MEDIATING INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS AND ENHANCING DIPLOMACY FROM RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE OF GEOPOLITICS AND SOCIETY

Christian Ozoemena AGBATA[1]

ABSTRACT

Mediation of international conflicts and diplomacy have traditionally been a secular affair but religion have also played important roles. There have been instances of success where religious approaches or institutions have brokered peace; the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 which was significantly influenced by Pope John XXIII from the Vatican; the Mozambique Civil War of 1977-1992 which was resolved by the Community of Sant'Egidio; the Sierra Leone Civil War of 1991-2002 which was mediated and resolved by the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL); successes recorded in Nigeria by the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IFMC) formed in 1995; the Vatican's facilitation of the 2014/15 US and Cuba peace deal. There were also instances where they failed such as in Algeria in 1995 by Sant'Egidio or the ongoing Israel and Palestine crisis. The study set out to answer the research question; what are the dynamics and challenges of mediation of international conflicts and enhancement of diplomacy from religious perspective of geopolitics and society? The findings show that despite the success recorded by religion in mediating international conflicts and diplomacy, it faces challenges of acceptance and lack of enforcement or coercive power. The study has some limitation such as reliance on secondary data and mainly Christian case studies.

Keywords: conflict, constructivism, diplomacy, geopolitics, religion, secularism, track-II-diplomacy.

---

[1] **Ajayi Crowther University, Oyo. Department of Political science, faculty of social sciences**

INTRODUCTION

Conflicts across the international political system are inevitable because states and other non-state actors have varied interests and in the struggle for the scarce resource and its authoritative allocation, conflicts do arise (Balaam & Dillman, 2018). The realists posit that states are the primary actors in international political system and do disagree in the pursuit of their national interests (Mearsheimer, 2019). The liberalists opine that, international institutions can serve as the means for brokering peace but constructivists recognise the importance of norms and cultures in diplomacy (Sørensen et al., 2022). That is how and why the post-secularists argue that religion plays a significant role in international relations, conflicts and diplomacy and its significance cannot be overstated (Mavelli & Wilson, 2016).

There have been different success stories of religious stakeholders serving as mediators of international conflicts and enhancing diplomacy: the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 which was significantly influenced by Pope John XXIII from the Vatican; the Mozambique Civil War of 1977-1992 which was resolved by the Community of Sant'Egidio; the Sierra Leone Civil War of 1991-2002 which was mediated and resolved by the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL); successes recorded in Nigeria by the the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IFMC) formed in 1995; the Vatican's facilitation of the 2014/15 US and Cuba peace deal; and recently International Center for Religion and Diplomacy

(ICRD) which successfully negotiated the release of 21 Korean missionaries from the Taliban in Afghanistan (Siahaya et al., 2023). There were also instances where the religious institutions faced challenges and could not succeed (Silvestri & Mayall, 2015).

Consequently, this paper investigates the roles of religion in mediating international conflicts and diplomacy while highlighting various challenges and charting ways forward. It is divided into nine parts; part one is the introduction which sets the scene for the study. Part two discusses the theoretical framework; part three analyses the methodology including the research question; part four discusses the connection and role of religion in mediating international conflict and diplomacy; part five analyses the successful religious mediations of international conflicts and diplomacy; part six discusses the challenges of religious mediation of international conflicts and diplomacy; part seven draws conclusion; part eight makes recommendations for policy; and part nine highlights the limitations and makes suggestions for future research.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory is an essential tool for the explication and comprehension of concepts and social phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2023), as was observed by Easton (1965), research is supposed to be guided by theory. Consequently, the international relations theories of realism, liberalism, constructivism and post-secular theories are applied to critically discuss the

subject matter under review (Sørensen et al., 2022). Although constructivism is the international relations theory that supports non-state institutions and non-international institutions such as the pius or religious institutions as actors in the international system capable of influencing geopolitics but the views of the realists and liberalists are also discussed (Peltonen, 2017). Furthermore, there is also a discussion of the emerging post-secularist theory of international relations (Mavelli & Wilson, 2016).

