

İslam'da Batı Merkezli Uluslararası İliřkiler Teori İnřasının Sınırlarına Dair Felsefi Bir Sorgulama

A Philosophical Inquiry into the Limits of Constructing Western-Centric International Relations Theory in Islam

Emrah Utku Gökçe 

Doç. Dr., Bandırma Onyedli Eylül Üniversitesi, Manyas Meslek Yüksekokulu, Mülkiyet Koruma ve Güvenlik Bölümü

Assoc. Prof., Bandırma Onyedli Eylül University, Manyas Vocational School, Department of Property Protection and Security

Balıkesir / Türkiye

e.utku.g@gmail.com | <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9319-1672>

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A Philosophical Inquiry into the Limits of Constructing Western-Centric International Relations Theory in Islam

Summary

This study investigates whether Islam can develop a Western-centric modern international relations (IR) theory from a philosophical perspective. Employing Stephen Toulmin's model of argumentation, it examines the ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological disparities between Islamic and Western paradigms. It explores whether Islamic thought, rooted in tawhid (the unity of God) and revelation-based epistemology, can align with the secular, rationalist, and materialist assumptions underpinning Western IR theories. Ultimately, the study identifies significant theoretical incompatibilities while highlighting how Islamic principles might contribute to global discussions on justice, equality, and pluralism. Unlike conventional research, this study employs a philosophy-based argumentative approach. Toulmin's model -consisting of claim, data, warrant, backing, rebuttal, and qualifier- analyzes the theoretical underpinnings of both paradigms. Toulmin's model of argumentation consists of six key elements: claim, which represents the central point of the argument; data, the evidence supporting the claim; warrant, the logical bridge connecting the data to the claim; backing, additional information reinforcing the warrant; rebuttal, addressing counterarguments; and qualifier, which indicates the strength of the claim. This model systematically examines the ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological foundations of Islamic and Western paradigms, highlighting their incompatibilities. These components are critical in understanding the conceptual frameworks and fundamental differences between Islamic and Western international relations theories. Central concepts in Western IR theories, such as the nation-state, sovereignty, and power, are compared with Islamic notions like ummah (community of believers), divine sovereignty, and moral power. These comparisons underscore the theoretical impossibility of integration. The study finds that Islam's tawhid-centered ontology is inherently incompatible with the secular ontology of Western IR theories. While Islamic ontology emphasizes divine sovereignty and the interconnection of spiritual and material realms, Western theories prioritize state-centric and materialist paradigms. Similarly, Islamic epistemology, which integrates revelation (wahy) with reason ('aql), contrasts sharply with Western empiricism and rationalism, which often exclude metaphysical dimensions. These foundational differences result in divergent interpretations of reality and approaches to addressing global challenges. Methodologically, Western IR theories are rooted in scientific positivism and post-positivism, emphasizing empirical observation and experimentation. In contrast, Islamic methodology relies on interpretation (ijtihad) of revelation and the sunnah (practices of the Prophet Muhammad). This divergence further reinforces the paradigmatic incompatibility. Axiologically, Islamic thought places morality and justice at its core, deriving values from divine principles. Western IR theories, however, often adopt value-neutral stances, prioritizing power and pragmatism over ethics. These axiological differences hinder seamless integration between the paradigms. The study critiques the Westphalian model, foundational to modern IR, which emphasizes state sovereignty, secular governance, and national interests. This model stands in stark contrast to Islam's holistic governance approach, which prioritizes moral and ethical principles. Moreover, post-modern and post-secular IR theories advocating pluralism and relativism are inconsistent with Islam's theocentric worldview and absolute moral values. Despite the impossibility of integration, the study highlights how Islamic principles can enrich discussions on justice, equity, and pluralism. For example, the Islamic concept of justice (adl) emphasizes fairness and responsibility, offering a moral framework for addressing power imbalances and economic disparities. By applying Toulmin's model, the study demonstrates the structural and philosophical incompatibilities between the paradigms while identifying shared values such as justice, ethical governance, and pluralism as potential areas for collaboration. Although full integration is unattainable, these shared principles can foster dialogue between Islamic and post-secular frameworks and contribute meaningfully to global governance strategies. The study underscores the importance of evaluating Islamic political theory within its own framework rather than attempting to fit it into Western paradigms and calls for recognizing the unique contributions of Islamic values to international relations discourse.

Keywords: Religious Studies, International Relations Theory, Islamic Political Theory, Islamic Worldview, Theoretical Incompatibility, Western Worldview.

İslam'da Batı Merkezli Uluslararası İlişkiler Teori İnşasının Sınırlarına Dair Felsefi Bir Sorgulama

Özet

Bu çalışma, İslam'ın felsefi bir perspektiften Batı merkezli modern bir Uluslararası İlişkiler (UI) teorisi geliştirip geliştiremeyeceğini araştırmaktadır. Stephen Toulmin'in argümantasyon modelini kullanarak, İslamî ve Batı paradigması arasındaki ontolojik, epistemolojik, metodolojik ve aksiyolojik farklılıkları incelemektedir. Çalışma, vahiy temelli epistemolojiye ve tevhid (Allah'ın birliği) anlayışına dayanan İslam düşüncesinin, Batı UI teorilerinin seküler, rasyonalist ve materyalist varsayımlarıyla uyum sağlayıp sağlayamayacağını araştırmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, teorik uyumsuzlukların önemli ölçüde var olduğu belirlenirken, İslamî ilkelerin adalet, eşitlik ve çoğulculuk gibi küresel tartışmalara katkıda bulunabileceği vurgulanmaktadır. Bu çalışma, geleneksel araştırmalardan farklı olarak, felsefe temelli bir argümantasyon yaklaşımı benimsemektedir. Toulmin'in modeli -iddia, veri, gerekçe, destek, karşıt görüş ve niteleyici unsurlarından oluşan yapı- her iki paradigmanın teorik temellerini analiz etmek için kullanılmaktadır. Toulmin'in argümantasyon modeli, bir argümanın yapı taşlarını analiz etmek için kullanılan altı temel unsurdan oluşur: iddia (claim), argümanın savunduğu temel noktayı ifade eder; veri (data), iddiayı destekleyen kanıtları içerir; gerekçe (warrant), veriler ile iddia arasında mantıksal bir köprü kurar; destek (backing), gerekçeyi güçlendiren ek bilgiler sunar; çürütme (rebuttal), karşı argümanları ele alır; ve niteleyici (qualifier), iddianın gücünü ve kesinlik derecesini belirtir. Bu model, İslamî ve Batı paradigmasının ontolojik, epistemolojik, metodolojik ve aksiyolojik temellerini sistematik olarak inceleyerek uyumsuzluklarını ortaya koyar. Bu unsurlar, İslam ve Batı uluslararası ilişkiler teorilerinin kavramsal çerçevelerini ve temel farklılıklarını anlamada kritik bir öneme sahiptir. Batı UI teorilerindeki ulus-devlet, egemenlik ve güç gibi temel kavramlar, İslam'daki ümmet, ilahi egemenlik ve ahlaki güç kavramlarıyla karşılaştırılmaktadır. Bu karşılaştırmalar, entegrasyonun teorik olarak mümkün olmadığını göstermektedir. Çalışma, İslam'ın tevhid merkezli ontolojisinin, Batı UI teorilerinin seküler ontolojisiyle özünde uyumsuz olduğunu bulmaktadır. İslamî ontoloji, ilahi egemenlik ve manevi-maddi alanların bağlantısını vurgularken, Batı teorileri devlet merkezli ve materyalist paradigmaları önceliklendirir. Benzer şekilde, vahiy ile aklı bütünleştiren İslamî epistemoloji, genellikle metafizik boyutları dışlayan Batı'nın empirizm ve rasyonalizminden keskin bir şekilde farklıdır. Bu temel farklılıklar, gerçekliğin farklı yorumlarına ve küresel sorunlara yönelik farklı yaklaşımlara yol açmaktadır. Metodolojik olarak, Batı UI teorileri, bilimsel pozitivism ve post-pozitivizme dayalı olarak ampirik gözlem ve deneylere vurgu yapar. Buna karşın, İslamî metodoloji vahyin ve sünnetin içtihadı (yorumlama) yöntemine dayanır. Bu farklılık, paradigmatik uyumsuzluğu daha da pekiştirmektedir. Aksiyolojik olarak, İslam düşüncesi ahlak ve adaleti merkeze alarak değerlerini ilahi ilkelere türetir. Oysa Batı UI teorileri genellikle değer-nötr duruşlar benimseyerek etik yerine güç ve pragmatizmi önceliklendirir. Bu aksiyolojik farklılıklar, paradigmalar arasında sorunsuz bir entegrasyonu engellemektedir. Çalışma, modern UI'nin temelini oluşturan ve devlet egemenliği, seküler yönetim ve ulusal çıkarları vurgulayan Westphalia modelini eleştirmektedir. Bu model, ahlaki ve etik ilkeleri önceleyen İslam'ın bütüncül yönetim anlayışıyla keskin bir tezat içindedir. Ayrıca, çoğulculuk ve göreceliği savunan post-modern ve post-seküler UI teorileri, İslam'ın teosentrik dünya görüşü ve mutlak ahlaki değerleriyle uyumsuzdur. Entegrasyonun imkansızlığına rağmen, çalışma, İslamî ilkelerin adalet, eşitlik ve çoğulculuk üzerine yapılan tartışmaları nasıl zenginleştirebileceğini vurgulamaktadır. Örneğin, İslam'ın adalet kavramı, güç dengesizliklerini ve ekonomik eşitsizlikleri ele almak için bir ahlaki çerçeve sunmaktadır. Toulmin'in modelini uygulayarak, çalışma paradigmalar arasındaki yapısal ve felsefi uyumsuzlukları gösterirken, adalet, etik yönetim ve çoğulculuk gibi ortak değerlerin iş birliği için potansiyel alanlar olduğunu belirtmektedir. Tam entegrasyon mümkün olmasa da, bu ortak ilkeler İslamî ve post-seküler çerçeveler arasında diyalog oluşturabilir ve küresel yönetim stratejilerine anlamlı katkılarda bulunabilir. Çalışma, İslam siyaset teorisinin kendi çerçevesi içinde değerlendirilmesinin önemini vurgulamakta. İslamî değerlerin uluslararası ilişkiler söylemine yaptığı katkıları tanıma çağrısında bulunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dini Araştırmalar, Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorisi, İslam Siyaset Teorisi, İslam Dünya Görüşü, İslami Politik Teori, Teorik Uyumsuzluk, Batı Dünya Görüşü.

