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## **Feasibility Study of Islamic Theory of International Relations**

*Seyed Jalal Dehqani Firoozabadi  
Professor, Faculty of International Relations,  
Allameh Tabatabaei University, Tehran: Iran.  
jDehqani20@yahoo.com*

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### **Abstract**

Different approaches and perspectives can be suggested on the feasibility and dismissal of the Islamic theory of international relations. The present paper suggests that the processing of the Islamic theory of international relations based on the assumptions derived from Islamic texts and doctrines employing logic, and a valid and justified Islamic method is conceivable within the framework of the Islamic worldview through criticizing and further reflection of the arguments and claims of those who dismiss the feasibility of the Islamic theory of international relations. This Islamic founding theory holds an explanatory, developmental, critical, and normative nature, the purpose of which is to describe, explain, understand, and interpret the existing international relations and further illustrate how it evolves and shifts and then establishes the convenient international order.

### **Keywords**

Islamic Theory, International Relations, Feasibility, Dismissal, Convenient International Order.

## Introduction

Different approaches and perspectives can be suggested on the feasibility and dismissal of the Islamic theory of international relations. This multiplicity and conflict of approaches emerge from different meta-theories, the definition of science and Islam, the reciprocity between the two, and, consequently, the different expectations from Islam concerning the social aspects as well as sciences. On the other hand, epistemological differences on the nature and identity of religious science and Islamic theory of international relations, and the dilemma of extracting and deducing it from the book and tradition (Sunnah) or establishing it based on the principles and assumptions derived from these sacred texts are determinants that cause multiplicity in the approaches.

The present paper suggests that the processing of the Islamic theory of international relations based on the assumptions derived from Islamic texts and doctrines employing logic, and a valid and justified Islamic method is conceivable within the framework of the Islamic worldview through criticizing and further reflection of the arguments and claims of those who dismiss the feasibility of the Islamic theory of international relations. This Islamic founding theory holds an explanatory, developmental, critical, and normative nature, the purpose of which is to describe, explain, understand, and interpret the existing international relations and further illustrate how it evolves and shifts and then establishes the convenient international order.

In line with this claim, the meaning and concept of theory in international relations are defined upon beginning to present the basis required for further discussions. Further, the approaches that deem the processing of the Islamic theory of international relations infeasible and unjustified are pondered and criticized under the subject of dismissal. In this discourse, the argument and claims of the dissenters for dismissing the feasibility of the Islamic theory of international relations are further remarked and pondered under the impression of evidence and affirmation. In the third discourse, the theory of foundational pluralism is briefly elaborated as the author's theoretical input

in the framework of possibilism, i.e. the approaches that Islamic theory and theorizing of international relations consider feasible, justified, and valid.

### **The meaning and concept of the theory of international relations**

The theory of international relations is defined in several forms. All these definitions are based on the two discrete meanings of the theory, namely positive-experimental and non-positive-meta-experimental. Many theorists define theory as any notion that organizes a discipline or field of study in an orderly and systematic manner, arranges and structures questions, and provides the establishing and design of a coherent and thorough set of relevant and logical concepts and categories (Acharya & Buzan, 2010). Contrarily in the positivist tradition and meaning, the theory is given a narrow definition, which outlines concepts concretely and operationally and illustrates concepts through the establishment of causal relations between the cause and effect. The theory contains or generates hypotheses of a causal nature that could be experimented (Hollis & Smith, 1991).

The definition of international relations theory is similarly presented in the context of these two general meanings of the theory. The theory of international relations, in the general sense, is a coherent and precise set of relevant and logical concepts, categories, and propositions that signify a systematic thought and idea regarding international relations. This general definition is not confined merely to scientific and experimental theory, but also incorporates various types of meta-experimental theory to the extent that the theory of international relations is separated into practical, formative, normative (prescriptive-moral), critical, and explanatory-scientific types that render different nature, purpose, and function.

The practical theory implies a guide towards action and is processed within the framework of political philosophy. This theory strives to grasp and discern the pattern overseeing international relations and further describe it to political decision-makers (Vasques, 1992). The developmental theory attempts to clarify how international relations and the current international systems are constructed. In parallel, this theory highlights the significance of

reflection on the nature of the theory as well as the world of international relations. The normative theory contemplates international relations as it should be organized and arranged and further seeks to express precise ideas and opinions concerning a feasible and convenient international order. Moreover, this theory deals with the obligations of international relations and outlines the desired convenient international order from among the feasible orders instead of interpreting or understanding the essence of international relations. Critical theory of international relations is likewise an ideological critique of various forms of dominance and approaches that demonstrate socially constructed and changeable international affairs as natural and resolute phenomena (Burchill & Linklater, 2005).

The explanatory (or experimental) theory is further incorporated within the general meaning and concept of the theory of international relations. Experimental-scientific theory in international relations is defined in two forms. In a general sense, an experimental-scientific theory is a set of interconnected and relevant propositions to explain the demeanor of international actors (Mansbach & Vasques, 1981). The second definition of experimental-scientific theory in international relations refers to a systematic set of experimental knowledge and conversance. In this sense, the scientific theory of international relations is defined as a set of approved and valid experimental propositions that explain a set of experimentally documented generalizations about international relations (Vasques, 1992). Consequently, the different types of theories must be distinguished in the feasibility study of the Islamic theory of international relations since each of these theories presents a different nature, purpose, and end, which holds a decisive role in the feasibility or dismissal of the Islamic theory of international relations.

### **Dismissal**

The approaches dismissing the Islamic theory of international relations can be divided and studied within two respective levels of evidence and affirmation.

