



## Critical evaluation of Max Weber's activism in the issue of the evolution of religion based on the intellectual system of Morteza Motahari

Mohammad Soltanieh<sup>1</sup> 

1. Assistant Professor, Department of Social Sciences, Razavi University of Islamic Sciences, Mashhad, Iran. Email: [m.soltanieh@razavi.ac.ir](mailto:m.soltanieh@razavi.ac.ir)

| Article Info   | ABSTRACT   |
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| <p><b>Article type:</b><br/>Research Article</p> <p><b>Article history:</b><br/>Received: 22 October 2023<br/>Received in revised form: 06 December 2023<br/>Accepted: 12 December 2023<br/>Published online: 20 March 2024</p> <p><b>Keywords:</b><br/><i>Evolution of religion, Max Weber, Morteza Motahari, Religion, Society, Sociology of religion.</i></p> | <p>Max Weber's approach as a sociologist is classified in the category of sociological micro-approaches, and his explanation of various phenomena is an objective co-explanation. Paying attention to the individual and explaining based on considering the position of the individual in the society has shown itself even in his opinion about the development of religion in the society. This article is written with the aim of understanding the criticisms obtained from the point of view of Morteza Motahari about Max Weber's views on the issue of the development of religion. It is written in an exploratory, descriptive and critical method, has reached this finding that religion is not a phenomenon with the origin in atheism, humanism or society, so that due to the changes and transformations of conditions and time, it needs to evolve and conform to the conditions. Comprehensiveness and compatibility of religion with reality are two basic elements for religion that prove it doesn't confront substantive changes. Also, the nature of religion has not changed in the course of history so that religion needs to be completed. The elements of all divine religions are the same, and no change has been made in these elements, so as to create the suspicion of change, transformation and evolution in religion. The Qur'an's point of view regarding the development of religion is an integrated point of view. That is, from the beginning of the creation of the first man to the last creature, this religion has been accompanied by Allah almighty with the aim of ensuring the happiness of the this world and the afterlife world with man and human society, and since the goal is the same, religion has also been comprehensive of this goal from the beginning until now.</p> |

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### **1. Introduction**

The importance of religion for sociologists has been based on the effects it has had on social life or has been affected by it. The audience of religion are people, and its first manifestation is in the faith and belonging of the individual, but religion is prone to quickly find a social aspect. In addition, religion, like any other social phenomenon, is not immune to the influence of the environment and its appearance; Therefore, in this sense, as a dependent variable, it has been the focus of sociologists. Now, the realization of the necessary prerequisites for the correct understanding of the position of religion and religiosity in the society, clarifies the necessity of dealing with this issue. Of course, other issues such as discovering the hidden talents of religion, revealing the meaning of some verses in this regard, and issues of this kind, especially in the conceptual system of Morteza Motahari, will also be clear and transparent.

### **2. Methodology**

The current research is a critical type that describes and interprets the existing conditions and relationships and studies and then criticizes the current state of the phenomenon or subject. In the present study, an attempt has been made to conduct a basic research using the exploratory method and descriptive-analytical approach, with direct reference to first-hand documents and references.

### **3. Findings**

Criticisms taken from Morteza Motahari's opinions on Max Weber's views in the field of the evolution of religion are:

1. Religion is not a phenomenon with an atheistic, human or social origin, so that due to the changes and developments of the conditions and time, it needs to evolve and adapt to the conditions. Mankind's need for religion is permanent and it cannot be replaced by anything other than revelation. Comprehensiveness and compatibility of religion with reality are two basic elements for religion not needing substantive changes.
2. The nature of religion has not changed in the course of history so that religion needs to be completed.
3. The elements of all divine religions are the same, and no changes have been made in these elements, so that change, transformation and evolution in religion have been created by thinking.
4. The Qur'an's point of view regarding the development of religion is an integrated point of view. It means that this religion has been associated with man and human society from the beginning of the creation of the first man to the last creature by God Almighty with the aim of ensuring the happiness of the worldly and the afterlife. And since the goal is the same, the religion has also been inclusive of this goal from the beginning until now.

### **4. Discussion and Conclusion**

Based on the opinions of Morteza Motahari, it can be concluded that the reason of Weber's understanding of the development of religion was his wrong assumptions. Because what has been presented as an explanation about the origin of the development of religion from the perspective of social science thinkers, including Weber, has gross errors, which are as follows:

1. The existence of religion in any time and place is considered to be the reason for the existence of a common root for all diverse religions. Even the later sophisticated religions have been considered to have originated from this simple and primitive type of religion. Therefore, there are basic question about the initial point of religion. also it's not clear that what are the correct indexes providing a model of evolution for religions. Recent scholars of religion, like Eliade,

believe that there is a lot of evidence for this issue and that the one-line paths of the growth of religions cannot be relied upon.

2. The results obtained by anthropologists from primitive societies and primitive humans are usually obtained with experimental evidence from primitive societies. Therefore, one tribe has been investigated and its results have been disseminated to all primitive societies.

3. Studies of sociology, anthropology and psychology about religion have a bias; In the sense that without any reason, they humiliated primitive humans and considered them mentally retarded or children or psychopaths or even considered them as superior animals. The reduction of their perceptive powers and intelligence is one of the biased presuppositions towards past humans. Their studies on ancient myths or ancient religions are faced with the same perceptions. Even considering the magic and magic of historically advanced religions and considering complete religions to be the same as primitive religions due to having the same essence, is another example of this biased attitude.

4. Accusing religions of relativism, that each religion is compatible with its region, is one of the most important wrong assumptions. Anthropology, as a suitable approach in studying the religious beliefs and behavior of early and primitive societies, has not been able to be far from value bias in order to show the obvious and hidden truths.

Therefore, it can be said that Morteza Motahari's view on the development of religion is completely opposite to Max Weber's view. He has not defined religion according to the requirements of human day, and he has not considered the process of completion of religions from the beginning to the end of religion in the field of the nature of religion. This view of Morteza Motahari is based on the principles mentioned in the article..

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