Introduction

Philosophy rigorously examines the fundamental aspects of human existence

and the vast expanse of reality through methodical, rational, and abstract inquiry.¹ The practice of reasoning is central to the discipline of philosophy, which involves a systematic examination of a subject matter through critical analysis. Philosophical inquiry spans a wide range of domains, including the fundamental nature of existence, the origins of the natural world, and the dynamics of international politics, among others.² Merely offering personal responses to these inquiries does not constitute the practice of philosophy. What is the accepted method in the practice of philosophy? In philosophy, the core essence lies in the contemplation of subject matters, engagement in logical reasoning, generation of cogent arguments, formation of precise concepts, and rigorous analysis within its conceptual framework.³ Furthermore, within the discipline of international relations, any subject matter is open to philosophical inquiry, showcasing the field's interdisciplinary potential. According to Beitz, the political philosophy of international relations critically examines a range of ethical issues, including the morality of diplomacy and warfare, the fairness of international practices and institutions that affect economic welfare and the global environment, and the tensions between human rights and sectional loyalties, such as patriotism versus broader moral obligations.⁴

Given that international relations can be subjected to philosophical analysis, it is essential to determine the most appropriate method for conducting such inquiry within this field. The Toulmin method of argumentation will be employed to guide the philosophical investigation. This approach is expected to contribute an argumentative perspective to both local and global scholarly literature on international relations. Moreover, this study demonstrates the application of the argumentative method within the discipline of international relations. The research question, framed according to Toulmin's method, is as follows: "Can Islam construct a Western-centric modern/post-modern international relations theory?" The primary objective of this study is to highlight the profound theoretical incompatibility between the fundamental principles of Islamic thought and those of Western modern theories of international relations. While it is acknowledged that Islam possesses a political theory within its own framework, this study argues that the language and paradigmatic structure of Islam conflict with the linguistic frameworks and conceptual structures of modern international relations, rendering integration impossible.

Language is the expression of our thoughts, and our thoughts are shaped and bounded by language. The structural properties of language dictate the types of information we can acquire about the world and the ways in which we can express this information. This perspective reveals that language is not merely a tool for communication but also a reflection of our worldview. Language fundamentally shapes our understanding and articulation of reality.⁵ This framework helps us understand

¹ Encyclopedia Britannica, "Philosophy" (Access 29 March 2024).

² John Hospers, *An Introduction to Philosophical Analysis* (London: Routledge, 1997), 4.; Nigel Warburton, *Philosophy: The Basic* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 2.

³ Nicholas Rescher, *Philosophical Reasoning: A Study in the Methodology of Philosophizing* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 3-17.

⁴ Charles R. Beitz, "International Relations, Philosophy of" (Access 26 April 2024).

⁵ Ahmet Cevzici, *Felsefenin Kısa Tarihi* (İstanbul: Say Yayınları, 2013), 576.

that different linguistic structures reflect different worldviews and perspectives. I argue that Islam has developed its own political and social theories within a unique linguistic and cultural framework. These theories are enriched with Islamic terminology and concepts, demonstrating that Islam possesses a political theory within itself. However, Islam cannot be integrated with modern international relations theory. Conversely, modern international relations theory is predominantly constructed upon Western-centric epistemological structures and linguistic frameworks. The fundamental differences in the concepts produced by these two linguistic structures shape and constrain each worldview.⁶ The concepts derived from different linguistic structures shape how we understand and interpret the world. Consequently, the disparities between the linguistic framework of Islam and that of modern international relations theory result in fundamental differences in how each paradigm perceives and interprets the world. In this context, attempting to produce a Western-centric modern Islamic theory of international relations leads to a clash of linguistic and thought structures. The boundaries of Islamic language and thought are likely incompatible with the paradigms of modern international relations, as both systems employ distinct languages and concepts to articulate their worldviews and perceptions of reality. This conflict further complicates integration.

The ontological and epistemological differences between Islamic and Western-centric international relations theories form the foundation of this study. Western-centric theories, whether modern or post-modern, are fundamentally built upon rationalist and materialist principles. These theories rely on a secular ontology that separates the divine from political and social structures, whereas Islam's ontology is grounded in the principle of tawhid (the unity of God), offering a holistic and divinely centered worldview. These ontological differences create profound divergences in how each paradigm perceives, interprets, and understands the world. Epistemologically, Islam combines revelation (wahy) and reason (aql) in the process of knowledge production, emphasizing the interconnectedness of spiritual and material dimensions. In contrast, Western epistemology adopts a materialist framework rooted in observation, experimentation, and rational inference. These rationalist and materialist foundations not only shape Western-centric theories' approach to knowledge and reality but also represent a fundamental departure from the Islamic paradigm. This foundational clash, manifesting in linguistic and conceptual structures, demonstrates the deep incompatibility between the worldviews. In this context, it appears theoretically impossible for Islam to construct a Western-centric international relations theory.

The study will conduct a comparative analysis of the origins and key concepts of both systems of thought. It highlights the paradigmatic divergences between Islamic thought and modern theories of international relations. By drawing on the work of scholars, this study challenges the notion of a Western-oriented modern

⁶Şahabettin Yalçın, "Yalçın Koç'un 'Arkitektonik' Dil Anlayışı", *Felsefe ve Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 35 (2023), 116-120.

Islamic theory.⁷ This study seeks to address the research question using a distinctly philosophical methodology. The significance of the study lies in its clarification of the reasons underlying the metatheoretical incongruity between Islamic thought and Western thought whether modern or post-modern. Western thought, regardless of its era, is fundamentally grounded in rationalist and materialist principles, which stand in stark contrast to the spiritual and holistic foundations of Islamic thought.