## 1. Evidence dismissal

The evidence dismissal approaches that deems the Islamic theory of international relations to be existentially objectionable can be summarized and interpreted in the following cases: secularism, contrastive pluralism, and scientific integration.

### 1-1. Structural norms for the recruitment of government officials

The first dismissal approach directed towards the Islamic theory of international relations is based on secularism, which deems Islam and international relations to be incompatible given that the international relations possess a secular and non-religious nature in both practical and theoretical senses. In parallel with this statement, modern international relations emerged in the practical sense when nationality replaced religion and Christianity. As a result, religion does not denote a decisive role in the relations between countries, and governments are not bound to religion, and consequently, the pursuit of religious ends in their foreign policy. The science of international relations is similarly secular by nature in the theoretical sense and has been established on metaphysics and non-religious philosophical foundations (Fox & Sandler, 2004).

Secularism in international relations further leads to the development and organization of collective belief systems. The collective belief systems are defined as a set of perceptions, stances, beliefs, and inclinations concerning world affairs that support particular political alternatives. These core values determine countries' perceptions of international issues and threats and incite them to pursue particular non-religious objectives, preferences, and priorities in foreign policy (Shakman Hurd, 2008). Consequently, non-religious ends and aims such as power, security, wealth, peace, stability, and economic development are on the foreign policy agenda regardless of religious motives and endeavors to pursue and preach religion (Philpott, 2002).

The secularism discourse separates the preaching of religion from the secular realm of this world by personalizing religion and further excluding it from the public sphere and politics in a particular manner. The secular realm becomes associated with rationality, knowledge, and wisdom, whereas vice versa is

defined and designated for the religion, as an adversary to the secularist approach. Thus, not only is religion irrelevant but also depicted as an adversary to all that's deemed rational in the context of secularist discourse seen in international relations. Thus, the integration of religion and international relations is regarded as abnormal and irrational (Esposito, 2000; Shakman Hurd, 2004).

The dominance of secularism implies the substitution of religion with positive science within international relations. Hence, science assumes the role of religion in interpreting and deciphering the world of international relations and further replaces religion in resolving the predicaments of the international community. This epistemological change originates from the belief in the conflict between religion and knowledge, signified as an empirical and positive science in the secularism discourse. This belief itself is the outcome of the rule of instrumental rationality and positive science over the science and discipline of international relations, which regards religious propositions to be metaphysical, inconclusive, and absurd (Bhargava, 1998).

Accordingly, the ontological and epistemological foundations of the science of international relations are evidently based on the principles and assumptions of secularism.

The outbreak of behavioral revolution and hegemonic behaviorism empowered and established the conflict between religion and science in this field of study in the 1950s and 1960s. The science of international relations is in the framework of positivism based on the separation of essence, mind, value, and reality, while religion has a value-based and normative nature. Furthermore, foreign policy leadership and world affairs management fall into the realm of general science and the universality of international relations. However, religion is opposing to science in terms of positivism. As a result, we define the science of international relations as opposing to religion because it is contingent on the scientific management of the international community instead of religious beliefs (Philpott, 2000).

The most predominant practical principle of secularism in international relations is the viewpoint of the sovereign state as the only exclusive type of political authority and jurisdiction. This principle has been viewed as the

incapacity of another schema to organize international influence and power based on religion, which proposes the end of religion-based political practices and behaviors. First, government officials and decision-makers refuse to meddle in the domestic affairs of other sovereign countries in forming the association between religion and politics. Second, the government generally ceases to pursue and provide religious goals and interests, including its preservation and promotion inside and outside its territory. Third, as a result of religious freedom and pluralism, the role of religious conductors in secular and international affairs decreases and eventually ends (Nandy, 1998; Esposito, 2000).

Islamic secularism, both general and specific, also considers Islam to lack the theory of international relations acting under and influenced by the discourse of secularism. According to Islamic secularism, Islam has an afterlife-based nature, and all its principles and rules apply only to individual morals and beliefs. This statement suggests that the Holy Shari'a of Islam lacks any definite and specific transhistorical founding value and verdict in the area of international relations and has left it to the rule of reason and the manners of the wise entirely (Tibi, 2000).

In criticizing the theoretical secularism, we can argue that the secular nature of science and the current theory of international relations does not imply the infeasibility of the Islamic proposition of international relations; because the secularization of modern science and theory of international relations is rooted in its metaphysics and philosophical presumptions of the secularism discourse (Shakman Hurd, 2008).

As a result, if the meta-theoretical establishments and presumptions of the theory of international relations arising from the worldview and the secular metaphysical system change, processing and presenting an Islamic theory of international relations will be likely and justified.

Hence, there is the likelihood of a theory of non-secular international relations outside of this metaphysical system and socio-cultural and epistemological designations within the framework of the Islamic worldview and an Islamic metaphysical system with presumptions derived from it. The lack of a religious theory of international relations does not imply its dismissal; it is

due to the disagreement of the metaphysics of religion with the secular metaphysics that controls the science and theory of international relations and meta-theories in international relations (Snyder, 2009).

We can offer the following reasons for criticizing the Islamic secularism based on the separation of Islam from international relations and the dismissal of the Islamic theory of international relations. The claim that the religion of Islam lacks any general practice and founding proclamation in the field of international relations is controversial for at least two reasons. Intra-religiously, the verdicts of the Holy Shari'a of Islam on jihad (holy war waged on behalf of Islam as a religious duty), peace, and the way the Islamic State interacts with non-Muslims or Dar ul Islam with Dar ul Harb/Kufr, such as the dismissal of the domination of the kafirs over the Islamic society and Muslims violate this claim. Extra-religiously, the inadequacy of the human wisdom in discovering and understanding all socio-political verdicts, including international relations, is an indication of the necessity to guide it by Wahy (revelation) and the absolute non-devolution of these matters to the human intellect and the manner of the wise (Haqiqat, 1997). However, the Holy Shari'a has acknowledged the authority of reason and intellect based on the Principle of Attachment.

