

**The political realism of Augustine and Morgenthau:  
Issues of Man, God, and just war**

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**Abstract**

Augustine and Morgenthau are examples of classical political realists who base their arguments on the nature of man. Both believe that man is born evil but they differ on the question if man can improve. Augustine also believes that the statesman has a moral purpose while Morgenthau believes that the consequences of man's nature can only be counterbalanced. This difference is rooted in Morgenthau and Augustine's different views of the meaning of peace. To Morgenthau, peace is power balance and stability and a permanent peace cannot be achieved. Augustine, however, describes two kinds of peace, the earthly peace and God's peace. The article discusses these differences and how it impacts their views on moral and war. These different views have similarity with the different views that led to the Reformation in the 1500's and their difference is as great. <sup>1</sup>

Keywords: nature of man; realism; just war; Augustine; Morgenthau

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Realism is not one particular theory but a collection of theories with the common belief that it is impossible to achieve fundamental qualitative progress in international politics (IP). It is not possible to achieve a lasting peace, where peace is understood as stability and order, not war. According to Waltz, realists argue for this in three different ways, i.e. three different images of IP: First image is to argue based on human nature: "Wars result from selfishness, misdirected aggressive impulses, from stupidity" (Waltz 1993, 124). Second image is to look for explanations on national or domestic policy level: "Defects in states cause wars among them" (Waltz 1993, 127). Third image is to find the cause in the international system's anarchy structure: "In anarchy there is no automatic harmony" (Waltz 1993, 129).

In this article I focus on the first image approach where for instance Morgenthau and Niebuhr are central, the so-called classical realists. Niebuhr, however, describes the church father Augustine as the first great realist (Niebuhr 1953, 124). According to Niebuhr, Augustine argues that ‘self-love’ is the source of evil, not some natural impulse that the mind cannot yet control (Niebuhr 1953, 125). Therefore, Augustine can be interpreted to also have a first image/classical realist perspective on IP. According to Wæver (1992, 42), there was not a realistic IP tradition before the 20<sup>th</sup> century but this school of thought arose as a reaction to *inter alia* liberal IP theory. Morgenthau’s *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* from 1946 became a central contribution. Since Morgenthau and Augustine therefore both seem to be key first image realists in each of their age, I will compare them, particularly on the issues of the possibility of fundamental progress in IP and just war. I will not take to position of one of them to criticise the other, rather explore their differences to partly uncover and discuss some of the range and diversity of classical realist thought, partly to suggest the hypothesis that in particular some of the differences between Augustine and Morgenthau seems to be rooted in fundamental different views of the concept of peace and the nature of man. This difference has similarity with the discussions and disagreements that led to the Reformation in the 1500’s.

## 2. AUGUSTINE

Augustine’s realism is seen in his book series *City of God* (Niebuhr 1953, 124) that was written 413-426. Here Augustine divides the world into two types of societies - God’s city and the terrestrial city. Based on the Bible he describes these societies’ origin (Books 11-14); their development (Books 15-18); and their appointed ends (Books 19-22).<sup>2</sup>

### *The nature of man*

Augustine uses the Story of the Creation and Fall of Man to explain the difference and origin of God’ city and the terrestrial city. He differentiates between the *nature* of man and the *will* of man. Sin lies in man’s will since man in the Garden of Eden had the choice between following God or turn away from God hereby making himself God. Furthermore God created nature in which there is no sin (*City of God*<sup>3</sup>, XI: 15). The fall of the will had consequences for nature since although nature and man’s will are different they are connected; hence the fall of the will creates chaos in nature and harms it (*City of God*, XI: 17). After the fall every man is born with a harmed nature and a will turned away from God (*City of God*, XIIV: 3). Since man therefore has become his own God, man becomes centered towards himself and it is this

self-glorification and lust for power that characterizes the terrestrial city. Man is furthermore not capable of, by own force, rising up after the fall or to do good since man has a harmed nature and a will captured in this nature.<sup>4</sup> Augustine argues that man from nature is equipped with an ability and a will to love and this ability has not disappeared in the fallen man, but it is damaged and therefore directed at man himself. In salvation man's love is healed whereby both the will and the ability to do good is restored. Augustine therefore writes: "The two cities then were created by two kinds of love: the earthly city by a love of self carried even to the point of contempt for God, the heavenly city by a love of God carried even to the point of contempt for self" (*City of God*, XIV: 28).

### *Society and state*

Man is social but social life is often destroyed: "A man's foes are even those of his own household". Augustine concludes that since the home is not safe, the city is it even less (*City of God*, XIX: 5). Through conversion man has redirected his will towards God and justification means that a healing of nature has begun, but man will never reach perfection as long as he is on earth and therefore a society will never be perfect. The way in which man, hence society, can improve is if the holy Spirits works internally and makes the Biblical teaching, which is applied externally, effective. Augustine writes further: "Otherwise, even if God himself employs a creature subject to him to address in some human form the human senses, whether those of the body of the ones that we possess very much like them when we sleep, and yet does not rule and move our minds with his inner grace, no preaching of the truth is of any avail to man" (*City of God*, XV: 6). Augustine (and the Roman-Catholic church) sees grace as a kind of force, inspiration, or inner quality in the soul. This view is different from Luther's view as written in *Against Latomus* from 1521, where grace is God's mercy or favor.<sup>5</sup> A conversion is therefore necessary since ethics and moral is not enough since man without the grace only gets worse when confronted with the law (*City of God*, XIIV: 5). Man cannot do good without the help of God's grace (*City of God*, XV: 21) but with the help of God's grace, man will ultimately rule over sin (*City of God*, XV: 7). The church is God's city (*City of God*, XIIV: 16) where Christ is king (*City of God*, XIIIX: 29). God's city is above and is the "heavenly Jerusalem" (*City of God*, XVI: 31). Outside the church there is no salvation but there are people in the church who only externally have committed themselves to the church's message. The church is not just the external visible institution but also the spiritual invisible community among believers. A state<sup>6</sup> should not be turned into a church and the church should also not take over the political power. The church should be