This study focuses on analyzing the incompatibilities between the paradigms underlying Islamic and Western international relations theories within a philosophical context and does not aim to provide a comprehensive theoretical literature review. Instead, it employs Toulmin's Model of Argumentation to systematically explore the ontological, epistemological, and axiological differences between these paradigms. By grounding its analysis in this methodological approach, the study highlights why theoretical integration between Islamic and Western paradigms, whether modern or post-modern, is fundamentally unfeasible. The scope of the study is therefore deliberately limited to examining these philosophical incompatibilities without engaging in a broad survey of alternative theories or paradigms.

Toulmin's model of argumentation provides a comprehensive framework for analyzing the structural components of arguments, including those within the paradigms of Islamic political theory and Western-centric modern, post-modern, and post-secular international relations theories. In this study, the ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological differences between these paradigms are systematically examined through Toulmin's six elements: claim, data, warrant, backing, rebuttal, and qualifier.

This philosophical argumentative reasoning study employs various methodic approaches to examine the differences and potential intersections between Islamic and Western paradigms, particularly within the context of modern theories. While the analysis focuses on modern theories, it only briefly addresses post-modern and post-secular frameworks as secondary considerations. First, a comparative conceptual analysis was employed to highlight the distinctions between Islamic theological concepts and the secular, materialist, and rationalist approach of modern theories. For instance, concepts such as Sharia and Ummah in Islamic political thought emphasize a universal moral order grounded in divine principles, whereas modern international relations theories are predominantly built on materialist assumptions such as power, interest, and anarchy. Second, a historical analysis examined the historical context of modern international relations theories and the marginalization of religion's role in global politics within this framework. While Islam historically

⁷ Panayiotis J. Vatikiotis, *İslam ve Ulus Devlet*, trans. Enis Arslanoğlu (İstanbul: Pınar Yayınları, 1998); Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, "International Relations Theory and the Islamic Worldview", *Non-Western International Relations Theory: Perspective on and beyond Asia*. ed. Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010); Wael B. Hallaq, *İmkansız Devlet: Modern Çağda Bir İslam Devleti Niçin Mümkün Değildir?*, çev. Aziz Hikmet (İstanbul: Babil Yayınları, 2019); Ali Bakir, "Islam and International Relations (IR): Why is There no Islamic IR Theory?", *Third World Quarterly* 44/1 (2023), 22-38.; Mohammed Nuruzzaman, "Western and Islamic International Theories: A Comparative Analysis", *International Studies* 55/2 (2018), 106-129.

provided a robust normative framework for international relations, modern theories confined religious elements to a secular paradigm, limiting their scope and relevance.

1. The Method of Study: Toulmin's Model of Argumentation

This study employs a comparative conceptual analysis approach within the framework of philosophical inference. This article is structured as a philosophy-based argumentation study, differing methodologically from explanatory research. Philosophical argumentation operates through a reasoning model consisting of premises and conclusions, conducting conceptual analysis based on linguistic, ontological, and epistemological foundations. The objective was to demonstrate how concepts acquire different meanings across various languages, cultures, and worldviews. Frequently cited concepts in the discipline of modern international relations such as nation, nation-state, sovereignty, power, national interest, and anarchy were included in the analysis. A comparison was conducted to explore how these concepts are defined within the contexts of Islamic thought and modern international relations theory, uncovering their inherent discrepancies. This study aims to explain why Islam cannot integrate with Western-centric international relations theory. This is not a "cause-effect relationship" investigation but rather a philosophical discussion of conceptual incompatibility. Non-Western international relations theories were not included in the analysis, as the study focuses specifically on the paradigmatic differences between Islamic thought and Western-centric modern theories. Additionally, this exclusion reflects the intent to examine the dominance of Western paradigms in shaping the language and framework of modern international relations. To support my claim, I employed Toulmin's model of argumentation as the methodological approach.

Language can be divided into two domains: instrumental and argumentative. Instrumental language refers to the use of language that does not require reasoning or logic, often serving as a means of basic communication or interaction. In contrast, argumentative language involves the use of reasoning and logic to establish a rational foundation. Argumentative language is characterized by the construction and presentation of logical arguments that aim to persuade or justify a claim.⁸

An argument is defined as a set of statements where one or more premises are presented to provide support or reasons to justify the conclusion.⁹ The examination of argumentation involves the articulation of an argument on a particular subject by providing rational justification.¹⁰ Reasoning and argumentation are fundamentally interconnected and represent complementary aspects of cognitive activity. Specifically, what is commonly referred to as reasoning often includes the

⁸ Stephen Toulmin, et al. *An Introduction to Reasoning* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1984), 5.

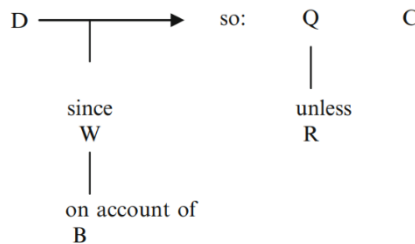
⁹ Patrick J. Hurley, *A Concise Introduction to Logic* (Boston: Cengage, 2023), 2; Alan Hausman, et. al. *Logic & Philosophy: A Modern Introduction* (Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 2021), 1.

¹⁰ David R Morrow – Anthony Weston, *A Workbook for Arguments: A Complete Course in Critical Thinking* (Indiana: Hackett Publishing, 2019), 3.

internalization of argumentative processes.¹¹

The construction of a classical argument involves several fundamental components, including statements (premises) and a conclusion. First, a statement is defined as a sentence that can be classified as either true or false. Second, the premises, which are a set of statements, provide reasons, evidence, or supporting facts. Third, the conclusion, which is also a statement, is derived from the premises. The quality and accuracy of the premises significantly affect the likelihood of reaching a valid conclusion and persuading the audience.¹²

Figure 1. Toulmin's Extended Model¹³



Toulmin's model of argumentation consists of six elements: claim (C), data (D) or ground (G), warrant (W), backing (B), modal qualifiers (Q), and rebuttal (R). The claim (C) represents the statement under discussion and serves as the conclusion within the classical components of an argument.¹⁴ All efforts in the argument aim to substantiate the claim. The claim acts as the starting point of an argument, initially without support; however, over time, it develops into a conclusion supported by evidence and reveals specific insights.¹⁵ To substantiate the claim, ground (G) and data (D) are required. The source of the data primarily involves reasoning, while also drawing on scientific knowledge. The individual making the claim utilizes specific information—facts, observations, or statistical data—to support the argument.¹⁶ The warrant (W) establishes a logical connection between the data/ground and the claim. It facilitates the transition from the supporting evidence to the claim and serves as the logical bridge linking the two. A claim can be likened to a cake: the ground represents the ingredients needed for the cake, while the warrant is the recipe that explains how the cake should be made. The warrant, like a recipe, provides instructions that enable the creation of a credible argument.¹⁷ Backing (B) provides additional support for the warrant, serving as a guarantor for its validity. Backing includes statements of general applicability, similar in generality to the warrant

¹¹ Catarina Dutilh Novaes, "Argument and Argumentation". (Access 1 January 2024.)

¹² Hurley, *A Concise Introduction to Logic*, 3.

¹³ Frans H. van Eemeren, et. al. *Handbook of Argumentation Theory* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), 220.

¹⁴ Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 93-94.

¹⁵ Stephen Toulmin, et al. *An Introduction to Reasoning*, 38.

¹⁶ Stephen Toulmin, et al. *An Introduction to Reasoning*, 38.

