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MASTER'S THESIS

**FROM TANMIYAH TO TAZKIYAH: AN ISLAMIC
MORAL CRITIQUE OF DEVELOPMENT**

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APPROVAL PAGE

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts in Civilizations Studies.

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Bir kavram ve uygulama olarak kalkınma, 20. yüzyılın ikinci yarısındaki başlangıcından bu yana, kapitalizme ve onun batılı emperyalist makinesine gömülü olduğu gerekçesiyle yaygın bir şekilde sorgulanmıştır. Kalkınmanın reforme edilmesi ya da daha sürdürülebilir ve sosyal açıdan sorumlu hale getirilmesine yönelik taleplerin ters teptiği kanıtlanmıştır; zira kalkınma, özünde sürdürülebilirlik ve sosyal adalet fikriyle uyuşmayan doğrusal ve sınırsız büyüme doktriniyle yoğrulmuştur. Bu araştırma, klasik çağdan ikinci dünya savaşı sonrasına kadar Batı entelektüel düşüncesinin kökenlerine inerek, öncelikle kalkınmanın modern seküler bir sosyal değişim teorisi olduğunu savunmaktadır. Kalkınmanın vaatlerini yerine getirmedeki başarısızlığı, mantık açısından bağımsız ve dogma açısından farklı alternatif sosyal değişim teorilerini gerekli kılmaktadır. Başka bir deyişle, kalkınmaya bütüncül ve etkili bir alternatif sunmak, en başta onu doğuran değer temelini, yani ekonomiyi ve sosyal değişimi kişisel çıkarı maksimize etme ilkesine dayandıran Batılı dünya görüşünü tersine çevirmeyi gerektirmektedir. İnsanlık durumunun merkezi bir alanı olarak etğin bu yokluğu, bu araştırmanın temel sorunsalını oluşturmaktadır. Sosyal bilimlerde farklı bir eleştiri soyağacının önemini vurgulayan bu araştırmanın ikinci bölümü, Faslı ünlü filozof Taha Abdurrahman'ın teorik görüşlerini ve küresel insani yardım çalışmalarının önde gelen isimlerinden Hany el-Banna'nın pratik deneyimlerini analiz ederek kalkınmanın ahlaki bir eleştirisini sunmak suretiyle İslami dünya görüşünün bu boşluğu nasıl doldurabileceğini göstermeye çalışmaktadır. Bunu takip eden temel argüman, kalkınma teorisinin verimsizliğinin ancak ekonominin marjlara itilmesi ve insani çabanın merkezi alanına, yani tezkiye süreci yoluyla manevi ve ahlaki sermayenin geliştirilmesine tabi kılınması halinde giderilebileceğidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kalkınma, Eleştiri, Tezkiye, İslam Ahlak Felsefesi.

ABSTRACT

From Tanmiyah to Tazkiyah: An Islamic Moral Critique of Development

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Since its inception in the second half of the 20th century, development as a concept and practice has been widely challenged for being entrenched in capitalism and its Western imperialist machine. Demands for reforming development or attempting to make it more sustainable and socially responsible have proven to be counter-productive, for development is steeped in the doctrine of linear unlimited growth, which, in essence, is incongruent with the idea of sustainability and social justice. By tracing its history back to the origins of Western intellectual thought from the classical age to the aftermath of the Second World War, this research argues first that development is a modern secular theory of social change. The failure of development to deliver its promises calls for alternative theories of social change that are independent in logic and different in dogma. In other words, providing a holistic and effective alternative to development necessitates flipping the value base that gave birth to it in the first place, namely the Western worldview that came to base economics and social change on the principle of maximizing self-interest. This absence of morality as a central domain of the human condition constitutes the main problematic of this research. Stressing the importance of a different genealogy of critique in social science, the second aim of this research is to demonstrate how the Islamic worldview can bridge this gap by presenting a moral critique of development through an analysis of the theoretical insights of the renowned philosopher Taha Abdurrahman and the practical experience of Hany el-Banna, the leading figure in global humanitarian work. The central argument that follows is that the unproductivity of the development theory can only be countered if the economy is pushed to the margins and is subordinated to the central domain of human endeavor: the cultivation of spiritual and moral capital through the process of *Tazkiyah*.

Keywords: Development, Critique, *Tazkiyah*, Islamic moral philosophy.

DEDICATION

To the people of Gaza,
who are inscribing a critique of the current world order with their blood.



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الحمد لله أولاً وآخراً، الحمد لله المحيي المعطي الوهاب، والصلاة والسلام على نبيه خاتم المرسلين والمبعوث رحمة للعالمين.

لم يشكر الله من لم يشكر الناس.

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وما توفيقي إلا بالله، عليه توكلت وإليه أنيب
والحمد لله رب العالمين

Khaoula El Omrani

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَلْهَبَكُمْ التَّكَاثُرُ حَتَّىٰ زُرْتُمُ الْمَقَابِرَ

Competition in (worldly) increase diverts you until you end up in
your graves - (102:1-2)

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A Brief Background and Definition of Development

The word "development" has a complex and multifaceted history; it can mean different things relating to different disciplines. Speaking of the development of intelligence, an equation or a film in the respective contexts of psychology, mathematics, and photography, for instance, is more or less clear enough. However, the situation is quite different when the same word is used to denote something associated with material and social well-being, economic growth, social justice, progress, or ecological equilibrium (Rist 2019, 8). "By now, development has become an amoeba-like concept, shapeless but ineradicable. Its contours are so blurred that it denotes nothing – while it spreads everywhere because it connotes the best of intentions" (Sachs 1992a, xix). Despite development being void of explicit content, it still managed to provide common ground for legitimizing any intervention sanctified under the banner of a higher goal. As such, defining development remains quite a challenging venture, for most existing definitions are either instrumental, normative, or point to deficiencies through the use of abundant signifiers (e.g., "more participatory", "more democratic"). Indeed, many of these definitions do share some common presuppositions to characterize development, such as social evolutionism, individualism, and economism. However, most of them rarely base themselves on certain clear "external characteristics' common to all phenomena within the group in question... in such a way that a Martian could not only understand what is being talked about but also identify the places where 'development' does or does not exist" (Rist 2019, 9-10). As such, before proceeding to assess development and argue for or against its existence, we ought to agree on a clear and precise definition of development. The primary definition this research establishes is of development being a secular theory that conceives of social change exclusively in terms of linear economic growth. The following chapters thus aim to contextualize and trace the origins of this specific definition.

Indeed, the concept of development can be traced back to the classical age of the Greeks and Romans, which will be elaborated on in due course. However, it was in the late

twentieth century that development, as we know it today, emerged as a distinctive discourse and practice. The post-World War II era brought about shifting global dynamics, with the United States emerging as a burgeoning political and economic power, garnering significant attention for its unmatched productivity. Solidifying this recently acquired global dominance required Americans to devise a rather different political initiative regarding their foreign policy. Henceforth, the American administration devised a worldwide political campaign, which began on January 20, 1947, the day President Harry Truman assumed office. In his inaugural speech, Truman stated:

More than half the people of the world are living in conditions approaching misery. Their food is inadequate; they are victims of disease. Their economic life is primitive and stagnant. Their poverty is a handicap and a threat both to them and to more prosperous areas. For the first time in history humanity possesses the knowledge and the skill to relieve the suffering of these people . . . I believe that we should make available to peace-loving peoples the benefits of our store of technical knowledge in order to help them realize their aspirations for a better life... What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair dealing. . . Greater production is the key to prosperity and peace. And the key to greater production is a wider and more vigorous application of modern scientific and technical knowledge (Truman [1949] 1964).

In his book *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*, Arturo Escobar comments on this as follows:

The Truman Doctrine initiated a new era in the understanding and management of world affairs, particularly those concerning the less economically accomplished countries of the world. The intent was quite ambitious: to bring about the conditions necessary to replicating the world over the features that characterized the "advanced" societies of the time - high levels of industrialization and urbanization, technicalization of agriculture, rapid growth of material production and living standards, and the widespread adoption of modern education and cultural values. In Truman's vision, capital, science, and technology were the main ingredients that would make this massive revolution possible. Only in this way could the American dream of peace and abundance be extended to all the peoples of the planet (2011, 4).

This "dream" was not a mere creation of the US Government alone but was rather the product of the specific historical timing and state of affairs in the aftermath of the Second World War (Escobar 2011, 4). The year 1949 marks the turning point in which the post-war world order was falling into place. The US and its allies emerged as the so-called

"first world," while the "second world" stood for the Soviet Union and Mao's China. The remaining majority of the world, undergoing a rapid process of decolonization, was all grouped under the label of the "third world." Already in this time, it was obvious that the main ruling empires were crumbling, the French and British empires were in decline, India, as the most-exploited and richest colony, gained independence, while the Dutch never succeeded in reasserting control over the Indonesian archipelago after Japan's withdrawal. "The pre-war colonial world order was over." Truman's vision of development was "his attempt to stamp on the world the terms on which the postwar American world order would be born" (Esteva, Babones, and Babicky 2013, 7).

Initiated by the American administration, this vision would soon be embraced by the most powerful governments at the time and hence be turned into an international program targeting nations worldwide. This era of globalization promised poor peoples and nations great opportunities through free-market forces. The main hegemons of neoliberalism called for so-called economic reforms through privatization, flexibilization, and deregulation in the promise of an unprecedented and inclusive era of prosperity. However, the fact that after years of development theory and practice so many countries still struggle with basic needs, while poverty, social inequality and the environmental crisis are only in an increasing exacerbation puts the whole discourse of development in question. In the late 1990s, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) itself admitted that conceiving of the North and South as imprecise broad categories resulted in "no convergence of per capita income levels between the two groups of countries" (O'Hearn and Munck 1999, xv).

By 2019, after over six decades of development theories and programs, only four nations out of a hundred and ninety-five managed to move from "developing" to "developed," namely Singapore, Hong Kong, South Korea, and Taiwan, with China now arguably holding a promising rapid process of development, albeit unsustainable (de Rivero 2019, viii). The discrepancy between the amount of promises made in the name of development and the reality on the ground raises doubts about its rigor or even necessity, especially regarding the amount of resources mobilized in its name. Furthermore, the looming environmental crisis, as well as the increasing gap between the rich and the poor over the world and the rise of political turmoil, raises serious questions about whether development theory is no more than a myth that all countries, whether "developed" or not, keep pursuing

despite being "mired in a crisis of civilization" as De Rivero (2019, viii) contends in his book *The Myth of Development*. He explains that this crisis of civilization is a product of the standardization of a fast and unsustainable process of massive urbanization, adding to the global greenhouse gas emissions and further destroying agricultural and forest land to make way for increasingly expanding urban centers. "The world today has many cultures but only one civilization: the global urban California model that is present to some degree in all countries," which, due to its ethical, technological, and political predicament, has reached a crisis (de Rivero 2019, ix). As such, instead of delivering its promised "kingdom of abundance...the discourse and strategy of development produced its opposite: massive underdevelopment and impoverishment, untold exploitation and oppression". The debt crisis in many countries, increasing poverty and violence, and Sahelian famine are just a few examples that illustrate the failure of the development agenda (Escobar 2011, 4).

Numerous critics of development and post-development scholars have argued that development is an inherently political process that is both uneven and unequal, predicated on Westernization. While the pledge of this process of "modernization" was that it would lift the global poor out of their predicament, Western companies and, by extension, their countries (mainly in Western Europe and North America) ended up reaping most of the benefits of this post-war development race owing to their already existing industrial and technological advantages. However, what they lacked to further advance their economies was natural resources and raw materials, a scarcity the "Third World" countries did not know but lacked the proper infrastructure to extract and distribute. To achieve this goal, a wave of loans from international institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank emerged for these countries. The same Western companies that already possessed adequate technology and expertise were the ones that made use of these loans and took the task of "upgrading" the infrastructure of these countries. The outcome was the well-known Third World debt crisis, which continues to be unresolved to this day. The outcomes essentially led to Western companies' control of natural resources, infrastructure, and production in Third World countries (Mowforth 2014, 1-2). Today, more than ever, the consequences of the development paradigm are no longer deniable. The culmination of environmental, social, psychological and epistemological

crises calls for an urgent need of new critiques that destabilize and call in question the value system that produced development in the first place.

Islamic Moral Critique

Critique:

Ever since the 1950s, critiques of development have been continuously emerging to "restore" and "re-align" the vision of development with basic human needs and include other aspects of social welfare instead of solely focusing on economic growth. However, what remained missing in the bulk of these critiques is a systematic approach that targets the value system that produced development theory in the first place. The fact of development and its necessity had become such an omnipresent and certain reality in the modern social imaginary that even the most radical of critiques had to be couched in the language of development using expressions like "alternative development" or "socialist development." As Escobar utterly mentions: "it seemed impossible to conceptualize social reality in other terms... Reality, in sum, had been colonized by the development discourse" (Escobar 2011, 15).

Be that as it may, against its familiarity, thinking of development as a discourse creates the possibility of seeing it as a historically produced cultural space and a specific regime of representation¹, instead of a natural, historical necessity or an objective scientific discipline (Escobar 2011, 16). Thus, a genuine critique of development denotes the deconstruction of the modern hegemonic knowledge system, namely the social sciences. In this spirit, Charles Taylor contends that "the number one problem of modern social science has been modernity itself² ", and that "Western modernity on this view is inseparable from a certain kind of social imaginary." Indeed, at the center of this modernity lies "a new conception of the moral order of society" which has come to imbue the collective social imaginary through the consolidation of the new social forms which essentially define Western modernity (one of which is the market economy). This "new

¹ "Regimes of representation can be analysed as places of encounter where identities are constructed and also where violence is originated, symbolized, and managed." (Escobar 2011, 10)

² In his book *The Modern Social Imaginaries*, Taylor defines modernity as: "that historically unprecedented amalgam of new practices and institutional forms (science, technology, industrial production, urbanization), of new ways of living (individualism, secularization, instrumental rationality); and of new forms of malaise (alienation, meaninglessness, a sense of impending social dissolution)," 1.

conception of moral order" was actually directly linked to the seventeenth-century theories of Natural Law, which appeared as a reaction to the political disorder wrought by the European wars of religion in Europe, as Taylor further explains (Taylor 2004, 1-3).

Similarly, in their analysis of what they call "the modern colonial capitalist world-system in the twentieth century," Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez speak of three mythologies that mold the way we nowadays conceptualize social reality: "objectivist/universalist knowledge, the decolonization of the modern world-system, and developmentalism" (2002, 9). In their view, these three deeply intertwined mythologies, commonly denominated by the discourse of the superiority of the West, are a direct product of Eurocentric forms of knowledge production. This is to say that the order of knowledge and social sciences as we know it today was not a universal device that transcends time and space but rather the product of a specific socio-historical context.

In addition to serving the function of exposing the otherwise concealed root causes of the consolidation of Western hegemony and privilege systems, this discussion also questions the project of modernity as the primary framework that produced theories like development, which continues to silence other imaginations, epistemologies and alternative ways of life (Grosfoguel and Cervantes-Rodriguez 2002, 9).

Against this background, the central argument of this thesis is the following: Development, judged by any mainstream definition that situates it within the discourse of modernity, is an unsalvageable theory of social change. Hence, efforts to critique development both as a discourse and practice must overhaul the overall systematic structure from which it derives its hegemony, namely the domain of modernity, embodied in neoliberal economics and modern politics in the model of the nation-state paradigm. The concepts of "central domain" and "paradigmatic way of living" offer valuable insights for the critique being presented.

Critique in light of "Central Domains" and "Paradigms":

In his essay "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations," German political theorist Carl Schmitt introduces the notion of "central domain" to signify any intellectual domain in terms of which the problems of other domains are resolved; "they are considered secondary problems, whose solution follows as a matter of course only if the problems of the central domain are solved" (Schmitt 1993, 86). He introduces this notion in his

elaboration on four main stages of European intellectual thought from the 16th to the 19th century, in which the central domains of thought have shifted from theology to metaphysics to the humanitarian-moral, which then lent its centrality to economics. He argues that over the past four centuries of European intellectual history, the ideas of what he refers to as the "intellectual vanguards" — the active elite within society — have evolved in tandem with the shifting centers of intellectual life. In illustration of this process, he contends that:

If the center of intellectual life has shifted in the last four centuries, so have all concepts and words... In a theological age, everything runs smoothly if theological questions are in order; everything else is "provided" by definition. The same is true of other ages. In a humanitarian-moral age, it is only necessary to inculcate morals, whereby all problems become problems of education. In an economic age, one needs only solve adequately the problem of the production and distribution of goods in order to make superfluous all moral and social questions (Schmitt 1993, 85-86).

In this sense, "all concepts such as God, freedom, progress, anthropological conceptions of human nature, the public domain, rationality and rationalization, and finally the concepts of nature and culture itself derive their concrete historical content from the situation of the central domains and can only be grasped therefrom" (Schmitt 1993, 87).

Building on Schmitt's notion of central domains, Wael Hallaq sets the ground for what he calls "paradigmatic beliefs and practices," or simply "paradigms," referring to that which makes certain modes of existence have a considerable hegemonic range over different aspects of living and thinking. In other words, paradigms enable the identification of systematic features, "relations, and conceptual structures of what might be called "driving forces," which give structures and systems a specific "order of things" (Hallaq 2012, 6). A paradigm, however, does not denote the homogeneity of all movements or intellectual projects it encompasses. The Enlightenment, for example, is one instance Hallaq discusses to illustrate this aspect of paradigms. Indeed, "there is no doubt that this project encompassed intellectual and political movements that ranged across a wide spectrum of intellectual difference," which cannot be lumped together to represent a single identifiable category; "Yet it is eminently arguable that the Enlightenment in its totality... exhibits a *paradigm, one featuring a shared substrate of assumptions and presuppositions, that bestows on it a certain unity, despite its internal multiplicity*" (Hallaq 2012, 7) (emphasis

added). A paradigm is thus defined by the underlying logic that reaches the level of certainty in the social imaginary and upon which every other feature of society is built. With regards to Enlightenment again, its core project "was the displacement of local, customary, or traditional moralities, and all forms of transcendental faith, by a critical or rational morality, which was projected as the basis of a universal civilization." In essence, the Enlightenment represented the formation of a new moral framework grounded in secular and humanist principles. This framework became the primary standard—a central reference point—for addressing significant issues and continues to influence our ways of life, for better or worse (Hallaq 2012, 8).

Given the significant closeness of central domains and paradigms, Hallaq posits that the latter offers a broader comprehension of the former in relation to non-central or peripheral domains. To quote Schmitt, this perspective situates these domains within "a system of knowledge and practice whose constituent domains share in common a particular structure of concepts that qualitatively distinguish them from other systems of the same species." For Hallaq, Schmitt's account of "central and peripheral domains" is somewhat linear because it sets a kind of dialectical relationship between the two where the issues of the peripheral domains just "follow as a matter of course and only if the problems of the central domain are solved" (Hallaq 2012, 8). He then continues saying that:

While it is true that the problems in the central domain acquire priority and subordinate the other domains to these priorities, all these domains function within a system of knowledge that shapes the very priorities within the peripheral domains themselves... In our account of paradigm, the peripheral domains are not so much peripheral as subsidiary and supportive, their relegation to this status being not the function of logical or ontological precedence of the central domain but rather the entrenchment and anchoring of this domain within a system continued no less by the subsidiary domains...

While Schmitt is right in insisting on the central domain as a driving force, our account of paradigm emphasizes the centrality of the values adopted in the central domain as ideal values that remain the distinctive desiderata and the locus of purposive action and thought, even when their application and realization are not always achieved and even when the competing forces within the domains constituting the paradigm undermine such application and realization. *For paradigms represent fields of "force relations", encompassing opposing and competing discourses and strategies* (Hallaq 2012, 8-9) (emphasis added).

Paradigms as "fields of force relations" thus prove to be an integral part of this critique. This analogy of the "force field" is very useful for this account in the sense that it sets apart what truly constitutes a systematic critique of development and other attempts to reform and restore development without digging deep into its epistemological and systematic roots. Without addressing the central domain of development—namely, economics as the foundational structure of modernity—any critique that attempts to propose an alternative without supplanting the instrumental logic of neoliberal economics merely serves as a restraining force. Such critiques, while questioning the developmentalist paradigm, ultimately highlight its deficiencies merely to allow it to refine its core framework and address its shortcomings, thereby extending its lifespan even further.

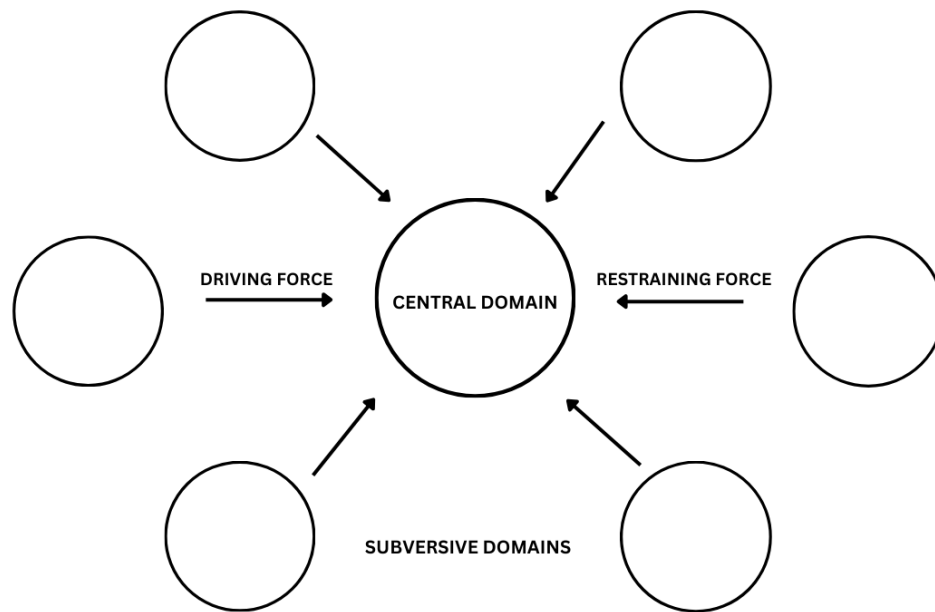


Figure 1 The Force Field of Central Domains and Subversive Domains

It is exactly this logic of central domains and subversive domains operating within the same force field that calls not only for any kind of critique, but of one that is centered first and foremost on the necessity of restoring morality as a central domain of human action.

The Moral

This critique is moral in at least two ways. First, the main argument of this research postulates that the central domain of any productive critique of development should be the domain of cultivating spiritual and moral capital. Second, in terms of agency and the articulation of human nature, development is revisited from a grassroots, bottom-up perspective of social change that centers the agency of the individual human being, whose humanity lies in his ethicality, as Taha Abdurrahman argues in his ethical philosophy of *I'timaniyyah*. In his *Impossible State*, Hallaq contends that “the political and the economic... remain derivative of this moral predicament, which is to say that resolving these contradictions as moral issues would by definition resolve the political and economic problems” of development (Hallaq 2012). In other words, we believe that the issues touched upon here (i.e. social inequality and injustice, environmental crisis, economic imperialism etc.) are “as philosophical-moral and epistemic issues as much as they are material and physical” (Hallaq 2012).

The central argument in this regard is the definition of the human being as an ethical being first and foremost. This argument is perhaps what connects these two points: cultivating the agency of the human being lies predominantly in cultivating his nature as an ethical being through the cultivation of moral and spiritual capital. How? This is where the concept of *Tazkiyah* serves as a proposed different model of social change that grounds the present moral critique of development in the worldview of Islam.

The Islamic

Given that the reign of the self-regulated market as the main sphere of human interaction is a product of the Western intellectual tradition, the quest for an ethics truly capable of fending off the misdoings of development necessitates adopting values that redefine the essence of the human being in a way that elevates his consciousness and actions, and such values can only emerge from an independent logic and dogma different from the doctrine of "economic fatalism," or what Taha Abdurrahman calls "Marketeering." Since "marketeeing values are known to be secular in orientation, materialist in their fulfillment and aiming to ensure man's total surrender to worldly life," any alternative "values, meant to counter the negative impacts of marketeeing should embody its opposite, be faith-based and spiritual in implementation, and strive to shape a human being who advances

in life with attention to all matters and awareness of their repercussions" (Taha 2014, 121-122).

An introduction to what follows could be in Hallaq's statement on the need to look for moral critiques within the Islamic tradition since there have been many people in pursuit of moral critiques of modernity from the Western tradition itself. In other words, this quest for morality is definitely not a new one; neither is it exclusive to the Islamic tradition. Nevertheless, focusing on Islamic moral resources in this research bases itself on the extensive years-old Islamic tradition that is distinguished in its moral epistle by "a paradigmatic way of living," for

while the traditions on which these philosophers³ have drawn consisted of theoretical and philosophical concepts (and some would say a notion of community that no one "has ever lived in"); the Islamic tradition on which the project of retrieval can draw is a composite one, combining the theoretical-philosophical with sociological, anthropological, legal, political, and economic phenomena that have emerged in Islamic history as paradigmatic beliefs and practices (Hallaq 2012, 6).

That said, the Islamicity of this specific critique lies in drawing on religion, in this case Islam, as an active agent of critique instead of being a passive object of scrutiny. This specific critique thus utilizes revelation, the Quran, as an analytical framework against which development can be measured to assess shortcomings and detect blind spots. In this case, the basic framework of this critique is based on the following Ayah (verse): *إن الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتى يغيروا ما بأنفسهم*, God does not change the condition of a people until they change (what is in) themselves (Quran, 13:11). Breaking this ayah down provides an underlying structure for this proposed critical framework. The ayah clearly denotes two distinctive spheres of change: the sphere of *ما بالقوم*, the condition of a people, and the sphere of *ما بأنفسهم*, that which lies in themselves. In terms of agency, the ayah clearly attributes Divine action to the first sphere and human agency to the second (Said 1993, 69).

In light of this structure, and combining it with the earlier elaboration on development as a crisis of civilization both as a practice and a discourse, the following diagram provides the basic skeleton of this research:

³ meaning Western philosophers such as McIntyre, Larmore, and Taylor

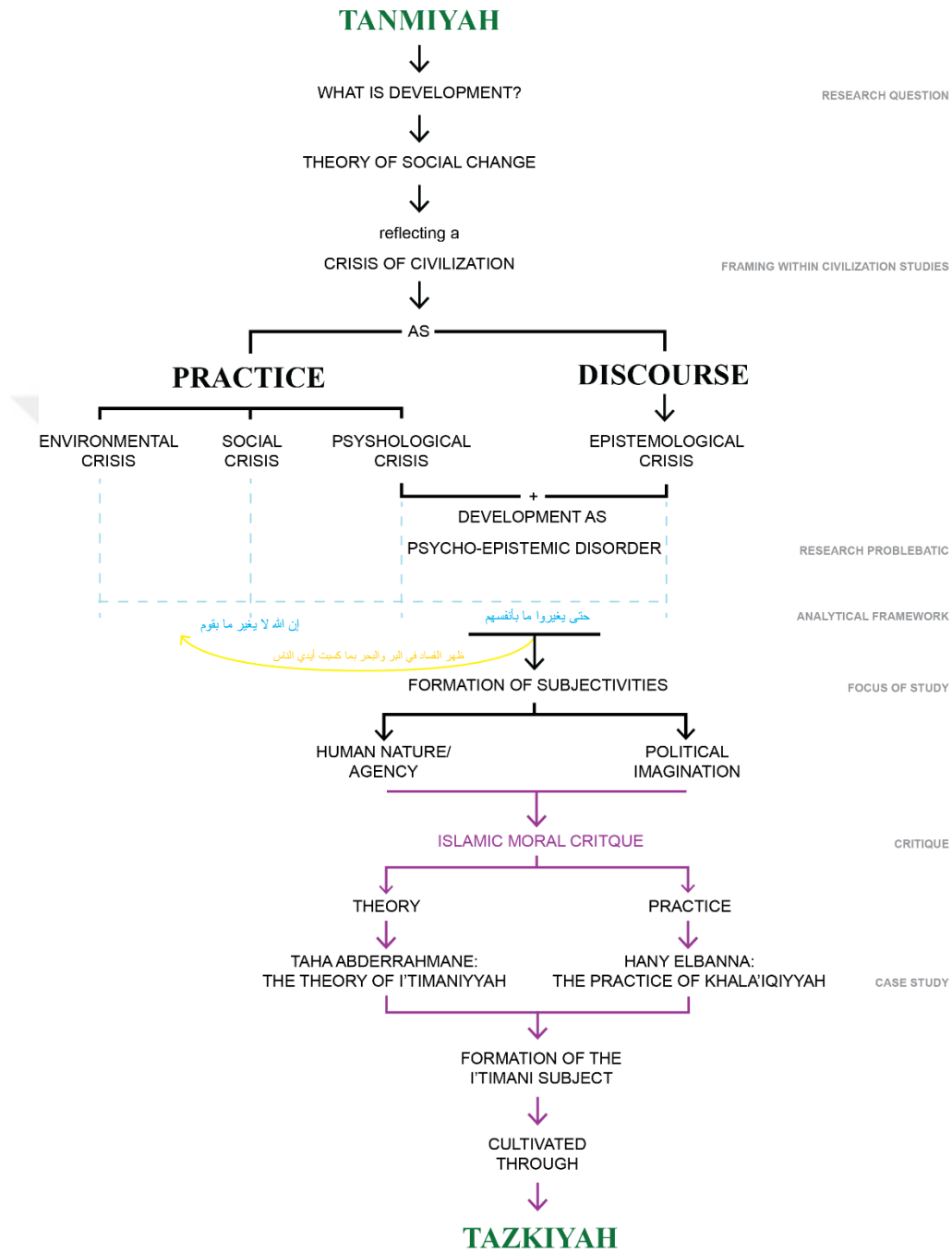


Figure 2. Basic Structure of Research Framework Combining Development as a Crisis of Civilization

Critique of Theory and Method

Having said that, I would like to clarify that this research is a critique of both form and content; the latter being development itself, and the former being the nature of social science research and this gap it creates between theory and practice.

“Departing from standard Enlightenment understandings, according to which religions, especially non-Protestant ones, could only be objects of critique” (Ahmed 2018, 15), and in the same vein of what Irfan Ahmed attempts to do in his book *Religion As Critique: Islamic Critical Thinking from mecca to the Marketplace*, by focusing on the concept of development, this thesis attempts to challenge the conventional genealogy of academic critique and illustrate the way in which religion, particularly Islam, can be utilized as an active agent of critique. As Ahmed contends: "Unlike the available dominant accounts of critique in Western and Westernizing traditions, the book (*his book*) describes and posits God Himself as the course of critique and the prophets He sent over time as critics par excellence." (Ahmed 2018, 17)

This research thus stands as both a conceptual critique of development theory as well as a critique of social theory, in accordance with the trajectory of the field of anthropology or sociology of intellect and philosophy. Additionally, in analyzing the examples of Taha Abdurrahman and Hany el-Banna, this research shall also attempt to challenge mainstream notions of critique and development by arguing for the case that critique is not only a cognitive venture but also an everyday socio-cultural practice.

Methodology and Research Questions

As briefly mentioned before, the main problematic of this research is the absence of morality as a central domain of human action, manifested in (at least) two ways corresponding to two different levels of analysis:

1. The Micro: Articulation of human nature as *homo oeconomicus*
2. The Macro: Political imagination in the model of the modern nation-state

As such, the main research question that will be directing this research is as follows: How can we craft an Islamic moral critique of development that prioritizes morality as a central domain of action, rather than subordinating it to economic and political considerations?

The research then shall proceed to analyze the possibility of a transition from development, or *tanmiyah*⁴, to *tazkiyah*. Taking the ethical theory of the Moroccan philosopher Taha Abdurrahman as a theoretical framework, as well as the practical experience of Hany El-Banna, founder of the Islamic Relief organization and later initiator of the World Humanitarian Action Forum, this research shall address further questions. These questions pertain to the analysis of how moving from relief practicalities to a forum where people set standards for action ethics, especially amongst faith-based organizations, gives more depth to the role of humanitarian and development work. It will also examine how a moral standard is deliberated and negotiated within such an initiative, making action-based development a source of meaning and morality. The positioning of people like Hany el-Banna alongside Taha Abdurrahman thus shapes the worlds of meaning as much as the lifeworlds of Islam⁵ and humanity. Furthermore, how can the examination of development as a concept and vision enable us to see the role of experience, rather than top-down theories, plans, or programs, in developing a critical view based on practitioners in changing the semantic field and action ethics? How can we relate the notions of development to the rise of the notion of global civil society, hence focusing on the bottom-up revisions of the concept rather than top-down policies of governmental cooperation and international institutions (UN agencies, World Bank, bilateral aid, and others)?

As such, the second part of this research shall also be structured around the two main levels of analysis mentioned before:

1. The Micro: articulation of human nature as the *I'timani* subject, focusing on Taha Abdurrahman's theory of *I'timaniyyah*
2. The Macro: political imagination embedded in social infrastructure, which can be reflected in the notion of global civil society (among other notions), focusing on Hany el-Banna's practice of Humanitarian work and his conception of *Khala'iqiyyah*

With regard to research positionality, this thesis espouses a critical approach to social theory with a focus on the philosophy of knowledge and the construction of social paradigms. It addresses both aspects of critique mentioned earlier: the critique of form,

⁴ *Tanmiyah* is the Arabic word for development

⁵ Concept introduced by Mohammed Bamyeh in his book *Lifeworlds of Islam*

which pertains to the nature of social science and the criteria for what constitutes a valid critique, and the critique of content, which examines the theory of development as a representation of social theory and a paradigm for social change. Therefrom, the deconstructive⁶ part of this research relies on the method of conceptual analysis⁷ to trace the history of the concepts subject to analysis and question the historical contexts that produced them. The second part aims to lay the ground for the construction of a different paradigm of social change and thus mainly utilizes Quranic revelation, specifically the previously mentioned ayah of change (13:11), as well as Taha Abdurrahman's theory of *I'timaniyyah* as a theoretical framework on which the suggested model of social change is based. Finally, the experience of Hany el-Banna in Humanitarian work and then his coining of the theory of *Khala'iqiyyah* is presented as a case study to illustrate and test the theoretical underpinnings of the suggested model of *Tazkiyah* as a central domain of social change.

This research shall hopefully be an attempt to bridge theory and practice both in terms of content and methodology of research, following a certain kind of "barzakh logic," as explained in the following section.

Barzakh Logic to address the limitations of theorizing "in the meanwhile":

In his book *Islamicate Cosmopolitan Spirit*, Bruce Lawrence (2021) introduces this new concept of "barzakh or fuzzy logic." As he elaborates, the logic of this different form of reasoning resides in the *in-betweens* and attempts to go beyond the world of binaries, hence his choice of the term "barzakh." In being located in the liminal space between the visible and invisible, past and future, "longing and belonging," barzakh logic embraces ambiguity and advocates for a language that is neither overly precise nor excessively loose. What this approach does is challenge the modern emphasis on exactitude and thinking within the strict boundaries of binaries that obsess over the exact framing and control of language. Lawrence (2021) explains that the barzakh logic presents an alternative approach that liberates the human spirit, enabling it to push the boundaries of possibility. This perspective views "spirit" not only as the life force but also as an essential

⁶ By deconstructive, I mean the critique of development and the larger critique of social science as a foundational feature of Western modernity

⁷ See Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, trans. Todd Samuel Presner et al. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002).

human quality that encompasses consciousness, discernment, and moral motivation. It emphasizes the importance of doing what is not only right but also best for everyone, blending agonism and altruism.

The heterological logic of the barzakh aligns greatly with the vision of this research in how it attempts to critique development both as a theory and practice. On top of settling the unrest with critiques that go beyond dealing with "the immediate enemy" (environmental, social, and economic problems) to deal with "the central enemy" (i.e., the absence of morality as a central domain of human action) as Hallaq contends in his *Impossible State*, this kind of reasoning opens new horizons allowing the imagination of a living that transcends the modern discomfort with unclear limits, unsettled borders, transitional periods, and any kind of alternative thinking that does not resemble the current models of social governance that centralize the economic and the political. Because the present critique of development ventures as far as the world system that produced it in the first place, its wide scope poses a great challenge in terms of research and exact methodology. A possible limitation of the current work could, therefore, be this exact absence of a clear method to deal with the issue at hand and the complexity of the issue itself inasmuch as it attempts a re-imagination of the current world order. This kind of barzakh logic thus offers the intellectual courage to venture into the unknown waters of a novel and deeply moral Islamic critique of development and the socio-epistemic structure that upholds it, especially with quite a big ambition as that of marginalizing the economy and putting the spiritual and moral imperative at the center of the human condition, paving the way for a new revolution of the commons and an attempt to re-organize society from the bottom-up, which means no less than a critique of the current modern world order and not just the set of development theories and programs.

CHAPTER II

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

2.1. The Development of Development: A History of the Concept

Invoking the word "development" generally points to a specific geo-temporal intersection in popular collective memory. Specifically, it refers to a turning point in the second half of the twentieth century marked by American President Harry Truman's "Point Four" program, announced in his inaugural presidential speech in 1949. This program targeted "underdeveloped" countries or peoples, soon to be widely recognized as the Global South, both geographically and discursively. While this historical moment did officially launch the "Development Age" and shape development discourse as we know it today, neglecting the preceding events and ideas that led to this juncture fails to address the phenomenon in its entirety and contributes to the propagation of a much-contested genealogy of history. Indeed, "there are some seams of political thought that, when mined, threaten to collapse the entire mountain of Western culture on your head" (Edelstein 2018, 1); the history of development is one such seam, I would argue.

What, then, is development? To answer this question, we need to differentiate between the "ghost" and the "shell."⁸ The shell is the specific word "development" as a linguistic artifact, while the ghost is the constellation of meanings and concepts associated with development without necessarily using this term. Exploring the history of both the ghost and the shell, and their eventual collision, reveals compelling contentions about both the past and present. It explains the state of our current affairs as a human community

⁸ The terms "ghost" and "shell" are in reference to Masamune Shirow's Science Fiction manga of the same name, "Ghost in the Shell," which tells the story of a cyborg public security team; I borrow this terminology because it provides a functional differentiation between development as a philosophical concept, and development as a linguistic artifact. This differentiation allows for a deeper analysis of the history of development, especially of the importance of the moment the ghost and the shell collide to give birth to our modern understanding of development. On the other hand, this analogy is very pertinent since development has in some way come to be some kind of a cyborg, with certain parts having developed organically while others remain more of a manufactured biomechatronic nature, as this chapter shall elaborate.

threatened by the looming environmental crisis, social inequality and the ever deteriorating state of the human soul.