responsible for the worship of God and teach the Christians how to live a Christian life. The church is independent from political instances,<sup>7</sup> but the two societies are mixed in this world (*City of God*, XII: 49, 54). This mix is however only on the visual level (Christians and non-Christians live side by side), on the spiritual side, the two wills have opposite directions (Larsen 1991, 31-35).

### *Moral and war*

Man's lust for power causes divisions in the terrestrial city and this leads to war (*City of God*, XV: 4). Furthermore: "The dispute between Cain and Abel proved that there is enmity between the two cities themselves, the City of God and the city of men. Accordingly, there are battles of wicked against wicked. There are also battles of wicked against good and good against wicked. But the good, if they have achieved perfection cannot fight among themselves. If, however, they are advancing toward perfection but have not yet attained it, fighting among them is possible to the extent that each good man may fight against another through that part of him with which he also fights against himself" (*City of God*, XV: 5). In spite of social life being characterized by conflicts, Augustine believes that everybody wants peace. He argues that even if people prefer to upset the peace, they do this since they want a different peace, not because they hate peace (*City of God*, XIX: 12). The people in the terrestrial city also seek peace and the only reason why the terrestrial city is evil is the evil will; nature in itself is good. The good in man therefore seeks the peace but since man is only oriented against himself and furthermore has an evil will, man is not capable of creating a lasting peace. Augustine believes that the earthly peace is good (*City of God*, XV: 4) but there are even greater goodness attached to the city of God.

To Augustine, true justice or true values do not exist outside of Christianity (*City of God*, XIX: 21), and there can be no true virtues where there is no true religion (*City of God*, XIX, 25). Augustine believes that there is a "supreme good" (*City of God*, XIX: 1) that man ought to seek for his own sake. This supreme good is the everlasting life (*City of God*, XIX: 4), hence the perfect peace (*City of God*, XIX: 20).

War can be a necessary evil as it is the injustice by the counter part that forces a righteous state to lead a (defense) war (*City of God*, XIX: 7). This, I argue, must be seen in connection with that Augustine argues for accepting something evil, if one hereby avoids an even greater evil: "For just as it is no kindness to help a man at the cost of his losing a greater good, so it is not blameless behaviour to spare a man at the cost of his falling into a graver sin. Hence blamelessness involves the obligation not only to do evil to no man but also to restrain

a man from sinning or to punish him if he has sinned, so that either the man himself who is chastised may be reformed by his experience or others may be deterred by his example” (*City of God*, XIX: 16). Thus, to defend a supreme good it can be necessary to lead a defence war as this is the least evil compared to loosing the supreme good. It is the world that makes it necessary that the statesman acts evil.<sup>8</sup> A just war is therefore a war that has as its purpose to bring an end to the violation of justice (*City of God*, XV: 4). To Augustine the true God is justice, as are the resulting moral qualities.

### 3. MORGENTHAU

In this section I look at Morgenthau’s realism in his earlier writings: *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics* (1946) and *Politics Among Nations* (1973), published for the first time in 1948. In the latter Morgenthau summarizes his realism in Chapter 1: *A Realist Theory of International Politics*. This chapter was however not included in the book until the second edition in 1954.

#### *The nature of man*

According to Morgenthau, man is born with an aspiration for power: “Man is born a slave, but everywhere he wants to be a master” (Morgenthau 1946, 145). Man’s inborn desire to assert himself is expressed in his wish to maintain his sphere of power in relation to other people, perhaps even increase it and demonstrate it. Man’s lust for power has therefore not first and foremost to do with survival but with man’s position in the community (Morgenthau 1946, 165). Power is anything that establishes and maintains man’s control over other men, from physical violence to psychological ties (Morgenthau 1946, 9). In addition, Morgenthau writes that man intellectually is not capable of calculating or controlling his action whereby good intentions unintentionally can lead to evil. Furthermore life in a society makes it impossible to make everybody happy at the same time: “Whatever choice we make, we must do evil while we try to do good; for we must abandon one moral end in favour of another” (Morgenthau 1946, 162-163). Actions are therefore corrupted. This is even more common in political actions than in private ones (Morgenthau 1946, 161).

The will for power is the basics of human actions. Statesmen seek power since they have canalized their search for power into the state and politics therefore becomes a constant question of power and power balance as a state’s<sup>9</sup> goal is its survival and possible expansion. Interests, defined as power, are therefore the driving force in IP (Morgenthau 1973, 5).<sup>10</sup> Since man is also a moral being, moral questions arise about justifying and limiting the power that one man can have over another man (Morgenthau 1946, 145).

### *Moral and state*

There is a tension between the transcended moral values and the demand for successful political actions. Political success is defined as: “The test of political success is the degree to which one is able to maintain, to increase, or to demonstrate one’s power over other” (Morgenthau 1946, 168). Morgenthau here argues that transcended moral principles cannot be used on state’s actions but have to be “filtered through” the concrete conditions in society and policy (Morgenthau 1973, 10). Interests defined as power is an objective category but its content is not given once and for all (Morgenthau 1973, 8). Instead the interests that determine political action in a specific historical period are dependent upon the political and cultural context in which IP is formulated.