First, the main argument of realism is that the international political system is anarchic and states who are the main actors are influenced by their national interests (Mearsheimer, 2019). Realism views state as the primary actor in an anarchic international system and it traditionally disregards the role of religion (Tabak, 2025). This theoretical lens views religion as a secondary cultural factor at best because it concentrates on the pursuit of power by state actors in line with their national interest which is not what religion represents (Heydarian Pashakhanlou, 2016). In the light of this proposition, religion is traditionally ruled out by the realists in analysing international politics and relations among nation-states (Jackson & Moore, 2016). When a religious actor does appear, it is often framed as a threat to state security, such as in the case of a terrorist organization (Ran, 2015). Realism does not emphasise international law or the actions of non-state actors, which are seen as secondary to the core dynamics of state-based power politics which is why it views religion as

only a secondary actor in the international political system (Hayden, 2016).

Comparatively, although the liberalists are more accommodating of non-state actors and the potential for international cooperation but they are not in express alignment with religion as an important influence of international politics (Murphy, 2023). Liberalism emphasises that a peaceful world order can be achieved through cooperation and the use of economic and social power, with a focus on international institutions like the United Nations, African Union and European Union among others (Gauthier, 2020). However, regardless of the liberalist flexibility, the traditional liberal theory has been criticized for underestimating the influence of religion, operating on a flawed assumption that modernization would lead to secularisation and the privatisation of faith (Murphy, 2023). Therefore, it can be deduced that although liberalism is more flexible recognising the importance of the roles of the non-state actors in geopolitics but it failed to fully integrate religion's significant influence on political identities and geopolitics (Green & Levis Sullam, 2020).

In contrast, constructivism is the framework that is most open to the influence and impacts of religion in international relations and geopolitics which gives it the impetus and legitimacy to play important roles in mediating international conflicts and enhancing diplomacy (Rahim & Ali, 2020). Constructivism proposes that a state's foreign policy and behaviour are not only shaped by rational and material interests

but are shaped by its historical, cultural, and social belief systems (Haynes, 2021). The constructivists believe that non-state actors, including religious organizations significantly influence state behaviour through lobbying, persuasion, and formation of international norms (Karkalanov, 2016). There are evidences of the influence of religion in recent geopolitical events such as the Iranian Revolution, the 9/11 attacks and even the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine which has religious colourations which can be better situated and explicated with the context of geopolitics from the perspective of constructivism recognising religion as a core actor in the international political system (Haynes, 2021).

Furthermore, there is also the emerging concept or post-secularism theory which counters the argument of the main theories of realism and liberalism which have side-lined and neglected the important influence of religion on geopolitics (Ungureanu & Thomassen, 2015). This perspective argues and challenges the idea that secularism is the inevitable endpoint of modernity because the recent geopolitical events show that the reverse may in fact be the case (Welton, 2018). One of the proponents is Jürgen Habermas, who suggests that faith is not a relic of the past but a resurgent, critical force in global politics and its impacts in geopolitics should be recognised (Kaltsas, 2019). It proposes for dialogue, tolerance, and peaceful coexistence, recognising that a part of the global population is guided by religious or spiritual beliefs, which must be incorporated in geopolitical and diplomatic practice (Kaltsas, 2019). There is also the perspective of track-two diplomacy as religious institutions do work behind the scenes (Palmiano Federer, 2021). Religious mediators have engaged at all levels: churches and faith NGOs like that World Council of Churches helped negotiate Sudan's 1972 Addis Ababa agreement, clergy arranged informal Northern Ireland talks, and local interfaith councils have built grassroots trust (Gatu, 2015). It is within the context of these theories that the subject matter under discourse is undertaken.

METHODOLOGY

This is an interpretivist study which relies on human interpretation of social phenomenon to discuss the role of religion in mediating international conflicts and diplomacy by relying on extant literature. Therefore, it is a qualitative study that followed abduction as the approach for development of theory (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The study searched literature on Google Scholar, Scopus, JSTOR, Web of Science and ProQuest from where the reviewed articles were derived which included articles not older than ten years. The data was analysed using thematic analysis in line with the guidelines of Braun & Clarke (2023). The study set out to answer the research question: what are the dynamics and challenges of mediation of international conflicts and enhancement of diplomacy from religious perspective of geopolitics and society?