2.1.1. History of the *Shell*: Etymology of the Word “Development”

A basic search for definitions of development in the Oxford English Dictionary indicates the existence of two-thousand-fifteen different meanings.⁹ This fact alone testifies to the highly contested nature of the concept of development and what it has come to mean. Putting aside precise definitions of development bound to very niche technical fields (like photography, web design, and mathematics), standard dictionary entries that define development in the context of individual or social change tend to draw on broader meanings, such as: "to cause to evolve or unfold gradually; to lead or conduct (something) through a succession of states or changes each of which is preparatory for the next; to expand by a process of growth" (Merriam-Webster), and "it also refers to the organized increase of a country's industry and wealth; the improvement of a skill, ability, quality, etc.; or the use of an area of land for its natural resources" (Cambridge Dictionary). Whether development is explained as a movement from point A to point B, a dynamic accumulation of interconnected assets or capabilities, or an algorithmic relation between input and output (such as the extraction of raw resources to be turned into valuable products), all these definitions share an inherent sense of change and motion that the word "development" denotes, regardless of its subject. If there is one thing we can rule out when defining development, it is the possibility of it referring to something static, passive, or of a never-changing nature. This aspect of development arguably constitutes the most persistent feature across its various meanings since its first use.

Etymologically, the verb “to develop” comes from the old French combination of “*des*,” meaning to undo, and “*veloper*,” meaning to wrap up (Etymonline). The earliest use of the word in the French language goes back to the 12th century. Its literal meaning was “to get something or someone out of that which envelops them” or “to unroll that which has been rolled” (CNRTL). With this metaphor borrowed to explain more abstract or social phenomena, the word “*desveloper*” originally meant to “unwrap, unfurl, unveil; reveal the

⁹ For the entire list of related definitions of the word “Development,” refer to this link: <https://www.oed.com/search/advanced/Meanings?textTermText0=development&textTermOpt0=Definition&dateOfUseFirstUse=false&page=1&sortOption=DateOldFirst>

meaning of, or explain” something (Etymonline). However, the verb “to develop” gradually shifted from being a transitive verb to an intransitive one, no longer requiring the presence of a specific object for development to occur. As previously stipulated, the modern use of the word has evolved to generally mean linear, ever-ascending progressive advancement, expansion, and growth (Etymonline). How exactly did development shift from the simple meaning of unfurling or unfolding to the above phenomenon that created and still continues to propagate discourses, programs, and institutions to this very moment? How did this specific meaning become the *ghost* that inhabits the linguistic *shell* that is the word "development"? The following section addresses this question.

2.1.2. History of the *Ghost*: Philosophy of Development

Among the themes occupying a special place in the public discourse scene of Antiquity, the topic of change was a major priority of contemplation. This change pertained to the subtle and intricate coexistence of the perceived permanent sameness and the emerging newness of things. In Antiquity, the study of such phenomena mainly derived from two sources: mythology and philosophy. Myth perceived transformations of the world as a succession of 'ages' distinguished by metaphorical associations to different metals symbolizing each age's relative perfection (i.e., iron, bronze, silver, gold). Each age unfolded in a cycle of growth, peak, and decline. This conception of evolution also reflected the common trajectory of humans and plants in everyday experience (Rist 2019, 28). It was during the emergence of agriculture and human settlement that this particular conception began.

2.1.2.1. Contemplating the Precious Seed: Birth of the Cycles of Growth and Decay

Considering the vital and basic dependence of the human community on food supply, the discovery of the seed plant that marked the transition from an existence of endless wandering to a more stable life of settlement and agriculture could arguably be the single most revolutionary turning point in early human history. Given the life-altering discovery of 'the precious seed,' it is unsurprising that seeds and plants became early objects of wonder and myth. The fascinating mystery starts with the seemingly lifeless seed that undergoes a succession of changes once committed to the earth and aided with external

factors such as sun and moisture to turn into a mighty plant in its apogee granting life-giving bounties to man, then gradually losing its liveliness in the process of decay and degeneration only to end up in the death that precedes the next birth: a dead seed containing life inside. This recurrent phenomenon marks the birth of the cycles of genesis and decay (primarily prompted by the contemplation of the seed) as central elements of ancient religious mythology (Nisbet 1970, 17-18). While it might be challenging to determine the origins of "worship of the seed," there are plenty of accounts attesting to the abundant presence of religious beliefs, Gods and Goddesses, as well as rites pertaining to the life-cycle of plants all over the earliest manifestations of religious belief, including the beginning of the Western civilization with the Greeks (Nisbet 1970, 18). The most influential of seed deities in Western thought, for instance, was Demeter; her story and the Greeks' veneration of it persists from the beginnings of their sacred thought well into the age of Greek philosophy and rationality. The myth of Demeter is of this great importance not only because it marks the origin of the cycle of seasons and mankind's commitment to it but also because it arguably constitutes a transition from mythical to rational mentality, for it contains all the essential elements of the theory of growth: sterility and fecundity, cyclical development, recurrence, immanence, potentiality, and telic purpose. Born of religious reverence and awe, essentially inspired by the seed, the metaphor of growth or what Nisbet calls "being as becoming" became the basis of the Western worldview. To fully grasp the Greek conception of historical change, it is crucial to remember that the Greeks viewed the cosmos primarily as a living organism that can be observed and understood in its entirety. As Sambursky contends: "the Greek had a profound awareness which was characterized by his biological approach to the world of matter. The teleological principle is essentially biological and anthropomorphic so that the first basis for the conception of order in the universe was found in the system of the world of living things" (Nisbet 1970, 22). It is this early moment in Western intellectual history that establishes the biological sphere as a central domain in the development of Western thought. This basis is what the Greeks would soon come to call *physis* (Nisbet 1970, 21).

2.1.2.2. Aristotle and Greek Rationality

The concept of *physis* emerged with Greek philosophers like Aristotle who, against the background of mythological interpretation of natural phenomena, sought to develop

grounded scientific knowledge to distinguish between that which can be known for sure and that which can be altered by unexpected circumstances. Hence the emergence of a radical split between Science as that which dealt with the sequence of causes that establish regularities which unfold by necessity, and history as the art of dealing with contingencies and accidents that constitute the exception to that established regular and 'natural' pattern. For Aristotle, nature and science were coextensive, but the concept of nature was relatively different from its contemporary meaning. *Physis*, the Greek word for 'nature', literally means 'to develop' or 'to grow', contrary to the modern perception of nature as fixed and unchanging. As Rist (2008, 29) elaborates:

For Aristotle, 'nature' (φύσις or 'development') means (1) 'the genesis of growing things [literally: which participate in the phenomenon of growth]'; and (2) 'that immanent part of a growing thing from which its growth first proceeds... Nature in the primary and strict sense is the essence of things which have in themselves, as such, a source of movement ... and processes of becoming and growing are called nature because they are movements proceeding from this.

Nisbet (1970, 23) contends that "an interest in the physis of things – quite literally their 'physiology' – is, then, the point of departure of Greek science and rational philosophy." On this basis, science can be defined as the theory, or study of the nature of things (i.e. their development). A scientist is thus someone who aims to understand living beings on the basis of their 'natural'- that is, their 'normal'– growth process, leaving aside exceptions or contingencies. The 'natural', and 'normal', is therefore established as soon as an order is manifested. One of the points of divergence of Aristotle's conception of nature from modern thought is its extension beyond the confines of the physical world. To Aristotle, every being contains its own physis, meaning its principle of development, including non-physical entities like the state for example.¹⁰ Unlike the historian, who accounts for 'accidents' and dates them over a given period, the scientist offers a 'natural history' of things and institutions. This natural history pertains to their silent development, which carries them by necessity to an assigned 'final state' corresponding to their 'perfect

¹⁰ "Thus 'the State is by nature [that is, seen in terms of development] clearly prior to the family and to the individual, since the whole is of necessity prior to the part; ... he who is unable to live in society, or who has no need because he is sufficient for himself, must be either a beast or a god: he is no part of a State.' This quotation shows that things should be understood in accordance with their end, and in so far as man is a 'political animal' (ζῷον πολιτικόν) his ultimate goal is given by the polis or the State, which is 'prior' to the individual, just as the tree is 'already' contained in the seed" Rist 2019, 30.

form'. However, it is crucial to remember that Aristotle remained faithful to the ancient theory of cyclical development, for he did not believe in the notion of endless growth beyond limit. In his eyes, everything is subject to a cycle of birth, growth then decay and death leading perpetually to a series of new beginnings. The theory of the cycles thus continues reigning on the classical thought of both the Greeks and Romans until the arrival of Christianity, and more specifically with the rise of Saint Augustine (Rist 2019, 31).

2.1.2.3. Christianity, Saint Augustine, and the birth of the notion of Divine physis¹¹

With the rise of Christianity, the Greek theory of genesis and decay continued to be an integral part of Christian ontology. However, it only existed within the confines of the Hebrew conception of man's relation to God. In other words, the alteration in the notion of development that was brought upon the arrival of Christianity was primarily a product of the fusion of Greek metaphysics and Hebrew scripture, which gave birth to the notion of sacred developmentalism, a perspective that would rule over Western thought relatively until the late Renaissance when the notion was secularized. In this major turn St. Augustine arguably played the central role, for he preserved and fully utilized all derivations of the Greek concept of *physis*, including immanence, growth, cumulative development, progress, purpose, and degeneration. However, what he did omit from classical thought was the notion of recurrent cycles, as it did not converge with his sense of sacredness and uniqueness of the plight of Christ (Nisbet 1970, 63). In other words, while the classical view of the cycles of genesis and decay emphasized the infinite multiplicity and recurrence of the cycles, in the Christian view, the cycle of human existence became single and unique, beginning with Adam and determined to terminate sometime in the future, with absolutely no point of recurrence.

In a context where the notion of recurrent cycles was widespread, St. Augustine sought to refute it for two important reasons. First, the uniqueness of Christ's suffering and redemption for mankind in the Christian narrative was irreconcilable with the idea of an infinite repetition of falls, rebirths and redemptions. Second, and perhaps more importantly, the sacred record that Augustine and other Christians drew from the Hebrews

¹¹ Referring to Nisbet on Augustine bringing together Greco roman tradition of physis with Hebrew view of sacred history to produce the notion of historical necessity as we know it today (after being secularized during or after the Renaissance)

emphasized a "God-given history," specifically springing from God's dealings with the Jews—and later the Christians who borrowed this record from the Old Testament—as a special nation. The primary focus of Scripture history is to demonstrate the actions and words of the Lord, highlighting His unique guidance of a particular nation in a fundamentally special way (Nisbet 1970, 71). While St. Augustine preserved the existence of a “cycle” -single however- in his philosophy of history, his repudiation of recurrent cycles thus was mainly a manifestation of the incompatibility of the idea of God-given sacred history and the view of infinite cyclical repetitions that would have not only made the Christian epic lose its uniqueness but also its appealing majesty. This Augustinian repudiation of recurrent cycles was of utmost importance for it set the ground for the emergence of a linear view of history in which Western worldview would be steeped ever since (Rist 2019, 35).¹²

In summary, Augustine's most important contributions to the concept of development include his conception of the human race as a unified entity rather than separate groups and nations, and the notion of historical necessity, both unfolding under the will of an omnipotent Divine being. Based on the premise of the fatherhood of God, Augustine's contemplation of humankind as a single entity followed a sequence of “self-realizing stages of development” unfolding under an inescapable rule of historical necessity (Nisbet 1970, 72). For Augustine, this was a result of integrating the Greek pattern of immanent growth embedded in the concept of *physis* and the notion of a God-given sacred history of a unique and chosen nation acquired from the Hebrew tradition (Rist 2019, 88). The merger of these two views therefore produced a kind of "divine physis" from which stems the notion of necessity and inevitability in history. However, it is crucial to highlight that divine physis does not correspond to a simplistic conception of God's sovereignty; it refers to a more intricate and nuanced notion of God's sovereignty, manifesting itself in a predetermined plan. It is a sort of divine physis out of which no one strays, including God Himself. (Rist 2019, 90). In other words, while Augustine continues to insist on the place of God as the first cause and principle of this Divine plan, he does create a distinction between God's will and God's immanent design, from which the idea of historical

¹² Rist later elaborates on this as follows: “We should stress the importance of Christian theology in this reinterpretation of Aristotle, which led to the linear view of history.” A contrasting case is that of Ibn Khaldun.

necessity flows. Understanding this division is crucial because it sets the stage for the later secularization of the notion of development. The concepts of divine will and eternal design were closely united until the rise of secular thought, when the concept of "God's will" began to gradually retreat from "God's design" until it completely disappeared by the nineteenth century. Later modern European philosophers of history replaced God as a "First Principle" with terms such as nature, spirit or civilization, laying the groundwork for the notion of change to acquire secular footings and dispense with the premise of God altogether (Rist 2019, 90).

2.1.2.4. The “Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns” and the Birth of Linear Infinite Growth

Augustinian theology persisted through the following periods, especially during the middle ages. His influence was not only felt in the realm of theology, but also extended to other earthly domains such as grammar, astronomy, philosophy and rhetoric. The most celebrated idea in this regard was the reverence of the Ancients as bearers of superior wisdom. This idea aligned with the historical notion of the world moving in an irreversible motion of decline towards a state of degeneration, as entertained in both Aristotle and Augustine’s thought. As the reigning philosophy of history at the time, this view established the superiority of the Ancients in terms of knowledge and wisdom and the difficulty to go beyond what they have achieved. Thus, even the Renaissance continued this attitude of reverence and imitation of intellectual predecessors. This view was not contested until the mid-seventeenth century with the arrival of thinkers like Pascal, Descartes and Fontenelle. This century saw a significant epistemological shift that placed intellect and philosophy, rather than revelation and theology, at the center of the quest for knowledge.

The argument was that if the advance of knowledge had a cumulative characteristic, meaning that it built on itself over time, the *logical* derivation according to basic laws of nature was that the knowledge of the seventeenth century must be superior to all preceding centuries since it is a culmination of them all, in which case it would not make sense to preserve that unquestioned attribution of superiority to the ancients. This single line of thought was what paved the way for what would become known as the Quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, which was a series of debates between members of the

intellectual community in seventeenth century France on the merits of arts and knowledge and the nature of reason. The quarrel erupted in 1687 and concluded around 1715 with the victory of the modern view which held, among other things, that human reason was of a cumulative nature and most importantly was to operate autonomously from any traditional forms of authority. While the classical metaphor of growth was still preserved, these two elements (cumulativeness and autonomy of human reason) have resulted in the disposal of the notion of degeneration and its substitution with indefinite ever-ascending growth (Rist 2019, 35). The following passage from Fontenelle's treatise *Digression sur les anciens poètes et modernes*—Digression on the Ancients and the Moderns— perfectly illustrates this turnaround. In his critique of the comparison of history to the life of an individual man, he contends that:

The comparison we have just drawn between men of all centuries and a single man may be extended to our whole question of the Ancients and the Moderns. A fine cultivated mind is, so to speak, composed of all the minds from preceding centuries; there is one and the same mind which has been cultivated all that time. Thus, the man who has lived since the beginning of the world until the present day has had his infancy (when he busied himself only with the most pressing needs of life), and his youth (when he was quite successful in the things of the imagination, such as poetry or eloquence, and when he even began to reason, albeit with more fire than substance). Now he is in the age of virility, when he reasons with more force and greater knowledge than before, but he would be much more advanced if the passion for war had not occupied him for so long and made him contemptuous of the sciences, to which he has at last returned. It is vexing that such a smoothly flowing comparison cannot be carried to the end, *but I have to admit that that man will not have an old age*. He will always be equally capable of the things to which his youth was appropriate, and ever more capable of those befitting his manhood: that is, *to leave the allegory, men will never degenerate, and the healthy views of all the fine minds to come will always be added to one another* (Fontenelle 1688 quoted in Rist 2019, 36) (emphasis added).

This alteration - disposal of the element of degeneration - in the intellectual landscape at the time arguably constitutes the significance of the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns for it established the modern notion of indefinite linear growth that still persists to this day. While the metaphor of growth remained a developmental necessity in Western intellectual tradition, the removal of God as the first cause in human affairs led to the collapse of the concept of necessary decay. This downward move had once constituted a limit that kept progress and development in check, in accordance with God's plan.

Stripped of degeneration and decay, all that remains in this classical metaphor is genesis and growth. This marks the birth of a linear philosophy of history, replacing the preceding theory of cycles that had ruled over Western thought until this point. Another aspect that sealed the argument of the moderns was the triumph of the Cartesian premise of the uniformity of nature, which posits that nature operates in consistency regardless of variations in time and space (Nisbet 1970, 109-110). The combination of these tenets with the assertion of the unity of mankind and the notion of an unstoppable ascending history established a new “order of things” in which Development constituted what Rist calls “the finality – and fatality – of history,” paving the way for the consolidation of the paradigm of Social Evolutionism that would rule over the next century (Rist 2019, 38-40).

2.1.2.5. Natural History, Social Evolutionism, and Colonialism as Mission Civilisatrice

By the end of the eighteenth century, the general preoccupation with progress as a philosophical concept produced a more specific interest in human development as a *process*, namely that which is comprised of a chain of successive and interconnected steps through which the human condition unfolds from its "origins" towards its present state (Nisbet 1970, 139). Regardless of the moral judgment of the surrounding culture (for there were thinkers that did not deem the current state of affairs at the time as politically or morally favorable), moral philosophers of the time mostly grappled with the same task of attempting to explain how the present state had evolved from its origins. This twofold task sought to explain the evolution of history and civilization according to a presumed set of provisions in the nature of man and society. Based on this, it aimed to consolidate a normative set of rules to carry society from its primitiveness to a more perfect state. This conception of development came to be known as the theory of "natural history." As a product of the eighteenth century's admiration for nature, this theory attempted to understand human progression in time based not on contingencies and unpredictable events of conventional history, but on a presupposed inherent nature, or prototype, consisting of definite stages through which human and societal progression unfolds uniformly (Nisbet 1970, 139-140).

By the nineteenth century, this new order was further consolidated with the rise of social evolutionism which established the superiority of the West in the sense that it represents the highest stage of social development towards which all nations are supposedly headed, albeit in a slower pace compared to Western society (Rist 2018, 40). Notably, this theory coincided with biological evolutionism, generally attributed to Charles Darwin. In light of the biological theories of Wolff (1759) and Darwin (1859), development moved from meaning a kind of transformation moving towards the *appropriate* form of the being in study to a conception of transformation that advances towards its “*ever more perfect form*”. This period eventually oversaw the interchangeable use of the terms evolution and development by scientists. However, the proper transfer of the metaphor of growth from its biological sphere to the social sphere did not occur until the last quarter of the eighteenth century. This is the time when theories of universal history and gradual social change as a natural process began to appear more frequently. In the early turn of the 1800s, development began to emerge as a reflexive verb. With the rise of secularization and the retreat of God from the popular conception of the universe, *self-development* became a trend, opening all possibilities to the human actor to become the principle author of his progress breaking free from the design of God. Of crucial importance in this account is Karl Marx’s work which revolved around the notion of development. In his view, development “was revealed as a historical process that unfolds with the same necessary character of natural laws” (Esteva 1992, 4). What followed was the blending of Hegelian philosophy of history as a rational and *necessary* process with Darwin’s conception of evolution to reinforce scientific determinism of Marx’s theory of development (Esteva 1992, 4).

Despite differing views on the connection between the two theories— i.e. whether social evolutionism was an application of biological evolutionism to the social sphere or a distinct theory standing its own ground—social evolutionism gained scientific endorsement due to its "semantic proximity to Darwinism" (Rist 2019, 42). This theory thus established the Western experience as the benchmark of modernity and progress against which all non-Western societies were assessed. This view provided a legitimate base for the late nineteenth century's European wave of colonization under the guise of a "mission civilisatrice," or what became known as "the white man's burden" to "help"

other nations achieve civilization and move beyond their perceived backwardness and savagery (Rist 2019, 42-43). The colonization that took off in the late nineteenth century and ended in the aftermath of the world wars around the mid twentieth century is of utmost importance in this account, for it illustrates how these ideas that dominated the European intellectual scene were put into practice by the "great powers" in a way that opened the way for the consolidation of development as a practice through the birth of new institutions like the League of Nations, United Nations, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank. The following section shall be addressing this aspect.

2.1.2.6 From Colonization to the Mandates System

As previously elaborated, the blend of the theory of natural history and social evolutionism provided the intellectual base for what Gustavo Esteva calls the "conversion of history into a program" (Esteva 1992, 4), namely the colonial enterprise and its subordination of non-European nations in pursuance of new markets and resources. This subordination was manifested in at least two important ways. Politically, this period marked the transition to a different set of power relations between "North" and "South" established through direct colonization. Epistemologically, this territorial subjugation also enabled the dissemination of the specifically Eurocentric genealogy of history centering the belief in the industrial mode of production prevailing in Europe at the time as the latest stage of social development, resulting in other - non-Western – definitions of social life being rendered impotent. In this sense, "history was reformulated in Western terms" (Esteva 1992, 5).

The system of colonization at the time was primarily manifested in the development of "the colonial pact," which granted metropolises exclusive commercial rights to extract resources from their respective peripheries. This early colonial system was mainly concerned with commercial interests, explaining the weak presence of European settlers in colonized territories (Rist 2019, 49). Needless to say, the colonial project was an extension of economic aspirations, for imperialism proved to be highly profitable (Polk 2018, 56). However, this pure economic concern was coated in a philanthropic branding that concealed the less appealing characteristics of colonization. Gilbert Rist (2008, 49) elaborates, "... the philanthropic case for colonization is that it holds a worldwide promise of civilization for all, and is the expression 'of the growing solidarity, the

community of feelings and interests that unites the metropolis to its overseas possessions”.

This initiative in holding the metropolitan countries accountable for the general welfare of their colonies thus paved the way for the mandate system which *internationalized* this kind of European intervention and put it in custody of what would since be known as the “international community”, first materialized as the institution of the League of Nations. In other words, “if colonization threw up an array of arguments justifying intervention outside Europe to serve the national interest, the League of Nations legitimated the *internationalization* of this intervention in the name of civilization itself, considered as the common heritage of the European countries” (Rist 2008, 58). In the aftermath of the first world war, the League of Nations was established as the first international political institution, whose Covenant took effect in January 1920 (Elmandjra 1973, 23).

As far as development history is concerned, this covenant is important because of its Articles 22 and 23, which installed the mandate system and attributed upon specific members of the League administrative responsibility for the colonies of the losing countries in the war. The growing socialist and philanthropist movements in Europe specifically had an effect on this slight shift in attitude towards the issue of territorial annexation. While they did not completely oppose the colonial administration of former territorial possessions of defeated empires, they wanted them to be under the authority of an international institution rather than the colonizing states (Rist 2019, 59). It was in this vein that the British government for example argued for the necessity to grant their colonies minimum levels of rights with regards to healthcare, nutrition and education. Thus, by the late thirties, colonialism began to be strongly associated with development, “when the British government transformed its Law of Development of the Colonies into the Law of Development *and Welfare* of the colonies in 1939” (Esteva 1992, 5).

Although the two experiences should not be conflated, colonization and the mandates system did indeed share similar geographic, temporal as well as ideological spaces, on top of both being conducted without the United States and thus forming a somewhat purely European history. Together, they established a sequence of conquests, starting with the *conquest of geographical space* through direct colonization that followed the European age of "discoveries", followed by the formation of a symbolic and political

space comprising of the internationalism established by the League of Nations (Rist 2019, 66-67). Understanding the dynamic between these two spaces is important to us, for it reveals the logic by which powerful states would be operating under development programs. These states, although torn apart in their contest of territorial possessions, had to appear united nonetheless. Gilbert Rist befittingly explains this as he affirms:

The powerful States discussed together even as they clashed on the ground; *they could not really settle the world's problems, but at least they agreed to recognize one another's right to profit from their conquests*. These two distinct spaces, far from being counterposed, actually complemented each other – for both asserted a kind of mastery. *The first grabbed hold of places and living people, while the second exerted its sway over minds in the name of universalism and humanity* (Rist 2019, 67) (emphasis added).

The last *conquest* that consolidated this new international system was of *public opinion*. The aim was to establish a collective sentiment among peoples of the metropolitan countries to espouse a relatively favorable attitude towards such colonial expeditions. The League of Nations thus was vital for the colonial enterprise in that it now presented it as "a sacred trust of civilization", which offered it great legitimation. Conquest could no longer be justified on grounds of private gain or self-interest, and the League of Nations provided a suitable, and indeed virtuous, replacement. The "international community" at this point had become a staple of international organization and cooperation, seemingly embracing all peoples of the world. What followed was the rise of the United States as a central actor in this international community and, eventually the official invention of "development" to replace the concept of the "dual mandate."¹³ (Rist 2019, 67-68).

2.1.2.7. The Merger of the Ghost and the Shell: The Invention of Underdevelopment and the Launch of the Development Era

Although the early twentieth century did witness an increase in the use of the term "development" and the proliferation of multiple concurring meanings and definitions, development still held its firm seating in the popular and intellectual imaginary of the time occupying a central position in the constellation of the prior meanings of progress,

¹³ Essentially, during the mandate system, this concept meant that the conquering empire should be able to both « economically develop » the conquered region while also maintaining the wellbeing of the native population

natural history, historical necessity, evolution, etc. In other words, as an expansion of the aforementioned intellectual doctrine, development continued to imply "a favorablefavorable change, a step from the simple to the complex, from the inferior to the superior, from worse to better. The word indicates that one is doing well because one is advancing in the sense of a necessary, ineluctable, universal law and towards a desirable goal" (Esteva 1992, p. 6). Nevertheless, for two thirds of the human population, this positive connotation of the word began to haunt them as "a reminder of *what they are not.*" This new internalization of an undignified and undesirable self-image by two thirds of the world population was thus the product of the post-second world war era and the launch of the development age (Esteva 1992, 6).

In the aftermath of the second world war, the United States emerged as a dominant global power characterized by its unmatched productive machine; it was the master and the model at the same time. The League of Nations was replaced by the United Nations institution, whose headquarters, revealingly, were to be in New York instead of Geneva (Rist 2019, 69). This transformative era was marked by the inauguration of President Harry Truman on January 20, 1949 during which he disclosed four main aspects of the new American foreign policy: first, continuous support for the newly founded United Nations; second, continuation of post-war European reconstruction efforts through the Marshall Plan; third, creation of NATO as a joint defense organization primarily to counter the Soviet threat; and fourth, extension of "technical assistance" to the "poorer countries" around the world. In contrast to the first three points, the last point that would later come to be known as 'Point Four' was the least conventional. As told in Louis J. Halle's *On Teaching International Relations*, the main headlines on the morning following Truman's inaugural speech were all about Point Four and what it possibly meant (Halle 1964, 11-25). In his reply to press questions, Truman later stated: "the origin of point four has been in my mind, and in the minds of members of the government for the past two or three years, ever since the Marshall Plan was inaugurated... it originated with the Greece and Turkey propositions. Been studying it ever since. I spent most of my time going over to *that globe back there, trying to figure out ways to make peace in the world*" (emphasis added). Against this background, Gilbert Rist (2019, 70) comments on this story by contending that Truman's statement "is a fine example of opportunist deception,

because in reality there had been no advance planning, and it would take nearly two years for the administration to start implementing Point Four” and he adds, “nobody—not even the President or the Secretary of State— could say more about it (Point Four) than what everybody read.”

Regardless of the true intention of the American administration at the time, Truman’s Point Four was a turning point, officially launching the so-called Development Age and creating the “Underdeveloped” as a new category of people. In fact, this was the first time the adjective “underdeveloped” was used in an official statement intended for such wide circulation, as shown in the following excerpt from Truman’s inaugural speech:

We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and undergrowth of underdeveloped areas. The *old imperialism*¹⁴ -exploitation for foreign profit—has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair dealing (Esteva 1997, 1).

This day marked the dawn of the "Development Era," which also simultaneously marks the conception of "Underdevelopment." Although the term had sporadically appeared in different documents before, it only gained significance "when Truman presented it as the emblem of his own policy," imbuing it with a new colonial meaning. As Esteva (1992) aptly sums it up, "On that day, *two billion people became underdeveloped.*" The concept of underdevelopment has thus emerged as the flip side of development, rendering two-thirds of the global population into "underdeveloped" subjects. This internalized perception created a new subjective divide: a Global South indulging in a sense of inferiority and a Global North assuming the role of a savior. Viewed in light of colonial history and the West's "*mission civilisatrice*," all Truman did was actually that he effectively substituted "backwardness" or "poverty" with the new concept of "underdevelopment" (Esteva 1992, 3).

Following this profound transformation of development was a further impoverishment of the term by its initial champions, who primarily reduced its essence to economic growth. This focus was underscored by Sir Arthur Lewis (as cited in Esteva 1992, 14) when he dictated: “it should be noted that our subject matter is growth and not distribution," thereby

¹⁴ Emphasis added, to illustrate the irony of the expression “old imperialism” as an indirect assertion that development is indeed a new form of imperialism

highlighting that the main goal of development was to increase income per capita in the so-called “economically underdeveloped areas.” The 1947 United Nations Charter actually sealed this perspective, rendering development into a scale on which countries were ranked by GDP, with wealthy countries at the top. Worthy of mention is the fact that this centralization of the economic at the heart of development did not originate with Truman; its roots actually date back much earlier to the 19th century Europe when economics was placed at the center of politics. The European colonial mission later propagated this capitalistic worldview in the remaining parts of the world, which kind of established an immediate association of colonization with economization. Henceforth, Truman's contribution actually lay in freeing “the economic sphere from the negative connotations it had accumulated for two centuries, delinking development from colonization” (Esteva 1992, 14).

Following this, development shifted from being perceived as one-dimensional and centered on the economy to recognizing the need to separate the economic from the social, paving the way for the inception of “social development” as a new iteration. Emerging around the 1960s, this concept came out to establish that social development was a pre-requisite for sustainable economic growth; this shift appeared “partly as a moral justification for economic growth and the sacrifices it implied” (Esteva 1992, 9).

Since then, development has undergone a series of mutations, each generating new approaches and terms. These include the International/global development strategy (1970), cross-sectoral/ participative/ spatial development (early 1970s), human-centered development (1975), the 'basic needs approach' (1976), endogenous development (late 1970s), a challenging period known as the lost decade for development (1980s), leading to redevelopment efforts in the 1990s, and culminating in the rebranding of the concept as 'sustainable development' in recent years. This reflects ongoing adaptations and responses to global challenges, and the list of conceptual transformations continues to this day, attesting to the undefined contours of development as a concept (Esteva 1992, 9-14).

2.2. What then is Development?

In the organic world of animals and plants, development, as part of a larger matrix of interconnected terms such as growth, genesis, degeneration, decadence, unfolding, and

death, refers quite literally and empirically to the life-cycles of living organisms. In the social realm, however, no one has ever empirically seen the literal development of a society or civilization as things are seen in the natural world. This term implies "change proceeding gradually, cumulatively, and irreversibly, through a kind of unfolding of internal potentiality, the whole moving toward some end that is presumably contained in the process from the start" (Nisbet 1970, 3). Birth, development, degeneration, death: none of these phenomena are *seen* in culture. As Nisbet puts it, "all that we see are mingled facts of persistence and change" (Nisbet 1970, 3). We see the succession of generations, rise and fall of dynasties, series of wars, migrations, and revolutions. We see the birth of children, their rearing, education, maturation, working and playing and thinking and writing, the alternation of governments and changes in economies etc. But we do not literally and empirically see "genesis," "progress," "degeneration," "backwardness," or "development." To the organic world, these concepts have immediate relevance because they reside in the cycles of birth and decay of living organisms; their meanings are both empirical and literal. In the social domain, however, these words are metaphoric (Nisbet 1970, 3-4). So, to address the initial question: what is development? In the context of social and cultural phenomena, development is first and foremost a metaphor.

2.2.1. Development as Metaphor

2.2.1.1. What is a metaphor?

Far from being simple figures of speech and grammatical tools, metaphors are cognitive lens through which reality is perceived and constructed. Nisbet (1970, 3-4) contends that metaphors are ways of knowing and "proceeding from the known to the unknown. They are used as ways to express the inexpressible, to grasp and express one thing in terms of another, to define the unknown by drawing analogies from the known, which in most cases is an attempt to grasp "the nonphysical in terms of the physical – or the less clearly delineated in terms of the more clearly delineated" (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 477). It is important to remember that a metaphor can only express an abstract concept in a partial way. In other words, the effective use of metaphor that allows us to comprehend otherwise incomprehensible notions can also obscure other aspects of the concept in question. The implication is that the adequacy and credibility of any perception of reality depends on the awareness of the subjective nature of metaphors used to explain it, necessitating the

questioning of both the metaphors and the larger episteme that produced them (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 485-486).

Nevertheless, metaphors remain indispensable linguistic tools to know and to communicate knowledge. This knowledge contrasts with analytic knowledge, which comes from a series of observations, cumulative experiences, and analysis of meanings in a proposition, leading to synthesis through detailed elaboration, whether inductive or deductive, to arrive at a certain conclusion. Metaphoric knowledge consists of the fusion of two separate spheres of experience to form *an image* that serves as a tool of simplifying and articulating rather complex and more abstract concepts. Therefore, what constitutes “the test of essential metaphor,” as Herbert Read (quoted in Nisbet, 1970, 4) wrote, “is not any rule of grammatical form, but rather *the quality of semantic transformation* that is brought about.” It is in this way that metaphors make up the building blocks of the conceptual systems in terms of which we think and act (Lakoff and Johnson 1980, 455), and this is how they possess the potential to distort meaning when they become ways of “mistaking attributes of analogy for attributes of reality” (Nisbet 1970, 7). Development is one such example where the metaphor transcends its descriptive function in the realm of semantics to that of social relations through becoming a prescriptive theory of social action.

2.2.1.2. Development as the Metaphor of Growth

As the earlier historical account demonstrates, at the heart of the Western idea of development resides the metaphor of growth. To describe a nation or a culture as something that “develops” or “grows” directly refers to the theme of change, particularly to a specific iteration that expels random and contingent changes and mainly points to a notion of change that intrinsically resides in the inherent nature of the subject entity and unfolds in a natural and predictable manner. That development has come to be associated with this specific view of change is the result of the borrowing of the analogy of growth from the natural realm and its application to social and cultural phenomena. The transfer of this analogy implies the extrapolation of the attributes that define the growth of natural organisms to construct a perception of social development. In other words, attributes such as the directionality, cumulativeness, continuity, and irreversibility of natural and biological growth, when applied to social change, in a way declare society to be

organismic in its constitution. That is to compare society to a plant or a human being that passes through life stages of childhood, youth, adulthood, and old age for instance. The downside of this likening of social change to the growth of a living organism is that it runs the risk of overshadowing socio-historical specificities that make each society different from others. As mentioned previously, this analogy, albeit modified and altered along different milestones in Western intellectual history, stands in proximity to the modern conception of progress weaved of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries' theories of social evolutionism, natural history, and developmental change (Nisbet 1970, 10)

While this analogy certainly holds a certain level of plausibility in simplifying the complex process of social change, it runs to the peril of establishing a linear teleology and a naturalist positivist ideology. Instead of making social change more understandable, the same analogy ends up obscuring its meaning by naturalizing history. For while the general 'rule' is that every little child for instance is destined to become a grown up man or woman, "there is no proof that every little village is 'destined' to become a big town" (Rist 2019, 27). Additionally, the idea of a unified human history and experience, where all societies are placed on a single progressive unilinear trajectory of historical movement, is problematic. This view places the European experience of modernity as the final stage of development and the yardstick against which all other societies are measured (Aref 2002, 21). Nevertheless, when development is used to mean something around the lines of the general wellbeing of a community or society, this analogy still usually passes undetected and uncontested by force of having been repeated and consolidated through centuries in the history of Western civilization.

While metaphor serves as an effective cognitive tool to describe complex abstract phenomena, it also "allies itself well with proposals for social action" (Nisbet 1970, 6). This means that employing the analogy of growth in the social sphere not only provides a specific description of the process of social change, but also automatically "prescribes" a specific way to reach the ultimate desirable state of social change. In other words, the employment of the metaphor of growth constructs development as a discourse that is both positive and normative: positive in the sense that it constitutes a linear theory of social change, and normative in being a "modern secular theory of salvation" to borrow Arturo Escobar's expression (2011). Against the usual claim of the universality of development,

these two aspects frame development as a specific theory of social change that was the product of a particular context, namely the Western experience. Viewing development as a unique historical phenomenon that created a specific realm of thought and action allows us to analyze it by examining the characteristics and interconnections of three main axes that define it, as elaborated by Escobar. First, the forms of knowledge that pertain to it and are later shaped into objects, theories, concepts and so on. Second, the system of power governing its practice, and third, the forms of subjectivity promoted by this discourse, through which individuals come to identify themselves either as developed or underdeveloped. When brought together, these three elements form development as a discursive framework, consolidating an efficient apparatus which systematically links forms of knowledge and techniques of power (Escobar 2011, 10).

Therefore, the argument that follows in the coming section stipulates the problematic nature of development as a discourse that draws its strength from “faith in unlimited growth”, leading to a myriad of environmental, social and psychological crises. More importantly, the hegemonic nature of the discourse of development, when globalized and universalized, not only obscures other worldviews and ways of conceiving social reality, but also encloses any possibilities for creative solutions to emerge from alternative epistemes.

CHAPTER III

WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH DEVELOPMENT?

If we do have a food crisis it will not be caused by the insufficiency of nature's productive power, but by the extravagance of human desire.

– Masanubo Fukuoka

“What we nowadays call ‘growth’ is in reality, random cancerous proliferation. We are currently living through a frenzy of production and growth that seems like a frenzy of death. It is a simulation of vitality that conceals a deadly impending catastrophe. Production increasingly resembles destruction. Humankind’s self-alienation may have reached a point ‘where it can experience its own annihilation as a supreme aesthetic pleasure’ (Han 2021, 1). This is the statement with which German sociologist Byung-Chul Han opens his book *Capitalism and the Death Drive*. From a civilizational perspective, the paradigm of development is problematic in at least two main ways corresponding to two interdependent levels of analysis: as a practice or way of life and as a discourse consolidating a specific episteme, namely the Western belief in development as linear economic growth. Wolfgang Sachs makes the pertinent remark that, as suspicion grows around development being a misconceived project from the start, “it is not the failure of development which has to be feared, but its success” (Sachs 1992a, xviii). What he is essentially pointing to through this statement is the standardization of one particular monoculture, exemplified by countries ‘running in front,’ equating development with ‘the Westernization of the world’. The result is an enormous loss of diversity in everything from architecture, clothing, and food to language, customs, and even desires and dreams. Science, the market, and the state have been the leading agents in this universalizing process through the expanded reign of experts. In short, “the mental space in which people dream and act is largely occupied today by Western imagery” (Sachs 1992a, xviii).

