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NASSEF Manabilang Adiong (www.Nassef.info)

**Founder, Philippine International Studies Organization
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Research Cohort (www.CoIRIS.org)**

**Religion, International Relations, and
'Philippine IR'**

Working Paper Series

**No. 180
July 2016**



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City University of Hong Kong

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*Indeed,
there could be no secular discipline
such as IR without 'religion' ...*

Timothy Fitzgerald¹

Religion, International Relations, and 'Philippine IR'

NASSEF Manabilang Adiong (www.Nassef.info)

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The term 'Philippine IR' does not assumed the nationalization of International Relations (IR) as theory, practice and discipline, nor it emulated the English School of International Politics. What it offers are its homegrown theorizing efforts in the study and practice of the 'international' based on empiricism, experiences, and context-bound Philippines. The purpose of this paper is to survey the relations of religion and IR as a probable source for the Philippine IR.

For the past few decades there is a tremendous increase of IR scholars studying religion, and evidently, a dedicated section called 'REL (Religion and International Relations)' was established at the International Studies Association (ISA) in 2013. Prior to this, there are similar sections, committees, and caucuses that focused on religion and politics, and some of them are: International Political Science Association (IPSA), the American Political Science Association (APSA), the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), among others. The ISA-REL members are steadily growing in numbers including its sponsored panels each year. It is without a doubt that literature on IR and religion rapidly proliferated, particularly after the tragic 9/11 event occurred in the USA.

Several scholars are talking about the 'global resurgence of religion' or the need to 'bring religion back into IR from its exile'. Was religion really on its exile? How come IR scholars are recently paying attention to religion? How do IR scholars see religion in their analyses? Is there a possibility of integrating religion into IR? These are the prominent issues as regards to the study of religion and IR. Operational descriptions on IR and religion are firstly provided below.

¹ Fitzgerald, T. (2011). *Religion and politics in international relations: The modern myth*. New York: Continuum.

International Relations

International Relations² (IR) is commonly understood as the study of behaviors and interactions of nation-states (e.g. the United States or China), regional organizations (e.g. the European Union or the Association of Southeast Asian Nations), international organizations (e.g. the United Nations or World Bank), and multinational corporations (e.g. Google or McDonalds). The distinction whether those given examples may further be characterized as governmental, inter-governmental or non-governmental in nature depends on the hybridity of tasks, roles, and mission-vision of those mentioned organizations.

It is quite apparent that other disciplines of social sciences have highly influenced IR in terms of its theoretical and methodological development. It is described as an interdisciplinary field mostly influenced by Philosophy, Political Science, History, Economics, and Sociology. Thus, individual (personhood), community of peoples (cultural, religious or secular), civil society, world society (cosmopolitan and universal), and the international system have been conceived, and their interactions are also part of the study in IR. In addition, it also features on how to formulate and implement foreign policy. Its motivations, objectives, goals, national interests, and implementation of involved agents such as political elites in decision making are all shown in dealing with the foreign policy of a certain nation-state. It may also utilize positivistic or normative tools for its research design and methodology.

Furthermore, it is relatively a young discipline autonomous from other social sciences, but some treat it as part or branch of Political Science. However, pioneering IR scholars from the United Kingdom and the United States have made it independent and have established their own institutes and departments. Thus, the IR discipline in the UK and the US is highly prominent and developed. Almost all books, journal articles, and textbooks in IR used all over the world were authored by American or British scholars, or someone (non-Anglo-American) who earned their PhD degrees from universities in the UK or the US. It only shows that the extant literature in the West (the US and the UK or Western Europe) is highly extensive and comprehensive compared to the rest of the world. This is the reason why accounts and orientations regarding the conception and development of IR is considered by some scholars as very US- or European-centric which

² Adiong, N. M. (2016). International Relations (S. Ray, H. Schwarz, V. B. L., A. Moreiras, & A. A. Shemak, Eds.). In *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.

disregards the importance of experiences by other civilizations (e.g. Muslim world) or current principal actors (e.g. China, India or Brazil).

Another significant aspect to discuss is the variations of approaches on issue areas between a theoretician and a practitioner. Who have more weight, credibility, and extent of influence over a specific issue (e.g. Iranian nuclear talks, Climate Change or Crimes against Humanity) among theoreticians or practitioners in trying to provide better interpretation, explanation, and solution? Theoreticians may guide and provide explanatory precedents to practitioners while practitioners will always be in the forefront of hands-on activities in IR which would attest to the hypothesis and laws posited by theoreticians. In short, both of them play vital roles in shaping and/or carrying out the study of IR, which of course considers the magnitude and value of temporal (time or period) and spatial (place and event) elements.

After providing a summarized account of what it meant by International Relations, operational description on religion is subsequently discussed.

Religion

There is no common understanding of the meaning of religion³ whether in social sciences, theology or philosophy. Every scholar has his/her own interpretation and understanding. Some may perceive religion as the fundamental force or energy of the cosmos, while others conceive it as the singular and central invisible force that drives and moves people. It thus far gives meaning of what it really meant to become a human being which feeds the mind, body and soul of man and woman. In Haynes quoting Martyr, he identified five features of religion that aid us in putting boundaries around the term, and these are '(1) focuses our ultimate concern, (2) builds community, (3) appeals to myth and symbol, (4) enforced through rites and ceremonies, and (5) demands certain behavior from its adherents'.⁴

³ Fitzgerald (2011, p. 6) generally described the lay understanding of religion 'as a universal and distinct kind of human practice and institution. Though it is frequently (though not always) defined by 'belief in the supernatural', religion is generally seen as a natural aspect of human experience and action. Also, religion in general has some problematic relationship to religions in particular. These 'religions' have been set up in modern discourse as things that exist in the world, things which belong to a general class but each with their own essential characteristics.'

⁴ Haynes, J. (2013). *Introduction to international relations and religion* (2nd ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, p. 33-4.

