

Islam as a Theory of International Relations: A New Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Within the discipline of International Relations, there is a growing debate with regards to the comprehensive nature of the discipline. Non-western Scholars such as Amitav Acharya asserted that the discipline of International Relations fails to put into consideration other theories that are non-western. This, they believed, limits the discipline's comprehensiveness. The dominant mainstream theories are lacking in explaining complex issues around the globe that are non-western. This is because the theories are based on the euro-American worldview. Concepts such as state, sovereignty, power etc. are all understood through the auspices of western centric theories of International Relations.

The rise of Islamism/Political Islam, can be said to be one of the major catalysts to this critique. The mainstream theories are embedded in the secular intellectual tradition of the West. Therefore, unable to put into consideration issues such as the resurgence of Islam. The reason being, religion (in this case Islam) is considered irrelevant. Hence, making the theories unsuitable to understanding the dynamics pertaining to Islam and events in the Muslim world. Events such as the Islamic revolution, Muslim Brotherhood, Islamist militias such as al-Qaeda and the Islamic State (ISIS). It is therefore in the light of this, that this study seeks to contribute to the post-western debate by looking at concepts of state sovereignty, war and peace from an Islamic perspective. And ultimately, by proposing Islam as a theory to understanding events in the Muslim world.

Keywords: Islam, secular, International Relations, mainstream, Theory.

ÖZ

Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplini içinde, disiplinin kapsamlı doğasına ilişkin büyüyen bir tartışma vardır. Amitav Acharya gibi Batılı olmayan bilim adamları, Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplininin batılı olmayan diğer teorileri dikkate almadığını iddia ettiler. Bunun, disiplinin kapsayıcılığını sınırladığına inanıyorlardı. Hakim ana akım teoriler, dünya çapında batılı olmayan karmaşık sorunları açıklamakta yetersiz kalıyor. Bunun nedeni, teorilerin Euro-Amerikan dünya görüşüne dayanmasıdır. Devlet, egemenlik, güç vb. kavramların tümü, Batı merkezli Uluslararası İlişkiler teorilerinin himayesinde anlaşılmaktadır.

İslamcılığın/Siyasal İslam'ın yükselişinin bu eleştirinin ana katalizörlerinden biri olduğu söylenebilir. Ana akım teoriler, Batı'nın seküler entelektüel geleneğine gömülüdür. Bu nedenle İslam'ın dirilişi gibi konuları dikkate almak mümkün değildir. Sebep, din (bu durumda İslam) alakasız olarak kabul edilir. Bu nedenle, teorileri İslam'a ilişkin dinamikleri ve İslam dünyasındaki olayları anlamak için uygunsuz hale getirmek. İslam devrimi, Müslüman Kardeşler, El Kaide gibi İslamcı milisler ve İslam Devleti (İŞİD) gibi olaylar. Bu nedenle, bu çalışma, devlet egemenliği, savaş ve barış kavramlarına İslami bir perspektiften bakarak Batı sonrası tartışmalara katkıda bulunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Ve nihayetinde, İslam dünyasındaki olayları anlamak için İslam'ı bir teori olarak önererek.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İslam, laik, Uluslararası İlişkiler, ana akım, Teori.

DEDICATION

To my family and to the Muslim world

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IR	International Relations
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

For a long time, International relations as an academic discipline has undergone severe criticism for its Euro-American centrism. Many scholars (mostly non-western) have argued that new paradigms or theories should be considered outside the mainstream theories of International Relations which are widely believed to limit the scope of the discipline, with the contemporary changes taking place in the international system (Abdelkader, Adiong and Mauriello 2016; Acharya and Buzan 2010). The classical mainstream theories of International Relations i.e., Liberalism, Realism, Marxism, constructivism, critical theory, post-colonialism, post-modernism and a host of others, can be seen to represent the dominant European worldview on how relations between states should be undertaken. If one takes a look at the norms of international institutions today, one cannot help but to realise the premise upon which they are strictly based on; western- oriented. As a result, it has produced an unchanging narrative based on the Euro-American viewpoint. Theories of International Relations as generally known, are not only instruments of investigation and analysis but are also paradigms of conceptualizing the international system and world order. As dominant theories of international relations such as Realism and liberalism and their various strands are employed to investigate, explain, analyse and provide solutions to the complex events in the international system (Mauriello, 2016).

The rise of 'Political Islam' can be said to be the catalyst behind this criticism. The nature of international relations has changed considerably in the past four decades and during this time, we have witnessed this rise in several Muslim countries, in the Middle East, Africa, Central Asia, Europe and East Asia. The famous Islamic Revolution of 1979 that took place in Iran, was perceived to be an unexpected historical occurrence because no western political scholar predicted the rise of Islam as a political entity, simply because the modern era was driven by the belief of secularization. The assumption that religious observance declines and rendered irrelevant as a society embraces scientific inquiry and industrialises i.e. modernize (Gellner, 1992).

However, this was not the case with the Muslim world. Islam has continued to exert tremendous influence on its adherents in virtually every Muslim country (and to very large extent non-Muslim countries, where Muslims are a minority). Moreover, in the 1990s, as a result of the second gulf war which was launched by the U.S and its allies leading to the invasion of Iraq (a Muslim country) has produced a hostile situation between the world of Islam (Daru-al-Islam) and the West. These events would eventually lead to the 9/11 attacks on the US and the declaration of the "war on terror" by the Bush Administration.

The controversial '*Clash of civilisations*' authored by Samuel Huntington has also raised debates and concern in academia and among policymakers about the future of Islam and the entire Muslim world. Nevertheless, not everyone agrees with the assumption that, the clash between the world of Islam and the West is inevitable. Some have argued that Huntington did not stress the inevitability of the clash but

rather the potential thereof (Sullivan, 2002). Moreover, the rise of Islamist terrorist organisations across the globe in virtually every region and country with large Muslim population e.g. Egypt, Syria, Nigeria, Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan etc. to name a few, have attracted tremendous attention to Islam. Some may go on to ask, ‘why Islam?’ It is on the backdrop of this reality, that this research is considering Islam as a theory of International Relations in explaining the current wave of events that are related to Islam in the International system.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Islam has always been a factor in world politics which has not been given much attention by Western academia. This is because in the west, religion is considered irrelevant and it has been so for a very long time until the recently. Western dominance in the intellectual realm, most of the educational institutions and curriculum around the globe have adopted western educational system which pay little to no attention to religion. This is because western thought is rooted in its ‘secular tradition’ which makes religious discourse completely irrelevant. Hence, International Relations as an academic discipline is based on this worldview.

The rise of political Islam and other Islamic movements both moderate and extreme- have produced a vacuum within International Relations discourse. As not a single theory of International Relations can comprehensively explain these predicaments. Issues such as the revolution of Iran, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Boko Haram in Nigeria, the dominance of the Islamist party in Turkey known as the ‘Justice and Development Party’ (AKP) and above all, the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria popularly known as ISIS; all these movements cannot be fully analysed and conceptualised under the auspices of any of the Mainstream Theories of International

Relations. This is because, Islam is not considered as an approach in of itself but as a factor to be comprehended within the existing International Relations Paradigms (Turner, 2009).

Major contemporary crisis facing the world today have relation to Islam. If one reflects on Middle Eastern cold war between the Islamic republic of Iran and the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as the two struggle for influence. At centre of this conflict is the religious sectarian rivalry, the former being Shiite and the latter Sunni. Another example is the ‘war on terror’ in which the United States in Afghanistan is in conflict with the Islamist groups known as the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

However, most theories in international relations have adopted positivist and post-positivist epistemological inquiry to explain events in the international system. This has posed a significant limitation to the Mainstream theories simply because there are certain events that cannot be explained without putting into consideration the Islamic worldview as an approach in understanding those facts. Therefore, it is imperative to consider Islam independently as a theory of International Relations. Which is precisely the focus of this study. Therefore, this study aims to analyse how Islam can be considered as a theory of International Relations, in explaining the events in the international system which are related to it.

1.2 Research Questions

- Does the Islamic worldview possess the capacity to conceptualise, and explain the basic elements that shape the International System as it relates to issues of state sovereignty, war and peace?

- Does the Islamic Worldview have the capacity to provide an alternative optics for theorization?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The fact that many of the major problems facing the contemporary world has to do with Islam shows the imperativeness for Islam to be taken as a theory of International Relations. Western academia can no longer turn a blind eye to this reality. International Relations as a discipline of studying events from all over the world cannot be divorced of the very factor that influences the actions of individuals and states other than what the Mainstream paradigms assume. It dismisses from the very start any possibility that religion, in this case Islam, can be ‘a fundamental organising force in the international system’ (Hurd, 2009).

The Mainstream Paradigms within International Relations have been argued to be Euro-American centric (Amitav Acharya & Barry Buzan, 2010). For this reason, it has limited their scope in grasping the dynamics surrounding the crisis in connection to Islam. This is because Islam is not European and most of the problems in the world are located not in Europe or America but in the heartland of Islam (i.e. Middle East) and wherever there is a significant number of Muslims (Hamid, 2016).

In this light, by examining Islam as a theory within the discourse of International Relations, perhaps an ample account can be generated in explaining the complexity of events in the world. The world, if perceived through the lens of Islam as a theory- not as factor to be conceptualised or analysed, can yield deeper clarifications and perhaps, answers to the crisis across the Muslim world.

1.4 Hypothesis

This study is guided by the Hypothesis below:

- Islam as a theory of International Relations proposes an alternative perspective with regards issues of state sovereignty, war, and peace.
- Islam as an International Relations Theory provides a viable alternative to the mainstream Western-centric theories.