THE CONNECTION AND ROLE OF RELIGION IN MEDIATING INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT AND DIPLOMACY

Religion, diplomacy and international relations are interconnected in different ways which enables religion play important role in mediating international conflict and diplomacy as was posited by post-secularism (Constantinou, 2015). For instance, religion shapes the identity and norms of some states such as a theocratic state like Iran where the Supreme Leader is both a religious head and head of state (Kamrava, 2024). This shows that religion cannot be successfully delinked from state affairs, geopolitics, international relations and diplomacy (Marsden et al., 2016). Other examples are the Vatican City led by the Pope, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan ruled by the Taliban; there is also Yemen which is partly ruled by the Houthi Islamic group, and Lebanon partly controlled by the Hezbollah Islamic group (Byrnes, 2020). Therefore, the foreign policies of these states are heavily influenced by religion as they are all intertwined (Dada et al., 2022). Besides, there are religious leaders who have interstate influence that they can influence the foreign policy of countries such the Pope who is the leader of the Catholic Church and the Dalai Lama (Diez, 2020).

There are mechanisms through which religion influences international relations especially by mediating international conflicts and enhancing diplomacy (Lehti, 2018). One of the notable means is through back-channel and track II diplomacy because there have been many times when religious leaders have unofficially intervened in conflicts making diplomatic efforts to find resolutions (Palmiano Federer, 2021). An example is the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) which successfully negotiated the release of 21 Korean missionaries from the Taliban in Afghanistan and, from 2005 to 2016, maintained a back-channel communication link to foster dialogue with Iran (Thompson, 2015). There are also instances of interfaith dialogue which are usually aimed at conflict resolution and peace building and an illustration is the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL), made up of Muslim and Christian leaders, through interfaith collaboration serving as 'moral guarantors of peace', which laid the foundation of trust for formal peace negotiations and eventual resolution of the conflict (Anne Hurd, 2016). Finally, religion influences international relations, conflict mediation and diplomacy through faith-based organisations where they provide support especially in relation to humanitarian aids through which they build trust with which they negotiate peace (Blakemore, 2019). An instance is the Community of Sant'Egidio, a lay Catholic organization whose involvement in the Mozambiquan civil war began with providing humanitarian aid and building relationships with both sides of the conflict and later leveraged on the same to mediate resolution of the conflict (Nadziak, 2025).

Nonetheless, there are some challenges that arise in the role of religion in

mediating international conflict and diplomacy (Ruhe, 2021). The first is the general theoretical and practical belief especially in the West that politics is totally secular and religion has no role to play in the political affairs (Berinyuy, 2025). This perspective can be seen from the realist and liberalist positions discussed in the preceding section which has relegated religion to the background in relation to geopolitics making difficult for it to freely play the role of conflict mediation and diplomacy in the international political system (Duursma, 2020). There are also issues of language and perceptions which sometimes mar religion in international relations such as the fact that sometimes the middle east interprets 'secular' used by the Western Societies as 'Godless' and thereby blasphemous (Troy, 2018). There are also instances of a particular religion perceiving others as unbelievers or heathens which make it practically impossible to have peaceful interreligious dialogue that could lead to peace building and diplomacy especially at the international level (Melki & Jabado, 2016).

There are instances where there have been successful religious mediation of international conflicts and there are other times that they have not been successful as a result of some challenges, the preceding paragraphs examine some case studies.

SUCCESSFUL RELIGIOUS MEDIATIONS OF INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS AND DIPLOMACY

Brokering the US and Cuba Relationship

This happened in two phases, the first was during the 1962 Cuban missile crisis which almost led the world to a catastrophic nuclear war but the Vatican intervened by contacting both President Nikita Khrushchev of the Soviet Union and President John F. Kennedy of the United States of America which many believed significantly contributed to the resolution of the crisis (Horváth, 2019). The pope, Pope John XXIII launched a diplomatic intervention and on the 25th of October, 1962, he issued a radio message with global reach and appealed to the leaders to heed the 'anguished cry' of humanity and 'continue to negotiate' (Lamb, 2015). The Pope's message was broadcast globally by *Radio Vaticana* and the official Communist newspaper, *Pravda*, ensuring that it reached the stakeholders (Horváth, 2019). In his message, the Pope urged Khrushchev to stop the Soviet ships, framing the act not as a political concession but as a supreme act of love for humankind that would mark him as a pioneer of a 'revolution based on love' (Ryall, 2018). The next day, on October 26th, 1962, the Soviet Union's Premier, Khrushchev wrote Washington and proposed that the missiles in Cuba would be dismantled if Washington promised not to invade Cuba and on the 27th of October, 1962, Khrushchev announced that the missiles would be dismantled under the United Nation's supervision (Lamb, 2015). The

US also agreed to remove the Jupiter missiles from Turkey as was requested by Kremlin and that averted what may have been a catastrophic nuclear war (Ryall, 2018). The moral appeal was accompanied by coordinated back-channel diplomatic activities between the Holy See and the Italian government, which communicated a potential reciprocal concession from the United States to the Soviet Union (Cahill, 2023).

