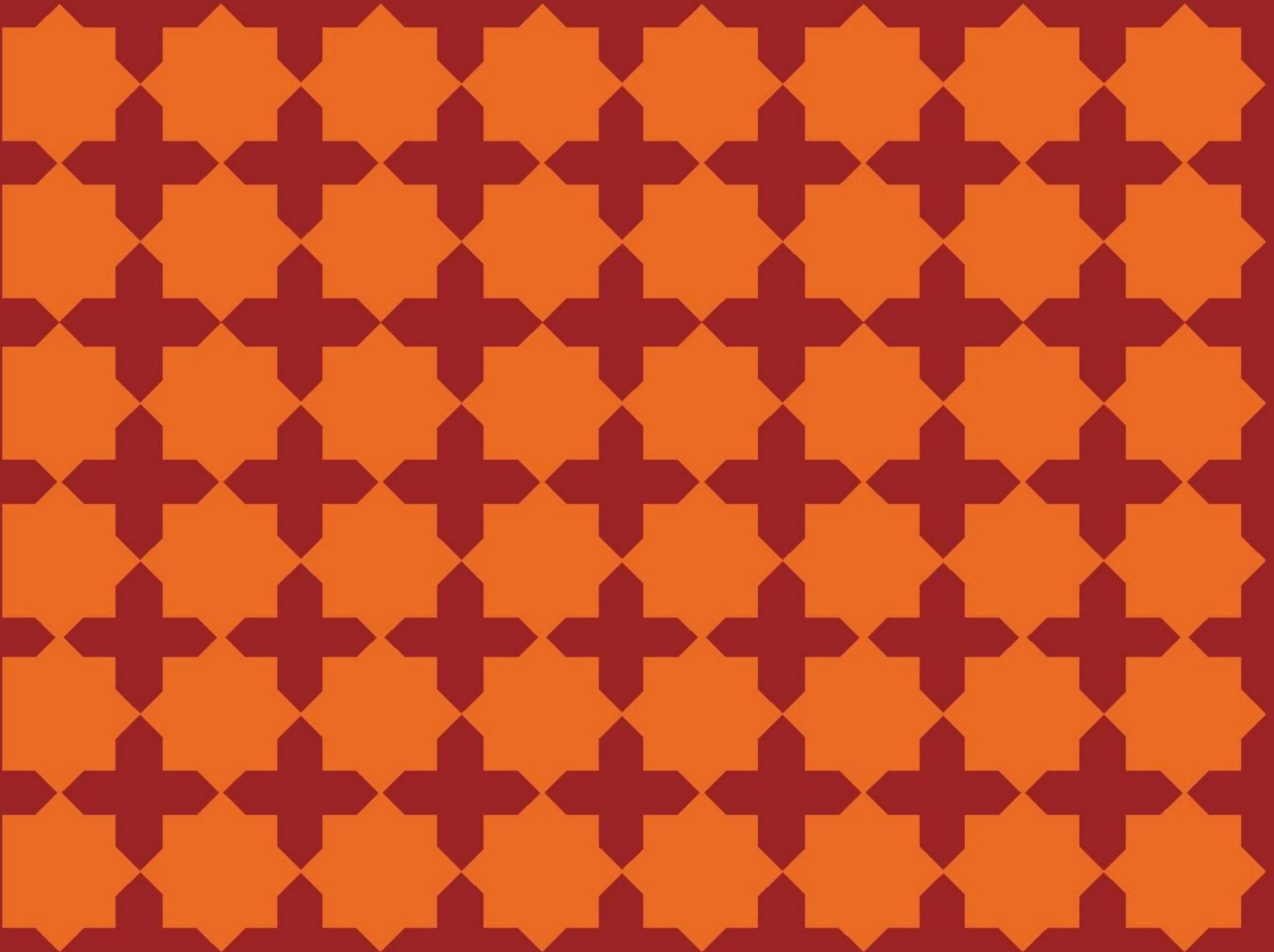# INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ISLAM
DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES

Edited by
Nassef Manabilang Adiong

CSP

International Relations and Islam

International Relations and Islam:
Diverse Perspectives

Edited by

Nassef Manabilang Adiong

**CAMBRIDGE
SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

CONTRIBUTORS

Jessica L. Daniels holds a Masters Degree in Historical Studies and a Bachelor's Degree in Social Inquiry, both earned at The New School of Social Research in New York. Her research has been primarily focused on The Middle East and Iran pre-revolution in particular. In June of 2012, Jessica relocated to Boston and hopes to find a career within International Relations. For now, she is writing, creating websites and teaching yoga. Jessica is available to be contacted at <JLynneDaniels@gmail.com>.