1.5 Methodology

The study will employ the qualitative method in both data collection and analysis. It will utilise the secondary use of data collection. Mostly from Books, journals, articles, and other related documents. Secondary sources of data refer to a set of data gathered or authored by another person, usual data from archives, either in the form of documents or survey results tend to be collected for a purpose other than the present one.

The advantages of secondary sources of data lie in the obvious fact that, information of this sort is collected periodically. This makes the establishment of trends and consistent patterns over time. Again, the gathering of information from such sources does not require the co-operation or assistance of the individual about whom information is being sought. Moreover, the study will use a historical and content method of explaining Islam as a theory of International Relations.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

This work will focus on three countries with strong and active Islamic presence, namely; Iran, Egypt, and Syria. This is because, all three countries are presently experiencing active Islamic Revivalist movements. In Iran after the 1979 revolution, we see the establishment of an Islamic Government headed by Ayatollah Khomeini,

Egypt has the Muslim Brotherhood, and in Syria, the notorious Islamic State (ISIS). In the course of writing the study will occasionally give reference to other countries where there are similar cases.

This study will be unable to fully criticise all theories of International Relations. This is because it would go beyond the scope of the study and it will turn out too broad. Rather, it would centre on looking at the mainstream international theories collectively so as to draw out their limitations and show how best Islam is fit as a theory of I.R. However, there is little materials on the limitations of these theories in regards to Islam and Middle East. Finally, there will also be no use of Statistics and interviews to guide this research. As a result of these limitations, this research will therefore rely greatly on secondary sources of data.

1.7 Road Map

This study will contain four chapters, the first chapter includes the introduction, research problem, aims and objectives of the study, the hypothesis, scope and limitations and the research methodology.

The second chapter will review the relevant literature by looking at the conceptual clarifications as regards what is meant by theory of International Relations and the limitations of the dominant Mainstream theories.

The third chapter will look at the position of Islam with regards basic elements of state sovereignty, peace, and war in international relations.

The fourth chapter will present and discuss Islam as a theory of International Relations.

The fifth chapter will involve the summary of the study and conclusion based on the findings.

Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter attempts to look at relevant literatures as to what is meant by Political Islam, the concept of Secular, secularism or secularization and international relations theories. This is to accurately make a conceptual clarification on how they are centred on the relationship between the trend of events around the globe linked to Islam. It will also look at limitations of the existing western-centric International Relations theories. Hence, it will thereafter serve as the foundation of this paper. The chapter will end with a summary of the reviewed literature.

2.2 The Revival of Political Islam (Islamism)

The significance of Islam is still present and felt in virtually every Muslim majority country. Islam has taken root in almost any national discourse since the 1970s by becoming the undeniable source of authority and influence among Muslim states and in fact, governments. “Almost all discourse in the social, political and economic as well as private realm are discussed in terms of Islam” (Berger, 2010).

The current revival of political Islam has taken different manifestations. On the one hand, it has taken a terrorist-like approach (al-Qaeda and ISIS) and on the other hand, a rather moderate approach (perhaps in Turkey with the AKP) and finally, to a very large extent, it has taken a revolutionary approach (as seen in Iran in 1979). The

following paragraphs will show what Political Islam (Islamism) means and what it stands for, by looking at relevant literatures.

Abu-Rabi argues that 'political Islam' has to do with finding a 'Muslim solution' to the problems created by modernity after the shock of western imperialism. He stated that, the revival of Islam seeks to resurrect the pure conceptions and values of Islam, erasing the existing secular values that hover around Muslim societies. he believes, the revival of Islam has taken different forms that encompasses politics, economics, socio-cultural and intellectual traditions, with the objective of reinstituting the proper Islamic way of life (1995).

In a similar vein, yet different, Daniel Regan in his article, *Islamic Resurgence*, chose the use of 'resurgence' over 'revival'. This is because Muslim history is filled with aforementioned cases of 'resurgence'. He describes the word 'resurge' as to 'rise again forcefully, with a billowing action of a powerful wave'. He holds that, the contemporary reality of Islamic resurgence (or revivalism) is not new, it is as old as Islamic history. He identified types of Islamic resurgence by dividing them into six (6) namely; 'Fundamentalism, Puritanism, evangelicalism, militancy, oppositionism and civilizational'. Firstly, Fundamentalism has to do with reconnecting with the authentic teachings of Prophet Muhammad and his companions. The second is linked to the first, by which the advocates put a special emphasis on 'ritual purity' (clothing, foods and drinks, gender roles etc.). Thirdly, 'evangelicalism', this has to do with recommitting Muslims into the religious practices. The fourth is 'militancy', this involves picking up arms, in the struggle to reassert Muslim values through physical violence against western secularity. Fifth, 'oppositionism', pertains to

challenging the establish political order, for instance, the 1979 Islamic revolution against the shah regime. And finally, ‘Civilizational’, here Regan asserted that, ‘Islamic resurgent’s (Islamist) seek to re-establish Islam as a dominant power beyond the confines of a country. In the words of Regan, as a ‘religio-cultural hegemony and political power’ (1993).

According to Sharma (1987), ‘the revival of political Islam’ entails ‘a strong attachment to the past’. That is, it pertains to establishing the past in the present; this simply means, reinstituting Islamic principles in modern Muslim societies. John Abrahams, (2017) in his research, considers the revival of Islam in Muslim societies as similar to ‘radicalization’. He defines ‘radicalization’ as ‘a process whereby an individual or group chooses to adopt, internalize, and act on a new ideology or set of beliefs aimed at challenging the prevailing social, economic, political, and status quo with or without violent outcomes’ (2017). Therefore, a parallel can be seen here between concept of ‘Political Islam’ and ‘Islamic radicalization’.

In the view of Shadi Hamid, ‘Islamism’, which is another way of referring to ‘Political Islam’, has to do with the idea ‘that Islam and Islamic law should play a central role in political life. This, he holds is a modern phenomenon, in the past there was no such thing as ‘Islamism’. It came to the fore as consequence of modernization and a reaction to secularism (2016).

2.3 Defining ‘Secularism’ and ‘Secularization’

Secularism or secularization are both very popular concepts that are widely used, often interchangeably in our world. Concepts that have been accepted as part and parcel of the modern world. As a result, it is essential to understand what this

concept mean because contemporary International Relations is rooted in this worldview.

The definitions vary and have been used differently in various context. Intellectuals and scholars of all manner of persuasion have defined it in ways that vary. Some have considered it to be an 'ideology' and others a 'process'. while others believe, there is a distinction between 'Secularism' and 'Secularization'. This will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The origin of this word is rooted in the intellectual and socio-political history of the West. To begin with, the word 'secular' means 'non-religious'. It holds that religion should be banished from public realm. (Grayling, 2009). According to Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, secularism is a 'social construction' which has assumed two different forms in International Relations, namely: 'laicist trajectory, in which she argues religion is perceived as an 'adversary and impediment to modern politics, and secondly, a Judaeo-Christian secularist tradition, in which religion is seen as a source of unity and identity that generates conflict in modern international politics.' (2009)

Ernest Gellner, the British thinker and sociologist considers secularisation to imply that, 'with the rise of scientific-industrial society, religious faith and observance decline' (1992). This means that, science, scientific inquiry and industrialisation will ultimately lead to the weakening, and eventually the eradication of religion from society. Humeira Iqtidar, in his article, *Secularism and Secularization*, mentions how secularization was conceived by modern sociologists as an 'inevitable process' that is concurrent to the notion of 'modernization and development'. He considers it a paradox, that secularization is not only seen as an element within the idea of

modernization and development but as a ‘facilitator’. To put it differently, it is through secularization can a society achieve modernization and development (2011).

In a similar fashion but yet different, the Canadian intellectual, Charles Taylor, in his book *A secular age*, believes secularization to not only denote the demarcation of state and religion and the absence of religion; but that secularism has to do with the complete transformation in the very nature of belief (2009). This refers to the process of completely transforming by changing the acceptable worldview, which can involve culture, tradition and moral codes in a given society.

In contrast to these definitions Al-Attas, in his book *Islam and Secularism*, gives a rather comprehensive account, by distinguishing between ‘Secularisation’ and ‘Secularism’. He considers secularisation as a ‘philosophical and scientific process; that involves the divesting of spiritual meaning from the world of nature, the desacralization of politics from human affairs and the deconsecration of values from the human mind and conduct’. On the other hand, he defines secularism as an ideology and as well as a process similar to secularization that entails, ‘the disenchanting of nature and desacralization of politics, however, it never quite deconsecrates values since it (secularism) sets up its own system of values intending it to be regarded as absolute and final...’ (1993). From the aforementioned definition, we can discern that, secularisation seeks to remove the sense of the sacred or divine from every human activity and surrounding. And secularism has to do with the establishment of new values independent of the values that are believed to be sacred, as traditionally considered in all religions.

A.C Grayling perceives secularism from a different perspective, as ‘a system that relegates religious institutions from the circle of ‘public policy making, and public funded provision of services...’ (2009) In short, secularism pertains to the ‘separation of church and state’. He further asserted that, not all secularists are ‘anti-religious’, considering the fact that, there are people who claim to be religious but yet secularists. Moreover, in his perspective, the concept of secularism has obtained a new meaning, to denote, a worldview on the bases of empiricism and the rejection of any form of view that has roots in ‘faith, tradition or superstition’ (2009).

Talal Assad (2003), mentions the imperativeness in understanding the relationship between secularism and religion. Assad emphasized that, in order to fully grasp the notion of the secular, one cannot sperate it from religion (2003). In other words, there is a relationship between the two concepts. He holds a rather paradoxical account, very much against the conventional and widely held definition of ‘secularism’; which involves the separation of religion and government as mentioned above. In his view, secularism has to do with the ‘continuous management of the first by the second’. This further implies that, the state will continue to influence norms of religion by encroaching the private circle, in order to relegate it (2003).