¹⁷ Stephen Toulmin, et al. *An Introduction to Reasoning*, 47-48.

itself.¹⁸ The rebuttal (R) is a counterstatement that aims to refute the claim with contrary evidence and proofs, demonstrating the claim's potential falsehood.¹⁹ Lastly, the modal qualifier (Q) addresses the strength of the proposed claim. Toulmin identifies several qualifiers, including: necessarily, certainly, presumably, in all probability, so far as, very possibly, very likely, maybe, apparently, plausibly, or so it seems.²⁰

2. Can Islam Construct a Modern Western-Centric Theory of International Relations? An Applying of Toulmin's Argumentation Model

I claim (C) that the language reflecting the Islamic worldview diverges significantly from the language used in modern international relations theory, which is rooted in Western modern thought and science. This divergence makes the development of a Western-centric Islamic modern international relations theory appear contradictory. While recognizing that Islam has a political theory within its own framework, this research argues that the Islamic language conflicts with the paradigmatic language and structure of modern international relations, rendering integration unfeasible. Any Western-centered conceptualization of Islamic international relations will inherently contradict itself.

The discipline of international relations has traditionally relied on Western-centric theoretical frameworks, primarily focusing on state interactions and the material dynamics of the international system. These frameworks, which prioritize state sovereignty, international law, and economic structures, are often rooted in secular values.²¹ While we are said to be living in a post-secular era, the fundamental meta-theoretical assumptions of post-secularism such as the reconciliation of secular and religious values, the integration of pluralistic belief systems, and the acknowledgment of religion as a sociopolitical force also remain in conflict with Islam. Post-secularism's emphasis on coexistence and its attempt to harmonize religious values with a secular epistemology fail to accommodate Islam's ontological commitment to *tawhid* (the oneness of God) and its rejection of compartmentalizing the divine from political and social structures.²² Consequently, Islam, which excludes secular values, offers extensive political and social theories that fundamentally conflict with the language and structures of both modern political theory and the post-secular turn in international relations.

2.1. On What Grounds (G) and Data (D) It This Claim Substantiated?

Islam is not only a religion but also provides a comprehensive worldview encompassing politics, society, and economics. The foundation of modern

¹⁸ Stephen Toulmin, et al. *An Introduction to Reasoning*, 62-66.

¹⁹ Stephen Toulmin, et al. *An Introduction to Reasoning*, 95.

²⁰ Stephen Toulmin, et al. *An Introduction to Reasoning*, 86.

²¹ Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, "Secularism and International Relations Theory". *Religion and International Relations Theory*, ed. Jack Snyder (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 60-90.

²² Abdurrahman Arslan, *Modern Dünyada Müslümanlar* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2013), 7-13.; Seyyid Muhammed Nakib El-Attas, *İslam, Sekülerizm ve Geleceğin Felsefesi*, çev. Mahmud Erol Kılıç (İstanbul: İnsan Yayınları, 2016).

international relations theories lies in modernism, which is not a religion but is rooted in a secular framework. Western modernity has been constructed upon secularism and secular institutions. While Western modernity defines Islam as its "other," it often views Islam as deficient and flawed.²³ Even though contemporary thought claims that we are in a post-secular or even a post-modern era, the foundational principles of international relations theories remain non-religious and continue to adopt a secular framework. The core assumptions of these theories, such as state sovereignty, rational choice, and material power dynamics, reflect a secular and often secularist worldview, fundamentally incompatible with Islam's ontological and epistemological commitments. In this study, I adopt the perspective that evaluates Islam and Western modern thought as two distinct paradigms. According to Bakir,

Although the idea of exploring Islam as an IR theory or IR paradigm can help advance discussions on broadening the horizon of IR and the IR theories, it is still widely met with rejection or, at best, scepticism. Besides the ontological aspect, which arouses aversion in the opposing camp, the idea that Islam has a transnational message and a competing vision of international community that can challenge the claimed universality of IR norms and the very foundation of the Westphalian system might have contributed to this rejection. Therefore, to bypass or at least dilute such rejections, it should be always emphasised that the aim of exploring Islam as a paradigm or IR theory is not to present it as an alternative but rather to help expand the scope and the sources of knowledge of Eurocentric IR theories, and to be able to better understand, interpret, and anticipate what is happening in the non-Western part of the world²⁴.

A comparison and observation of these two perspectives from a paradigmatic standpoint will aid in understanding their fundamental nature. The phenomena will be analyzed in ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological terms to elucidate their underlying principles.

From an ontological perspective, Islam is based on the monotheistic belief (tawhid) in the unity of God (Allah). "A proof which argues for the existence of God entirely from a priori premises and makes no use of any premises that derive from our observation of the world"²⁵. The existence of both the physical and metaphysical realms is contingent upon Allah's creation. Everything that occurs in these realms is subject to Allah's will. There is an inherent order in everything, from the microcosm to the macrocosm, as all events unfold within Allah's knowledge. This divine order encompasses war, peace, disasters, conflict, and prosperity, all of which are determined by Allah's will.²⁶

The foundation of the modern discipline of international relations is shaped by rationalism, which represents modern scientific understanding. The observable and perceivable physical realm is considered essential, inherently rejecting the

²³ Shahrbanou Tadjbakhsh, "International Relations Theory and the Islamic Worldview", 174.

²⁴ Ali Bakir, "Islam and International Relations (IR)", 32.

²⁵ Ayman Shihadeh, "The Existence of God", *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*, ed. Tim Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 121.

²⁶ Steffen A. J. Stelzer, "Ethics." *The Cambridge Companion to Classical Islamic Theology*. ed. Tim Winter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 166-179.

metaphysical realm. Modern science, including postmodernism, is built on a secular foundation that excludes the notion of a creator or any similar divine entity.²⁷ International relations theories adopt these principles of modernism, defining the material realm where states exist without a hierarchical divine authority, thereby forming a purely materialistic and scientific ontological framework.²⁸ In contrast, Islamic ontology asserts that all existence is a manifestation of divine will, inherently spiritual and deeply connected to the divine.

From an epistemological perspective, Islam produces knowledge based on revelation (Quran), integrating reasoning with religious thought. While it does not reject empirical evidence, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and reasoning consistent with revelation and the *sunnah* (the practices of the Prophet Muhammad) serve as sources for knowledge production in many areas, including politics and inter-community relations.²⁹ Modern science, in contrast, rejects the notion of revelation as a foundation for knowledge. It prioritizes observation, experimentation, and rational deductions, often expressed mathematically. Modern international relations theories, rooted in observation, experimentation, and rational inference, exclude metaphysical knowledge.³⁰ Modern science, based on positivist or post-positivist epistemology, disregards revelation and similar types of knowledge. This stands in stark contrast to Islamic epistemology, which embraces a holistic integration of sensory, logical, and spiritual dimensions, valuing not only the acquisition of knowledge but also its ethical and spiritual implications.³¹

Methodologically, in Islam, knowledge and the political are interpreted based on revelation and the *sunnah*, with interpretation serving as the primary methodological approach. Causes and effects are understood as manifestations of Allah's will. Reasoning within the framework of the Quran and *sunnah* is an accepted method, as evidenced by Jeanron³² and Macit³³. In contrast, international relations theories, rooted in secular knowledge, prioritize scientific methods for knowledge production. These theories rely on quantitative and interpretive qualitative methods within positivist and post-positivist frameworks.³⁴

From an axiological perspective, Islam is a religion that emphasizes morality and justice. It defines moral values, including concepts such as justice, rights, and

²⁷ John Hedley Brooke, *Science and Religion: Some Historical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); John Henry, *The Scientific Revolution and the Origins of Modern Science* (New York: Palgrave, 2002).

²⁸ Patrick Theodeus Jackson, *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations: Philosophy of Science and its Implications for the Study World Politics* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011); Paul R. Viotti - Mark V. Kauppi, *International Relations Theory* (Boston: Longman, 2012).

²⁹ Abdullah Saeed, *Islamic Thought: An Introduction* (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), 60-61.

³⁰ Fred Chernoff, *Theory and Metatheory in International Relations: Concepts and Contending Accounts* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 5.

³¹ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Alternative Paradigms: The Impact of Islamic and Western Weltanschauungs on Political Theory* (Maryland: University Press of America, 1993), 78-80.

³² Werner. G. Jeanron, *Theological Hermeneutics: Development and Significance*. (London: Macmillan, 1991.)

³³ Nadim Macit, "The Methodology of Muslim Theologians in Understanding the Qur'an." *Journal of Divinity Faculty of Hitit University* 1/2 (2002), 1-19.