Didem Doğanyılmaz is currently a PhD candidate in Historical Societies at Rovira I Virgili University in Tarragona, Spain. She is also one of the project researchers in UNESCO Chair of Intercultural Dialogue in the Mediterranean. She completed her Masters degree in the same university in the department of Mediterranean Cultural Studies, while her Bachelor's degree was from Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University in Istanbul in the department of Statistics. Her main research interests are interrelationships between state and religion, laicism, secularism, and religious identity. She is interested in the complex relations between Islam and laicism concentrating on the history of Turkey. In addition, she focuses on Alevism, its history and a sociological approach to Alevi identity. You may contact her at <d.doganyilmaz@gmail.com>.

Gökhan Duman is currently a PhD student in historical societies, land and heritage at the University of Rovira i Virgili in Tarragona, Spain. He is also one of the project researchers in UNESCO Chair of Intercultural Dialogue in the Mediterranean. He completed his Masters degree in Mediterranean Cultural Studies at the same university, while his Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Administration (French language as the medium of instruction) was from Marmara University. The Mediterranean is his region of specialization, with research interests in nationalism, minorities, terrorism, Middle East, and Turkish foreign policy. He can be reached at <g.duman@gmail.com>.

Alessandra L. González is a post-doctoral research associate at John Jay College, City University of New York, and a non-resident research fellow at the Institute for the Studies of Religion at Baylor University in central Texas. She is the principal investigator of the Islamic Social Attitudes Survey Project (ISAS), a study in conjunction with Baylor's Institute for the Studies of Religion (ISR) on Islamic Religiosity and Social Attitudes, including Women's Rights Attitudes in the Arab Gulf Region. She has publications in "Women's Encounter with Globalization" (Frontpage Publications), the Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, the Annual Review of the Sociology of Religion, and an op-ed on Islamic Feminism in the *Dallas Morning News*. She has presented her research at the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy's Conference on "The Rights of Women in Islam," the American Council for the Study of Islamic Societies, the Dialogue of Civilizations Conference hosted by the Institute for Interfaith Dialogue in Houston, the Gulf Research Conference at the University of Exeter, and various other academic settings. Her most recent book manuscript on *Islamic Feminism in Kuwait* is expected for publication this year. Dr. González's email address is <Alessandra.L.Gonzalez@gmail.com>.

İştar Gözaydın is a professor of law and politics at Doğuş University, Istanbul. She received her MCJ (Master of Comparative Jurisprudence) at New York University, School of Law, in 1987; and her Ph.D. at İstanbul University. Her publications include Regulating Religion in Turkey, University of Utah Press, Salt Lake City, 2013 (forthcoming); "Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı," in John L. Esposito (ed): Encyclopedia of the Islamic World, Oxford University Press, February 2009; "The Fethullah Gülen Movement and Politics in Turkey: a chance for Democratization or a Trojan Horse?", Democratization, vol. 16 no. 6 (December 2009), 1214-1236; "Religion, Politics and the Politics of Religion in Turkey", in Dietrich Jung & Catharina Raudvere (ed.), Religion, Politics and Turkey's EU Accession, Palgrave-Macmillan, September 2008, 159-176; "Diyanet and Politics", The Muslim World, vol. 98, no. 2/3 (April/July 2008) 216-227; "Turkey: A Women's History," in Bonnie G. Smith (ed): The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Women in World History, v.4, Oxford University Press, 2008, 255-258; "Adding Injury to Injury", in Evil, Law and the State: Issues in State Power and Violence, ed. John Parry, Rodopi Press, 59-69, Amsterdam/New York, 2006 (ISBN:90-420-1748-1). You may contact Prof. Gözaydın at <isavasir@dogus.edu.tr>.

Ari Varon holds a Ph.D. in political science in a joint program at Sciences Po, France and Tel Aviv University, Israel. He focuses his research on the developing contemporary European Islamic identity. Ari analyses the internal debate of Muslim intellectuals in Europe as they integrate, or not, European and Islamic values when defining religion-state relations, as well as the effects on political mobilization and social integration. He has presented his research at conferences and universities throughout Europe and the United States. Ari can be reached at <ari@arivaron.com>.