To Morgenthau the state is the sphere of highest secular loyalty and man can transform his selfishness and aspiration for power to the nation whereby it becomes patriotism (Morgenthau 1946, 168). There is, however, a difference in morals for individuals and for states. The individual has a moral right to sacrifice himself in the defense of for instance freedom. But the state does not have a right to let its defense of freedom get in the way of successful political actions since these actions often are inspired by the overall moral principles of the nations’ survival (Morgenthau 1973, 10). Political realism thus focuses on how various policies influence the nation’s power. This is what Morgenthau calls the political criterion. He acknowledges the existence and the relevance of other criteria but he argues that these are secondary to the political criterion and it is therefore wrong to use, for instance, moral and legalistic criteria for the evaluation and determination of political actions (Morgenthau 1973, 11-14). His arguments here is based on the view that man is composed of *inter alia* an economic man, a political man, and a religious man. Since man is divided, an investigation of politics must focus on the political man, the one seeking power. Morgenthau therefore argues that it is dangerous to mix other criteria into the political sphere. For instance will a moral criterion in IP cause the statesman to be without a tool to distinguish between evils. He would have to choose in the dark between one evil (which after all secures the power balance) and a greater evil that leads to war (Morgenthau 1946, 173). The only way to improve the stability of the world is by working *with* the forces that have made the past not by confronting reality with an ideal. Here Morgenthau quotes Goethe: “one ought to accept the evils, as it were, as raw materials and seek to counter-balance them” (Morgenthau 1946, 185). Reality must therefore be evaluated and understood as an approximation to an ideal system of power balance (Morgenthau 1973, 8). Since the society is complex and conflicting, politics

becomes an art that does not demand the rationality of an engineer but instead wisdom and moral strength (Morgenthau 1946, 16). A statesman always does evil but he ought to choose the least evil (Morgenthau 1946, 172).

### *Intervention and war*

Morgenthau argues that one should not equate a nation's own moral principles with the transcended moral laws (Morgenthau 1973, 10-11). States should not act under cover of transcendental moral norms or believe that they themselves are absolutely right. This can lead to crusades that leave nations deserted and Morgenthau is against such elimination of existing states. All states' sovereignty should be respected and sovereignty is indivisible (Morgenthau 1973, 309). This view is connected with that Morgenthau's goal is stability/power balance, which is synonymous with that the units that are a part of the power balance must be secured. It is therefore necessary to give other nations the right to pursue own moral goals. Morgenthau is therefore against interventions. The notion of interests defined as power saves IP from both moral arrogance and political stupidity (Morgenthau 1973, 11). The reason is that if *all* states each pursue their own interests, defined as power, it becomes possible to estimate other nation's action on the basis of what one would have done in a similar circumstance. Hereby it becomes possible to lead a politics that respects all nations' interests while one protects one's own. Power politics hereby becomes an instrument by which to avoid the outermost and devastating consequence of power politics, namely war (Morgenthau 1946, 16). But the statesman has a right and a duty to defend his state with violence against an aggressor.

## **4. COMPARISON OF AUGUSTINE AND MORGENTHAU**

Below I discuss how Morgenthau and Augustine, based on their views of man, argue that IP cannot fundamentally be improved. I also discuss their views of moral and an objective good and how this effects the question of just war. I will, among others, include Heyking (2001), Loriaux (1992), Murray (1996), and Niebuhr (1953), where some of Augustine's and Morgenthau's views are further discussed. If nothing else is stated I refer to the theories of Augustine and Morgenthau as described above.

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1946, 16). But the statesman has a right and a duty to defend his state with violence against an aggressor.

#### **4. COMPARISON OF AUGUSTINE AND MORGENTHAU**

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##### **4.1 VIEW OF MAN AND FUNDAMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS IN IP**

Morgenthau believes that the statesman cannot foresee everything and that it is not possible to get certain knowledge or completely see through the consequences of one's actions. Therefore good intentions get corrupted and policy becomes uncertain. Morgenthau believes that man is born with an aspiration for power and cannot fundamentally change. Man can never hope to be good but must be content with not being too evil and man's lust for power is boundless (Morgenthau 1946, 165). Morgenthau therefore rejects the possibility of qualitative changes in IP owing to the inborn unchangeable forces in human nature that makes man lust for power. Augustine believes that man is born with self-love which makes him put himself at the center of his action but that man can improve through conversion through which he gets a new will and his nature is healed. Hence, Augustine finds that man is not *completely* corrupted; to him man is *partly* evil and *partly* good since man's nature was only *damaged* in the fall. This is contrary to Morgenthau who argues that the nature of man is *completely* corrupted. This distinction has resembles with the discussion about justification between Luther and the Roman Catholic Church. Much in line with Morgenthau, Luther believed that the converted man is being *declared completely righteous* but at the same time he *is* a *complete sinner (simul justus et peccator)*. The Roman Catholic Church believed that God justifies by inspiring man with a good will, which slowly drives out the evil. Christians are therefore *partly righteous* and *partly sinners* (Wisløff 1985, 74-77). Furthermore man's ability to put his will into practice is healed since man gets greater wisdom through faith: "About matters that its mind and reason apprehend it [city of God] has most certain knowledge, even though it is slight because of the corruptible body that weighs down the spirit" (*City of God*, XIX: 18). Christian belief is therefore a prerequisite for man to be able to understand what is

right since reason now is being lead by a higher knowledge's will. A change in the nature of IP could therefore happen if all statesmen convert to Christianity. However, even if this occurs, it would not change the *basic* quality of IP since nobody reaches perfection in this life, which is also the reason why good people can be in conflict with other good people.<sup>20</sup> It is therefore basically impossible to improve the nature of IP.