³⁴ Fred Chernoff, *Theory and Metatheory in International Relations*, 79/131.

duties. The principle of goodness is a fundamental tenet of Islamic teachings.

[...] axiological normativeness supported by ontological and epistemological antecedents as a comprehensive Weltanschauung based on the belief of tawhid. Axiological normativeness constitutes the third fundamental dimension of the Islamic paradigm, along with ontological unity and epistemological harmonization, shared by almost all Muslim schools and sects³⁵.

In contrast to Islam, modern thought bases its understanding of morality on Kantian ethics and utilitarian ethics. Even when morality is included in modern theories, it is predominantly developed on the foundation of human reason, a premise that Islam does not accept. Morality in modern science is often viewed as value-neutral, aiming for an objective understanding devoid of ethical or moral concerns. In international relations theories (except for international normative theory), morality is generally excluded from the domain of international politics.³⁶ Islam, however, possesses a distinct worldview that is fundamentally incompatible with the worldview of modern thought and science. The moral language of the modern paradigm is not employed by Islam because its assumptions and postulates are incompatible with the fundamental worldview of Islam. This incompatibility is not due to an inferior or less developed language but rather stems from the diametrically opposed assumptions and postulates of modernism.

2.2. What is the Warrant (W) for Islamic Worldview that is Unable to Construct a Western-Centric Modern International Relations Theory?

The term “theory” originates from the Greek word “theoria,” which means “to view the divine.” With the emergence of secular Western modern thought, the notions of the divine and the sacred have been largely eliminated. In modern thought, there is no act of perceiving the sacred. Contemporary theory seeks to relate natural phenomena to one another in a way that allows them to be explained through mutual relationships.³⁷ Modern scientific theory is designed to facilitate explanation, interpretation, and inference. In both natural and social realms, causality is clarified through theories, which guide our inferential processes. These theory-based explanations provide a foundational framework for reasoning.³⁸

Meta-theory is a field of study that examines the foundational assumptions, concepts, and methods underlying the processes of theorizing and research within a given theory. Rather than focusing on specific events, phenomena, or empirical applications, meta-theory explores the underlying assumptions of the entire theoretical framework in ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological contexts. Its primary aim is to understand the implications of these assumptions for the process of theorizing itself. Additionally, meta-theory shapes how theorists

³⁵ Ahmet Davutoğlu, *Alternative Paradigms*, 86.

³⁶ John Stewart Gordon, “Modern Morality Ancient Ethic”. (Access 1 January 2024.)

³⁷ Luc Ferry, *Gençler İçin Batı Felsefesi*, çev. Devrim Çetinkasap, (İstanbul: Türkiye İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları, 2007), 87.; Emrah Utku Gökçe, *Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorileri Üzerine Diyaloglar: Sosyal Bilim Felsefesi Bağlamında Bir Değerlendirme* (Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi, 2023), 40.

³⁸ Emrah Utku Gökçe, *Uluslararası İlişkiler Teorileri Üzerine Diyaloglar*, 39-49.

conceptualize and perceive the world, guiding their theoretical perspectives.³⁹ Islamic theology-based international relations theory and Western-centric modern scientific international relations theory each rely on distinct meta-theoretical attributes shaped by their respective historical and cultural contexts.⁴⁰

The international relations theory of Islam, particularly regarding global politics, exists but is fundamentally incompatible with modern, post-modern, and even post-secular international relations theories. While post-secularism claims to integrate religious and secular values, its foundational assumptions remain rooted in secular epistemologies. According to Pabst, “post-secularity fails to overcome the hegemony of secular reason. Rationality so configured rejects religious faith as irrational and is predicated on the separation of natural immanence from supernatural transcendence”.⁴¹ Post-secularism attempts to reconcile diverse belief systems and sociopolitical frameworks within a pluralistic and coexistent model, yet it overlooks the holistic and revelation-centered worldview of Islam. This creates a structural incompatibility, as Islam does not compartmentalize the divine from the political and social spheres. The language and worldview of Islam, shaped by its historical experience, have given rise to a unique paradigm and theoretical outlook. For a theory to be valid and functional, it must be rooted in a language and thought structure congruent with its development. The political thought that has evolved within Islam does not share the same language and structure as Western-centric theories. Concepts such as nation and nation-state, sovereignty, power, and the international system-anarchy are modern definitions that do not align with Islamic thought. Analyses often assume that these modern definitions are inherent in Islam’s political theory; however, this assumption can lead to distortion.

Modern international relations theory is typically built upon Western-centric theoretical approaches such as the grand theories of realism, liberalism, and constructivism. The linguistic framework of modern international relations theory is rooted in the fundamental assumptions of Western philosophy, including objectivity, rationality, and a progressive understanding of history. This language provides specific premises on how Western-centric international relations should be analyzed, creating a contradiction with the alternative worldviews offered by Islam. Similarly, post-modern and post-secular international relations theories, despite their rejection of rigid structures and emphasis on pluralism and relativism, are also fundamentally incompatible with Islamic perspectives. Post-modern theories often prioritize the deconstruction of universal truths, while Islam adheres to a unified, revelation-based worldview. Likewise, post-secularism, with its attempt to integrate religious and secular values, remains rooted in secular epistemological assumptions, making it structurally incongruent with Islam’s holistic and theocentric paradigm. The linguistic structure of Islam’s political theory is theologically and ontologically

³⁹ Milja Kurki-Colin Wight, “International Relations and Social Science”, *International Relations Theories: Discipline and Diversity*. ed. Tim Dunne, Milja Kurki, Steve Smith (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 15-33.

⁴⁰ Mohammed Nuruzzaman, “Western and Islamic International Theories”, 110-122.

⁴¹ Adrian Pabst, “The Secularism of Post-Secularity: Religion, Realism, and the Revival of Grand Theory in IR. *Review of International Studies*, 38 (2012). 996.

coherent, rooted in expressions found in sacred texts. This language shapes the political and legal structures as well as the social relations within the Islamic world. In contrast, modern international relations theory and its post-modern and post-secular iterations are deeply influenced by Western philosophy and epistemology and are articulated using concepts developed in Western languages such as Latin, French, English, and German. The profound divergences between these linguistic frameworks and the worldviews they generate have led to significant divisions in how each system expresses and understands the world.

The field of modern international relations is founded upon the concepts of the nation and the nation-state. The nation-state is a political unit constituted by individuals residing within a defined geographical area who share a common language, culture, and history. This concept is centered on national identity and sovereignty, constructing the state structure upon this national framework.⁴² However, the concept of the nation-state is often marginalized in Islam, where the understanding prioritizes a community united by religious and spiritual bonds, exemplified by the concept of the Ummah.⁴³ The Ummah in Islam differs significantly from the concept of a nation. It represents a community united by faith, transcending ethnic or geographical boundaries. In Islam, “the state and society structure are shaped by religious principles, and the governance of society is regulated by sharia-based legal rules”.⁴⁴ Therefore, in the Islamic world, the concepts of the state and nation are rooted more in a broad religious identity than in a Western-style national identity. Even in post-international relations theories that challenge the notions of sovereignty and nation-state structures -characteristics of the post-Westphalia era- Islam fundamentally conflicts with these frameworks. Post-Westphalia international relations theories emphasize transnational governance, fluidity of borders, and the decline of state-centric power structures.⁴⁵ However, Islam’s political framework is deeply tied to its religious principles, which prioritize unity under divine sovereignty rather than governance through secular transnational mechanisms. While post-Westphalia approaches aim to transcend rigid state structures and nation-state boundaries⁴⁶, they remain grounded in secular premises of governance, often sidelining the religiously unified perspective of the Ummah. This divergence highlights the structural and philosophical incompatibility between Islamic thought and post-Westphalian international relations theories.

In contemporary international relations theory, sovereignty is understood as the supreme legal authority and independence of the nation-state. In this context, the independence of the state in making internal and external policy decisions signifies its capacity to act as a free actor in international relations. In Islam, however,

⁴² Andrew Heywood-Clayton Chin, *Political Theory: An Introduction* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2023), 221-225.