Religion can also be thought of belief system that is mutually supported by practices and oftentimes related to adherence to supernatural beings or 'being' held as sacred to a society or number of persons. A great unique of religion is its having the power of persuasion through the delivery of charismatic persons that affects a great mass of people which could be fixated in a specific geography or moves transnationally. 'For purpose of social investigation, according to Haynes, religion may be approached: (1) from the perspective of a body of ideas and outlooks – that is, as theology and ethical code⁵; (2) as a type of formal organisation – that is, the ecclesiastical 'church'; or (3) as a social group – that is, religious groups and movements. There are two basic ways that religion can affect the world: by what it says and by what it does. The former relates to religion's doctrine or theology, the latter to its importance as a social phenomenon and mark of identity. This can work through a variety of modes of institutionalisation, including church–state relations⁶, civil society and political society.'⁷

Although we assumed those descriptions in approaching religion as body of ideas, institutions, and social groups, we have to distinguish the ontological difference between religious and secular thought. All religious communities – be they from the Western or Oriental civilizations – share a uniqueness between prevailing quotidian of normalcy and of transcendental or spiritual realms of reality. If there is an ontological difference between the realities of religious and secular, then it automatically leads to differences in both epistemological and methodological ways of worldviews. Kubalkova opined that in 'attempting to fit religious experience into a positivist framework can only emasculate it, caricature it, distort its meaning, and underestimate its strength. A serious consideration of the role of religion in IR must start with the exploration of the

⁵ Kubalkova (2000) asserts that 'religions are made up mainly of assertive speech acts and instruction-rules. While 'commandments' might seem to be commands (directive-rules), on a closer look, it is probably better to call them declarations.... Nevertheless, it is usually possible to identify directive-rules and commitment-rules backing up the declarations and instruction-rules that give any religion its general character although religious rules carry their own special 'back up'. (p. 696)

⁶ According to Kubalkova, quoting Juergensmeyer, that 'there is the opposite danger of seeing religions and states as totally separate. For example, Juergensmeyer simplifies the issue when he argues that for understanding the world today it is necessary to see two interacting and competing frameworks of social order: secular nationalism (allied with the nation-state) and religion (allied with large ethnic communities).³⁸ There is no way of a priori generalisation and only a careful examination of rules and their interplay will reveal the nature of these relations.' (Kubalkova, V. (2000). Towards an International Political Theology. *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, 29(3), 695.)

⁷ Haynes, J. (2013). *Introduction to international relations and religion* (2nd ed.). Harlow, England: Pearson Longman, p. 34-5.

ontological foundation of religious discourse.’⁸ That is, religion or religions share that the material world which could be comprehended by our human senses is considered a single component out of several ones in a hierarchy of nature or essence of life.

Religious scholars accused secular thinkers as having a very narrow understanding of nature or of the physical world especially when they perceived it as lacking of an inconceivable plan or design capable of proving and explaining human experiences. These experiences carried by humans are considered the bridge between the spiritual and material worlds which may have the preponderance in shaping the structure and facets of reality. In addition, human experience may be perceived of as a single dimension that is part of a bigger and multidimensional reality instructed by a cosmic or universal design rather than by a likelihood or probability called ‘chance’. This enormous reality is substantially greater than a finite reality of human experience, but impermeable to temporal senses and/or perception. Thus the line or division between the spiritual world and the material world in both sense and thought are closely connected.

It is surprising that almost all major religions share a symmetrical view of transcendental reality, for example, sociologists of religion instigated that the practice or thought of creating or constructing a sanctified being, sometimes characterized with supernatural abilities, is universal to all human civilizations that date back to the antiquity period particularly in West Asia or the modern Middle East region. In Kubalkova words ‘theologians, of course, deny that God (or the gods) are human constructions. They might accept that the human being is homo sapiens but they would contend that he or she is also homo religiosus, a species in need of finding a system of beliefs essential to the self-definition of the believer, what we now call ‘identity’. All religions are organised on the basis of beliefs that are fundamental not only to reality, but even more important to human identity.’⁹

While theologians contend the homo-religiosus nature of human beings, at the other spectrum social scientists raise the aspect of homo-politicus characterization. Religion and politics are intertwined since humans became aware of transcendental and supernatural being. Oftentimes religious explanations are the result of political situations and of political life. Hurd’s argued that

⁸ Kubalkova, V. (2000). Towards an International Political Theology. *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, 29(3), 683. doi:10.1177/03058298000290031501

⁹ Kubalkova, *Towards an International Political Theology*, p. 684.

‘religion cannot be disembedded and isolated from the broader social and political fields in which it is entangled. It also cannot be divided between good and bad. There are no untouched religions waiting to be recovered from political irrelevance or reformed into peaceable governing partners.’¹⁰

Violence, war, and peace cannot be results of a sole entity called religion. It is the mixture of identities such as religious, class, gender, race, etc. that consisted the collective governance with variants of complexity and emergence of context-specific understanding. The religious-secular binary is actually caused by belief system, practices, mobilized social forces, and organized institutions. Although today’s religion is in itself a product of modernity, some aspects of it occupies spaces that can be considered secular. For example, Hurd distinguished ‘between “expert religion,” “official religion,” and “lived religion,” it disaggregates religion in order to access a richer field of religio-political realities.’¹¹

For example, ‘lived’ Islam refers to day-to-day practices and rituals of Muslims as they interact with their lives, society, and how to make sense of and connect to the world. ‘Official’ Islam is pronounced and carried by those who have political power of maneuvering positions, solutions, and issues, and most of them have backings or support of international and domestic political elites or by the state itself (e.g. the Saudi Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Iranian mullahs, Turkish Diyanet, Egyptian state, or the Gulf Cooperation Council, Arab League or the Organization of Islamic Cooperation). And the last category is ‘expert’ Islam which usually pertains to the works of public intellectuals, scholars, academics, policy experts, religious authorities and those who have positions in the government. In Hurd’s words ‘disaggregating Islam into these three categories reveals that expert and official constructions of Islam do not and cannot exhaust the field of contemporary Muslim religiosities. Lived Islam does not align with an understanding of Islam as a singular, bounded cause of political behavior. ... The practices and traditions of lived Islam often dissent from orthodox, elite or official understandings of what Islam is or should be.’

¹⁰ Hurd, E. (n.d.). How international relations got religion, and got it wrong. *Washington Post*. Retrieved July 9, 2015, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/07/09/how-international-relations-got-religion-and-got-it-wrong/>

¹¹ Hurd, 2015, p. 2.

However, after discussing the operational description of religion, have we really grasped a fuller understanding about religion? Scholars critical to the term religion provided very interesting and insightful arguments.

Critique of Religion

They¹² are saying that ‘religion’ or ‘religions’ are actually modern inventions that are made to appear ubiquitous, in a sense that it is present everywhere, and have been marginalized and privatized because it construed to be only serving the mystification of the supposed natural rationality of the secular (e.g. the modern nation-state and the capitalist systems). This reified religion told in IR stories represents the so-called ‘resurgence’¹³, ‘return from exile’, or ‘bringing back’ religion in the world of social sciences. It is treated as if it has distinct properties and characteristics that is subject for empirical investigation and analysis. A concerted effort by secular agents to construct a make belief that religion is only a variable which can be observed. Religion(s) designed to be classified as a type of practice, experience or institution, and yet it is also classified as a phenomenon subjected for experiential examination.