The second phase was recent, the Vatican's facilitation of the 2014/15 US and Cuba peace deal championed by Pope Francis (Mariño, 2016). The Holy See leveraged its longstanding ties with both the Communist Cuban government and the U.S, and the Pope through his Secretariat of State communicated with President Barrack Obama of the US and President Raul Castrol of Cuba urging them to initiate a new phase based on humanitarian concessions (Smytsnyuk, 2025). In October 2014, the US and Cuban delegations met in the Vatican at Papal invitation and made important compromises on sensitive issues (Mariño, 2016). Cuba's Cardinal Jaime Ortega also acted as an interlocutor, and the U.S. Ambassador to the Holy See hailed the Holy See's key role in the negotiations (Smytsnyuk, 2025). In the case, the Pope's moral authority and diplomatic neutrality gave the Vatican access that neither country's ambassadors had (Smytsnyuk, 2025). The outcome was a historic success, diplomatic relations were restored after decades of hostility highlighting the important role of religion in mediating international conflict and diplomacy (Lamb, 2015).

Nonetheless, there were limitations and challenges in the process by the Holy See (Cahill, 2023). The Vatican's influence depended on the willingness of secular leaders as Washington and Havana had to see benefit in third-party help (Ryall, 2018). The Vatican worked informally as its influence was indirect, through correspondence and informal meetings, so it lacked coercive powers and could not force outcomes but only made moral appeals to the leaders (Ryall, 2018). Critics note that religious actors lack formal power, they advise and exhort, but ultimately states make the policy decisions which are usually in line with their national interests (Cahill, 2023). Still, the Cuban cases show how a religious institution, armed with mutual trust and moral prestige, can achieve success even where ordinary diplomacy may have struggled (Lamb, 2015).

The Community of Sant'Egidio mediating the Mozambique Civil War (1977-1992)

The Roman Catholic lay community Sant'Egidio also helped to successfully broker peace in the Mozambiquan Civil War of 1977-1992 (Igreja, 2018). The Community's success stemmed from its unique position as a non-state religious actor with the peoples' trust, credibility and no political agenda (De Simone, 2017). Beginning with humanitarian aid, Sant'Egidio cultivated personal relationships with leaders from both the Frelimo government and the Renamo opposition, and through the informal track II diplomacy eventually facilitating a secret formal meeting in Rome (Saraiva, 2022).

The first formal talks between June and July 1990 laid out shared national goals and recognised each side's legitimacy (Hume, 2019). The negotiations mediated by the Sant'Egidio saw the two sides cease hostilities and agreed to make compromises resulting in peaceful negotiations and resolutions ending the civil war that had been on for 16 years (Hume, 2019). The approach was offering a neutral venue which was Rome for the negotiations, combining both formal and informal diplomatic tactics which the then UN secretary general Boutros-Ghali described as innovative (Igreja, 2018). The resulting 1992 Rome General Peace Agreement was a pragmatic and multi-faceted solution that established a ceasefire, demobilized troops, and transformed the rebel group into a political party (De Simone, 2017).

However, critics noted some limitations: the Church's religious commitment meant it did not profit from the outcome and there were also risks of partiality (Saraiva, 2022). In Mozambique, the mediators had to balance loyalty to Catholic social teaching against any appearance of ecclesiastical self-interest (Igreja, 2018). The Sant'Egidio's case illustrates that religious institutions may excel when they are seen as serving "the same nation" in moral rather than partisan terms highlighting their important roles in mediating international conflicts and enhancing diplomacy and peace building (De Simone, 2017).