⁴³ Panayiotis J. Vatikiotis, *İslam ve Ulus Devlet*, 47-71.

⁴⁴ John L. Esposito, “Ümmet”, *Oxford İslam Sözlüğü*, trans. Nurullah Koltaş (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları, 2013), 356.

⁴⁵ Eric Akken Engle, “The Transformation of the International Legal System: The Post-Westphalian Legal Order”, *Quinnipiac Law Review* 23/23 (2004), 23-45.

⁴⁶ Özlem Kaygusuz, “Egemenlik ve Vestfalyan Düzen”, *Küresel Siyasete Giriş: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Kavramlar, Teoriler ve Süreçler*, ed. Evren Balta (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2014), 47.

sovereignty belongs to Allah, and all laws and forms of governance must align with Allah's commands. Social order and interpersonal relationships are regulated according to divine laws, emphasizing the necessity for the state and its rulers to govern society in accordance with Islamic principles. Sovereignty, in Islam, is viewed as divine will, and the governance of society is inherently structured by Allah's commands.⁴⁷ This is a pivotal concept in Islamic political theory and significantly influences the application of Islamic law. In contrast, modern international relations theory typically defines sovereignty as the authority of states to independently determine their internal and external policies, a concept rooted in Western legal and political thought. Post-sovereignty approaches in international relations aim to transcend traditional notions of state sovereignty, emphasizing the interconnectedness of global governance, regional authorities, and transnational networks.⁴⁸ These frameworks advocate for a reduced focus on state-centric authority in favor of shared governance mechanisms. However, this shift does not align with Islamic political thought, as post-sovereignty frameworks still operate within secular premises and exclude divine authority as the foundation of governance. While post-sovereignty theories critique the absolute independence of states and seek to redefine sovereignty through collaborative governance, they remain fundamentally at odds with Islamic thought. The Islamic concept of sovereignty does not accommodate shared authority models that dilute divine sovereignty. The emphasis on secularism in post-sovereignty frameworks leads to structural incompatibilities with Islam's theocentric paradigm, highlighting a continued philosophical and practical divergence. These differing conceptualizations of sovereignty -modern, post-sovereign, and Islamic- create significant barriers to theoretical integration.

In modern international relations theory, power is commonly conceptualized as the capacity of a state to influence others in the realm of interstate dynamics. This notion encompasses both tangible (e.g., military and economic assets) and intangible (e.g., psychological) components, highlighting the mechanisms through which these elements are operationalized on the global stage. The Western conceptualization of power not only involves the possession of these resources but also emphasizes their strategic deployment. Consequently, power serves as the foundation for a state's capacity to shape outcomes, securing a competitive edge and strategic positioning in its engagements with other states. In this way, power serves two distinct functions in international relations: it is both a tool and a goal, fundamentally influencing the unfolding interactions among states.⁴⁹ Post-modern international relations theories challenge traditional definitions of power by emphasizing the role of non-state actors, fluid power structures, and discursive formations.⁵⁰ Power is

⁴⁷ Andrew F. March, "Modern Islamic Conceptions of Sovereignty in Comparative Perspective", *The Oxford Handbook of Comparative Political Theory*. ed. Leigh K. Jenco, et. al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 546-550.

⁴⁸ Eric C. Ip, "Globalization and the Future of the Law of the Sovereign State", *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 8/3 (2010), 637, 645.

⁴⁹ Oktay. F. Tanrısever, "Güç", *Devlet ve Ötesi: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Temel Kavramlar*, ed. Atila Eralp (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), 54-70.

⁵⁰ Helen V. Milner-Andrew Moravcsik, *Power, Interdependence, and Nonstate Actors in World Politics*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

understood not merely as material capabilities but as a relational and contextual concept, embedded within narratives, identities, and cultural constructs. Post-modern theories critique the hierarchical and state-centric notions of power, offering instead a decentralized and pluralistic view that foregrounds the dynamics of power in shaping social and political realities. Despite this reconceptualization, Islamic political thought remains fundamentally incompatible with post-modern power frameworks. Islam offers a distinctive interpretation of power within the context of international relations, significantly diverging from conventional Western paradigms. In this Islamic framework, power extends beyond mere physical or military prowess to incorporate moral and spiritual dimensions. Power is viewed as a divine grant, to be wielded with justice, compassion, and a profound sense of social duty. This perspective challenges the traditional use of power solely as a mechanism of coercion and competition, advocating instead for its role in fostering international peace and stability. Moreover, the Islamic perspective prioritizes cooperation and mutual understanding over conflict in the context of international relations. It reconceptualizes power as a tool for nurturing and enhancing relationships among individuals and communities. This application of power, aimed at both internal and external peace, sets forth a comprehensive framework through which Islamic principles can contribute to and reshape the discourse in international relations⁵¹. Islamic conceptualizations of power are rooted in divine sovereignty and moral accountability, viewing power as a sacred trust to be used for justice, compassion, and social welfare.⁵² While post-modern theories deconstruct the universality of power and its structures, Islam asserts a universal framework grounded in divine principles. The fluidity and relativism central to post-modern theories contrast sharply with the fixed moral and theological foundations of Islam. In Islam, power is inherently linked to the divine order, which rejects the secular relativism underpinning post-modern thought. This divergence underscores a profound incompatibility, as the Islamic framework views power not as a fragmented or negotiable concept but as a divine mandate, fundamentally at odds with post-modernism's pluralistic and relativistic ethos.

2.3. What Backings (B) Do I Provide to Support the Warrant?

Following the Peace of Westphalia, the nation-state model and the concept of sovereignty became central to Western thought. Modern international relations theory, grounded in the Westphalian order, emphasizes a centralized and secular approach to resolving interstate disputes, offering a paradigm that Islam fundamentally does not conform to.⁵³ In contrast to the Westphalian and post-modern order, Islam has not developed a global political or theoretical practice structured around the

⁵¹ Mahmoud Saleh Sheyyab, "The Concept of Power in International Relations: A Comparative Political Study between the Contemporary Western Perspective and the Islamic Perspective", *Journal of the Association of Arab Universities for Research in Higher Education* 42/1 (2022), Article 3.

⁵² Mae Bulbulia, "The Ethical Foundations and Distinctive Features of Islamic Law", *The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa* 18/2 1985, 215-236.

⁵³ John. M. Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760-2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); 1-29.; Mohammed Nuruzzaman, "Western and Islamic International Theories", 121.

modern nation-state system. This divergence became particularly pronounced following the abolition of the Caliphate and the widespread adoption of the modern nation-state system.⁵⁴

Table 1. Major properties of the Westphalian and Islamic Order⁵⁵

	Islamic Order	Nation-state based Westphalian Order	Post-Westphalian/Post-Modern Order
Number of independent units	Only one Islamic state and others	Multiple nation states	Increasingly fragmented units, including nation-states, regional authorities, and transnational actors.
Central authority	Hierarchy: Caliphate authority in the name of God. International order is maintained via the caliphate and its institutions.	Anarchy: No central authority. International order is maintained via the institutions of the international community.	Decentralized power: No singular authority. Power is distributed across global governance networks, corporations, and NGOs.
Scope of the units	Universal and deterritorial: No nation-states; the Earth is based on spiritual space.	Territorial: Nation-states separated by geographical borders.	Fluid and deterritorial: Sovereignty and identity are redefined through overlapping jurisdictions and transnational flows.
Source of authority	Divine: Authority originates from God.	Temporal: Based on secular and human-made laws.	Pluralistic: Authority derived from global institutions, regional organizations, and collective governance mechanisms.
Articulation of moral purpose	Moral values are based on Islamic principles.	Each unit determines its own moral purpose independently.	Relativistic: Moral purposes vary across actors, emphasizing pluralism and subjectivity.
Source of units' legitimacy	Divine will	Internal consent, external recognition.	Multilateral recognition and shared governance arrangements.
Primary legal identity	Religious affiliation	Citizenship,	Hybrid markers: National, regional, or global

⁵⁴ Ali Bakir, "Islam and International Relations (IR)", 32/34.