Fitzgerald claimed that religion is an abstract category where it problematizes the relations between ‘religion’, ‘a religion’ and ‘religious’.¹⁴ In England’s history and ever since the Reformation Era, the word ‘religion’ referred mainly to Christian Truth of the Protestant Faith. On the other hand, ‘a religion’ is treated as a variable subjected for closed examination, which clearly permeates a modern idea. For Fitzgerald, ‘religion, a religion and religions in the plural together form a general modern category or family of categories used for classifying a kind of practice and

¹² Scholars of the Critical Religion Association ~ Critical Approaches to the Study of Religion. See <http://criticalreligion.org/scholars/>

¹³ Goldewijk argued that ‘the global resurgence of religion demonstrates religion’s involvement in global and local integration as well as in conflict and fragmentation. It expresses the globalisation of religions and a growing interconnectedness, while it simultaneously shows that religion, violence and conflict are closely intertwined in world affairs today. Integral part of the resurgence is a counter-tendency towards a growing involvement of religions in conflict: in intrastate conflicts, local ethnic conflicts, wider identity conflicts and other complex emergencies.’ (2007, p. 23)

¹⁴ Fitzgerald, T. (2011). *Religion and politics in international relations: The modern myth*. New York: Continuum, p. 2.

institution, not something which has any clear, empirical referent which can be observed.’¹⁵ In short, religion is generally has no essential meaning.¹⁶

Moreover, these categories perpetuated into a whole new level of mythological discourse that was taken up by IR for almost two decades. In a retrospect world, scholars of ‘Religion and IR’ regards IR as dependent to religion, meaning IR will not exist without the emergence of religion particularly its contribution to wars.¹⁷ However, my contention is not how religion is imagined by its disciples but how they interpret it that leads to fallible human errors which causes conflicts and inevitably leads to war.

In relation to what I briefly touched upon about the binary or an essential dichotomy between religious domain and non-religious or secular domain, it was imagined and believed by most scholars of secular disciplines such as IR, political science and other related ones that religion is irrelevant in the empirical investigation of observable phenomena. Thus they treated it as a marginalized course of insignificance to a profound rational life. Yet, Fitzgerald contends that ‘the marginalization of what is imagined to be ‘religion’ is simultaneously its inclusion by negation.’¹⁸

He is basically arguing that the creation of any secular domain which is perceived as irreligious is a direct cause and dependent on the historical notion that religion is conceptualized as a distinct and different from that secular domain even if the IR scholar is unaware or simply uninterested to religious issues.¹⁹ In other words, the modern invention of religion is tautologous to the modern emergence of the secular nation-state system, IR, politics and economics. This may

¹⁵ Fitzgerald, 2011, p. 3.

¹⁶ Fitzgerald, 2011, p. 35.

¹⁷ This was further essentialized that in Fitzgerald’s words ‘International Relations as a rational secular discipline for the analysis of world politics derived in the long run from these same historical sources. Once irrational and violent religion had been tamed and put into its proper place at the margins of government, at least in Europe and North America, then International Relations could emerge as the science of statecraft.’ (2011, p. 29)

¹⁸ Fitzgerald, 2011, p. 4.

¹⁹ According to Fitzgerald, this kind of thinking presupposes that ‘historically and conceptually, the idea of religion as a universal essence manifesting in specific religions, and the idea of politics as a distinct, non-religious domain, emerged (in English at least) in the late seventeenth century and did not become powerfully institutionalized until the American and French Revolutions and their respective proclamations of a new world order.’ (2011, p. 5)

mean that we could also have a separate modern idea of religious domain of a state system (e.g. Saudi Arabia, Iran, Pakistan, and Israel)²⁰.

Aside from the religious-secular binary discourse, another debate is the two different images of religion. The first image of religion pertains to its goodness where it is viewed as a peace-loving element. Religion that is apolitical, unselfish, non-greedy, gentle, benign and primarily concerned with metaphysical world. It is capable of bringing people together in good faith where piety is always practiced and uninterested with political operations of secular state. The second image refers to its evilness which is characterized as irrational, violent, barbaric, and always causing insurgencies, anomie and mayhem to all its followers. This type of image reflected and epitomized with the 9/11 event and US' War on Terror which automatically threatens the peace-loving nature of reasonable non-religious secular state system.

However, these two images brought two conventional paradigms²¹: 1) the secularization thesis which supposedly anticipated the acceleration of secularization at a great pace and at world scale in terms of proximity but the assumption was wrong because of proliferation of religious movements in secular domains; and 2) the neutrality of nation-state over religious and secular domains was under attacked and scrutinized. The neutrality refers to the principle of separation between church and state or religion and politics which became the foundation of state system in the international community.

The first paradigm also posits that the number of religious people is increasing globally. But, this is actually the opposite of the secularization thesis that emphasized the difference between realms of 'religious' and of 'secular', where religious is privatized and became the absolute necessary for successful liberal democratic societies. Secularization thesis assumes that there is a preponderance link between religion and conflict, which pertains to the second image of religion. If this thesis is correct then there should be a decreased number of religious people that perpetually

²⁰ Hunter (2011, p. 9) argued that 'in the case of some countries such as Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran which are based on different interpretations of Islam, religion is the official ideology and the basis of state legitimacy. As is the case with secular ideologies, both countries believe that the spread of their particular brand of Islam will advance their interests and increase their regional and global influence. However, what is important to point out is that religion, like secular ideologies, plays a purely instrumental role namely that of justifying and legitimizing state policies rather determining them.'

²¹ Goldewijk, B. K. (2007). *Religion, international relations and development cooperation*. Wageningen: Wageningen Academic, p. 30-3.

lead to decline of conflicts and wars. However, this is not the case today as demonstrated by Desch in his three waves of approaching religion in IR.²²

The first wave approach argues that the real origin of IR is religion, i.e. without the Reformation Era there would be no birth of idea of territorial sovereignty and authority of states. The second wave is the growth and spread of religious actors that greatly affected several transnational events (for example, the 1967 Six Day War between Israel and Arab neighboring countries, the 1979 Iranian Revolution, Pan-Islamic movements in the greater Middle East, the rise of fundamentalist groups such as Al Qaeda, the tragic of 9/11, and, of course, ISIS). The seminal work of Huntington's clash of civilizations thesis greatly captured the second wave, which he argued 'that future global politics would be characterized by the interaction among civilizations, which he defined as the highest cultural grouping whose "most important" defining feature was common religion.'²³ The third wave approach is the adoption of religion as an epistemology that relates to other factors of global politics. It evolved to have a status of an ideational variable which both positivist and non-positivist methodologies are utilized in addressing international issues.

