

Return from Exile: The Study and Disproof of the Reasons of Omitting Religion from International Relations

Document Type: Research Article

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Received: 2018/09/05

Accepted: 2018/11/21

Abstract

Religion is the biggest absent of International Relations' science. From the official formation start of this science in the West as a single academic field of studying, religion and religious studies have been forgotten by most of scholars, as far as it can be known that international relations is the most religion separated branch of social modernized sciences. Knowing about the reason of this long time and controversial absence, usually it is citing to five reasons which are the requirements of the modernization's process in western societies, an inclusive consolidation and acceptance of religion separation principle (secularism), the Westphalia Order of the International System, the domination of the ultra-theory of rationalism on this study field, and the materialistic nature of the mainstream theories in international relations. The current article is trying to study all these reasons, and disproof them, and to claim that deleting the religion from the science of international relations does not have a rational excuse and credibility because of the discredit of the loyalty for modernization single line process, the outbreak of serious doubts about the correctness of religion separation principle and the start of post-secularism, the start of Westphalia order's deterioration and entering the international system into post-Westphalia era, the sunset of the ultra-theory of rationalism's domination with the appearance of competitor ultra-theories, and also the formation of various theories and the decrease of the monopoly of the mainstream. Therefore, it is necessary to have a deep understanding of international relations by knowing about the position of religion.

Keywords:

The Global Resurgence of Religion, Multiple Modernizations, Post-Westphalia, Post-Secularism, Theoretical Pluralism.

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Introduction

Religion as one of the oldest existed institutions in human societies which have a remarkable effect on the behavior and function of people have been absent in studies of international relation's science for a long time. Despite of studying various subjects, theorists of this originally western science keep silent mostly in facing with religion, as far as in many classic books of international relations' glossary there is no sign of it. This ignorance is sometimes strange and unjustified as far as apart from materialistic theories, even semantic theories which had a remarkable role and authority in the field of international relations in recent decades, and also which emphasized on the role of social components such as ideas, norms, perceptions and cultures in the formation of the actor's behavior and their decisions, easily neglect the role of religion with all its' effects on social arrangements.

For answering to the reason of deleting religion from international relations' science, scholars usually mention five factors:

First, modernization process in western societies and separation from traditions and pre-modern subjects like religion and division of society between public and private; second, consolidation of secularism as a comprehensive and Uncontroversial principle of social sciences. Third, the establishment of Westphalia orders after 1648 A.D. as the state-centered order that state was a reference to religion in a territory. Fourth, the dominance of rationalism over international relations studies that prohibit reference to any Metaphysical, Normative, valued propositions and any facts that cannot be check with observation and experimental experiment. Fifth, materialism nature of international relations mainstream (i.e. realism and liberalism) that has no interest in any spiritual and semantic subjects like religion. These five factors were effective in the marginalization of religion in international relation studies. Now we want to study whether stand of international relation about religion is still exclusion, ignorance, and

marginalization? Or it is plausible to pay attention in religious in the westernmost and the most secular subcategory of social sciences?

For answering this question, this article wants to show that reasons for deleting religion from theorizing and practical arenas of international relations have flaws nowadays and discredited. The first reason is questioning one-linear modernity and proposing multi-linear modernizations. Second, some doubts appeared in universalism of secularism and beginning of the post-secular era that knows secularism for western Christian societies. Third, Westphalia state-centered order eroded and in post-Westphalia order, we saw decreasing in the undeniable governance of states and non-state actors have more potential for acting. Fourth, the sunset of rationalism theory and appearance of rethinking in Ontology and epistemology. Fifth, subcategories of international studies expanded and critics of the mainstream in international relations paid attention to semantic and immaterial subjects .

In result of this changes and aftermath of landmarks in the international arena in recent decades including Islamic revolution of Iran, 11/9 and appearance of Islamic fundamentalism it seems that not only ignorance of religion in international relation studies is irrational but also it is necessary for understanding the international environment. Because unlike predictions nowadays religion came from private arena to public and religious entities in internal and international levels are effective and for interpretation of them we need sentimental, identical and normative components that religion made them. Therefore continuation of religion ignorance only results in incompetence insights of phenomena and developments.