⁵⁵ Barak Mendelsohn, "God vs. Westphalia: Radical Islamist Movements and the Battle for Organising the World", *Review of International Studies* 38/3 (2012), 600.

marker		nationality.	affiliations depending on the context.
Relationship between principles communities	Inequality: Primacy for the members of the ruling faith.	All states are legally equal.	Overlapping and fluid hierarchies: Equality depends on the nature of the actors and their agreements.
View of alternative organizational forms	Rejection: Other organizational forms may only serve bureaucratic purposes.	Rejection, but states are sovereign to collectively transfer authority to institutions of global governance.	Embrace of multiplicity: Supports a diverse array of organizational forms, including NGOs and supranational bodies.

The social and political structure of Islam is founded on a definition of self and other that is shaped by religious identity and belief. This distinction, which differentiates between Muslims and non-Muslims, influences the worldview of Islamic communities and is closely tied to the concepts of Dar al-Islam (House of Islam) and Dar al-Harb (House of War). Dar al-Islam refers to territories where Islamic law and principles are dominant, while Dar al-Harb encompasses regions where Islamic law does not prevail and are potentially considered as adversarial territories. These concepts have historically shaped the Islamic approach to international relations, influencing its strategies and interactions.⁵⁶

However, in the context of modern international relations, this dichotomy is not only incompatible with the Westphalian nation-state framework but also fails to align with post-modern and post-Westphalia understandings of global politics. Post-modern and post-Westphalia theories reject the rigid boundaries of nation-states and the centralized authority of the Westphalian model, emphasizing fluidity, pluralism, and the role of transnational actors. These theories advocate for a deterritorialized understanding of governance, where authority is distributed across various actors, including international organizations, NGOs, and regional networks. In contrast, the Islamic worldview remains rooted in a territorial and moral order defined by divine principles, such as Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb. While post-modern frameworks encourage pluralistic and secular approaches to power and identity, Islam’s conceptualization of self and other is inherently theocentric and absolute, prioritizing religious and spiritual values over pluralistic governance structures. This divergence becomes even more apparent when considering post-modern theories’ emphasis on relativism and deconstruction, which conflict with Islam’s fixed moral and ontological framework. Furthermore, post-Westphalia frameworks aim to transcend the binary notions of self and other, fostering interconnectedness through shared governance and multilateral cooperation. However, Islam’s worldview, grounded in a distinction between the community of believers (Ummah) and others,

⁵⁶ Labeeb Ahmed Bsoul, “Theory of International Relations in Islam”, *Domes: Digest of Middle East Studies* 16/2 (2007), 71-96; Ali Bakir, “Islam and International Relations (IR)”, 26.

does not accommodate the fluid and overlapping hierarchies promoted by post-modern thought. Instead, Islam advocates for a unified moral and spiritual order, rejecting the secular and fragmented nature of post-modern systems.⁵⁷ This fundamental philosophical and structural incompatibility underscores the challenges of reconciling Islamic political thought with both modern and post-modern international relations paradigms.

These concepts (Dar al-Harb and Dar al-Islam) play a significant role in Islamic political thought; however, they are insufficient to address the complexities of today's international political landscape. Rather than conforming to the expectations of Western international relations theories, Islam offers a world order rooted in its own internal dynamics and principles. This proposition is derived more from Islam's intrinsic values and historical experiences than from compatibility with the existing international system, thereby presenting an alternative paradigm. Within this framework, the distinction between self and other in Islam, grounded in both material and spiritual realms, clashes not only with the nation-state concept that underpins modern international relations theory but also with post-modern and post-secular approaches. Post-modern international relations theories emphasize fluidity, pluralism, and the decentralization of power, advocating for frameworks that deconstruct fixed boundaries and traditional hierarchies. Similarly, post-secular theories seek to integrate secular and religious perspectives within a pluralistic global order. However, Islam's binary conceptualization of Dar al-Islam and Dar al-Harb inherently resists the relativism and pluralism championed by these approaches. Islam's worldview is rooted in absolute divine principles, which contrast sharply with the fluid and context-dependent nature of post-modern paradigms. While post-modern theories attempt to transcend binary distinctions and accommodate diverse value systems⁵⁸, Islam's theocentric framework maintains a fixed moral and spiritual order that rejects the relativistic ethos of these theories. This fundamental divergence highlights the structural and philosophical incompatibility between Islam and contemporary international relations paradigms, whether modern, post-modern, or post-secular.

The Islamic worldview shapes international relations not only through territorial and political considerations but also through religious beliefs and values. This perspective allows Islam to exist as an alternative paradigm within modern international relations theory. However, this incompatibility also highlights the challenges Islam faces in integrating with Western theories while offering its unique contributions. Furthermore, the international system, as conceptualized in modern international relations theory, is a structure where sovereign states interact with one another, often characterized as anarchic. In this system, the absence of a central authority requires each state to prioritize its own security. In contrast, Islam envisions a global society unified under the concept of the Ummah. Within this framework,

⁵⁷ Adibah Sulaiman et. al., "Islamic Spiritual Ethics and Postmodernist Moral Thought: Can There Be A Reconciliations?", *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences* 9/1 (2019), 680.

⁵⁸ Darryl S. L. Jarvis, "Postmodernism: A Critical Typology", *Politics & Society* 26/1 1998, 95-142.

interstate relations are guided by principles of peace, justice, and mutual respect. Islamic teachings encourage the avoidance of war and conflict, aiming instead to promote the general welfare of humanity.⁵⁹

Islam offers an ontological and epistemological framework for addressing international relations. This framework acknowledges the existence of a cosmological order believed to be determined by Allah. Islam's cosmological understanding emphasizes that the universe and everything within it is created with order and purpose, and this order should align with human actions. This perspective places a strong emphasis on concepts such as social justice and universal responsibility in international relations. Islamic law (Sharia) is not merely a collection of legal rules; it is also a comprehensive body of moral, ethical, social, and political norms. These norms regulate human behavior while defining social justice and individuals' responsibilities towards society. The comprehensive structure of Islamic law promotes the creation of an order based on moral and ethical principles, transcending the struggle for power and interest that often dominates international relations. In particular, the Islamic political tradition provides a distinctive approach to balancing power and interest with moral values, which diverges significantly from the realist approaches commonly found in Western international relations theories. While Western theories often focus on power, interest, and anarchy to explain state behavior, these concepts in Islamic thought are limited and fundamentally shaped by moral and ethical values.⁶⁰ This moral-based difference underscores the fundamental incompatibility of political and international relations theories developed within Islam and Western models. In Islam, international relations are not perceived as a struggle for power but rather as a social order rooted in moral and ethical values. This perspective is incompatible with the construction of international relations theory based on Western scientific understanding, leading to contradictions with the predominantly materialist and pragmatist views of the modern international relations community. Therefore, Islamic perspectives on international relations should be evaluated within their own theoretical framework.

While Western theories often focus on power, interest, and anarchy to explain state behavior, post-modern international relations theories expand this framework by emphasizing concepts such as discourse, identity, and deconstruction. These theories critique universalist claims, favoring relativism and pluralism, and deconstruct fixed notions of authority and identity. However, these principles conflict with Islamic political theory, which is rooted in absolute moral and theological values. For instance, the Islamic concept of Ummah envisions a divinely ordained and unified community of believers, contrasting with the fluid and evolving identities central to post-modern thought. Additionally, while post-modernism challenges hierarchical power structures, Islam views power as a divine trust to be exercised with justice and responsibility. This divergence underscores the fundamental incompatibility between the relativistic approach of post-modernism and the fixed

⁵⁹ Faiz Ahmed Sheikh, *Pursuing the International Relations of Islam: A Critique of IR Theory* (Leeds: University of Leeds, PhD Thesis, 2013), 139-145.

⁶⁰ Wael B. Hallaq, *İmkansız Devlet*, 99.

moral framework of Islamic political theory, making integration between the two paradigms highly challenging.

2.4. What Could Be a Rebuttal (R) to the Claim that Islam Cannot Construct a Western-Centric Modern International Relations Theory?