The common understanding of these three waves of religion in IR seem to suggest the defeat of the secularization thesis and the decline of secularism in world politics. As Desch briefly summarizes these waves: 'In the first wave, to be sure, secularism was alive and well, but it opened the door to religion by conceding the latter some residual influence. By contrast, in the second wave, secularism was in retreat as it came under assault by the increasing numbers of global religious actors and the growing frequency of religiously tinged events around the world. Finally, in the third wave, which emphasizes the conceptual change in the nature of the relationship between religion and other factors in world politics, secularism is down for the count but not out yet. What has blunted religion's knockout punch is the fact that some third wave approaches have adopted definitions of religion, and embraced epistemologies for analyzing its effects, which will

²² Desch, M. C., & Philpott, D. (Eds.). (2013). *Religion and International Relations: A Primer for Research* (The Coming Reformation of Religion in International Affairs? The Demise of the Secularization Thesis and the Rise of New Thinking About Religion). Mellon Initiative on Religion Across the Disciplines. Retrieved from <http://berkeleycenter.georgetown.edu/publications/religion-and-international-relations-a-primer-for-research> (pp. 26-40)

²³ Desch, 2013, p. 29.

ensure that the role of religion in global politics remains opaque and obscure and thus subject to debate.’²⁴

With scholars who provided critical approaches to the study of religion particularly claiming it as a modern invention tautologous to secular state system, the first wave seems to me is more striking as it argued and contented by almost all scholars of religion and IR that the root of IR is religion.

Religious Roots of IR

It is argued again and again that the cause of modern International Relations is religion and this is rooted with the European experience of the Reformation Era, which consequently lead to the infamous 1648 Treaty of Westphalia. It means that those actors or agents who acted upon the Reformation are the same suspects who carried Westphalia. There are two contributions for this argument: Firstly, Reformation accounted for the origin of Westphalia because of the similar authoritative structure of the system of sovereign states. In Philpott words, ‘International Relations scholars have long granted that a state system exists and have sought to theorize its laws and patterns of war, peace, and commerce.’²⁵ While secondly, Reformation warrants the ‘recognition as a kind of historical cause that merits more attention in the international relations literature.’²⁶

Going back to historical accounts during the Reformation, in 1517 the monarchies of Britain, France, and Sweden dominated politically over the church, and even Italy had system of sovereign states. 1555 Peace of Augsburg had provisions authorizing German Princes the free will to establish their own faith in territories they own. This accounts for the famous saying ‘*cuius regio, eius religio* (whose realm, his religion).’²⁷ The 1648 Westphalian treaty provided the political elites and its constituencies ‘to live and practice their faiths in their territories, and to refrain from attempting to convert one another’s subjects ... the text of the treaties calls for

²⁴ Desch, 2013, p. 40.

²⁵ Philpott, D. (2000). The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations. *World Politics*, 52(02), 207. doi:10.1017/S0043887100002604

²⁶ Philpott, 2000, p. 208.

²⁷ Philpott, 2000, p. 211.

arbitration of religious disputes, but through compromise, not majority decision, thus leaving the sovereign right of assent virtually intact.’²⁸

Philpott strongly argued that ‘had the Reformation not occurred, a system of sovereign states would not have developed, at least not in the same form or in the same era as it did. More precisely, were it not for the Reformation, persistently medieval features of Europe—the substantive powers of the Holy Roman Empire and its emperor, the formidable temporal powers of the church, religious uniformity, truncations of the sovereign powers of secular rulers, Spain’s control of the Netherlands—would not have disappeared when they did, to make way for the system of sovereign states.’²⁹ It was truly through Reformation that these actors including the church develop an interest and curiosity to the idea of sovereign nation-state. Although, the church was at the losing end for its political power diminished, territories and properties confiscated, and the temporal authority of the Pope and of the Emperor was truncated and transferred over to the modern state. All in all, religious powers and influences succumb to the dominance of the secular state. How did this all happened and how Reformation’s ideals contributed to the transfer of religious power to secular ones? Philpott has an answer, and he stated that:

‘But such relinquished powers could not be left adrift. They were assumed by the secular authorities—in Germany, by princes; in the Netherlands, by the Estates-General; in Sweden and England, by the king. This new separation of functions also sprang from Luther’s “Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms and the Two Governments,” his political theology. God created two earthly orders with two forms of government. One was the realm of the spirit, the site of the relationship between Christ and the believer’s soul; the other was the realm of the world, the order of secular society, governed through civil magistrates, laws, and coercion. The reformers demanded a separation. Thus, the pastors of the church were not to perform the duties of public order, just as magistrates, princes, and kings would not preach or perform the sacraments. In separating the two realms, Reformation political theology essentially prescribed sovereignty, even though neither Luther’s

²⁸ Philpott, 2000, pp. 212-13.

²⁹ Philpott, 2000, p. 214.

tracts nor John Calvin's *Institutes* outline a Westphalian system of sovereign states. For secular authorities within the empire the remaining temporal prerogatives of the church filled out their portfolios of power. The point is essential: sovereignty was implied in the very propositions of the Reformation.'³⁰

In other words, the theology of Christianity's Reformation and conceptual notion of territorial sovereignty are intrinsically and historically connected. Those polities who were interested in sovereign state system were also those who adapted Protestantism as their official religion or faith. According to Philpott, 'the social power of Protestants, then, was coincident with and plausibly connected to the development of an interest in sovereign statehood in all of the polities that together defeated the empire during the Thirty Years' War.'³¹ With this interlinking source claiming that the Reformation Era tremendously shaped IR making it as the root of event laying for the birth of IR, then, what does the relations of IR and religion generally constitute of.

IR to Religion

As discussed before, religion is seen by IR scholars as either good or bad, but most of the time the latter one prevails particularly after 9/11. Internationally, religion is treated as form of epistemic communities that is non-governmental or transnational organizations or entities (e.g. cultures, civilizations or worst 'terrorist organizations'). However, religion can be a distinctive subject matter in IR because 'in the sense that it brings into IR issues of norms, values and beliefs that go beyond the traditional secular concerns of international relations – war, peace, security – while opening up the terrain of IR analysis to involvement of numerous non-state actors motivated by religious concerns.'³²

In another aspect, IR scholars neglected the importance of religion in their analyses of the 'international', and one way of looking at it is the staunch influence of Enlightenment thinkers to IR scholars, and the Western (Anglo-Americana and European) experiences on secularization, nation-state system, and modernity which have relegated religion into the state of oblivion and

³⁰ Philpott, *The Religious Roots of Modern International Relations*, 2000, p. 223.