Nassef Manabilang Adiong is the founder of the IR-IS Research Cohort, an online community interested in advancing comparative research between International Relations and Islam. His research interests include theories of International Relations and their major debates and contemporary discourses, conceptualizations of and debates about 'Nation-State' and 'Civilization' phenomena in IR and Islam, and relations between religion and politics concentrating on 'Political Islam'. He is the author of numerous articles, including "Nation-State in IR and Islam" in the *Journal of Islamic State Practice in International Law*, "The U.S. and Israel Securitization of Iran's Nuclear Energy" in *The Quarterly Journal of Political Studies of Islamic World*, "The Palestinian Refugee Question: A Constitutive Constructivist Interpretation" in *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations*, "Ideology that Spawns Islamist Militancy" in *Frank Shanty's Counterterrorism: From the Cold War to the War on Terror*, and encyclopaedic entries such as civilization, nation, nation-state, Turkey, International Relations, nationalism, Qatar, and Suez Canal for various publishers including ABC-CLIO, SAGE Publications, Inc., Oxford University Press, and Wiley-Blackwell. He can be contacted via his website at <www.nassef-m-adiong.com>.

INTRODUCTION

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND ISLAM

NASSEF MANABILANG ADIONG

This edited book is a follow up of a two-part panel proposal for the 2011 Middle East Studies Association annual meeting. The authors who submitted their articles were the participants of the proposed panels. My goal was to present and put forward the idea of finding a middle way between two bodies of knowledge which were conceived from two different hemispheres of the world. International Relations (IR), a social science discipline conceived in the UK and the US (comprising the West), and Islam or Islamic Studies which was conceived in the Arab world and developed in Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia and many non-Arab countries (comprising the East).

If scholars and members of the English School of International Relations were able to associate and converge their thoughts on conceptualizing International Relations with Christianity (of course the majority of them are Christians and so Western Europe is), then it is a precedent and an indication that along the strand of the Abrahamic Faiths, Islam is putatively feasible and probable to understand and interpret International Relations (IR) and vice versa. Though the danger of this idea may suggests a myriad adherence to two extreme poles of risky paradigms: (1) those IR scholars who totally ignore Islamic concepts, and (2) those Islamic scholars (ulama and Islamicists) who aim for the Islamization of knowledge. This is a matter of how we are going to find tangency or *via media* between Islam and IR without committing submission to those extreme poles.

The proposed idea is on the study of relations between International Relations and Islam, which primarily presents the title of this edition, "International Relations and Islam: Diverse Perspectives." This was initially conceptualized with the aim of looking at their conceived perceptions side by side; how Islam is interpreted by IR scholars, and vice versa. It has been the proponent's quest to feasibly and scholarly present Islam as non-alien in the Western discourse of the IR field.

The aims of this initial initiative are to show juxtaposed positions of mutual perceptions or diverse perspectives between Islam and IR based on conceived notions of contested conceptions, to eliminate deplorable and pejorative (mis)conceptions of IR scholars towards Islam and vice versa, and to add Islam to the epitome of global discourse of international relations as a major causal factor that affects the behaviours of actors (states, sub-state system, individuals, international and regional organizations, and multinational corporations) in the international community, particularly those who have an interest in and peculiar relations to the Muslim world. The process of constructing this initiative involves selecting perspectives and categories to bring to bear on the research idea.

Contemplating the Idea of an Islamic IR

The title alone of this book will surely cause havoc in the Western academia of IR, particularly those who were trained in an American IR school. European IR schools are somewhat more pluralistic in terms of how they view IR, as compared to their American counterparts. This initiative (an edited book project) is not an 'all-knowing' term project, but it is delimited by an 'interrogative' descriptive structure of explanation. It will be about various perspectives and cases on the complex relations of "Islam and IR"; how both conceptions perceive each other; its repercussions on implicit and explicit notions of human and society; and whether there are mutual or reciprocal relations or even relative relatedness, or in short, 'interrelationships' constructed.

