Truman's American civil religion created potent enemy images of the Soviet Union that added an emotive intensity to his foreign policy explanations;

- Clinton was able to simplify the complexities of American foreign policy to the American public by echoing the narrative structure of revival and rejuvenation of the ‘city upon a hill’ of America’s Puritan ancestors;
- Bush’s civil religious rhetoric helped unify a devastated nation. Bush’s reference to the incarnations of the devil proved to be potent in terms of explaining America’s foreign policy to Americans by simplifying a highly complex subject matter.

Puritan antecedents of American civil religion have been part of America’s self-perception as a people, being part of the larger national narrative American presidents have drawn on explain America’s foreign policy to the American public. While these narratives in themselves did not result in particular foreign policy decisions being made, they did help reinforce them by presenting foreign policy issues as intertwined with America’s religiously-infused national self-understanding as a people. Religiously-derived Puritan ideas, because they were embedded in America’s political culture, are notions Americans are familiar with from the domestic realm and, as a result, foreign policy explanations that are infused with them are much more easily understandable to the American public than, for example, highly technical foreign policy language. It helps stir something in Americans. Hence, the implication of presidential rhetoric is that America’s religiously-derived self-understanding as people was involved and, as a result, Americans ought to support the nation’s foreign policy.

Second, Puritan ideas, being an integral to America’s self-understanding as a people, have been important irrespective of America’s position of power in the international system. American presidential rhetoric, with its Puritan antecedents, unfolded over four different periods that ranged from America’s weak position in the international system during the

founding era, its stronger position during the great power era and its overwhelmingly powerful positions during the Cold War and post-Cold War era. Indeed, while the emphasis on Providence and the need for guidance from a transcendental power during the founding era made lot more sense because the United States was in a weak position in the international system, the other three periods (great power, Cold War and post-Cold eras) explored in this thesis were characterised by America's strong position in the international system. Hence, during these three eras transcendental guidance was not needed, and the United States could have relied on its material power, but American presidents still opted to draw on Puritan ideas in presidential rhetoric. This would suggest Puritan ideas have been important in the way in which the nation has seen itself irrespective of its position of power in the international system.

Third, there has been variation in terms of the religiosity of American presidents. This thesis revealed the following insights about the religiosity of American presidents:

- Both Washington and Jefferson were brought up in Anglican households, being raised in an age that was underpinned by the Great Awakening and during which the original writings of Puritan scholars such as Cotton Mather were widely popular. During their adult life their religious worldview was increasingly underpinned by Enlightenment ideas, although it seems Jefferson exhibited stronger Enlightenment inclinations.
- Roosevelt, brought up in a devout Dutch Reformed congregation household, stands out as a president whose religious socialisation during childhood converged with his religious worldview during his adult life. Roosevelt channelled his religious worldview into his civil religious rhetoric.

- Truman, brought up in a strict Baptist household, shunned his earlier religious socialisation because it was too strongly based on routines. So, as an adult he sought a higher moral purpose from religion which he channelled into his civil religious rhetoric.
- Clinton, growing up at the very heart of America's Bible Belt that encouraged a life of piety, was a Southern Baptist who attended church regularly and had been apparently 'born-again' during his youth. As an adult he continued to appreciate the importance religion had in his life and in that of ordinary American, recognising the significance of civil religious rhetoric.
- To Bush, religion was not significant during his childhood even though he regularly attended church and received religious instruction, being brought up by parents who also attended church and had received religious instruction. It was only during his adult that Bush came to appreciate the potency of religion.

Noteworthy, irrespective of Presidents' religiosity and how it emerged (whether during childhood and/or adult life), Puritan ideas have found expression in presidential speeches. Different levels and degrees of religiosity among American presidents are compatible with Puritan ideas. Puritan ideas transcend the religious diversity of American presidents who have sought to ensure that their presidential rhetoric operated within the parameters of American political culture. American presidents have sought to do justice to the role of the presidency, which comes with the expectation that an American president ought to serve as the high-priest of American Civil Religion. What is interesting is that even presidents who were apparently deemed to be less religious, such as Jefferson or Clinton, have hesitated to give expression to Puritan ideas in their civil religious rhetoric on foreign policy with no less vigour than

American presidents who were religious. Hence, regardless of their personal and religious background, American presidents have operated within the parameters of America's political culture.