Interreligious conflict resolution collaborations

There was the success story of Pastor James Wuye, an evangelical Christian and Imam Muhammad Ashafa, a Muslim cleric who each lost a loved one in the 1990s Plateau State religious crisis, and came together in 1995 to form the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IFMC) to forge peace between Christian and Muslim communities (Sampson, 2020). They organised joint sermons and homilies drawing from both the Bible and Qur'an (Saleh, 2022). There was a massacre in Yelwa in 2004 and it was the dialogues and negotiations brokered by IFMC that led to ceasefire and peaceful resolution among the locals who were fighting each other because of religious differences (Saleh, 2022). IFMC also brokered formal commitments, such as the 2002 Kaduna Peace Declaration, in which 22 Christian and Muslim leaders publicly vowed to renounce violence after the Miss World riots of 2002 (Orebiyi, 2016).

In a similar vein, although the Sierra Leone Civil War (1991-2002) may be said to have been partly caused by religion but it must also be recognised that religious institutions led to its end (Anne Hurd, 2016). The conflict was resolved in part by the efforts of the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL), which was a body formed by Christian and Muslim leaders in the country to help broker peace (Anne Hurd, 2016). The warring parties trusted the religious leaders in a way that they did not trust political actors, allowing the IRCSL to facilitate the Lome Peace

Accord and secure the release of child captives (Redse, 2016). The IRCSL has continued to play a vital role in post-conflict reconciliation and public health initiatives, demonstrating how a trusted, non-political religious body can provide support for societal healing and stability (Portaankorva, 2015).

Critically, in the Nigerian context, the mediators' Christian and Muslim partnership worked because both men had personal credibility across sectarian lines because most religious leaders are still seen as representing their own communities or religious interests (Portaankorva, 2015). This highlights the challenges faced by the religious institutions in mediating international conflict and diplomacy (Sampson, 2020).

CHALLENGES OF RELIGIOUS MEDIATION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFLICTS AND DIPLOMACY

The Sant'Egidio tried to replicate the Mozambique success in Algeria between 1994 and 1995 but was not successful (De Simone, 2017). The community initiated both informal and later formal diplomacy by getting the parties to the negotiation table in Rome referred to as the Rome Platform, 1995 but this failed to end the conflict (De Simone, 2017). The Algerian military regime refused to implement the Platform, and clashes continued (Holmsen, 2018). The failure in Algeria shows the limits of religious mediation when one side distrusts any solution that seems to confer legitimacy on its rival (Holmsen, 2018). Despite Sant'Egidio's good offices and careful framing, the government described the initiative as illegitimate and ended the negotiations (De Simone, 2017). Overall, religious actors like the Vatican and Sant'Egidio can break stalemates by appealing across political divides, but they succeed only when and where parties allow and accept religious legitimacy to shape bargaining (Holmsen, 2018). Thus, there is no guaranteed legitimacy for the religious institutions brokering peace despite their good intentions as it only happens when all the conflicting parties accept their legitimacy which is not often the case.

Furthermore, there are instances where religion complicate conflicts and make them more complex to resolve because religion is often based on emotions and faith, not logic or rational reasoning (Cahill, 2023). A good example is the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict which usually takes religious lines along the Christian-Muslim divide making diplomacy more complex (Buettner, 2020). Religious leaders from Islam and Christianity especially the Vatican have called for an end to the decades long Israeli-Palestine conflict but it lingers (Shlaim, 2020). In fact, there was the interfaith effort and call for an end to the conflict resulting in the 2002 Alexandria Summit, where some 400 Israeli, Palestinian and U.S. religious leaders, rabbis, imams and priests assembled to produce a joint peace declaration (Buettner, 2020). Nonetheless, the Alexandria Declaration, while symbolically significant, failed to impact the negotiating table, partly because secular leaders frame the conflict in political-national terms (Buettner, 2020).

Although, it is noted that religion is not the origin of the conflict but it has become its most enduring and emotionally potent justification (Shlaim, 2020). This dynamic creates a mutually reinforcing cycle of extremism where the actions of one side are used to legitimize the extremism of the other (Rosen, 2021).