But this question is apparently not the primal concern of IR; it may be more significant to sociology, psychology, theology and political science. However, we cannot deny IR's multidisciplinary approach as an academic discipline. For many years since the interwar (interbellum) period, a bulk of IR scholars' research work has been dealing with statecraft, war and conflict studies, state-to-state relations, and the international system, paying little attention to human affairs, human-to-human, or human-to-society relations concomitant with the roles of culture, religion, language, and other determining 'given' identities. Only then, at the post-Cold War period, were these matters given importance, of course, ignited by the constructivist project in the US.

Looking for an Intellectual Patronage

In the first year of my graduate studies, I did some little research on the faculty list of the IR department and noted those who may help me in this

endeavour. I initially talked to the chairwoman during the registration period and she told me that she did not know if my proposed thesis (this was done verbally not the formal process of submitting a thesis proposal) was feasible enough because, in her view, 'Is there a need to formulate an international relations theory based on religious perspective? If this is so, then there should be Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, and Jewish conception(s) of IR.' I replied that this is not the point; it is as if you are saying that Islam is similar or identical to other religions or ideologies.

Further, I lamented, 'Why can Western scholars, particularly the pioneers of the English School of IR, associate their thoughts with Christianity?' Was this because of the Peace of Westphalia's resolutions to disputes between Catholics and Protestants, later leading to the establishment of 'sovereign' nation-states, whereby sovereignty has been a word so used (rehashed) for research by IR scholars which resulted in grand concepts like anarchy, self-help system, balance of power, national interests, power, and complex interdependence, among others? Though this is not to mean that when the notion of sovereignty emerged, the grand concepts that I mentioned immediately were conceived. Simple causation here is not enough, but a complex method of correlation is the appropriate structure of explanation.

Another professor just shrugged me off and answered that my proposal was too ambitious (period). In my mind, there is no 'ambitious' research proposal; it is only those who have concluded their research and failed to defend their work that make it ambitious. A few other IR professors responded to my inquiry that they could not help me in my research work because, simply, they are not experts on Islam, but instead, gave me links and other important resources salient to my research. However, when I approached a certain professor (we had an interesting discussion that lasted an hour or so), it gave me hope and widened my thoughts to many possibilities.

First, he was asking me several questions regarding what was on my mind. He talked about vehemently avoiding two extreme poles which I discussed in the beginning. I asked: "Can we find a via media or a middle way from these two ends of a spectrum?" because I do not want to pattern my research in a pendulum-style way, wherein I might become too adherent to one or other of the extreme poles. And he answered that it is possible if we can rework (adjust) its ontological propositions and find or discover appropriate epistemology. The thing that I can think of is to use a method that is immune and has defensive mechanisms in avoiding or is capable of avoiding these extreme poles.

But for now I will focus first on asking questions, observing the phenomena, and gathering a plethoric survey of literature. Secondly, he suggested possible research undertakings, like looking into the works of Edward Said, Mohammed Arkoun, Giorgio Shani, al-Zuhili, and he gave me Sabet's book to make some reports. Though I criticized Sabet's book at first, suddenly I was overwhelmed by the arguments he presented in his conclusion. He presented a conundrum style of inquiry (like puzzles designed to test lateral thinking) and basically in those puzzles you can find answers. And lastly, he humbly suggested that perhaps I might alter my research inquiry; instead of developing an Islamic theory of IR, why not divert my attention to postcolonial studies, because (in his words) it is appropriate and plausible.

International Relations and Islam, Strange Bedfellows

International Relations and Islam, two intricate terminologies; but how can I make them tangent (meeting along the same line or point)? This is not to sound like an orientalist, projecting the "incompatibility enterprise" thus you cannot find harmony; or manipulating the study based on upbringing or normative biases, e.g. using Western culture as a point of reference and making it superior to oriental culture. The orientalist has done such a great deal to make Islam incompatible, or worse, hostile to Western values, ideas, norms and traditions, declaring and pronouncing Islam's incompatibility with democracy (hinting at Western "democratic peace theory" that democratic countries or democracies do not go to war with one another, though this argument can also be associated with opposed totalitarian governments), human rights, particularly of women and gay rights, and international law, etc.

How can we advance our scholarship if we already have a preconceived perception, notion, impression and bias against Islam and its adherents, i.e. Muslims? Why did most IR scholars write that the area studies of the Middle East in the US failed miserably? According to them, experts of Middle Eastern studies in America failed to predict the war in Afghanistan and Iraq; failed to warn the West about the rise of radical or fundamental Islamic revivalist movements; failed to suggest and give guidelines for policy making procedures or to their foreign policy that would have prevented wars or mitigated hostilities or tensions between the West with the Muslim world.