In any case, this consolidation of development as unrestrained growth constitutes the leading problem of the development paradigm and the practices it produces. Today, development as linear growth is challenged first and foremost by the environmental

predicament. While countries of the North are still relatively 'ahead' of others on the socio-economic scale, it is now clear that this 'race' is leading towards nothing but an abyss. On average, "we now consume in one year what it took the earth a million years to store up... If all countries 'successfully' followed the industrial example, five or six planets would be needed to serve as mines and waste dumps" (Sachs 1992a, xvi-xvii). In light of this, the economic model of the 'developed' societies proves to be no model at all. A "suicide economy," as David Korten argues, seems to be a more befitting description. In the quest for a perpetual increase in capital, this paradigm is destroying both human and non-human life as well as the very foundations of its own existence (Korten 2015, 21). Another strongly matching illustration of this "frenzy of growth" lies in the statement of the "Under-Secretary of Environment of the Chinese government" who mentions "in an interview for Der Spiegel in 2006" that "our cities grow, but also our deserts" (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 49).

Indeed, a significant number of people are living in an extremely affluent state. Millions are experiencing far greater levels of consumption than ever before, but billions have been forced off the lands from which they made a living to make room for mines, dams, oil extraction sites, agricultural estates, resorts, forestry plantations, golf courses, and countless other development projects serving the needs and desires of the few. This majority today lives in overcrowded slums, struggling to survive as migrant agricultural workers, sweatshop laborers, street vendors, or even drug dealers. The once-green hillsides are now barren. Coral reefs that were once teeming with life have become lifeless underwater deserts. The air is filled with pollutants, while societies that were once grounded in spiritual, community, and family values have been replaced by violence and materialism (Korten 2015, 1-2). Instead of the promised abundance of wealth and jobs, large-scale development projects are bringing severe ecological and social predicaments to local communities. Against all existing evidence of increasing social inequality, political turmoil, and the looming environmental crisis produced by this "cult of growth," as some scholars call it, capitalist-driven development still persists and carries the day both in theory and practice (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 98).

3.1. The Discourse of Development: Epistemological Crisis

Capitalism's greatest diversion lies in the way it channels its "death drive" toward the sustenance of the discourse of growth (Han 2021, 1). Discourse, as a sufficient generator of social power, constitutes "the key instrument in this permanent project," as Gilbert Rist argues (2019, 28). He continues, "It is words that are given the responsibility not only to classify but actually to ground the existence of a representation meant to be generally applied" (Gilbert 2019, 28). Discourse proves to be a powerful tool to shape and transform the social imaginary in the sense that it changes imagination and the way we conceive of social reality. The development discourse specifically has proven to be so powerful and resilient that it managed and continues to manage adapting and even coopting its critiques. The evolution of development theories over the second half of the twentieth century illustrates this reality. Moving from purely economic growth-oriented theories to others, such as "the basic human needs approach" around the seventies aiming to address issues of distribution and not only of growth, even those who stood against the mainstream capitalist logic of the market had to couch their critiques in the language of development to gain legitimacy (Escobar 2012, 5).

The invention of development, and similarly of the Third World as a particular subjectivity of underdeveloped subjects, rests on an order of knowledge whose foundations are situated within the space of Modernity. Analyzing the development discourse from this perspective thus frames it as "a chapter of what can be called an anthropology of modernity, that is, a general investigation of Western modernity as a culturally and historically specific phenomenon" (Escobar 2012, 11).

Situating the Development Discourse Within Modernity:

In his seminal work *Liquid Modernity* (2000), Zygmunt Bauman defines Modernity as a process of "liquefaction of solids" and "profaning the sacred ."Melting the solids essentially meant dissolving anything that resists the passage of time and is negligent or immune to the changes it brings. In short, the modern spirit is an agent of change that seeks to break free from the solid and stagnant state of traditional society. This turn eventually called for the profaning of sacred ideals. In other words, to dissolve the solids of the past, that is, any kind of 'tradition' persisting with its 'residues' in the present, one had to dispose of "the protective armor forged of the beliefs and loyalties which allowed

the solids to resist the 'liquefaction' (Bauman 2000, 3). In this process, "the first solids to be melted and the first sacreds to be profaned were traditional loyalties, customary rights and obligations which bound hands and feet, hindered moves and cramped the enterprise" (Bauman 2000, 3). In other words, the process of modernization started first and foremost with the dissolution of traditional societies and the breakage of the bounds of kinship and trust binding their community members.

"Melting the solids meant first and foremost shedding the 'irrelevant' obligations standing in the way of rational calculation of effects," which in practice was reflected primarily in the dissolution of traditional forms of social organization, starting with the family, and the rise of an ideology of individualism around which modern society would be reorganized (Bauman 2000, 3-4). The market-based modern society is a materialization of this ideology of individualism upheld by an institutional structure designed to ensure the concentration of wealth and its abuse for the sole advantage of a private ruling elite (Korten 2015, 20-21). This institutional system is what we have come to know as Capitalism. "In its literal meaning, *capitalism* means rule by capital, more specifically by the owners of capital for their exclusive private benefit – or simply rule by money" (Korten 2015, 20). While the details of its implementation are relatively complex, Capitalism concentrates wealth through a straightforward strategy based on a self-evident truth: our basic human needs, particularly those of the young, are wired in a way that our survival and flourishing as a species can only be secured by remaining a part of functioning families and communities. Contrary to traditional pre-modern gift economies where the social fabric was bound by relationships primarily characterized with mutual care and commitment, "in a monetized market economy these relationships are defined primarily, even exclusively, by money at the expense of the mutual caring and commitment essential to individual happiness and healthy social function" (Korten 2015, 21). What this implies is a profound shift from gift economies to the universalized market-based economy. In the former, human survival and prosperity depended on the active sense of belonging to one's community through bonds of trust and accountability. While the latter rendered survival and well-being dependent on money and, by extension, on the institutions that manage and control people's access to it, all in service to the economy (Korten 2015, 21).

As a modern conceptual framework, economics aims to subordinate every form of social interaction to its control and logic in any society it reaches. Rather than being an idealized model of peaceful progress towards a more accurate 'science' that safeguards a higher standard of living, economics is deeply intertwined with a political agenda whose rise represents a history of violence and domination that reconfigured the modern subject's perception of society and social reality. "As Ivan Illich claimed, the establishment of economic value requires the devaluing of all other forms of social interaction and existence" (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 131). Conventional thinking has somewhat established that all human endeavors are now governed by economic logic. Economics became a central category in the modern imaginary of social reality, a worldview in a sense whose grip is far too hegemonic for most social perceptions and actions to escape (Rist 2011, 8-9).

Modernity Redefining Time and Space:

Central to this transformation is the way Modernity reshaped the meaning and perception of time and space. Bauman argues that Modernity is the moment when *the history of time* was invented. The way people conceived of time before Modernity was in organic and what could now be deemed vague and loose expressions such as "soon" and "near," "long" and "far," which in essence hinged on the reality of movement pre-modernity, relying either on human effort or animal muscles to cross a certain distance. The invention of something other than these two basic and organic "hardware" thus marked the birth of a new epistemology that gave birth to Time and Space as two independent entities that broke with the organic reality of human labor and became abstractions existing on their own. Bauman asserts that it was precisely the invention of the automobile that marked this significant break and launched a new episteme that rests on exact measures and numerical signifiers that sort differences of capacities to move and control space and assign importance to them accordingly (Bauman 2000, 110). The revolutionary aspect of these new vehicles was their ability to move faster than human legs or animals to cross a certain distance, and so the perception and measurement of time were no longer dependent on "wetware" or human cognitive capacity but rather on the effectiveness of the "hardware" constructed to travel. As Bauman explains further:

When such non-human and non-animal means of transportation appeared, the time needed to travel ceased to be the feature of distance and inflexible 'wetware'; it became instead the attribute of the technique of traveling. Time has become the problem of the 'hardware' humans could invent, build, appropriate, use, and control, not of the hopelessly unstretchable 'wetware' nor the notoriously capricious and whimsical powers of wind or water indifferent to human manipulation by the same token, time has become a factor independent of inert and immutable dimensions of landmasses or seas. Time was different from space because, unlike space, it could be changed and manipulated; it has become a factor of disruption: the dynamic partner in the time-space wedlock (2000, 111) (emphasis added).

What this points towards is a major epistemological shift, for it transformed time and space into "resources" and "tools" that could be manipulated and controlled to optimize performance. This point in history marks the birth of the expression "time is money" that would paint the language of generations to come. Bauman comments on this in a powerful statement, mentioning that "time became money once it had become a tool (or a weapon?) deployed primarily in the ongoing effort of overcoming the resistance of space: shortening distances, stripping the 'remoteness' of the meaning of an obstacle, let alone of a limit, to human ambition." (Bauman 2000, 112) It is this profound effect on the modern self and the formation of modern subjectivities that concerns us the most with regard to the production and propagation of the development discourse, whose practice, in turn, produces a number of crises, as shall be elaborated shortly.

The way in which development has become a hegemonic regime of representation poses an epistemic threat to the plurality of cultures and knowledge production. In being so, the continued propagation of the development paradigm leaves very little, if any, room at all for other cultures and paradigms to flourish. The way in which the development discourse has produced and continues to produce modern subjectivities leaves very little room for alternative conceptualizations of social reality. Categories such as the "third world," "underdeveloped," or "developing" versus "developed" have become more than simple tools to describe a country's level of material advancement; they have come to be almost like ethnic identities that separate the world population in a caste system. The following section thus elaborates on how the development paradigm has managed to disintegrate traditional social structures to make way for the rule of neoliberal markets and how this shift has resulted in the destruction of nature and contributed both to the loss of communal

spaces as well as the transformation of self-identity, moving from a sense of rootedness in community to a more individualistic view that results in the alienation of individuals.

3.2. The Practice of Development

Social Crisis and the Tragedy of the Commons

The Enclosure of the Commons

The enclosure of the commons - or "the dissolution of communal land" - that took place in Britain during the eighteenth century and soon spread everywhere else has arguably marked the beginning of Capitalism and the dawn of individualistic economics inasmuch as it constituted a "systematic effort to construct the individual as the basic unit of society" (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 95). Being characterized by a rise in the industrialization of society, privatization of land, and commodification of space, one of the profound consequences of this period was a gradual loss of communal land, which led to a loss of people's physical as well as cultural space. In other words, the dissolution of the community-owned land directly resulted in the fracture of communal bonds that constituted a kind of social infrastructure. The result was the transformation of society into atomized individuals alienated from their respective communities to become the basic units of the labor force (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 95). In short, replacing the organic communities that existed before, society was reorganized around the model of the self-regulating market, and with that, an important shift in language occurred: the rise of the language of resources. Instead of a web of interconnected community *members*, humans now became "resources" best represented in the language of *numbers*.

In any case, the subsequent rise in global trade stemming from this shift eventually played a significant role in the two world wars and the Great Depression around the beginning of the 20th century. As a response to the devastating social challenges brought about in the post-war period, theorists like Karl Polanyi led the intellectual efforts to advocate for a new kind of social pact and attempt to create a more socially oriented economy. "The pact took form of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's New Deal, adopted in many countries in different forms and intensities. The new arrangement assumed that some kind of economic coordination is indispensable" (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 95). The three key measures that granted this deal its substance are primarily "the institutional integration of

the working class...; the principle of increased wages exchanged for increases in productivity; and the creation of the welfare state, investing in education, health, and other social services" (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 95). In spite of such efforts to contain "the excesses of the 19th century free markets" through redirecting the economy towards the social (or as Polanyi calls it: "the double movement"), these kinds of neoliberal "excesses" not only have survived to this day but also managed to find new ways to express themselves. Governments and international institutions in leadership positions still employ a neoliberal discourse that takes the idea of the government as the only qualified agent to manage the current struggles as its base. While on the ground, practical experience attests to the fact that this monopoly of control and power at the hands of the state has only resulted in the surge of what social geographer David Harvey calls "accumulation by dispossession," meaning a "new imperialism" leading to the enrichment of a minority by depriving the majority of their wealth (for example, communal or indigenous land)" (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 97). It is on this basis that the need for a new "double movement" is pertinent nowadays more than ever, as many have been increasingly calling for the need to push the economy to the margins in order to recover the commons.

What is the Meaning of Commons?

Commons is an overarching term used to refer to various modes of existence and forms of social organization. Simply put, it refers to the different practices and creations that extend beyond the private sphere without necessarily fitting into the category of the public either. One example of commons is lands that were traditionally used by a certain community for agricultural purposes such as sowing, planting or grazing animals etc. The term "commonism" refers to a growing alliance between those who defend, restore, or create their own shared resources i.e., commons, and those who aim to protect what is left of the biosphere while distancing themselves from individualistic consumerism (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 123). This term has now become more inclusive and encompassing, used to iterate new meanings of commons. Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky explain this new turn as follows: "Since the 1980s... many peasants, urban marginals, and de-professionalized intellectuals have been trying to disconnect themselves from the dominant developmentalist institutions that permeate the global South." This deeply

reaching social transformation, as they describe it, is increasingly referred to as the "revolution of the new commons." They go on to further explain that "there is no single word to fully express the diversity of social struggles attempting to create, at the grassroots, new ways of life and government. But calling them commons roots these new shapes of society in an old tradition that expresses their spirit and orientation well" (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 122).

The general perception of commons has usually been one of lacking capital, education, structure, work ethic, and enough formality to be included in national accounts of "development." Nonetheless, time and again, common people have proven their high adaptability to challenges and harsh situations where the state or the distant upper class has had little to offer. Perhaps today, more than before, commons all over the world are leading a movement away from conventional oaths of development steeped in neoliberal economics. Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky consider this "new revolution of the commons" as a form of "hope emerging from the margins" (2013, 70). What the recognition and legitimization of such grassroots movements of the commons would mean is not to "include" them in already existing development plans but to allow them the space to actively challenge the space of conventional development by imposing limits on its reach (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky, 95).

The Modern Nation State and the Question of Political Imagination

A major signifier in the practice of development and the problems it results in is the question of political imagination. The story of peasants around the world is one that properly illustrates the misdoings of development, especially with regard to the process of state formation and the metamorphosis of pre-modern individual subjectivities into one prototype that fits this new context: the category of the citizen. A good example in this regard is the historical evolution of the state of Mexican peasants, which is representative of the modern state-building process that took place in many other countries and not just Mexico, as Gustavo Esteva relates in his account *Regenerating People's Spaces*. The process of modernization and state-building that took over Mexico starting in the 19th century primarily consisted of overtaking the communal land that belonged to peasants and turning it into private property, and the transformation of these peasants into "citizens"

who, along with the enclosed common lands, would be embedded in the new abstraction of what would be known as “the national society” or “the nation.” On the ground, by the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the so-called national territory was but the private property of one percent of the total population, while the fate of most peasants was reduced to forms of labor, serfdom, or what resembled modern slavery leaving these individuals little choice to escape a state of destitution. As such, the flipside of the apparent success by conventional economic and political standards was the dissolution of communal land and the social fabric of the peasant community (Esteva 1987, 125-126).

The process of state-building in the majority of industrialized countries was preceded by a deep formation of national identity. For countries of Western Europe, the genesis of the modern nation-state was an organic product, albeit questionable, of a consistent historical trajectory. The concept of the nation-state was based on the collusion of the growing middle class and a market to satisfy its needs, resulting in the emergence of the "nation." The issue at stake in most of the so-called "developing" countries is that this political model was "transplanted" into the fabric of societies that did not experience the same political and socio-economic turmoil that swept over Europe in the early modern era. "In contrast ... this sequence was reversed. Political authority -the state – emerged from independence before the nation, that is, before developing a true bourgeoisie and a unifying national capitalist economy" (de Rivero 2010, 1). In the context of a critique of development theory, the critique of the modern nation-state as an essential carrier of developmentalist ideology and the dissolution of traditional societies has been left out for the most part.

In his book *State-Directed Development: Political Power and Industrialization in the Global Periphery*, Atul Kohli argues that the economic role of the state does not necessitate any justification. In other words, the existence of the state as the carrier of development projects has not only reached a state of legitimacy but has also become a truth hardwired in the social imaginary to the level that it is rarely questioned. Kohli goes on to mention that:

Historians of economic processes repeatedly emphasize the significance of institutions, especially the role of government. Lloyd Reynolds, for example, concluded his major study of economic growth in the "Third World" by observing that the analysis of underlying economic growth factors does not fully reveal the "mystery" of "sources of sustained growth ."What is missing from the economic

models, according to him, "can be labeled as political. government matters."
(Kohli 2004, 3)

Similarly, in his address to the American Economic Association, renowned economist W. Arthur Lewis noted that the cornerstone of any holistic understanding of "the engine of growth" would be "a theory of government, where government would appear to be as much the problem as the solution" (Kohli 2004, 3). This statement is crucial in understanding the nature of development theory inasmuch as it highlights two of its defining features. While it points to "the engine of growth" as the essence of development, or the 'what' in the development process, the 'who' or the main agent in such a process is the nation-state as a modern conception of government. Such an argument is not peculiar in development theories. Economic historians have repeatedly emphasized the role of institutions in steering economic development in countries, as mentioned above, and central to these institutions is the state. In this vein, a bulk of critiques of classical development theories have focused on the mechanisms of state intervention to promote socio-economic development but left out the critique of the state as a particularly modern form of political imagination that deserves just as much critique, if not more. Oftentimes, the state is seen as a simple system of mediation: a tool that merely follows the directions set by others. It becomes fascist, socialist, or democratic depending on the group that controls it. However, "the problem is not a small elite of corrupt oligarchs who use the state for their own ends. The problem is the state itself" (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 114). From the most extreme dictatorships to the purest democracies, the nation-state has always been and remains a structure of control and domination forced on the people to serve the interests of capital. Serving and protecting capital was the main purpose for which the state was designed, with its modern form absorbing and perverting all pre-existing forms of nation and state (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 115). At the heart of the state-building project lies the idea of the "national economy." Numerous post-colonial states espoused the mainstream understanding of economics and "the very idea of economic growth as a leading feature of economy and the idea of progress" (Al-Daghistani 2024, 25). In this vein,

The proliferation of models, statistics, plans, and programs of economic discourse all claim to represent the different elements and relationships of a real object, the national economy. Yet this object, as one could show at length, is itself constituted

as a discursive process, a phenomenon of values, representations, communications, meanings, goals, and uses, none of which can be separated from or said to pre-exist their representation in economic discourse (Al-Daghistani 2024, 25-26).

In the same vein, what we now call the "international community" is increasingly asserting the same hegemony of the state in the sense that it subtly still asserts other nations to accept a new form of "economic imperialism." International institutions and NGOs such as the World Bank or the United Nations are still deemed problematic in the sense that they adopt a top-down approach to address social issues. Another issue that persists is the ever-growing disconnection between theorizers and development "experts" crafting development plans while not being fully immersed in the experience of "recipients" of such programs at the grassroots. Despite living a first-hand experience of "development issues" and being better acquainted with the lived reality of these issues, communities on the ground are usually not included in the planning of solutions and are left to deal with recommendations of "experts" who rarely share their same daily experience.

Another issue that emerges with the idea of the international community and big institutions operating at a massive scale is what could be referred to as a "crisis of proportion." Against the limited human capacity of a limited elite to process social reality issues at a massive international level, this modern approach to governance still persists as a result of an illusion of control. As Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky put it, the point is that if the disconnection between the level of grassroots lived reality and that of problem-solving and planning solutions is that big, how can the people at this top level possibly provide truly authentic and sustainable solutions to respective social issues? This crisis of proportion is thus not only a main cause of the dissolution of social bonds and the social infrastructure, as elaborated before, but also a major player in the imminent global environmental crisis (2013, 113).

One way to illustrate the misdoings of state-level planning is the story of the replacement of centuries-old indigenous agricultural methods in Mexico, consisting of rotating and diversifying crops over the land, with an imported standardized method that focuses on the massive production of single crops for their higher preferability in the global market. Historically, generations of Mexicans have been growing and cultivating corn and maize, two main staples of the Mexican diet and culture. However, upon the arrival of European

settlers to Mexico, the focus of agriculture shifted to the cultivation of crops that were preferred in Europe, such as wheat, sugarcane, tobacco, and cotton. Since the 1990s, the continued neoliberal policies in the field of agriculture resulted in a gradual social dissolution of the maize farming communities, which were increasingly facing problems of "loss of subsistence farming and increased-out migration" (Bower, Prieto, and Kim 2020). The indigenous crop rotation method that Mexican peasants have been using for centuries was, on the one hand, contributing to the preservation of the vitality of the soil and its resilience to better stand in the face of climate change and environmental challenges. On the other hand, such a convivial exchange of crops and seeds among community members was simultaneously weaving an organic social fabric indirectly aimed at strengthening community relations and building ties of friendship and trust through the exchange of seeds and agricultural savoir-faire. In this sense, the arrival of large-scale development plans to standardize the agriculture of the country not only substituted the traditional indigenous knowledge of agriculture for modern techniques prioritizing efficiency and profit; in parallel, this process of modernization was also transforming a complex and intricate social fabric built on an exchange of favors into a standard society of disconnected individuals that serve the labor force for the sake of the national economy. Such examples of policies that replaced vernacular ways of food production and dealing with the land have arguably made such communities more vulnerable and exposed to the dangers of climate change, not to mention the complete disintegration of entire farming communities who flocked to urban centers in search of better work opportunities.

Environmental Crisis and the Destruction of Nature

From a material standpoint, the environmental crisis that hovers around like a time bomb proves the mythical nature of the development discourse. Going hand in hand with the tragedy of the commons, the destruction of nature started with the epistemic shift that transformed it from being an integral part of the commons into being a mere "resource" for economic production. Initially, 'resources' implied life. Etymologically, its Latin root comes from the verb *surgere*, which evoked the image of a spring that continually rises from the ground", highlighting the inherent quality of self-regeneration of a 're-source'

even while being repeatedly used. Additionally, this concept of a resource pointed to a pre-modern view which based the relationship between nature and humans on principles of reciprocity and regeneration, "that the earth bestows gifts on humans who, in turn, are well advised to show diligence in order not to suffocate her generosity" (Shiva 1992, 228). However, the onset of industrialism and colonialism brought about an epistemological shift in the meaning of resources. Natural (and later human) resources were rendered into mere parts needed as input for production and trade. "In this view, nature has been clearly stripped of her creative powers; she has turned into a container for raw materials waiting to be transformed into outputs for commodity production" (Shiva 1992, 228). With the priority now becoming the perpetual growth of capital and the continuous generation of revenues, this attitude of unrestrained economic exploitation resulted in nature's loss of the capacity to regenerate, and with it, the principle of reciprocity was also gone. This rendering of natural resources into passive recipients of development, now completely dependent on human intervention to 'regenerate,' provided fertile ground for the consolidation of a new belief in capital and technology as the sole means through which nature can 'develop' (Shiva 1992, 228). In this sense,

Nature, whose real nature it is to rise again, was transformed by this Western worldview into dead and manipulable matter. Its capacity to renew and grow had been denied. It had become dependent on people. The development of people was thus essential for the development of nature... Since nature needed to be 'developed' by humans, people also had to be developed from their primitive, backward states of embeddedness in nature. Nature's transformation into natural resources needed to go hand in hand with the transformation of culturally diverse people into 'skilled human resources' (Shiva 1992, 229).

The transformation of people from community members into 'human resources' thus went hand in hand with 'the development of natural resources' to facilitate their commercial exploitation. By this means, a new dualism between humans and nature was created. Instead of a relationship based on restraint, accountability, and reciprocity in a view where people are embedded in their natural surroundings, nature was transformed from a space of belonging to an object of uncontrolled exploitation. Starting with colonialism, this exploitation took place in two phases. The first phase represented a rapacious exploitation of 'natural resources', abundant and largely available in the colonies, with no concern for regeneration. Naturally, this pattern of consumption resulted in the creation of degradation

and scarcity, leading to the second phase where "the 'management' of 'natural resources' became important in order to maintain continued supplies of raw material for commerce and industry... 'Management of natural resources' has therefore been a managerial fix for resource scarcity resulting from the uncontrolled destruction of nature" (Shiva 1992, 229). This managerial shift represents a major turnaround in the history of development, especially in the wake of the post-war period and its "technological euphoria" brought about by rapid advances in science and technology and its promised unlimited abundance by replacing scarce materials with plentiful ones. Silk, cotton, and wool were substituted for synthetic fibers, organic manures replaced with chemical fertilizers, as well as seeds converted into genetically modified crops; all of these alterations seemed to liberate society from the natural constraints of limited land and its resources while seemingly providing an unlimited reserve of substitutes (Shiva 1992, 229).

In light of this, Oswaldo De Rivero (2019, viii) contends that "owing to climate change, today more than ever, development is a myth because all countries (developed as well the so-called, erroneously, "developing countries") are mired in a crisis of civilization." This crisis of civilization is a result of the adoption of an unsustainable urbanization process, what he calls the "California model," namely a product of rapid and massive urban expansion (as has occurred in California). He continues:

Today, the Californian model of urban expansion is, to a lesser or greater degree, the global paradigm of urbanization and civilization. All the world's cities expand by pouring cement; by destroying agricultural lands and biodiversity; by insatiably devouring water, food and petroleum; and by turning the private automobile with its combustion engine into the transport king, sewing into the atmosphere tons of CO₂ and other greenhouse gases, polluting the air and compounding global warming (de Rivero 2019, iii).

Urban expansion, having reached more than 50% in 2010 and expected to rise above 80% by the year 2050, endangers more than ever agricultural lands, forests, and water supplies that are supposed to be primarily reserved for food production. Instead, a rising urban population inevitably requires a high supply of these resources, on top of which it contributes to the ever-increasing levels of Greenhouse gas emissions and pollution due to the surge in urban automobile traffic (among other factors) that naturally comes hand in hand with the expansion of urban population. The greater part of this massive urban expansion is happening in the so-called "under-developed" countries of Asia, Africa, and

Latin America. By UN statistics, urbanization in these countries is augmenting urban population by half a million people every week. Sustaining such a mass of urban population thus requires much higher levels of water, food, and energy consumption. With the already worrisome trend of increasingly depleted and expensive resources, this urbanization results in what De Rivero calls a physical-social imbalance emerging between the amount of available resources on the one hand and the ever increasing urban population on the other (de Rivero 2019, ix).

In spite of this current state of affairs, a great many actors still do not fully realize that these prevailing afflictions constitute a crisis of civilization. Faced with the increasing threat of global warming as well as an inability to change the consumption patterns it has long established, this model of urban civilization is thus incapable of sustaining its own existence. Contrary to the conventional fear of the growing world population as the main trigger of scarcity and climate change, “it is a crisis of the style of urban life – consumerist, free spending, environmentally unsustainable – of the California model, which has ended in unstoppable global warming” (de Rivero 2019, ix-xi). The concept of “sustainability” or “sustainable development” has thus risen to counter such concerns in the development scene. However, "sustainable development" stands as an oxymoron rather than a creative solution to resource depletion and climate change. The major issue with this prominent discourse lies in its "fundamentally biased orientation: it calls for extended management, but disregards intelligent self-limitation" (Sachs 1992b, 34). In other words, development and sustainability are incompatible because the problem lies essentially in the consumption patterns it spreads, especially of energy sources. Development cannot be sustainable at present because even a mix of different renewable energies cannot replace the daily demand for millions of barrels of oil to sustain the billions of kilowatt-hours that power the multi-trillion-dollar global economy (de Rivero 2019, x). In this sense, “calls for securing the survival of the planet are often, upon closer inspection, nothing else than calls for the survival of the industrial system” (Esteva 1992, 35).

Psychological Crisis and the Alienation of the Human Soul

Another leading issue in the practice of development as unlimited growth has to do with the new forms of subjectivity it created in the modern self. The modern fragmentation of

the once organic kinship-based social structures created by the system of Capitalism indeed accounts for one of the major reasons behind the rise of fragmented, disenchanted, and sometimes narcissistic individuals (Hallaq 2012, 4). One of the ironies of the modern world is this increased feeling of alienation and burnout in a society that promises more connection and transcending local boundaries through processes of globalization. The communities that existed before globalization were in a sense limited geographically, but perceived their borders as horizons easily permeable to slide between communities and contexts, a feature that does not stand true in modern urban life with increased gated communities and surveillance techniques that meticulously filter what goes in and out of a given territory. While the modern global society claims to be as connected as ever, the sense of fencing we experience is like no other. Communities in the past provide good illustrations of the balance between preserving a certain local lifestyle while still allowing a sense of openness and flexibility of movement within their spaces, both physical and cultural. “Their spaces are localized – located in a specific place – but unlimited, i.e., without defined limits. They travel a lot. Some of them settle for years in another town or city, or even in another country, but they always keep, as a point of reference, that commons to which they belong, and which belongs to them” (Esteva 1987, 132).

With the arrival of Capitalism, these normative and protective social networks were dismantled in a way that completely changed the meaning of society. What centrally characterizes modern ideology is the subordination of social reality to the individual, considered an absolutely autonomous and independent being. This ideology is what distinguishes modern Western societies from others which, in the contrary, subordinate the individual to the totality of the social. Margaret Thatcher has an infamous declaration that "there is no such thing as society ."Her catchphrase provides an excellent illustration of society's retrieval from the stage to the advantage of the individual. 'No society' signifies that society is no longer an agent of social change; it means "No more salvation by society' – suggesting (albeit by omission rather than commission) that, by implication, the responsibility for damnation cannot be laid at society's door either: redemption and doom alike are of your making and solely your concern – the outcome of what you, the free agent, have been freely doing with your life" (Bauman 2000, 64). Left to his own, the modern subject internalizes the identity of *Homo oeconomicus*, whether consciously or

not, which at a surface level appears as a description of "a rational (that is, calculating) individual, who disposes of scarce resources that can be allocated to various uses, but whose needs are unlimited, who makes self-interested choices, and who seeks to obtain the greatest satisfaction with the minimum effort" (Rist 2011, 37). Capitalist development, in this sense, produces or depends on the production of alienation and the corruption of the human soul (Nadarajah 2014, 3).

The Prozac Economy and the Rise of the Cognetariat

A pertinent aspect of this psychological crisis that characterizes the practice of development is the surge in loneliness and psychological disorders that are to a large extent results of the disintegration of traditional pre-capitalist societies. Modern society was built on the idea of human governance over a world designed around a human scale. The purpose of this governance is to discipline bodies, language and communicational relations (Berardi 2009, 198). Foucault argues that disciplines arise from the notable historical conjuncture between the rapid growth of population and the expansion of production systems in the eighteenth century (Foucault 1995, 218). Discipline involves transforming the world into a domain governed by reason, while simultaneously confining, repressing, segregating and medicalizing irrationality. The emergence of the industrial model of production relies on the same process of discipline, while also redefining it. In an industrial factory, the productive relationship between machine and body was formed through gradual interaction that was conscious, visible and controllable. Throughout this process, both the capitalist machine and the anatomical body are mutually modeled. In other words, mechanics and anatomy are what unite the system of productive bodies occupying the physical space of objects, movements and transformations. In this tangible space, labor and conflict are easily manifested, and thus power remains organized accordingly (Berardi 2009, 198-199).

However, "once the digital appears on the horizon of social life, the central factors of social relations move from the analogical domain (of sizes, bodies, drives) to that of algorithms (relations, constants, simulations)" (Berardi 2009, 199). What this means is, the shift from industrialism to information economy implies a profound change at the level of manipulation of capital: instead of being physically manipulated, social products become manufactured at a conceptual level. The result, to use Bauman's terminology, is

the retrieval of human wetware as a unit of measure of time and space and production processes to the advantage of the new technologies. In other words, in this new site, what determines and counts the construction of social phenomena is no longer the human measure but these 'invisible' algorithms and technologies. As such,

Domination therefore shifts from the domain of bodily, mechanical and political disciplining to that of logical and psychological, or logical and biogenic automatisms. *Not the body but the soul becomes the subject of techno-social domination...* Control over the body is no longer exerted by molar mechanisms of constriction, but by micro machines that are incorporated into the organism through psychopharmacology, mass communication and the predisposition of informatics interfaces. That means that *control over the body is exerted by the modeling of the soul* (Berardi 2009, 200) (emphasis added).

A major marker of our times, as Berardi argues, is the shift from physical or industrial labor to cognitive labor. The supposedly freed time that was previously dedicated to physical labor has now transformed into what he names "cyber time," a kind of new mental processing that occurs within a different kind of space: "cyberspace." In this collision of cyberspace and cyber time, work becomes a system operating with fluid boundaries making it increasingly difficult to switch on and off between modes of rest and work. The invisible nature of cognitive labor makes it difficult to measure 'how much' the worker needs to work to reach their respective milestones. It even makes it more difficult to set standards of measuring productivity, for cognitive ability is not as easy to measure as physical produce. Yet, this age of cognitive labor is marketed as revolutionary for it has managed to "free" time from the shackles of physical work, while it produces a new kind of enslavement to capitalist production thanks to digital technology, which realized the capitalist dream of reaching "the neuro-worker" wherever and whenever needed for the production wheel to keep moving nonstop in favor of more production of capital. In this context, "depression occurs when the speed and complexity of the flows of information overwhelm the capacities of the social brain to manage these flows, inducing a panic that concludes, shortly thereafter, with a depressive plunge. Depression is so widespread today because the contemporary organizations of production of surplus value is founded on the phenomenon -the accumulation- of speed." (Berardi 2009, 10).

A most compelling observation about this transformation in labor production is the worker's transition from a supposed state of resistance to what Berardi calls an

“investment of desire” in this unusual workspace (2009, 78). Work, for which people offer their specific competences, their creative, innovative and communicative energies, meaning the best part of their intellectual capacities, becomes the center of attention, on which people place their highest bets, not only economically but also psychologically. This excessive level of personal investment, is at the same time ironically coupled with a certain expectation of maintaining formal and professional labor relations within this space of info production, that still sustains a certain social perception and individual internalization of this kind of cognitive labor as the highest form of self-actualization. In other words, ~~the~~ what Berardi calls the “neuro-worker” in this cognitive turn comes to value the most that which values it the least. And so the result of this strange connection between the worker and his work is the emergence of an economy that produces depression and psychological burnout. Be that as it may, depression in this context still does not come out as a symptom of the systemic failure of the current economy, in need of being urgently addressed at a root-cause level. Instead, it is explained as being an anomaly occurring in feeble individuals lacking sufficient resilience to navigate the corporate world, who are thus offered the solution of anti-depressants to help them catch up with the inevitable race against time. It is in this way that the economy has become extremely dependent on the Prozac effect, as Berardi contends, leading to the rise of a new class of workers subordinated to cognitive Capitalism: "the cognitariat ."In light of this, Capitalism can be defined as "the mobilization of a pathos and the organization of a mood; its subject, a field of desire, a point of inflexion for an impersonal affect that circulates like a rumor. The cognitariat carries a virus" (Berardi 2009, 10). In this site, the individual is rendered into a passive being who no longer feels compelled to act or resist, acquiring an attitude of passivity that points towards a refusal, or dissociation from a "system of possibilities that are not ours", as Berardi continues (Berardi 2009, 10). It is this "mentalization" of production processes that consequently alienates and enslaves the human soul, another leading crisis in the practice of development as unlimited growth which goes as far as seeking to transform "every fragment of mental activity into capital" (Berardi 2009, 24).

3.3. Some Historical Critiques of Development:

By the early nineteen sixties, the general framework of development was in place both conceptually and institutionally. "The political preliminaries were over, we might say, so that economics was able to sweep onto centre-stage" (Rist 2019, 92). Ever since Truman had established the binary of development/underdevelopment in the second half of the past century, underdevelopment became an uncontested reality taken for granted. Since it was now a "real" phenomenon, all kinds of explanations started appearing to tackle its historical and material causes. Some takes, like modernization theory, did not give much importance to the historical period of gestation of underdevelopment. In a nutshell, this theory studies the process through which modernization unfolds in societies to achieve economic progress. Most prominent in this camp was Walt W. Rostow, whose *Stages of Economic Growth* provided fertile ground for discussions on how to carry out the task of modernizing societies with rather more "primitive" economies in order to reach a stage of *maturation* that resembled the industrialized countries at the time. Although his theory is now widely criticized for being steeped in a linear evolutionary outlook, its popularity at the time did indeed offer a clear source of inspiration for policies and the general practice of international relations (Rist 2019, 93) and in many ways, has contributed to the consolidation of the perception of economics as an "objective" science that operates according to natural laws (Rist 2019, 107).

On the other hand, other approaches to development centered their analyses on the consequences of colonial exploitation and the multiple processes of the so-called primitive accumulation of capital. In this vein, "pragmatic attention also began to be given to the internal and external factors that seemed to be the current cause of underdevelopment: terms of trade, unequal exchange, dependency, protectionism, imperfections of the market, corruption, lack of democracy or entrepreneurship..." (Esteva 1992, 7). The case of Latin America for example illustrates the way in which multiple institutions and entities (such as the Peace Corps, the War on Poverty, the Point Four Program, the Alliance for Progress etc.) contributed to the consolidation of the notion of underdevelopment in popular imagination (Esteva 1992, 7). However, most relevant to us in the sense of illustrating the need for a radical critique of development, is the case of dependency theorists.

3.3.1. Dependency Theory and Beyond

Emerging as a counteroffensive to modernization theory, dependency theory essentially explains the process of development in terms of systems of domination and exploitation in which resources flow from impoverished peripheries to core wealthy states who achieve a state of development at the expense of the underdevelopment of others. The dependency school brought together a number of intellectuals from different disciplines who shared this common sensibility, most of whom hailed from Latin and North America. The school later opened up to include researchers from other continents such as Samir Amin from Africa, Pierre Jalée, Dieter Senghaas and the prominent André Gunder Frank from Europe (Rist 2014, 109). Contrary to Rostow's theory of modernization as Western-induced linear economic growth, *dependentistas*¹⁵ based themselves on the study of real history, instead of the philosophy of history as in the case of Rostow, as a product of the social circumstances created by men and women in a system of interconnected international relations. In this world system, colonialism constituted the starting point of underdevelopment in the peripheries, which required a certain dissociation from the global system, while internal social inequalities reflected the same issue of exploitation and for them demanded the corrective intervention of the state (Rist 2014, 110-111). *Dependentistas* challenged the dualist thesis of developmentalist-modernist theory which divides societies into modern developed and traditional backward ones. Their argument is that this phenomenon of "backwardness" immensely depends on the development of modern urban enclaves, which in their view develop in a way that is parasitical on the underdevelopment of peripheries, not because these hinterland regions are essentially backward (Chew and Lauderdale 2010, 3).

3.3.2. World-Systems Analysis

Another major theory in this context is Immanuel Wallerstein's World Systems Analysis. Departing from the problem of the fragmentation of social sciences resulting in a fragmented perception of reality (i.e., the economic being separate from the social itself disconnected from the cultural, etc.), Wallerstein argues that social "phenomena dealt with

¹⁵ This term refers to the thinkers associated with the dependency school

in these separate boxes¹⁶ are so closely intermeshed that each presumes the other, each affects the other, each is incomprehensible without lacking into account the other boxes" (Wallerstein 2004, x). In this modern world system, Wallerstein argues that the internal and external manifestations of modernization and development in different parts of the world is interconnected as the world constitutes one system instead of being perceived as separate ones, or three worlds for instance (in reference to the three worlds theory). In his account, the origin of Western European capitalist domination goes back to "the feudal crisis," meaning the expansion of commerce and population in medieval Europe beyond the limitations of the feudal system, which led to a severe economic crisis. On this basis, Europe moved from feudalism to Capitalism in order to sustain continuous economic growth. The capitalist system was based on an international division of labor which places different regions within one system of relationships to supply labor and resources.