Another drawback or challenge of religion is that extremist whether religion or political do co-opt and take advantage of religion in advancement of their selfish desires which makes it challenging for religious institutions to mediate conflicts because of issues of trust and integrity (Cahill, 2023). There are several conflicts across the world with religious colouration such as the farmer-herders conflict in West Africa especially in Northern Nigeria and also the Boko-Haram, ISIL, ISIS, banditry and terrorism (de Montclos, 2017). Although, some religious leaders such as Cheick Gumi have made attempts to resolve the conflicts but there has been any permanent solution to the crisis (de Montclos, 2017). Consequently, religious institutions play important roles in international relations especially in shaping conflict resolution and diplomacy but they also have some limitations as discussed (Cahill, 2023).

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study adopted the realist, liberalist, constructivist and post-secular theoretical perspectives and examined mediating international conflicts and enhancing diplomacy from religious perspective of geopolitics and society. The findings indicate that religion is vital in brokering peace in international conflicts, building peace and enhancing diplomacy. The religious institutions normally use track II or informal diplomacy by working behind the scenes and convincing actors to conflicts based on morals.

The approach has been successfully undertaken in several cases: the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962 which was significantly influenced by Pope John XXIII from the Vatican; the Mozambique Civil War of 1977-1992 which was resolved by the Community of Sant'Egidio; the Sierra Leone Civil War of 1991-2002 which was mediated and resolved by the Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone (IRCSL); successes recorded in Nigeria by the Interfaith Mediation Centre (IFMC) formed in 1995; the Vatican's facilitation of the 2014/15 US and Cuba peace deal; and recently International Center for Religion and Diplomacy (ICRD) which successfully negotiated the release of 21 Korean missionaries from the Taliban in Afghanistan.

There were also challenges which make the religion's mediating roles to sometimes be unsuccessful such as: Sant'Egidio tried to replicate the Mozambique success in Algeria between 1994 and 1995 through the Rome Platform in January 1995 but failed; there is also the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict despite the 2002 Alexandria Summit leading to the Alexandria Declaration but the conflict lingers because of non-acceptance by parties and extremist hijacking religion for advancement of selfish interests.

RECOMMENDATION

First, it is recommended that the states and various parties to conflicts recognise the legitimacy of religion and religious leaders because that is the key to the success of mediation of conflict and diplomacy by religious institutions.

Second, it is recommended that the states recognise the importance of religion to global peace and make deliberate efforts to incorporate religion and religious institutions in peace building.

Third, it is recommended that international organisations and institutions recognise and work in collaboration with religious institutions, so that they can deploy their track II diplomacy in brokering peace across the world.

Fourth, the religious institutions can also make policies to train their clergy on peace building and conflict resolution in order to better equip them for conflict resolutions and peace building whenever the needs arose.

REFERENCES

Anne Hurd, H. (2016). The Inter-Religious Council of Sierra Leone as Peace Facilitator in Post-1991 Sierra Leone. *Peace & Change*, *41*(4), 425-451.

Balaam, D. N., & Dillman, B. (2018). *Introduction to international political economy*. Routledge.

Berinyuy, S. N. (2025). Faith-Based Diplomacy—A Mechanism for Conflict Resolution in Sub-Saharan Africa: Strategies and Impacts. *International Relations*, *13*(1), 15-22.

Blakemore, S. (2019). Faith-based diplomacy and interfaith dialogue. *Brill Research Perspectives in Diplomacy and Foreign Policy*, *3*(2), 1-124.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2023). Toward good practice in thematic analysis: Avoiding common problems and be (com) ing a knowing researcher. *International journal of transgender health*, *24*(1), 1-6.

Buettner, A. (2020). Religion as law: The Israeli-nation state law and the Palestinians. *Wash. U. Global Stud. L. Rev.*, *19*, 113.

Byrnes, T. A. (2020). Sovereignty, supranationalism, and soft power: The Holy See in international relations. In *Modern Papal Diplomacy and Social Teaching in World Affairs* (pp. 6-20). Routledge.

Cahill, L. S. (2023). The Challenge of Peace: Popes, Presidents, and Politics as Historical Context. *American Catholic Studies*, *134*(3), 28-34.

Constantinou, C. M. (2015). Everyday diplomacy: Mission, spectacle and the remaking of diplomatic culture. In *Diplomatic cultures and international politics* (pp. 35-52). Routledge.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (Sixth edition.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Dada, Z. A., Wani, M. D., & Shah, S. A. (2022). The impact of pilgrim tourism on the

bilateral diplomacy of India and Nepal and the mediation effect of people-to-people contact. *Asian Journal of Comparative Politics*, *7*(3), 495-506.

de Montclos, M. A. P. (2017). Boko Haram. *Understanding Boko Haram: Terrorism and Insurgency in Africa*, 19.