Both Morgenthau and Augustine therefore reject the possibility of qualitative improvements in IP. Both of them do it on the basis of a negative view of man; hence a 1<sup>st</sup> image approach. But they are also different since in Augustine one can catch a glimpse of an *optimistic* view of human nature; it is to a certain extent possible to improve/heal man. With Morgenthau one instead sees a *pessimism* regarding the possibility of improving man, or perhaps a *resignation*. These differences cause Augustine to believe that the statesman has a moral purpose since man and society to some extent can be *healed*, while Morgenthau believes that the consequences of man's nature can only be *counterbalanced*. I discuss this further below.

#### **4.2 HOW A STATESMAN SHOULD ACT IN IP: MORAL AND WAR**

##### *Moral for statesmen*

Morgenthau argues in *Politics Among Nations* that man is composed of a political and religious man and that political actions should be determined from the considerations by the political man. This is why a moral criterion should not be part of the political life. Murray (1996, 82) is therefore right when he writes that Morgenthau is very occupied with moral questions, and (Murray 1996, 86) that man cannot find his purpose of life in himself but must get it from a transcending source. I will however argue that getting his purpose of life from a transcending source is in fact part of the religious man and not the political man. These moral criteria are important to Morgenthau, but they must be subordinate to the political criterion in IP. I therefore find that Murray over-interprets Morgenthau's statement that the statesman's action should be evaluation using Jewish Christian norms (Murray 1996, 85). It is also an over-interpretation when he writes the following: "While national interest must be protected, it must always be subjected to strict moral limitations" (Murray 1996, 81). Murray treats the two criteria as equals but to Morgenthau, the statesman's superior moral principle is to secure the survival of the state, its expansion, and position; *then* when this is secured, it is good if the political actions approach the transcendent moral principles. The moral evaluation of political action is therefore not, at first, significant to the political evaluation of the actions, namely if it

is a successful political action. There is a difference in the moral of the state and that of the people. Any political act is according to Morgenthau good if it promotes the goal of power balance.

Hence, the transcending norms in politics are good but they must be filtered through the circumstances. One might therefore argue that Morgenthau can be seen as a value relativist, which Loriaux (1992, 416) also states. However, as Murray (1996, 104) argues, Morgenthau is being misunderstood on this issue. Regarding the survival of the nation as the prime moral principle, Murray argues that this is actually a Christian principle and he interprets Morgenthau for saying the following: “The statesman cannot sacrifice the well-being of others in order to preserve his” (Murray 1996, 104). Furthermore, Murray argues that Morgenthau’s principle is not the same as *raison d’état*, as Morgenthau argues that political actions must be adjusted to the universal transcending moral principles as much as possible (Murray 1996, 100). My critique of Murray’s argument is that anyone can claim that a particular act was the best possible in relation to the transcending moral principles wherefore Morgenthau’s principle is closer to *raison d’état* than Murray argues. My argument would be that it is clear that Morgenthau does not defend his IP from moral principles, but I will argue that Morgenthau can still be morally defended if it is a “luxury” (Loriaux 1992, 410) for the statesman to be able to do moral actions, and therefore it become necessary to prioritize. When such a prioritizing is done, there is no longer a situation of relativism. Morgenthau gives top priority to the survival of the nation. This is morally defensible as territorial and nation states exist, wherefore peace in the world is synonymous with peace (power balance) among these states. Peace in the form of stability is the goal for Morgenthau which can also be seen in that he wants to avoid the outermost consequence of power politics - namely war.

Thus, instead of being a value relativist, Morgenthau is a kind of absolutist since, first, he has an absolute good as goal which is power balance; second, he argues that it is *only* through power balance policies that this stability or peace (periodically) can be achieved. However, this does not mean that Morgenthau argues that the statesman has got a moral purpose, but on the other hand his statesman’s role is not without values.

Murray writes that Morgenthau joins an Augustinian understanding of policy (Murray 1996, 107), but this can hardly be aimed at Morgenthau’s views in *Politics Among Nations* since Augustine argues that a statesman has a moral purpose. Augustine’s view is, on the other hand, more in line with Morgenthau’s later views in *The Problem and National Interest* from 1962 where Morgenthau argues: “Political action can be defined as an attempt to realize moral values through the medium of politics, that is, power” (Murray 1996, 98). I

will argue that the problem with Murray is that he goes backwards and seems to try to argue that Morgenthau has *always* had this view. The quote above seen together with what Morgenthau writes in *Politics Among Nations* from 1954, for example: “Ethics in the abstract judges action by its conformity with the moral law; political ethics judges action by its political consequences” (Morgenthau 1973, 10), show that these views are incompatible. From the latter quote it is clear the usual transcending ethics should not determine political actions; political actions can therefore not be assumed to be actions with a moral purpose. And as Morgenthau writes in *Scientific Man vs. Power Politics*: “Political ethics is indeed the ethics of doing evil” (Morgenthau 1946, 172).