In a similar vein, Shadi Hamid, in his book, *Islamic Exceptionalism: How the Struggle over Islam is Reshaping the World*, gave an example with Turkey’s Diyanet or the Department of Religious Affairs, where by the state through this agency, uses religion to its own advantage. He considers ‘secularism’ in this case, when the government apparatus manages the undertakings of religion. According to him, ‘secularism’ means, ‘not the separation of religion from politics but in the sense of

affirming the supremacy of the state and ensuring that religion does not obstruct the state's prerogatives' (2016).

Saba Mahmood in her book, *Religious Difference in a Secular Age: A Minority Report*, argues that the definition of secularism goes beyond the usual assertion that has to do with the 'separation of church and state, religion and law and ecclesiastical and political authority'. She believes that secularism is much deeper than that. According to her, it has to do with 'fundamental shifts in conceptions of self, time, space, ethics, and morality, as well as a reorganization of social, political, and religious life.' She holds that, secularism can be divided into two, 'Political Secularism and Secularity'. The first has to do with 'the state's relationship to, and regulation of, religion'. And the latter pertains to set of concepts, norms, sensibilities and dispositions that characterize secular societies and subjectivities' (2015).

To Mohammad Salim Al-Rawashdeh and Ibrahim Ali Al-Rawashdeh in their article titled, *The Impact of Secular Thought on the Arab and Islamic World of modern Times*. The notion of Secular can be divided into two concepts. First, it relates to 'the separation of religion from political power'. Secondly, it implies 'Scientism'; which can be traced back to the nineteenth century, that stressed the adoption of scientific enquiry and reasoning in the process of acquiring knowledge 'away from religion and superstition' (2014). This brings another version of the term secular, which has to do with knowledge.

2.4 What is meant by International Relations Theory

There are various accounts of what international relations theory is in scholarly literature. From the viewpoint of Pease, "International relations theory is a way of

systematizing and comprehending world politics. Theories of international relations are theoretical frameworks that are based on organizing assumptions or propositions that simplify the world and guide analysis". She further equates them to worldviews, in this case a "widely held belief, serving as a mental diagram, as guides on how the world works" (Pease, 2015).

Hans Morgenthau, one of the foremost scholars of international relations maintains that theory is an instrument of understanding. It brings "order and meaning into a mass of unconnected materials" (Morgenthau, 1962). Its principal aim "is to reduce the facts of experiences to mere specific instances of general propositions" (Morgenthau, 1959). In correlation to how theory is considered by Pease, Morgenthau also sees theory as a guiding map and as an, "ideal for action". This "ideal for action" can be understood as follows in the words of Morgenthau:

"...We can say that the situation in Laos, Cuba and Berlin provide American foreign policy with a limited number of rational choices... what a theory of international relations can state is the likely consequences of choosing one alternative as over against another and the conditions under which one alternative is more likely to occur and be successful than the other" (Morgenthau, 1962).

Furthermore, there are four vital purposes that a theory of international relations can achieve. Firstly, a theory can serve as a "theoretical justification" for government officials. Secondly, theory can develop an efficient framework of thought for judging the conduct of foreign policy. Thirdly, as former theoretician of international relations to the administrations of three U.S Presidents (Truman, Eisenhower, and Kennedy), he believes theory can function as an "intellectual conscience, which reminds policymakers of the sound principles of foreign policy and points out their

failure to comply with them. Lastly, theory can “prepare a ground for new international order” (Morgenthau, 1962).

According to Gold and McGlinchey theories of international relations “allow us to understand and try to make sense of the world around us through various lenses, each of which represents a different theoretical perspective”. Perspectives which become frameworks based on worldviews. Moreover, they asserted that, one cannot strictly depend on a single theory because there are many others competing with each other. Each theory is unique depending on the context (2017).

In his article *What is a theory of International Relations?* The author Raymond Aron argues that in the western world there are two types of theory. Each of which belong to a distinctive tradition. The first being, “theory as a contemplative knowledge, drawn out of the idea or from the basic order of the world. The other type of theory is the scientific theories. In this case, a theory is a hypothetical, deductive system consisting of a group of hypotheses whose terms are strictly defined through empiricism and observation of reality”. He mentions that, sociologists and political scientists favor adopting the second type of theory which focuses on how the empirical world is perceived and analyzed. He considers theory in international relations to be a framework of examining the “behavior of actors in relation to one another”. (1967).

Steve Smith on the other hand maintains that theories of international relations “offer account on why things happened”. They aid us in grasping the puzzling events of world politics. He asserted that it is easy to *describe* actions in international affairs

but very difficult to *explain*. “When it comes to explaining action, we are, whether we like it or not, in the realm of theory” (1987).

In a rather comprehensive manner, Spindler and Scheider consider the distinctive feature of international relations to be what they refer to as ‘theoretical pluralism’. In this case they emphasize that, ‘theoretical pluralism’ is an “expression used to describe the coexisting and generally competing theories, approaches, perspectives and concepts that try to describe, explain and understand international relations”. They argue that, the multiplicity in theoretical approaches can be pinned on three main reasons. Firstly, “the result of theory building and culminative theory building and professionalization” in the international relations discipline. This has to do with the general focus and analysis of the discipline on why wars occur and the conditions for peace. Secondly, the polarity of theoretical approaches is as a result of a process that involves the borrowing of related perceptions from other social sciences such as sociology, political philosophy, economics etc. This, Spindler and Scheider believe is the ‘key characteristics of international relations. In other words, international relations as an academic discipline is also multidisciplinary, as such making it more insightful. Finally, the authors maintain that, being a social scientist, “there is a close interplay between theory building and the discipline’s historical and sociopolitical context.” Here Spindler and Scheider credit progress to international relations due to the practicality of the discipline in the ‘real world of international politics’ such as the “development of the bipolar system after the second world war, the decolonization of large parts of Africa and Asia in the late 1950s and 1960s and now globalization” (2014).

Buck and Hosli consider theories of international relations as approaches that “generate assumptions that explain and predict state behavior and interest”. They further asserted that, theories “attempt to explain why states act the way they do in particular situations”. Furthermore, theories of international relations, try to “extrapolate possible action with regards to foreign policy decision, war propensity and animosity between states and as well as the structure of international system” (2020).

2.5 Mainstream Theories of International Relations

There are two major theories of international relations namely; Realism and Liberalism. Despite their position as the dominant paradigms in international relations, they have undergone a great deal of challenge posed by other theories. This subheading will examine briefly the main arguments of the mainstream theories also known as the rationalist theories.

Realism as a theoretical framework has its roots in the historical experience of Europe and its intellectual tradition or scholarship. The reality of war and imperialism in Europe molded the realist worldview in understanding international relations. Continental Europe beginning in the fifteenth century has experienced among the most brutal and destructive conflicts the world has ever known, from the Thirty-Year War (1618-1648) to the Napoleonic wars during the nineteenth century and the twentieth century was marked by the destruction of world war I and World War II. European states, also violently competed with one another in the “quest for empire and colonies”. Britain for example, controlled vast expanse of territory that “the sun never sets on the British Empire” (Pease, 2019).

Individuals such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Hamilton all whom were political thinkers have subscribed to the notion that human nature is inherently “selfish and evil”. They represent the philosophical and intellectual heritage of realist worldview. As the renaissance political thinker, Niccolo Machiavelli in his famous book “*The prince*”, (1552) puts it; in the conduct of politics “all men are wicked and that they will always give vent to malignity that is in their minds when opportunity offers”. Twentieth century realist scholars of political science and international relations have built on this insight by formulating theoretical framework that analyze, explain and predict international affairs.

Realism is perhaps the oldest and most commonly adopted paradigm in international relations. It is the paradigm that focuses on the attainment, preservation and exercise of power by individuals and states. In its very ontology, it seeks to analyze the “imperatives states face to pursue a power politics of national interest” (Donnelly, 2005). Realists believe human selfishness or egoism is the main constraint on politics and also with the anarchical nature of the international system. To many realists, power is the ultimate settler of disputes in international relations.

The influential scholar of international relations Hans Morgenthau, who is among the foremost realist theoreticians has argued that Human beings are naturally selfish, aggressive and susceptible to bad behavior. States are human invention therefore states are bound to possess the same features. He further asserted that in realism “universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states” (1952). In other words, all forms of moral consideration whether religious or irreligious is not to be put into consideration. Furthermore, he outlines six fundamental principle of

realism that go as follows: (1) realism is “governed by objective laws that stem from human nature”. Laws by “which man moves in the social world”. (2) Power in realism is the main guide in politics. In other words, individuals and states are driven by interest described as power. (3) Realism does not claim to possess the definitive meaning of power. In other words, society plays a vital role in shaping the interests that inspire political action. (4) Realism does not totally negated morality in political action but rather, believes “universal moral principle cannot be realized”. (5) Realism “refuses to identify the moral aspiration of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe”. This means all states pursue what they consider to be in their national interest. (6) Realism supports the independence of politics from other circles of thought (Morgenthau, 1962).

In the academic circle of international relations, Hans Morgenthau and E.E. Carr, are categorized under this Hobbesian realist viewpoint, known otherwise as Traditional and Neoclassical realism. However, there are other strands of realism that maintain the universal pessimistic approach to the conduct of individuals and states in international affairs but differ as to how in their reasons. Structural realism, for instance, opined by Kenneth Waltz, the renowned American political scientist and scholar of international relations believe that, international conflicts are consequences of the ‘structure’ of international system that influences state actions. According to the structural realists, anarchy and balance of power are the two features of international system that influence state actions. He further argues that, because of the anarchical nature of international system, war is likely to occur due to the absence of world government to prevent belligerence and hostility (Waltz, 1959).