In light of the aforementioned considerations, it can be definitively asserted that Islam does not lend itself to the formulation of a modern theory of international relations centered around the Western paradigm. However, Islam has the potential to make significant contributions to the normative theory of international relations. Islamic teachings provide an ethical framework that can substantially influence international policies. By emphasizing principles such as international social justice and equality, these teachings are particularly relevant for addressing power imbalances and economic disparities in the sphere of international relations. The incorporation of Islamic doctrines could play a pivotal role in fostering a more equitable global order, particularly in the development of international political and economic strategies. Islam advocates respect for diverse cultures and beliefs, a principle that is increasingly vital in a globalized world. Multiculturalism, which is essential for fostering cooperation and peace within the international community, aligns well with Islamic values. Consequently, Islamic principles could serve as a foundation for advancing cultural diplomacy and pluralism in the realm of international relations. To establish a just global order, it is essential to integrate an Islamic normative framework into existing theories of international relations, enriching them with a unique ethical and moral perspective.⁶¹

Despite the inherent differences between Islamic political theory and post-modern and international relations theories, certain areas of convergence can be identified. Post-secular approaches, for instance, acknowledge the importance of religion as a sociopolitical force and advocate for the inclusion of religious perspectives in global governance.⁶² This acknowledgment aligns with Islamic political theory's emphasis on the centrality of moral and ethical values in shaping international relations. Similarly, post-modern theories challenge rigid state-centric frameworks and advocate for pluralistic approaches that prioritize diverse cultural and ideological perspectives. This pluralism can resonate with Islam's advocacy for mutual respect among different communities and its emphasis on cooperation over conflict. Furthermore, both post-modern and post-secular theories critique the materialist and reductionist tendencies of traditional Western paradigms, creating potential common ground with Islam's holistic worldview, which integrates spiritual and material considerations. The shared rejection of strict binaries and an openness to alternative paradigms suggest that, while full integration may not be achievable, these theories could support the inclusion of Islamic principles in broader discussions on justice, equity, and pluralism in international relations. This potential convergence

⁶¹ Shaimaa Maged, "Constructivism in the Islamic Approach to International Relations", *Islam in International Relations: Politics and Paradigms*, ed. Nassef Manabilang Adiong, et. al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2019), 136.

⁶² Samantha May, et al. "The Religious as Political and the Political as Religious: Globalisation, Post-Secularism and the Shifting Boundaries of the Sacred", *Religion & Ideology*, 15/3, 331-346.

highlights the value of fostering dialogue between Islamic and alternative theoretical frameworks to enrich the global discourse on international relations.

2.5. Toulmin’s Argumentation Model: Islamic and Western Paradigms

This section provides a comparison of Islamic political theory and Western paradigms in international relations using Toulmin’s Model of Argumentation. Table 2 highlights key theoretical differences and identifies areas of normative potential.

Table 2. A Comparative Analysis Using Toulmin’s Model

Elements of Toulmin’s Model	Explanations	Islamic Approaches
Claim	Islam cannot construct a Western-centric international relations theory.	Islam’s moral and theological framework is incompatible with the materialist paradigm of the West.
Data	Ontology based on the principle of <i>Tawhid</i> (Oneness of God).	The belief in Allah’s unity, the order of the universe, and the alignment of human actions with this order.
Warrant	Ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological differences between Islamic and Western paradigms.	Islam’s morality-centered approach contrasts with the power- and interest-based perspective of the Western paradigm.
Backing	Historical applications of Islamic legal and political doctrines.	<i>Sharia</i> principles provide a framework for social justice, responsibility, and an ethically grounded order.
Qualifier	Theoretical integration is impossible, but normative contributions are plausible.	Islam offers normative perspectives on universal justice and equality, enriching the discourse.
Rebuttal	Attempts to integrate with Western paradigms fail; however, normative collaboration and areas of commonality exist.	Islam presents a spiritual and ethical perspective against the materialist and reductionist tendencies of the West. Furthermore, shared values with post-secular and post-modern theories (e.g., justice, pluralism, and ethical principles) can foster collaboration. These areas provide opportunities for dialogue and cooperation, though full integration remains difficult.

Table 2 utilizes Toulmin’s argumentation model to provide a comparative analysis of Islamic political theory and Western paradigms in international

relations. It highlights both theoretical differences and areas for potential normative collaboration: Claim and Data: The claim posits that Islam cannot construct/integrate into a Western-centric framework due to fundamental ontological differences grounded in the principle of Tawhid. Warrant and Backing: Structural differences between paradigms and the historical applications of Islamic principles reinforce the claim and provide a robust foundation for its argument. Qualifier: While theoretical integration is deemed impossible, Islam's normative contributions—emphasizing justice, equality, and pluralism—offer valuable perspectives to the discourse on international relations. Rebuttal: The challenges of integration with Western paradigms are acknowledged, but the table also identifies areas of convergence with post-secular and post-modern theories, particularly in shared values like justice, ethics, and pluralism. These intersections present opportunities for limited collaboration and meaningful dialogue.

Conclusion

This argumentative study analyzed the ontological, epistemological, methodological, and axiological distinctions between two opposing and frequently conflicting worldviews: Islamic and Western paradigms. The linguistic expressions and conceptual frameworks historically developed by each worldview reveal fundamental differences that prevent theoretical integration. The conclusion clearly indicate that a Western-centric theory of international relations cannot be derived from Islamic philosophical foundations. Each paradigm maintains its structural coherence within its own framework, but efforts at integration result in significant disagreements and conflicts.

The study highlights that modern Western theories, such as realism and liberalism, are deeply rooted in secular, materialist, and rationalist principles. These theories prioritize state sovereignty, power, and national interest, often viewing international relations as a competitive and anarchic arena. In contrast, Islamic political theory emphasizes a divinely ordained moral and ethical order, prioritizing justice, cooperation, and mutual respect. Similarly, post-modern international relations theories, which critique the state-centric and universalist assumptions of modernity, propose alternative approaches grounded in relativism, pluralism, and deconstruction. While these theories reject rigid hierarchies and emphasize the social construction of political realities, their relativistic ethos is fundamentally at odds with the absolute theological and moral values central to Islamic thought. This conflict underscores the enduring incompatibility between Islamic political theory and Western-centric frameworks, whether modern or post-modern.

In conclusion, the incompatibility between Islamic and Western paradigms extends beyond theoretical considerations and manifests in practical challenges within global politics. This study emphasizes the importance of evaluating Islamic political theory within its own epistemological and ontological framework, rather than forcing it into Western-centric paradigms. By recognizing and respecting these foundational differences, Islamic principles can contribute meaningfully to broader discussions on justice, equity, and global governance without compromising their

integrity. Future research should further explore the practical application of Islamic principles in reducing international economic inequalities. Empirical and theoretical case studies could analyze how Islamic financial institutions contribute to inclusive growth and examine the feasibility of applying Islamic economic principles in diverse socio-cultural contexts. Comparative studies between Islamic and Western approaches to economic governance, alongside interdisciplinary collaboration between scholars, could generate innovative strategies for addressing systemic economic challenges, fostering mutual learning and meaningful collaboration.

This study reveals the fundamental theoretical divergences between Islamic and Western-centric international relations paradigms, offering a significant framework for future research. In particular, the potential of Islamic normative values, such as global justice, equality, and pluralism, to address contemporary issues in international relations could be further examined through empirical studies. Such research could help make the normative contributions of Islam more tangible and visible within the international system. Additionally, the potential role of Islam in international relations could be explored more comprehensively within the context of post-secular paradigms. The impact of religion on politics, particularly in areas like pluralism, ethical governance, and intercultural dialogue, could be analyzed to provide a new perspective on global governance processes. Moreover, in-depth analyses could focus on Islam's capacity to develop its own theoretical framework without the need for integration with Western-centric international relations theories. The unique conceptual structure and value system of Islam provide an original foundation for constructing an alternative international relations theory, which holds the potential to introduce a new dimension to the existing literature. These recommendations offer valuable insights for both theoretical and practical research and have the potential to enrich interdisciplinary discussions in the field.

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