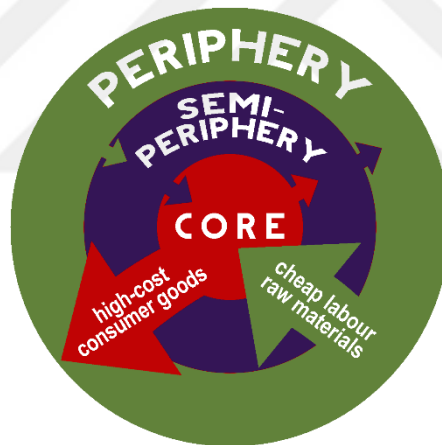


Figure 3 A Visual Representation of the Core-Periphery Model as in Dependency Theory and World Systems Analysis¹⁷

Accordingly, Wallerstein breaks these regions into four main categories. First, the core, standing for states that benefit the most from capitalist economy with a high level of economic development as well as political development encompassing the presence of a strong central government with an extensive bureaucracy and a large mercenary army. Second, the semi-periphery which resides between the core and the peripheries; these regions represent former core states in decline or peripheries aspiring to improve their

¹⁶ Meaning social sciences

¹⁷Retrieved from

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dependency_theory#/media/File:Wallerstein's_Core-periphery_model.png

economic position in the world; their access to the production of high quality and high-cost goods and international banking remains very limited, which hinders their predominance in international trade. Third, the periphery, representing areas that provide the bulk of raw materials to the core states while relying on coercive labor practices. They usually also lack strong central governments or remain under the pervasive control of other states. Fourth and last is the external which stands for areas that manage, for the most part, to stay outside the modern system of the world economy by maintaining their own vernacular economic systems (Amirabedini 2014, 67-68).

3.3.3. Underdevelopment or Revolution?

Another leading figure in the dependency school and the discussion on world systems analysis is the previously mentioned André Gunder Frank, a German-American economic historian and sociologist who is widely known for his phrase “the development of underdevelopment” which, towards the end of his life, he changed to “the underdevelopment of development”. In a similar vein of Wallerstein's argument and the general dependency perception, Frank departs from a critique of modernization theory which explains underdevelopment based on the absence of a set of internal factors within the subject region or state. In his view, such a perception of obstacles to development is extremely fallible for its exclusive focus on the internal conditions of countries instead of "understanding the process as a result of mechanisms tying the country to the economically and technologically advanced centers of the world" (Chew and Lauderdale 2010, 2). As many dependency theorists, Frank argues for a set of strategies for "liberation from underdevelopment" directed towards two major fronts: (1) the external change in the structural system that ties third-world countries to powerful imperial metropolises, and (2) internal reforms within the country mainly focused on the transformation of the ruling class. For Frank, as well as other dependency theorists, he advocated a socialist revolution by and large as the only way out for these underdeveloped countries (Chew and Lauderdale 2010, 3-4).

In his 1968 essay "Capitalist Underdevelopment or Socialist Revolution," Frank argues that the native and local bourgeoisie in Latin America, and by extension in Asia and Africa, is the immediate enemy of national liberation, withstanding that the principal enemy

remains imperialism which played and continues to play a major role in the transformation of local class structures in these regions in the image of "the colonial structure of international capitalism, from mercantilism to imperialism" (Frank 1969, 371). In the same colonial structure in which metropolises of Spain, North America and Europe subjected countries of Latin America to political domination and economic exploitation, national metropolises extending throughout Latin America similarly subject their provincial and local centers to a kind of internal imperialism. Therefore, in his view, the anti-imperialist struggle must depart from the structure of class struggle. He continues: "Popular mobilization against the immediate class enemy on the national and local levels produces a stronger confrontation with the principal imperialist enemy than does direct anti-imperialist mobilization" (Frank 1969, 371), therefore, he goes on:

The strategic coincidence of class struggle and the anti-imperialist struggle, and the tactical precedence of class struggle in Latin America over the anti-imperialist struggle against the metropolitan bourgeoisie, is obviously valid for guerilla warfare, which must begin against the national bourgeoisie of the country and it is also valid for the ideological and political struggle that must be directed not only against the imperialist and colonial enemy but against the native class enemy (ibid, 372).

Such a take illustrates some of the Marxist and Neo-Marxist underpinnings of the dependency school, although many intellectuals, including Frank, did not endorse Marx's linear view of history. This discussion on revolution and development is very important as it represents a thread that connects socialist thinkers, or those associated with this camp, throughout different stages in their critique of development. Harry Cleaver enumerates some of the most prominent takes in this regard starting with pre-Marxian analyses of how capitalist development produces extreme concentrations of wealth alongside extreme impoverishment and suffering, to Marx's takes on class antagonism and capitalist exploitation, through the idea of "imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism" as in the thought of Rosa Luxemburg, Lenin and Bukharin, to the more recent critiques of *dependentistas* and the likes. However, a common critique of socialists in general and dependency theorists in particular lies in their adoption of an alternative view of development instead of abandoning the development project altogether (Cleaver 1992, 260).

3.3.4. Appraisal

Although dependency theory was the first major challenge to Eurocentric academic discourse, it was limited inasmuch as it restricted its analysis almost exclusively to the economic dimension and political considerations to a lesser extent. Indeed, it did provide an alternative paradigm that was more closely accorded with the experience of the “third world”, yet it failed in addressing the cultural aspect of domination and control which constitutes a crucial dimension in the understanding of power relations and resistance strategies to such hegemonies. In this sense, dependency theory ended up sharing the same premises of the modernization discourse for it did not really question the desirability of development, or the existence of underdevelopment as a socially constructed phenomenon, conceived in terms of presence (or absence) of economic growth, liberal democracy, and industrialization. Together with other Marxist and socialist theorists, *dependentistas* implicitly endorsed and advanced the evolutionary and linear model of progress. Vincent Tucker scrupulously sums up the main issue with dependency theorists in their neglect of ecological and social ramifications of development as their remaining “profoundly modern in their worldview” (Tucker 2013, 12).

This view is illustrated in the case of USSR-sponsored "socialist development," which did not significantly differ from capitalist development in the end. "The extremely rapid (by historical standards) industrialization of the USSR, which at the time of the Revolution of 1917 was still an overwhelmingly agrarian society, convinced many of the superiority of socialist over capitalist development, of socialism over capitalism, *tout court*" (Clever 1992, 260). This socialist view was extremely appealing to a number of anti-colonial movements in various third world countries, who often equated anti-colonialism with anti-capitalism, a view that was further reinforced through watching the Soviet efforts of fostering socialist development. This soviet-style socialist development was actually adopted by countries such as Cuba and China after their revolutions in addition to some Eastern European states in the aftermath of the second world war. The political climate of the Cold War thus established these two rival forms of development which contested on the ground of Third World countries, with Capitalism representing the First World while Socialists retrieved to the Second. Both camps sought to extend their development models, the Americans and their allies through strategies of foreign aid and the likes of Point Four,

while the socialists mainly supported a number of revolutionary movements, partly through foreign aid packages as well. The irony was that, in their fight against Western Capitalism, Socialists ended up devising development strategies that parallel Western methods inasmuch as they financed trade and the development of infrastructure such as dams, roads, schools, agricultural research, etc. Their only point of divergence was the lack of private foreign investment in their models (Cleaver 1992, 261).

Fast forward, socialism as a worldview and philosophy experienced a massive decline after more than seventy years, leaving a number of post-soviet societies in a situation of destitution and political turmoil. A prominent explanation of such a decline is the unidimensional nature of the socialist view which, even in its fight against Capitalism, reduced the essence of the human being to the material world, and thus could only conceive of development and social justice almost exclusively in terms of ownership of resources and means of production. While the violence of Capitalism remains undeniable in view of its production of extreme issues of political and social injustice, as well as the ever-growing wide gap it created between the rich and the poor and the consolidation of a minority of oligarchs controlling the vast majority of social and natural resources, socialism, on the other hand, brought impoverishment to society at large (Hasanah 2011, 5).

3.3.5. The Need for an Islamic Moral Critique

In the introduction to his book *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*, Timothy Mitchell makes the following observation:

It is a curious fact that while critical theory has interrogated almost every leading category of modern social science, it has left perhaps the most central one untouched. It has critiqued the concepts of class, nation, culture, society, state, gender, race, personhood, and many others, but not the idea of the economy. It is as though the varieties of cultural theory had to leave in place a residual sphere of the economic, as a reserve whose existence in the distance made cultural analysis secure (2002, 3).

The reigning conventional thinking nowadays established the view of all human activities through the lens of economic logic as a given truth. Beyond being a mere tool that explains economic behavior, economics has now been established as the only possible view of the world (Rist 2011, 7). This view, contributes to the instrumentalization and "hierarchical

compartmentalization" of the world, with the commodification of everything from the natural habitat, through social relations, to even revolutionary and spiritual movements. Everything in this view submits to the rule of financial and material capital. Yet economics occupies such a central place in the modern social imaginary that it has been elevated to the level of unquestionable objective science, when in fact it is a set of questionable beliefs (Rist 2011, 7). Any serious critique of development as an offshoot of Modernity would definitely arrive at the centrality of the project of economics in advancing modern ideals. "Development is defined as the ongoing commodification of nature and social relations"; economics is the hegemonic platform that makes this commodification of the world possible (Rist 2011, 9).

This realization, in addition to the earlier discussion of central domains and the main problem of development residing in its moral predicament, establishes the necessity of new critiques that are truly moral in essence and direction. However, it is important to mention in this regard that morality and ethics, if not emanating from a dogma separate from that which produced the economic as a foundational structure of life, end up being coopted by the logic of the market and the capitalist drive. The economization of society creates a culture of likeability, as Han argues in his book *The Palliative Society: Pain Today*. In a palliative society, one that revolves around the maximum minimization or complete eradication of pain in pursuit of pleasure, a desire of likeability becomes omnipresent. "Everything is smoothed out until it becomes agreeable and well-liked." In such a society, Han argues, "even morality is presented in such a way to inspire likes" (Han 2021,8-9). In such a society, morality itself becomes a commodity, a means to the end of justifying, or pacifying for the sake of the capitalist world order.

The usual claim in this regard comes as the disposal of religion as a source of morality in the modern world. However, Anjum contends that "secular modernity, which claims to provide ethics without revelation, has tried to "smuggle" in religious values, but has failed in providing meaning to individuals and restrain against exploitation" (Anjum 2022). Indeed, the quest of morality is as old as man himself. The search for a moral proposal in the context of critique of Modernity is definitely not a new proposal. It has been a major preoccupation of a number of scholars and thinkers from Aristotle, Plato and Aquinas to

Charles Taylor and Alasdair MacIntyre. However, the focus of this research will be on the Islamic tradition not only because it stands as an extensive and rich source of moral resources but most importantly because morality in the Islamic tradition, contrary to secular and especially Enlightenment ethics, operates as paradigmatic way of living (Hallaq 2012, 6), as the following chapter shall elaborate.



CHAPTER IV

FROM *TAZKIYAH* TO *TANMIYAH*: THE DEVELOPMENT OF ISLAMIC ECONOMIC THOUGHT

Some introductory remarks:

Since the concept of development is indigenous to the Western intellectual tradition, as has been argued thus far, looking for its equivalent in another tradition would prove to be incongruous. What we can do, however, is look for the common themes usually brought under the development umbrella to provide some guidance on what to look for in the history of Islamic thought. Economy is the primary theme in this venture, not only because many of the topics dealt with in the development discussion are related to economic matters in one way or another (i.e., questions of social justice, governance, public administration, distribution of resources, etc.), but mainly because the major problem with developmentalist thinking is the focus on economics as a modern science that materializes social reality and subordinates it to the logic of "mathematical physics" (Schumpeter 1995, 5)¹⁸. In fact, "economic science as a purely objective branch of knowledge neither existed in the classical Islamic tradition nor in pre-Enlightenment Europe" (Al-Daghistani 2021, 6). In the introduction to his *history of economic analysis*, Joseph Schumpeter argues that "the subject matter of economics is itself a unique historical process so that, to a large extent, the economics of different epochs deal with different sets of facts and problems" (Schumpeter 1995, 4). Various cultural and religious traditions have tried to put forth their best economic models for humanity, which is also the case for Islam. However, the major parting point in this regard was the altering of the meaning of "the *economic* as an extension of the *moral* in Islamic and Western traditions, especially after the Enlightenment period" (Al-Daghistani 2021, 5). Therefore, studying economic thought in Islam focuses on the theory of knowledge and the perception of reality itself rather than questions of identity. In continuation of this line of thought, Al-Daghistani argues that

Economic thought in Islamic tradition is not about economics as we understand it in modern times, with respect to material prosperity, economic development, and

¹⁸ Schumpeter contends that the term science, especially in English and French-speaking countries, denotes mathematical physics

consumption and transfer of wealth. In fact, one could state that economic thought, as analyzed by classical Muslim scholars, is least concerned with such pursuits. Rather, it pertains to much broader human and Divine relations, as well as behavioral patterns of spiritual, metaphysical, and, above all, moral qualities, irreducible to merely the natural order (Al-Daghistani 2021, 1).

Fundamentally, every stipulation of economic theory rests upon the philosophy of the doctrine to which it belongs; the same applies to Islamic economic thought. While liberal economic philosophy, both at the level of globalization and the state, is defined by privatization, free movement of capital, free trade, and the desire for accumulating capital and maximizing profit for their own sake, the Muslim worldview rests on what can be defined as a moral economy. Emerging with the Quran as the founding text of Islam, the Islamic paradigm of moral economy was further consolidated with Prophetic teachings and the development of Shari'a as an encompassing discursive and institutional system (Hallaq 2012, 146-147).

For classical Muslim scholars, grounding economic life in the moral dimension was a pervasive reality that has gradually diminished in modern Islamic economics and finance for various reasons. Although the primary motive of contemporary Islamic economics was to provide an alternative to the prevalent secular economics around the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it remained steeped in the logic of European natural and social sciences, including economics, which, as mentioned before, espouses a worldview that rests on the colonial and material restructuring of the social fabric. Hence, as shall be elaborated in due course, the problem of contemporary Islamic economics is in its taking for granted the epistemology of scientific positivism from which conventional economics springs, which allowed for its cooptation by mainstream economic narratives as a *new branch* of economics and finance (Hallaq 2012, 2-3). Therefore, instead of focusing on the intricacies of finance and economics as we know it today or merely dealing with the Fiqh of economic transactions and provisions, the study of Islamic economic thought is concerned first and foremost with the setting of a conceptual framework that grounds the discourse of economic thought in the theological, philosophical, legal, and most importantly the moral ideas of Muslim scholars, both contemporary and classical, while also interrogating the process through which these ideas as well as the subject matter of

Islamic economic thought¹⁹ emerged as a discipline with distinguished features²⁰. On this matter, tracing the genealogy of Islamic economic thought necessitates the search for clear definitions of Islamic Law, economic thought, and the correlation between the two²¹. Therefrom, tracing the history of Islamic economic thought means going back to its origins in the Quran and the Sunnah²², which necessitates sketching an outline of the main issues that contributed to and shaped the formation of Islamic legal traditions, including the pre-Islamic context of the Arabian Peninsula and the cultures of its inhabitants. For now, to provide a general overview of the historical development of Islamic economic thought as shall be elaborated in this chapter, we present the following diagram borrowed from Al-Daghistani's *The Making of Islamic Economic Thought*:

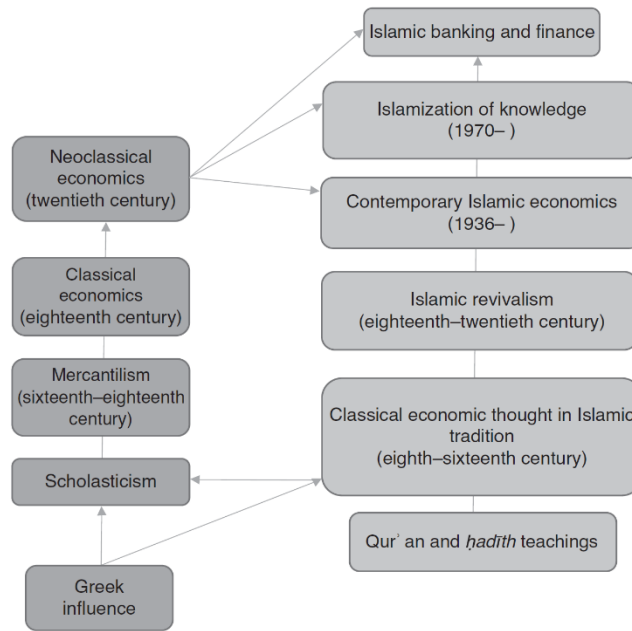


Figure 4 General Overview of the Evolution of Islamic Economic Thought from Classical Scholars to Modern Economic Theories including Islamic Banking and Finance²³

¹⁹ Throughout this chapter, Islamic economic thought will be used to refer to the overall body of scholarship dealing with economic matters in general, from the classical period of Islam to the contemporary era, while the usage of the term Islamic economics will specifically refer to contemporary Muslim scholars' efforts to constitute a modern economic system that centers Shari'a, as part of the larger postcolonial Muslim reformist vision of an Islamic state.

²⁰ Al-Daghistani p1-2

²¹ Al-Daghistani p146

²² Islahi p7

²³ From Al-Daghistani 2021, 277

4.1. Pre-Islamic Near East and the Rise of Islam:

The prevalent (Orientalist) view of “the Prophet’s Arabia” mostly holds it as a culturally impoverished region that drew on the cultural resources of its neighboring societies, especially those of the Byzantines and Sasanians, to build its sophisticated empires, cities, and legal systems. The search for the origins of Islamic Law in the shadow of this account thus sets an assumption that much of the pre-Islamic legal systems of Arabia are heavily based on the legal cultures of other places such as Syria and Iraq. To the contrary, Hallaq argues that "except in a few cases, attempts to demonstrate genetic links with these cultures have proved futile, if only because Arabia has provided an equally, if not more, convincing source for much of the law that Islam came to adopt" (Hallaq 2004, 4). Despite not being at the center of the imperial culture of the neighboring empires due to its strategic location, the pre-Islamic Arabian Peninsula was an integral part of the overall culture of the Near East at the time. The cities of Mecca and Medina already had a long-established history of migration, settlement, and trade in the region way before the arrival of Islam, which explains the similarity of culture and institutions developed amongst all peninsular Arabs. The Bedouins in the area maintained close connections with one another through trade and migration, allowing them to create extensive markets and fairs that served both commercial and religious purposes.

The international commercial fairs provided the tribes with the opportunity to collect taxes, house idols, and host religious ritual performances and festivals. In this network, the city of Mecca was the most important center of trade, particularly for Western and Central Arabia. Its strategic location at the crossroads of two important trade routes allowed it to be a trade center on top of being an important pilgrimage destination for many of the Arabs in the region at the time (Hallaq 2009, 34). "The close contacts that the Arabs of the Peninsula maintained between and among themselves, coupled with their extensive relations with their neighbors to the south, north-west, and north-east, exposed them to the general legal culture of the Near East" (Hallaq 2004, 18). Among them, the influential men of the first community of Muslims (who would go on to establish a Muslim state) were thoroughly familiar with such legal systems. Particularly, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, "as a product of the mercantile tribal society" to which he belonged, bore extensive

knowledge of the cultures and religions (especially Christianity and Judaism) of the Peninsula on top of its legal practices as extensively documented in the Quran and later manifested in the constitution of Medina.²⁴ However, in its first stages, the message of Islam was not focused on Law in its technical sense. During the Meccan phase, the formative period of the new faith, the Prophet ﷺ's mission was centered on religious and ethical teachings. The early message of Islam was articulated in continuity with its preceding monotheistic counterparts, namely Christianity and Judaism, which allegedly had been corrupted over time, and Islam had arrived to put forth a more than pure form of their earlier messages (Hallaq 2004, 19-20).

4.2. Migration to Medina and the Emergence of a Quranic Legal System

Against this background, and although the culture of the Peninsular Arabs that made the first generation of Muslims did indeed preserve elements of the preceding traditions, in its formative stage, Islam was different in the way it introduced a worldview that “was not influenced by any outside elements” (Islahi 2004, 8). Marshall Hodgson opens his seminal work *The Venture of Islam* with the intriguing observation that “the *Islamicate* was unique among the great civilizations of its time in failing to maintain the earlier lettered traditions of its region” (Hodgson 1974, 103). What he meant was that unlike other civilizations that maintained the corresponding cultural legacies of the first millennium BC as the starting point for their later intellectual lives, as the classical Greek and Latin works were still read in modern Europe, as were those of Sanskrit and ancient Chinese read in the contemporary Indic regions and the Far East respectively, the case in Islamdom was quite different. The preceding Iranian and Semitic literatures were replaced by Arabic and later by Persian during the dawn of the Islamic period. This meant that the great works of the civilizations preceding Islam were largely unknown to the Muslims, whether translated or in their original forms. "Instead, the Muslims developed their own classical models afresh ."Hodgson continues on this point: "On the conscious literary level where the consciences of cultivated persons are engaged, the coming of Islam, then, marked a breach in cultural continuity unparalleled among the great civilizations we have come to know; a breach

²⁴ The constitution of the first polity of Muslims in Medina, Yathrib, home to Muslims from both Mecca and Yathrib as well as Jews

which can help to produce an impression of youthfulness -or of immaturity- on observers more at home in civilizations with a longer explicit heritage" (Hodgson 1974, 103).

Indeed, it was upon the migration to Medina that Islam's message started slightly veering away from certain practices it had shared with Judaism before²⁵. While the Meccan period paralleled the formative phase of Islam in which the Prophet ﷺ's message was primarily religious and ethical, the migration to Medina marked a new era in the history of Islam inasmuch as it transformed the prophetic vision from a fight for survival and recognition to building and leading a new community of believers (Hallaq 2009, 38). By the end of the fifth year of hijra (around 626 AD), Quranic revelation started reflecting this shift, maintaining the new community of Muslims as a *Ummah* capable of possessing its own body of Law, which parallels yet still maintains differences from preceding monotheistic legal traditions. The revelation of the fifth Surah (chapter) of the Quran particularly marks this shift inasmuch as it ushered a list of rulings and commands that pertained to various issues ranging from theft to diet, as well as its repetitive mentions of Jews and Christians and their scriptures. Specifically, Ayah (verse) 48 of this Surah marks a turning point in the development of an independent legal system for Islam:

We have revealed unto you the Book [i.e., the Quran] with the Truth, confirming whatever Scripture was before it . . . so judge between them by what God had revealed, and do not follow their desires away from the Truth . . . for We have made for each of you [i.e., Muslims, Christians, and Jews] a law and a normative way to follow. If God had willed, He would have made all of you one community.
5:48

"It is worth noting here that the "normative way" in verse 5:48 is represented by the term "*minhāj*," a cognate of the Hebraic word "*minhāg*" (the Law). The creation of an Islamic legal parallel here speaks for itself" (Hallaq 2004, 21). This Ayah thus sets clear boundaries between the three different sets of Law corresponding to each of the monotheistic traditions, which marks the beginning of substantive Quranic legislation covering various matters and rituals constituting a distinctive body of Law, itself now directed exclusively to the community of Muslims. Indeed, there is no doubt that Judaism and Christianity constitute the historical and theological background of Islam, which came

²⁵ An example that can be provided here is the changing of the *qibla* (prayer direction) from Jerusalem to the Ka'ba in Mecca

as their corrective and final form. However, Hallaq highlights that "to argue for historical and theological influences without acknowledging the "*minhājic*" influences -which had been incubating among Meccan and Medinan Arabs for generations – would be a serious misreading of history" (Hallaq 2004, 22). In this sense, while Quranic legislation subjected certain pre-Islamic practices to limitations or complete prohibition (such as gaming, gambling, wine-drinking, etc.), it did rehabilitate others that served the purpose of strengthening the *ummah* and assisting the mission of the new religion. The example relevant to us in this account is *zakāt*, an ancient tax "attested as early as during fourth-century Yemen and South Arabia where the ancient deities exacted a tithe on commerce, to be expended on public works" (Hallaq 2004, 22). In light of Islamic legislation, this practice was rehabilitated through the establishment of a central system of alms-giving to sustain the dispossessed and weak, which allowed for the binding of a true community on the basis of faith rather than tribal affiliation. The enactment of such legislation thus established a new political imagination that transposed "the individual from the tribal to the Islamic domain, where he or she would have a status in a community of equal members" (Hallaq 2004, 22). This explains the tendency of the later Quranic revelation toward a larger and more specific body of legislation as a means of asserting the uniqueness and independence of Islam as a new religion and the Muslim *ummah* as a distinct community.

All in all, taking into consideration the influences of pre-Islamic Arabian legal practices, including those of the Jews and Christians, the Quran's detailed coverage of large and various areas of Law in the last years of Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ career did set the stage for the elaboration of a basic and distinct legal structure. In this sense, the Shari'a, which would later constitute the more mature version of the Islamic legal system, was unique in that it put forth a set of principles that distinguished the *ummah* as an emerging community of faith judging its problems in accordance with Divine revelation in the Quran, while many of the old institutions and customs of Arabia remained unchallenged and were even incorporated in the body of the Shari'a for years to come (Hallaq 2004, 20-24).

4.3. The Death of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ and the Emergence of an Islamic Legal Ethic

By the time of his death in 623 AD, Prophet Muhammad ﷺ had left a small polity in Medina based on fiercely uncompromising moral standards which fit, at the same time, within the wider context of tribal justice in Medina. The following rapid Muslim conquests of a territory as wide and diverse as that landmass between the Iberian Peninsula and China, Islamic Law emerged as a sophisticated and full-fledged legal system in a relatively short period of time spanning from its inception to the three and a half centuries that followed (Hallaq 2009, 34). "Despite its tribal and other differences, the new Muslim leadership saw itself as the promulgator of a religion whose lynchpin and cornerstone was the command of God, a command embedded in, and given expression by, the Quran. It did not escape the chief leaders in Medina, the capital, or their military representatives in the garrison towns, that their warriors needed to learn the principles of the new order, its new ethic and worldview" (Hallaq 2009, 41). However, with the death of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ in 632 AD officially marking the cessation of the revelation (Hallaq 2009, 29), Muslim scholars at this point had to develop a more systematic approach to preserving the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah pertaining to maintaining a society well-ordered, especially with the expansion of Muslim lands and the correspondingly growing Muslim community. It was in this context that the Shari'a emerged as a paradigm that would regulate the Muslim political and socioeconomic system up until the colonial period, when this system would be dismantled, and its rule yielded to the authority of the nation-state. The development of Islamic economic thought is thus closely tied to the history of Shari'a or Islamic Law. This Law, as a code of living, came to incorporate economic, social, and religious rules of conduct for Muslims. Thereupon, it is worth studying the history and sources of Shari'a before delving into the particularities of economic matters.

4.4. Islamic Law Between Shari'a and Fiqh:

Al-Daghistani defines Shari'a as "the Divine code of conduct, often interpreted as a submission of oneself to the will of God by confirming the Divine unity of existence" (Al-Daghistani 2021, 151). In the Arabic language, the word Shari'a literally means "path to the well" or "a straight path ."During the early phases of Islamic history, Shari'a emerged

as a technical term to refer to the "path to God," or "the law of God obtained through revelation," or simply the practical aspect of Islam (Al-Daghistani 2021, 151) that God has revealed through his messenger to manage people's religious and mundane affairs. Shari'a thus appears in the Quran to denote the bulk of rules and regulations that pertain to matters ranging from theology, ritualistic worship, and transactions, as well as ethics and virtues of character purification (Alhamwi 2024a, 9-10). The sources of Shari'a can be divided into two: those that were established by the Prophet ﷺ during his lifetime and those that were deduced by Muslim scholars after his death. The first one consists of the Quran and the Sunnah, while the second incorporates the overall body of jurisprudence that was developed later (El-Ashker and Wilson 2006, 50).

As hinted upon earlier, the development of Islamic jurisprudence was the result of the changing historical context of the Muslim society after the death of the Prophet ﷺ. With the rapid expansion of the Islamic state, Muslims started facing situations that did not resemble anything mentioned before in the Quran or the Sunnah, which necessitated the establishment of a more organized system of sciences pertaining to the effort of deriving new rules from the existing body of the Quran and Sunnah through the science of jurisprudence, or what would later become known as Fiqh. The linguistic meaning of Fiqh in Arabic denotes "knowledge and deep understanding which requires a certain amount of cognitive effort ."In the context of Islamic Law, it generally refers to understanding the religion as well as its sources. As such, Fiqh emerged in the classical period of Islam as "the science of applying Shari'a," which originally reflected a system that is both legal and ethical par excellence, though it later evolved to become the specialized legal branch of Islam that expounds legal rules of a more "technical" nature. This evolution in the meaning of Fiqh took place over three main stages. During the formative period of Islamic sciences, roughly ranging from the time of the Prophet ﷺ until the second Hijri year, Fiqh and Shari'a bore almost identical meanings referring to an understanding of the entirety of Islamic teachings relating to theology, worship, and ethics. However, from the middle of the second Hijri year, Fiqh was narrowed down to mean Islamic rulings pertaining to all practical matters other than those of a theological essence. The final iteration it underwent happened during the time of the Abbasids, when Fiqh started referring exclusively to rulings of worship and transactions (*ibadat* and *mu'amalat*). This era marks the

specialization of Islamic sciences and their consolidation as separate disciplines with different subject matters. In addition to Fiqh, the sciences of Kalam and Tasawwuf finally took shape, the former dealing with questions of theology while the latter dealt with matters of ethics and spiritual purification. As such, Fiqh became a more specific branch of Shari'a while the latter remained the umbrella term that refers to the entirety of Islamic Law and ethics (Alhamwi 2024a, 10-12). This account thus establishes the "theoretical considerations of Shari'a as a primarily moral conception," which "maintains an epistemological difference from the ontology of Fiqh" (Al-Daghistani 2021, 146). Understanding this epistemic differentiation between Shari'a and Fiqh is crucial, for it clears a common misunderstanding that relegates Islamic economic thought to purely legal matters instead of placing it in the larger matrix of Islamic teachings that are primarily concerned with the question of morality and spiritual refinement.

4.5. Situating Economic Thought in the Moral Cosmology²⁶ of Shari'a:

Translating Shari'a to English can be a tricky matter, for it runs the risk of reducing Shari'a as an overall system of governance to merely a legal system, as delineated in the sections above. In this context, Hallaq translates Shari'a as "the moral law of Islam" (Hallaq 2012, 1), which was "the defining emblem" of the paradigm of Islamic governance. The Shari'a's paradigmatic status lies in its being a moral apparatus to which the legal, in its modern sense, was an instrument rather than the other way around. In other words, articulated through the logic of paradigms and central domains, we can assert the following:

As a central domain, the Shari'a was the measure against which the subsidiary domains were judged, and its solutions largely determined the solutions of those domains... In its formal discourse, the Shari'a generally did not account for problems and solutions in other domains, having, as a rule, assumed them to be subsidiary and requiring solutions as such. These latter domains catered to the demands and priorities of the Shari'a and were often designed and organized to serve its needs (Hallaq 2012, 1).

²⁶ This term is borrowed from Al-Daghistani, who defines it "as a totality of ethical standards, norms, and teachings in the context of economic-spiritual development in Islamic tradition ... The moral cosmology of Shari'a", he continues, "entails economic teachings as part of wider metaphysical considerations, whose ethical foundation ultimately functions as a technology of self-examination as it pertains to the most profound human behavioral patterns. It affects not simply exchange but also production processes and their spiritual significance". Al-Daghistani 2021, 31-32

This particular elucidation of Shari'a is of utmost importance in the context of the legal/moral conundrum with regard to understanding Islamic Law and, by extension, economic thought in Islam. Originating in the European Renaissance, the modern severance of theology and philosophy produced the dichotomy of science/ethics as separable and completely irreconcilable spheres, the former representing the domain of objective and rational knowledge while the latter was relegated to the private sphere (itself a modern construction) for its lack of rigor and objectivity to be a source of knowledge and legislation. This epistemic shift affected the entire spectrum of the theory of knowledge and has thus reached as far as the domain of Islamic governance. In light of this, a common misreading of Shari'a confines it to the territory of the legal, which is otherwise closer to the contemporary meaning of Fiqh. In anticipation of the forthcoming discussion on the development of Islamic economic thought in the modern period, this analysis highlights that the subject of the so-called "Islamic economics" is no more than the product of applying rules and injunctions of Fiqh to secular economics, or what Asutay calls the *halalization* of secular economics (Jan and Asutay 2019, 2), which proves that the discipline does not really measure up to a true "alternative" of conventional economics as argued by many modern Islamic economists (Addas 2008, vii).

Classical Islamic scholarship situates economic affairs within the larger "human-centric paradigm," the focal point of which is spiritual development. The purpose of economic development in Islam is to preserve human wellbeing through emancipation and empowerment of individuals and collectives by means of just distribution of wealth, improving living conditions, establishing justice and equity and preserving dignity with the aim of changing society through the cultivation of Ihsan, which can be translated as beneficence or excellence (Jan and Asutay 2019, 1).

Al-Daghistani contends that:

Despite the fact that the subject of Fiqh has always been Shari'a, Fiqh, and Shari'a are nonequivalent, for the latter is as Divine Law encapsulated in the Qur'an, while the former is the body of Islamic Law extracted from detailed sources, which are studied and interpreted by learned men as the principles of Islamic jurisprudence. Economic activities in the works of the classical scholars tend to surpass purely legal precepts because they are as much theological in nature as they are moral... concepts such as common good (*maslaha*), charity (*sadaqa*), and alms-tax

(*zaka*[̄]*t*), and institutions such as charitable trust funds (*waqf*), supervision of markets, purchases and commodities (*hisba*), fiscal policy (*bayt al-ma*[̄]*t*), social benefits, and others, despite their legal effect, were also analyzed by classical Muslim scholars within the fields of theology, philosophy, Islamic mysticism, policy-oriented governance (*siya*[̄]*sa Shar*[̄]*iyā*[̄]), and moral cosmology embedded in the Qur'anic conceptions of *'adl*, *'ilm*, and *'amal* and their human exposition, and not exclusively via commercial laws or transactions (*mu*[̄]*'a*[̄]*mala*[̄]*t*), or rather that commercial laws were ingrained in an ethical understanding of the economic world. Classical Muslim scholars would derive and deduce legal rulings on micro and macro levels on economic ideas. Hence, translating Shari'[̄] a simply as Islamic Law would be incorrect since Shari'[̄] a encompasses more than only legal rulings" (Al-Daghistani 2021, 150-151).

All in all, it is important to remember that the proper placement of economic thought is in the larger moral cosmology of the Shari'a instead of the comparatively more confined legal epistemology of Fiqh. The following survey of economic thought of classical scholars across different geographies and time periods shall attest to the flow and interconnectedness of Islamic economic ideas and how they were grounded in the moral apparatus of the Shari'a. Considering their different backgrounds, many of these scholars indeed drew on the four Sunni schools of Fiqh to invoke different legal reasoning in support of their different approaches to the same economic subjects; however, in the larger scheme of things, "the ethical intricacy rooted in Shari'a's moral cosmology reigned supreme" (Al-Daghistani 2021, 149). That said, the following account shall be structured around the main themes and concepts that make up the philosophy of classical Islamic economic thought instead of doing a chronological survey of classical scholars since the ideas they invoked overlap in many ways, as previously argued.

4.6. Classical Islamic Scholarship on Economic Thought:

4.6.1. Brief Survey of the Development of Classical Scholarship on Economic Thought:

As mentioned before, economics as an independent field of study did not exist in the classical Muslim world (nor did it exist in pre-enlightenment Europe) (Al-Daghistani 2021, 177). However, the evolution of economic thought did indeed predate Islam with other civilizations, such as the Greeks, which are nowadays considered the forefathers of Western economics. Concerning early Muslims, on top of their familiarity with commercial activities such as trade, taxation, and barter exchange, their societies

witnessed the unfolding of economic ideas since the earliest periods of Islam, evidently starting with the Quran and the Sunna. The issues contended in light of the revelation included the Quran's prohibition of usury, initiating the *zakāt* institution, and encouraging economic activities, all under the ethical guidance of Divine Law. However, without shunning Quranic epistemology as the bedrock and starting point of Islamic economic ideas, it is the human effort of the early scholars and jurists, their inferences and interpretations that form the body of Islamic economic thought (Al-Daghistani 2021, 176-177). In his account of the history of economic thought in Islam, Islahi divides this process into three main periods: "the formation, the translation, and the re-translation and transmission period." The first period spans from the beginning of Quranic revelation to the end of the period of the *sahaba*, i.e., the companions (623-718 AD). The second phase covers the period from the eighth to the eleventh century and is mainly the period where Muslim scholars received and translated foreign economic ideas into Arabic. The third and last period concerns these "Greco-Arab Islamic ideas" reaching Europe and initiating the process of re-translation and transmission of these ideas from the twelfth century to the fifteenth (Islahi 2004, 7). These three periods constitute what shall be referred to as the "classical period" of Islamic economic thought for the rest of this account.

Arguably, collections of prophetic teachings and other Muslim writings on financial and economic matters started by the end of the phase of consolidation of the major Islamic schools of jurisprudence at the hands of contemporaries and students of the corresponding imams (leading jurists). Examples in this regard include Abu Yusuf (d.798) authoring *Kitāb al-Kharāj*; Muhammad al-Shaybani (d.804) authoring *Kitāb al-Kasb*²⁷; Ibn Abi al-Dunya (d.894) writing on *Islāh al-māl*; etc. (Islahi 2004, 9). Already in the ninth century, classical Muslim scholars had established a more systematic intellectual structure that dealt with a wide array of issues, including economic underpinnings, as an extension of Shari'a's moral character. Even with the flourishing of markets and trade as an outcome of the expansion of Islamic civilization, the subject of the economy remained deeply entrenched in the spheres of theology, Law, and moral epistemology. Many Muslim scholars of this era operated not only in the confines of the legal sphere but also within

²⁷ Books on the topics of "land tax" and "earning," respectively (as translated by Al-Daghistani 2021, 147)

the larger theological and Sufi realms, capitalizing on concepts that form the backbone of the epistemology of the economic subject without detaching it from a moral understanding of the cosmos. These concepts ranged from *‘adl* (justice) to *maslaha* (public good), *ihsan* (excellence), *faqr* (poverty), *zuhd* (asceticism), and *tazkiyah* (purification), to name a few. In addition to the names already mentioned, some of these scholars include al-Muhasibi (d.857), Ghazali (d.1111), al-Dimashqi (12th century), Ibn Taymiyyah (d.1328), Ibn al-Qayyim (d.1350), Ibn Khaldun (d.1404), and al-Maqrizi (d.1441). “These figures underwent different forms of training and lived in different eras and geographical regions, which indicates the multivalent legal, sociopolitical, and cultural landscape of these thinkers, as well as the complexity of Islamic economic history” (Al-Daghistani 2021, 33/147-148).