Hence, in recent years we met religion resurgent in the international arena and return of that in academic discourses and even it turns out some courses like international political theology. So nowadays fields for religious theorizing in international relations is provided more than any time.

Critiques and reject of reasons of deleting religion from international relations are:

1. Reject of the One-Linear Way of Modernization

Western man in process of tradition to modernity marginalized religion and wanted with relying upon rationality and Experimental Science realize the universe. Thus in recent centuries, it imagined that there are a cause and effect relation between separation from religion and modernity and that is the one-linear way that western societies paced and that is unique way Ahead of traditional societies. In the other words, it looked like that progress and economic welfare Necessarily is achievable through secularism so deterioration of religion in modernization was unchangeable.

However unlike all predictions and theories of western scholars, not only religion not deteriorated but also in the twentieth century (as Peak of flourishing of modernity) we met the global resurgence of religion that consequences of that could be seen in all the world .

An important point is that resurgence of religion is not exclusive for Islamic world or eastern societies (appearance of political Islam, Islamic revolution of Iran, religious fundamentalism and jihadi groups) but in developed western countries also religious groups again found an effective role in the public arena.

Basically, we can see a global resurgence of religion as part of the big crisis in flaws of enlightenment arena. In fact, the return of man to faith and religion can be seen as critiques of the culture of modernity and mechanical life. Problems and flaws in secular rationality and experimental science in answering human challenges made people in different societies to rethink and reassess relation between religion and modernity. In other words resurgence of religion in developed countries represents turning away from modernity and what leave theology and sacred.

The global resurgence of religion challenged our understanding from one-linear modernity and generally what is being modern and proposed possibility of multiple ways for reaching development and progress. Today, in postmodernism situation there is an idea that western modernity can specify factors of development for all societies has been delegitimized. Now

there is a question: whether secularism and marginalizing religion is an Inseparable effect of modernity or it is a historical phenomenon that occurred in a specific time? Can't we propose multiple modernism as multiple plans for development in multicultural global society? If the answer is yes, then there is no necessity for the universality of western ideas about religion, culture, and values. Secularism formed in Europe and expanded then assumed that all parts of the world should be secular for development. But we can say secularism instead of being an inseparable part of modernity, it can be a historical phenomenon that only applied in Europe and cant prescribed for all parts of the world.

In particular, about religion, realities in the postmodern world show that unlike modernization theory that Believes secularism is a universal value of development, religion in other parts of the world is important yet because both people are religious and religion has effects on political and social structures .

In most south countries there are negative reactions toward western political ideologies and norms because they are against religious traditions. Even in the west, there is clear strengthen of religion from 1990 that can't be ignored. For instance, 11 September 2001 event made western international relations scholars revise the role of religion and made ignorance of religion and believers that won't change the world impossible.

In result, discrediting one-linear western modernity and recognition of multiple ways of development in the postmodern world led to some scholars named 20th century "the last modern century."

In this new emerged situation, the universal resurgence of religion and appearance of postmodernism Represents collapse of faith to modernism method for world understanding. Then there is a growing tendency in international relations to religion for realizing the world. Therefore we can see a universal resurgence of religion as restoration of religion for realizing multiple modernisms for the postmodern world and not return to past traditions.

2. Doubt in the Universality of Secularism

Though western scholars from the enlightenment era tried to propose secularism perfect and universal, in recent years resurgence of religion and increasing role of that in public sector made doubts in secularism and Sociologists of religion that in past assumed secularism for realizing the world, revised their opinions. Some scholars like Talal Asad say secularism is for Europe and North America and cannot be used in other parts of the world and cannot interpret the relationship between politics and religion .

In fact, secularism was ideas in western elite minds that tried to generalize to an ideology. In the other words trivialize religion in politics is part of western culture and sociability in western countries and examples of this idea are in western societies. For instance, surveys show that secularization term is exclusive for the western theology of Christianity (come from “saeculum”) that has no Equation in other religions even in eastern Christianity. So western secularization is only for the specific situation of Christianity in Medieval era and cannot generalized for all geographies including Islamic world .