Moreover, even the absence of any general rule or principle about international relations in the Qur'an and Sunnah does not necessarily indicate the absolute dismissal of the Islamic theory of international relations. Because, as will be explained, this only suggests the infeasibility of an Islamic theory derived from or based solely on the Qur'an and Sunnah, not every Islamic theory of international relations. Other types of Islamic theory of international relations, such as the founding theory, are welcome and justified. Hence, even Islamic secularism does not imply the dismissal of the Islamic theory of international relations; because the dismissal of the Islamic theory of international relations can be considered justified and valid only if the inherent opposition between Islam and the science of international relations is proven. But Islamic secularism does not confirm this idea, and Islamic secularists do not make such a claim.

The claim and argument of the Islamic theory of international relations based on the conflict between the pre-modern nature of Islam and the modern nature of



international relations are also evoked and dismissed. Because, first, what is today called international relations is unquestionably a modern phenomenon which is the outcome of the establishment and development of the nation-state; however, the issues, obstacles, and practical examples of modern international relations existed before the establishment of the nation-state from the beginning of human social life.

Second, there is no doubt that the science and discipline of international relations is also new and brand-new, which entered the field of social sciences after the First World War in 1919; but international issues and phenomena were always studied, explained, and analyzed earlier. These studies were conducted in the context of other social sciences such as history, law, philosophy, sociology, and political science. Hence, what happened in 1919 was the beginning of a systematic and consistent study of these long-established issues in the form of a new scientific discipline called international relations.

Consequently, thirdly, many of the issues and topics that are studied nowadays in the area and field of international relations have been addressed directly, indirectly, covertly, and openly in Islam. War and peace stand at the front line of these issues. Besides, the topic and phenomenon of power, which some consider being the prime subject of the study of international relations, also holds a high theoretical and practical rank in Islamic Shari'a to the degree that some verses of the Holy Quran address this point explicitly.

Fourth, assuming that Islam includes none of the problems and issues of modern international relations, we still cannot infer the dismissal of the Islamic theory of international relations; because even in this case, these issues are considered innovative or emerging and are discussed. As a subject, Islam studies international relations as an object. It is not improbable or unjustified that the subject of study is a secular religious epistemology because the verses of the Qur'an proposed non-religious and even atheistic issues; as the secular science analyzes the international relations of religious and sacred matters.

Fifth, dismissing the Islamic theory of international relations just because Islam has historical precedence over international relations is not acknowledged; because, on the one hand, in the field of international relations, the study of

arising phenomena in the framework of previous ideas and systems of thought and knowledge is accepted and common. Many theoretical studies of international relations today are rooted in the viewpoints of ancient philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. On the other hand, many theories of international relations, such as realism, not only seek to track their roots back to ancient Greece but also use events of that era, such as the Peloponnesian Wars, to confirm their claims.

Ultimately, the impression of the secular nature of international relations and its detachment from religion and religious knowledge is a myth; since religion, phenomena, and divine knowledge influence international relations in both theoretical and practical fields. At the theoretical level, as political theology debates, many of the concepts, notions, and theoretical formations that initiated in the science of international relations, such as sovereignty, have been adapted from Christian and Jewish teachings. At a practical level, religion nowadays plays a decisive and undeniable role in international relations and politics in the form of formations, institutions, activists, and religious representatives. So much so that many secular theories have inevitably accepted the role of religion and religious phenomena in theoretical and practical international relations. This fact has led to the revision and redefinition of some of their secular principles and presumptions (Snyder, 2009).

### **1-2. Contrastive pluralism**

The second dismissive approach is contrastive pluralism. This approach claims that the Islamic theory of international relations is infeasible according to the belief in the inherent contrast of science and Islam. According to this conflicting approach, Islam and science as two epistemological systems are contradictory, and there is no feasibility of compatibility and cooperation between them. Furthermore, since both Islam and science claim to be the righteous one in a single common field, it is infeasible to resolve the conflict between them. Consequently, Islam and science inevitably meddle in each other's realms and fuel this conflict. As a result of this inherent conflict, Islam and science deny each other's legitimacy, rationality, and epistemological

authority. As a result, there is no chance of independent and correspondent coexistence and compatibility between the two of them in two different fields of knowledge (Golshani, 2011; Barbour, 1984; Khaki Gharamolki, 2008).

The prime cause and origin of the conflict between Islam and science is the inherent contrast of the claims and principles of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and teleology of Islam and science. At the ontological level, Islam and science propose conflicting definitions and analyses of natural and social facts. Although Islam and science are both realistic and give credit to an external reality independent of the mind and the subject, reality has different qualities in these two. In the realm of science, since the material world is the prime reality, eventually everything is reduced to materialism; but in the realm of Islam, not only is not everything diminished to the material but the material world itself has a spiritual origin (Russell, Stöger, & Kevin, 2005: 252-251).