De Simone, C. (2017). *Italy and the community of Sant'Egidio in the 1990s.'Coopetition'in post-Cold War Italian foreign policy?* (Doctoral dissertation, London School of Economics and Political Science).

Diez, T. (2020). Diplomacy, papacy, and the transformation of international society. In *Modern Papal Diplomacy and Social Teaching in World Affairs* (pp. 31-38). Routledge.

Duursma, A. (2020). African solutions to African challenges: The role of legitimacy in mediating civil wars in Africa. *International Organization*, *74*(2), 295-330.

Easton, D. (1965). *A Framework for Political Analysis*. Pp. xvi, 143. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

Gatu, J. G. (2015). *The role of all Africa conference of churches (aacc) in international conflict management: A case of South Sudan* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Nairobi).

Gauthier, F. (2020). *Religion, Modernity, Globalisation: Nation-State to Market*. Taylor & Francis. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429276033

Green, A., & Levis Sullam, S. (2020). *Jews, liberalism, antisemitism: a global history*

(1st ed.). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-48240-4

Hayden, P. (2016). *The Ashgate research companion to ethics and international relations* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315612935

Haynes, J. (2021). Religion and international relations: what do we know and how do we know it?. *Religions*, *12*(5), 328.

Heydarian Pashakhanlou, A. (2016). *Realism and fear in international relations: Morgenthau, Waltz and Mearsheimer reconsidered* (1st ed. 2017 edition.). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-41012-8

Holmsen, J. (2018). *Believe it or not: the new face of religion in international affairs: a case study of Sant'Egidio* (Doctoral dissertation, European University Institute).

Horváth, E. (2019). The Case of Cuban Children Arriving Unaccompanied to the United States (1960–1962). *Orpheus Noster. A KRE Eszme-, Kultúr-, és Vallástörténeti Folyóirata*, *11*(1), 7-22.

Hume, C. R. (2019). The Mozambique Peace Process. In *The Diplomatic Record 1992-1993* (pp. 81-101). Routledge.

Igreja, V. (2018). Relationships in transition in Mozambique 1990-2011. *Comparative Study of Transitional Justice*, 6.

Jackson, M., & Moore, T. (2016). Machiavelli's walls: The legacy of realism in international relations theory. *International Politics (Hague,*

Netherlands), *53*(4), 447–465. https://doi.org/10.1057/ip.2016.9

Kaltsas, S. (2019). Habermas, Taylor, and Connolly on secularism, pluralism, and the post-secular public sphere. *Religions*, *10*(8), 460.

Kamrava, M. (2024). *How Islam rules in Iran: theology and theocracy in the Islamic Republic*. Cambridge University Press.

Karkalanov, Ts. V. (2016). The Intrinsic Explanatory Value of Social Constructivism in International Relations Theory. *Sravnitel'naĭa Politika (Moscow, Russia)*, *7*(4(25)), 5–12. https://doi.org/10.18611/2221-3279-2016-7-4(25)-5-12

Lamb, K. (2015). Papacy and Diplomacy: Pope Francis' Role in Mediating International Relations. *Brown Political Review*.

Lehti, M. (2018). *The era of private peacemakers: A new dialogic approach to mediation*. Springer.

Mariño, S. M. C. (2016). The New Era of Cuba-US Relations: Breaking Down Axioms and Establishing Lasting Legacies?. *CUBA-US RELATIONS*, 49.

Marsden, M., Ibañez-Tirado, D., & Henig, D. (2016). Everyday diplomacy: Introduction to special issue. *The Cambridge Journal of Anthropology*, *34*(2), 2-22.

Mavelli, L., & Wilson, E. K. (2016). Postsecularism and international relations. In *Routledge handbook of religion and politics* (pp. 250-269). Routledge.

Mearsheimer, J. J. (2019). Realism and restraint. *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, (14), 12-31.

Melki, J., & Jabado, M. (2016). Mediated public diplomacy of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria: The synergistic use of terrorism, social media and branding. *Media and Communication*, *4*(2), 92-103.

