

## KİTAP TANITIMLARI/BOOK REVIEWS

**Jack Snyder, ed., *Religion and International Relations Theory*  
(New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).**

*Reviewed by Eyüp Ersoy, Yıldırım Beyazıt University*

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I said somewhere else that a specter is haunting the world – the specter of the God. Religion has come, or as a scholar said returned from the exile, to influence international relations in myriad ways and at myriad levels. Religious actors in the form of transnational civic activist movements or militant terrorist networks are now considered prominent non-state actors capable of altering the course of national and international politics in varying but significant degrees. Religious convictions motivate several actors, confer legitimacy upon one's or others' actions, and cause reactions to policies ranging from peaceful demonstrations to violent protests. Religion is now an international phenomenon and studying the causal and constitutive role and place of religion in international relations seems imperative for the discipline of international relations.

*Religion and International Relations Theory* takes this imperative seriously and attempts to identify the underlying causes for the absence of religion in international relations theory, and to specify certain ways for the analytical accommodation of religion into the conceptual frameworks of the existing paradigms without much paradigmatic compromise. The injunction of Jack Snyder in the introductory chapter is not to reduce religion to just another explanatory variable but to problematize the core assumptions of disciplinary paradigms with reference to religion. He sketches

some insights to that end with respect to the realist, constructivist, and liberal theories in the discipline.

In the second chapter, Timothy Samuel Shah and Daniel Philpott discuss 'the fall and rise of religion in international relations.' They provide the reader with an excellent list composed of nine conceptions of 'the secular', four positive or neutral and five negative. The contention is that international relations underwent a drastic process of essential secularization with and after the Treaty of Westphalia in the West, followed by the diffusion of political secularism all over the world. With these two successive processes, the origins of contemporary international relations theory were constituted in a secular essence, culminating in the expulsion of religion from the practice and thought of international relations. However, they argue, the process is quite reversed after 1970s with the failure of modernization programs, consolidation of democracy, and globalization which, contrary to previous expectations, have strengthened religious actors. Finally, they once again emphasize the need for new assumptions in the discipline.

In the third chapter, Elizabeth Shakman Hurd examines the current secular normative structure of international relations. She classifies secularism into two main strands, laicism and Judeo-Christian secularism, and shows how the fundamental assumptions of these two strands of secularism have generated a 'politics of secularism' in international relations. Her main contribution is to reveal the underlying normative structure of contemporary international relations *thought* with its premises, norms, values, and policy prescriptions, all resistant to the incorporation of religion into study of international relations.

In the subsequent chapter, calling attention to the religious dimensions of contemporary international order, Michael Barnett questions the hesitation, if not aversion, of international relations theorists to acknowledge the constitutive role of religion in international relations. One reason, for Barnett, is the pervasive conviction that religion, bordering irrationality, is a source of violent conflict. The second reason is the conviction that religion is causally insignificant. He is especially critical of 'those theories of international relations' that study ideational/non-material aspects and elements of international relations; constructivism, for example, has made religion just a 'modifier'. He gives a detailed discussion of international humanitarian order to show the shifting relationship between world order, secularism, and religion.

In the fifth chapter, the only case study in the book, Monica Duffy Toft examines the relationship between religion and violence by focusing on the role and place of religion in civil wars. Her conclusion is that a discernible increase is observable in the number and proportion of religious civil wars in the world.

In the sixth chapter, Daniel H. Nexon states four main criticisms against 'the

secularist bias' of international relations theory. In the literature, first, material forces are treated more significant than ideational forces. Second, accounts of world politics are state-centric and non-state religious actors are ignored. Third, religion and politics are treated as distinct realms of activity. Fourth, religion is examined basically in terms of categories like identity, preference, and norm. In his case study, Nexon places these criticisms under greater scrutiny, and argues that the Protestant reformations in early modern Europe exhibit patterns of international relations validating these criticisms. His proposition is to approach religion as a 'discursive context', meaning that religion not only causes political behavior but also creates and sustains 'conditions of possibility' for political action. Nexon, still, is of the conviction that religion is just one among many phenomena in international relations, and ought not to be 'fetishized'.

In the next chapter, Il Hyun Cho and Peter J. Katzenstein engage in a comparative analysis of the role and place of religion in China, Japan, and South Korea, and demonstrate that despite all the predictions of modernization theorists and secularist sociologists, religion is not privatized and politics is not secularized in the East Asia. In terms of the legitimacy of governments and states, and in terms of national unity, religion continues to play important roles in Japan and South Korea, and has begun to play important roles in China, with domestic and regional consequences. As an example, the intermittent controversy between China and Japan over the visits of Japanese politicians to Yasukuni Shrine is discussed in some detail.

In the concluding chapter, Emily Cochran Bech and Jack Snyder once again discuss the causes behind the growing visibility and increasing influence of religion in international relations, and specify democratization, benevolent secularization, international migration, and legitimacy crisis of secular regimes the world over as basic causes. Nonetheless, they contend that religion is not that much distinct from other belief systems, including secularism, and accordingly, existing analytical frameworks common to all belief systems are more expedient for theory-building in the discipline of international relations than analytical frameworks specifically designed for religion. In addition, they advocate broadening of existing state-centric analytical frameworks to include transnational processes, instead of abandoning them altogether.