Although the most significant conflict between Islam and science stands at the level of ontology in this approach, the most disagreements and disputes between the two occur in the field of epistemology. The epistemological conflicts of Islam and science are manifested in different dimensions and basics. First, according to the material and observable nature of cognitive science, knowledge, and scientific claims, they represent facts detached from the mind and the cognitive means. As a result, scientific science and knowledge are realistic in nature and reflect, describe, and explain objective reality as it is. Islam, however, as a set and epistemological system, consists of non-descriptive and value propositions that do not express and reflect the external reality but express the inner and mental conditions and inclinations of the Muslim human.

Second, due to the detachment of nature, mind, value, and reality, science is free from values, neutral and impartial. Scientific knowledge is also objective. Therefore, scientific findings are generalizable and universal. They can be generalized and extended to different cultural, social, and geographical environments. On the other hand, Islam and Islamic knowledge have a cultural identity that proposes its capacity to be generalized and objectified as a result of its value-based and normative nature.

Therefore, scientific findings are universal and can be generalized and

extended to different cultural, social, and geographical environments. On the contrary, Islam and Islamic knowledge have a cultural identity that indicates their generalizability and objectivity as a result of their value-based and normative nature.

Third, science reveals the cause and effect relationship of natural and social events; because science claims that every natural and social phenomenon, including human behavior, both individual and communal, can be defined basically through understanding and identifying cause and effect relationships. Science is even capable of analyzing Islam and causally explaining Islamic phenomena as a social event and institution. But Islam, like other religions, firstly believes in the existence of spiritual realities to which science has no access. Second, you cannot causally explain these unseeable otherworldly realities through physical cause-and-effect relationships (Northbourne, 2011).

Fourth, knowledge and scientific propositions are capable of being experimentally tested as a result of the objective nature of science. One can measure the accuracy and falsehood of scientific hypotheses and teachings through experimental investigations. In other words, scientific knowledge is empirically and experimentally subjects of research. However, Islam and its propositions cannot be tested experimentally due to them being non-experimental and non-empirical.

So, the totality of Islamic knowledge is also irrefutable due to the non-experimental nature of Islamic propositions, This fact is what causes Islamic knowledge and Islam, in general, to conflict with science, the most important feature of which is being open to investigation or at least empirical falsity (Hot, 2003; Khaki Gharamaleki, 2008). The criterion for the validity of Islamic propositions is not practical testing.

Fifth, science develops and offers models and prototypes of temporary definitions of natural and social reality. Science changes with the discovery process and access to new data and information that are contradictory and inconsistent with scientific claims; because the central tendency of science and scientific process is the experimental examination of scientific claims and hypotheses. Consequently, science is likely to be inaccurate and unimmune to

the wrong. In contrast, Islamic propositions and knowledge that have originated from Wahy (divine revelation) are reliable, accurate, and error-free (Maggie, 1995). Therefore, questionable and fallible science opposes to reliable and infallible Islam. These two realms shall not be incorporated.

Only the language of physics or object, which is composed of discernible concepts, has scientific legitimacy. Consequently, only the propositions considered scientific and meaningful can be translated into this language. Meanwhile, first, the language of Islam is not the language of physics consisting of notions and concepts. Second, the language of Islam is metaphorical, symbolic, and allegorical. Therefore, Islamic propositions and knowledge obtain a symbolic nature. Third, the language of Islam, like other religions, is mysterious and guides those who believe and Muslims to a metaphysical and otherworldly spiritual end.

Subsequently, the role and function of the language of Islam and science are also contradictory. The purpose and function of scientific language are prediction and control, which lack any metaphysical generalization regarding the nature of truth; because the language of science is restricted and limited to observations and narrowed to experimental concepts. However, the function of the language of Islam as a religious language is to prescribe and promote a particular lifestyle, expressing a set of moral principles and deeds of worship and prayer (Russell, Stöger, & Kevin, 2005; Barbour, 1983).

In the contrastive approach, perhaps the methodological conflict between science and Islam is highlighted more than anything else. The primary disagreement between science and Islam is in the opposing methods that the two use to confront different issues and topics. Science faces reality, nature, and the order that governs natural and social phenomena scientifically, which involves the inductive or deductive experimental method. The scientific inductive method begins with perfectly controlled and precisely measured direct observations of reality. As a result, numerous reliable intuitive data is collected. Then, drew on inductive logic, a general hypothesis is formed that defines both the observed phenomena and its generalization to likewise unobserved events. In the next step, the generalized hypothesis goes

under detailed empirical experiments. Finally, if it passes the tests and experiments, the hypothesis is actualized and confirmed and becomes a scientific theory. Therefore, what turns science into science is the intentional and conscious application of this method (Maggie, 1995).

On the other side of the coin, in Islam, the inductive empirical method is either not practiced at all to explain natural and social facts and phenomena, or is applied unintentionally or unknowingly. Islam's method of confrontation with different realities and issues is non-experimental or non-scientific. Islamic knowledge is rooted in intuition, narration, and abstract intellect. Religious and Islamic methods have an individual and mental nature based on rational observations and internal and narrative intuitions, which are in contrast with the experimental inductive method ruling science.

Lastly, there is an invincible conflict at the level of purpose between science and Islam. The aim of science is in utter opposition to the purpose of Islam. The goal of science is to explain natural and social phenomena by defining the cause and effect relationships between them to control and dominate nature and humanity. The purpose and goal of Islam are to guarantee human happiness and redemption in this world and the afterlife. Science attempts to understand the structure and physical function of the world while Islam endeavors to apprehend the Creator, the realm of the unseen and intuition. Science aspires to discover the order ruling natural and social phenomena and to define and explain them in terms of causal laws. But religion strives to explain the meaning and purpose of the universe and the position of humanity in it (Golshani, 2011).