This leads to competition for material capabilities, such as the acquisition of arms for self-defense or risk being exposed to aggression and outright destruction.

Hence, egoism, self-interest, survival; these are the presiding ideas of the all strands of realism be it neorealism, defensive realism, offensive realism etc. They all share these fundamental characteristics that are considered indispensable in the discourse of international relations. In other words, in their very ontology they are not different from one another.

Liberalism as a concept can be traced back to the Enlightenment era. A doctrine that is intrinsic to all modern industrial societies (Bruchill, 2013). It is a conception which finds its roots from the Anglo-American political, economic and social experience. Liberalism can have various meanings depending on the context. In the political sense, it means equality, liberty, among individuals, participatory democracy and limited government. In the economic sense it involves the belief in capitalism, free market, privatization of production and self-regulation. Liberalism like realism is rooted in the intellectual and philosophical tradition of the West. If gone back in history, one cannot help but to make mention of the individuals who have contributed to the Liberalist thought. Individuals such Hugo Grotius, John Locke, David Ricardo, Adam Smith, Immanuel Kant and Jeremy Bentham (Pease, 2019). It rests on certain assumptions that act as lens of analysis and outlook on the nature of international relations.

Liberalism within the discourse of international relations is a theory that is rather tilted on the side of optimism (Hosli, 2020). It questions the prevailing assumption of realism and argued that, conflict can be mitigated through cooperation and believe

international organizations can serve as reliable instruments through which this cooperation can be achieved (Stein, 2008). Its focus therefore is on international organizations. The belief that international organizations can play a fruitful and positive role in the promotion of stability and welfare in the international system is precisely the reason why the individuals who hold this view are referred to as liberals or liberalist.

The liberalists believe in the interdependence of states through economic integration. According to Scott Burchill, based on the classical notion of liberalism, the post-war arrangement focused on international cooperation through institutional arrangements (2008).

Liberalists like realists deem states as the main actors in the international system. Neoliberalism also known as neoliberal institutionalism is a strand of liberalism that has been made as an integral part of international relations theory. They too believe states to be the major actors and that, the anarchical nature of international system shapes an atmosphere of uncertainty and fear between states which limits the tendencies for cooperation. According to the neoliberal theoreticians and scholars of international relations Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye; on the global stage, there are actors other than states that play a significant role in international politics. Units domestically and internationally, be it domestic politics and international institutions pose as influential actors shaping the priorities and behaviors of states. That is, interest groups such as multinational corporations can influence the actions of states. In their article '*The promise of institutionalist theory*' Robert Keohane and Helen

Milner argued that “international institutions affect the way states define their self-interest” (1995).

Liberalism and its other strands whether neoliberalism or neoliberal institutionalism, all share one fundamental characteristic namely, the focus on cooperation between states. This, like realism is the very ontology of Liberalism as a theory of international relations.

Constructivist approach came to the fore during the 1990s. At the beginning, it was not considered as a theory of international relations per se but rather it saw its development in sociology. It has to do with the process of revealing how the world is “socially constructed”. The notion of ‘socially constructed’ means when something in its very meaning, existence and value is created by groups and individuals in society. Unlike the mainstream theories that are materialist in nature by focusing on material capabilities i.e. military and economic might, which they believe influence the behavior and actions of states.

Constructivists on the other hand, opposes this viewpoint held by the two major mainstream theories. They believe that the actions of states are shaped by the social not material factors. The well-known constructivist Alexander Wendt in his work titled, *Anarchy and what states make of it*, explains that the mainstream theories or problem-solving theories, realism and liberalism are ‘rationalist’ given that they take the identities and interest of states as fixed. He argues that, they are not fixed rather they are “shaped by social interaction between individuals and states” (1992). According to him the anarchical state of the international system is contingent on ‘*what states make of it*’. In other words, the notion of self-help and security dilemma

are the natural outcome of anarchy held by the rationalist theories (Realism and liberalism) is negated by Wendt who argues that “social interaction between states define what states think about anarchy”. For example, the interaction between U.S and Britain may not result to any tension despite both states being nuclear armed. However, in the case of U.S and Iran, the interaction is unfriendly, therefore this explains why Iran is pursuing a nuclear weapon. As Wendt puts it, “material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are imbedded” (1992). Ideas and intersubjectivities about identity and logics of ideology matter in shaping the “social identity of political actors” (Burchill, 2013). Alexander Wendt argues that, “ideas are the basis of interest” (1992). Therefore, in the development of interest, constructivist theorists pay significant attention to social identities rather than states. This, as Wendt asserts, shape the interest of states.

2.6 Limitations of the Mainstream Theories of IR in Relation to Muslim World

There is an ongoing discourse among non-western scholars of international relations as to the limits of the mainstream theories mentioned above pertaining to how they apply to the context of the non-western world. They argue that there is a need to diversify the discipline by incorporating new theoretical perspectives from other parts of world in order to give it more richness (Abdelkader, Adiong and Mauriello 2016; Acharya and Buzan 2010). The following paragraphs will look at the literatures on the limitations of international relations theories.

Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (2010) hold the view about the limits that lie within the dominant theories of international relations. They asserted that the

dominant theories have little to offer in analyzing comprehensively the “structure of international relations subjects”. That these dominant theories only address states and their purposes within a specific geopolitical area. This, they contend makes it impossible to fully grasp and analyze the reality of non-western world.

Peter G. Mandaville (2003) argues that the orthodox theories of international relations are to a great extent oblivious of the other political activities and changes around the globe. In other words, they fail to put into consideration changing political circumstances from other parts of the world. He further holds the view that realism and its other strands, which believe state to be the focal point of international relations neglect the fact that “there are many other layers and spaces of politics”. These “layers and spaces of politics” he identifies as other social dimensions such as employment, gender and religion. This, he concludes are relevant political dimensions.

Faruk Yalvac (2016) also holds the view that the international relations theories that are widely accepted have for a long time concerned themselves with “explaining the order and not changes”. That is, the theories are accounts of European experience and uniqueness. He posits a similar argument like Mandaville, that it is a “linear progressive understanding of history to ignore the interactive and mutually constitutive nature of development between European and non-European societies”. The notion of change has not been analyzed independently within the existing order which the mainstream theories of international relations accept as fixed and given. In his perspective, change outside the non-western world i.e. Muslim world has not been “properly defined nor theorized” within the dominant international relations

theories. He gives an example with the liberal theories of international relations are deeply Eurocentric given that they all fail to consider changing circumstances in other parts of the international system.

Faiz Ahmed Sheikh (2013) argues that there is a lack of attention paid to religion (in this case Islam) within the international relations discourse. He contends that, looking at the Middle East, religion is strictly ignored by realists who for example prioritize material gain and capabilities to be the driving influences of states and individuals, talk less of liberalism. He further asserted that, constructivist theory in which there is a focus on identities and intersubjectivities also turn away from ideology i.e. religion. As a result, he concludes “religion is placed on the backburner” in constructivist analysis because it is believed to only have domestic influence but not regional or international.

2.7 Post-Western IR

Post-Western IR is an ongoing debate within the discipline of International Relations pertaining to the western-centric nature of the discipline. Amongst the scholars at the forefront of this debate challenging this western-centrism of international relations are Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan. In their fascinating volume titled “*Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspectives on and Beyond Asia*”, they offer an alternate outlook to other non-western perspectives of IR. They argued that, virtually all theories of international relations are “produced by and for the west, and rests on an assumption that western history is world history”. They strongly maintain that, “if we are to improve International Relations Theory as a whole, then the Western IRT needs to be challenged not just from within, but also from outside the West” (2010).

Quite contrary but similar to Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan view, Giorgio Shani in his work titled *Towards a Post-Western IR*, argues that in order to have a more genuine post-western perspective of IR, there is a need to interrogate the very ontology and positivist methodology as well as the “concomitant assumptions of western cultural distinctiveness and superiority which are constitutive of the discipline”. Moreover, he asserted that “the secular Eurocentric historicism deployed by most critical theorist places limits on the degree to which transnational non-western actors can fully participate in critical international politics (2008).

Similarly, Tickner and Blaney in their book *“Thinking International Relations Differently”*, offered a profound argument against euro-centric discipline of International Relations. They offered different non-western scholarly angles on essential elements, conceptions and issues in the euro-centric discipline such as the concepts of state, secularism, authority, security, sovereignty, religion and so on, by questioning the negligence of certain “concepts, categories and epistemology of western IR” (2012).

In a similar vein also, Shilliam looks at the concept of “global modernity” by questioning the widely held assumption that the “modernity is an exclusive contribution of the West to the world.” He challenges the socio-political thought of the West and present non-western “ideas and perspectives on modernity”, hence paving new ways for “engagement with non-western modernity” (2011).

In all of this, Islam receives little to no attention. Some scholars such as Shani, who tried to provide a rather rich contribution to the post-Western IR debate by looking at Islamism and Sikhism as “critical political discourses” (2008). He challenges the

secular tradition of IR so as to introduce other IR traditions, as mentioned above. For example, He looks at the Islamic International Relations in a generalized fashion, without putting into focus the relationship between Islamic faith and the non-Muslim world.

Therefore, this study can be viewed as a contribution to the ongoing ‘post-Western’ debate within the discipline of International relations.

Post-Colonialism is relevant to this study because of its concern about historical factors that involves empire, race, class and hierarchy in international relations, which are otherwise neglected by mainstream theories. The notion of hierarchy has to do with the “concentration of power” not arguing for the fair and equal distribution of power. That is, post-colonialisms’ fundamental argument is that, “western perceptions of the non-west are a result of the legacies of European colonization and imperialism” (Nair, 2017). The focus is ‘discourses’, mainly things that are written or spoken, which were constructed and imposed on non-western peoples as distinct and inferior to the West. These constructed narratives helped justify the West’s dominance all in the name of bringing progress and advancement to the rest of the world.

