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Editorial

Ahmet Erdi Öztürk¹

The progression of such an intricate and multifaceted phenomenon as religion from domestic politics to foreign policy has become one of the most contemplated issues in academia (Haynes, 2016; Sandal and Fox, 2013; Ozturk, 2021). Researchers have investigated the role those Abrahamic religions such as Islam, Christianity and Judaism have played in global politics and discussed how and why some particular countries utilise religion in foreign policy, both explicitly and covertly. These studies make a series of assertions regarding the use of religion in foreign policy that can be categorised along three objectives which generally fit the instrumentalization of religion both in domestic and foreign policy areas: a) to create regional and global influence, b) to access regions and groups that are difficult to reach through conventional foreign policy tools and c) to alter domestic political balances or amass power (Ozturk and Baser, 2022; Fox, 2006; Asad, 1999).

Under the cover of these general arguments, International Journal of Religion aims to be a venue for scholarly discussion on religion in reference to society, politics, economics and relevant issues and topics. Therefore, it wants to be a suitable place to examine various topics, including, inter alia, the late Samuel Huntington's controversial – yet influential – 'clash of civilisations' paradigm, the international effects of migration, religion's impact on the climate emergency, the influence of religious non-state actors on international outcomes, and how religion can affect political extremism and terrorism (Haynes et al., 2020).

With this aim, in this issue, we are pleased to present four articles offering analysis on the impact of Brexit on religious hate crime in the UK, populism and crisis of American Methodism, a game theory approach to interfaith dialogue during conflict and a review of religion in International Relations Theory

The first article in this issue by Astha Chadha offers a systematic review of religion in International Relations Theory. Chadha argues that key works in the field can be classified according to where they place religion in (existing) IR. Three important developments in the IR scholarship as thus proposed: i) studies incorporating Religion in traditional IR theory, ii) Religious IR theories/approaches and frameworks of analysis, and iii) finding secular in the post-secularizing IR. The paper examines the above trends in detail and critically analyses each development, followed by a brief discussion on the methodological avenues for studying different religions under the same framework.

In the following paper, Serdar Guner and Nukhet A. Sandal discuss a game theoretical approach to the role of informational asymmetry in interfaith communication during conflict in Northern Ireland. They investigate the role of uncertainty and trust in interfaith communications, especially in times of political conflict. The authors propose four dynamic game models of incomplete information classified into two categories. Through their model, they find that even if one participant would prefer

¹ Dr Ahmet Erdi Öztürk, London Metropolitan University and Coventry University, UK. E-mail: e.ozturk@londonmet.ac.uk.



a scenario where the other party is cooperative while she herself remains defiant for reputational purposes, as long as she values a mutual solution/cooperation to mutual defection/conflict, the interfaith interaction will be more likely to be successful.

Ozgur Cinar in his article titled “Brexit and its Implications on the Freedom of Religion and Belief in the UK” comments on the changes in hate crime in the period after the Brexit decision in the United Kingdom. Cinar examines what the implications of Brexit might be on the freedom of religion and belief, one of the most significant freedoms for social identity, in light of the ongoing debate concerning the political, economic, social and cultural effects of Brexit on the United Kingdom (UK).

The last contribution in this issue is a review by Anton Jäger. Jäger outlines how Methodists saw populist farming associations in the 1890s as a natural extension of previous church networks and the changes throughout. He investigates how Flower and Watson’s Populism saw the crisis of American Methodism as part of a broader republican decline, and how this insight can inform contemporary discussion on the interrelation between populism, pluralism, democracy, and religion.

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