The purpose and goal of science are to apprehend nature and society through description, clarification, and prediction. However, Islam's chief goal and purpose are to guide humans to the transcendent being that gives meaning to human life and guarantees his redemption and joy.

The contrastive approach to Islam and science faces several oppositions and objections that misrepresent its authenticity and validity. First, there is no disagreement between science and Islam as a divine religion in terms of evidence and extent of essence and level of existence. There is no inherent

difference between real science and real Islam since they are both explorers of truth. Therefore, the birth of conflict between Islam and science is the outcome of the false definition of either both or one of them. Yet the prime conflict that may take place between science and Islam occurs in the form of Islamic knowledge and erroneous scientific findings.

Thus, all the disagreements between Islam and science, as Barbour correctly argues concerning the absolutism of religion, are the result of a physical understanding of the universe and a wholly practical understanding of science, on the one hand, and shallow perception of Islamic verses, on the other hand. In other words, utterly experimental and empirical science in the setting of scientism or scientific materialism may be in contrast with true Islam and Islamic knowledge. Superficial perception of Islamic knowledge can also lead to the conflict between science and Islam if neither of these two interpretations of science and Islam is correct.

Islamic superficialists, like the Ash'ari theological school of the Sunni and Akhbaris of the Shiite factions, consider the ostensible and literal meaning of verses and hadiths to be sufficient for their perception and religion; because they assume the language of Islam and Islamic propositions to be uninterpretable, which is the cause of many conflicts between Islam and science. While the symbolic, figurative, and metaphorical language of some Islamic verdicts and verses of the Holy Quran indicate their capacity to be interpreted. Therefore, many of the disagreements between science and Islam are superficial and can be resolved by interpreting Islamic texts. However, the interpretability of Islamic propositions does not imply justifying and implementing Islamic teachings to science; it rather means that if there is a difference between the science of Yaqeen (certainty) and the narration of the text, the interpretation of the surface of the text becomes mandatory. Resolving opposition may even require declaring religious Ḥadīths (quotations) and verses verbally (Javadi Amoli, 2007).

Although the superficial conception of Islam in the framework of religious superficiality is the cause of some conflicts between science and Islam, most of these conflicts are due to the representation and perception of science as solely experimental in the form of scientism or scientific materialism. If science is

defined beyond merely physical and sensory experimental science, many conflicts between science and Islam at the levels of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and teleology will be fixed according to non-positivist theories.

At the ontological level, as opposed to the claim of positivism, the external reality that applies to cognitive science is not necessarily restricted to particularly visible facts and phenomena. There are many presences, such as mass and pressure that humankind is incapable of observing directly, as meta-theories such as critical realism of reasoning and scientific findings confirm. Science can in no way prove that everything that exists is understandable. Moreover, science is not able to prove the absence of metaphysical or transcendental reality that belongs to the knowledge of religion and Islam (Golshani, 2011).

At the epistemological level, the oppositions between science and Islam are due to the perception of science as solely positivist and experimental. First, the positivism of the experience is only one of the trans-theories and schools of philosophy of science in which science is defined experimentally and merely materialistically. Consequently, since science is not limited to experimental science and other types of science are convincing and feasible, we cannot consider the conflict between positivist science and Islam as its conflict with science in general.

Second, solely experimental science in international relations, as interpreted in positivism, faces major objections and doubts; the fulfillment of such science of international relations in terms of affirmation is infeasible. In general, all three claimed features and quality of the experimental science of international relations based on direct observation and receptive data that cause its conflict with Islam are inadequate and defective. First, opposed to the claim of positivism object, mind, value, and reality are separated; it's actually the other way round. Since the cognitive subject advances to sensory data with a presumption and interprets them, then reality and sensory data are full of theory and base value.

Second, due to the cooperation of object, mind, value, and reality, value-free and impartial objective science is impossible, and the argument of scientific



objectivity is also invalid; because it is impossible to observe impartially, unbiased, and with no theoretical interpretation. Third, if there is no objective reality and observation without value and theoretical interpretation, it will be infeasible to determine the accuracy and falsehood of scientific knowledge based on experimental investigation, agreement, and correspondence with mere observation (Barbour, 1983). Additionally, science is not based solely on experience. Science has roots in metaphysical presumptions and principles such as rationality, comprehensibility, the order of the world, the harmony of nature, and the value of science (Golshani, 2006). Science has two complementary aspects, which are experimental/practical and theoretical.

At the methodological level, the asserted conflict between science and Islam originates from viewing the inductive empirical method as the exclusive method of science and the acquisition of scientific knowledge in international relations. This methodological interpretation is incorrect in several respects. First, the scientific method is by no means restricted to the inductive empirical method based on direct observation and collection of sensory data. Thus, there is no single, established scientific method for acquiring scientific knowledge; various intuitive, mental, and historical methods are used to acquire knowledge depending on the research topics and different stages of scientific research according to each stage's demand (Putnam, 1995). Second, although the experimental method is not the only method of discovering and obtaining knowledge, this method and sensory tools are not dismissed at all in Islam and Islamic teachings; we utilize the method depending on the case. Moreover, the intuitive method is also used in science. As a matter of fact, some scientific discoveries have been achieved through intuition. Moreover, there is no inherent difference between scientific intuition, which suggests inductive and direct recognition of cognition, and religious intuition; because both scientific and religious intuitions are among the types of intellectual intuitions (Ali Zamani, 2004).