Furthermore, concepts such as the state, power, and security, analyzing them “serves to reproduce the status quo”. In the post-colonial perspective, such concepts are perceived differently from how mainstream theories conceive them. The concept of sovereignty which will be discussed later has its roots in the modern understanding of state, imposed on the colonized by the European colonial powers. In their analysis, realists and liberalist neglect by taking for granted this concept. Post-colonialist

scholars consider the international system as hierarchical not anarchical as mainstream theories do. Post colonialist argue that “colonialism and imperialism fostered a long process of continued domination of the West over the rest of the World and cultural, ideological, economic and political domination still characterize global politics” (Nair, 2017).

Post-colonialism also stresses the relationship between the Muslim world and the West. It reveals how the West’s views of Islam is a direct manifestation of the its own insecurities. The rise of political Islam in the Muslim World “revealed the impacts of core cultural and social shifts accompanying a more global economy” (Nair, 2017). Scholars such as Edward Said have contributed profoundly in demonstrating how the Western world has constructed an image of Islam or the ‘Orient’. He concluded in his book that Western academia, media, policy experts etc. all contributed in distorting the image of Islam and its adherents (Said, 2008).

Therefore, postcolonialism is relevant to this work, as the study has taken the form of a hybridization. In other words, the fusion of post-colonial arguments and post-western arguments. This will be seen in the following pages.

2.8 Conclusion

Be that as it may, the aforementioned inquiries have divulged relevant literatures regarding some conceptual clarification as to what ‘Political Islam/Islamism’ and ‘secularism/secularization’ denote. Moreover, it has investigated what is meant by ‘theory’ in international relations and has also looked at the dominant Mainstream theories and their limitations in the field of international relations concerning the Muslim world. This has left an opening within the post-Western debate and the

academic discipline as how to properly understand and analyze the events in the Muslim world which is the aim of this research. Therefore, in this light, the next chapter will look at the position of Islam with regards the notion of state sovereignty, war and peace.

Chapter 3

STATE SOVERIEGNTY, WAR AND PEACE IN ISLAM

3.1 Introduction

In order to understand Islam in the context of international relations, there is a need for a historical background as to what Islam is, and its position in international system. This chapter, most importantly will present Islam as a theory of international relations by sketching out its position pertaining to conceptions of state sovereignty, war, and peace.

3.2 Islam: A Brief Historical Background

Islam is often seen as a religion in the secular sense as a result of the advent of modernity. However, the historical founding of Islam and its subsequent development overtime up to this day has indeed made it very much distinguishable and immune. In spite of the notion by Western secular modernizers that a state ought to be secular. However, this goes contrary to the Islamic notion of statehood as it will be described in the following paragraphs. Before that there is need to look at the brief historical background of Islam.

First of all, Islam was founded in seventh century Arabia by Muhammad who is believed by Muslims all over the world to be the last and final prophet of God. By the time of his demise, he has successfully revolutionised the peninsula by uniting most of the warring pagan Arab tribes in the region, under the banner of the new Faith, Islam. This religion is based on two sources that Muslim around the globe

consider as sacred, namely: the Quran and Sunnah. The Quran is believed by Muslims adherents to be the verbatim word of God revealed to Prophet Muhammad in a period of 23 years. It contains religious injunctions and laws as to how Muslims ought to act and behave in accordance to the will of God. The Sunnah on the other hand, has to do with the sayings, doings and general conduct in virtually every imaginable sphere of the Prophet life. In which Muslims accept to be the practical aspect of the Quranic injunctions and laws. These laws and injunctions found in the Quran and Sunnah together are the foundation to what makes up the Shari'ah or Islamic law, upon which everything else is based on (Hamid, 2016). The Islamic law encompasses rituals such as prayer, charity, fasting, pilgrimage to the holy city of Makkah. It also includes laws on socio-political matters especially one that has to do with Muslims relation with non-Muslims.

Islam is a religion that spread no doubt through conquests. By the time of the Prophet's passing, it is worth mentioning that, he established an Islamic state in Arabia under his leadership. After his death, the caliphate came to existence and would flourish from the seventh century all through to the twentieth century.

3.3 The Caliphate (Islamic Sovereignty)

As earlier mentioned, Islam's political nature is very distinct from modern political conception of nation-states. The main factor that profoundly contrast Islam with modern statehood is its political nature. This political nature of Islam is embodied in what is known as the 'caliphate'.

The concept of 'Caliphate' emerged with the followers of Muhammad who inherited the new Islamic state created in medina (in present day Saudi Arabia). During his life

time, the Prophet was the sole religious and political guide for Muslims. The caliphate comes from the word 'Caliph' which means a 'vicegerent' or 'Successor'. The caliph is therefore the political and religious leader of the ummah (Islamic State). The first four caliphs that succeeded Muhammad are known as the 'rightly guided'. They were individuals very close to him. They are accepted by both in the Sunni and Shiite worlds of Islam. The 'Caliph' as an individual embodies the spiritual and wields the political power in the world of Islam. It demonstrates how Islam is political since its birth, and how it is a politically successful religion. It is this fact, that profoundly distinguishes Islam from the modern conception of Statehood. And to understand Islam in the context of international relations, there is a need to clarify this distinction.

From the beginning of Islamic history, there was no such thing as the 'the separation of mosque and state' as it is known in the West as the 'separation of Church and state'. This notion is known today as 'secularism'. As stated above, the role of the Caliph is as a religious and political leader in the Muslim world. Hence, politics and religion have always been intertwined. Throughout Islamic premodern history there was never *not* a caliphate, all through since the Islamic state founded in Medina by the Prophet, the caliphate of the four rightly guided as mentioned, the Umayyad caliphate, then the Abbasid caliphate until the fall of the last Islamic caliphate of the Ottomans in 1924. Although in its long history there were marked cases of sedition and infighting but never have they interrupted the flourishing of the caliphate until 1924.

Contrary to the advent of modernity with its new form of state organization, which of course eventually became one of the legacies of European imperialism and colonialism in the Muslim world and the non-western world at large. Indeed modernity, was “associated with the end of the devastating wars of religion that wracked Europe throughout the sixteenth century and brought about the beginnings of our modern theories of secularism” (Smith, 2016).

The post-colonial countries ended up adopting the state structure of the western countries, the colonial powers. It has to be noted that, the post-colonial nation-states and how they are structured reflects one of the elements in the process of modernization. In other words, at one point, to be ‘modern’ actually meant to be ‘western’. During the first flush of the post-colonial era, to be modern meant the pursuit of western education, technology, industrialization and the adoption of secularism, which has to do primarily with the ‘separation of state and religion’ and certainly the control and relegation of religion by the state. Or as the British thinker and sociologist, Ernest Gellner defines it as follows; with the rise of “scientific-industrial society, religious faith and observance decline” (1992). Therefore, modernity and the process of modernization, both are considered to be antithesis to religion.

Hence, the new nation-states tend to look at religion the way the nineteenth century colonial powers looked at distant cultures which came under their domination- at best as ‘things to be studied, engineered, ghettoed, museumized or preserved in reservations’. At worst, as inferior cultures opposed to the principles of modernization and further seen as inconsistent with the ‘game of modern politics,

science and development'. Therefore, the notion of progress, the nation and the will of the people; new means of organizing society and state power; and new means of communications altogether transformed the local realities all over the Muslim world (Said,1993). As much of the post-colonial world then became a laboratory for western-style social engineering, a fresh testing site for the Enlightenment ideals of secular progress.

3.4 Political Islam/Islamism

The concept of political Islam or Islamism became widespread after the era of colonialism. Much of Muslim countries during the post-colonial era were administered by secular western styled governments as stated above. This legacy of colonialism is what created the fissure which is to be felt to this very day. The notion of 'political Islam' or 'Islamism' is new to the Muslim world. In fact, the very term 'Islamism' gained prominence and widespread use after the Iranian Revolution of 1979. It has to do with the desire to reorganise society in an Islamic way as against western secular style e.g. Kemalism. It is a complete reaction to modernity. The central belief is the establishment of an 'Islamic State' (Heywood, 1992). As Giorgio Shani pointed, "the most unrelenting challenge to secular, historicist and Eurocentric worldview of Western IR has come from 'Islamism'" (Shani, 2008).

The wave of Islamic movements that emerged all over the Muslim world can be connected to one major event, namely; the fall and abolishment of the Ottoman Islamic Caliphate in 1924. This sent tremor through the Muslim world which subsequently led to numerous Islamic movements. The sparks of Political Islam/Islamism can be traced back to the last half of the nineteenth century, with clash between the European imperialist forces and the Muslim world. The advocates

of Islamism argued for the reversion of Muslims to the fundamental tenets of Islam in reaction to the inevitable threat of westernization (Soage, 2009). Among the earliest proponents of Islamism was the well-known Muslim scholar Al-Afghani, who called on Muslims to return to classical sources of Islamic doctrine by embracing the ways of the Salafi (the first generation of Muslims that are believed to be the ideal Muslims), Muhammad Abdu, who was a disciple of the former, Hassan Al-Banna the founder of Muslim Brotherhood, and his follower the famous Sayid Qutb and later Ayatollah Khomeini the usurper of the Iranian revolution of 1979 etc. All these individuals desired one thing, which is to see Islam reinstated as the organizing principle of society.