As far as translation is concerned, mainly of preceding Greek works into the Arabic language, Muslim scholars had started this activity as soon as the first century of the Hijrah, even though it took two additional centuries to make a visible influence on the scholarship produced²⁸. In this context, Muslim philosophers translated treatises on the Greek concept of *oikonomia* as *‘ilm tadbīr al-manzil*, which means "science of household management." Hence, although there was no subject of economics in Islam per se, the earlier discussions referred to this notion to draw on matters dealing with the management of a family-based household. In fact, *oikonomia* was one of three branches of Greek philosophy, the two others being ethics (*‘ilm al-akhlāq or tadbir al-nafs*) and politics (*‘ilm al-siyāsah*) (Islahi 2004, 11). This household model was later expanded to include larger kinds of social organization, ranging from community and state to the eco-system at large, thus integrating economic ideas with political and ecological concerns as well. Another group of scholars that also contributed to economic thought during this period was *ahl al-tasawwuf*. Islahi continues:

Among the representatives of this group are Abd-Allah Harith b. Asad al-Muhasibi, Junayd al-Baghdadi, Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, al-Suhrawardi, etc. Shedding the light on the importance of this group in the history of economic thought, Siddiqi observes: The main contribution of *tasawwuf* (or *zuhd*) to economic thought in Islam is a constant pull against giving too high a value to

²⁸ Such “collections remained in Iraq and Syria in Persian and Byzantine Greek respectively until the end of the caliphate of Abd al-Malik b. Marwan who ordered their translation into Arabic”. Islahi 2004, 9

material wealth and a persistent push towards altruism and unselfish service of Allah's creatures. They emphasized the ultimate concern of the human soul and its reaching out toward its source in the Divine. They personally exemplified this concern by minimizing the material values and extolling the virtues and attributes that contributed towards felicity in the hereafter while also enabling the life here on the earth (Islahi 2004, 12).

A final group that can be mentioned in this phase can be identified as those who combined Hellenistic and Islamic teachings with their practical experience of business. One of these thinkers was al-Dimashqi, a 12th-century scholar and merchant who authored *al-Ishārah ilā Mahāsin al-Tijārah* [*The Guide to the Virtues of Trade*] (Islahi 2004, 12), “in which he defined an early form of price theory and expressed support for acquiring wealth” (Al-Daghistani 2021, 147).

Next up, the translation of Islamic sciences from Arabic to Latin among other European languages starting the twelfth century marks the third and final phase in the evolution of classical Islamic economic thought. Existing reports indicate translation activities catering to the Christian West dating to “the end of the fourth century Hijrah in the Byzantine capital Constantinople”, after which the amount of re-translation work significantly increased up until the period that precedes the Western Renaissance, hence the name of this period as the “translation age”. Worthy of mention in this regard is the fact that this process of translation did not encompass the entirety of the Muslim legacy of both Islamic and Greek thoughts. While the works of Muslim *muhaddithūn* (traditionalists) for instance were barely touched, the main focus was on works of philosophical, practical and intellectual importance (Islahi 2004, 13).

4.6.2. Classical Islamic Economic Thought: Basic Philosophy

Due to the limited scope of this research and the wide array of concepts covered in classical economic thought in Islam, the choice here is to focus on the axes that are mainly relevant to the topic of this research and also encompassing of the general moral structure of the rest of the ideas and works produced by classical scholars. These three axes include the concept of *Iqtisād* in its relation to *Kasb* and *Infāq* as the subject matter of Islamic economic thought, the importance of *Maqasid al-Shari'a*, and finally, the practice and institution of *Zakāt* based on the higher objective of *Tazkiyah*.

Iqtisād, Kasb, and Infāq: The subject Matter of Islamic Economic Thought

As mentioned earlier, *'ilm tadbīr al-manzil* (the science of family-based household management) is the Arabic translation of the Greek concept of *oikonomia*, which is considered the origin of modern Western economics. However, classical Muslim scholars equated the term “economics” with *kasb* or *iqtisād*, which can be shortly defined as the action of seeking and realizing what is judicious (Setia 2016). Derived from the Arabic root *iqtasada*, the term *iqtisād* entails the process of moderation, frugality and economization, which are primarily spiritual characteristics (Al-Daghistani 2021, 270). As such, the subject matter of *iqtisād* in the Islamic understanding can be described as *'ilm al-iktisāb wa al-infāq* (“the science of earning and provisioning”), which “is the study of how people, as individuals and as communities, earn their livelihoods by drawing upon the divine bounty in nature (*fadh Allah fī al-ard*), and thereby, a healthy economy is dependent upon a healthy ecology” (Setia 2016).

Iqtisād also shares the same root with the word *Qasd*, translating to goal, objective, purpose and direction. Morphologically, *iqtisād* as a derivative of *qasd* also carries the meaning of “seeking out or realizing the purpose of something” (Setia 2016). Another meaning of *qasd* is moderation, prudence, or thriftiness with regards to one's disposal of wealth, hence the judicial meaning of *iqtisād* as a science that studies the way in which wealth is acquired and distributed according to moral principles (Al-Daghistani 2021, 178). Combining both meanings, *iqtisād* becomes the space where worldly and immediate material goals evoke a larger transcendent moral purpose in which physical things are not sought for their own sake, “but in virtue of an ethico-moral, spiritual and ultimately eschatological objective that transcends its immediate temporality, materiality, instrumentality, facility and practicality” (Setia 2016). In this sense, as stipulated by classical Muslim scholars, *Iqtisād* cannot be confined to the modern technical definition of economy as a rational process that is accumulation-based and profit-driven. Instead, it should be understood as a human behavior grounded in providence and structured around standards of moral uplift (Al-Daghistani 2021, 270). Thus, economic activities of trade, consumption, wealth acquisition and so on directly draw on larger moral and socio-ecological underpinnings which *render economic activity as the backbone of one's spiritual wellbeing*, as well as the core of what constitutes their being human (Al-

Daghistani 2021, 178-179). In this vein, a large part of what classical Muslim scholars produced in terms of economic ideas and guidelines in acquiring a livelihood sought to bridge the notion of *kasb* as worldly economy or earning, and *zuhd*, as extramundane attachment. In this sense, work becomes a matter of spiritual significance in its dependence on production processes embedded in human relationality, which ought to maintain justice as an objective of the Shari'a and an economic prerogative. In other words:

The spiritual significance of production processes does not only mean that any type of work can be spiritual in itself (as vocation), despite its dehumanizing conditions, but rather that the profession is integrated into higher orders of knowledge and that the very relations of production are not based on inherent antagonisms but communal recognition and value of labor (Al-Daghistani 2021, 180).

The matter of justice can thus be seen as a very important tenet of classical Islamic economic thought. Abu Yusuf, who was a *qādi* (judge) and pupil of Abu Hanifa, held for instance that justice is the only way through which overall social development can be achieved. In the same vein, the theologian and jurist Ibn Qayyim invoked the notion of justice to explain the logic of Islam's economic philosophy. He asserts that "anything contrary to the notion of justice that can turn the matter from blessing and welfare into a curse or destruction, and from wisdom into disutility has no correlation with the Shari'a" (Al-Daghistani 2021, 180).

On a different note, many classical scholars naturally tackled the concept of *kasb* as a subject matter of *iqtisād*. Having studied Fiqh under supervision of Abu Yusuf, Al-Shaybani for instance authored his *Kitab al-Kasb*, one of the most important classical works on matters of earning and livelihood. Even though it comprises of a number of legal arguments on the topic of economics, *Kitab al-Kasb* expounds the notion of *zuhd* as detachment from worldly matters, thus bringing together teachings of *tasawwuf* and Shari'a injunctions. In addition to *Wara'* (prudence), al-Shaybani centers his analysis of *kasb* on the notion of *zuhd* as a safeguard from corruption and a spiritual quality of economic discipline that maintains the honest earning of livelihood. Additionally, al-Shaybani also emphasizes the intertwined nature of individual earning of livelihood and service to public good, thus situating one's individual needs within the ensemble of

communal needs in a way that establishes a sort of sense of duty towards the collective as an extension of one's own wellbeing. Therefrom, *ibādāt* or matters of worship do not suffice to lead a wholesome life if one's *mu'āmalāt* or transactions and relationships are absent. In this sense, al-Shaybani, like many classical scholars thus analyzes themes of sales, value of money and accumulation of wealth through the ethico-spiritual lens of piety, asceticism and renunciation (Al-Daghistani 2021, 181). In light of this "*kasb-zuhd* amalgam," it would not be an exaggeration to say that "the aim of classical scholars' writing was not necessarily to eradicate poverty but to refrain from riches" (Al-Daghistani 2021, 219).

Situating Islamic Economic Thought within Maqasid al-Shari'a

At the heart of any account of Sharia's moral economy is the idea of promotion and protection of wealth and property as an important part of the five universals or objectives of Islamic Law, which are usually referred to as *Maqasid al-Shari'a*. In addition to protection of wealth and property (*māl*), the remaining four Maqasid consist of the protection of life (*nafs*), religion (*din*), intellect (*'aql*), and lineage or community (*nasl*). These five universals were the product of scholars' inductive screening of the entire body of Shari'a, after it had reached a certain level of maturity, and their synthesis of its overall effect into five major *Maqasid*. As such, one of the objectives of *Maqasid* is to generate norms that establish what is good and desirable for the general public and what can be considered as potentially harmful to society (Al-Daghistani 2021, 158).

That said, it is important to understand that the five *Maqasid* operate in an interdependent logic. For each universal to be applied in a reasonable and meaningful manner, it has to overlap with and draw upon the four others. The first *maqsad* (singular of *Maqasid*) provides a basic illustration of this interdependence. Pertaining to the protection of life, this universal essentially provides a basic structure of order without which the remaining principles cannot be operative. The second *maqsad* of protecting religion is similarly foundational in the way it determines that the order of life established by the first principle has to adhere to a certain quality and texture that gives this social order its meanings, values, spirituality and psychology. In this manner, these universals thus weave the matrix within which the *maqsad* of preserving property and wealth is made operative and constructive. Situating the economy within the scheme of *Maqasid* thus denotes that "the

very principle of property rights and the acquisition, maintenance, and dispensation of wealth were all at once regulated by a dialectic of spiritual, metaphysical, and worldly considerations” (Hallaq 2012, 148-149).

Having said that, the Shari'a's general approach towards earning and seeking wealth was permitting and even encouraging of such pursuits. Trade and business in light of the Quran and Sunnah are considered legitimate activities to be pursued, albeit with respect to some rules and regulations extracted from the moral body of the Shari'a. Approximately, a quarter of Sharia's legal literature is focused on matters of trade, commerce, contract, and financial transactions, which is quite remarkable. Topics included within the range of these texts vary from sale and commerce and the different spaces that uphold them such as business partnerships, transfer, pledge, agency, loans, deposit, rent, leases and hire, etc., to other themes better described as non-market transactions or means of exchange of wealth such as inheritance, taxation, gifts, bequests, charity, divorce etc. These two domains are thus interconnected through the grounding of material transactions within a moral logic of purification and social justice. In other words, "the fear that trade, and the money made from it, have been, even unknowingly, corrupted by the market's immoral practices prompted the Shari'a to install legal and moral mechanisms that were intended to “purify” that money” (Hallaq 2012, 150). Hence the establishment of the institution of *zakāt* (alms-tax or alms giving) as well as the encouragement of other forms of charitable practices such as *sadaqa* and *waqf*, the latter having arguably commanded almost half of all real property in Islamdom by the sixteenth century (Hallaq 2012, 150). In light of these points, the hoarding of money or accumulation of capital for no sake other than its own is illicit under the moral cosmology of Shari'a because at its core lies one's neglect of the larger human web to which they belong and their social accountability towards its members as a genuine act of worship (Hallaq 2012, 150). However, being wealthy presents no problem in Islam as long as one is aware of their moral liability to other society members (Al-Daghistani 2021, 189).

Tazkiyah, Zakāt, and Growth through Purification²⁹

Al-Qaradawi defines *Zakāt* as the financial and social pillar of Islam (Al-Qaradawi 1999, 20). In its most direct sense, *zakāt* refers to the practice of almsgiving or taxation of the financially able in service of the vulnerable members of society. *Zakāt* shares the root of *Tazkiyah*, which means in its linguistic connotation *al'inmā' wa al'irbā'* (الإِنْمَاءُ وَ الْإِرْبَاءُ), to increase and grow something. The word *irbā'* actually shares the same root of *riba*³⁰, which sheds light on an important consideration of *zakāt*. The Quranic verse speaking of the evil of *riba* mentions: *يَمْحَقُ اللَّهُ الرِّبَا وَيُزِيلُ الصَّدَقَاتِ وَاللَّهُ* - Allah has made interest fruitless and charity fruitful (Quran 2:276)³¹. This Ayah points to two important considerations. First, that the act of seeking increase in wealth is not evil in itself, considering the Divine promise of increasing and blessing one's wealth through charity. Second, this act of increase in wealth is not something humans drive through their own efforts; rather it is a divine blessing on those who comply with the commands of the Shari'a. In light of this, increase in wealth in the Islamic perspective is strongly associated with spiritual purification, for the end goal of this process of *irbā'* and *inmā'* is the purification of human attributes and elevating the humanity of the *insān* as the means and end of the development process. In this spirit, *zakāt*, as one of the fundamental five pillars of Islam, comes as an extension of the striving for *Tazkiyah* and purification as the primary occupation of the human being (Hasanah 2011, 7).

As a path and process of purification of human character, *tazkiyah* is a multilayered concept that often takes different terms and forms, one of which is *tahāra*, referring to a state of cleaning and purification in light of the Divine. While it does not figure in the Quran directly, the derivative form of *tazkiyah*, *z-k-y*, can be found in various instances, reflecting on meanings of increase, growth (*namā'*), blessing (*baraka*), praise (*madh*), purity (*tahāra*), etc. In the Arabic language, *tazkiyah* is derived from the root word *z-k-y*, which means “righteous”, “pure” or “grow”. *Tazkiyah* is

the verbal noun (*masdar*) of the second verbal form *zakkā*, indicating causal effect that imparts intensity, demonstrating a desire to purify or acquire purity... In *Lisān*

²⁹ Ziauddin Sardar defines Tazkiyah as Growth through purification in his 1996 essay “Beyond Development: an Islamic Perspective

³⁰ Usually translated as usury

³¹ Translation from <https://quran.com/2?startingVerse=276>

al-‘Arab, one of the most comprehensive dictionaries in the Arabic language, Ibn Manzur first describes *zakā* as something that grows or spreads, such as plants in soil; whatever it increases or grows, it is called *yazkū zakā’an*. *Zakāt* (as almsgiving) refers to *ṣalāh* (righteousness), whereas a human being can be *zakiyyun* in that he/she honors the very principles of *zakāt*. But *zakāt al-māl* also means its cleanliness or purity (*taḥīrahu*) if *zakāt* as almsgiving is being applied to one’s wealth. Ibn Manzur clearly states that “*zakāt* as almsgiving is about purifying one’s wealth” (Al-Daghistani 2024, 31).

Thus, *tazkiyah* shares the same etymological root of *zakāt*, which includes at least two dimensions. While *zakāt al-māl* depends on the value of one’s material possessions, *zakāt al-nafs* denotes the purification of this wealth of any possible impure worldly acquisitions. As a central matter of *kasb* and *infāq*, *tazkiyah* can be conceptualized as acquisition of livelihood, especially since various classical scholars argued that the quest for financial provision is essentially concerned with human relations in the process of development. Hence, “*zakāt al-nafs* and *tazkiya* pinpoint to an ethical side of obtaining human capital in economic engagements and one’s relation toward the lived environment” (Al-Daghistani 2024, 36).

Zakāt is based on the Islamic perception of individuals as an extension of collectives. Islam does not conceive of the individual as an isolated unit but rather as a member of social networks which shape him as much as he shapes them. Al-Qaradawi thus argues that if Islam attributes this much value to society at large, then it has indeed focused its attention even more on its vulnerable members. The Quran repeatedly emphasizes the importance of taking care of the needy, the orphans, the destitute, the travelers, etc. This aspect is shared by both Makki and Madani Surahs, and the recurrent mention of *zakāt* as a sister of *salāh*, prayer, in multiple occasions attests to the importance of this pillar in Islam (Al-Qaradawi 1999, 5). He then continues on the importance of *zakāt* being manifested at four levels. First, in its being one of the fundamental pillars of Islam, coming directly after prayer. Second, in how it represents an important source of income for the Muslim state, which expands its scope beyond its ritualistic function, which explains the plethora of classical economic treatises. Third, *zakāt* serves as the fundamental institution of social security in Islam, primarily aimed at supporting the most vulnerable segments of society. Additionally, a portion of *zakāt* is allocated for the administrative system responsible for its collection and distribution, as well as for eligible non-Muslims known

as *al-mu'allafati qulubuhum* (المؤلفة قلوبهم). This reflects a broader strategy of fostering alliances with other communities. Fourth and last, in the role it plays in financing jihad as a means of *da'wa*³², protection of the Muslim community, and the support of *mujāhidin* and *du'āt* in their struggles (Al-Qaradawi 1999, 7-8).

This discussion on *zakāt* and *tazkiyah* is vital to this account in the way it balances the take on *tazkiyah* as a suggested paradigm of social change, instead of development. While being rooted in purification and seeking the cultivation of moral capital first and foremost, the Islamic stipulation of *zakāt* also points towards an important consideration that is part and parcel of the larger framework of economics and issues of wealth. From the preceding explanation of the different functions of *zakāt*, a clear point is made that Islam values financial stability and the presence of material resources that preserve the dignity of the human being. Hasanah argues that economic stability is a vital prerequisite for living a life that upholds the fundamental humanity of individuals. He notes that while history has always featured extraordinary individuals who, even in the depths of severe deprivation, remain resilient against the intellectual and cultural pressures of dominant materialist paradigms, the absence of basic needs for a dignified existence—evident in the rise of extreme poverty and famine—often undermines people's capacity to nurture moral capital and their affective reserve of resilience. As such, Islam remains keen on the provision and preservation of a minimum level of material prosperity which secures people's basic level of humanity. In light of the Ayah that stipulates *الَّذِي أَطْعَمَهُمْ مِنْ جُوعٍ وَءَامَنَهُمْ مِنْ خَوْفٍ* - Who (God) has spared them from hunger and fear (through provision of food and security), Hasanah establishes food and security as the basic levels of humanity that enable *al-insān* to venture beyond the material realm and cultivate an attitude of seeking the transcendental values that constitute the moral make-up of the Islamic worldview (Hasanah 2011, 16).

That said, in the Islamic classical view, the issue is not so much in the pursuit of material wealth, but rather in the obsession with its accumulation, which compromises and hinders the central function of *tazkiyah* and cultivation of moral capital. As mentioned several times earlier, “economic thought, as put forward by several classical scholars and jurists,

³² Call or invitation to the religion of Islam

was founded on the idea of the ethical self” (Al-Daghistani 2024, 30). In this regard, the concepts of *tazkiyah* and *zakāt al-nafs*, pertain both to matters of trade and human interaction with the environment, chiefly as qualities of cultivating and conserving “ethical accountability of the self”.

4.7. Contemporary Islamic Economics:

4.7.1. The Transition from Paradigmatic Shari’a to Modern Islamic Economics:

The birth of modern Islamic economics is usually traced to the postcolonial period which prompted Muslim intellectuals and scholars to formulate new economic ideals to replace the reigning Western institutions at the time (Jan and Asutay 2019, 2). However, the Western intellectual penetration of Muslim lands had started long before their military colonization, which directly dismantled Shari'a as a paradigmatic system of governance. In the Ottoman empire for instance, in addition to the establishment of Western commercial agencies, various leaders started adopting rather liberal policies as early as the seventeenth century³³, which spurred an increased presence of European scientists and engineers, as well as Christian missionaries. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, American and British Protestant missionaries had already established a strong presence in Syria and Lebanon, and later in Egypt. Already around this time, educational missionaries in the form of educational institutions became quite significant. Namely the founding of “the American School for Girls in Beirut” in 1830, “the Syrian Protestant College” in 1866, “the American University of Beirut” in 1881, etc. With English being the official language of teaching in these institutions, as well as the design of their curricula by American educationalists, the result was a careful monitoring of the Islamic input in these educational programs, which left very little space, if at all, for a significant body of Islamic education. This has remained the situation until the second half of the twentieth century which saw the rise of Islamic revivalism in order to “reform”, among other things, these educational curricula (Al-Ashker and Wilson 2006, 292-293).

Nonetheless, this Western influence was not always forced upon Muslims; the rise in the alienation of Islamic religion and culture in favor of secularization and modernization

³³ One of these leaders is the Lebanese prince Fakhr al-Din II (1590-1635) as mentioned in al-ashker and wilson 2006, 292

projects did indeed see light under the rule of some Muslim rulers. Perhaps most prominent of these is Muhammad Ali of Egypt who is frequently referred to as the founder of Modern Egypt. Arguably impressed with the legacy of the Napoleonic expedition which had brought with it some features of “Western development”, Muhammad Ali embarked on a program of reform and modernization reflecting the French model. Relevant to our account here is his monopolization of land and products in Egypt (Al-Ashker and Wilson 2006, 294) including *awqaf* (endowments), “which were properties donated by devout Muslims for the purpose of supporting the poor, religious causes, students of Shari’ah and Ulama” (Al-Ashker and Wilson 2006, 296).

In the Indian subcontinent and South-East Asia, Western presence was mainly manifested in the commercial ambition of "the East India Company" (EIC) and the likes, which would later lead to a "jural colonization" of the region, paving the way for its military colonization later on. As the main goal of the EIC was commercial gain, initially it did not interfere in native Law and forms of governance, as long as they did not hinder its commercial activities and interests in any way. However, with the decline of Mughal power, the EIC's role would gradually diminish from that of an "amicable guest" of the Mughal emperor to an increasingly militarized and aggressive institution which "had over time acquired many of the features of a modern state, and acted with an increasing sense of sovereignty that entailed warring, raising taxes and administering justice to its employees and – in time – to Indians as well" (Hallaq 2009, 371). With its military victory upon the confrontation with the Nawab of Bengal in 1757, the EIC officially asserted its dominance over the subcontinent, and embarked on its project of economic as well as juridical colonization, all in service of realizing the vision of establishing an open economic market (Hallaq 2009, 371-372). This is all to illustrate that military colonization of the Muslim world, could not have happened if it were not for the dismantling of the indigenous economic and legal system that operated for centuries since the birth of Islam. In this vein, Hallaq asserts that "European colonialism could not truly dominate Muslim lands during the nineteenth century without first dismantling the economic structures, and these structures depended on Shar'i regulations, laws, and values to a significant extent" (Hallaq 2012, 147). Understanding this background is crucial in this account for it sets the

stage for the much contested phenomenon that comes next: the birth of modern Islamic economics.

4.7.2. The Genealogy of Islamic Economics:

4.7.2.1. Muslim Revivalism and the Islamization of Knowledge:

The roots of modern Islamic economics can be traced to nineteenth and twentieth centuries' Muslim reformists' efforts to address the variety of social and political issues Muslims faced at the time. In the backdrop of nineteenth-century European colonization of the Muslim world, while resenting and resisting Western Christian occupation of their lands, a number of Muslim reformers at the same time were convinced of the superiority of these forces in terms of science, technology and political culture, and sought to find ways to lessen this gap and drive their countries to the stage of modernism (Al-Ashker and Wilson 2006, 319). The debate on Islamic economics therefore came out of the conception of the state during the colonial period and reformist ideas calling for the integration of Shari'a in state law all while upholding concepts, theories and methods that were a unique product of the Western intellectual tradition. It is in this context that Islamism as a political project was conceived as "an effort to promote modernization while islamising, domesticating and indigenizing it" (Al-Daghistani 2021, 27-28). With the changing of Muslim societies' cultural and social knowledge during the colonial period, the following decades witnessed the emergence of nationalistic sentiments coupled with a vision of political Islam, as well as a resurgence of writings on Islamic economics. Some of these scholars include Muhammad Hamidullah, Abu al-A'la Mawdudi and others; the concept of a Muslim state was the focal point of their studies. Through their accounts, "they invoked the state – which was a uniquely European phenomenon – as a way to expand "authentic" Islamic ideas based on the Divine law" (Al-Daghistani 2021, 28). Most relevant to us here is how this turn affected the position of Shari'a, which, from having been an institution and framework of moral Islamic governance during the classical period, was rendered into a mere legal system rather corresponding to the modern classification and practice of Law.

The integration of Western-inspired penal codes in the Ottoman Empire began during the Tanzimat period, which lasted from 1839 to 1876 and continued until the empire's official

dissolution in 1923. This effort was part of a broader initiative to modernize and restructure the Ottoman Empire according to the modern nation-state model. This naturally led to an enclosure of Islamic legal scholars' input in both education and legislation, which had irreversibly affected the economic conditions and the sociopolitical fabric in Ottoman territory as well as the greater Middle East. As a response to this alteration of the indigenous social systems and the submerging of traditional Islamic culture, many Muslim scholars pledged for the re-establishment of an "authentic" view of social life and Islamic Law as the only possible solution to the challenges of modernity, especially the positivist economic methodologies. As a consequence, what is nowadays known as the discourse of Islamization had emerged as an extension of the intellectual makeup set by early Muslim revivalists who sought to restore that vision of "authentic" Islam which preceded the turmoil of the colonial period. This discussion and contestation of the state-religion relation is thus crucial to the understanding of Islamic economics and its emergence as a discipline (Al-Daghistani 2021, 46-47).

In such a context, the following decades saw the merging of a process of Islamization of knowledge across different disciplines, one of which pertained to the economic realm, seeking to establish a kind of "methodological hybridity" of neoclassical economics and Islamic terminology (Al-Daghistani 2021, 46-47). With an aim to Islamize spheres of human action that pertain to the issue of knowledge, the Islamization of knowledge project originated in the second half of the twentieth century primarily as a vision of Muhammad Naquib al-Attas and Ismail al-Faruqi. Based on the philosophy of knowledge of these two scholars, Islamization embarked with an aim to de-Westernize and decolonize epistemic models while providing authentic contributions to the philosophy of knowledge as a response to the changing politico-economic challenges in Muslim majority countries (Al-Daghistani 2021, 48). The works of these two scholars particularly had an impact on curricula and the overall methodology of education in Islamic schools and institutions, including economic institutions. However, the Islamization process came to develop at least two different strands directed towards the accommodation of different Islamic teachings and principles to elaborate a new understanding of knowledge that could be better suited to the new issues faced by Muslim societies at the time. Al-Faruqi's specific

conception of the Islamization process was the one that carried the day with regard to economic models in particular (Al-Daghistani 2021, 28-29).

Al-Faruqi conceptualizes Islamization as a process of “applying new knowledge to the Islamic intellectual corpus, rooted in the *tawhid* epistemology” while also being “a way and a method to formulate a methodological, scientific, mental approach to humanities, social sciences, and applied sciences” (Al-Daghistani 2021, 83-84). As such, unlike al-Attas, focusing on education as the cornerstone of any state, al-Faruqi viewed Islamization of knowledge as a project that can establish itself as a rival of the universalized Eurocentric knowledge system, with one of its aims being to reconcile contemporary knowledge systems with traditional Islamic sciences by expanding the methodology of the latter due to its proclaimed shortcomings (Al-Daghistani 2021, 83-84). Hence, al-Faruqi articulates his project of Islamizing knowledge through the following objectives:

... efforts to increase awareness among the *umma* of the crisis of ideas; to revive the lost ideology; to define the relationship between the failure of Islamic thought and its methodology; *to adopt Islamic methodology in the field of social sciences*; to master modern disciplines and Islamic history; to establish a bridge between Islamic and modern knowledge; and to launch a trajectory of knowledge that would fulfill the divine message (Al-Daghistani 2021, 84).³⁴

In sum, the Islamization of knowledge project did indeed provide a critique of modernity, but at the same time it tried to establish that Islam is compatible with modern forms of knowledge (Al-Daghistani 2024, 20). On this account, a central task of this view of the Islamization of knowledge was the integration the Islamic view of knowledge with the modern social, political, cultural, and educational platforms available. Hence the establishment of Islamic educational institutions from elementary and secondary schools to colleges and universities, which would be vital for the dissemination of Islamic economics as a progeny of Islamization (Al-Daghistani 2021, 84).

4.7.2.2. Birth of Islamic Banking and Finance:

This history of banking institutions in the Muslim world goes back as far as the nineteenth century when a number of Western countries opened their banks in Muslim lands in order to sustain their economic activities. Some of these banks include “the Imperial Ottoman

³⁴ italics mine

Bank (1856) in the territory of the Ottoman dynasty and the Imperial Bank of Persia (1889) in the territory of the Qajar dynasty” (Nagaoka 2012, 115). These banks, naturally charging interest, constituted a grave problem for Muslim scholars, as *riba* has been prohibited in financial transactions since the early stages of Islam. Coupled with the outputs of the Islamic revival and Islamization of knowledge efforts, Islamic economics thus emerged as an attempt of a number of intellectuals, who conceived of modern interest-based transactions as *riba*, to provide an alternative economic system (Nagaoka 2012, 116). The following years saw the proliferation of Islamic economic theories at the hands of Muslim scholars trained in Western economic sciences who could rather be considered economists with a Muslim background (Al-Daghistani 2021, 81).

Particularly, in the attempt to address the Islamic financial system, two pioneer works emerged in the 1940s (authored by Anwar Iqbal Qureshi and Mahmud Ahmad) and set forth a consensus on the utility of *mudarabah* and *musharakah*³⁵ as alternative "partnership-based financial instruments" in line with Islamic Law. Qureshi states for example that "Islam prohibits interest but allows profits and partnership. If the banks, instead of allowing loans to the industry, become its partners, share the loss and profit with it, there is no objection against such banks in the Islamic system" (Nagaoka 2012, 118). In the same vein, the next generation of scholars thus focused on the topic of *interestless* banking, which formed a big part of the literature on Islamic economics.

In addition to the postcolonial struggle of Muslim intellectuals to reconcile their tradition with the new modern world order, another important factor in this account was the emergence of oil exploitation in the Gulf countries around the 1960s, which had created an unprecedented amount of wealth in its corresponding Muslim countries. Jan and Asutay argue that this further incited the need for financing products that were Shari'a compliant, thus resulting in what they call "the *halalization* process" which finally led to the

³⁵ “*Mudaraba* is a form of business contract in which one party offers capital and another party undertakes some business with this capital; the former is termed *rabb al-mal* and the latter *mudarib*. Any resulting profit is distributed between both parties based on a previously agreed ratio, while the entire loss would be borne by *rabb al-mal* unless *mudarib* is proved to be negligent. *Musharaka* is a form of business partnership in which multiple parties invest. Any profit is distributed between both parties in a previously agreed ratio or shared depending on the amount invested. Any loss is borne by both parties depending on the amount invested.” Nagaoka 2012, 118

emergence of “Islamic Banking and Finance” (IBF) as an operational institution of modern Islamic economics (Jan and Asutay 2019, 3).

In any case, one of the major milestones in the history of Islamic Banking and Finance is the founding of the Islamic Development Bank in Jeddah in 1975. This bank emerged as an international financial institution for development projects. Its main purpose was to support economic development and international trade between its member states, as the membership was open to all Muslim countries. It also relies on a function of research pertaining to the particularities of economic and financial activities in a way that complies with the Shari'a. This bank was one of the first Islamic banks that turned the modern Islamic economic thought into practice, and in a way set the stage for the banks to follow (Alhamwi 2024b, 10). The same year of 1975, the Dubai Islamic Bank was founded as the first commercial bank that was created with the purpose of maximizing profit in a Shari'a-compliant way. The creation of this bank is considered to be the starting point of Islamic banking and finance (IBF) (Jan and Asutay 2019, 3). The years that follow saw the proliferation of Islamic banks across many Muslim countries including Sudan, Egypt, Kuwait, Bahrain, Turkey, Cyprus, Senegal, Guinea, Niger etc. In the year 1977, the International Union of Islamic Banks was founded, taking Makkah as its headquarters. The purpose of this institution was to facilitate networking and support for the newly founded Islamic banks as well as documenting their cooperation and supporting academic publication in the field of Islamic economics. By the year 2002, the number of Islamic banks in the world had reached five hundred sixty-two operating across fifty-four countries, and to this day, this proliferation of Islamic banks continues (Alhamwi 2024b, 11-12).

4.7.2.3. Appraisal and closing remarks

As mentioned earlier, the debate and practice of Islamic economics finds its origins in the colonial period and its conception of the state. The search for Islamic economics was part and parcel of Muslim reformists, revivalists, and later Islamists' attempt to establish Muslim states in the image of the European modern nation-state. This political imagination lies at the heart of the problem with modern Islamic economics. By mirroring the conception of society as a nation made up of individuals in service of “national” capital and economy, Muslims perhaps were not aware that a by-product of this view would be

the dissolution of the moral structure of Shari'a, which is embedded and dependent on the larger Islamic view of social organization. As Al-Daghistani aptly explains, in the classical period, "the individual did not exist for the sake of the state (government) but as part of the collective unit, at least in theory, governed by moral laws. The governmental authority promoted welfare to the individual, which was part of the *umma* not as an abstract (worldly) entity but also as a concrete (local) one" (Al-Daghistani 2021, 27).

Indeed, most of the ideas circulated during the period of Islamic revivalism and later with the rise of the theory of Islamization of knowledge were largely expressions of the time and space that Muslims are inhabiting along their Western counterparts. However, since a large part of these thinkers viewed the nation-state as a natural entity and took it for granted, Islamic economics ended up being constructed around the tenets of secular economics and the epistemology of neoliberalism (Al-Daghistani 2021, 28). In this sense, Islamic economics were "Islamic" only in the way they tried to eliminate unlawful practices such as *riba*. The ruling logic however remained not much different from that of classical economics. The creation of commercial Islamic banks specifically illustrates this point of deviation from the aspirational framework of Islam's moral economy. Jan and Asutay make the following pertinent observation:

Although IBF is considered one of the fastest growing sectors in the international financial system with double-digit annual growth rates, Muslim countries are still striving to achieve economic development to escape the poverty trap, whereas IME³⁶ imagined that IBF would lead to the development of Muslim societies. While the relatively small asset domain of IBF institutions should also be considered as a factor in not being able to mobilize resources, the commercial nature of IBF has led to further financialization of Muslim economies rather than being an instrument of Islamic development. In other words, IBF has been successful in transactional accumulation, but it has not developed any strategy for IME's transformational objectives (Jan and Asutay 2019, 3).

The failure of Islamic economics and the Islamization of Knowledge project to provide a true alternative for the current economic and political system thus calls for a creative re-imagining of social reality in light of the moral paradigm of Shari'a. This task need start at the basic levels of articulating the essence of human nature, in response to the material view of the *insan* as unidimensional being seeking the maximization of self-interest. The

³⁶ Islamic Moral Economy

moral project of Taha Abdurrahman through his paradigm of *I'timaniyyah* thus serves as a good starting point in this regard.



CHAPTER V

FROM *TANMIYAH* TO *TAZKIYAH*: THE FORMATION OF THE *I'TIMANI* SUBJECT

While scientists agree that our consumption patterns must change, no one has the magic formula. Change in our consumption implies, above all, an ethical change. We need an ethical renaissance to modify our hostile relationship with our planet, and that is a tall order.

– Oswaldo De Rivero

5.1. Taha Abdurrahman's Theory of *I'timaniyyah*

5.1.1. The Human Being as a Trustee of God

Taha's theory of *i'timāniyya* aims to prevent the act of human beings from becoming tyrannical by having the illusion of being "sufficient unto themselves (*al-istighnā' bi-l-dhāt*)," which in both cases boils down to people achieving a state of moral corruption that makes them worship themselves. As such, the concept of *i'timāniyya* acts as a constant reminder to humanity of its origins in the realm of the unseen, or '*alam al-ghayb*. It emphasizes the covenant made to act in this world according to God's will and to uphold one's *Amanah* (trust).³⁷

What Taha intends to construct in this paradigm of entrustment is a faith-based moral philosophy, which, although primarily based on Islam, holds the promise of being relevant to other religious contexts encompassing different affiliations. He primarily bases his theory on what he calls *al-tawāthuk'* (referring to the covenant), basically pointing to a different kind of "social contract" established between two parties, at least, as in the common understanding. Yet, contrary to the secular conception of the "civil" or the "social contract," this *mithāq* stipulates a religious postulation of an agreement with God Himself. For Abdurrahman, this *tawāthuk'*, or divine contract, ought to constitute the basis of any social contract that succeeds. He thus infers the basic principles of his paradigm from *al-mawāthik'* (covenants) that God took from man in the world of the unseen, '*alam al-ghayb*. Namely, the "three Quranic covenants," as Fadi Zatari (2022, 1-3) explains,

³⁷ See Quran, 33:72. Taken from <https://quran.com/33:72>

encompass the following elements: "Testimony, establishing man's responsibility before God, Entrustment, establishing man's duties and responsibilities on earth, and Transmission, introducing an ideal form of conduct through the role model of God's prophets and messengers." Contrary to civil contracts, which limit human existence to the realm of the physical, such a divine contract consists of a spiritual essence. It comes as a reminder for the human being of his primordial connection to the realm of the metaphysical and the unseen through the witness he bore of God's creation of the heavens and the earth,³⁸ and the promise he gave to act as God's vicegerent, or *Khalifah*, in this world. When the human is fully aware and internalizing having been entrusted the world and its creatures by Allah, the owner, and sovereign of all, his soul becomes more prone to be purified from possessive greed, leading to his development of a sense of accountability and responsibility regarding his actions and decisions (Zatari 2022, 6). Holding this spiritual memory of having held the *Amanah* to behave within the bounds of *Shari'a* (Hashas 2020, 69), the human being turns from a passive observer in society to an active agent of change from his or her respective position.

This decentralized model of accountability stands contrary to the conventional imagination of political action as being solely limited to the state or the international community, which makes the responsibility to protect rights and uphold social justice bound to the central power in a sense that both burdens them (i.e., the state and international community) with more political obligation than they could possibly handle and also results in the production of a passive body of individuals who are blind to their responsibility to proactively initiate change from their respective positions.