Plus, at the lingual level, the argument of conflict between the language of science and Islam is groundless and controversial; because there is no inherent difference between the language of science and religion that could lead to their conflict. First, as the positivism debates, the language of science is not

exclusively and solely descriptive that describes reality as it is. The language of science, like the language of Islam, has a figurative, metaphorical, and symbolic nature. Scientific concepts and propositions are like signs and symbols that deal only with specific aspects and certain features of facts and phenomena and lead to particular goals. In the language of science, similitude means ascertaining or understanding the perceptible or rational similarity between two phenomena or two items to discover and describe reality (Barbour, 1983). Secondly, as opposed to the claim of the contrastive approach, the language of Islam is not solely figurative, symbolic, metaphorical, and allegorical to conflict with the solely descriptive language of science. The religion of Islam is composed of both metaphorical and descriptive concepts and propositions. Many Islamic and Qur'anic propositions are descriptions of the real world and external reality that are similar to scientific language and propositions.

Thus, there is no inherent and content-related conflict between science and Islam at any of ontology, epistemology, methodology, and teleology levels. Furthermore, contrastive pluralism does not imply that the Islamic theory of international relations is infeasible even if it involves the dismissal of the Islamic science of international relations; because, by definition, Islamic science of international relations is a set of valid and justified propositions that have been obtained through reliable experimental, intellectual, intuitive, and narrative methods. But the Islamic theory of international relations is a set of feasible and unproven propositions and hypotheses regarding international relations that have been provided based on Islamic presumptions through the utilization of valid and justified Islamic logic. Hence, in the setting of contrastive pluralism, we can argue that, as postmodernism claims (Devetak, 2005), the Islamic theory of international relations, like other theories of international relations, is incomparable, not infeasible.

Teleologically, there is not necessarily an opposition between the purpose of science and the goal Islam; because, on the one hand, the ultimate goal of science is not to control and dominate nature and humanity; the primary and chief objective of science is the intellectual cognition of reality and the real

world.

The main aims of science are more concerned with cognition - the urge to make the function of nature not only predictable but also understandable - and that involves seeking rational conceptions of the relations by which we can understand the flow of events (Barbour, 1983). On the other hand, not only is leading human beings to worldly and otherworldly perfection and redemption an ultimate goal of Islam, revealing the truth to achieve this goal is also one of its prime aims. Consequently, science and Islam both claim the truth. Religion, and principally Islam, is rather rational than emotive since the capability of perceiving the truth is also through consciousness or general intellect (Northbourne, 2011).

### 1-3. Scientific integration

Scientific integration, which maintains the fundamental unity and integrity of human knowledge, deems the processing of the Islamic theory of international relations infeasible. Positivism is the most significant and compelling type of integration that maintains the integration and further unity of sciences, both natural and humanities, and the associated experimental method. The science and theory behind international relations are experimental and objective in nature by far and comprised of experimental propositions that can be proven true or false through experimental trials and tests (Puchala, 2004). Consequently, religious propositions that cannot be proven true or false by means of experiment are deemed absurd, nonsensical, and ultimately unscientific. Scientific integration's stance implies that the Islamic theory of international relations is absurd and infeasible according to them.

In parallel, even if the processing of the Islamic theory of international relations is deemed feasible as acquisition and discovery, it is ultimately infeasible upon arbitration given that the theory of international relations, even if elicited from the texts and instructions of Islam, is validated only within experimental testability and the distinction of scientific theories is bound to their subject, method, purpose, and ends (Soroush, 2006). Subject, method, and purpose are corresponding in the science and theory of

international relations (Griffiths, 2007), and as a result, the processing of the Islamic theory of relations between relations is further deemed absurd and infeasible in terms of these notions as well.

Epistemological integration, both as a discovery and as an arbitration act, renders numerous shortcomings that self-contradict the epistemological integration's own dismissal claim concerning the Islamic theory of international relations. Contrary to positivism's main claim, scientific theories of international relations do not originate solely from objective propositions and propositions based on experimental evidence. Conclusively, the scientific theory of international relations – as an acquisition – is not obtained solely by means of experimental induction. Hence, as some claimants of integration theory acknowledge as well, the feasibility of Islamic theory exists under the guise of acquisition and discovery, similar to other theories (Soroush, 2006). Consequently, one could argue that the Islamic theory of international relations is infeasible in terms of validation and arbitration at best, since the validity of a scientific theory is established on experimental testability and Islamic theory is incapable of providing this fundamental condition. Nevertheless, the Islamic nature of this theory remains undisputed by the experimental judgment if we resolve that the feasibility of Islamic theory is valid under the guise of acquisition (Baqeri, 2006).

Furthermore, the integrity of the subject, method, and purpose of the science pertaining to international relations does not necessarily imply, nor does it oblige the rejection of the Islamic theory of international relations since the distinction ensuing here is not extra-disciplinary, but rather intra-disciplinary within the disciplines of international relations. That is, the purpose is not to render a theory that exceeds the realm of the epistemology in international relations, but to process a particular case of international relations theory alongside other theories established in this area of study. Moreover, the specified case is a type of theory based on principles and assumptions under the framework of the Islamic worldview and metaphysics. Theories of international relations do not necessarily possess the integrity of subject, method, and purpose likewise. In sum, different theories of international relations, as Waltz states (Waltz, 1990),

inquires different topics through different methods and purposes. Consequently, the Islamic theory of international relations can similarly converge on a particular unit of analysis and subject of study with a distinct method and purpose.