Augustine writes (*City of God*, XIX: 14) that a Christian should love his neighbor and help him. Since the world is full of injustice, one has to intervene in the world, why it is necessary with some kind of leadership to control this.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Augustine finds it necessary to let some people rule over other people, even though this results in “rule through coercion” (Loriaux 1992, 406). This is not God’s original plan for man, but it is nevertheless necessary due to the injustices in the society. Augustine is therefore more radical in terms of the statesman’s moral obligations and the statesman’s role is different from the role he has to Morgenthau. Augustine believes that the statesman should perform morally good actions that can improve some of the injustices in the society and secure an earthly peace and order, which according to Augustine is good and a gift from God. It is best if the state is being led by Christians since mixing the city of God with the terrestrial city results in, according to Niebuhr (1953, 130), that one avoids cynicism in IP. The Christian statesman however always meets moral dilemmas due to the injustices of the world. Therefore he cannot always act morally correct and sometimes he will have to choose another good or an evil in preference to a moral good.<sup>22</sup> However, Augustine did not permit an ends-justify-the means moral calculus (Heyking 2001, 139).

Augustine writes (*City of God*, XXI: 27) that man should do acts of mercy that correspond to his sins. These acts of mercy have according to Murray (1996, 89) the purpose of counterbalancing the “tough decisions” which a statesman must take. Morgenthau, on the other hand, believes that a statesman should be content by not being too evil and that he in moral dilemmas should choose the least evil. Therefore, to Augustine a statesman should feel a kind of *guilt* of acting evil which he can then do penance for, while he in Morgenthau’s view should be *content* if he manages to choose the least evil. Therefore the statesman in Morgenthau’s view does not have a moral obligation other than securing the nation’s existence and position. On the contrary the statesman, according to Augustine, must through



moral acts improve the injustices in the world and he should also protect true justice. These views have a significant importance for their view about war.

### *War*

Augustine argues that if a state is being threatened or attacked by another state it does not itself justify that the state defends itself using violence. The reason is that Christians first and foremost are citizens of heaven and the most important thing for a man is to become a citizen here (*City of God*, XV: 1). Furthermore he assumes that everybody seeks peace and if the earthly peace is an unjust peace it matters less if it is destroyed, it will just be replaced by a new earthly peace. Therefore, Augustine argues, a state should not always defend itself against an attack. Earthly peace is good, so peace is better served by surrender than by defense (Loriaux 1992, 411-412). On the contrary Morgenthau believes that a state's sovereignty should be respected. His view is based on the idea that a state takes part in a system of power balance and the system is being disturbed if one of the elements in the balance disappears. Hence, also Morgenthau wishes to serve an earthly peace but the difference between him and Augustine is that Morgenthau ties this to preserving the state.

Augustine believes that a defense war is just if it brings an end to an offence of justice and to Augustine the true justice is that man is not removed from the true God and the resulting moral qualities. Loriaux (1992, 413) adds to this and writes that Augustine believes that a defense war is just if the state under attack is a Christian state and then Loriaux asks: "What is it, then, about the empire's conversion to Christianity that justifies its defense by violent means?" (Loriaux 1992, 413). The answer is that it is a Christian duty to show care for one's non-Christian neighbor and therefore interfere in politics to achieve a better earthly peace and order. The Christian is capable of this since he knows the true peace - God's peace. To do this the Christian can give people a moral education (Loriaux 1992, 414) which should promote a civic virtue. To Augustine, virtue is however a question of the right order in man's relationship to God. Virtue therefore has its source in God's love and the justification recovers man so he can exercise good deeds in the Christian sense (Larsen 1996, 18-20). Civic virtue in Augustine's use of the word does therefore not have anything directly to do with national interests, this is part of the Roman virtue-concept. On the contrary, modern democracy could be argued to be an expression of virtue since it includes civil, political, and social rights, which can be assumed to be an expression of the Christian norms of charity and equality among people. According to Loriaux, it is the presence of this civic virtue, this supreme good, which justifies the use of violence in the defense of the Christian state and it is the church that

promotes this good (Loriaux 1992, 415). It is therefore, according to Augustine, the domestic affairs that determine if a state has a right to defend itself with violent means. Heyking seems to agree and writes the following about Augustine: “That he considered freedom and equality proper objects of love indicates that he considered democratic loves good, but easily corruptible without being mixed by nondemocratic loves. For example, he affirms the love of freedom understood as independence from external attack and tyranny. He praises the Roman ability to secure independence (*CD* 5.12) and the Roman people’s ability to eject the Tarquin kings even though he notes they were more motivated by their own lust for domination (*CD* 3.15-16)” (Heyking 2001, 103). Hence, preservation of freedom and democracy justifies defending oneself with violent means.

Morgenthau, on the other hand, believes that domestic affairs are not determining factors for deciding if a state’s sovereignty can be defended with violence. Instead the focus is on the distribution of power and geographical circumstances (Morgenthau 1946, 62). Morgenthau therefore serves peace in a different way than Augustine since peace, to Morgenthau is synonymous with power balance between existing states.

This difference of views about how to preserve peace has roots in that Morgenthau and Augustine have different views of what peace is. To Morgenthau, peace is power balance and stability and a permanent peace cannot be achieved. Augustine, on the other hand, describes two kinds of peace, the earthly peace and God’s peace. The first is good and a gift from God as it gives a (periodical) stability and order; but God’s peace is the everlasting peace. Morgenthau’s view of peace is therefore analogue to Augustine’s view of an earthly peace, while Morgenthau is not concerned with God’s peace in IP.