The question of ethics thus occupies a central position in the philosophical project of Taha Abdurrahman. Unlike the common imagination of the human being as a rational or political being, for Taha, the human being is, above all, an ethical being. He then asserts that the ultimate source of ethics is revealed religion (instead of human reason or man-made religions), specifically Islam, as "the religion par excellence that champions this core value for human well-being" (Hashas 2020, 41). The heart of the Islamic message, as he argues, is ethical, and the way to achieve and realize these ethics is not in reason. Rather, the more one perfects their ethicality (*akhlāqiyya*), the closer they can get to

³⁸ See Quran 7:172, from <https://quran.com/7:172>

humanity, and in this context, rationality (*'aqlāniyya*) can only be a means to this end. As such, for Taha, “the existence of man parallels the existence of ethics, and vice versa... ethics is what renders human beings human. It is their identity and essence” (Taha 2000, 41). Not to mention that in his book *The Question of Ethics* (2000), he mentions that ethics is not only the essence of humanity and Islam, “but also the essence of any human change to a better future, or what he calls a “civilization of ethos” (Taha 2000, 45).

5.1.1.2. Critique of Development as Critique of Modernity

In his book *Ruh al-Hadatha*, Taha places his critique of development within the larger context of his critique of Western modernity. He begins his critique by distinguishing between two levels of analysis: *waqi' al-hadatha* as in the reality or practice of modernity, and *ruh al-hadatha* as in the spirit or the ethos that drives this practice. His argument is that the spirit of true modernity is ideally the same everywhere, while its practical reality can differ in application from one context to another. What constitutes the building blocks of the spirit of modernity are three main principles: the principle of Majority.³⁹ (مبدأ الرشد), the principle of Criticism (مبدأ النقد) and the principle of Universality (مبدأ الشمول). Each of these principles encompasses two main pillars as follows: Autonomy (ركن الاستقلال) and Creativity (ركن الإبداع) under the principle of Majority, Rationalization (ركن التعقيل) and Differentiation (ركن التفصيل) under the principle of Criticism, Extensibility (ركن التوسع) and Generalizability (ركن التعميم) under the principle of Universality. These tenets constitute the basic structure on which Taha bases his critique of the Western application of modernity and then further elaborates on how an Islamic application of the spirit of modernity ought to be conducted. To illustrate this paradigm, he lays out the application of each of the six pillars, both in the Western and Islamic view, through the scrutiny of six corresponding themes: globalization, family, translation, Quranic interpretation, citizenship, and solidarity (Taha 2006, 19-20).

³⁹ The translation of the Arabic terminology used here is articulated by Taha himself in the same book of *Ruh al-Hadatha*.

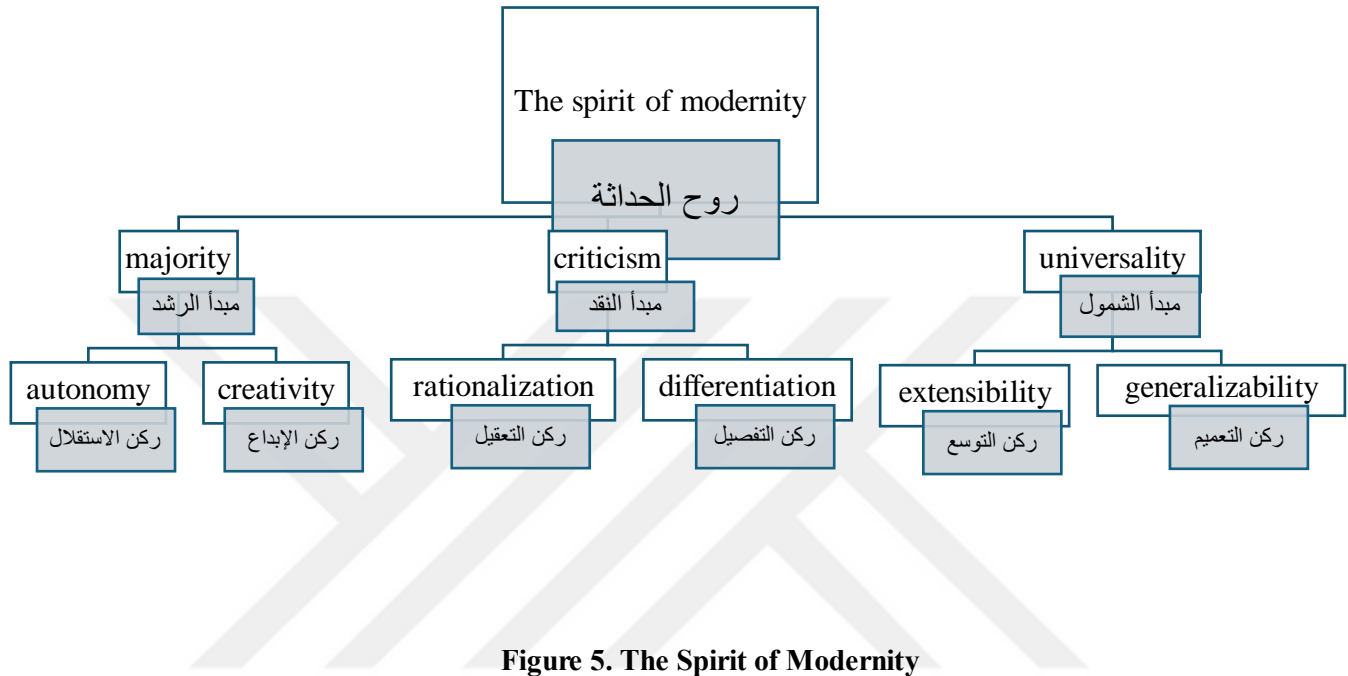


Figure 5. The Spirit of Modernity

Taha's critique of development therefore comes as part and parcel of his critique of the Western application of the principle of Criticism; in this context, he takes globalization as a practical example of the failure of the Western model to apply the pillar of rationalization, which he deems to be purely utilitarian.⁴⁰ Before proceeding to critique it, Taha first establishes a definition of globalization as "the rationalization of the world in a sense that turns it into one domain of relations between societies and individuals through the materialization of three dominations: "the domination of economics in the field of development," "the domination of technology in the field of science" and "the domination of network in the field of communication" (Taha 2006, 78). This particular definition necessitates three main implications, as he contends. First, globalization is an ever-continuous act of influence on the world in its entirety, which, in essence, is a rational act. Second, the enduring effect of this rationalizing act is the standardization of global relations in a way that turns the world into a single social, economic, political, and cultural

⁴⁰ In Arabic, he speaks of the Western application of rationalization as *التعقيل الأداة*

domain for all humanity. In his view, this is what is usually referred to in the usage of expressions such as "global village," "global city," "global society," or "global proximity," etc. What characterizes the relations established in this uniform network is not their similarity but rather their ever-increasing proliferation and growing complexity. Arriving at this increasingly complex intricacy of relations while still containing them within the same domain is the product of the aforementioned three dominations of globalization. These three dominations contribute to the perpetual reproduction of this peculiar network of relations, which in turn affects the ethics of its subjects. What is of specific interest to us here is the first domination Taha (2006, 79) talks about, which is the domination of economics in the field of development.

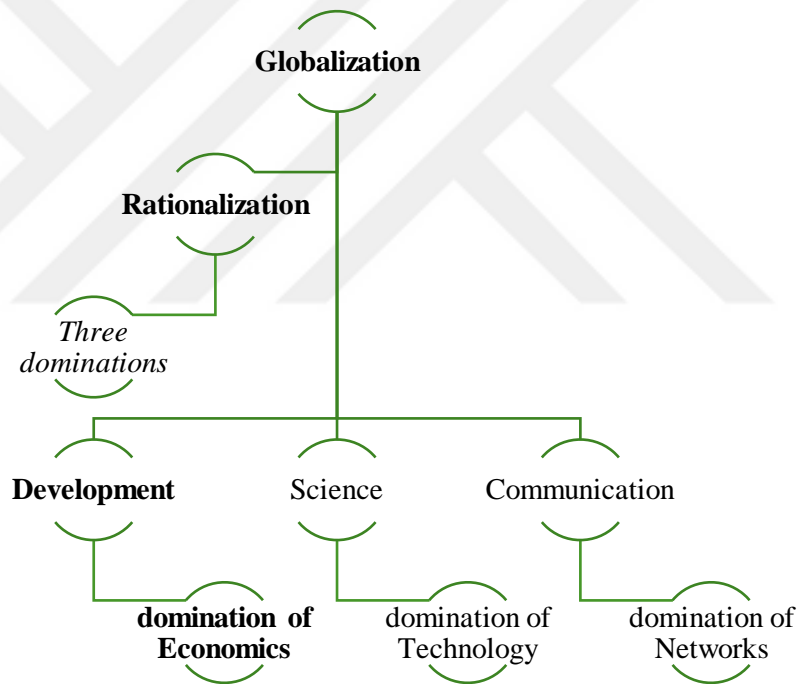


Figure 6. Globalization in the Thought of Taha Abdurrahman

5.1.1.3. The Domination of Economics in the Field of Development and the Breach of the Principle of Tazkiyah

Stating that economics is a crucial factor in development or that the economy in the West is the product of the unfolding of multiple phases of a specific historical context of capitalism is quite an evident declaration. However, what is less obvious is that the rationalizing aspect characterizing globalization seeks to boil all kinds of development down to economic capitalist development to the extent that there would be no

overstatement to speak of the reality of economic authoritarianism. With the onset of globalization, there is a conviction that a rationalized economy must be inherently good both in its goals and means, that economic growth is the best possible kind of growth that a society can achieve, and that it ought to be elevated as high as possible on the list of priorities allegedly because it creates job opportunities, builds capabilities and solves different kinds of social issues in a way that reduces the gap between the rich and the poor. Based on such assumptions, the system of globalization solidified the proliferation and presence of big multinational companies carrying their trade and investment anywhere and anytime beyond all national borders, further legitimized and protected by institutions such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and the International Trade Organization. Such a context in which development is entrusted to multinational companies operating with the logic of the market can only form global relations that are based on pure material interests, especially in the absence of a strong global civil society or institutions with enough authority to stand in the face of this economic sovereignty. This system thus contributes to the entrenchment of materialist values, leading to the rise of moral corruption and the dissolution of the solidarity that glues the different constituents of the social fabric. Thus, in the view of Taha (2006, 79-80), such an ecosystem does not leave space for any moral and ethical considerations, and it also conceptualizes development in a way that essentially goes against any kind of development that is centered on what we can call *Tazkiyah*.⁴¹

According to Taha, the basic tenet of *tazkiyah* is to ensure that any kind of interest or benefit, whether tangible or intangible, should have the overall righteousness of the human being as its end goal. He further asserts that this righteousness can only be achieved through an increase in one's humanity, which directly means an increase in *akhlaqiyyah* or ethicality.⁴² In this light, any material interest that can meet a certain need but risks corrupting one's ethics is directly sidelined by *tazkiyah*. Contrary to development, the logic of *tazkiyah* does not seek the entirety of *manafi'* (interests), but only the *masalih* (benefits that cultivate *salah*, human righteousness or reform) out of them. The reigning system of globalization thus does not cultivate this kind of *salah*-oriented benefits; as Taha

⁴¹ Briefly, it can be translated to "purification."

⁴² This corresponds with Taha's earlier articulation of human nature as being essentially represented in the human being's *akhlaqiyyah* (ethicality)

articulates, "in their economic relations, the people belonging to the globalization camp benefit but do not reform, develop but don't purify, they focus on developing their resources but neglect the development of their ethics." As such, their values are steeped in an almost sacralization and veneration of economics to a level that resembles the veneration of Divine provision; Taha calls this strong belief in economics the "deification of the economy." In this sense, this breach of the principle of tazkiyah constitutes the central moral defect of the reign of the economy in development, which itself is a product of the aforementioned utilitarian rationalization that characterizes Western modernity. Be that as it may, the principle of tazkiyah is thus about bringing together the development of both material resources and moral ethics (Taha 2006, 81).

5.1.1.4. From Tanmiyah to Tazkiyah

Within the same line of critique of globalization and its three dominations, Abdurrahman argues that at the heart of this system is a triangular ethical crisis (triangular corresponding to the aforementioned three dominations of economy, technology, and network communication). This ethical dilemma, albeit acknowledged, has been addressed only partially at best, as manifested in efforts to open departments and programs focused on the study of ethics in universities and higher education institutions or even the increase in codes of ethics corresponding to different disciplines and practical fields. Against all these efforts and their likes, Taha contends that the world is only headed towards an increasing state of moral deterioration and that the current economic system actually keeps adapting to these new demands by coopting them and commodifying morality itself in a way that turns it into a pure instrument for the capitalist system to reproduce itself and further extend its lifetime. It is this subordination of ethics and the centralization of the economy as an end in itself, while it should only be a means to an end, that calls for creative solutions that ought to be different in logic and dogma from the system that produced them in the first place, namely capitalism and neoliberal economics. It is in this light that Taha proposes an Islamic moral framework to address what he calls the moral defects of the current developmentalist model.

In his attempt to address the loopholes of the foregoing globalized system of the economy, Taha stipulates his critique by first redefining the meaning of "the world," which to him is, in essence, an "ethical, relational domain." In view of this, the meaning of globalization

thus becomes the attempt to rationalize the world in a way that makes it turn into one unified, ethical, relational domain. As such, Islam provides a critique that elevates the economy from the level of *tanmiyah*, that of securing material interests, to the level of *tazkiyah*, that which cultivates moral gains. Such an elevation happens thanks to what Taha calls “the principle of *ibtigha’ al-fadl*⁴³,” which can roughly be translated to “the seeking or the aspiration for graciousness” (Taha 2006, 90).

5.1.1.5. The Principle of Ibtigha’ Al-Fadl

With regards to the specific breach of the principle of *tazkiyah* as represented in the reign of the economy in the field of development, Taha proposes establishing the principle of *ibtigha’ al-fadl*, which sets the following rule: holistic or wholesome development does not happen unless the economic is both combined with other elements of development and connected to the spiritual realm.

5.1.1.5. 1. Combining the Economic with other Elements of Development

The principle of *ibtigha’ al-fadl* proposes a logic of action different from that of trade in the market economy. The latter detaches economic transactions from any moral considerations, while the former ensures that acts of buying and selling operate under a moral imperative. Taha then asserts that the illustration of this principle lies in the meaning of the word *fadl* itself, which encapsulates two ethical meanings that are not present in the concept of commodity or merchandise. The first is "*fadilah*," or what can be translated into "virtue" or "excellence," and the second is "*khayr*," which can be translated into the concept of "good" as that which opposes "evil." In light of these two meanings, *fadl* thus connotes the *khayr* (i.e., both material and moral good) through which *fadilah* is realized. This definition establishes an important rule: in the context of *ibtigha’ al-fadl*, merchandise acquires a moral value on top of its commercial value. As such, it turns into a *khayr* of both moral and material benefit in a way that bends the changing rules of the market to the moral standard of ethical behavior. Economic development in such a context thus becomes what Taha calls a “double *tazkiyah*”: *tazkiyah* of money and *tazkiyah* of “*hāl*,” or what can be shortly translated into "spiritual condition." That being the case,

⁴³ الفضل in Arabic.

economic development becomes compatible with other kinds of development that seek to elevate the overall condition of humans and create a healthy global environment.

5.1.1.5. 2. Connecting the Economic to the Spiritual Realm

Compared to the logic of trade in the market economy, the logic of *ibtigha' al-fadl* in Islam not only differs in its being steeped in a moral imperative but also in the way it brings back the meaning of *fadl* between people to the ultimate source of all *fadl*: God and that draws our attention to two major implications that follow from this kind of thinking. First, in establishing God as the first *mutafaddil* (i.e., main actor of *fadl*, meaning benefactor or provider in English), there is a strong reminder that the acquisition of any commodity, instead of solidifying the feeling of possessiveness that lies at the heart of all human evil, does not denote any sense of ultimate ownership of anything but ensures remembrance of God as the ultimate and true owner of all, and that the possession of anything is not an entitlement of the human being but rather a blessing from God that necessitates gratitude and action with the ethics of a trustee.

Second, given the fact that nothing seems more steeped in materialism than the concept of commodity constituting the center of financial transactions and its proximity and appeal to the material side of the human constituting the pinnacle of materialism, and given that nothing is farther from the spiritual horizon than tangible matter, the association of commodities acquired by man to God is a strong reminder that these commodities carry a spiritual meaning while retaining their material character, just as it enters what is not a commodity, and also a reminder that man is required to recognize and identify this meaning in order to approach the One who bestowed it upon him.

In such a case, commerce becomes not an exchange of goods whose value is exhausted in material consumption, as in a market economy, but an exchange of *afḍāl* or favors that elevate consumers to the spiritual horizon. In other words, in light of these moral principles, commercial exchange turns from being a mere manifestation of money velocity to becoming a process to build a social infrastructure established on an economy of trust and graciousness between its members.

As such, Taha concludes that, in ensuring the integration of different development aspects and the connection to the spiritual realm, the Islamic principle of *ibtigha' al-fadl* puts spiritual and moral values at the heart of economic development in a way that deems any

development worthless and irrelevant unless its central aspiration is the cultivation of spiritual and moral capital. Any development process failing to meet this standard is thus immediately dispensable, according to Taha, because economic development becomes nothing more than a means to the ultimate end of cultivating spiritual and moral capital (Taha 2006, 9).

	Human nature	Focus	End goal	Developing	Meaning of 'alam (the world)	Value of commodities	Leading logic	Meaning of commerce/trade
<i>Tanmiyah</i>	<i>Insan</i> as a materialist being	<i>Manāfi'</i> (entirety of interests)	Economic growth	Resources	Materialist Rational domain	Material	Rationality	exchange of goods whose value is exhausted in material consumption
<i>Tazkiyah</i>	<i>Insan</i> as an ethical being	<i>Maṣāliḥ</i> (only interests that secure <i>salah</i>)	Overall <i>salah</i> (righteousness) of the human being	Ethics	Ethical Relational domain	Material + Moral/Spiritual	Ethicality	exchange of <i>afdāl</i> (favours) that elevate consumers to the spiritual horizon

Table 1 From *Tanmiyah* to *Tazkiyah*

5.2. Hany El-Banna's Practice of *Khala'iqiyah*

Hany el-Banna, the founder of the renowned international charity and humanitarian organization Islamic Relief, currently leads the World Humanitarian Action Forum (WHAF). Established in 2008, WHAF was created to support the collaboration of international organizations working with Muslim NGOs and communities. Its primary goal is to foster effective partnerships to enhance the assistance provided to affected communities. In order to gain insights into the experience of Hany el-Banna and how it relates to the questions of this research, I had an in-depth interview with Dr. Hany el-Banna on the 27th of June, 2024, in Istanbul, Turkiye.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ In this section, all direct quotations used in the preceding paragraphs and all ideas attributed to Hany el-Banna were obtained from an in-depth interview we had on the 27th of June, 2024, in Istanbul Turkiye.

A Few Notes on the Choice of In-Depth Interview as a Method:

In their book *The Practice of Qualitative Research*, Nagy and Hesse refer to the in-depth interview as a crucial tool of qualitative research attributing a significant importance to the individual as a beholder of unique knowledge and perception of the social reality which can be ascertained through the means of verbal communication. They define in-depth interviews as “a particular kind of conversation between the researcher and the interviewee that requires asking and listening. The process is a meaning-making endeavor embarked on a partnership between the interviewer and their participant.” (Nagy Hesse and Leavy 2014, 154).

Within the specific context of this research, I chose this particular method because it aligns with the philosophical nature of the inquiry in the sense that it primarily asks theoretical questions about the theory of development and looks for critiques rooted in Islamic ethics. Hany el-Banna provides a good example in this regard, given his extensive, long, and rich experience as a practitioner in the field of development and humanitarian work. Most importantly, his example aptly illustrates the concept of critique as stipulated before, at least in two main ways. First, as an unusual individual with a very rich experience, he provides a practical ground to test the theory of *i'timaniyyah*, as elaborated by Taha.

Secondly, his recent shift from direct humanitarian work to synthesizing and theorizing about such practices aligns perfectly with this research, as it connects theory and practice. In other words, the example of Hany el-Banna is particularly distinguished because he provides a conceptual critique of development theory, illustrated in his coining of the theory of Creaturearianism, which is a quite uncommon outcome coming from a grassroots practitioner. Therefore, I specifically chose to conduct the in-depth interview since the topic under investigation in this research is not particularly limited to any subjective context but is rather an issue-oriented investigation that is better ascertained from individuals regardless of their setting, as Nagy and Hesse-Biber highlight in their book (Nagy Hesse and Leavy 2014, 155). The interview was unstructured, with open-ended questions; it lasted around two hours in conversation with the interviewee.

5.2.1. Notes on Knowledge and the Need for an Epistemological Revival

The first thing El-Banna mentioned in our conversation was a reflection on a model asserting levels of knowledge to situate his larger practice of humanitarian and

development work in a faith-based epistemological framework. Within this framework, there are four categories of science. The first and lowest category responds to material needs, such as biology, engineering, and medicine. The second category is philosophy, which investigates the metaphysical order that upholds the physical reality. The third is social and humanitarian work, which deals with human beings for the sake of whom all matter and creation was harnessed. The fourth and highest level of knowledge is spiritual purification and refinement. According to El-Banna, knowledge-seeking ideally should occur with this hierarchy in mind. Against this background, he went on to explain his understanding of development.

5.2.2. Theorizing Development in Action

Building on his extensive experience on the ground, El-Banna asserts that “development is not projects, it is a program of change; quite often people think that because they built a hundred wells or fifty schools or have a sponsoring scheme for the children that this is development; these are projects. *Development is a program made out of many projects,*” and it should be practiced in light of *an integrated approach* over enough time to start seeing a significant impact. Such an integrated approach consists of a project-oriented mindset that takes into consideration the philosophical and moral together and deals not only with material needs but also looks at the human being as a complex being with different needs. In this sense, development is about empowering marginalized groups, the youth, and women. It also involves protecting the family structure and, by extension, the future of children. All of these elements define what development means. More importantly, an Islamic approach to development would consider the human being as the center and focal point of development of the society.

Another theme he touched upon is measuring impact. For him, this remains a significant gap in current efforts since impact measurement is often done in superficial positivist ways that do not reflect reality or is neglected altogether after projects are completed. He provided an example from Pakistan, illustrating a successful measurement of impact in his own experience:

We went there in 1997, and we were trying to build water reservoirs on the top of a mountain. The following year, we discovered that the only people who went to fetch the water were the girls, five times a day, carried it on their heads and could only carry 5 liters each trip. Once we built the water tanks, the number of girls

enrolled in school increased. This is impact. The number of skin diseases decreased because people could wash themselves every other day; even the mother at the house was producing more things for the local market because she had water at the house. When we did this, this was the impact. When we did it in China, a hundred-year-old woman said I would love to see water coming to my house before I die. This is impact! This statement by itself lets you shiver. Unfortunately, our organizations don't believe in investing money out of the program's overall budget to measure its impact.

Unfortunately, he continues, many people have a limited and superficial understanding of development. They get impressed by simple acts of digging wells or establishing schools, although development is much more than that.

Look at the history of the intervention of the great Western humanitarian NGOs in third-world countries. Did they decrease the level of poverty in any of these countries? *This is not development. This is firefighting or pocket-to-mouth to keep you happy. Enough is enough!* If you don't empower me to enable me to stand on my feet, you're not developing or helping me. You give me some biscuits while my house is on fire, what am I going to do with it? You give me some water while there is an earthquake, and my house collapses; this is not right."

Building on these powerful metaphors that illustrate the impotence of current development practices, he goes on to emphasize a rule of central importance:

You have to review the ethical value of the meaning of development; this is number one! What follows is a reality check that development practitioners ought to run with themselves: are we really honest with ourselves when we say that we're going to develop this village or this community? Are we developing it? Why are organizations, such as Syria, still unable to solve basic problems over the last twelve years, with billions and billions spent on humanitarian response? Why is there no resilience from the donor agencies, the UN, and others? Because it is (i.e., their intervention) dictated by the philosophy and the culture and the values of their respective countries, *any help coming to you is escorted by the culture, values, and beliefs of the donors themselves.*

5.2.3. Situating Development within the Current World Order

Aside from emphasizing this important awareness of development practices being value-driven even when advertised as being universal and inclusive, El-Banna went on to discuss another important dimension: the larger political scheme and power relations in the current world system. He went on to discuss examples of countries, such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, where attempts for a truly democratic transition and economic innovations were aborted at the hands of local armed groups to keep supplying international investors with raw resources of the country and to preserve the established

systemic violence of subordination and exploitation of such countries to the service of the Global North. "With one hand, you steal my country, and with the other, you give me a piece of bread"! In light of this context, El-Banna then goes on to describe current development work and funding as "cosmetic, sedative, a tranquilizer, sleeping tablets" instead of addressing issues at their root cause level. What development is supposed to provide, in his view, is local leadership, teaching people their rights, strengthening community organization, and implementing what we call "localization." "Don't ever talk to me about development if I don't find any local leadership after you being in the community for the last ten or twenty years... this is imperializing, colonization, not development."

For El-Banna, even in the context of the current global system that doesn't hold such a radically honest approach to development in its priorities and seems quite discouraging of grassroots efforts in the face of big-scale systemic failures, what matters is that each person "carries development from their own perspective and asks critical questions." He asserts that "development is a holistic approach to community problems... it is about connection, with people by people, not separatism, not isolation nor marginalization. When it comes to development, you have to see every component of society, including animals' rights and the environment. That means education, that means awareness, that means advocacy, rights, civil liberty space, civil society organizations." He then continues, an emphasis again on the need for what we can call "an epistemic renaissance," that "*the challenge now is to redefine the definitions*, the known definitions because we cannot take everything for granted anymore! Because in the good old days, there was no communication or awareness. You took what was available and good for you, and *now you have to write what is good for everybody from your own perspective; this is development.*" This statement is crucial in the context of this research because it parallels the previous argument of development primarily being a psycho-epistemic disorder. El-Banna's continuous emphasis on the importance of this kind of paradigm shift with regards to theory building, as well as his pointing at the necessity to unlearn what we can possibly call "our learned helplessness" in the face of the global system, this emphasis is eye-opening perhaps because it goes against the assumption that radical change in the face of such massive issues we're facing currently can only come through efforts at the macro

level from parties with unparalleled social and political power. For El-Banna, the emphasis is on the building of resilient human beings and the cultivation of spiritual and moral strength to act from one's respective position at the service not only of humanity but of all God's creation. It is in this vein that El-Banna coined the term *Creaturetarianism*, his alternative to the concept of Humanitarianism.

5.2.4. The Concept of Creaturetarianism or *Khala'iqiyyah*

Derived from *creature* instead of *human*, the concept of creaturetarianism, or *khala'iqiyyah*, as explained by El-Banna, redefines humanitarian and development work on at least two main axes. First, in substituting *human* for *creature*, the concept proposes a view that transcends human-centrism to include all creatures within the scope of development work, including both living (such as animals and plants, etc.) and non-living creatures (such as mountains and seas and natural habitat in general). This tenet emphasizes, first, the obligation to uphold environmental justice and rights of creatures other than the human being, and second, the embeddedness of existence and unity of life shared by different creatures, the human being among them and not a separate entity placed above. The second axis this concept highlights, according to El-Banna, is in the connection the word *creature* directly establishes with the necessity of a Creator. Contrary to the humanist assumptions underlying the concept of Humanitarianism, creaturetarianism is an attempt to re-establish the necessary hierarchy of agents, subduing human agency to Divine authority first and foremost. As El-Banna elaborates:

Humanitarianism refers to everything in society as human: the human is the jury, the legislator, the judge, the criminal, and the lawyer. In creaturetarianism, the Creator is the legislator; after that, the human comes. In creaturetarianism, you have your philosophy of thinking because the Creator is the main authority; you can't be above him. In Humanitarianism, the supreme is the human, and the criminal is a human. This is a limited scope of thinking and understanding development that cannot be compared to the vast and endless scope of God; that's why the point of reference should be The Endless Source of knowledge, and you are next to Him under the reference; *he created you to do the job, but you can't do the legislation*. The legislation is in the Quran, the book of Allah. *You can interpret it, but you can't actually make it; not your job!*

Along these lines, El-Banna argues that the concept of Creaturetarianism proposes a new conception of humanity. For him, defining humanity as a concept that is only bound to the human being obscures the presence and role of other creatures placed by God as *partners*

or *allies* of the human being in this world. Henceforth, the human being should not neglect these creatures and their "creative roles" on earth but should rather perceive them as complementary agents of humans' mission on earth. In this vein, El-Banna defines humanity as a broad concept that encompasses not just humans but also every other creature and all that God has created.

Table 2. Comparison Between Elements of Creatureitarianism and Humanitarianism

Creator – الخالق	Human - الإنسان
Creatureitarianism - الخلائقية	Humanity/ Humanitarianism - الإنسانية
Creaturism – حركة خلائقية	Humanism – حركة إنسانية
Creatureitarian – عمل متخلق	Humanitarian – عمل إنساني
Creature - مخلوق	Human - إنسان
Creature(s) – مخلوقات	Human(s) - بشر

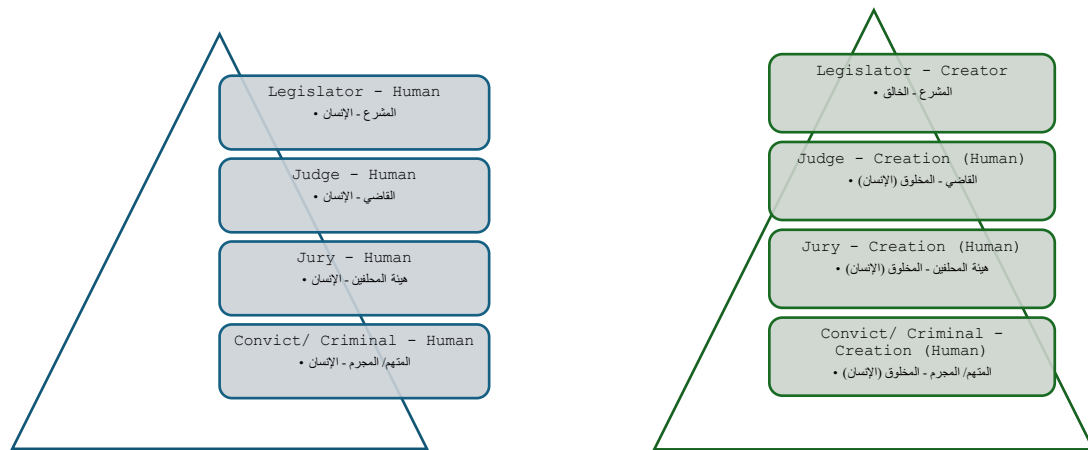


Figure 4. Hierarchy of Different Agents in Creatureitarianism and Humanitarianism

(Source: El-Banna 2023)

Furthermore, in a lecture he gave on the philosophy of this concept he coined, El-Banna stresses on the Universality of this view in the sense that it argues for the existence of a certain order of things that, when violated, wreaks havoc in the social, spiritual and

physical realms. Regardless of religious affiliation, he asserts that the common belief in the existence of such a *nomos* and the struggle for its preservation is the common ground that can bring people together in humanitarian and development work. In accordance with this philosophy, El-Banna stipulates that development work (in the sense of charity, relief and humanitarian work) has existed since the beginning of creation and constitutes a *natural inclination* of any creature, for it is a right God has bestowed upon all his creatures. In other words, what El-Banna is emphasizing here -among other things- is the necessity of the paradigm shift that comes with substituting what would conventionally be called development “recipients” or “beneficiaries” with the terminology of “right holders” (أصحاب حق). This choice of words reframes the assumed place of stakeholders in the development framework, and primarily establishes a dutiful approach to such work instead of conceiving of it as a kind of charity or voluntary aid. The former cultivates a moral awareness of one’s obligation to safeguard other people’s God-given rights, while the latter implies a false sense of choice which one can either use or revoke.

El-Banna thus presumes that the difference that exists between development work in the East versus the West is not manifested in practice, but rather in the worldviews and cultures that inform practices later. Hence the need again to start with an epistemological revival and redefine the definitions if we are to provide any effective critique of the existing models. In this vein, he goes on to mention that the bottom line of radical social change is to empower people at all levels so they can orchestrate their own change-making process. Change should be an internal impulse and not an enforced external order. In this vein, El-Banna strongly highlights that the building block of social change is the family unit.

5.2.5. Family as the Building Block of Development

Providing an example from his own personal experience, El-Banna believes that family is the cornerstone of development work, whether in the sense that it provides a support system for people to be actively engaged in social change or in the sense of it being an important civil society organization in itself. He states: "Without a family, you don't have a nation; you don't have a community, state, country, civilization, future generation, etc." Thus, development starts at the moment of childbirth. A profound example El-Banna provided in this regard is that of the increasingly low rate of childbirth as a result, among

other factors, of the escalation of individualistic values and the modern unease with anything that causes pain or disturbs the status quo. He mentions: "If you want to bring a good citizen, you need to have this kind of pain of love; to love the pain you bear to get the one you love!" speaking of the example of giving birth as "a kind of love for humanity not as a kind of burden." This stipulation is powerful because it not only questions the individualistic values of humanitarianism and development work but also challenges the very definition of development *institutions* by putting the family at the center of this Islamic approach to development as the first unit where this kind of moral sense of responsibility towards creation is cultivated. "The first school of teaching the younger people is the labor pain and the burden of pregnancy and upbringing a little child with all the challenges it brings. This is the first lesson to educate the future generation," he continues. Another example he provides in this context is the family's inherent embeddedness of structures of social support for the vulnerable categories in society. "Who is maintaining the elderly?" El-Banna asks. "In the old days, a granny, divorced or widowed aunties, for example, used to live in the family house." This simultaneously provided a system of support for both the vulnerable members of society and the child bearer(s) in the sense of reducing the alienation and overwhelm many mothers (and sometimes fathers) experience in the raising of their children within the nuclear family unit that is forced to bear the responsibility of the children alone in the absence of a supportive social infrastructure.

All in all, for El-Banna, the first step and platform to learn and apply the philosophy of creaturearianism is the family, the home, which is the most important civil society organization, as he keeps highlighting. From there, he goes on to stress the importance of civil society in building the proper climate for social change from the bottom-up. In addition to the family, El-Banna believes that there are five more institutions that constitute the basic infrastructure of a good and complementary civil society. School comes after family. Who is the teacher? What is the curriculum? Asks El-Banna with regard to the aspect of education. Then comes the mosque or place of worship, which is one of the most important civil society organizations in the sense that it shapes people's beliefs and provides role modeling. What comes next is the now less prominent institution, the library, followed by other civil society organizations such as NGOs and associations.

Last but not least, El-Banna mentions research institutions and think tanks as crucial elements in the building of a good civil and social space. With all these six institutions, El-Banna states that this is how a social atmosphere conducive to change is built, and further stresses the importance of political freedom and building civil liberty space that can nurture critical thinking individuals who grow up to become important agents of change in the society. However, with all that has been said, El-Banna kept emphasizing the importance of the family as the central unit of the formation of moral capital and the upbringing of future leaders. "If you change the system or the moral environment of a country, you change the climate of building future leadership," he mentions.

DISCUSSION

At first glance, the discussion of development and humanitarianism side by side might prompt some questions, as the usual perception has it that while development is concerned with issues of long-term social change, humanitarian work is more about managing and attending to the immediate needs of communities in distress. However, in theory and practice, development and humanitarianism are much more closely associated. In addition to the historical conditions of both ventures, at least in their modern manifestations, starting in the context of political upheaval or war, the discourse on development and security has been rising since the mid-1990s. "Once a specialized discipline within international and security studies, war and its effects are now an important part of development discourse. At the same time, development concerns have become increasingly important in relation to how security is understood" (Duffield 2001, 1). A number of international organizations nowadays are already working in the direction of conflict resolution and "helping to rebuild war-torn societies in a way that will avert future violence" (Duffield 2001, 1). In this context, Mark Duffield argues that this shift in development policy towards societal construction and conflict resolution has gone beyond being a technical means of assistance to an important aspect of an emerging new system of governance that seeks to contain instability in the countries of the South in order not to disrupt the global system of flow of capital which secures the prosperity of the North (Duffield 2001, 2). Today, more than ever, the increase of war-torn countries attests to the increasing proximity of development and Humanitarianism since, in many cases, these

concepts have become almost synonymous. This state of affairs thus explains why a critique of development is inevitably connected to issues of humanitarian work, which also points to the proximity of proposed solutions to both spheres.

In this context, putting people like Taha Abdurrahman and Hany el-Banna side by side provides quite a fertile ground for discussion and reflection on the topic of the attested Islamic moral critique of development we attempt to investigate in the context of this research. This comparison was enlightening in a number of ways. First, with regards to the aforementioned need to critique development both as a practice and an epistemology of social science research, positioning Taha Abdurrahman's moral philosophy of *I'timaniyyah* and Hany El-Banna's concept of *Khala'iqiyyah*, considering their great similarity, offers valuable insights on how to bridge theory and practice in social science research. At the level of theory, both Taha and El-Banna offer an alternative model of thinking and critique of development from an Islamic perspective. They emphasize the cultivation of moral capital as the central domain of social change. This presents *tazkiyah* as a creative and different path from development and the major crises it has created.

In practice, Taha and El-Banna's different experiences offer valuable insights for this research. While Taha is a full-time philosopher, El-Banna is a physician by training who became a pioneer in grassroots humanitarian work. On the one hand, Abdurrahman's philosophy provides a powerful critique of the utilitarian and materialistic conception of human development that reigns over the existing models. It revolutionizes development thinking by reversing the value base of the Western development model, which centers the economy and its focus on the accumulation of capital and subordinates all else to it. For Taha, perhaps we can say that the challenge is rewiring our collective thinking to conceive of a different kind of economics: an economy of morality where the primary focus is on the cultivation and circulation of moral capital instead of other forms of material capital. On the other hand, El-Banna's case illustrates Abdurrahman's theory in providing a practical example of how *tazkiyah* can inform the formation of what we can perhaps call a *pluralistic* individual, meaning someone that thinks with the larger context of creation in their mind and thus behaves as an institution unto themselves. In a similar vein, El-Banna's experience provides a powerful example of how critique is not necessarily just a matter of cognitive theorizing but also of lived reality and practice. His

experience, which then led him to formulate the view of Creaturearianism, attests to the possibility of critique as a practice and an embodiment. Taking El-Banna as a case study further reinforces Taha's *I'timaniyyah* paradigm, especially that the latter conceptualizes the practice of philosophy for the *I'timani* subject not as a cognitive venture happening in a rational vacuum but as a vividly lived experience of search for the Truth⁴⁵.