## 2. Practical dismissal

The practical dismissal approach deems the practical fulfillment of the Islamic theory of international relations through evidence infeasible, despite not contradicting the Islamic theory of international relations through affirmation since this theory itself faces major challenges and obstacles in a functional sense. First, the dispersion and inconsistencies of Islamic thought and the intellectual disagreements observed in the Islamic world, particularly Arabic and Persian thought (Shiite and Sunni), thwart the feasibility of processing an Islamic theory of international relations. Second, the central instructions of Islam eliminate the feasibility of an Islamic theory of international relations, since Islam is devoid of the notion and concept of the nation-state, and further rejects these as the fundamental precondition of the theory of international relations. Third, assuming the feasibility of an Islamic theory of international relations in the framework of the Islamic worldview, the practical implementation of this theory in the Islamic world is impracticable (Acharya & Buzan, 2010).

The argument behind the practical dismissal of an Islamic theory of international relations is similarly faltering and misleading. First, theoretical disagreements in the Islamic world do not act as epistemological barriers against the discussion of an Islamic theory of international relations, or rather, one could merely claim that the depiction of an integrated Islamic theory of international relations has yet to occur in the Islamic world. In parallel, this fact is not true only in the case of Islam, nor is it limited to the Islamic world, but indeed the main challenge for the field and theory of international relations, even the Western counterparts. The presence of an infinite number of contradictory theories regarding international relations serves as the best testament for this fact indeed.

Second, the lack of authenticity and absence of the nation-state concept in Islam does not necessarily indicate the absence or dismissal of international notions in Islam, nor does it imply the dismissal of the Islamic theory of international relations. This issue could be further elaborated by the case of contemporary schools of theory, as these schools do not view the nation-state as a necessary precondition for the theory of international relations but further consider the state-centered theory as having no explanatory authority, and therefore, inadequate. Hence, the Islamic theory of international relations heeds order and the international community instead of highlighting the integration and interaction of units. Ultimately, the infeasibility of implementing the Islamic theory of international relations in practice does not indicate, nor does it oblige any dismissal to process it, similar to many theories in international relations.

### **The Feasibility of Islamic Theory of International Relations: Foundational Pluralism**

The Islamic theory of international relations is feasible based on prior arguments. However, different theoretical approaches have been defined and determined concerning the nature of Islamic theory's processing based on the Islamic theory's interrelation with science and the nature of Islamic science alongside as well as the various perceptions and expectations affiliated with Islam. Consequently, the nature and identity of the Islamic theory of international relations, as well as the formulation method, are defined and determined differently under this framework. The most notable Islamic theoretical approaches can be summarized and interpreted in six respective approaches, namely scientific adaptation, extractive, inferential, critical, amendatory, foundational integration, and foundational pluralism.

The theory of foundational pluralism -brought forth by the author's theory- is concisely explained to prove the feasibility of the Islamic theory of international relations (Dehqani Firoozabadi, 2003)

The theory of foundational pluralism in international relations is established on a comprehensive, holistic, and assertive Islam. Accordingly, one should not expect Islam to explain the principles and generalities of science and theory

of international relations given that Islam is solely concerned with human guidance.

According to this approach, a theory based on metatheoretical foundations and presuppositions inferred and derived from Islamic texts (books and traditions/Sunnah) within the framework of Islamic metaphysics is deemed to maintain an Islamic nature. The presuppositions on which the Islamic theory of international relations is established are further inferred and derived from the propositions, instructions, and guidance found in the Holy book of Quran and tradition (Sunnah) in a rational and narrative (ijtihad) method. Moreover, the Islamic theory of international relations comprises three other categories of propositions in addition to meta-theoretical and trans-empirical propositions, namely revelatory descriptive propositions derived from the Islamic texts via narrative and rational (ijtihad) methods, experimental, rational, and intuitive propositions from non-religious sources approved by Islam and inferred via experimental, rational, and intuitive methods. Further, there are prescriptive propositions (value-obligatory) derived from the Islamic texts by rational and narrative methods (ijtihad). These propositions are justified and validated with regards to their experimental, rational, intuitive, and narrative nature, based on experimental, rational, and narrative evidence (Dehqani Firoozabadi, 2012).

Accordingly, the Islamic theory of the foundational pluralism in international relations can be defined as a set of consistent, rational, and relevant experimental and meta-experimental propositions, based on assumptions inferred and derived from Islamic sources and knowledge by experimental, rational, intuitive, and narrative methods, which expresses a systematic and precise outlook and the concept of international relations and world order. Validation and further justification of Islamic theory are obtained according to the experimental, rational, narrative, and intuitive nature of its propositions with experimental, rational, and narrative criteria and methods (Dehqani Firoozabadi, 2010).

The foundational theory of pluralism in international relations is pluralist in terms of ontology, epistemology, and methodology of pluralism. Ontological pluralism suggests that the international realities and phenomena are numerous

and diverse in nature and number alike. Second, integrated realities similarly have different existential and causal layers and levels. Third, international relations, as a social realm, are governed by variable and fixed precepts and regulations, such as the law of causality. Fourth, causal agents and relations overseeing international relations are numerous and plural, which include subjective, material, formal, and conclusive causality. Fifth, man is a multidimensional being with various levels of existence. Sixth, different types of human beings, human societies, social realms, and different international systems have the feasibility of existence according to the order of human existence. Seventh, international interactors are numerous and have different orders of existence and rationality.

The theory of foundational pluralism at the epistemological level is similarly pluralistic in both acquisition and arbitration orders. In terms of acquisition and discovery, pluralism signifies that there exist various sources of knowledge, and further includes the three sources of intellect, revelation, and heart in addition to these sources. The propositions of the Islamic theory of international relations are assembled from these four sources and have an experimental, rational, intuitive, and narrative nature. Hence, the Islamic theory of international relations is not a merely experimental, rational, narrative, and intuitive theory, but possesses a merged nature and identity.