Augustine does not believe that God’s peace can be achieved on this earth but the earthly peace can be moved towards God’s peace. This view, I find is analogue to Augustine’s view of the possibility of healing man through grace. It is therefore decisive that Christians get involved in politics as it is through this it becomes possible to approach God’s peace since only Christians know is. It is furthermore only Christians who through faith have the true wisdom. Moreover God’s peace is the supreme good and ought to be sought for its own sake. One could argue that Augustine’s statesman confronts the earthly peace with an ideal - the unattainable peace of God. This is in opposition with Morgenthau’s view that one cannot change the world by confronting it with an abstract ideal (Morgenthau 1973, 10).

What to Augustine justifies that the Christian state defends itself using violence is the presence of civic virtue. This civic virtue is being promoted through moral education. Civic virtue is a secular political virtue that brings the peace in the earthly city closer to that

which is in the heavenly city (Loriaux 1992, 414-415). This means that the notion ‘Christian state’ does not mean that all the citizens are Christians, or that the state is perfect, since it would then not be necessary to *promote* civic virtue. Furthermore Loriaux writes that the Christian must be in charge of moral education. The Christian state is therefore one in which the church has the possibility to teach people the true moral which will then promote civic virtue. Here there seems to be a contradiction in Augustine. Elsewhere Augustine argues that man without the grace just gets worse by being confronted with the law: “For prohibition increases longing for a forbidden action when righteousness is not loved enough for the delight in it to be victorious over the desire to sin. And there is no help but the grace of God to ensure our love of true righteousness and our delight in it” (*City of God*, XIII: 5). However just before Augustine began the composition of *City of God*, he wrote: “In the most opulent and illustrious Empire of Rome, God has shown how great is the influence of even civil virtues without true religion, in order that it might be understood that, when this is added to such virtues, men are made citizens of another commonwealth, of which the king is truth, the law is love, and the duration is eternity” (McCracken 2000, *lxvi*). I will argue that this contradiction can to some extent be eliminated if there in the moral education also lies an element of preaching and conversion of man. The church should therefore confirm and bring up people.<sup>23</sup> Another possibility is that Augustine across his works discovered what Luther later called the double use of the law (*duplex usus legis*).<sup>24</sup>

Augustine is more positive to intervention than Morgenthau. This is connected with Augustine’s view of the Christian state’s right to defend itself with violence and that the Christian statesman cannot be indifferent to what happens to Christians and the civic virtue in other states. This is connected with that Christianity and Christian moral are objective goods, and that God’s city, in the spiritual sense is transboundary and it is this city that is the Christians’ prime homeland. If Christians in other states are being threatened, it is allowed to intervene as one is helping one’s fellow citizens. Morgenthau would not agree with this. Even the later Morgenthau argues (Murray 1996, 1) that tolerance and acknowledgement of others right to pursue their own understanding of what is right is a fundamental moral necessity.

Hence, Morgenthau believes that a state has always the right to defend itself using violence against an aggressor, hence to him, using a concept from Augustine, the state is to Morgenthau in itself the supreme good. On the contrary Augustine makes the right to defend oneself depending on if the state contains the supreme good which is civic virtue. Morgenthau would not be in favour of intervening for instance a dictator state unless for reason of securing a power balance, but Augustine seems not to care about non-Christians states’ sovereignty,

which Morgenthau would disagree with since it might affect the power balance. To this, Augustine would probably argue that if this change of power balance would threaten a Christian state, it would justify an intervention. But Augustine tries to avoid distinguishing between various non-Christian states. Morgenthau believes that any nation has a right to choose her own moral values, a state should not intervene another state. Augustine might argue that this tolerance is the same at letting people down and letting the absolute truth down since this puts a greater emphasis on an earthly *temporal* peace instead of giving people the opportunity to get part in the *everlasting* peace.

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Augustine and Morgenthau share a skepticism about the possibility for fundamental qualitative progress in IP on the basis of the 1<sup>st</sup> image perspective. “This scepticism [...] is the characteristic and even definitional attribute of realists thought” (Loriaux 1992, 401). This kind of realism is different from neorealism and structuralism, where the latter perceives IP as structurally the same as market economy, where the units (people) are able of performing rational strategic actions (Loriaux 1992, 408; Waltz 1979, 82-85). Both Morgenthau (1946, 12) and Augustine (Niebuhr 1953, 124-126) disagree with the assumption that man can perform rational actions in the scientific sense. Loriaux (1992, 409-410) believes that the similarity between classical realism (Morgenthau) and neorealism (Waltz) is greater than between classical realism and Augustine. This is due to that Morgenthau uses the Marx inspired Niebuhr’s argument that man’s ability to do moral actions is subject to structural ties. Man’s actions in the political life are opposed by the society’s tendency to divide itself into groups (states). Charity rules within the groups as a kind of collective egoism (patriotism). It is therefore the structure that invites strategic speculations. This is in opposition to Augustine’s view that the individual acts evil/strategic both within the group and outside. But for the national level Morgenthau argues (1946, 96) that it is possible with peaceful relations since the values and interests that people have in common are more important to them than what they fight about. I will argue that even though Morgenthau might be inspired by Niebuhr’s argument, Morgenthau’s premise is still that man is born with an aspiration for power, regardless of whether man lives in a society or not. Hence the main reason for Morgenthau’s skepticism is his belief in an evil nature of man. This is very similar to Augustine. Morgenthau and Augustine are, however, different from each other in relation to how they *argue* for this conclusion, i.e. the skepticism about the possibility for fundamental qualitative progress in IP. Morgenthau has, according to Loriaux, has a touch of 3<sup>rd</sup> image,

while Augustine does not since he does not let man-made structures such as states decide if it is appropriate with for instance interventions.