Additionally, Hany El-Banna's experience of shifting from global Humanitarianism work to negotiating its ethics and logistics provides us with an important example of how bottom-up participatory community work in times of crisis can become a vehicle not only for development but also for building a global civil society that can change the mindset of what we mean by progress in relation to issues of local and global justice. In so doing, El-Banna perhaps complements Taha's paradigm of *I'timaniyyah* in the way it lacks practical substantiation, and more so with one of the usual critiques of Taha's work as catered exclusively for Muslims.⁴⁶ As a fruit of his long-lived experience in the field of Humanitarianism and his later shift towards the formulation of global ethics that can regulate the work of civil society globally, El-Banna's theoretical stipulations affirm the importance of the Islamic worldview as a vital source of alternative world ethics that can apply to all and not just Muslims. Calling it "the new *adhan*"⁴⁷ El-Banna conceptualizes this kind of work as a form of call to a new paradigm based on Islamic ideals. In doing so, he is leading a new movement of intellectual revisions of the concept of Humanitarianism from an Islamic worldview. For him, the essence of this *adhan* lies in its being a call for a new awareness and consciousness of revisiting considerations of identity and psycho-spiritual formations of the self in a way that restores the balance of present and future rights and obligations and to strive for peace and social justice in a time of dwindling hopes and ever-increasing political turmoil (El-Banna 2023, 5).

All in all, we can say that both Taha and El-Banna provide a double critique of development first in the concepts that came out of the gist of their life experience and

⁴⁵ Here, we are referring to Taha Abdurrahman's recent book, *Su'al al-Sirah al-Falsafiyyah: Baht fi Haqiqat al-Tafalsuf al-I'timaniyyah*, 2023.

⁴⁶ A critique that Taha actually addresses in many of his works, one of them is the conclusion to his book *Tughur al-Murabata: Muqaraba I'timaniyyah li Sira'at al-Umma al-Halliya*, 2018

⁴⁷ The short translation of *adhan* is "call," but the word is usually used to refer to the Muslim call for prayer

second in rooting their theories of *I'timaniyyah* and *Khala'iqiyyah* in a faith-based view of social reality, centering God and thus perceiving further creation and social phenomena as an extension of this kind of God-consciousness, cultivated through the recurrent process of *tazkiyah*.



CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

ALLAH DOES NOT CHANGE THE CONDITION OF A PEOPLE UNTIL THEY CHANGE WHAT IS IN THEMSELVES: TAZKIYAH AS A PARADIGM OF SOCIAL CHANGE

*What drives history is the human ambition to alter one's condition to match one's hopes – McNeill and McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's-Eye View of World History*.*

While this research has largely elaborated on the shortcomings of the theory of development and the paradigm of *tanmiyah*, it has only laid the ground for the necessity of the path of *tazkiyah* to articulate a radically different model of social change that corresponds to the moral nature of the human being and the need for morality to be established as a central domain of human action. This conclusion thus comes as an attempt to highlight the most important lines of thought that provide a blueprint for future research on the concept of *tazkiyah* and how it can be established socially, psycho-spiritually, and politically as an alternative model of social change.

“Until They Change What is in Themselves”: The Primary Driver of Morality and the Psycho-Spiritual Foundation of *Tazkiyah*

At the heart of the unfolding of every social issue lie the perennial foundational questions of the human condition: who are we, and what do we want? The paradigms and systems of thought and action that follow are subservient to the answers we provide to these questions. The human condition in the modern world has become one in which an unspoken (or sometimes well-articulated) consensus about ultimate salvation lies in the accumulation of capital and wealth, rendering the essence of humanity to material gains, totally oblivious to the ephemerality of life, the limited resources of this world, and the age-old human yearning for transcendence and a constantly pressing spiritual memory of a realm beyond the present one. Unlike the modern secular view of the world and its affairs, the Islamic worldview provides a roadmap to navigate a life that extends beyond

the physical to the metaphysical as the realm that holds the very essence of humanity. In service of this, the moral system of Islamic governance came to correct and direct all kinds of human endeavors toward the realization of the ultimate goal in this life: *Tawheed*. As Hallaq befittingly describes in his *Impossible State*:

The paradigm, like its particular and technical legal rules, always strove toward the realization of this moral end, sometimes failing but most often succeeding, which is precisely what made it a paradigm. *The entirety of the system rested on the concept of jihād* (much maligned nowadays because it has become, especially in late modernity, almost exclusively defined by the influential Schmittian idea of the political). *The concept dictated, at every turn, the indispensability of “striving” (the literal meaning of the term jihād) toward the accomplishment of the moral end* (Hallaq 2012, 11) (emphasis added).

In contrast to the developmentalist view of society and social change, which reinforces a paradigm of "technopoly" (Postman 1992)⁴⁸, what the Islamic view centers is the striving, the *jihad*, to cultivate "moral technologies of the self" (Hallaq 2012). While the Quran, as the founding document of Islam, definitely outlines ethics and guidelines of economic and financial transactions, it singles out a kind of trade in moral and spiritual capital as the primary transaction between God and the human being. The Quran describes this process of spiritual striving in a transactional language, as the following verses illustrate:

يَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا هَلْ أَدُلُّكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابِ أَلِيمٍ ۚ ١٠ تُوْمِنُونَ بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُوْلِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ ذٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ١١

O Believers, Shall I guide you to a trade (exchange) that will save you from a painful punishment? (It is to) Have Faith in Allah and His Messenger, and strive in the cause of Allah with your wealth and your lives. That is best for you, if only you knew. (61:10-11)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنْفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ ٢٩

Surely those who recite the Book of Allah, establish prayer, and donate from what We have provided for them—secretly and openly—“can` hope for an exchange that will never fail (35:29)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنْفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنْ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ۚ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ ۖ وَعَدَا عَلَيْهِ حَقًّا فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْفُرْآنِ ۗ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا ۗ بِبَيْعِكُمُ الَّذِي بَايَعْتُمْ بِهِ ۗ وَذٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ١١١

Allah has indeed purchased from the believers their lives and wealth in exchange for Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah and kill or are killed. This is a true promise binding on Him in the Torah, the Gospel, and the Quran. And whose promise is truer

⁴⁸ Neil Postman’s briefly defines technopoly as “the surrender of culture to technology”

than Allah's? So rejoice in the exchange you have made with Him. That is 'truly' the ultimate triumph. (9:111)⁴⁹

The formulation of these verses in a language of transaction and trade first establishes the centrality of exchange and relationality as the basis of life. The human condition and all that it encompasses starts with the establishment of a "self" and an "other." In the absence of the other with whom the self interacts, there can be no mention of existence or, experience or even civilization. The aforementioned verses thus establish the relationship between God and the human being as the basis on which all other relations are based, including matters of economic exchange. In a different light, this Quranic language of transaction perhaps indirectly affirms the human tendency towards such economic activities. Instead of denying the existence and necessity of worldly economic activities, the Quran thus situates them within the larger context of the principal trade we are supposed to strive for, in continuation of the original Divine covenants that humans have agreed to. Al-Daghistani describes the God-human relation in the Islamic perspective as one that operates on two levels. The first pertains to a top-down connection whereby the human being receives and adheres to Divine laws and commands, while the second focuses on the God-human relation according to spiritual devotion and emotional intelligence" (Al-Daghistani 2021, 46). Both approaches collide under the moral cosmology of the Shari'a, which, using the language of central domains, revolves around the cultivation of moral and spiritual capital. Contrary to the example of development, the paradigm of *Tazkiyah*, therefore, comes in this light as the driving vehicle of social change, which, in essence, can only occur through the ongoing process of purification and spiritual *jihād*.

This view takes us back to the ayah with which we started this inquiry: *إن الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتى يغيروا ما بأنفسهم* – *God does not change the condition of a people until they change (what is in) themselves* (Quran, 13:11). By framing the discussion within the Islamic worldview, this ayah proposes a model of social change with defined levels of action for two main agents. The first is the Divine, sovereign of the world and holder of the power to change the conditions of people in social, material, or other terms. The second is the human,

⁴⁹ Translation of the verses is retrieved from <https://quran.com/>

whose central level of action is cultivating spiritual and moral capital to be deserving and driving the force of social change.

A complimentary ayah that enables us to complete this initial vision of *Tazkiyah* as a paradigm of social change is the following: **ذَلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَى قَوْمٍ حَتَّى يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٥٣** - *That is because Allah would never discontinue His favor on a people until they change what is within themselves. Surely Allah is All-Hearing, All-Knowing* (Quran 8:53). In addressing a reverse direction of change, that of Allah changing a favor upon a people, this ayah closes the cycle of social change, moving between the change attributed to human agency and the change that God promises to drive. What this implies is that social change is a process that can move in both directions: toward ease and abundance or toward hardship and decay. In these two verses, the Quran addresses humans as the primary actors of this change, which in both cases is prompted by one thing: changing what is in themselves. As such, the Quran clearly denotes the function of changing what lies in the collective *Nafs* as the primary function of the *Insan* (Said 1993, 25). This understanding is established as a norm, a *sunnah*, which, according to Said, is a prerequisite to becoming deserving and apt for the larger social change that is primarily driven by God (Said 1993, 40). In light of this explanation, we propose the following diagram to visualize our proposed model of *tazkiyah* as a paradigm of social change:

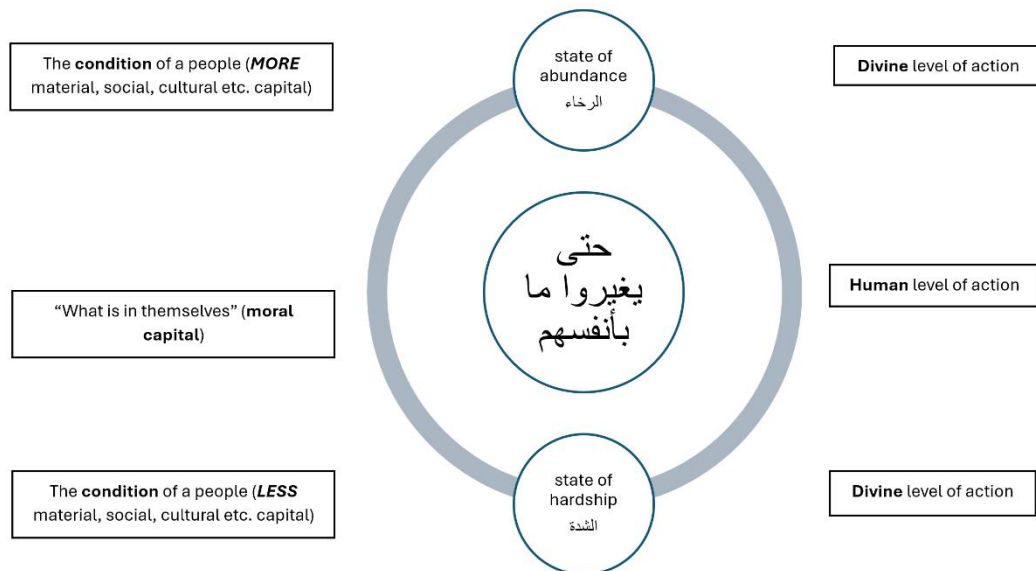


Figure 7. Tazkiyah as a Model of Social Change

The Social Dimension of *Tazkiyah*: Community as a Building Block of Morality

In their book, *The Human Web: A Bird's Eye View of World History*, McNeill and McNeill argue for the centrality of human social networks, or "webs of interaction," as they call them, in driving human history. In their purely historical analysis, they assert that while it is human ambition and action that essentially drives human history, the actualization of people's hopes both in the material and spiritual spheres "depended on the ideas, information, and examples available to them." At a base level, the human web goes back to the development of speech. The very basic fact of language, albeit taken for granted nowadays, developed out of the need to communicate with someone other than oneself to secure, at a minimal level, a good exchange of information and goods. Webs of interaction stir the development of society through a balance of cooperation and competition. To the authors of this book, human webs have been, from the very beginning, the basic unit of historical and social development, from ancient civilizations all the way to the digital World Wide Web and beyond (McNeill and McNeill, 3-4). However, in the wake of the capitalist world order, the perception of social reality as a shared one retrieved to the advantage of individualism as a leading feature of Western modernity. In his description of modernity as a process of liquefaction of "solids" and "profaning the sacred," Bauman asserts that "melting the solids meant first and foremost shedding the 'irrelevant' obligations standing in the way of rational calculation of effects"; that is "liberating business enterprise from the shackles of the family-household duties and from the dense tissues of ethical obligations... leaving solely the 'cash nexus' of the many bonds underlying human mutuality and mutual responsibilities" (Bauman 2000, 4).

In other words, the industrialization of society began with the dissolution of commons and the conversion of communities into separated individuals, forming a society more in line with the needs of the "self-regulated market" (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 95). The very definition of modern economics bases itself on the individual's *rational* self-interest, which, on top of resulting in the dissolution of organic communities, has rendered the earth, as an extension of the community of creation, uninhabitable (Jha, 2023). In fact,

what the modern world order achieved is it has destroyed social infrastructure⁵⁰, as the basis of human interaction and hence of life, in its obsession with erecting physical infrastructure and securing financial capital. In light of this explanation, deRivero's earlier assessment of development as a model mired in a crisis of civilization resonates more deeply.

"Ethics require norms, and norms can only be formed and enforced among people who are in regular contact with each other" (Esteva, Babones, and Babcicky 2013, 113). In the Islamic paradigm, it is remarkable that *Tazkiyah* has rarely been conceptualized in distance from social considerations, starting with the recurrent Quranic verses that stipulate the process of *tazkiyah* as one that happens primarily through connection with the prophets and not in a vacuum. One of these verses mentions: كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا ۖ وَبِزَكَاةِكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ١٥١ – *Since We have sent you a messenger from among yourselves – reciting to you Our revelations, purifying you, teaching you the Book and wisdom, and teaching you what you never knew*⁵¹ (Quran 2:151). The evolution of the science of *tazkiyah* and *akhlaq* from the dawn of Islam depended on social networks from the group of *sahaba*, companions of the Prophet ﷺ, to the historical development of *uruq*⁵² as collective spiritual guilds. In the context of the system of Shari'a, Sohail Hanif argues that "Islamic law is only realized through social institutions" (Hanif 2022a). In this light, prayer constitutes the basis of a civilizational order through the kind of social organization it inspires (Hanif 2022b). *Tazkiyah* has individual dimensions indeed, yet almost every ritual in Islam has a collective aspect. The community of Muslims inhabits collective spheres as it shares the temporal and physical space of *Jumu'a*. It also collectively observes the ritual of fasting as a collective sharing of the same temporal space of Ramadan. *Zakāt*, in its essence, is a social institution as it secures the circulation of wealth from the rich to the poor and creates social dependencies and ties. "From the fact that it must be given to Muslims and ideally to those who live in the same locality, we can note that very particular ties are developed and nurtured by *Zakāt*: *Zakāt* creates a sense of identity, belonging and care within a localized faith

⁵⁰ This is a term Setha Low introduces in her book *Why Public Space Matters*

⁵¹ Translation retrieved from <https://quran.com/2?startingVerse=151>

⁵² Plural of *Tariqah*, literally means spiritual path, and usually referring to practical schools of *tasawwuf*

community” (Hanif 2022c). The aforementioned ayah of change itself addresses a collective of *anfus* which, in Said’s reading, reflects the collective essence of social change insomuch as it is a communal endeavor and not one that can happen through individual practices of purification in isolation from the larger community (Said, 14).

Therefore, *hatta yughayyiru ma bi anfusihim*, "until they change what is in themselves," points to the collective as the main agent of change. The collective, in this sense, is not just "an aggregate behavior of society that can be deduced by adding up the behavior of isolated individuals," which is "contrary to the theory of logical types, which states that that which contains all the members of a class cannot itself be a member of the class" (Rist 2008, 262). Besides, "it is a principal precept of Islamic legal theory (*usul al-fiqh*) that public, communal interest (*maslahah 'ammah*) has precedence over private, individual interest (*manfa'ah nafsiyyah*). Hence, the commercial is never in spite of the communal, the societal and the community” (Setia, 2023). Hallaq emphasizes that “the Quran offers no less than a theory of *cosmological morality* of the first order” (Hallaq 2012, 83). This Quranic cosmology establishes a world order in which the entirety of creation is created for the human to enjoy in ways that are essentially grounded in moral accountability rather than utilitarianism. This worldview thus puts forth “an acknowledgment that what we do we do for ourselves – certainly as individuals but, more importantly, as members of a social group” (Hallaq 2012, 83). In continuation of this cosmological reading of the universe and the creation it contains, the reading of *anfusihim* in light of Taha’s paradigm of *I'timaniyyah* and el-Banna’s concept of *Khala'iqiyyah* additionally emphasizes the change brought to the collective through the interaction among individual members of the collective, in addition to their larger interaction with the larger human and non-human community in which they reside. In other words, in contrast to the concepts of development and humanitarianism that carry an intransitive meaning, the linguistic make-up of *I'timaniyyah* and *Khala'iqiyyah* directly establishes the presence of a field of social relations starting with the God-human relation in which *al-insan* took the *amanah* of vicegerency, and extending to the relation with the larger creation as *khalq* of one Sovereign: God as the *Khaliq*, the Creator. This paradigm thus not only re-centers community as the locus of social change but also redefines the meaning of the individual

as a "pluralistic individual," *insan* as an "*umma* unto himself." Taha Abdurrahman further elaborates on this notion of the individual as an *umma* in the following excerpt:

It does not require him to do what reality cannot bear, nor what history does not know the like of, nor does it require him to change the face of his surroundings in a short time, and to prepare to preside over this change, entering into the mobilization of souls, the mobilization of crowds, and the overturning of situations and institutions, but if he were to take this urgent and compelling managerial path, with the ambition of dominating the creation, it would interrupt the attainment of his devotional purpose. Rather, all that is required of him is for him to work vigorously and sincerely to change himself, so that the goodness of his deeds and the righteousness of his condition may lead others to follow his example to change themselves as well, and this in turn may become an example to others, and so on and so forth, until there is a group of righteous people, each one of whom is an *umma* (a nation). Accordingly, corrective action is required primarily from the base and periphery, and secondarily from the top and centers, except when it is urgent to disturb them to justice by word and deed when it is proven that they are grossly unjust, so that change comes from below, not from above, so that if the bottom reforms, the base and periphery, the top must reform, the top and centers, because the elements of the latter must be chosen from the elements of the former, so there is no doubt that a good society creates good leadership (Taha 2012, 503)⁵³.

With all that has been said, we can affirm that the Islamic paradigm of *tazkiyah* proposes a model of social change first through challenging the individual-collective dichotomy that conceives of the two as separate entities, contrary to the view of the individual as an *I'timani* subject, a pluralistic individual, *al-insan al-umma*, which by default encompasses the collective in his psycho-spiritual make-up; and second in the way it constitutes a driving force in the creation of a healthy and resilient social infrastructure, bound by networks of trust and an affective exchange of favors or bounties, *tabādul afḍāl*, instead of a material exchange of capitalist goods and services void of moral values.

Although this social reading of *Tazkiyah* as a paradigm of social change is not a new proposal, its erosion from the modern collective imaginary calls for the remembrance, and creative re-imagination of social groups and movements whose *raison d'être* is moral and spiritual in essence. From *Zawāya* and *tekkes* as institutions of public administration⁵⁴, to

⁵³ Translation from Arabic to English is mine

⁵⁴ Salah Chafik and Wolfgang Drechsler, "In the Semi-Shadow of the Global West: Moroccan *Zawāya* as Good Public Administration," *Public Administration Review* 82, no. 1 (January 2022): 10.1111/puar.13475.

environmental stewardship of years-old local cooperatives⁵⁵ to decolonial resistance of Sufi orders across the Muslim world⁵⁶ to modern digital groups of the open-source software movement⁵⁷ advocating for cyber security and protection in the face of the emerging economy of surveillance capitalism⁵⁸, the paradigm of *tazkiyah* offers a viable proposal to restore and strengthen social infrastructure which constitutes the backbone of social change. In the interest of future studies, studying topics like reclaiming public space, establishing voluntary public services, reviving the notion of communal obligations or *furud kifa'iyah* (الفروض الكفائية) as drivers of sustainable social welfare⁵⁹, studying affective economies⁶⁰ such as economies of hope⁶¹, as well as contesting the notion of global civil society to propose an alternative political imagination, beyond the model of the nation-state, based on the meaning of commons and the Islamic view of weaving social fabric, through contributing to ongoing efforts like those established in the “World Social Forum”⁶² (in contrast to the “World Economic Forum”⁶³); all of these examples can be very beneficial in expanding *Tazkiyah* as a paradigm of social change as a starting point of elaborating an alternative world order.

⁵⁵ Salah Chafik, "Plan Bee: The Case of an Islamic Honey Cooperative in Morocco," *Halduskultuur* 22, no. 1 (2022): 4-26.

⁵⁶ William R. Polk, *Crusade and Jihad: The Thousand-Year War between the Muslim World and the Global North* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005).

⁵⁷ Robert P. Merges, "From Medieval Guilds to Open Source Software: Informal Norms, Appropriability Institutions, and Innovation," paper presented at the Conference on the Legal History of Intellectual Property, Madison, Wisconsin, November 13, 2004.

⁵⁸ Shoshana Zuboff, *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power* (New York: PublicAffairs, 2019).

⁵⁹ Yahya Ahmad Al-Marhabi, *Dawr al-Furud al-Kifa'iyah fi Tahqiq al-Tanmiya al-Mustadamah* (2020).

⁶⁰ Sara Ahmed, "Affective Economies," *Social Text* 22, no. 2 (2004): 117–139, Duke University Press.

⁶¹ Hirokazu Miyazaki and Richard Swedberg, eds., *The Economy of Hope* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2017).

⁶² <https://wsf2024nepal.org/>

⁶³ <https://www.weforum.org/>

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CURRICULUM VITAE

EDUCATION

Ibn Haldun University (IHU), Alliance of Civilizations Institute, Istanbul, Turkey 2020 – 2024
Masters of Arts in Civilization Studies

Al Akhawayn University (AUI), Ifrane, Morocco 2015 – 2019
Bachelor of Science in Human Resource Development (BSHRD, Summa Cum Laude)
Minor: Communication Studies

WORK EXPERIENCE

Simultaneous Interpreter, IIIT Mahya, Istanbul, Turkey 31st Oct – 2nd Nov 2024
Provide real-time interpretation from Arabic to English of speeches and discussions at the International Symposium of Philosophy and Kalam: From the Nizamiyah Madrasas to Contemporary Times

Teaching Fellow, History Department, IHU, Istanbul, Turkey Oct 2023 – June 2024
Teach a weekly two-hour discussion session in a key introductory history course for undergraduate students, assist the key instructor (Dr. Halil Berktaç) in two weekly lectures, proctor and grade exams, design relevant course assignments for the discussion session

Bilingual Report Writer, Istanbul, Turkey 29th Oct 2023
Attend a day-long academic meeting discussing a proposed new approach to Shari'a as an Interpretive Framework Transforming Applied Spaces, synthesize key points of the presentation and produce a comprehensive report summarizing the discussion and proposed framework in both Arabic and English

Student Assistant, Alliance of Civilizations Institute, IHU, Istanbul, Turkey Nov 2022 – June 2023
Manage student affairs and activities at the Alliance of Civilizations Institute in Ibn Haldun University

Organizational Dev. (OD) Consulting intern, Morafeq consulting co., Rabat, Morocco Jan Feb 2020
Assist the drafting and implementation of a consulting program for the National Agency for Combatting Illiteracy in Morocco (ANLCA – Agence Nationale de Lutte Contre l'Analphabétisme), centered around the evaluation of literacy programs in three different provinces in Morocco

OD Consulting project, NoVA, AUI, Morocco Spring 2018
Conduct an OD consulting project for a local NGO, the "No Violence Alliance" to assess the effectiveness of its programs/ methods/ services

Director of applications, Ihsan Acad. Summer program, IHU, Turkey Sep 2017 – Aug 2018
Review applications, manage the application process, interview candidates, maintain student databases, participate in orientation and onboarding, conduct an OD project, manage corporate emails and communication, coordinate outreach efforts

Arabic Tutor, Writing Center, AUI, Ifrane Nov 2016 – Dec 2017
Assist students in their Arabic learning process, translate relevant documents from Arabic to English/English to Arabic, practice Arabic with students through verbal and written communication

Teacher Assistant, Arabic and North African Studies Program, AUI, Ifrane Summer 2017
Teach speaking skills to the advanced level class, tutor all students of the program

Program Assistant, MaRéussite training program for children, Rabat 2012 – 2013
Assist the trainers' sessions, facilitate student group discussions, manage logistics (e.g. documenting events)

PROGRAMS/ TRAININGS

Darul Fuqaha summer school, Fatih Sultan Mehmet University (FSM), Turkey 14 July-15 Aug 2024
Summer school training in traditional Islamic Sciences

IIT (International Institute of Islamic Thought) Summer School, Demirköy, Turkey 29 July – 6 Aug 2023
Summer school addressing the topic of “Muslim Societies: Contemporary and Future Challenges”

Darul Fuqaha summer school, FSM, Turkey 09-27 July 2023
Summer school training in traditional Islamic Sciences

YUAL (Young Ummatic Activists and Leaders) Seminar, Ummatics Institute, online Feb 2023 - ongoing
Weekly seminar establishing foundations in various disciplines in Islamic thought and Shari'a, aiming to shape participants' Ummatic orientation of research and community building projects

IIT (International Institute of Islamic Thought) Summer School, Turkey (online) 19-29 June 2020
Summer school addressing the topic of “Muslim Societies: Contemporary and Future Challenges”

The Khayma Retreat, Rabat, Morocco Sep 2019
Six-day retreat addressing the topics of Navigating Modernity, Economics, Environment, from a Creative Islamic Viewpoint

Leadership Development Institute, AUI, Ifrane Sep 2017 – May 2018
Nine-month long intensive training program for acquiring and developing leadership skills

Ihsan Academy summer program, IHU university, Istanbul, Turkey Summer 2017
One-month intensive Islamic studies program

Training in teaching Arabic to foreign students, AUI, Ifrane, Morocco Summer 2017
Two-month intensive Arabic and North African Studies Program

ÖZET

Gelişmenin Kısa Bir Arka Planı ve Tanımı

“Gelişme” kelimesi karmaşık ve çok yönlü bir tarihe sahiptir; farklı disiplinlere ilişkin farklı anlamlara gelebilir. Örneğin, psikoloji, matematik ve fotoğrafçılık bağlamlarında zeka, denklem veya bir filmin gelişiminden bahsetmek daha ya da daha az belirgindir. Ancak, aynı kelimenin maddi ve sosyal refah, ekonomik büyüme, sosyal adalet, ilerleme veya ekolojik denge ile ilişkili bir şeyi tanımlamak için kullanılması durumu oldukça farklıdır (Rist 2019, 8). “Bugün gelişme, şekilsiz ama yok edilemez bir amip gibi bir kavram haline gelmiştir. Çerçevesi o kadar bulanıktır ki, hiçbir şey ifade etmez – ancak en iyi niyetleri çağrıştırdığı için her yere yayılmaktadır” (Sachs 1992, xix). Gelişme, net bir içeriğe sahip olmamakla birlikte, yine de, daha yüksek bir hedefin adı altında kutsanmış her türlü müdahaleyi meşrulaştırmak için ortak bir zemin sağlamayı başarmıştır. Bu nedenle, gelişmeyi tanımlamak hala oldukça zorlu bir girişimdir, çünkü mevcut tanımların çoğu ya araçsal ya da normatiftir veya bolca gösterge kullanarak eksiklikleri işaret etmektedir (örneğin, “daha katılımcı”, “daha demokratik” gibi). Gerçekten de bu tanımların çoğu, gelişmeyi tanımlarken sosyal evrimcilik, bireycilik ve ekonomizm gibi bazı ortak varsayımlara sahiptir. Ancak çoğu, bu grup içindeki tüm fenomenlere ortak olan belirli “dışsal özelliklere” dayanmaktan nadiren kaçınır... öyle ki, bir Marslı sadece ne hakkında konuşulduğunu anlamakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda “gelişmenin” var olduğu veya olmadığı yerleri de tanımlayabilir” (Rist 2019, 9-10). Bu nedenle, gelişmeyi değerlendirmeye ve var olup olmadığına dair bir argüman ortaya koymaya başlamadan önce, gelişmenin net ve kesin bir tanımında ortak bir görüşe varmamız gerekir. Bu araştırmanın sunduğu birincil tanım, gelişmenin yalnızca doğrusal ekonomik büyüme açısından toplumsal değişimi kavrayan seküler bir teori olduğu yönündedir. Bu nedenle, sonraki bölümler bu belirli tanımın bağlamını anlamak ve kökenlerini izlemek amacıyla gütmemektedir.

Gerçekten de, gelişme kavramı, Antik Yunan ve Roma dönemine kadar izlenebilir, ancak bugünkü anlamıyla gelişme, 20. yüzyılın sonlarına doğru kendine özgü bir söylem ve

uygulama olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. II. Dünya Savaşı sonrası dönemi, küresel dinamiklerdeki değişimlere yol açmış ve Amerika Birleşik Devletleri, karşılaştırılmaz üretkenliği nedeniyle önemli bir siyasi ve ekonomik güç olarak yükselmiştir. Bu yeni kazandığı küresel egemenliği pekiştirmek için Amerikalıların, dış politika konusunda oldukça farklı bir siyasi girişim geliştirmeleri gerekmiştir. Bunun sonucunda, Amerikan yönetimi, 20 Ocak 1947'de Başkan Harry Truman'ın göreve başlamasıyla dünya çapında bir siyasi kampanya başlatmıştır. Truman, göreve başlama konuşmasında şöyle der:

"Dünyanın yarısından fazlası, sefaletle yakın koşullarda yaşıyor. Yiyecekleri yetersiz; hastalıkların kurbanı olmuşlar. Ekonomik yaşamları ilkel ve durağan. Yoksullukları, hem kendilerine hem de daha zengin bölgelere bir engel ve tehdit oluşturuyor. İnsanlık, ilk kez bu insanların acılarını hafifletecek bilgiye ve beceriye sahip... Barışsever halklara, daha iyi bir yaşam için özlemlerini gerçekleştirmelerine yardımcı olacak teknik bilgilerimizin faydalarını sunmamız gerektiğine inanıyorum... Bizim öngördüğümüz şey, demokratik ve adil bir yaklaşım temelinde bir kalkınma programıdır... Daha büyük üretim, refah ve barış için anahtardır. Ve daha büyük üretimin anahtarı, modern bilimsel ve teknik bilginin daha geniş ve daha güçlü bir şekilde uygulanmasıdır" (Truman [1949] 1964).

Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* adlı kitabında şunları belirtir:

"Truman doktrini, dünya meselelerinin, özellikle de dünya üzerindeki daha az ekonomik olarak gelişmiş ülkelerle ilgili meselelerin anlaşılmasında ve yönetilmesinde yeni bir çağ başlattı. Amaç oldukça iddialydı: O dönemin 'gelişmiş' toplumlarının - yüksek endüstrileşme ve şehirleşme seviyeleri, tarımın teknikleşmesi, maddi üretim ve yaşam standartlarının hızlı büyümesi ve modern eğitim ve kültürel değerlerin yaygın kabulü - özelliklerini dünya çapında çoğaltmak için gerekli koşulları yaratmaktı. Truman'ın vizyonunda, sermaye, bilim ve teknoloji, bu devrimci değişimi mümkün kılacak ana bileşenlerdi. Sadece bu şekilde, barış ve bolluk Amerikan hayali, dünyanın tüm halklarına uzatılabilirdi" (2011, 4).

Bu "hayal", yalnızca ABD hükümetinin bir yaratımı değil, daha çok II. Dünya Savaşı sonrasındaki özgül tarihsel zamanlamanın ve durumun bir ürünüdür (Escobar 2011, 4).

1949 yılı, savaş sonrası dünya düzeninin şekil almaya başladığı dönüm noktasıdır. ABD ve müttefikleri, "birinci dünya" olarak ortaya çıkarken, "ikinci dünya" Sovyetler Birliği ve Mao'nun Çin'ini temsil ediyordu. Dünya nüfusunun geri kalan kısmı ise hızla bir dekolonizasyon sürecinden geçiyordu ve tümü "üçüncü dünya" etiketi altında toplanmıştı. O dönemde, başlıca egemen imparatorlukların çöküşe geçtiği belliydi; Fransız ve Britanya imparatorlukları geriliyordu, Hindistan, en çok sömürülen ve en zengin koloni bağımsızlık kazanmıştı, Japonya'nın geri çekilmesinin ardından Hollanda, Endonezya takımadaları üzerinde kontrolü yeniden kuramamıştı. "Savaş öncesi sömürgeci dünya düzeni sona erdi". Truman'ın kalkınma vizyonu, "savaş sonrası Amerikan dünya düzeninin doğacağı koşulları dünyaya dayatma çabasıydı" (Esteve, Babones, ve Babcicky 2013, 7).

Amerikan yönetimi tarafından başlatılan bu vizyon, kısa süre sonra o dönemdeki en güçlü hükümetler tarafından kabul edildi ve böylece dünya çapında uluslara yönelik bir uluslararası programa dönüştü. Bu küreselleşme dönemi, yoksul halklara ve uluslara serbest piyasa güçleri aracılığıyla büyük fırsatlar vaat ediyordu. Neoliberalizmin önde gelen hegemonları, özelleştirme, esnekleşme ve deregülasyon yoluyla "ekonomik reformlar" çağrısında bulundu ve bu vaatle eşsiz ve kapsayıcı bir refah dönemi vaat edildi. Ancak, gelişme teorisi ve uygulamalarına yıllar harcanmasına rağmen, pek çok ülkenin hâlâ temel ihtiyaçlarla mücadele etmesi, yoksulluk, sosyal eşitsizlik ve çevresel krizin giderek arttığı gerçeği, tüm kalkınma söylemini sorgulatmaktadır. 1990'ların sonlarında, Uluslararası Para Fonu (IMF) bile Kuzey ve Güney'i belirsiz geniş kategoriler olarak kavramsallaştırmanın yanlış olduğunu kabul etmiş ve "iki grup arasındaki kişi başına gelir seviyelerinin ortalama olarak birleşmediğini" belirtmiştir (O'Hearn ve Munck 1999, xv).

2019 yılı itibariyle, altmış yılı aşkın kalkınma teorileri ve programlarının ardından, 195 ülkeden yalnızca dört ülke, "gelişmekte olan"dan "gelişmiş"e geçmeyi başardı; bunlar, Singapur, Hong Kong, Güney Kore ve Tayvan'dır. Çin, şüphesiz hızlı bir kalkınma süreci yaşamakta, ancak bu süreç sürdürülebilir değildir (de Rivero 2019, viii). Kalkınma adına verilen vaatlerle yerel gerçeklik arasındaki çelişki, bu kavramın geçerliliği ve hatta gerekliliği hakkında şüpheler uyandırmakta, özellikle bu amaçla mobilize edilen kaynaklar açısından. Dahası, yaklaşan çevresel kriz, dünya genelinde zengin ile fakir arasındaki artan uçurum ve politik çalkantıların yükselmesi, kalkınma teorisinin, De

Rivero'nun (2019, viii) *The Myth of Development* (Kalkınma Miti) adlı kitabında belirttiği gibi, bir mit olup olmadığını ciddi şekilde sorgulamaktadır. De Rivero, bu medeniyet krizinin, küresel sera gazı emisyonlarını artıran ve giderek genişleyen şehir merkezlerine yer açmak için tarım ve orman arazilerini daha da yok eden, hızlı ve sürdürülemez büyükşehirleşme sürecinin standartlaştırılmasından kaynaklandığını açıklar. “Bugün dünya çok sayıda kültüre sahip ancak yalnızca bir medeniyet var: tüm ülkelerde bir şekilde var olan küresel kentsel Kaliforniya modeli” ki bu model, etik, teknolojik ve politik açmazları nedeniyle bir krize ulaşmıştır (de Rivero 2019, ix). Bu bağlamda, vaat edilen “bolluk krallığı” yerine kalkınma söylemi ve stratejisi tam tersini üretmiştir: büyük çapta kalkınmamazlık ve yoksullaşma, sömürülmemiş ve ezilmemiş bir halk yoktur. Birçok ülkedeki borç krizi, artan yoksulluk ve şiddet ile Sahel’deki kıtlık, kalkınma gündeminin başarısızlığını gösteren birkaç örnektir (Escobar 2011, 4).

Kalkınma eleştirmenleri ve post-kalkınma araştırmacılarının çoğunun savunduğu gibi, kalkınma, Batılılaşmaya dayalı, hem eşitsiz hem de düzensiz olan, özünde politik bir süreçtir. Bu “modernleşme” sürecinin vaat ettiği şey, küresel yoksulları durumlarından kurtarmak olsa da, Batılı şirketler ve dolaylı olarak onların ülkeleri (çoğunlukla Batı Avrupa ve Kuzey Amerika), zaten var olan endüstriyel ve teknolojik avantajları nedeniyle bu savaş sonrası kalkınma yarışında kazançların çoğunu elde etmiştir. Ancak, ekonomilerini daha da ileriye taşıyabilmek için eksik olan şey doğal kaynaklar ve hammaddelerdi; bu, “Üçüncü Dünya” ülkelerinin bilmediği ama çıkarıp dağıtmak için uygun altyapıya sahip olmadığı bir kıttı. Bu hedefe ulaşabilmek için, Uluslararası Para Fonu (IMF) ve Dünya Bankası gibi uluslararası kuruluşlardan gelen bir kredi dalgası ortaya çıkmıştır. Zaten uygun teknoloji ve uzmanlığa sahip olan Batılı şirketler, bu kredileri kullanarak bu ülkelerin altyapısını “geliştirme” işini üstlenmişlerdir. Sonuç olarak, iyi bilinen Üçüncü Dünya borç krizi ortaya çıkmış ve bugün hâlâ çözülmemiştir. Bu sonuçlar, özünde Batılı şirketlerin, Üçüncü Dünya ülkelerindeki doğal kaynaklar, altyapı ve üretim üzerindeki kontrolünü pekiştirmiştir (Mowforth 2014, 1-2).

Bugün, kalkınma paradigmasının sonuçları artık inkar edilemez durumdadır. Çevresel, sosyal, psikolojik ve epistemolojik krizlerin doruk noktası, kalkınmayı üreten değer

sisteminin sorgulanması ve istikrarsızlaştırılması için yeni eleştirilerin acil bir şekilde ortaya çıkmasını gerektirmektedir.

İslami Ahlaki Eleştiri

Eleştiri:

1950'lerden itibaren kalkınma eleştirileri, kalkınma vizyonunu temel insan ihtiyaçlarıyla yeniden hizalamak ve yalnızca ekonomik büyümeye odaklanmak yerine, sosyal refahın diğer yönlerini de içerecek şekilde sürekli olarak ortaya çıkmıştır. Ancak, bu eleştirilerin çoğunda eksik olan şey, kalkınma teorisini ilk ortaya çıkaran değer sistemine yönelik sistematik bir yaklaşımın olmamış olmasıdır. Kalkınmanın gerçekliği ve gerekliliği, modern toplumsal tahayyülde o kadar baskın ve kesin bir gerçeklik haline gelmiştir ki, en radikal eleştiriler bile, “alternatif kalkınma” ya da “sosyalist kalkınma” gibi ifadelerle kalkınma diline gömülmek zorunda kalmıştır. Escobar'ın belirttiği gibi: “Sosyal gerçekliği başka terimlerle kavramsallaştırmak imkansız görünüyordu... Sonuç olarak, gerçeklik kalkınma söylemi tarafından kolonileştirilmişti” (Escobar 2011, 15).