Murphy, R. H. (2023). State capacity, economic freedom, and classical liberalism. *Constitutional Political Economy*, *34*(2), 165–187. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10602-022-09374-w

Nadziak, M. (2025). Identity and Self-Positioning of the Community of Sant'Egidio: A Faith-Based Organization on the International Stage. *Religions*, *16*(2), 127.

OREBIYI, T. P. (2016). *An assessment of faith-based organisations and peacebuilding in Kaduna State, Nigeria, 1999-2012* (Doctoral dissertation).

Palmiano Federer, J. (2021). Toward a normative turn in track two diplomacy? A review of the literature. *Negotiation Journal*, *37*(4), 427-450.

Peltonen, H. (2017). A tale of two cognitions: The Evolution of Social Constructivism in International Relations. *Revista Brasileira de Política Internacional*, *60*(1). https://doi.org/10.1590/0034-7329201700105

Portaankorva, J. (2015). Muslim and Christian leaders working together: building reconciliation in the Sierra Leone conflict. *The Journal of Pan African Studies*, *8*(9), 79-96.

Rahim, N., & Ali, A. (2020). Critical analysis of social constructivism: Myth or reality for peace and security. *Global Strategic & Security Studies Review*, 5(1), 14-22.

Ran, G. (2015). Religion and Realism in International Law: China's Perspective on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. *Review of European Studies*, 7(9). https://doi.org/10.5539/res.v7n9p10

Redse, L. K. (2016). *The Potential of Religious Peacebuilding-a case study from Sierra Leone* (Master's thesis).

Rosen, D. (2021). The 2002 Alexandria Summit and its follow-up. In *Conceptualizing Mass Violence* (pp. 255-262). Routledge.

Ruhe, C. (2021). Impeding fatal violence through third-party diplomacy: The effect of mediation on conflict intensity. *Journal of Peace Research*, 58(4), 687-701.

Ryall, D. (2018). The Cross and the Bear: The Vatican's Cold War Diplomacy in East Central Europe. In *Deconstructing and Reconstructing the Cold War* (pp. 191-211). Routledge.

Saleh, M. (2022). Role of interfaith mediation centre in managing conflict between farmers and herdsmen in Bauchi State, Nigeria. *Journal of African History, Culture and Arts*, 2(2), 110-123.

Sampson, E. (2020). *The Role of Civil Actors in Peace Mediation and Post-War Reconstruction: A Focus on Nigeria* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Huddersfield).

Saraiva, R. (2022). Peacemaking from within: adaptive mediation of direct dialogue in Mozambique's new peace process (2013–2019). In *Adaptive mediation and conflict resolution: Peace-making in Colombia, Mozambique, the Philippines, and Syria* (pp. 81-109). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

Shlaim, A. (2020). *Israel and Palestine: Reappraisals, revisions, refutations*. Verso Books.

Sørensen, G., Møller, J., & Jackson, R. H. (2022). *Introduction to international relations: theories and approaches*. Oxford university press.

Sinaga, J., Ibnu, S., Siddiq, A., Tri Murdo, I. & Nafi, M. (2023). Interfaith Dialogue in the Context of Globalization: The Role of Religion in International Diplomacy. *International Journal of Science and Society*, Volume 5, Issue 4.

Silvestri, S., & Mayall, J. (2015). *The role of religion in conflict and peacebuilding*. British Academy.

Smysnyuk, P. (2025). The Holy See's positive neutrality and conflict mediation: moral dilemmas in the Russo-Ukrainian war. *Canadian Slavonic Papers*, 1-25.

Telbak, M. (2025). *Realism in International Relations: The Making of a Disarrayed Tradition*. Springer Nature Switzerland. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-83227-7

Thompson, L. (2015). Religion and diplomacy. *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, 10(2), 197-214.

Troy, J. (2018). 'The Pope's own hand outstretched': Holy See diplomacy as a hybrid mode of diplomatic agency. *The*

British Journal of Politics and International Relations, *20*(3), 521-539.

Ungureanu, C., & Thomassen, L. (2015). The post-secular debate: introductory remarks. *The European Legacy*, *20*(2), 103-108.

Welton, M. R. (2018). Habermas and the Meaning of the Post-Secular Society: Twin Complementary Learning Processes. In *Critical Theory and Transformative Learning* (pp. 14-30). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.