I would argue that the reasons above were not the causes that made Middle Eastern studies vulnerable. There is a remarkable preconceived perception that Middle Eastern experts were unimportant in policy

making, and moreover, most of them were neoconservatives with 'attached' Israeli propaganda on their belt, e.g., Daniel Pipes (director of the Middle East Forum and Taube), Fouad Ajami (Harvard CIA/Nadav Safran Chair on Middle East Politics), Mark Steyn (a self-proclaimed expert on Muslim culture), Ibn Warraq (founder of the Institute for the Secularisation of Islamic Society), among others.

Other reasons were my following assumptions or hunches: (1) you cannot penetrate the government's circle of advisers to the president, the Congress, and the Judiciary if your views are pro-Islamic world, (2) you cannot survive academia in the US if you are straightforwardly criticizing Israel, of course with an exception of being established with the security of tenure, e.g. Edward Said and Noam Chomsky, and (3) you cannot be so outwardly visible and outspoken in the US in your rants against its foreign policy towards the Middle East and Israel. Anti-Israel has become a "taboo" in the public and academic spheres of the US.

Even Edward Said experienced the orientalist backlash. It was right after the 1995 Oklahoma City Bombing, many reports were pointing out that the suspects were of Middle Eastern origin. Said's office was bombarded with calls and emails from the media who wanted to know his opinion regarding the matter while he was in Canada giving lectures. Said thought that the reason they were calling him was because he was apparently from the Middle East; he was a Christian Palestinian. Little did they know that the suspect(s) was/were home-grown white American citizen(s).

How can we avoid, mitigate, and solve this "orientalist enterprise?" I suggest that Muslim countries or even non-Muslim countries who sympathized with the goals of Muslim countries can create a multilateral agreement condemning anti-Muslim acts. Muslim countries can invest in the international media to establish a worldwide News company vis-à-vis BBC or CNN. Invest more in popular culture by creating movies, TV series, documentaries, concerts, and other tools propagating or germinating informative means that would directly hit or influence people about the stories in the Muslim world. Muslim countries, particularly the Arab world, can extensively invest in 'international education' by funding researches about Islam, the Middle East, and Muslims around the world without political strings attached to them. However, this all changed after the events of 9/11.

Moving on, we should intensively and rigorously look into the etymology of International Relations and Islam. If we talk about Islam, are we referring to the religious aspects of it or to political Islam? Are we speaking of Islam as a total way of life that transcends its religious status?

How will Islam provide a structure of explanation in interpreting international relations theory? Is IR embedded within the realms of Islam naturally or constructively? IR scholars see Islam as 'the Other,' while most of the Islamic scholars interpret IR as alien. I think this is because of the dogmas or fatwas imposed by the Hanafi school of law, which delineated Muslims from non-Muslims by identifying two abodes: the abode of Islam (Dar al-Islam) and the abode of war (Dar al-Harb). Sometimes most of the early Muslim jurists relegated the abode of war as the abode of unbelievers (Dar al-Kufr).

We should be careful in contextualizing these terms and applying them to the present. During the Ottoman Empire, the Muslim jurists placed a third abode which is at the middle or between the first two abodes: the abode of covenant (Dar al-Ahd). It refers to non-Muslim governments which have a peaceful relationship (through binding agreements or treaties) with Muslim governments that prioritize protection and security of Muslims' land and property. The abode of Islam does not only refer to Muslim nations or states, it also refers to Muslims practicing their faith in non-Muslim countries. The concept of ijtihad, or making some independent interpretation for legal decisions, had greatly impacted Islam. Since the inception of the four schools of Islamic laws and jurisprudence within the strand of the Sunni tradition, the Hanafi, Maliki, Shafi'I, and Hanbali have developed Islam (on a positive note) as more colourful and evolving.

But, on the other hand, this has weakened Islam because of their different legal interpretations concerning the hadith (sayings of Prophet Muhammad), and sometimes they no longer refer to the source of Islam, the Holy Qur'an. They made conflicting and contradicting fatwa (binding or nonbinding) and legal decisions implemented under Shari'ah law, a combination of the Holy Qur'an and Sunnah (practices of Prophet Muhammad). But how will this affect finding a convergence with International Relations? Declaring and imposing different interpretations of Islam by Muslim jurists themselves made it possible for other Muslim jurists in other parts of the world, e.g. in China, Malaysia, Indonesia, Tunisia, Turkey, Morocco, etc., to give their own interpretations, sometimes basing them on their own culture to express appropriateness or approximation, applicability, and adjustment.