Secularism crisis and its failure to explain new changes in the world is overt for international relations scholars and alluded them to the vacuum of neglecting religion. It can be said it was imagined that religion exiled to the private sphere, suddenly in final decades of the 20th century become focal in world changes and penetrated in international relations and surprised western theorists. More than anything else, 11/9 event and World Trade Towers crumbling in heart of modern world made theorist surprised and paying attention to religion. 11/9 has shown that against the idea of dogma secularism, believers can act and have a purpose in global realm and their action can have broad consequences. Robert Keohane said: “11/9 revealed that mainstream theories in global politics are secular. They neglected the

effect of religion while actions that change the world are originated from religion”.

It seems that what was approved by 11/9 event was that religion still is a powerful force in the world politics and scholars and politicians neglected it. Since then, an increasingly Awareness formed in international relations about secularist bias. This bias explains why in most histories of international relations scholars ignored the important role of religion in global politics.

Altogether, we can say religion resurgence process since last decades of the 20th century till now has challenged universalism of secularism and privatization of religion and made the relation between religion and sacred with public and private politics inevitable.

The resurgence of religion has many consequences for the role of individuals, non-state actors, political parties, religious organizations and Global politics. In this respect, we can Consider religion interested in international relations as world seen how imam Khomeini’s fatwa about Salman Rushdie made huge waves in Muslim countries and deferent levels of the international system. So we should acknowledge that resurgence of religion globalized because it’s not exclusive to only one region or country but we can see its signs in many places such as Latin America, Europe, and Asia. Also, this phenomenon is expanding in many societies with deferent cultures and traditions and various levels of economic development. Should not restrict this resurgence only in poor or less developed countries but even in the USA as the most modern and developed country, we can see religion as a powerful factor in politics. Hence, we can say if in the 1950s and 1960s (in the summit of modernization theory) religion (including Rituals, Procedures, ideas, doctrines, paradigms, and structures) was marginalized and has a very little effect in politics, today it is considered as an important part of public and private life. So western scholars should confess (though with reluctance) that religion is an undeniable dimension of world politics and one of the megatrends in the 21st century.

3. The Transition to Post Westphalia Order

One of the important factors of deleting religion from modern societies was the dominance of state-centered Westphalia order on international arena from 1648. In that order, management of public arena absolutely was in hands of governments and with delegitimized intervene of religious activists in politics then marginalized religion. In result, emerging of secularism was an inevitable consequence of Westphalia order because that order can't accept any other social institution within the absolute sovereignty of the government. But this order in last decades of 20th century changed under the influence of globalization.

The most important consequence of globalization was the change in Westphalia order on the international arena and questioning the absolute sovereignty of nation-states. With unprecedented expanding of states interactions with more complexity and emerging of new non-state actors like international and Transnational organizations and transnational companies, state weakened and had no absolute power to do anything that wants. Now nation-state is not exclusive determiner anymore and its absolute sovereignty that was a heritage of Westphalia order limited by powerful states and transnational institutions.

Some scholars believe this fundamental changes in international politics are a transition from Westphalia era to post-Westphalia. They believe in the current era, Westphalia order that founded with an absolute will of nation-state gradually eroding and replacing with a globalized world that states, in order to benefit from the environment, should disregard part of their sovereignty .

In domestic arena also states are increasingly limited with civilians and dynamic institutions of civil society. In result of improvements in communication of civilians and form of institutions in civil society i.e. NGO's, the government are not absolute ruler on their civilians anymore and changed to limited, responsible and lawful collections. People as well changed and aren't followers of their rulers but have awareness of their

rights and have a proactive role in governance and beside their national identity like other identities like local and groups.

Globalization and post-Westphalian order have landmark consequences for the role of religion in national and global level. Religion facilitated forming and strengthening social identities. Globalization resurgent marginalized religious and cultural communities and help them to insist on their identities, beliefs, and values in international relations. So when the authority of government weakened, there is a good field for global resurgence of religion and empowerment of marginalized communities. Globalization through help in forming and cohesion of transnational religious groups in deferent countries that have bounds together in various levels of nationality and sub nationality facilitated Growth of transnational religion and Caused proximity of Followers of various religions.