This thesis considered what would have happened if different American presidents held this role during a particular moment in time. What if John Adams had been elected president instead of Jefferson, McKinley had survived the assassination attempt and had continued to be American president rather than Theodore Roosevelt, Franklin Delano Roosevelt had continued to live and hold the office of president rather than Truman, George H. W. Bush had been elected president rather than Clinton or Gore had become president rather than Bush Jr.? Even if different individuals had held the role of the American president, then, these individuals would have embraced the civil religious dimension of it. Adams, McKinley, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, George H.W. Bush and Gore all had some degree of religious socialisation growing up and did not hesitate to give expression to American civil religion as politicians, McKinley and Franklin Delano Roosevelt doing so as presidents. The role of the American president unfolds within America's religiously-infused political culture, with only individuals who are religious being regarded worthy to aspire or deemed capable of attaining the American presidency.

Fourth, there has been some variation in terms how Puritan ideas have found expression in presidential speeches. While Washington, Jefferson, Roosevelt, Clinton and Bush used civil religion rhetoric that largely avoided references derived from organised religion in their civil religious rhetoric as presidents, Truman did not hesitate to make references to Christianity in his presidential rhetoric during the onset of the Cold War. Moreover, Bush opted to avoid

explicit references from organised religion in his civil religious rhetoric as he tried to do justice to the role of American president as the high priest of civil religion who was addressing Americans of all religious backgrounds. Bush's strong emphasis on tackling evil in his presidential rhetoric in the context of dealing with the threat of terrorism stands out. By equating the fight against terrorism to fighting evil, he echoed the Puritan idea of fighting incarnations of the Devil. Hence, his rhetoric suggested that terrorists were manifestations of evil, or quasi-incarnations of the Devil, that had to be exorcised. Moreover, Washington, Jefferson and Truman alluded to Providence as part of the covenant with God, whereas Roosevelt, Clinton and Bush emphasised maintaining the covenant with God through a commensurate foreign policy.

8.3 Theoretical Insights & Contributions

Exploring *how* Puritan ideas have been important in American foreign policy long after they ceased raises a plethora of theoretical and methodological questions. How to theoretically and methodologically explore the importance of Puritan ideas? Given the religious dimension of Puritan ideas, where exactly do they operate? Do Puritan ideas have a direct impact on American foreign policy? To help answer these questions, this thesis developed a constructivist-orientated framework that drew on the concepts of political culture and civil religion. Using this framework to explore the importance of Puritan ideas produced the following theoretical and methodological insights:

First, my framework explored how American presidents have used their rhetoric to give expression to the nation's civil religion and its Puritan antecedents as they explained America's foreign policy.

For this purpose, the thesis considered various transmission mechanisms of socialisation and their relevance regarding the rhetoric a president might adopt. Childhood and adult religious socialisation of American president as well as the role of the American presidency were explored against the backdrop of different domestic (which included political, economic and social issues) and international contexts. Religious socialisation during childhood and adult life meant that American presidents had a religious worldview that made them more accepting to articulating religious notions during their respective presidency.

However, once the relevant individuals assumed the presidency, they were prepared to express or echo Puritan ideas in their presidential rhetoric. They have willingly infused America's political culture with religious ideas derived from America's Puritan ancestors. This suggests that the American presidency has been a crucial transmission mechanism of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy over time, being an important source of continuity of Puritan ideas in America's political culture. Future research on religion in political culture in American foreign policy ought to take into consideration American presidents as an important public institution in the United States that has been an important voice of religious ideas in America's political culture.

Second, this thesis' conceptual framework drew on the concept of civil religion, as an aspect of America's political culture to highlight how religious ideas have had relevance in American foreign policy. Civil religion is distinct from organised religions, such as Christianity or

Judaism, and operates essentially within the secular realm. For example, when American presidents make references to God they are not delivering religious sermons but delivering political rhetoric that has been infused with religious ideas and assumptions. In the same vein, American foreign policy operates within the secular realm. Thus, civil religion presents a fruitful way for conceptualising the relevance of religious ideas, such as about God, in what is the secular realm of American foreign policy. Consequently, civil religion as part of an analytical framework, as developed in this thesis, provides a highly relevant avenue for exploring the broader question of how religion and religious assumptions have mattered in American foreign policy. Hence, the literature on religion in American foreign policy ought to consider the use of the concept of civil presented in this thesis as part of their research strategies to explore the importance of religion in American foreign policy.

Given constructivism does not constitute a specific theory and content must be derived from appropriate concepts to explore the importance of shared religious ideas, the concept of civil religion could be a fruitful starting point for exploring shared religious ideas and their importance in foreign policy more generally. This could help constructivism make up for the lack of engagement with shared religious ideas as the constructivist scholarship has overwhelmingly focused on shared secular ideas.

Third, America's civil religious self-understanding as a people is expressed through presidential rhetoric amidst the different factors that determine American foreign policy. Yet, the importance of America's Puritan self-understanding as a people in its foreign policy is subtle rather than direct and explicit, helping reinforce and support certain foreign policy actions. With positivist methodology overemphasising the direct causal impact of Puritan

ideas in American foreign policy and, thus, being over-deterministic, the link between Puritan ideas and American foreign policy was explored through the epistemological and methodological stance best described as ‘constitutive causality’.