Augustine and Morgenthau build their realism on a negative view of man, hence the 1<sup>st</sup> image approach. On the basis of this they believe that there will not be any fundamental qualitative progress in IP. Augustine's more optimistically view of man's possibility of change with the help of God however might make minor changes in IP possible, but IP and completely just actions are incompatible. To Augustine, this has the consequence that the statesman must use transcendental moral norms as guidelines. Himself and his human natural love for peace is not enough to obtain/preserve peace since he without the grace of God only will be focused on himself. By the help of God (conversion and norms) the statesman can to some extent *heal* the evil. Morgenthau, on the other hand, believes that the statesman must *counterbalance* the evil, by, *inter alia*, accepting it. The statesman should work for a power balance and successful political actions are actions that lead to power balance between states. This is however not the same as utilitarian consequence ethics since political actions should still be evaluated after the transcendental moral norms, but the "verdict" has not any significance to whether or not the act should be carried out. The early Morgenthau argues that if all statesmen think in terms of power balance it is likely that there are periods of stability. However the later Morgenthau seems to be closer to Augustine on this issue.

To Augustine, the statesman has a moral obligation to try to improve the national order to resemblance the peace he knows with God. Heyking argues, based on the fact that Augustine praises Cicero for stating that pity is a virtue, as follows: "This indicates that Augustine believed that politics, in rare cases as its best, provides a foreshadow or intimation of the city of God" (Heyking 2001, 87). This means that the statesman should implement laws that are morally good. Furthermore the statesman must defend his state with violent means if his state contains the supreme good - civic virtue and the everlasting life. This is also the reason for defending the civic duty in other states and why interventions are allowed. Augustine's view has as consequence that the national loyalty must be subordinate to the transcendent. Niebuhr (1953, 134) writes that narrow national aspiration in the longer run can lead to self destruction since it blocks for the opportunity for making an alliance of for instance free states in relation to an undemocratic super power. This is in opposition to Morgenthau who argues that a moral criterion in IP will make IP even more insecure and unpredictable. Since any act in IP is evil the statesman would here in *blind* change one evil with another that might be worse in terms of instability. By having the nation as one's supreme loyalty a power balance (peace) can be maintained. Morgenthau's statesman's role is

to ensure a power balance why a defence war can also be justified. One therefore has to twist Morgenthau to find a moral purpose in his statesman's duty to defend the nation's interests with violence.

A further interpretation of Augustine might be that if we are indifferent to fellow human beings in other countries we do not own Augustine's civic virtue and therefore we do not have a right to exist as a state either. Furthermore, today, states exist, why a (temporarily) peace necessarily must be attached to these states. Morgenthau does not rule out the possibility that the nation states one day will disappear; the states are merely part of a historical development (Morgenthau 1973, 9-10).

This illustrates that even within the classical realist and first image thinking there are big differences on key concepts. In regard to Augustine and Morgenthau, one of the main differences between them is on the question of the possibility of *some improvements* in the nature of man, hence the world, or if counter-balance is all we can hope for. This difference of opinion has resemblance with a key thing that led to the Reformation in the 1500's, namely if man is a complete sinner or partially good partially evil. In the 1500's this led to separations, while in the classical school of IP thought, it has not since both Morgenthau and Augustine usually are being placed in the same category. Niebuhr's (1953, 124) view of Augustine as the first realist might be true, but the differences between him and Morgenthau are as great and fundamental as the differences that led to the Reformation in the 1500's. But if we see their skepticism as being focused on the premise<sup>25</sup> rather than the conclusion of IP, they are more similar, but nevertheless even their shared belief in the evil nature of man leads to very different conclusions on the question of moral and just war.

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## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> I owe many thanks to my supervisor Jean Monnet Professor Søren Dosenrode, Aalborg University, Denmark.

<sup>2</sup> Books 1-5 contain the argument against those who content that the worship of the pagan gods is profitable for happiness in the present life. Books 6-10 contain the argument against the view that worship of the pagan gods would obtain happiness in the life to come (McCracken 2000, *lxxvii*).

<sup>3</sup> References to Augustine's "City of God" is given as for instance (*City of God*, XI: 15) to make it easier for find the reference in other translations than the one I use in this article.

<sup>4</sup> Augustine was here in opposition to the monk Pelagius who thought that man is in possession of a free will and therefore naturally would be capable of and willing to do good. Salvation is, to Pelagius, furthermore achieved by man's own desire without help from a divine grace (McCracken 2000, *xli*).

<sup>5</sup> On this issue, there was however reached a partial agreement in the *Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification*, 1998, between the *Lutheran World Federation* and the *Roman Catholic Church*.

<sup>6</sup> When Augustine writes about a 'state' he does not mean 'state' in today's meaning. The present territorial and nation states in Europe have only existed since the Peace of Westphalia 1648, arising after the thirty-year war. Here, peace was reached through negotiation for the first time in history, it created the first European borders which formed sovereign states, and it put an end to the Roman Empire. When Augustine lived, Rome ruled but was heading for disaster. This meant that the church had to take on a larger part of the political responsibility as the power of the Emperor shrank.