Therefore in the post-Westphalian order, Decline in exclusive power of government helped to the promotion of religion in public arena because the government was not exclusive governance institution in society but is one of many institutions and in trans and sub-national levels limited by other institutions like those in civil society and religious institutions.

Finally, due to globalization changes, it seems religions returned from Westphalia exile and another time became effective in global politics as far as we see a global resurgence of religion and de-secularization in the world. This situation has challenged international relations studies and may cause revising in hypothesis and theories of Westphalian order. Because In contrast insights of western scholars, social understanding of religion still is alive in many developed countries that are odd to many modern era facts that religion is ideas and doctrines for the private sector. So this new approach toward religion shall be part of any post-Westphalian order.

4. Reflectivist Emerging in International Relation Studies

Emerging of reflectivist theories in international relations studies was a turning point and very important for evolving of this knowledge. This made

scholars revise some hypothesis about the meaning of science, scientific proposition, the nature of identifiable entities and methods for recognizing them. This process also weakened the dominance of rationalism. Reflectivists disproved positivist methods for social sciences and believe that only way for understanding intentions of social actors is interpretation and Hermeneutics. So Hermeneutics methods become the main tool for reflectivists in research .

According to Hermeneutics approach, politics is complex of meanings that human-made in the social arena and Based on those meanings made relations understandable. So researchers should grasp any act of any agent in social and cultural backgrounds of that act. Because Lifeworld of men only can be understood in inter mind interpretations of social phenomena and here is where identities of human forms. In result, basically, the purpose of social studies is understanding of the meaning that human reference to their acts. This purpose is achievable through entering into the mind of an individual. This means for understanding intentions and motives of agents we should be in their situation and know them as much as possible.

Now we should see what are the consequences of this massive trans-theory changes, and transition from the fundamental hypothesis of rationalism for religion in international relations studies? It seems advent and Prevalence of Hermeneutics made new path for international relations theories to pay attention to religion or even made it Inevitable because in one hand, recognizing individuals (like imam Khomeini, ayatollah Khamenei, Seyed Hassan Nasraallah or bin laden), states (like Islamic republic) and non-state religious organizations (i.e. Hezbollah, Hamas or al-Qaida) in regional and international levels is important and so this is the duty of international relations researchers and on the other hand on basis of hermeneutics realizing intentional and meaningful action of them Required understanding their lifeworld. In the other words familiarity with the worldview of religious actors is a master key for interpreting meanings of their actions.

Basically, if we accept reflectivism Epistemology that individual and social values are very important in Recognition of an actor then we should accept that for realizing actions of a religious actor there is no way except cognition of his intellectual system that Originated from religion.

Therefore, mainstream theories of international relations inability for understanding the global resurgence of religion requires revising fundamental Ontology and epistemology hypothesis of this science and theorists revise their previous claims about the marginal situation of religion. Today, it is obvious that rationalism more than enough is under influence of hypothesis of western modernity that made it unable to correct realizing from effects of religion on international relations. The dominance of materialism approach made some deep flaws in comprehending the act of religious actors .

So there is no doubt that we need some theories that go beyond conventional theories that can't interpret acts of religious actors in correct way. It seems reflectivists with interpreting approach have a good opportunity for comprehension in this paradigm .

According to Hermeneutics approach, secularism is not a theory but it is a story that we tell for how our world supposed to be. Now if we assume social facts only if interpreted is in our mind, then we can say that fact is on basis of our fundamental stories. One of that stories is that development and enlightenment are on basis of liberal and secular modernity. So Interpretationists belief that social theory could not have a comprehensive understanding of society and history. In result, we are in a world that many theories exist and we could not compare them with each other. In the meantime, theology and religion have returned from exile and like other discourses of international relations, are part of political equations. For understanding, religions should not be neglected that religions and religious actors are in a totally different framework and for grasp their actions we should recognize pluralism as different theories interpret one fact in different ways.

5. Extension of the Subjective Studies in International Relations

Until the late twentieth century, religion was labeled as a “marginal” and “unimportant” issue in international relations studies. In the other words, they assume the effect of religion and a religious actor is very Insignificant that we can neglect them from our studies. They thought that without religion can interpret international system and politics of states .