This stance, which is based on the premise that values are shared, rather than explaining the importance of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy, helped enhance our *understanding* of it. It provided, using ‘thick descriptions’, insight into the deeper meaning of events in American foreign policy and how American presidents understood them and wanted the American public to understand them in regard to the nation’s self-understanding. These ‘thick description’ helped underline the significance of America’s self-understanding as a people in regard to the prevailing conditions and existing social structures within which certain foreign policy actions unfold.

8.4 Value Added

In addition to the theoretical contributions, this thesis also makes several contributions to the academic literature on American foreign policy, whether scholarship on religion in American foreign policy, American exceptionalism in American foreign policy, American foreign policy traditions and American presidents in American foreign policy. This thesis could also be of relevance to the International Relations literature, whether constructivist literature focusing on the importance of collectively shared ideas or historically-inclined scholarship which has adopted a long-term perspective on international relations. This section elaborates how exactly this thesis contributes to the aforementioned literature.

First of all, in the wake of the increased recognition in the American foreign policy literature on the importance of religion as a factor that has offered more obscurity rather than clarity, this thesis underlined that the importance of religion has been subtle and nuanced. Without the Puritan antecedents of American civil religion various American foreign policy decisions would still have taken place and, thus, is not a central driver of American foreign policy, yet they did help support and reinforce decisions that had been taken. This thesis explored religious ideas as part of America's national narrative, enhancing our understanding of the significance of religion within the complex layers of American foreign policy with its specific contexts.

Second, this thesis underlined – notwithstanding the great ruptures and transformations in American history that saw the United States emerge from a fledgling state following independence to the sole superpower in the international system – the continuity of Puritan ideas in American foreign policy. Rather than events in American foreign policy having clear-cut beginnings and endings that have ushered in change, as frequently underlined by the American foreign policy literature, there is a complexity to these events that has been missed as a result of the focus on the larger ramifications of these events. Thus, insufficient attention has been devoted to the elements of continuity in American foreign policy. By providing a unique perspective that explores Puritan ideas, this thesis offers insight on the issue of continuity on American foreign policy, adding value to the scholarship that has explored continuity and, thus, adopted a long-term view on American foreign policy. This thesis could also be of interest to for IR scholars who are interested in adopting a long-term historical perspective about international relations in general.

Third, American exceptionalism, having religious origins, has been considered central to America's national identity and subsequently American foreign policy. American exceptionalism is intertwined with the notion of 'chooseness', with Americans convinced that they are a truly special people in the world. However, American exceptionalism reveals limitations insofar it does not sufficiently elaborate on the religion dimension of America's national self-understanding. I have argued that this sense of chooseness is derived from America's Puritan ancestors and has religious origins. America's self-understanding as a people being is intricately linked to the Puritan notion of 'God's chosen people' who have been elected to fulfil God's will on earth and has continued to reverberate in American history. Hence, scholars who have explored America's exceptional self-understanding as a people and foreign policy could gain new insights about America's self-understanding as a people by devoting attention greater attention to the Puritans. As Puritan ideas are subtly infused into America's foreign policy, it might be worth to talk about a 'Puritan tradition' in American foreign policy.

8.5 Epilogue – Obama, Civil Religion and Puritan Ideas

For more than two centuries since the founding of United States, religious ideas have underpinned presidential rhetoric on American foreign policy. When Obama became the president of the United States in 2009, he was the first African-American president and media headlines were abuzz that the United States was entering a new era (Williams 2013: 248). Was the United States entering a 'post-racial' era? (Parmar 2011). There was no doubt that the America had come a long way given the nation's difficult race relations whether as a result

of the issue of slavery or segregation that had scared American history, but some of the concerns and anxieties about Obama were deeply familiar, particularly those concerning Obama's piety. Like other presidents, whether Thomas Jefferson (1801-1809) or Bill Clinton (1993-2001) explored in this thesis, during the election campaign there were doubts about whether Obama was religious.

