

be a case in point. Al-Turābī is the inspiring leader behind the scenes. His knowledge of Islam and Western culture and languages makes him an ideal leader for a movement which tries to Islamize society. Most political leadership of contemporary Muslim countries belongs to neither of the two types of leadership. Atatürk and Bourguiba were inimical to Islam; Nasser, al-Āsād, and al-Qadhafī are semisecular fanatic Arab nationalists. The Shah of Iran promoted Western influence and attempted to reawaken the history of old Persia. In short, Islam has not been a central force for these and other Muslim leaders in the shaping of their societies, and hence they became dependent on either the West or the old Communist lock. On the contrary, empirical evidence shows that the ongoing contemporary Islamic movements have enhanced the sense of collective identity among the Muslim masses and they are seeking independence from the foreign dominance. When an Islamic regime takes the form of what the author calls "Political Islam," the horizon is open not only to resist the impact of the outsider, but also to establish Islamic sociopolitical institutions as an alternative to the Western model in the domains of social justice, human development, and participatory democracy. These plausible sociopolitical achievements are in line with Ibn Khaldūn's religious type of *ʿasabīyah*, through which the Arabs were able to build a world civilization. This religious *ʿasabīyah* could materialize if Muslim political leadership adopt political Islam as their strategy to change themselves and their relations with the West and East. The power of the religious force is an enormous one, as Weber's thesis affirms. Political Islam is certainly that force which could change the Muslims from within and make them real political actors on the world scene again.

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Modernity in the Arab World

The Challenge of Modernity: The Quest for Authenticity in the Arab World, by Louay M. Safi. Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994. Pp. 211. ISBN 0 8191 9376 3.

Modernization is the process of transforming of a social order into a competent one capable of providing utmost benefit to humanity. It is of

great significance for social scientists who study its different dimensions as well as its sequence and rate of progress. The book under review is a valuable addition to the existing literature on modernization. The author has successfully discussed conceptual and theoretical issues and the implications of modernization for Third World societies.

The book is in two parts. The first deals with the concept, its various explanations, and social conditions associated with it. The discussion begins with the functional model of modernization based on Almond's dualistic conception of society which is not different from the Parsonian schema of pattern variables. The author examines the viability and implications of the five sets of Parsonian variables presented to understand social behaviour in two social realities. He correctly points out that, to Parsons, the traditional society is characterized by "monolithic world-views," collectivism, customary code of conduct, rigid social stratification, and little specialization, whereas modern society is distinguished by "pluralistic worldviews," individualism, rule of law, social mobility, and extensive specialization.¹ These criteria form the core of modernization theories and are reflected in their frameworks in one form or another. Other scholars, however, differ in certain matters. Kerr finds industrialization coupled with advancement of science and technology, responsible for this transformation.² Rostow believes that the transformation is possible by following the strategy Western society had followed.³ Almond and Verba,⁴ and later on Binder,⁵ gave the impression that modernization leads to a global culture characterized by secularization, and produced by scientific innovation and technological sophistication. Safi points out some of their inconsistencies, and later on explains the contradictions which would emerge if these models are adopted.

The succeeding two chapters are devoted to analyzing the Marxian and Weberian models of development. In the Marxian model, the author explains the historical changes that take place through interaction and interrelation among three divisions of society: superstructure, economic base, and relations of production and factors of production. The deterministic approach of Marx suffers from conceptual fallacies and material inconsistencies because, on the one hand, the interconnections among these divisions of society are not clear, and on the other, the modern changes in Western societies go against the anticipated result of the interplay among these factors. The Weberian analysis, as opposed to Marx's, considers rationalization a prerequisite for modernization and development. Weber talks of cultural and structural rationalization

whereby the former takes place first, and consequently modifies the latter. Accordingly, it is necessary to modify the cultural worldviews and orientation of individuals to make them consistent with the current situation, and systematize the pattern of action. He presents four categories of actions: instrumentally rational, value rational, effectual, and traditional to explain the process by which life, according to him, becomes more meaningful. Louay Safi points out some paradoxes, but what is more important is the explanation of rationalization itself as provided by Weber and other Western thinkers. To begin with, Weber cites the example of the West where "rational capitalism" emerged due to "rational technique and law," and men's adoption of "practical rational conduct." It emancipated the ethical system, and replaced it by "worldly asceticism." The term itself indicates that Western societies made compromises with their value system so as to give room to desires, urges, material gains, and pleasure, relegating values, truth, and reality to a secondary position. This rationalization is not meaningful because it shatters the structure of basic values, and thus is irrelevant to social systems committed to certain basic values. Secondly, the rationalization itself is not ultimate and perfect. It does not render a correct account of anything, but operates through a set of principles by which we examine things and objects, and evaluate them as good or bad. If the principle is different the result will also be different. Thirdly, the categorization of orientations does not seem genuine because it is difficult to divide them into watertight compartments.