Furthermore, the arch enemy of Political Islam/Islamism is secularism or secularization. As mentioned above ‘secularism/secularization’ pertains to “the theory that modernisation is invariably accompanied by the victory of reason over religion and displacement of religious values by secular ones” (Heywood,1992). The main struggle of Islamism is actually against western secular values. As was the case with Iran during the Shah’s regime. The attempt to westernize Iranian society which was traditionally and conservatively Islamic and coupled with the oppressive nature of the Shah’s government was soon to trigger a rebellion from the masses. And then in 1979 this led to a reaction against the government’s brutal and oppressive policies, culminating eventually to the fall of the Shah’s Regime. After the seizure of the revolution by Khomeini, Islamic values such as women headscarf and Hijab were legislated against western dressing and values that were endorsed during the Shah’s regime.

The rise of the Islamism is indeed pointing to a potential civilizational clash. As Islamism stands against the West and virtually anything western, especially on an ideological and cultural level. in other words, the universalization of western secular values. As Samuel Huntington (1996) the author of the controversial book *Clash of Civilization and the remaking of world order* mentions about the Western universalist belief as follows;

“...The Western universalist belief posits that people throughout the world should embrace Western values, institutions and culture because they embody the highest most enlightened, most liberal, most rational, most modern and most civilized thinking of humankind”.

Therefore, it is against this superiority complex of the West that Islamists especially the radicals such as ISIS and Al-Qaeda do what they do. The assertion by Huntington represents the Euro-American centrism and is precisely the reason why individuals such as Edward Said beforehand spoke and wrote on ‘orientalism’ and ‘cultural imperialism’. It involves the belief in the superiority of the West over the non-West. Or the imposition by one usually politically or economically dominant community of various aspects of its own culture unto another nondominant community. It is cultural in so far as it involves the imposition of the customs, tradition, language, social and moral norms of the dominant community, in this case the West over other non-dominant community. And it is imperial because of the forceful extension of the dominant community’s (the West) authority of its ways of life over the other population by either transforming or replacing of the nondominant community’s (non-west) culture (Said, 1993).

It is worth mentioning that Islamists are not against western technological advancement. For example, the Sunni Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has successfully

modernized by embracing western technology and food e.g. McDonalds, but remains strictly conservative. Therefore, it is in fact in the realm of ideology and culture, which has to do with the values, norms and indeed worldview of the West that Islamists are against. If Islamic worldview is taken on one hand and western secular worldview is taken on another; one cannot help but realise that these two worldviews are grounded on very distinct paradigms. Islamic worldview is based on divine principles and modern western secular worldview is based on the very rejection of those principles. Therefore, to put them together is to juxtaposition them. A good example to outline this distinction is in the area of 'Law'. Islamic thought considers law to be absolute and unchanging which is the Shariah/Islamic law, being the injunctions in the Quran and Sunnah. However, in Western Secular thought, law is relative and ever-changing depending on the arbitrariness of the people and society (Edis, 2008).

Furthermore, one can equate the struggle of Islamism with the struggle of Zionists. For the reason that, Zionism began as a movement for the establishment of a Jewish state. Similarly, Islamism is a struggle as mentioned above for the establishment of an Islamic State.

There are various developments that led to the rise of Islamism. As stated above, one being the regimes that took over after the end of colonialism. In the Middle East, the post-colonial governments tended to be oppressive, corrupt and inefficient and as neo-imperialism succeeded old imperialism with the United States expansive involvement in the region. Another development is the never-ending Arab-Israeli conflict, with the defeat of Arab states during the 1967 six-day war, leading to a

sprawling occupation of Palestinian territories and by that drastically increasing the number of refugees among Palestinians. These triggered a feeling of disappointment in the secular Arab nationalism and socialism, paving way for religiously-based politics. The Afghan war in the 1970s and 1980s also led to militant jihadist groups caused by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and later on the 9/11 attack which culminated in the outbreak of the “War on Terror”. In spite of the fact that most Muslims live under nation-states, the aspiration for a redeemed international bloc for Muslims still continues. As a result, these developments have influenced and shaped the relationship between Muslims countries and non-Muslims countries. Therefore, there is a need to explore the position of Islam with regards to International Relations.

3.5 Islam and International Relations

The position of Islam with regards to international relations, has to do with its focus on the relationship between Muslims and Non-Muslims. Classical Muslim scholars and jurists are known to divide the world into three, dar al-Islam (Abode of Islam) dar al-harb (Abode of War or non-Muslim hostile territory) dar al-Aman (the abode of treaty). To avoid misunderstanding, Islam is a religion that preaches and advocates egalitarianism, making it universal in nature. Its laws and injunctions address all peoples without discrimination on the bases of groups or races. The aim of Islam is to incorporate all the diverse peoples of the world under one community (Ummah). However, it has not spread to all lands in the world beyond its own dar-al Islam and the lands it has not reached are known as the dar-al-harb as well as the lands with which there is peaceful truce with Muslim lands dar al-Aman (Abu Kazleh, 2006).

To properly understand the relationship between Muslims and Non-Muslims there is a need to look at the primary sources of Islam, namely; the Quran and Sunnah. As stated above, the Quran and Sunnah are the primary sources of Islam that lay down the standards and values pertaining to faith and ideology of Islamic thought for political action. Another source of Islamic thought relevant to external matters is what is known as ‘Fiqh’ or ‘Islamic Jurisprudence’. This involves the works of Islamic jurists and their opinions as regards issues that have not been dealt with explicitly in the Quran and Sunnah. To put it simply, “Fiqh represents the sum of jurisprudential interpretations, deductions and opinions of Muslim scholars, the ulama, and especially of those of the highest rank...” (AbuSulayman, 1981).

Throughout Islamic history, it has been noted that Muslim jurists have always played a role in shaping the choices and policies of Muslim rulers or Caliphs. In other words, they served as a guide for the Muslim rulers in political matters both domestic and external. Likewise, this branch of Islamic jurisprudence that deals with the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims is referred to as ‘Siyar’, making it the foundation of international relations in Islam (Bsoul, 2008). As the great Muslim jurist Al Sarakhsi (1960) defines it in jurisprudential terms:

“Siyar...describes the conduct of believers (Muslims) in their relations with the unbelievers of enemy territory as well as with people with whom the believers have made treaties, who may have been temporarily (musta’man- the subject of a state which was at war with a Muslim state and granted safe conduct to enter Muslim territory) or permanently dhimmi- (the non-Muslim subject of a Muslim state) in Muslim land; with apostates... and with rebels...”

Additionally, it also includes “the rules of civilized intercourse with peoples and states living in friendship with Muslims, which are contrasted in the Quran with

those in hostility”. There is a need to outline an important point; Islamic jurisprudence (Fiqh) is one of the sources of Muslim law but it should not be confused with the source of ‘Fiqh’ (Islamic jurisprudence) itself namely, the Quran and Sunnah, together they constitute the ‘Shariah’ or ‘Islamic Law’. (AbuSulayman, 1981). Therefore, there is need to explore what the position of Islamic law is on war and peace, using the three divide dar al-Islam (the abode of Islam), dar al- harb (the abode of War) and dar al-Aman (the abode of truce) made by classical Muslim scholars, before taking a look what contemporary Muslims thinkers or Islamists.

3.6 Dar al-Islam (The abode of Islam)

The definition as to what Dar al-Islam (The abode of Islam) is, varies among Muslim scholars. Most hold the opinion that an Islamic state is a country that operates on the basis of Islamic law as its legal system. In this case the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the other gulf states can be categorized. Some scholars believe that a country that has a mixture of Islamic and secular legal systems, for example, Iran and Pakistan are categorized within dar al-Islam. While another group of scholars consider countries with majority Muslim population, even if it happens that their governments are completely secular by not incorporating the Islamic law, such as; Turkey, Syria and Egypt. (Abduljalil, 2008).

3.7 Dar al-Aman (The abode of Truce)

Most Muslim scholars and jurists have argued that dar al-Aman (the Abode of Truce) has to do with the non-Muslim territories that are in peace relations with Muslim territories. As the Muslim scholar Dr. Abduljalil Sajid states “Dar al-Aman is any territory that has concluded treaties of peace with countries in Dar al-Islam” (2008). However, this definition is limited to mutual cooperation in trade and commerce, and sometimes in war. This shows that Islam holds the view that peace can be fostered

and achieved through economic cooperation, so long as there is no hostility. Although, the world has seen the rise of other Islamist sects holding extreme views as to the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslim countries e.g. Al Qaeda and ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). They believe these two worlds (dar al-Islam and dar al-harb) will always be at war with one another.

3.8 Dar al-Harb (The House of War) and Jihad

Dar al-Harb encompasses the lands where Islam has not reached or to put it simply, non-Muslim territories. These are lands where the shariah/Islamic law is not recognised as a legal system. One of the founders of Islamic schools of jurisprudence, Imam Abu Hanifa, who is also amongst the great Sunni scholars and Jurists recognized worldwide asserted that, in order to label a country or territory as dar al-harb (the house of war) rest on the security and safety of Muslims and their religion in that territory. However, if Muslims are unsafe and are unable to practise their religion, then such a territory is considered a dar al-harb (the house of War). Some other scholars and jurists hold the view that dar al harb (the house of War) are countries that attack and try to conquer Muslim lands (Abudljalil, 2008).

There is a need to explain the position of Islam with regards to the Jihad (War). Considering the attacks of 9/11 in the United States and the subsequent “war on terror” and other military conflict such as the invasion of Kuwait by Iraq in 1990, in which case a Muslim country attacking another Muslim country, including the militant groups like Taliban and ISIS that have all lunched Jihads in their various places of operations. Muslim scholar and jurists were saddled with the duty to clarify the concept of Jihad, this is still ongoing to this day. Therefore, understanding dar al-harb (the house of War) is to understand Jihad itself. From one of the four schools

of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence, the Maliki school of thought argues one of its scholars, Ibn Arafa that jihad is “warfare waged against non-Muslim for the purpose of instituting the Word of God and its principles, or war fought in retaliation to those who seek to conquer Muslim territories. Thus, making Jihad a necessary means of subduing aggression against Muslims (Berger, 2008).