Moreover, it is remarkable that there is no theoretical disagreement of judgments based on the different natures of these propositions. However, rational arbitration is preferable and valid in case of an ensuing disagreement between the results of arbitration on a matter, since the definite and certain verdict of the reason is deemed superior to the emergence of experimental, intuitive, and narrative findings contrary to reason. Further, the emergence validity that refers to narratives and text is based on rational reasons. Consequently, its dominance over the verdict of reason in a disagreement is invalid.

However, it is remarked that a prior validity of Islamic theory is not part of the theory and the process of theorizing in the beginning, even according to the prevailing definition of scientific theory as justification succeeds theorizing, to



the extent that it is feasible to present a true or false Islamic theory of international relations, the validity of which has not been confirmed practically and has not become a legitimate theory, similar to the other theories of international relations.

The methodology of the founding theory of international relations is also skeptical pluralism in the framework of transcendent wisdom. The methodology of skeptical pluralism, on the one hand, implies methodological plurality and, on the other hand, implies methodological skepticism. Methodological plurality means that, first; there are various valid and justified methodologies and methods for acquiring knowledge and theorizing in international relations.

Second, not all methodologies and methods are necessarily contrasting, conflicting, and incommensurable. They can even be complementary and synergistic so that different approaches and methods can be used in parallel to recognize and understand international relations and phenomena, and even a single phenomenon. Furthermore, according to the existential hierarchy, subject, and level of cognition, different methods are placed vertically and hierarchically below and lead to the recognition of its various dimensions and hierarchies. Methodological skepticism also means that not all methods are equal in explaining the different levels of agreeableness, validity, and authenticity. Each of them is appropriate for a particular level of reality and knowledge.

First, in the framework of the skeptical methodology, the type of appropriate and desirable method is determined and defined by the degree of existence of the reality of international phenomena and its level of knowledge. Second, different methods are necessary and appropriate for recognizing and studying different realities and different dimensions and aspects of a single international reality. Third, a desirable and appropriate method in a scientific branch and epistemological system cannot be extended and generalized to another epistemological system without considering the nature, existential level, and level of knowledge belonging to cognition. Fourth, not all methodologies and methods have the same desirability and appropriateness for studying and recognizing all sciences and subjects. Fifth, the epistemological accuracy and degree of validity of all methods are not the same in all international cases and

issues.

Therefore, the methodology of skeptical pluralism connotes the utilization of different methods within and outside the outline of religion, depending on the nature of the issues. It also involves experimental and unempirical propositions in the Islamic theory of international relations.

Propositions containing the presumptions of Islamic theory of international relations are unempirical in nature. They are methodically inferred and extracted from Islamic teachings through the application of valid Islamic logic and method. These unempirical propositions are deduced from Islamic sources and teachings in the Ijtihad (rational and narrative) method. Islamic empirical cognitive propositions about international relations can be collected experimentally from religious and non-religious sources approved or compatible with Islam. Rational propositions are also obtained by reasoning and argumentative methods.

### **Conclusion**

In this article, we tried to answer the fundamental question of whether it is feasible to process an Islamic theory of international relations based on presumptions and transtheoretical principles derived from the teachings of Islam and Islamic principles using valid and justified Islamic logic in the framework of the Islamic worldview. Based on the arguments raised to answer this question, we can infer the following statements:

1. Opposing to the claims of refusal approaches that make it infeasible to process an Islamic theory of international relations, it is feasible to present an Islamic theory of international relations based on presumptions inspired by and derived from Islamic teachings.
2. The Islamic theory of international relations does not exist as *nafs al-amr* (fact of the matter) of Islam the sacred Islamic texts definitively and certainly. Hence, one should try to establish this theory based on metaphysics and presumptions derived from the teachings of Islam.
3. The founding Islamic theory of international relations is pluralistic in both acquisition and arbitration. We obtain the propositions of this theory experimentally, rationally, narratively, and intuitively from the sources of

sense, reason, heart, and revelation. We then validate and justify them with empirical, rational, and narrative evidence. Its methodology is also skeptical pluralism.

4. The Islamic theory of international relations is a set of logical and related corresponding propositions, based on presumptions inspired and extracted from Islamic sources and teachings, in an empirical, rational, intuitive, and narrative way that states international relations and world order systematically and accurately views and ideas. Because of their experimental, intellectual, intuitive, and narrative nature, these propositions are justified and validated based on empirical, rational, and narrative evidence.
5. The Islamic theory of international relations has a descriptive, evolutionary, normative, and critical nature. It is descriptive because it deals with the "is" of the phenomena and nature of the international order and attempts to identify and solve its problems and challenges. This theory is naturally evolutionary because it ventures to explain the construction of the existing international order and its issues and challenges. We assume that the Islamic theory of international relations has a normative and prescriptive nature since it expresses the current feasibilities for political development and human societies in the international field and world order. It also portrays moral and practical extents for human societies. It is a critical theory because, first, it considers it feasible to change the current international order. Secondly, it considers it essential that we go beyond the established order and the current international system to establish order and just system (Dehqani Firoozabadi, 2010).
6. The Islamic theory of international relations is a system-oriented theory that offers a concept of just world order and system instead of emphasizing the function of units and their interaction and the impact of the international system on them. This system is in agreement with monotheism, the supreme system of creation, and human nature. This order is a balanced order in which all human beings and human societies can flourish their talents and abilities and achieve happiness, perfection, and all that they deserve or settle for (Dehqani Firoozabadi, 2012).

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