³¹ Philpott, 2000, p. 239.

³² Haynes, *Introduction to International Relations and Religion*, 2013, p. 23.

self-privatization. More so, even IR theoreticians³³ have excluded religion in their theoretical analyses and methodologies.³⁴ The rejection or negligence of IR scholars with regards to the importance of religion stems from the following points:

Firstly, most secular social sciences particularly IR has history of rejecting³⁵ religion on the basis that analyzing state relations and behaviors can only be accounted through basic rational and logical explanations against irrational religious analyses. It is, indeed, that secularization and modernization absolutely assumed the demise of religion which will make people less religious and inevitably lead to its nullification or extinction especially in areas of public domain and politico-economic life. However, Fox and some scholars counter-argued that:

‘The assertion that modernization³⁶ will lead to the decline of religion is perhaps ironic because scholars often suggest that modernization actually has led to a resurgence of religion. There are several processes associated with modernization

³³ Fox (2006, p. 1062) argued that ‘the core of Western IR theory as we know it today, especially American IR theory, evolved from national security theories which focused on the Cold War—a competition between two secular ideologies. In addition, the peace of Westphalia ended the era of international religious wars in the Christian West and the defeat of the Ottomans at the gates of Vienna in 1683 ended the Muslim threat to the West. Thus, centuries of Western historical experience reinforced the notion that religion was not relevant to the relations between states.’

³⁴ Fox, J., & Sandler, S. (2004). *Bringing religion into international relations*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 163.

³⁵ Petito and Hatzopoulos argued that ‘the rejection of religion, in other words, seems to be inscribed in the genetic code of the discipline of IR. Arguably, this occurred because the main constitutive elements of the practices of international relations were purposely established in early modern Europe to end the Wars of Religion.’ (Petito, F., & Hatzopoulos, P. (2003). *Religion in international relations: The return from exile*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 1)

³⁶ Fox has six points for this explanation: ‘First, modernity has eroded traditional values and in many parts of the world, traditional culture. To counter this many religious movements have developed methods to actively reinforce traditional values. Second, for many, especially those in the Third World, modern political ideologies are seen to have failed at delivering their promises of prosperity and social justice. This has undermined their legitimacy and caused a return to religion as a basis for societal and political legitimacy. Third, religion, especially fundamentalist variants of religion, can provide both solace and an explanation for the failures of modernity and, therefore, particularly attracts many who feel alienated from the modern political, social, and economic system. Fourth, religious groups are using modern methods and technology in order to mobilize and organize politically. Fifth, democracy has in many cases undermined state religious monopolies. This is important because many sociologists argue that a free religious market results in increased religiosity. Finally, modern state building in the third world has led to many ethnically exclusive governments and ethnic-based politics in many states. As many of these ethnic identities overlap with religious ones, this has increased the salience of religious identity.’ (Fox, J. (2006). *The Multiple Impacts of Religion on International Relations: Perceptions and Reality in Religion and International Relations*. *Politique étrangère*, Hiver(4), 1059-1071. doi:10.3917/pe.064.1059.)

that have contributed to the revitalization of religion. First, attempts at modernization have been unsuccessful in much of the Third World and have undermined local traditions and community values, causing a backlash of pent-up grievances by religious movements. This also has occurred on the individual level, with those left behind by modernization feeling alienated, disoriented, and dislocated, leaving them more open to the overtures of religious movements. Scholars also often reason that it is precisely these factors that have led to the growth of fundamentalist movements around the world. Such movements use modern organizational, communications, and propaganda techniques. They also use modern political action techniques, including mass mobilization and modern political institutions such as political parties and, in the case of Iran, government structures to further their fundamentalist agendas.³⁷

It is true that IR theory, particularly the mainstream ones, neglected religion because of its insignificance in analyzing state relations or in thinking of level of analysis.³⁸ Sandal and Fox investigated the causes of negligence and they discovered that ‘writings in this category and nearly every other study which seriously addresses religion in international relations were published after September 11, 2001.’³⁹ Before 9/11, there were less or scarcity of published journal articles and books but it changed after that event, and in 2001 onwards there were several books and journal articles published that seriously investigated the influence of religion to IR.

Secondly, the dominance of positivism and behaviorist traditions that IR adapted made religion difficult to operationalized. For example, IR scholars who utilized quantitative studies usually ignore religion as a type of variable because it is very hard to measure. There are two specific reasons for this, according to Fox:

³⁷ Fox, J. (2001). Religion as an Overlooked Element of International Relations. *International Studies Review*, 3(3), 53-73. doi:10.1111/1521-9488.00244

³⁸ See arguments at Dawson, S. (2015). The Religious Resurgence: Problems and Opportunities for International Relations Theory (L. M. Herrington, A. McKay, & J. Haynes, Eds.). In *Nations under god: The geopolitics of faith in the twenty-first century* (pp. 23-29). Bristol, England: E-International Relations.

³⁹ Sandal Sandal, N., & Fox, J. (2015). *Religion in international relations theory*. Routledge, p. 2.

‘First, the lack of attention that scholars give to the topic provides a poor basis on which to develop variables. That is, most of the theories and variables that have been quantified are based on an extensive qualitative literature on the relevant topic. Thus, the scarcity of international relations literature on religion probably has hampered efforts to conceptualize how it may be measured. Second, it is clear that the only truly accurate measure would involve reading the minds of political actors to discover their true motivations. Since this is not currently possible, researchers using quantitative methods probably choose not to measure religion at all.’⁴⁰

Lastly, IR scholars do not know how to deal, address or treat religion, whether they will integrate it to IR theories or build new theories to accommodate religion. There is somehow a hope that with the proliferation of IR scholars interested in religion after 9/11, there might be a possibility in the near future that IR may develop an adequate theoretical understanding of religion concomitant with its resurgence in world politics. Although, most contemporary IR scholarship is concentrated in looking at religion as a variable operated and perceived to have a preponderating link with conflicts.

On the other hand, Petito and Hatzopoulos argued that ‘religious traditions acknowledge what International Relations theory completely ignores: the fundamental tension between morality and law. The theory of International Relations is primarily concerned with the establishing of laws, or of norms in their non-legalistic version, and then tackles the question of their grounding. From the perspective of religious traditions, this task is essentially meaningless. Enter Abraham, and other religious figures who performed the ethical as the suspension of law. In this light, the radical provocation of religion is the articulation of the ethical not as correlative to law but as the redefinition of the coordinates that determine law.’⁴¹ Consequently, and interestingly, Fitzgerald summarized his points into seven contentions regarding the relations between IR and religion:⁴²

⁴⁰ Fox, 2001, p. 58.