Nevertheless, with the rise of other Islamist sects and organisations, this has led to divergent views as how jihad is to be conducted. Each sect and organisation have their own approach of waging military campaign against non-Muslims. These groups are in their minority who hold the view that the enemies of Islam comprise of ordinary civilians and military belonging to countries that have attacked Muslims. They argue that citizens of those governments deserve to be attacked because they voted the government that attacked Muslims. This is the view that is held by Islamist militias after the invasion of Iraq. The hostility towards the United states by jihadist groups in Iraq, Afghanistan, Palestine etc. Such individuals with this view have been widely criticised by most Islamic scholars across the globe.

Nonetheless, this is the widely held view of scholars and jurists with regards to Jihad. Ever since the fall of the Ottoman Islamic caliphate in 1924, the concepts of dar al-islam (the abode of Islam) and dar al-harb (the house of War) are no longer included in the legal system and international relations of Muslim states. What is seen currently are non-state actors, Islamist militia such Al Qaeda etc. employing them to justify their extremist brutalities.

3.9 Conclusion

This chapter has looked at the historical background of Islam; its political nature and its distinctiveness from the secular qualities of modern statehood. It has also looked at the concept of Political Islam or Islamism and how it gained prominence in the twentieth century, with the desire of its advocates to reinstate Islam as the social order shaping state and society. Finally, the chapter looked at Islam's position with regards to international relations, as it pertains to War and Peace. Therefore, this brings the next topic of discussion; Can Islam be considered as a theory of International relations? This will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4

ISLAM AS A THEORY OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

4.1 Introduction

With the preceding chapter looking at what Islam has with regards to International Relations; this chapter aims to look at Islam as a theory of International Relations. This chapter will briefly look at the ontological and epistemological nature of Islamic thought. Considering the fact that, with the rise of Political Islam/Islamism which is affecting the Muslim world, there is a need to look at the different approaches of these Islamic movements in order to understand the ongoing dynamics with regards to Islam in the Muslim World. Especially when it comes to understanding the international terror organizations and also in understanding the Clash of Civilizations which has more or less posited the West against Islam.

4.2 Islam as a Theory of International Relations

Islam as a theory of international relations is very distinct from mainstream theories. There are three factors that distinguishes Islamic thought with regards to international relations. The first being, the notion of Ummah and Assabiyah (Community of believers and mutual feeling) which goes beyond the understanding of State and sovereignty in western perspective. This concept of Ummah and Assabiyah is egalitarian in nature, as it transcends national, racial, cultural and territorial boundaries. Secondly, Islamic thought as explained in chapter three,

contains the concept of three worlds, dar al-Islam (the abode of Islam), dar al-harb (the abode of War) and dar al-Aman (the abode of Truce). The third is with regards to the shared ontology within Islamic thought, being the Quran and Sunnah. These three factors are the essential elements of theories within Islamic international relations.

Within Islamic thought there are three theoretical approaches one can argue that are quite distinct from one another. The traditionalist approach, which holds similar views with realist pertaining to war, anarchy, survival, and power. Secondly the non-traditionalist/modernist, who hold the view that security and cooperation can be achieved between non-Muslims. They also accept the existence of nation-states and Islam engagement with modernity. Lastly, the Jihadists, who happen to be the extreme ideological drivers of transnational terror organizations that have spread in many parts of the globe.

All these three approaches share the same ontological bases which is the Quran and Sunnah, but neither is epistemologically positivist or post-positivist like the mainstream western-centric international theories. And as mentioned, and their concept of sovereignty are unfamiliar to the western model. For this reason, therefore, Islam should be taken as a paradigm in its own right.

4.3 Traditionalist Approach

The traditional approach of Islamic international relations is based on the division of the world into two as mentioned above (the abode of Islam, the abode of war). This conception is very much similar to the anarchical conceptualization of international system similar to realist's perspective in mainstream IR. This relationship between

Muslim and non-Muslim territories is that of survival. From this standpoint, the traditionalists justify the conquering of non-Muslim lands in order to propagate the religion. This has been the dominant approach that guided Muslim foreign relations for much of its history (Abu-Rabi, 1995).

Muslim traditionalists hold a strict epistemic basis founded upon the literal understanding of Islamic primary texts namely the Quran and Sunnah, which is the starting point of analysis. They are considered absolute and infallible because of their divine nature and essence. Therefore, they are not relative and subject to change. Time is of no use and is irrelevant, any attempt to bend the texts to modern settings is considered heretical. Muslim traditionalists believe the Quran and Sunnah provide the political, social, economic and international guidelines as argued here, without the need of human interference. Therefore, Islam encompasses all aspects of social life. In interpreting these texts to provide rulings, the traditionalists employ the use of analogy based on historical events and occurrences by looking at the lives and times of the first generation of Muslims. They also use grammatical as well as legal approaches, which constitute much of what is termed Islamic jurisprudence.

The understanding of Islamic foreign relations is premised on seventh century understanding of international system. In other words, the traditionalist view of international relations is fixed in the premodern world of empires. Hence, there is no such thing as the modern conception of 'sovereign state' in traditional Islamic thought. The concept of the caliphate is very distinct from the Westphalian state style. This is because the Westphalian conception of state has to do with race, culture and territorial boundaries. While the Islamic concept of Ummah is rather more

universal and encompassing, bound by the belief as a community under the sovereignty of God and mutual group feeling associated with this belief. Thus, the state in traditional Islamic thought is considered to be the center of power and also the intermediary that binds the vast and diverse Muslim peoples as one Islamic community (Turner,2009).

Despite being criticized for its unchanging concepts with regards to foreign relations, it has proven to be very much influential in shaping modern Islamic thought. It is still serving as the basis for many Islamic movements and revivalists, who perceive the nation-states as one of the legacies of colonialism and western dominance which has crept into the Muslim world by subjecting Muslims to western powers. Making jihad as an indispensable feature of Islamic theory of IR similar to the realist view of anarchical world filled with aggressive forces struggling for survival, which present a threat to the Muslim Ummah (community).

For example, the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt can be characterized as traditionalist. It was founded by the school teacher and Imam Hassan al-Banna who was responsible for creating the most influential Islamic revivalist organization in the Muslim world. It has adopted a traditionalist interpretation of “Islamic political and international thought”. The aim is to revive Islam; as one of the major members of the organization Sayid Qutb demonstrated, their approach is calling for the “restoration of the Sharia law through physical power and jihad” (Qutb, 1981).

The brotherhood believe that the Quran and Sunnah should constitute the basis for State organization whether politically or socially and economic. They maintained that a true Islamic state (government) must be based on these primary texts for a just

and equitable society to be achieved. However, the brotherhood members have engaged in local politics despite their stern traditionalist stance. The tactic is to work from within so as to engineer the end of the nation-state. Their ultimate objective is to revive the lost caliphate that can transcend the modern notion of nation-state, the sovereignty of which they consider invalid. Therefore, their activity is not limited to Egypt alone but cuts across other Muslim countries such as (Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan Syria etc.).

The organization has also played a non-state role in Egyptian society in providing social services such as schools and medical facilities. Before the 2013 coup and the subsequent clamp down of the Organizations' activities by the new military regime, an estimated 2 million people were benefiting from the brotherhood's Islamic Medical Association (IMA) annually (Todd, 2015). Nevertheless, the traditionalist approach of the Muslim brotherhood is moderate unlike Al-Qaeda and ISIS that have taken a rather violent and extreme approach of the traditionalist school.

4.4 Non-Traditionalist (Modernist)

This strand of Islamic IR began in the late nineteenth century and took root in the late twentieth century. This particular approach is tilted towards liberal views with regards to Islam and modernity. The proponent of this view is the Muslim thinker Jamaluddin al Afghani, who believed that there is a possibility for reconciliation of Islam and modern western conceptions. He takes a mediated position between those Muslims who reject modernity altogether and those who wish to embrace full - heartedly western secular ideals. The non-traditionalists attempt to embrace modernity without being subjected to de-islamization such as the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The concept of dar al-islam (the abode of Islam) and dar al-harb (the abode of War) as adopted by the traditionalist school is on the other hand perceived by the non-traditionalist to need revision. For the reason that, the Islamic world is not what it used to be, as it is unable to promote universalism beyond the new borders of the modern world. In other words, non-traditionalists argue that the above stated binary concept of world division of the traditionalist is not absolute by opting to go with the third way of the division; dar al-aman (the abode of Truce). This has to do with the principle of peace and coexistence with non-Muslims.

In the eyes of non-traditionalists, the modern conception of nation-state is acceptable, unlike the traditionalists approach that rejects it. The Islamic concept of the ummah is considered more of a spiritual identity than it is concretely physical. But this does not mean compromising Islamic principles, they simply see it as a way to be both Muslim and yet modern. They see a possibility of integrating the nation-state with Islamic principles. Therefore, Jihad is seen as a misdemeanor, in the sense that it infringes on the ideal of coexistence, which is basically the aim of non-traditionalist and can only be used for self-defense (Abo-Kazleh, 2006).

On the epistemological level, the non-traditionalists largely employ the use of what is referred to as *Ijtihad*, which is translated as “personal judgement” based on the holy texts. The traditionalists do not reject the use of Ijtihad (personal judgment), which is an important aspect of Islamic jurisprudence but rather use it as a last resort. Thus, in the non-traditionalist’s perspective, the need to use ijthihad (personal judgement) is cardinal in dealing with the conditions of the modern world. By

looking at the current conditions, non-traditionalist use verses from the holy texts to apply to various subject matters.