According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life survey conducted during the presidential election campaign in August 2008, 72 % of Americans thought that the American president ought to have strong religious beliefs.¹²⁹ As we have seen throughout this thesis, this result was hardly surprising and fitted well with America's political culture. Historically, a strong tendency in the public opinion has prevailed that American presidents ought to have strong religious beliefs. Therefore, few things had changed in this respect between the Obama presidency or, when almost two-hundred years earlier, the Federalists accused presidential candidate Thomas Jefferson of not believing in God. Hence, Obama was scrutinised through the same political culture American presidents historic or contemporary have been viewed through, as I have consistently underlined in this thesis. The implication of the debate about Obama's religiosity, as it had been with past American presidents, was whether he was fit to serve as the high-priest of American civil religion. Only a president who was deemed sufficiently religious possessed the moral credentials to fulfil that role. There were, of course, also those Americans who thought that Obama had embraced the wrong religion. Almost one in ten Americans during the election campaign believed, according to the Pew Research

¹²⁹ 'Religion & Politics Election 08', see at <http://www.pewforum.org/2008/11/04/religion-and-politics-08-barack-obama>

Center, Obama was a Muslim.¹³⁰ These assumptions about Obama's religiosity were fuelled by Islamophobia in the United States, with some Americans convinced that because Obama was a Muslim he lacked the moral credentials to fulfil the role of high priest of American civil religion (Williams 2013: 248).

There was one particular controversy surrounding Obama's expressions of public faith that underlined the relevance of Puritan ideas in American civil religion. Obama was a member of the Trinity United Church of Christ in Chicago whose pastor, Jeremiah Wright, had declared in his sermon in regard to the treatment of Africa Americans in American society in 2003: 'No, no, no, not God bless America! God damn America'.¹³¹ This put Obama in a negative light and raised questions about his moral credentials to be the high-priest of American civil religion in light of his association with a man who did not bless America but damned it. Jeremiah Wright was essentially committing blasphemy against America civil religion and the Puritan idea that America had a sacred covenant with God, an idea no American president has dared to refute. Obama left the church of the controversial preacher, convinced Jeremiah Wright's view did not gel with his embrace of American civil religion.

Upon assuming the presidency amidst a recession and two ongoing wars (Afghanistan and Iraq, respectively) that created plenty of soul searching for a nation that was convinced it had a special relationship with God, in the first speech he delivered as the president of the United States Obama reaffirmed America's covenant with God that the Puritan's had established:

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ 'Chicagoans: Reports Misrepresent Obama's Church' see at <https://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=88552254>

‘The time has come to reaffirm our enduring spirit; to choose our better history; to carry forward that precious gift, that noble idea, passed on from generation to generation: the God-given promise that all are equal, all are free, and all deserve a chance to pursue their full measure of happiness.’

Amidst the perceived changes and expectations that centred on Barack Obama as the first African American president, like John F. Kennedy who had been America’s first Catholic president and had firmly affirmed America’s sacred covenant with God upon assuming the presidency. In fact, once he was re-elected in 2013 and, thus, served his second and final term in office, Obama’s adherence to American civil religion continued. Combining the Puritan idea of a ‘city upon a hill’ and the nation’s sacred covenant with God in his second inaugural speech, he reminded Americans to ‘carry into an uncertain future that precarious light of freedom. Thank you, God bless you, and may He forever bless these United States of America’.

This suggests that if Hillary Clinton had been elected instead of Barack Obama in 2008 and had become the first female president of the United States, it is likely that she would have embraced American civil religion with its Puritan antecedents. When Barack Obama left office, he was adamant that America would keep evolving and with it the American presidency. In the wake of America’s diversity, Obama envisaged that in future American presidents from a variety of background could emerge:

‘[If] we continue to keep opportunity open to everybody, then, yes, we’re going to have a woman President, we’re going to have a Latino President, and we’ll have a Jewish President, a Hindu President. Who knows who we’re

going to have? I suspect we'll have a whole bunch of mixed-up Presidents at some point that nobody really knows what to call them.'

Although it remains to be seen whether a Jewish, Hindu, Latino or female American president can emerge in the United States, Obama's firm embrace of American civil religion and its Puritan antecedents implies that American presidents who do not fit the lineage of previous American presidents are likely to embrace American civil religion. This underlines the strength of American civil religion with its Puritan antecedent in presidential rhetoric, and reinforces the relevance of the argument put forward in this thesis. While this short overview of Obama's presidency suggests that my argument seems to apply nicely to explain how religious ideas underscore his presidential rhetoric, it would be interesting to apply my theoretical and methodological framework to his presidency and do an in-depth case study on Obama's presidential rhetoric as part of future research.

Obama, who at first sight affirmed continuity of American civil religion in his presidential rhetoric, requires further probing through a framework of analysis established in this thesis in order to examine how he helped internalise American civil religion with its Puritan antecedents into America's political culture in the wake of an economic and financial crisis. It would be interesting to consider the nuances and subtleties of his rhetoric in regard to American civil religion, with possible consideration to be given to the issue of racial identities and assumptions that underpinned some of his rhetoric. A focus on the Obama administration would allow us to further explore this thesis' argument about the continuity of American civil religion in presidential rhetoric allowing us to consider whether America's first African-

American was different from the six different presidents in analysed in this thesis who were white males and had affirmed America's civil religion in their rhetoric.

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