⁴¹ Petito and Hatzopoulos, 2003, p. 16.

⁴² Fitzgerald, 2011, pp. 101-3.

1) That scholars in International Relations (IR) concerned with religion⁴³ and its relations to world politics are in general and with varying degrees of awareness rhetorically constructing a powerful modern myth. The myth is that there is an essential difference between religion and politics, or religion and the modern state, which in turn rests on a deeper preconception of the essential distinction between the religious and the non-religious.

2) That this myth is a foundation of modern liberal capitalist ideology, transforming a historically contingent discourse into a powerful set of global assumptions about the order of things. The myth of self-equilibrating markets and the rational self-maximizing individuals who 'play' them appear as natural, common sense realities, obscured for centuries by irrational religious traditions. Liberal capitalism, as theorized by the science of economics, appears as inevitable and in the immutable order of the world.

3) That there were multiple origins of this myth, especially the encounter of Christian European powers with non-European peoples and the new needs of classification that arose in colonial sites. There is therefore no single starting point for its articulation. However, its Anglophone formation achieved crucial early clarification from around the late seventeenth century.

4) That the discourse in IR, and indeed the formation of IR as a secular discipline, is part of a wider rhetorical construction which is being reproduced by scholars in neighbouring academic domains such as political economy or economics, sociology, political theory, anthropology, religious studies and literary studies.

5) That this academic production is a significant if apparently small part of a broader array of agencies for the reproduction and dissemination of the myth, including constitutions, courts, state agencies and the media. Without a critical awareness of this broader context within which IR and the academy generally is located, IR experts, like those in neighbouring disciplines, will be unable to see the outcomes of their own contributions to the production of this myth.

⁴³ Hunter contends that 'religion affects the character of international relations the same way as do other value systems and ideologies by influencing the behavior of states and increasingly non-state actors. Moreover, although mostly unrecognized, as part of states and other actors value systems religion has always played a role in determining the character of the behavior of various international actors.' (Hunter, S. T. (2011). Religion and International Affairs: From Neglect to Over-Emphasis (Ö Taşkaya, Ed.). In *The Sacred and the Sovereign: A compendium of pieces from e-IR on religion and international relations* (pp. 8-9). E-International Relations.)

6) In agreement with some IR experts, the discourse on religion as a privatized right is a modern invention which is ineluctably connected with the invention of the non-religious state and the secular domains, notably 'politics' and 'economics'.

7) Finally, an indication of the globalizing dominance of the religion-secular ideology is the reproduction of the basic form of the written constitution every time a new nation is constructed or reconstructed, along with other indicators of Anglo-American civility, such as the destruction of pre-existing modes of authority and practice accompanied by the growth of 'rights', corporations, property markets, and the pool of wage labour.

So, if this is how IR scholars treated and marginalized religion, then what are the importance and significances of religion so as to make or persuade IR scholars to seriously consider religion in their contemplations and analyses of world affairs?

Conceptions of Religion in IR

There are variety of conceptualizations on how IR scholars see the importance of religion in world affairs. It is seen as a form of ideology that is characterized by 'closed' belief systems which is not adaptable to change and perceive other ideologies as threat. This has happened for example 'when religious institutions are in the service of the state, such as the Greek Orthodox Church in Cyprus or the Russian Orthodox Church in post-Soviet Russia, state policy can become more uncompromising. When religion is mixed with nationalism, such as in the case of the Serbian Orthodox Church, state policy can legitimate the abuse of human rights and ethnic cleansing.'⁴⁴

Religion is seen as the source of identification for individuals and societies, which straightforwardly create differentiation between groups who imagined that they are affiliated among one another. Despite that they have no blood relations or whatever kind of relations, but they are bounded by similar beliefs and within these beliefs they identify themselves from other groups. Aside from seeing it as an ideology, it also moves transnationally even though the adherents are located in different geographies and guided by their own country's set of rules and norms.

⁴⁴ Thomas, S. (2000). Religion and international conflict. In K. R. Dark (Ed.), *Religion and international relations* (pp. 1-23). New York: St. Martin's Press, p. 3.

IR scholars tend to put religion in certain boxes which sometimes called ‘soft power’ (cultures, education, etc.) in contrast to ‘hard power’ of military or economic powers. The usage of religion as soft power is best exemplified by Muslim majority countries and regional or international organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and World Muslim League. Religion can also legitimize non-state actors’ actions through the ‘power of ideas’, which is best exemplified as soft power also.

Studies on civilizations and cultures are another way religion had been analyzed in IR. And this tradition was resuscitated through the works of Huntington especially on his ‘clash of civilizations’ thesis, which included major religions such as Islam, Hinduism, Confucianism, and Orthodox Christianity. It is civilizations that determines future conflict after the Cold War era. The momentous events of 1979 Iranian Revolution, the 9/11 tragedy, and emergence of ISIS justified Huntington’s thesis and of the ‘global resurgence of religion’. This resurgence, according to Thomas, is ‘the growing saliency and persuasiveness of religion, i.e., the increasing importance of religious beliefs, practices, and discourses in personal and public life, and the growing role of religious or religiously-related individuals, non-state groups, political parties, and communities, and organizations in domestic politics, and this is occurring in ways that have significant implications for international politics.’⁴⁵

In addition, globalization is aiding the process of which religion is rapidly affecting the international system. Thomas provided five explanations why globalization is changing the religious landscape globally:⁴⁶

1) Globalization is rapidly changing what religion is, and what constitutes religious actors in international relations.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Thomas, S. (2005). *The global resurgence of religion and the transformation of international relations: The struggle for the soul of the Twenty-first Century*. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, p. 26.

⁴⁶ Thomas, 2005, pp. 29-32.

⁴⁷ Thomas (2005, p. 30) argued that ‘ever since Samuel Huntington popularized the notion of the “clash of civilizations” most accounts of religion in international relations have followed an analysis of the static and rather well-delineated blocs that make up the main world religions and civilizations—Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism. However, this assumes a stability in the global religious landscape, and a rather static approach to religious non-state actors that is quite at odds with the reality of religion in the twenty-first century.’

2) It also assisting the creation or expansion of the existing ethnic and religious diaspora communities around the world.⁴⁸

3) Globalization is facilitating the more rapid spread of cultural and religious pluralism.⁴⁹

4) The large-scale religious changes in world politics are being accompanied by the global vitality and growth in Islam and Christianity.