IR scholars tended to perceive and study Islam in the prism of the secularist epistemology of great Judeo-Christian tradition, i.e. the concept of separation of Church and government. How is it possible to find a middle ground between two ends of a spectrum? In Islam, religion and politics are in unison, in contrast with IR, where religion and politics are

totally separated. It sounds like a melodramatic sentiment with the ingredients of Rudyard Kipling's famous saying, "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet."

Finding a Remedy?

If we are going to look for some putative solution and avoid hindrances, whether ascribing Islam as an ideology or religion towards international relations, then we might find answers. Katerina Dalacoura's text on "Political Islam and International Relations: A Dangerous Case of Mutual Neglect?" in 2004 talks about the concept of globalization as a via media framework. She argued that "Islamist movements can be seen as examples of non-state actors par excellence and their impact on the international system can be understood in their capacity to bypass the state and establish direct relations with other societies." The problem I see here is how she will be able to differentiate those movements that were state-driven with irredentist motivation from those with Islamicate characterizations. In the context of globalization, it is still debatable how Muslim societies are affected and of course how they respond or react to it.

The remedy I can think of is to construct or reconstruct ontological propositions and find appropriate epistemology to decipher Islam in the 'schema' or views of a specific or certain international relations theory; put all possible ideas and concepts together and initially develop a theoretical or conceptual framework. It will guide me in determining what things or variables I should look for. Though I do not want to use the word 'variable' because it is a scientific term, I do however see it as a useful word for this initiative to denote cases supporting my claim or main idea. Consequently, most of what I have written here are inquiring ideas that bedazzle my mind regarding Islam and IR.

Chapters Presentations

Two various divisions are presented, the first one being general perspectives from different backgrounds or cases: the veil, feminism, and European polity. The second one is a specified case in Turkey, with various perspectives: significance of Turkey, its democratic experience, and the role of a scholar/practitioner.

Daniel's take on the meaning and political symbol of the veil is to "challenge the Western stereotype that the Islamic veil is oppressive, and offer new avenues of insight – illustrating that the symbolism of the Iranian revolution is relevant today." The article on Islamic feminism authored by González "addresses the demographic profile of Islamic feminists based on a pilot study of Kuwaiti college students." Varon discusses the debates and discourses that are taking place in Europe of whether there can be "various levels of integrating Islamic and European principles into a Muslim's daily life."

Doğanyılmaz's article tells the unique story of Turkey's international relations. Duman deciphers the relations of Islam and democracy via the Arab Spring and Turkish experience. And lastly, Gözaydın's biographical representation of the current Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey, Ahmet Davutoğlu, details his scholarship and its impact on Turkey's foreign policy.

The chapters were alphabetically arranged by the author's surname, e.g. chapter 1 – Daniels, chapter 2 – Doğanyılmaz, chapter 3 – Duman, etc. Please be advised that it is the sole discretion of the chapter's author regarding how s/he expresses his/her posited claims, arguments, and facts. However, for any erroneous grammatical or typographical words, phrases or statements, the editor expresses full responsibility. Mea maxima culpa!

CHAPTER SEVEN

ACCOMMODATING ISLAM INTO IR:
THE CASE ON "NATION-STATE"

NASSEF MANABILANG ADIONG

This initiative is a deliberated mental effort of contemplating whether there is an Islamic impact in today's praxis of international relations, i.e. the trends, events, and related dominions (directly or not) influenced by the practices, actions or movements in the international community or arena. One way to look at it is to specifically consider one element that has had a significant role in conceiving international relations as an academic discipline, whereby debates (major and minor) and discourses (mainstream and periphery) were centred upon that element.

The element of Nation-State played a prominent part in conceptualizing international theories (including International Relations, International Law, and Philosophy), particularly on the political spectrum, and has been, and will always be, a contentious issue, particularly on its complex characterizations and its relations with other elements, i.e., system, structure, agency, actor, society, civilization, etc.