However, the dominance of positivism and behaviorism on Academic circles in Europe and North America halted paying attention to some immaterial subjects like religion and culture in the framework of mainstream theories of international relations (realism and liberalism). In result, researchers of this branch of science have not shown any interest to religion in those days and now as far as even when faced with some religious phenomena like Islamic revolution of Iran they do not ignore their secularist habit and don't take religion and culture serious. Regularly this tight approach to international relations studies and ignorance of many courses in this paradigm causes to Inefficiency on practical realms like foreign policies of the United States of America in some regions of world i.e. Islamic countries. That mean when American policymakers choose liberalism or realism method for analyzing world issues, make many strategic mistakes because of ignorance of immaterial factors .

Despite subjects in international relations were very limited, in recent decades following emerging of new opposition theories like critical thinking, Post-structuralism, Constructivism, feminism and Post-colonialism boundaries of international relations studies expanded To the extent that social, cultural, normative and ideal issues come to it and become one of the most important issues in books, articles, and researches of international relations. For example nowadays, in contrast the past, there is much attention to cultural issues and been assumed that Cognitive Agents have important role in decision-making process of the human .

In result, there is an acceptance of religion and beliefs in international relations as a natural dimension of it and through this, there is a good field

for studying the role of religion in international relations. Beliefs and values are most important factors in actions of individuals on the international realm and have effects on states, organizations, non-state groups, jihadi militants and believers that make them very important for analyzing world politics.

Among the theories outside the mainstream of international relations, Social constructivism is paid more attention to the role of religion although prominent scholars of this theory don't pay any attention to religion individually because have a secular habit. Basically, constructivism Emphasizes on realizing social action from inside because it believes that rules, norms and constructing processes are what help to state actions in domestic and international arenas. So constructivists focus on how norms and identities form social actions of state and non-state actors. It means that if we want to know what state and non-state actors want, we should know they want which identities in the world and what is their purpose from social life.

From social constructivism perspective, identities, preferences, and interests of states aren't constant but they form through social interactions. So since religion and culture are important factors of forming identities and purpose of life in religious actors' minds, we can say constructivism has opened a way for studying the role of religion in actions states in international relations .

Thus, despite mainstream material theories don't have any interest in Inclusion of religion in their researches, but they missed their exclusion in international relations issues. Today, Dominant pluralism in this field made many issues that were marginal in the past important. So in this theoretical plural situation and decreasing in the monopoly of the mainstream studies, religion is also considered like other immaterial issues and eliminating it from international relations studies with the excuse of this not has good justifications and do not Conform with liberalism and realism has not rationality anymore.

Conclusion

In this article, we tried to revoke 5 reasons that western references of international relations say for justification of eliminating religion from their studies. The claim of the author was that nowadays that justifications revoked because of new big changes in the international arena.

If in the past secularism, marginalization of religion and separation from traditions were inevitable factors of modernity and development, nowadays in new forms of development one-linear idea of progress had questioned and made new fields for various versions of modernity and development Simultaneous with preservation of traditions and religious values.

If some days ago secularism was an Inclusive basic for all fields of social sciences today many had criticized this idea and scholars proposed returning of religion to public sector and beginning of the post-secularism era in western societies.

If in the past dominance of Westphalia order and exclusive authority of government in a society exiled religion to the private sector, today world is in post-Westphalian order that government in sub and transnational levels have some rivals like religious actors .

If in the past dominance of rationalism made international relations studies secure from Metaphysical, normative and value subjects now with emerging of reflectivism and promoting in hermeneutics and Post-structuralist and critical thinking theories epistemology and ontologies of rationalism has lost their dominance .

And if in the past international relations studies was limited by mainstream theories and don't pay any attention to issues like religion, now thematic variation emerged in international relations that this field includes many normative, Sentimental, Semantic and cultural issues that religions are one of them.

In result, neglecting religion in international relations is not reasonable anymore and Continuity of ignoring religion and religious worldview would be made this field failed in analyzing world changes.

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