5) The spillover of new religious movements has hardly had any impact on the study of non-state actors in international relations theory. Thomas argued that ‘much of the study of non-state actors ... is still dominated by the notion that NGO coalitions and new social movements are forming a brave new world of global civil society.’⁵⁰

The failure or crisis of secularity and modernity is often told to be the main cause of the global resurgence of religion. This can be seen through the discomfort and resistance of the developing world with Western negative treatment of religion. Thomas opined that ‘in developing countries the modernizing, secular state has failed to provide a legitimate basis for political participation and a basic level of economic welfare for its citizens.’⁵¹ If this resurgence is seen as part of a larger crisis of modernity, then it means that it ‘is the result of the failure of the modernising, secular state to produce both democracy and development in the Third World.’⁵² He further goes on that ‘in the Third World the modernising, secular state has failed to provide a legitimate basis for political participation and a basic level of economic welfare for its citizens.’⁵³ Thus, it is prone to local expressions of cultural and religious norms.

⁴⁸ Thomas (2005, p. 30) contends that ‘the mass migration across state boundaries, usually for economic or political reasons—to flee poverty or oppression, or in the case of slavery, as a result of oppression—has been going on for several centuries. Although there are other factors, such as the aftermath of war, globalization is helping to create and expand religious diaspora communities around the world.’

⁴⁹ ‘One of the most commented on features of globalization is the way diverse cultures and religions are no longer in exotic, faraway places of which we know very little,’ Thomas said. (2005, p. 31)

⁵⁰ Thomas, 2005, p. 32.

⁵¹ Thomas, 2005, p. 41.

⁵² Thomas, S. M. (2000). Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously: The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of International Society. *Millennium - Journal of International Studies*, 29(3), 816. doi:10.1177/03058298000290030401

⁵³ Thomas, 2000, p. 817.

On the other hand, according to Fox there are three ways in which religion influences IR. 'First⁵⁴, foreign policies are influenced by the religious views and beliefs of policymakers and their constituents. Second⁵⁵, religion is a source of legitimacy for both supporting and criticizing government behavior locally and internationally. Third, many local religious issues and phenomena, including religious conflicts, spread across borders or otherwise become international issues.'⁵⁶ The first way emphasizes the objectives of foreign policymaking where the makers are influenced by the belief systems and of their constituencies they are representing.⁵⁷ Fox contends that there are two possible ways of which religion influences them. 1) To the extent that religion influences the worldview of a policy maker, it also influences his decisions. 2) Widely held religious beliefs among constituents can place constraints on policy makers' decisions.⁵⁸

The second way concentrates on the persuasive tool of 'legitimacy' where it can be utilized by the makers of foreign policy in support of their beliefs and of their constituents, but it can also be a medium to oppose such policies. 'For instance, states often have realpolitik reasons for giving aid to those in need, but this in no way compromises the fact that most religions consider charity a virtue,' Fox said.⁵⁹ The third way focuses in which religion is becoming an international issue. Firstly, religious conflicts may spread transnationally because of the growth of fundamentalist movement in the world, e.g. political Islam. Secondly, when these religious conflicts spread across borders it automatically changes the foreign policies of states affected. And lastly, as the world is becoming more interdependent, religious issues can gain international attention when they are connected to human rights issues.

However, there are very few state actors that uses religion as the benchmark of their foreign policy. Saudi Arabia, Iran, and probably Israel are the countries that may make religion as the central focus of their policies both domestic and international. But if you are going to take a look

⁵⁴ Fox (2001, p. 61) explained that 'belief systems can influence the outlook and behavior of policymakers.'

⁵⁵ The second is that religion 'may be used to legitimate governments as well as those who oppose them.' (Fox, 2001, p. 65-6)

⁵⁶ Fox, 2001, p. 59.

⁵⁷ Fox, 2006, p. 7.

⁵⁸ Fox, 2006, p. 8.

⁵⁹ Fox and Sandler, 2004, p. 163.

at non-state actors, there are far more of them that using religion in addressing international issues. Haynes provided extensive list of examples but the highlighted ones are ‘the Roman Catholic Church, with its headquarters, the Vatican, in Rome; the Anglican (in America, Episcopal) Church, with its centre of operations in Canterbury, England; the World Council of Churches, a group of around 350 Protestant churches with its head office in Geneva, Switzerland; the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, a 57-member intergovernmental organisation of Muslim countries, whose HQ is in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia; and a variety of transnational Islamist insurgents – for example, in Somalia, which affiliated to al Qaeda, are a concern for British and EU security.’⁶⁰ Although religion is publicly seen in a negative limelight, religion can also become a powerful tool for exerting efforts for cooperation, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding.

In another aspect, Shuriye introduced us with interesting four approaches where religion played role in effecting IR: ‘1) To work within the classical paradigms, exploring the ways in which religion has sometimes decisively shaped the states system, defined its constitutive units, and animated their interests and outlooks. 2) It is most nearly represented by Samuel Huntington’s ‘clash of civilizations’ thesis, holds that religion has become so central that it should supplant existing paradigms and become the main prism for thinking about international politics. 3) The role of religion in international relations has risen in recent decades as a form of populist politics in the developing world following the discrediting of secular political ideologies; an approach that some scholars term it as “relational-institutional” theory that draws on both realism and constructivism in thinking about the competitive interplay of discursive frames and transnational networks in an anarchical setting. 4) The evasion of definitive commitments to look at more focused hypotheses in which religion becomes a causal variable. But religion is no longer a causal variable rather a consistent actor of international affairs.’⁶¹

With all these varying degrees of importance of religion to world affairs especially its effect on IR, scholars are still divided regarding the material and real effects of religion to IR particularly its theoretical prowess and explanatory power to analyze relations of actors in the international system. If that is the case (referring to the growing importance of religion to IR), then there might be a possibility to integrate religion into IR, for example to IR theory, but how?

⁶⁰ Haynes, 2013, p. 17.

⁶¹ Shuriye, A. O. (2011, March). The Failed Assumptions of Some Social Scientists on the Role of Religion in International Relations. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 1(3), 11-17.