This book represents an opportune and noteworthy contribution to the study of religion in international relations theory. However, apart from highly incisive and provocative analyses of the absence of religion in the study of international relations, and incredibly thoughtful propositions to overcome 'the secularist bias' in the discipline, it does not provide a serious theoretical case that attempts to incorporate religion into international relations theory. In addition, a certain level of West-centrism is discernible in the book, that is, all the cases and associated lessons are drawn from the Western experience, except for the last chapter. Not a single chapter is devoted, for

example, to the role and place of religion in the international relations of the Muslim World and the Middle East where, to give some examples, states are ruled by *vali-e faghhs*, kings are at the same time leaders of global networks of 'the cause', foreign ministers write about the believer's 'divine responsibility', and all kinds of religious, sectarian, and confessional schisms prevail and interplay.

These shortcomings notwithstanding, *Religion and International Relations Theory* is a seminal work in the field, highly recommendable for the students of international relations theory and religious studies.

**Kirchgassner, Gebhard. Homo Oeconomicus: The Economic Model of Behaviour and Its Applications in Economics and Other Social Sciences, (New York: Springer Pub. 2008).**

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Homo Oeconomicus is merely one and the last volume of a book series, “*The European Heritage in Economics and Other Social Sciences*” which edited by Jürgen G. Backhaus and Frank Stephen. In order to define the place of Homo Oeconomicus in this book series, it seems to be good idea to mention at least the name of other books and their authors. **Volume 1:** *Joseph Alois Schumpeter* (Jürgen G. Backhaus), **Volume 2:** *The Soul of the German Historical School: Methodological Essays on Schmoller, Weber and Schumpeter* (Yuichi Shionoya), **Volume 3:** *Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900): Economy and Society* (Jürgen G. Backhaus and Wolfgang Drechsler), **Volume 4:** *From Walras to Pareto* (Jürgen G. Backhaus and J.A. Hans Maks), **Volume 5:** *Political Economy, Linguistics and Culture: Crossing Bridges* (Jürgen G. Backhaus), **Volume 6:** *Homo Oeconomicus: The Economic Model of Behaviour and Its Applications in Economics and Other Social Sciences* (Gebhard Kirchgassner). The first version of this book was published in 1991 in German. This English version corresponds to the third, which is updated and extended edition of the German version.

In the introduction, the author places the definition of the term “economics” among other social sciences. Economics as a method and the economy as a subject of economics are two different matters, he says. By combining method and subject, he differentiated four cases, where this book deals with cases 1 and 3.

1. The economic analysis of economic relations. (Traditional economics)
2. The non-economic analysis of economic relations. (e.g. sociological, psychological analysis of economics)
3. The Economic analysis of non-economic relations. (e.g. economic analysis of politics, law)
4. The non-economic analysis of non-economic relations.

Until the chapter four, homo oeconomicus is being explained in the field of traditional economics. To put it in other words, the economic analysis of economic relations among ‘rational man’ is considered in the first three chapters.

In the second chapter it is argued that if economics is value-free (objective or subjective) science or not. It is underlined that in this book economics is considered as value-free. On the other hand, economics is being considered as the explanation of human behavior. It is consisted of presenting ‘homo oeconomicus’; i.e. the single individual’s behavior and whether this behavior is consistent with the full rationality or

not, is the unit of the analysis. Then the limits of rational actions (bounded rationality) and the influences of rules are being searched. In the third chapter, homo oeconomicus debates are handled in the term of microeconomics and macroeconomics including both historical and contemporary views.

Fourth chapter is based on the economic analysis of non-economic relations. More precisely, the economic analysis of politics (within the framework of social choice, the economic theory of democracy and the theory of interest groups) and the economic analysis of law (within the framework of legal regulations in environmental policy, environmental liability law and economic analysis of fighting illegal drugs) are main issues to be discussed. The economic analysis of law in the book is more specifically based on the environmental issues rather than economic regulation of other issues (e.g. economic regulation of market or institutions etc.). On the other hand illegal drugs market had been interestingly explained with the demand and supply tools and brief example of Switzerland application of drug using.

In the fifth chapter there had been defined two types of low-cost decisions: the decision of single individual which is irrelevant for him/her-self and for other individuals (type 1); the decision of single individual which is irrelevant for him/her-self but highly relevant for other single individuals or groups (type 2). Type 1 decision makers refer to voter in a political system where type 2 decision makers refer to judges (and bureaucrats, which does not take an important role in this chapter, but judges). Based on these establishments, the nature of low-cost decisions and moral behaviors are debated.

Chapter 6 is consisted of the limits of application of economic model behavior and coordination problems. Anomaly is one of the limits, which has been given a lot of example about and underlined during the chapter. Coordination problem has been taken up not a kind of anomaly, but a challenge to the economic model of behavior.

Up to chapter 7, even if the examples include relevant practical problems, the issues has been taken up with the theoretical base. Chapter 7 deals with the practical consequences resulting from the application of this model. This chapter focuses on the rational behavior and reasonable action, on the other hand on the government role in society. Also constitutional economics field has been mentioned in this chapter.

In chapter 8 economics as an independent method is being comparing, possible differences and similarities, with the other social sciences (sociology and psychology, rather than politics and law) and natural sciences (physics and biology). Also the general scientific method and the independence of social sciences are questioned.

Finally chapter 9 presents a summary and discusses the competition between individualistic and collectivist, economic and sociological approaches within the social sciences as well as convergence tendencies between both of them.