Nation-State is a kind of polity or political unit of analysis. It comprised the elements of *authority* (form of government), *nationality* (large number of people called citizens), *territoriality* (juridical set of legal boundaries), and *sovereignty* (attained through the recognition bestowed by another nation-state or simply by an international organization such as the United Nations). Moreover, it is a modern entity (mostly secular in nature) that evolved from Greek/Italian city-states, Roman's *res publika* (public affairs) to the Western nation-state system, which was conceived by European political elites and commonly attributed by some political/social scientists as a product of the Peace of Westphalia in 1648.

In spite of that understanding, Western scholars (orientalists) oftentimes and consciously overlook the contributions of Asian or Middle Eastern scholars, particularly *Islamicists* (those who passionately study Islam and its civilizations based on different bodies of knowledge), to the literature on the study of the nation-state. The Prophet Muhammad,

subsequent members of *ulama* (scholars), and jurists, have also contributed
to the conception and evolution of the nation-state phenomenon.

Tracing the Significance of the Research Problem

The idea will primarily focus on the vagueness of interpretations and
understanding on the conceptualization of nation-state in both disciplines:
International Relations (IR) and Islamic Studies (IslStud),[1] and how a *via
media* (middle way) of linkage of understanding may be reached. The
primal research inquiries are how the nation-state originated, was
conceptualized, and operationalized in IR and Islamic Studies. While the
secondary (supporting) query is what the similarities and differences of
IR's and IslStud's understanding on the conceptualization of nation-state
are so as to locate a probable via media of understanding.

The proponent hopes to discover an area or element that will show a
profound and explicit relation between Islam and IR by studying the
significant role and meaning of nation-state. Thus, in comparing the
concept of nation-state in both disciplines, the author may lead to the
discovery of their probable mutuality or reciprocity with support of the
method (which will be further elaborated at the methodological section).
The null hypothesis is the opposite of it, i.e. it will not help him provide
answers to the posited statement of the problem.

This idea is particularly concerned with contributing to the expanding
(and exclusively extant) literature and significantly emerging sub-
discipline in the form of relations between 'Religion' and 'International
Relations'. How religion interacts with IR and vice-versa, especially on
the current waves of religious movements affecting the behaviour of
nation-states and their relations with one another. An imperative example
is the 9/11 event that changed the relations of mostly Western countries
(US and Europe, geographically speaking) and Muslim-dominated
countries (Arab nations, Iran, Turkey, Indonesia, Pakistan, Malaysia,
among others).

The scope of the research only dwells on three entities: 1) Nation-
State, 2) International Relations, and 3) Islamic Studies. It is delimited by
the relevance of time period (meaning the data and instrumentation that
will be included, analysed, and examined are works of contemporary
scholars, authors, and commentaries that have similar research interests,

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[1] Kindly please be reminded that the proponent will abbreviate 'Islamic Studies'
into 'IslStud', which will be used all throughout the essay. It is for abbreviation
purpose only, same as with 'International Relations' into 'IR'.

written aspects that are relevant to the study, and relatively related points of view). So, this is not purely objectively done (caveat), but is intersubjectively (pertains to sets of similarities, views, consensus, and partially shared divergences on meanings subject of previous contention by scholars) constructed instead.

Islamic Studies is explained (in conjunction with the study) as within the parallels or equation of Islamic views on politics, governance, leadership, and to some extent foreign relations experiences. Islamic philosophy has been excluded and only political Islam and jurisprudence will be concentrated on.

Contemplating the Theoretical Framework(s)

There is one observation which may help in the progress of the study. That is, observing the nation-state by incorporating two distinct frameworks in a demarcated theoretical phenomenon. Selected mainstream theories of International Relations and Islamic politics and jurisprudence are the focus of its theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

Realism, Liberalism, and Social Constructivism are the selected theories on the part of International Relations. Concepts such as *ummah, dar al-Islam, dar al-Harb, dar al-Ahd*, etc., which are within the tenets of political and jurisprudential Islamic views will be utilized on the part of Islamic Studies. The suggested independent variables are International Relations and Islamic Studies, while the dependent variable is nation-state. It hopes to straighten the line connecting these variables.