Religion in IR Theory

Some suggest (Petito et al) that there is a need to develop new theories that will encapsulate and encompass the significance of religion to world affairs, while others (Fox et al)⁶² would argue for integrating religion as a variable into mainstream IR theories. For example, it can be integrated to liberalism which can use religious norms and their concurrent institutions in order to resolve conflicts between cultures. There is also a stronger case for integrating religion into constructivism especially if religious elements are seen to foster social identification of groups of people or nations, which in turn can affect state behaviors and their relations in the international system. To Sandal and Fox, they chose to ‘first develop a comprehensive list of ways in which religion can potentially influence international relations, then to take this list and examine whether and how each item can be integrated into an existing international relations paradigm.’⁶³

For example, according to Sandal and James ‘religion as it plays out in ethnic conflicts, especially as an independent variable (i.e. defining who we are and who the other is) and intervening variable (as a tool to bring people together who actually have other grievances), can be situated in a classical realist explanation.’⁶⁴ Another way of looking at it is how religious institutions, particularly the transnational ones can be more appealing to neoliberalism, and especially if these institutions are using soft power to advance their interests and affects the system in the international level. Neoliberalism emphasized norms, regimes, multiple issues, power, etc. where it takes legitimacy (e.g., religion as an intervening variable) and the formation of transnational identity where it considers religion as both independent and dependent variables. Consequently, they stressed that ‘religion, a relatively new variable in the study of international relations, not only can be integrated into IR theory, but even benefit from the insights of established traditions when there is a need to explain complex interactions.’⁶⁵

⁶² Fox and Sandler, 2004, pp. 169-171.

⁶³ Sandal, Nukhet, and Jonathan Fox. *Religion in International Relations Theory*. Routledge, 2015, p. 4.

⁶⁴ Sandal, N. A., & James, P. (2010). Religion and International Relations theory: Towards a mutual understanding. *European Journal of International Relations*, 17(1), 3-25. doi:10.1177/1354066110364304

⁶⁵ Sandal and James, 2010, p. 18.

However, this is not always the case or a simple case of accommodating religion to IR. Wilson provided four shortcomings on the study of religion and IR:⁶⁶

1) It lacks critical self-reflection because, for example, the focus is often on the increasing significance of religion in the Europe or the US, which is presented somewhat of an anomaly in comparison to the rest of the West. This predominant lack of critical self-reflection is a remnant from the heyday of secularization theory, when religion was considered to be dying out and not relevant for understanding politics in developed, secularized states such as those in the West.

2) The prevailing focus of these critiques is on contemporary political contexts and actors. The role of history and historical memory in the West, of ‘collectively held subconscious ideas,’ or deeply embedded assumptions about the nature of political reality and the influence of religion on these collectively held subconscious ideas are rarely identified and problematized.

3) A narrow, limited definition of religion that seems to focus heavily on its institutional, individual and irrational dimensions, giving an incomplete picture of the different ways in which religion can and does influence politics and public life.

4) It does not offer an alternate understanding of religion that moves beyond secularism’s limited view. The critique of the secularist bias has served to highlight that secularism within International Relations and global politics is primarily a product of the Western experience, both in terms of the emergence of a secular states-system at the global level and the very nature of secularism itself.

Despite the shortcomings, there is somehow a bright future in seriously considering religion as part of the study of IR, particularly on IR’s praxis dimension. Aside from proliferating literature, multiple sections and conferences in professional international organizations, degree programs and curriculum offered by institutes and universities, and research foundations and think tanks, there is a great potential and possibility of a new IR theory that will succinctly encapsulate the relevance of religion to world affairs. Considering the great number of minds discussing religion and IR in public discourses, day-to-day commentaries and political analyses in online platforms and televisions, and the usage of decision makers in constructing, dissecting, and

⁶⁶ Wilson, E. (2013). Religion and International Relations Theory. *Religion Factor*. Retrieved from <http://religionfactor.net/2013/11/28/religion-and-international-relations-theory/>

implementing both domestic and foreign policies based on religious norms are just some of its empirical manifestations.

Unfortunately, the biggest lacuna in the study of IR and religion comes from the ontology of religion. As it still remains ambiguous and arguably confusing depending on various traditions of thoughts and cultural experiences, IR scholars would be left hanging and would simply rely on their own interpretation to suit their conceptual and theoretical interests. If religion can only be seen as a (scientific) variable and subjected to positivistic methodology, then it would permeate the uncritical and narrowness of religion as a mere subject matter in IR. There must be critical self-reflection and deep contemplation of looking and discovering for new or alternative cosmologies and knowledge systems in IR that would encompass the whole ontological being of religion and equally incorporate it into IR.

Unless the ontological predicament of religion is not comprehensively address, then the study 'between' and not 'of' IR and religion will unremittingly continue

Conclusion

Religion starts off as an ambiguous variable to IR scholars. Its essential and uniqueness characterization pertain to the adherence to supernatural beings or 'being' held as sacred or holy in the eyes of their followers. The message accompanied by a charismatic personhood (e.g. Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha, etc.) that sometimes hailed divine or rather 'special' among all human beings and creations. These messages usually answer the problems or cancers of that society during those times, and its distinction lies to its 'universal' claims encompassing temporal and spatial aspects of humanity. Religion existed before IR. It (re)configured human's thoughts, lifestyle and worldviews for several centuries.

Scholars critical to religion instigated that 'religion' or 'religions' are modern inventions that are made to appear ubiquitous and self-privatized. The marginalization of religion in IR is an actual effect of the religious-secular binary which argued for religion's insignificance to rational life. Thus the reification of religion in IR is a result of identifying religion of having its own properties and characteristics subject for empirical analysis and observation. It is true that the historical root of IR is religion, or relative to a 'mother-child' relationship where the child (i.e. IR) cuts its umbilical cord from the mother (i.e. religion) and grew independently without her guidance, and distinctively creating his/her own identity. However, the mother is reasserting her

domains and rights over the ‘grown up child’ that somehow make sense of the ‘resurgence of religion’ in global politics.

However, that simplistic comparison does not purveys the complexity of relations between religion and IR. Most IR scholars see religion as somewhat primordial, primitive, obsolete, and most of the times has pejorative effect to international affairs. This negative effect is seen as causing sporadic conflicts that exacerbate tensions among rivaling actors in the international system. However, religion may also spearhead peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts through humanitarian missions and reach out programs. This binary outlook of religion conveys an unstable ‘variable’ of observation whether the assessment may result to favorable conclusions or outcomes.

It is no wonder that the growing importance of religious factors affecting, for instance, the behavior of states is undeniable nowadays. These religious influence may even extend to regional or international organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Religion serves as source of social and cultural identifications for some groups of peoples or communities, and the legitimacy of their religious identity may inadvertently afflict political legitimacy. That, in turn, may also shapes foreign policy makings.

There are instances where IR scholars tried to integrate religion to IR theory but none so far had the audacity to work or produce new theories based on religious pretext and explanatory power. Some had find ways of contemplating its inclusion to compatibly insert religion to mainstream theories such as social constructivism and liberalism; while others looked for its probability of integrating it into realism particularly political/classical realism.

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Southeast Asia Research Centre

City University of Hong Kong
Tat Chee Avenue
Kowloon
Hong Kong SAR
Tel: (852) 3442-6330
Fax: (852) 3442-0103
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