The fourth chapter deals with the factors that changed the objective rationality into a subjective one and examines whether these factors are universal or specific. It also explains the applicability of these factors in non-Western societies. The author discusses the philosophical notions which are used by Western thinkers to justify the enlightenment and its development into transcendental subjectivism and as an emancipatory project to get rid of superstitions and irrational elements of culture. He assumes that subjectivization of reason is not an intrinsic aspect of development but a result of strategy. Its regeneration in the realities of the Third World societies is not possible. The restructuring of cultural worldviews, though attributed to the authority of the church and the subjection of individual to exploitation, was in fact a revolt against religion. In the name of individual freedom and adequate opportunity to grow and realize one's potential, the West restructured its value system to maximize the satisfaction of physical urges. The intellectualization of thought and action resulted in the desacralization of religion which, in due course, was deformed. The author further assesses the cognitive and

intellectual preconditions of modernity and the role of intellectuals in creating conditions conducive to change. The intellectuals, on the whole, acquaint the people with social distortion and deformation and set the goals of development. They create awareness among the masses and inspire them to remodel their social order for their betterment. In most developing societies, intellectuals trained in the West, served as windows to the West and introduced Western ethos in their societies.

The second part of the book analyzes the modernization process in Arab society to understand development in a non-Western context and to test the conceptual framework of modernization proposed by Western thinkers. The study takes into account the evolution of Arab consciousness initiated by Arab intellectuals which is represented in three types of movements: Marxist, Liberal, and Islamic.

The conflict of ideas still exists in the thought of contemporary thinkers in Middle-Eastern societies. One group believes that modernization can only be implemented through the Western pattern. It considers it necessary to restructure Middle-Eastern consciousness and to remodel the culture and society anew on the basis of science, technology, and the cultural worldview imported from the West. The radical among them find cultural forms completely incapable of being reformed, and wants to replace them with Western culture and institutions. Another group rejects the western worldview, cultural forms, and life pattern. It believes that they are not suitable to the needs, priorities of life, and ideological framework of Middle-Eastern societies. If they are implemented, they will generate contradictions and cause tension and turmoil. The needs of the time and wisdom demand that the alternative should be sought from within the framework of cultural heritage, ideological foundation, and the Islamic worldview.

The author feels that it is difficult to overhaul cultural heritage because it is rooted deep in the structure of one's consciousness, determines one's perception of the self and external world, and moulds one's outlook of life. Thus modernization, he observes, "must be attempted from within the realm of tradition and heritage."

The study of modernization in a non-Western situation, particularly in the Middle-East, demands re-examination and rethinking. Modernization is a Western concept which implies certain radical changes in the outlook of individuals and the cultural worldviews of their societies. These changes are based on empirically derived scientific generalizations, and are directed toward immediate gains and result-oriented actions. On the same pattern industrialization develops a new

culture where traditional beliefs and attitudes have no role to play. Thus, scientific and technological knowledge, advanced education, equality and liberty, fairness and justice, and democratization are considered prerequisites for modernization. Modernization, when transplanted to non-Western societies, fails to produce the desired result, particularly the change in consciousness of the society. It contradicts the basic thesis of modernization that structural changes lead to cultural ones. It is desirable that we redefine and reconceptualize the term in the light of new social realities.

Middle-Eastern societies have a distinct ideology, character, and worldview. In short, they have a distinct consciousness. Any alteration in that will damage their character and stop them being called ideological collectives. Their deficiency lies in their failure to translate their ideology into action. Science and technology, advanced knowledge, self-criticism and evaluation, fairness and justice, and democratization are neither alien nor contradictory to them, but are part and parcel of their system. Modification is required to make advances in these spheres, and to use them as a means to strengthen and revitalize their ideological framework. In this regard, they have to set goals and develop strategies to operate with full vitality in the interest of humanity. The present study inspires us to think about modernization anew.

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Notes

1. Talcot Parsons, *The Social System* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1951); also see Talcot Parsons and Edwards Shils, *Towards a General Theory of Action* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1957).
2. Clark Kerr et. al., *Industrialism and Industrial Man* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960).
3. W.W. Rostow, *Politics and the Stages of Growth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971).
4. Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press,