Seeking and Modifying Method(s) for Appropriation

A preliminary exploratory research (which means it is for the purpose of formulating hypotheses worth testing and complementing the tools used at Comparative Analysis Method) will help create an efficacy of research design and data collection for the purpose of reviews. To ameliorate our focal understanding on a specific operational method, the proponent selected 'Comparative Analysis Method (CAM)' put forward by Barney G. Glaser, A.L. Strauss, and J. Corbin.[2] While theirs is called 'Constant Comparative Method (CCM)' under the grounded theory -- mine was a renovation of their method which I named CAM. The CCM is a method

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[2] See: Glaser's and Strauss' *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research.*

for analysing data in order to develop a grounded theory. The goal of grounded theory is to develop a theory that emerges from and is therefore connected to the reality that the theory is developed to explain.

CAM does not concern itself with extrapolating previous theories and comparing them with current theories so as to develop a grounded theory. It instead removes the use of constancy by making it a presentation of two variables and compares them appropriately. CCM uses a parallel vertical approach of comparing the past to present, while CAM uses a parallel horizontal manner, regardless of periodicity, historicity, or element of time. CAM involves coding, the process of going through the data 'with a fine-toothed comb' looking for themes, ideas, and categories.[3] Three data analytical or coding stages under CAM will be operationalized: the first stage is the Textual Coding, next is the Arithmetical Coding, and the last step is the Categorical Coding.

Through these CAM codes, the inferential chart of 'compare and contrast' will compose the result of the data analysis; thus allowing us to categorically pinpoint inferences of similarities and differences, and further it through the use of analytical induction, which is inducing specific facts or imperative details. The generalization or probable outcome of this study is to humbly locate areas of via media (middle way) between perceived extreme poles on the concept of nation-state in IR and IslStud.

Preliminary Findings

It is quite apparent that the first factor in tracing the comparison or contrast of the concept of nation-state in both bodies of knowledge (IR and IslStud) is on the notion of 'level of analysis'. The nation-state is the unit of analysis for the IR, while the Ummah is for the IslStud. However, if you are going to deeply analyse the context, the Ummah is considered as an imagined space of community where people believe they are part of that space. In the modern context, nation-state is also considered as an imagined community where people think and feel they are affiliated within the boundary of that community. Thus, nation-state and Ummah are similar at a certain degree of understanding, while interpreted in various ways.

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[3] See: Strauss' and Corbin's *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques.*

Secondly, the notion on sovereignty lies a fundamental difference between them. In IR, it is the government elected/appointed by the citizenry that has the utmost will of authority over its jurisdiction, where their sovereignty is recognized and respected by other sovereign nation-states and international organizations. Thus, bestowing them legitimacy and accorded rights in the international community. In IslStud, it is their God that has the sovereign power, where all believers are subjects and considered part and parcel of the whole Ummah (societal) system. Consequently the last clear explicit comparison is that the government has the authority in IR's nation-state interpretation, while God has the sole authority in IslStud's nation-state interpretation.

The operationalization of constructivism to the nation-state is primarily influenced by idea, ideology, or set of ideas. These ideas are embedded within the construction of the nation-state. The inhabitants or people who believed they belong to that nation-state are the ones who formulate, describe, and define what constitutes the characters, elements, and compositions of it. The juridical understanding of an Islamic nation-state is purely ideological, where there is a strong emphasis on the essence of religiosity, culture, and the claim of being universal.

Concluding Summary

There are stark differences between the interpretations of IslStud and IR on the conception of the nation-state. Selected categorical claims under the selective coding stage include citizenship or membership, limits of boundaries or territoriality, the jurisdiction of the authority, and the sovereignty issue. For categorical claim of citizenship, the political prism of IR is based on nationality of parents or birthplace of an individual, while in IslStud, it is the individual's affinity with Islam regardless of racial or geographical orientations that define his/her citizenship.

For the categorical claim of territoriality, IR respects or is subdued to international treaties and agreements, and sometimes via domestic referendum of the citizenry, while IslStud is finite as long as there are presences of Muslims. In addition, IslStud submits to juridical divisions of 'dar'. For the jurisdiction of authority, IR's interpretation depends on the style of leadership or form of government, whether totalitarian, dictatorship, monarchical, or democratic. In IslStud, there are different variations or descriptions laid by scholars, particularly Sunni's and Shia's different political schools of thought, and Sufi's philosophical description of a leader. The sovereignty issue is primarily a contestation between the people and recognition from other nation-states and God. Consequently, as

of this moment, the researcher has not found any clear elements for reaching a *via media* or middle way in their (IR and IslStud) understandings of nation-state.

INDEX