Contemporary representatives of the non-traditionalist approach are namely; the Egyptian Islamic scholar, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the Islamist columnist Fahmi Huweydi and the Egyptian Judge Tariq al-Bishri whose perceptions were shaped by the nineteenth century Muslim thinkers, Jamaluddin al-Afghani (1838-1897) and his associate Muhammad Abdu (1849-1905). They all agree in embracing a ‘middle path’ (wasatiya) to international relations (Shalut, 1999). In their view, in order to avoid a clash of civilization, they opined a new form of Fiqh (Islamic Jurisprudence) which rejects the traditionalists division of two worlds, replacing it with that of coexistence. This they believe is the only means to deal with modernity and protect Muslims from western intrusion of neo-imperialism. Accordingly, Khomeini of Iran rejected the international relations binary division of the traditionalist and replaced it with a new duality “oppressed peoples and the oppressive powers”. He believed a true Islamic state is one based on divine laws as enshrined in the Quran which stood for the oppressed and states governed by man-made laws and authority whether western or non-western are lacking moral pedigree and are ignorant of God’s supreme authority on earth (Nurruzzaman, 2018). Khomeini believed that Muslims need not to borrow from secular west considering the fact that Islam is a complete guide for the whole of humanity. After the 1979 revolution, Khomeini instituted Islamic religious authority at the core of Iranian political system managing all governmental activities and policies in accordance with Islamic principles (Khomeini, 1979).

Therefore, the ultimate objective of the non-traditionalist is not limiting the role of Islam but to find an effective way of Islamizing modernity to suite Muslims all over the world. They further contributed to Islamic IR by rejecting the traditionalist school division of the world into dar al-Islam (the abode of Islam) and dar al-harb (the abode of War) by arguing that in order for peace to be achieved cooperation and coexistence must exist between the two worlds.

4.5 Jihadist Approach

This particular strand of Islamic IR is very much distinct from the previous ones. Similar to mainstream international relations, in which new theories are proposed or reconstructed with regards to the ontological and epistemological challenges that arise due to changing circumstances in world politics, so to in a similar vein has Islamic international theory develop in respect to changes in the international system. Islamic international relations theory goes way back to the seventh century and ever since, it has undergone development based on changes over time (Turner, 2009).

Thus, Islamic scholars and thinkers responsible for the formation of Islamic international relations (Siyaar), proposed concepts that were shaped by their times in which they lived. For example, the Traditionalist approach was more or less shaped by the Hobbesian world of nature filled with violence in which empires struggled for power and survival. In the premodern era, 'Conquer or be conquered' was the rule that governed international system. Secondly the non-traditionalist approach was the product of the Islamic world coming into contact with European colonialism and the struggle against western secular conceptions. They advocated a middle path between the modernist who seek to embrace in totality modern western concepts and those traditionalists who reject modernity completely. The third approach pertains to the

emergence of jihadists, triggered by the alienation and marginalization of colonialism and the post-colonial disorder.

The Jihadists approach is rather a less intellectual and scholastic debate, despite turning out to be an outgrowth of the traditionalist school. It was borne out of the heated tension of international affairs and conflict. As the U.S expansive influence in the Middle East grew, and the adoption of a more western secular style governance which eventually led to the unfortunate event of September 11 2001. These events are the catalysts behind the emergence of this violent and radical strand of traditionalist approach Al-Qaeda and now ISIS (Islamic state of Iraq and Syria) are the embodiment of this new approach. They demonstrate their perspective to international relations to be far more radical and extreme than other traditionalist organizations such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Its ideologues namely; Osama bin Laden, Ayman al-Zawahiri and now al-Baghdadi opined a whole new ideology shaped by the existing traditional and non-traditional approaches. Today Al-Qaeda and ISIS are the most notorious Islamist organizations in the world. They believe that Muslims should return to the path of the Salafi generation, (the earliest Muslims) who represented Islam in its purity and authenticity. Unlike the traditionalist and non-traditionalist which are similar to mainstream international relations theories of realism and liberalism. The jihadist approach is a whole different thing. It is a mixture of “Islamic hyper realism and universalism” which has a strong opposition to western international liberal order. The jihadists share the same principle precepts of the international and local with the traditionalist, the notion of dar al-Islam and dar al-harb and the stern use of the Quran and Sunnah.

Consequently, in order to achieve its objective of reviving Islam by opposing secularism in the Muslim world, al-Qaeda has chosen to directly confront the West. Unlike other revivalists such as Sayid Qutb of the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt and Khomeini of Iran who chose to pursue the same objective without directly confronting the West. As a result, the civilizational clash dodged by the non-traditionalists is perpetuated by al-Qaeda and ISIS and their ideologues bin Laden and al-Baghdadi. As U.S presence and influenced increased in the Muslim world, al-Qaeda and its ideologues also sketched out two chief enemies of Islam namely; “the near enemy (Muslim countries allied with West)” and the “far enemy (the West mainly the U.S)”. They believe by staving off the U.S in the region they can mount their jihad on other Muslim countries run by secular western styled governments (Habeck, 2008). By so doing it will revive the lost Islamic caliphate that comprise the Middle East, Africa, central Asia and the Balkans. Similarly, ISIS that has gained ground declared by its self-proclaimed caliph al-Baghdadi to be a caliphate for the Muslim world and in his first address al-Baghdadi divided the world into two camps; “the camp of Islam and Faith and the camp of Kufr (disbelief) and hypocrisy” (Nuruzzaman, 2018).

Therefore, Jihad is the ultimate approach for this strand of Islamic thought. It is the representation of the extreme version of the traditionalist approach by completely opposing the non-traditionalist approach of peace with non-Muslims. There is no dialogue or coexistence whatsoever, force is the only way to revive Islam.

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented Islam as a theory of international relations. It has examined the different strands of Islamic international theories by looking at their

ontology and epistemology- by outlining their main distinction from mainstream western international relations theories- and how they apply to circumstances in the Muslim world. In presenting Islam as a theory, this chapter has laid down a potential framework of inquiry into circumstances and conditions in relation to Islam. After all, the aim of international theories is to serve as a framework and guideline to understanding events in the international system. Therefore, the next chapter will provide a conclusive summary of the general study.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSIVE SUMMARY

International Relations as an academic discipline came into existence shortly after the second World War. Its theories are employed as lenses, frameworks or guidelines in understanding events and occurrences in the international system. Lately, not just the theories are being criticized, but international relations itself. Many scholars are critiquing it by questioning the comprehensiveness of the discipline as the theories are unable to explain quite a number of current and ongoing events, especially one that has to do with religion, in this case Islam (Abdelkader, Adiong and Mauriello 2016; Acharya and Buzan 2010).

The emergence of political Islam or Islamism led to this mounted critique on international relations. The scholars maintain that, the theories are western-centric as they cannot explain the dynamics of events such as the rise political Islam and other events that are in relations to it, such as the regime of post 1979 Iranian revolution, Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaeda and now ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria). The reason being that, international relations as a discipline is founded on the secular worldview of the west, in which religion is considered irrelevant for discussion. That is, ontological and epistemologically all the mainstream theories of international relations either adopted positivist or post-positivist modes of inquiry in analysing and conceptualising the complex events of world politics (Turner, 2008, Nurruzaman, 2018 et al).

Therefore, it is in this light, that this study attempted to add diversity to the western-centric discipline by proposing a new theory that will serve as a potential framework for analysing complex events linked to Islam. Thus, it has been noted Islam as a theory of international relations is a theory that is radically distinct from the normative way of theorizing in this discipline. It is a theory that is neither ontologically and epistemologically positivist or post-positivist but rather a religion based on sacred texts and opinions of religious scholars; considering the fact that theories of international relations are based on the secular intellectual tradition of the West.

Furthermore, this study has looked at the historical background of Islam by sketching out its position pertaining to the concepts of state sovereignty, war and peace, which are essential elements of analysis and conceptualisation to understanding international affairs.

It is worth repeating that Islam as a theory of international relations presents an Islamic analysis and conceptualisation of international affairs connected to it. However, as mentioned, Islamic IR is not about relations between states but relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. This Islamic concept is known as ‘Siyaar’ as mentioned in Chapter three. It shows how the world is divided into three namely; dar al-Islam (The abode of Islam) dar al-Har (The abode of War) and dar al-Aman (The abode of Truce).

With the rise of Islamist movements in the Middle East and in various other countries of the Muslim World, struggling for the reassertion and restoration of Islamic principles and values against western secular values. Islam is at the centre of

this struggle. Groups, organisations and governments such as the Muslim Brotherhood, al-Qaeda, ISIS and the Islamic regime of Iran all share one aim; the aspiration to bring back Islam as the legal system and organising principle of social order. However, as shown in chapter four, these Islamist movements share different approaches with regards to relations with non-Muslims, which is what Islamic IR is about.

The traditionalist approach is represented by the Muslim Brotherhood, which sees Muslim and non-Muslim relations based on the binary division of the world; the abode of Islam and abode of war (dar al-Islam and dar al-Hrab). Asserting that these two worlds are always at odds with one another, as it is a struggle for survival and power. The second approach discussed is the non-traditionalist approach to Islamic IR, represented by the Islamic government of Iran which believes in reconciling Islam and modernity to promote dialogue in order to achieve peace and coexistence, without compromising Islamic principles. The last approach, the jihadists, is considered the radical and extreme version of the traditionalist school as it is embodied by the notorious terror Islamist organisations of al-Qaeda and ISIS. Who maintain a complete stance opposed to modernity and anything western. It pursues a direct confrontation with the West in order to stave off western intrusion, and influence- especially the U.S, so as to revive the lost caliphate of the Islamic World.

Therefore, as presented here, Islam deserves to be considered as a theory in of itself. As Islam plays a role in shaping political thought of states and non-state actors alike. It serves as a relevant contribution to the relatively youthful discipline of International Relations.

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