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<sup>7</sup> Augustine writes (*City of God*, XIX: 15) that originally man was not suppose to rule over other men, but only over the animals. However, injustices in the home and the world make it necessary that some to command over others: “For they command not through lust for rule but through dutiful concern for others, not with pride in exercising princely rule but with mercy in providing for others” (*City of God*, XIX: 14).

<sup>8</sup> This causes Augustine to cry to God: “From my necessities deliver thou me!” (*City of God*, XIX: 6).

<sup>9</sup> Morgenthau uses ‘state’ and ‘nation’ as synonym. Realists operate implicitly with a notion of all states being nearly nation states (Wæver 1992, 58).

<sup>10</sup> Morgenthau uses ‘foreign policy’ and ‘IP’ as synonyms. This is in contrast with the neorealist Waltz’ third image. Waltz argues that reduction theory (i.e. Morgenthau) explains international outcomes through elements and combinations of elements at the national or subnational levels (Waltz 1979, 47). Waltz therefore defines a theory of foreign policy as a theory of the national level (Waltz 1979, 61). Contrary to this Waltz argues that one should look at IP from a system theory angle: “A system theory of international policies deals with the forces that are in play at the international, and not at the national, level” (Waltz 1979, 60).

<sup>11</sup> Books 1-5 contain the argument against those who content that the worship of the pagan gods is profitable for happiness in the present life. Books 6-10 contain the argument against the view that worship of the pagan gods would obtain happiness in the life to come (McCracken 2000, *lxxvii*).

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<sup>16</sup> Augustine writes (*City of God*, XIX: 15) that originally man was not suppose to rule over other men, but only over the animals. However, injustices in the home and the world make it necessary that some to command over others: “For they command not through lust for rule but through dutiful concern for

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others, not with pride in exercising princely rule but with mercy in providing for others” (*City of God*, XIX: 14).

<sup>17</sup> This causes Augustine to cry to God: “From my necessities deliver thou me!” (*City of God*, XIX: 6).

<sup>18</sup> Morgenthau uses ‘state’ and ‘nation’ as synonym. Realists operate implicitly with a notion of all states being nearly nation states (Wæver 1992, 58).

<sup>19</sup> Morgenthau uses ‘foreign policy’ and ‘IP’ as synonyms. This is in contrast with the neorealist Waltz’ third image. Waltz argues that reduction theory (i.e. Morgenthau) explains international outcomes through elements and combinations of elements at the national or subnational levels (Waltz 1979, 47). Waltz therefore defines a theory of foreign policy as a theory of the national level (Waltz 1979, 61). Contrary to this Waltz argues that one should look at IP from a system theory angle: “A system theory of international policies deals with the forces that are in play at the international, and not at the national, level” (Waltz 1979, 60).

<sup>20</sup> Also Loriaux mentions that Augustine’s skepticism regarding a lasting peace is connected with that there are many wills which are spread away from what a lasting peace demands (Loriaux 1992, 404). Furthermore Augustine believed that as long as there are governments, these will do evil since man originally was not suppose to rule over other men (Loriaux 1992, 406; Niebuhr 1953, 128-129).

<sup>21</sup> Niebuhr also discusses this and argues that Augustine’s realism partly rests on Augustine’s observation that social peace and order seem to be established by a dominant group within some level of community (Niebuhr 1953, 129).

<sup>22</sup> This is what Loriaux (1992, 417) describes using Augustine’s words as “man’s miserable lot”. Heyking argues in this connection the following: “Augustine is usually seen to think that one cannot preserve one’s virtue, or at least one can keep one’s soul only if one follows the absolute rules of engagement as set by the Scripture and by the Church. Taking extreme actions in extreme circumstances is forbidden because forbearance and submission purify the soul. ... Augustine though not denying the virtue of forbearance, thought that one can know the right and good, and act upon it, through right-by-nature, and that moral and political reasoning is not restricted to the application of universal rules to all circumstances. His treatment of political reasoning is considered where following the letter of the law would have disastrous consequences in rare circumstances” (Heyking 2001, 110). Hence, the exceptions to the absolute rule fulfil the law’s purpose.

<sup>23</sup> The church therefore has a central and top role in the Christian state. This seems to be in contrast with how Larsen describes Augustine’s view of the how Christianity should spread. Christianity began in the lower parts of the society so that none in this world can boast. It started with a simple fisherman and from here moves to the senator and then the emperor. In this way society, little by little, is being permeated with Christianity (Larsen 1991, 30). Hence, to Augustine it is problematic if the preaching is too much controlled from the top since the top might become arrogant. Either Augustine is not consistent across his works, either Loriaux or Larsen misunderstands him, or the explanation might be,

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which I will argue, that Larsen describes how Christianity evolves in the society from *the start* when the first people are being converted and Loriaux describes Augustine's view of the *further development* of Christianity where Christianity *has* actually penetrated the top of the society. However, as Larsen argues, it is important for Augustine that "the great in the world" cannot boast of the spread of Christianity wherefore this part might be in contradiction with what Loriaux writes about the church having a central role.

<sup>24</sup> In Luther's *Lectures on Galatians* from 1531 he mentions two uses of the law: The first is the civic use (*usus civilis*), which is God's ordained civil laws to protect and to restrain transgression. The second use is the theological use (*usus theologicus*) which serves to increase transgressions especially in the consciousness to reveal to man his sin and the well-deserved wrath of God; hence drive man to Christ.

<sup>25</sup> Wæver (1992, 43) argues that to see realism as skepticism is looking at its *conclusion* rather than its *premise*.