

An overall strategy of gratifying basic needs with the ultimate goal of independence can likely integrate the following six principles: the relationship with the outside world; self-reliance; the role of the state in supporting independence; strategy in maximizing economic surplus; distribution; and development as a complex process. The social side of development relies on mobilization of the masses. Our main means of realizing this independent development is through a concept of social action that seeks to mobilize diverse and competing energies within a specific society-nation via appropriate institutions.

Great revolutions are usually fueled by a solid doctrine, and Islam, in particular, embodies such a doctrine. The independence model implies an unrelenting confrontation with major powers on the cultural, political, and economic fronts, but the model instead embodies a minor struggle against interests that run radically counter to our own.

## Chapter Three

### **Theories of Political Development: A Case of Biased Discourse in the Political Sciences**

*Nasr M. Arif*

Any academic work is expressive of the culture of the society in which its author's mind has been shaped and informed. Therefore, full detachment cannot be achieved. Epistemological inputs are bound by time and place. Self-centricity is central to bias and to evaluating the Other according to the criteria of the perceiving self. Theories of political development that are considered the essence of the concept of development encompass all relevant theories in the domains of social, economic, and cultural development. The following analysis will address the methodological and philosophical bases of most theories of development in the social sciences. The concept of political development and its roots can be used to see if bias has rendered these theories partial and exclusive or if these theories are universal and applicable to most human societies despite their differences.

Science is characterized by the study of specific human or natural phenomena regardless of their details or geographical locations. According to Western thought, science is an intellectual activity that deals with the actual and objective state of things. A close examination

of the origins and development of Western social sciences and humanities reveals that they consider theirs the best approaches to understanding and controlling human reality. Since the Renaissance, a steadily growing academic trend has focused on the study of “non-Western societies.” The purpose of such studies may have been academic but their disciplines are still flawed and devoid of creative scholarly production, despite the development in the tools, methodology, and discourse of Western social sciences.

Several sciences devoted to the study of non-Western societies may have aspired to detach the West from the East in order ultimately to control it. Anthropology sought to control the non-Western world and undermine its culture and civilization with the aim of annexing it to Western culture. The theories of cultural and socio-political development coincide with the political objectives behind all other theories of Western sciences devoted to the study of the non-Western world. Orientalism arose when the “Other” specifically meant Islam or the religious East. In the post-colonial period, a new pattern of domination aggrandized the West as the ideal human and social model to be followed by other societies. Credible academia cannot study those societies with the same analytical categories used in the study of Western societies; rather, independent sciences are needed for the study of such societies.

The Western societal model projects the simplistic ethnic viewpoint that reduces humanity to “them” and “us.” This approach has led to the promulgation of vague concepts that claimed to represent those “Other” societies, without effective criteria or basis for analysis. Those who define the “East” this way risk a grave simplification of a number of diverse civilizations and cultures. Other concepts dealt with the Other by describing it as backward, primitive, agricultural, non-industrial, and Third World. The countries under study have hardly any historical or cultural relationship and instead have been forcibly categorized by the West as one, despite their internal diversity.

Since the advent of Orientalism, Western thinkers have consciously or unconsciously projected the experience of their own societies onto the non-Western world by classifying history into ancient, medieval, and modern; promoting Western political science’s concept of state; seeing a linear development of human societies across ascending stages; and projecting Western ideals and objectives on other human models. This bias of self-centricity strips the Other of the right to exist and tries to expel it from the framework of science or history. Biased science

imposes its own categories, concepts, and methods. If we consider the literature of political development in general, we find that the process of negation and replacement emphasizes the negation of traditional culture, institutions, and economy by replacing them with modern culture, institutions, and economy.

Bias often determines the method of analysis, ways of interpretation, and findings of academic research. As such, the impartial researcher can never define bias, let alone neutralize or remove its effects. The definition and neutralization of bias must comprise two fundamental methods of dealing with socio-political phenomena. The determination of bias in theories of political development is the essence of change and social evolution, and this process requires a methodological approach.

If the researcher applies these approaches, the next step is to neutralize bias in his/her own studies. There remains a basic factor that can only be controlled by learning the ethics of the scholar and the learner, for scientific research must be founded on honesty, moral probity, and adherence to the criteria of rightness and justice.

## Chapter Four

### **Modernizing vs. Westernizing the Social Sciences: The Case of Psychology**

*Rafik Habib*

Communities everywhere work to boost their technological performance and scientific activities, but emphasize performance more than testing scientific concepts and methods. Third World countries use science to measure the level of progress, and Muslims' desire for progress is achieved by absorbing and/or imitating scientific patterns prevalent in other, more advanced communities. The scientific paradigm adopted by advanced nations acquires legitimacy and importance by its ability to modify the environment in a manner acceptable to the people living in those parts of the world. In the Arab world and elsewhere, people import scientific innovations into their lives along with the lifestyle and ideals that accompany them, thus augmenting the need for more imported technology. Science should not be taken as an aim per se, but as a means of improving the quality of life by modifying the environment.