Bununla birlikte, kalkınmayı bir söylem olarak düşünmek, onun tarihi olarak üretilmiş bir kültürel alan ve belirli bir temsiliyet rejimi olarak görülmesi olasılığını yaratır; bu, doğal bir tarihsel gereklilik ya da nesnel bir bilimsel disiplin olarak değil (Escobar 2011, 16). Bu anlamda, kalkınmanın gerçek bir eleştirisi, modern hegemonik bilgi sisteminin, yani sosyal bilimlerin, de-konstrüksiyonunu ifade eder. Bu ruhla Charles Taylor, “modern sosyal bilimlerin bir numaralı sorununun modernlik olduğunu” ve “Batı modernliğinin, bu görüşe göre, belirli bir tür sosyal tahayyülden ayrılmaz olduğunu” savunur. Gerçekten de, bu modernliğin merkezinde, “toplumun ahlaki düzenine dair yeni bir anlayış” yatmaktadır ve bu anlayış, Batı modernliğini tanımlayan yeni toplumsal biçimlerin pekiştirilmesiyle toplumsal tahayyülde derinlemesine yerleşmiştir (bunlardan biri piyasa ekonomisidir). Bu “yeni ahlaki düzen anlayışı” aslında, Batı'daki dini savaşların yol açtığı politik düzensizliğe bir tepki olarak, 17. yüzyıl Doğa Hukuku teorileriyle doğrudan bağlantılıydı, Taylor'un açıkladığı gibi (Taylor 2004, 1-3).

Benzer şekilde, Grosfoguel ve Cervantes-Rodriguez, 20. yüzyılda “modern sömürgeci kapitalist dünya sistemi”ni analiz ederken, sosyal gerçekliği günümüzde nasıl

kavramsallaştırdığımızı şekillendiren üç mitolojiden bahsederler: “objektivist/evrenselci bilgi, modern dünya sisteminin dekolonizasyonu ve kalkınmacılık” (2002, 9). Onlara göre, bu üç derinden iç içe geçmiş mitoloji, Batı'nın üstünlüğü söylemiyle tanımlanır ve doğrudan Euro- merkeziliğin bilgi üretme biçimlerinin ürünüdür. Bu, bilgi ve sosyal bilimler alanının bugün bildiğimiz haliyle, zaman ve mekânı aşan evrensel bir cihaz olmadığını, belirli bir sosyo-tarihsel bağlamın ürünü olduğunu gösterir.

Bu tartışma, Batı egemenliği ve ayrıcalık sistemlerinin pekişmesinin gizli kök nedenlerini ortaya koyma işlevi görenin yanı sıra, kalkınma gibi teorilerin üretildiği modernlik projesini de sorgular ve diğer tahayyüllerin, epistemolojilerin ve alternatif yaşam biçimlerinin susturulmaya devam edilmesine yol açar (Grosfoguel ve Cervantes-Rodriguez 2002, 9).

Bu arka planda, bu tezde öne sürülen ana argüman şudur: Modernite söylemi içinde konumlandırılan herhangi bir yaygın kalkınma tanımına göre kalkınma, kurtarılabilir olmayan bir sosyal değişim teorisidir. Bu nedenle, kalkınmayı hem bir söylem hem de bir pratik olarak eleştirme çabaları, onun egemenliğini doğuran genel sistematik yapıyı, yani modernitenin ekonomik yapısının temeli olan neoliberal ekonomiyi ve modern politikanın ulus-devlet paradigmasını temelden gözden geçirmelidir. “Merkezî alan” ve “paradigmatik yaşam biçimi” kavramları, sunulan eleştiri için değerli içgörüler sunmaktadır.

Merkezî Alanlar ve Paradigmalar Işığında Eleştiri:

Carl Schmitt, “Neutralizasyonlar ve Depolitizasyonlar Çağı” adlı makalesinde, “merkezî alan” kavramını tanıtarak, diğer alanların sorunlarının bu alan aracılığıyla çözüldüğü herhangi bir entelektüel alanı ifade eder; “bunlar, merkezî alanın sorunları çözüldüğü takdirde, otomatik olarak çözümlenmesi gereken ikincil sorunlar olarak kabul edilir” (Schmitt 1993, 86). Bu kavramı, 16. yüzyıldan 19. yüzyıla kadar olan Avrupa entelektüel düşüncesinin dört ana aşamasını tartışırken ortaya koyar. Bu süreçte, düşüncenin merkezî alanları teolojiden metafiziğe, oradan insancıl-ahlaki düşünceye kaymış ve nihayetinde merkezîliğini ekonomiye devretmiştir. Schmitt, son dört yüzyıldır Avrupa entelektüel tarihinde, toplumun “entelektüel avantgarde”ları — yani, toplumdaki aktif elit — düşünsel hayatın merkezlerinin kaymasıyla paralel olarak gelişen fikirlerin

de deđiřtiđini savunur. Bu s¼reci ¼rneklerendirerek řunları ileri s¼rer:

Eđer entelekt¼el hayatın merkezi son d¼rt y¼zyılda kaymıřsa, t¼m kavramlar ve kelimeler de deđiřmiřtir... Teolojik bir ¼ađda, teolojik sorular d¼zen i¼inde olduđunda her řey sorunsuz iřler; diđer her řey tanım geređi “sađlanır”. Diđer ¼ađlar i¼in de aynı řey ge¼erlidir. İnsancıl-ahlaki bir ¼ađda, ahlakları yerleřtirmek yeterlidir, b¼ylece t¼m sorunlar eđitim sorunlarına d¼n¼ř¼r. Ekonomik bir ¼ađda ise, sadece malların ¼retim ve dađıtım sorununu yeterince ¼ozmek, t¼m ahlaki ve sosyal soruları gereksiz kılacaktır (Schmitt 1993, 85-86).

Bu anlamda, “Tanrı, ¼zg¼rl¼k, ilerleme, insan dođasına dair antropolojik anlayıřlar, kamusal alan, akıl ve rasyonalizasyon, ve nihayetinde dođa ve k¼lt¼r kavramları, ancak merkezi alanların durumundan t¼retilen somut tarihsel i¼erikten anlaşılabilir” (Schmitt 1993, 87).

Schmitt’in merkezi alanlar kavramını temel alarak, Wael Hallaq, “paradigmatik inan¼lar ve pratikler” ya da kısaca “paradigmalar” olarak adlandırdıđı kavramı geliřtirir. Paradigmalar, belirli varoluř bi¼imlerinin d¼ř¼nme ve yařama bi¼imlerinin farklı y¼nleri ¼zerinde geniř bir hegemonik etkiye sahip olmasını sađlayan unsurları ifade eder. Bařka bir deyiřle, paradigmalar, sistematik ¼zelliklerin, “iliřkilerin ve kavramsal yapıların” tanımlanmasını m¼mk¼n kılar; bunlar, yapıları ve sistemleri belirli bir “iřler d¼zeni”ne sokan “itici g¼çler” olarak adlandırılabilir (Hallaq 2012, 6). Ancak bir paradigma, kapsadıđı t¼m hareketlerin veya entelekt¼el projelerin homojenliđini ifade etmez. Hallaq, bu paradigmatik yapıları ¼rnek olarak Aydınlanma’yı tartıřırken kullanır. Gerçekten de, “bu projenin, entelekt¼el ve politik hareketlerin geniř bir yelpazede yer alan d¼ř¼nsel farklılıkları kapsadıđına hi¼ kuřku yoktur” ve bu hareketler tek bir tanımlanabilir kategori olarak birleřtirilemez; “Ancak, Aydınlanma’nın b¼t¼nl¼đ¼yle... paylařılan varsayımlar ve ¼nkabullerden oluřan bir alt yapıya sahip bir paradigma sergilediđi de eminlikle savunulabilir; bu, onun i¼sel ¼eřitliliđine rađmen ona belirli bir birliktelik kazandırır” (Hallaq 2012, 7). Bir paradigma, toplumsal tahayy¼lde kesinlik d¼zeyine ulařan ve her bařka toplumsal ¼zelliđin ¼zerine inřa edildiđi temel mantıkla tanımlanır. Aydınlanma ¼rneđiyle devam edersek, onun temel projesi “yerel, geleneksel ya da geleneksel ahlaki anlayıřların ve t¼m metafizik inan¼ bi¼imlerinin yerini alacak olan, evrensel bir medeniyetin temeli olarak ¼ng¼r¼len eleřtirel ya da rasyonel bir ahlak anlayıřının”

kurulmasıydı. Esasında, Aydınlanma, laik ve insancıl ilkelere dayalı yeni bir ahlaki çerçevenin oluşumunu temsil eder. Bu çerçeve, önemli sorunlara yaklaşmak için birincil standart haline gelmiş—toplumun her yönünü şekillendiren merkezi bir referans noktasıdır ve iyi ya da kötü şekilde, hayat biçimlerimizi etkilemeye devam etmektedir (Hallaq 2012, 8).

Merkezî alanlar ve paradigmanın önemli yakınlığı göz önüne alındığında, Hallağ, paradigmanın, merkezin dışında kalan ya da periferal alanlar ile ilgili daha geniş bir anlayış sunduğunu öne sürer. Schmitt'i alıntılıyarak bu perspektif, bu alanları “aynı türdeki diğer sistemlerden onları niteliksel olarak ayıran belirli bir kavramsal yapıdan ortak bir şekilde pay almış bilgi ve uygulama sistemlerinde” yerleştirir. Hallağ'a göre, Schmitt'in “merkezî ve periferal alanlar” hakkındaki açıklaması, doğrusal bir yapıdır çünkü bu iki arasında, periferal alanların sorunları sadece “merkezî alanın sorunları çözüldüğünde” otomatik olarak çözülür biçiminde bir diyalektik ilişki kurar (Hallaq 2012, 8). Hallağ şöyle devam eder:

Merkezî alandaki sorunların öncelik kazandığı ve diğer alanları bu önceliklere tâbi kıldığı doğru olsa da, tüm bu alanlar, periferal alanların kendileri içindeki öncelikleri şekillendiren bir bilgi sisteminde işler... Paradigma anlayışımızda, periferal alanlar, mantıksal ya da ontolojik olarak merkezî alanın önceliği nedeniyle değil, bu alanın sistemdeki temellerinin ve köklerinin pekiştirilmesi ve sağlamaştırılması nedeniyle periferal değil, yan destekleyici ve yardımcıdır...

Schmitt, merkezî alanı bir itici güç olarak ısrarla savunurken, paradigma anlayışımız, merkezî alanda benimsenen değerlerin, ideal değerler olarak merkezi bir öneme sahip olduğunu vurgular; bu değerler, her ne kadar her zaman uygulanıp gerçekleştirilmeseler de, toplumda amaçlı eylem ve düşüncenin merkezi noktası olmaya devam eder.

Paradigmalar, “güç ilişkileri” alanlarını temsil eder; bu alanlar, karşıt ve rekabetçi söylemleri ve stratejileri kapsar (Hallaq 2012, 8-9).

“Güç ilişkileri alanları” olarak paradigmalar, bu eleştirinin ayrılmaz bir parçası olurlar. “Güç alanı” benzetmesi, bu anlatı için çok faydalıdır çünkü, gelişmenin gerçek bir sistematik eleştirisini oluşturan unsurları, epistemolojik ve sistematik köklerine derinlemesine inmeksizin gelişmeyi reforme etmeye ya da yeniden inşa etmeye yönelik

diğer çabalardan ayırır. Gelişmenin merkezi alanını — yani modernliğin temeli olan ekonomi— ele almadan, neoliberal ekonominin araçsal mantığını altüst etmeyen herhangi bir eleştiri, yalnızca sınırlayıcı bir güç işlevi görür. Bu tür eleştiriler, kalkınmacı paradigmaya meydan okurken, nihayetinde onun eksikliklerini yalnızca merkezi çerçevesini rafine etmesine ve eksikliklerini gidermesine olanak tanır, böylece ömrünü daha da uzatır.

Bu “merkezi alanlar” ve “subversif alanlar”ın aynı güç alanı içinde işlediği mantık, yalnızca herhangi bir eleştiriye değil, insan eyleminin merkezi alanı olarak ahlakı yeniden inşa etme gerekliliğini önceleyen bir eleştiriye çağırıştırır.

Ahlaki Eleştiri

Bu eleştiri en az iki şekilde ahlakidir. İlk olarak, bu araştırmanın merkezi argümanı, gelişmeye yönelik herhangi bir üretken eleştirinin merkezi alanının, manevi ve ahlaki sermayenin yetiştirilmesi alanı olması gerektiğini öne sürmektedir. İkinci olarak, ajans ve insan doğasının açıklanması açısından, gelişme, bireyin ajansını merkeze alan, toplumsal değişimin temeli olarak yeniden ele alınmaktadır. Burada, insanın insaniyeti, Taha Abdurrahman’ın İ’timaniyyah ahlak felsefesinde savunduğu gibi, onun etikliğiyle ilgilidir. Hallaq, *Impossible State* adlı eserinde “politik ve ekonomik... bu ahlaki çıkmazın türevleridir, yani bu çelişkileri ahlaki meseleler olarak çözmek, gelişmenin politik ve ekonomik sorunlarını tanım gereği çözmüş olurdu” (Hallaq 2012) demektedir. Başka bir deyişle, burada ele alınan sorunların (örneğin sosyal eşitsizlik ve adaletsizlik, çevresel kriz, ekonomik emperyalizm vb.) “felsefi-ahlaki ve epistemik sorunlar kadar maddi ve fiziksel sorunlar” olduklarına inanıyoruz (Hallaq 2012).

Bu bağlamdaki merkezi argüman, insanı öncelikle etik bir varlık olarak tanımlamaktadır. Bu argüman, belki de bu iki noktayı birbirine bağlayan şeydir: İnsan varlığının ajansını yetiştirmek, öncelikle onun etik bir varlık olarak doğasını, ahlaki ve manevi sermayenin yetiştirilmesiyle geliştirmektedir. Nasıl? İşte burada, Tazkiye kavramı, sosyal değişim için farklı bir model olarak, bu eleştiriye İslam’ın dünya görüşüne dayandırarak sunmaktadır.

İslami Eleştiri

Özellikle, öz-düzenlemeli piyasanın insan etkileşiminin ana alanı olarak egemenliği, Batı entelektüel geleneğinin bir ürünü olduğu için, gelişmenin kötüye gidişlerine karşı gerçekten etkili bir ahlak anlayışı arayışı, insanı tanımlayan değerleri yeniden tanımlamayı gerektirir. Bu değerler, insanın bilincini ve eylemlerini yükseltmeye yönelik olmalıdır ve yalnızca “ekonomik kadercilik” ya da Taha Abdurrahman’ın “piyasa değerleri” dediği doktrinden farklı bir bağımsız mantık ve dokma ile ortaya çıkabilir. Çünkü “piyasa değerleri, seküler bir yönelime, tatmin için materyalist bir yapıya sahiptir ve insanı dünyevi hayata tam bir teslimiyetle yönlendirmeyi amaçlar”, herhangi bir alternatif “değer, piyasa değerlerinin olumsuz etkilerine karşı çıkmak için onun zıttı olmalı, inanç temelli ve manevi bir uygulamaya sahip olmalı, ve insanı hayatında her şeyin farkında olarak ve etkilerini göz önünde bulundurarak ilerlemesini sağlamalıdır” (Taha 2014, 121-122).

Sonraki kısmı başlatmak için Hallaq’ın Batı geleneğinden moderniteye ahlaki eleştiriler aramız gerektiğiyle ilgili söylemi dikkate değerdir. Yani, bu ahlak arayışı kesinlikle yeni bir şey değildir ve yalnızca İslam geleneğine özgü değildir. Bununla birlikte, bu araştırmada İslami ahlaki kaynaklara odaklanmak, geniş bir geçmişe sahip olan İslami geleneği temel alır; çünkü bu gelenek “yaşanmış bir paradigmatik yaşam biçimiyle” kendini ayırt eder. Çünkü bu filozofların dayandığı gelenekler teorik ve felsefi kavramlardan oluşurken (bazıları bunu “kimsenin hiç yaşamadığı bir topluluk” olarak tanımlayabilir), projeyi geri almak için dayanılabilecek İslami gelenek, teorik-felsefi olanı, sosyolojik, antropolojik, hukuki, politik ve ekonomik olguları birleştiren karmaşık bir gelenektir (Hallaq 2012, 6).

Bununla birlikte, bu özel eleştirinin İslami tarafı, dini bir pasif nesne olarak değil, aktif bir eleştiri ajanı olarak kullanılmalıdır. Bu özel eleştiri, böylece vahyi, yani Kuran’ı, gelişmenin eksikliklerini değerlendirmek ve kör noktalarını tespit etmek için ölçüt olarak kullanan bir analitik çerçeve olarak kullanmaktadır. Bu durumda, bu eleştirinin temel çerçevesi şu ayetle şekillenir: *إن الله لا يغير ما بقوم حتى يغيروا ما بأنفسهم* (Allah bir kavmin durumunu değiştirmez, ta ki onlar kendi içlerinde bir değişim gerçekleştirmedikçe, Kuran, 13:11). Bu ayetin analiz edilmesi, önerilen eleştirel çerçevenin temel yapısını oluşturur. Ayet, açıkça iki ayrı değişim alanını belirtir: *ما بالقوم*, bir kavmin durumu, ve *ما بأنفسهم*,

onların içinde bulunan şey. Ajans açısından, ayet, ilk alandaki ilahi eylemi, ikinci alandaki ise insan ajansını açıkça atfeder (Said 1993, 69).

Teori ve Yöntem Eleştirisi

Bununla birlikte, bu araştırmanın hem biçim hem de içerik açısından bir eleştiri olduğunu belirtmek isterim; içerik, gelişmenin kendisi ve biçim ise sosyal bilimler araştırmalarının doğası ve teori ile pratik arasındaki bu yarıklık ile ilgilidir.

“Özellikle Protestan olmayan dinlerin sadece eleştiri nesnesi olabileceği yönündeki Aydınlanma anlayışlarından hareketle (Ahmed 2018, 15),” ve Irfan Ahmed’in *Religion As Critique: Islamic Critical Thinking from Mecca to the Marketplace* adlı kitabında yapmaya çalıştığı aynı doğrultuda, bu tez, gelişme kavramına odaklanarak akademik eleştirinin geleneksel soyağacını sorgulamayı ve dini, özellikle İslam’ı, aktif bir eleştiri ajanı olarak nasıl kullanılabilirliğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ahmed’in belirttiği gibi: “Batılı ve Batılılaşan geleneklerde mevcut olan egemen eleştiri anlatılarının aksine, bu kitap (onun kitabı) Tanrı’yı bizzat eleştirinin kaynağı olarak tanımlar ve zaman içinde gönderdiği peygamberleri mükemmel eleştirmenler olarak ortaya koyar” (Ahmed 2018, 17).

Bu araştırma, böylece gelişme teorisinin ve sosyal teorinin hem kavramsal bir eleştirisi olarak durmakta hem de entelektüel ve felsefi antropoloji ya da sosyolojinin izlediği yolda eleştiri kavramına meydan okumaktadır. Ayrıca, Taha Abdurrahman ve Hany el-Banna örneklerini analiz ederken, bu araştırma, eleştirinin yalnızca bilişsel bir girişim değil, aynı zamanda her günkü sosyo-kültürel bir uygulama olduğuna dair ana akım eleştiri ve gelişme anlayışlarına da meydan okumayı amaçlamaktadır.

Yöntem ve Araştırma Soruları

Daha önce kısaca bahsedildiği gibi, bu araştırmanın ana problemi, insan eyleminin merkezi alanı olarak ahlakın yokluğudur ve bu durum, iki farklı analiz seviyesine karşılık gelen en az iki şekilde kendini gösterir:

1. Mikro Seviye: İnsan doğasının homo oeconomicus olarak betimlenmesi

2. Makro Seviye: Modern ulus-devlet modelinde politik tahayyül

Buna göre, bu araştırmayı yönlendirecek ana araştırma sorusu şu şekildedir: Ahlakı, ekonomik ve politik kaygılara tabi kılmak yerine, eylemin merkezi alanı olarak önceliklendiren bir İslami ahlaki gelişme eleştirisi nasıl şekillendirilebilir?

Araştırma, daha sonra *gelişme* veya *tanmiyah*dan *tazkiyeye* geçiş olasılığını analiz etmeye devam edecektir. Bu çalışmada, Faslı filozof Taha Abdurrahman'ın etik teorisi ve İslami yardım kuruluşunun kurucusu ve daha sonra Dünya İnsani Yardım Forumu'nun başlatıcısı olan Hany El-Banna'nın pratik deneyimi teorik çerçeve olarak alınacaktır. Bu araştırma, ayrıca daha fazla soruya cevap arayacaktır. Bu sorular, yardım uygulamalarından, özellikle inanç temelli organizasyonlar arasında eylem etiği standartları belirleyen bir foruma geçişin, insani yardım ve kalkınma çalışmalarının rolüne nasıl daha fazla derinlik kattığını analiz etmeyi içermektedir. Ayrıca, böyle bir girişimde, bir ahlaki standardın nasıl müzakere edildiği ve tartışıldığı incelenecek ve eyleme dayalı gelişme, anlam ve ahlâkın kaynağı olarak nasıl anlam kazanabilir sorusu ele alınacaktır. Hany el-Banna gibi insanların, Taha Abdurrahman ile birlikte konumlanması, İslam ve insanlık anlam dünyalarını şekillendirirken, aynı zamanda yaşantı dünyalarını da etkilemektedir. Dahası, kalkınma kavramını ve vizyonunu incelemek, üstten aşağıya teoriler, planlar veya programlar yerine pratisyenlerin deneyimlerinin bu semantik alanı ve eylem etiğini değiştirmede nasıl rol oynadığını görmemizi nasıl sağlar? Ve gelişme kavramlarını, global sivil toplum kavramının yükselmesiyle nasıl ilişkilendirebiliriz? Böylece, bu kavramların, hükümetler arası işbirlikleri ve uluslararası kurumların (BM ajansları, Dünya Bankası, ikili yardımlar vb.) üstten aşağıya politikalarından çok, alt seviyeden yapılan revizyonlara odaklanması nasıl sağlanabilir?

Bu şekilde, bu araştırmanın ikinci kısmı da, daha önce bahsedilen iki ana analiz seviyesine dayalı olarak yapılandırılacaktır:

1. Mikro Seviye: İnsan doğasının *I'timani* öznesi olarak betimlenmesi, Taha Abdurrahman'ın *I'timaniyyah* teorisi üzerinde yoğunlaşarak

2. Makro Seviye: Sosyal altyapıya gömülü politik tahayyül, global sivil toplum kavramı (diğer kavramların yanı sıra) üzerinden, Hany el-Banna'nın insani yardım pratiđi ve *Khala'iqiyyah* anlayışı üzerinde durarak

Araştırma Pozisyonu

Bu tez, sosyal teoriye eleştirel bir yaklaşım benimsemekte ve bilgi felsefesi ile sosyal paradigmalara inşasına odaklanmaktadır. Önceden bahsedilen iki eleştiri yönüne de hitap etmektedir: Biçim eleştirisi, sosyal bilimlerin doğası ve geçerli bir eleştirinin ne olduğuna dair kriterlerle ilgili olan kısmı, ve İçerik eleştirisi, gelişme teorisinin sosyal teori ve toplumsal deđişim paradigması olarak nasıl bir temsil oluşturduđunu incelemektedir. Buradan, bu araştırmanın dekonstrüktivist kısmı, analiz edilen kavramların tarihsel geçmişini izlemek ve onları üreten tarihsel bağlamları sorgulamak için kavramsal analiz yöntemine dayanmaktadır. Sosyal deđişimin farklı bir paradigmasını inşa etmek için temel oluşturmayı amaçlayan ikinci kısım ise, özellikle daha önce bahsedilen deđişim ayetini (13:11) ve Taha Abdurrahman'ın *I'timaniyyah* teorisini, önerilen sosyal deđişim modelinin temeli olarak kullanmaktadır. Son olarak, Hany el-Banna'nın insani yardım çalışmaları deneyimi ve ardından *Khala'iqiyyah* teorisini geliştirmesi, önerilen *Tazkiyah* modelinin teorik dayanaklarını test etmek ve somutlaştırmak için bir vaka çalışması olarak sunulmaktadır.

Bu araştırma, umarım hem içerik hem de araştırma metodolojisi açısından teori ile pratiđi birleştirmeye yönelik bir çaba olacaktır ve bunun için aşağıdaki bölümde açıklanacak olan bir "barzakh mantığı" izlenecektir.

Barzakh Mantığı: "Arada Olma" Durumunun Teorik Sınırlamaları

Bruce Lawrence, *Islamicate Cosmopolitan Spirit* adlı kitabında "barzakh ya da bulanık mantık" kavramını tanıtmaktadır. Lawrence, bu farklı türdeki mantığın, görünen ile görünmeyen, geçmiş ile gelecek, "özlem" ile "aidiyet" arasındaki sınır alanlarda olduğunu ve ikili dünya anlayışlarını aşmayı amaçladığını açıklar. Bu mantık, bulanıklığı kucaklar ve dilin ne çok kesin ne de aşırı gevşek olmasını savunur. Bu yaklaşım, modern dünyanın kesinliğe ve dilin tam çerçevenmesine takıntılı yaklaşımına meydan okur. Lawrence

(2021), barzakh mantığının, insan ruhunu özgürleştirerek, olanakların sınırlarını aşmasını sağlayan bir alternatif sunduğunu açıklar. Bu perspektif, “ruhu” sadece hayat gücü olarak değil, aynı zamanda bilinç, ayırt etme gücü ve ahlaki motivasyon gibi temel bir insan özelliği olarak da görür. Doğruyu yapmanın yanı sıra, herkes için en iyisini yapmanın önemini vurgular, agonizm ile altruizmi harmanlar.

Barzakh’ın heterolojik mantığı, bu araştırmanın geliştirme teorisini ve pratiğini eleştirme çabasıyla büyük ölçüde örtüşmektedir. Bu tür bir mantık, çevresel, sosyal ve ekonomik problemlerle ilgili “hemen düşmanı” ele almanın ötesine geçerek, “merkezi düşman” (yani, insan eyleminin merkezi alanı olarak ahlakın yokluğu) ile uğraşmaya yönelir, tıpkı Hallaq’ın *Impossible State* adlı eserinde belirttiği gibi. Bu mantık, modernliğin belirsiz sınırlar, çözülmemiş sınırlar, geçiş dönemleri ve mevcut toplumsal yönetim modellerine benzemeyen alternatif düşüncelere olan rahatsızlığını aşmak için yeni ufuklar açar. Çünkü gelişme eleştirisi, onu üreten dünya sistemine kadar uzandığı için geniş kapsamı, araştırma ve metodoloji açısından büyük bir zorluk teşkil etmektedir. Bu yüzden, mevcut çalışmanın olası sınırlamalarından biri, tam olarak bu konuyu ele alacak belirgin bir yöntem eksikliği olabilir ve konunun karmaşıklığı, mevcut dünya düzenini yeniden hayal etmeyi amaçladığından dolayı da büyümektedir. İşte bu tür bir barzakh mantığı, gelişmeye karşı yeni ve derin ahlaki bir İslami eleştiriyi ve bunu destekleyen sosyo-epistemik yapıyı keşfetmek için entelektüel cesaret sunar. Özellikle de ekonomiyi marjinalleştirme ve insanlığın manevi ve ahlaki zorunluluğunu insanlık durumunun merkezine koyma amacına sahip oldukça büyük bir hırsla. Bu, alt seviyeden toplumun yeniden örgütlenmesi ve ortakların devrimi için bir yol açmak anlamına gelir; bu da, sadece gelişme teorileri ve programlarının değil, mevcut modern dünya düzeninin eleştirisini içerir.

Allah, Bir Toplumun Durumunu, Kendi İçlerindeki Şeyi Değiştirmedikçe Değiştirmez: Tazkiyah'ın Bir Sosyal Değişim Paradigması Olarak

Bu araştırma, büyük ölçüde gelişme teorisinin ve tanmiyah paradigmasının eksikliklerini açıklamış olsa da, tazkiyah yolunun, insanın ahlaki doğasına ve ahlakın insan eyleminin merkezi bir alanı olarak yeniden kurulmasına olan ihtiyaçla, radikal bir sosyal değişim modelini ifade etmenin gerekliliği için bir temel atmıştır. Bu sonuç, tazkiyah kavramına dair gelecek araştırmalara bir plan sunmayı amaçlayan düşünce

hatlarının vurgulanmasında bir girişim olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır; tazkiyah'ın nasıl sosyal, psikolojik ve manevi olarak ve siyasi anlamda toplumsal bir alternatif model olarak inşa edilebileceği ele alınacaktır.

“Kendilerindeki Şeyi Değiştirmedikçe...”: Ahlakın Temel Hareket Ettirici Gücü ve Tazkiyah'ın Psiko-Manevi Temeli

Her sosyal meselenin gelişiminde, insanlık durumunun köklü ve sürekli soruları yatar: Biz kimiz ve ne istiyoruz? Takip eden düşünce ve eylem sistemleri, bu sorulara verdiğimiz yanıtlara bağlı olarak şekillenir. Modern dünyadaki insanlık durumu, sonunda kurtuluşun, kapital ve servet birikiminde gizli olduğu yönünde, bazen açıkça dile getirilen (ya da bazen de söylenmeyen) bir toplumsal mutabakatla şekillenen bir durumdur. Bu, insanın özünü maddi kazançlarla özdeşleştirirken, hayatın geçici doğasını, bu dünyanın sınırlı kaynaklarını ve insanın her zaman var olan aşkını ve sürekli olarak hatırlatılan ruhsal hafızasını göz ardı eder. Modern seküler dünyadaki görüşün aksine, İslami dünya görüşü, insanlığın özünü barındıran ve onu aşan bir varoluş alanına giden bir yol haritası sunar. Bu bağlamda, İslami yönetim ahlakı, insan çabalarının her türünü bu hayatın nihai amacına ulaşmak için düzeltmiş ve yönlendirmiştir: *Tawheed* (Tevhid). Hallağ'ın *Impossible State* adlı eserinde uygun bir şekilde tarif ettiği gibi:

Paradigma, özel ve teknik hukuki kurallarıyla her zaman bu ahlaki amacın gerçekleştirilmesine yönelik bir çaba gösterdi, bazen başarısız olsa da çoğu zaman başarılı oluyordu, bu da tam olarak onu bir paradigma yapan şeydi. Sistem bütünüyle *cihad* (bugün özellikle geç modernitede, Schmitt'in siyasi düşünceye dayalı tanımlamalarıyla oldukça olumsuz bir şekilde anılan) kavramına dayanıyordu. Bu kavram, her durumda, ahlaki amaca ulaşma noktasında *striving* (cihad kelimesinin kelime anlamı) kavramının zorunluluğunu belirliyordu. (Hallağ, 2012, 11) (vurgulama eklenmiştir).

Toplum ve sosyal değişimle ilgili gelişmeci bakış açısının “teknopol” paradigmasını (Postman 1992) pekiştirdiği bir dünyada, İslami bakış açısı, “ahlaki teknolojiler”i (Hallağ, 2012) geliştirmeye yönelik çabayı ve cihadı merkezi bir tema olarak ele alır. İslam'ın kurucu metni olan Kuran, kesinlikle etik ve ekonomik işlemlerin yönergelerini belirlese de, insan ve Allah arasındaki birincil alışverişin manevi ve ahlaki sermaye ticareti

olduğunu vurgular. Kuran, bu manevi çabayı, aşağıdaki ayetlerin de gösterdiği gibi, bir alışveriş diliyle anlatır:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا هَلْ أَدْلُكُمْ عَلَىٰ تِجَارَةٍ تُنْجِيكُمْ مِّنْ عَذَابٍ أَلِيمٍ ۝ ١٠ تُوْمِنُونَ بِاللّٰهِ وَرَسُولِهِ وَتُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللّٰهِ بِأَمْوَالِكُمْ وَأَنْفُسِكُمْ ۗ ذَٰلِكُمْ خَيْرٌ لَّكُمْ إِن كُنْتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ ۝ ١١

Ey İman Edenler! Size, acıklı bir azaptan kurtulmanızı sağlayacak bir ticareti göstereyim mi? (O, Allah'a ve Elçisine iman etmektir ve Allah yolunda mallarınız ve canlarınızla cihad etmektir). Eğer bilseydiniz, bu sizin için çok daha hayırlıdır. (61:10-11)

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَتْلُونَ كِتَابَ اللَّهِ وَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَأَنفَقُوا مِمَّا رَزَقْنَاهُمْ سِرًّا وَعَلَانِيَةً يَرْجُونَ تِجَارَةً لَّن تَبُورَ ۝ ٢٩

Şüphesiz, Allah'ın Kitabını okuyanlar, namazı kılanlar ve kendilerine verdiğimiz rızıklardan gizli ve açık bir şekilde infak edenler, asla tükenmeyecek bir alışverişini umabilirler. (35:29)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ اشْتَرَىٰ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ أَنفُسَهُمْ وَأَمْوَالَهُمْ بِأَنَّ لَهُمُ الْجَنَّةَ ۗ يُقَاتِلُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ فَيَقْتُلُونَ وَيُقْتَلُونَ ۖ وَوَعْدًا عَلَيْهِ حَقٌّ فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ وَالْقُرْءَانِ ۗ وَمَنْ أَوْفَىٰ بِعَهْدِهِ مِنَ اللَّهِ ۗ فَاسْتَبْشِرُوا بِنِعْمَتِ اللَّهِ الَّتِي بِآبَاعِكُمْ بِيَدِهِ ۗ وَذَٰلِكَ هُوَ الْفَوْزُ الْعَظِيمُ ۝ ١١١

Şüphesiz Allah, müminlerden canlarını ve mallarını, onlara Cennet karşılığında satın almıştır. Onlar Allah yolunda savaşır ve öldürür ya da öldürülürler. Bu, Tevrat, İncil ve Kuran'da Allah'ın kendisine verdiği gerçek bir vaattir. Peki, Allah'tan daha doğru bir söz kim verebilir? O zaman, verdiğiniz söz karşılığında sevinin. İşte bu, gerçekten büyük bir zaferdir. (9:111)

Bu ayetlerdeki ticaret ve alışveriş dili, hayatın temelini oluşturan değişim ve ilişkilerin merkezietini ilk olarak kurar. İnsanlık durumu ve onu kapsayan her şey, bir “ben” ve bir “öteki”nin kurulmasıyla başlar. Eğer ben'in etkileşimde bulunacağı bir öteki yoksa, varlık, deneyim ve hatta medeniyetin varlığından söz edilemez. Bu nedenle, yukarıda bahsedilen ayetler, Allah ile insan arasındaki ilişkiyi, tüm diğer ilişkilerin temeli olarak kurar; ekonomik alışverişler de dâhil olmak üzere. Başka bir açıdan bakıldığında, bu Kurânî alışveriş dili, belki de insanın bu tür ekonomik faaliyetlere karşı eğilimlerini dolaylı olarak onaylar. Dünyasal ekonomik faaliyetlerin varlığını ve gerekliliğini reddetmek yerine, Kuran, onları daha büyük bir bağlamda, insanın üzerinde çaba göstermesi gereken asıl

alışverişin içinde konumlandırır. Bu, insanın daha önce kabul ettiği İlahi ahitlerin devamı olarak anlaşılmalıdır. El-Daghistani, İslam perspektifinde Allah-insan ilişkisini iki seviyede işler. Birincisi, insanın İlahi yasaları ve emirleri kabul ettiği ve uyguladığı yukarıdan aşağıya bir bağlantıyı ifade ederken, ikincisi, Allah-insan ilişkisinin ruhsal bağlılık ve duygusal zekâya dayalı olduğunu vurgular (El-Daghistani 2021, 46). Her iki yaklaşım, Şeriat'ın ahlaki kozmolojisi altında çakışır ve burada, merkezi alanların dilini kullanarak, ahlaki ve manevi sermayenin geliştirilmesi etrafında döner. Gelişim örneğinin aksine, Tazkiyah paradigmaları, bu ışık altında, sosyal değişimin yönlendirici aracı olarak karşımıza çıkar ve bu değişim, özünde ancak sürekli bir arınma ve manevi cihad süreciyle gerçekleşebilir.

Bu görüş, araştırmamıza başladığımız ayete geri götürür: *إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ* – Allah, bir toplumun durumunu değiştirmez, ta ki onlar kendilerindeki şeyi değiştirene kadar (Kuran, 13:11). Bu tartışmayı İslami dünya görüşü çerçevesinde çerçeveselendirerek, bu ayet, sosyal değişim için tanımlanmış eylem seviyelerine sahip iki ana aktörü önerir. Birincisi, dünyayı yöneten ve toplumların durumlarını sosyal, maddi veya diğer terimlerle değiştirme gücüne sahip olan İlahi kudret, ikincisi ise insan, bu sosyal değişimin gücünü hak edecek ve yönlendirecek merkezi eylemi olan manevi ve ahlaki sermaye geliştiren bir varlık olarak tanımlanır.

Tazkiyah'ı sosyal değişim olarak bir paradigma olarak tamamlayan bir başka ayet de şu şekildedir: *ذَٰلِكَ بِأَنَّ اللَّهَ لَمْ يَكُ مُغَيِّرًا نِّعْمَةً أَنْعَمَهَا عَلَىٰ قَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنْفُسِهِمْ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ سَمِيعٌ عَلِيمٌ ٥٣* – Bu, çünkü Allah bir kavmin üzerindeki nimetini, onlar kendilerindeki şeyi değiştirmedikçe asla değiştirmez. Şüphesiz, Allah işitendir, bilendir (Kuran, 8:53). Allah'ın bir kavme verdiği nimeti değiştirmesiyle ilgili ters bir değişim yönüne işaret eden bu ayet, sosyal değişimin, insan ajansı tarafından tetiklenen değişim ve Allah'ın vaat ettiği değişim arasında döngüyü tamamlar. Bu, sosyal değişimin iki yönde ilerleyebileceği anlamına gelir: kolaylık ve bolluk yönünde ya da zorluk ve çürümeye doğru. Bu iki ayette de Kuran, sosyal değişimin temel aktörleri olarak insanları adresler ve her iki durumda da değişimi tetikleyen tek bir şey vardır: kendilerindeki şeyi değiştirmek. Bu nedenle, Kuran, kolektif *Nafs*'ta yapılması gereken değişimin, insanın (İnsan) ana işlevi olduğunu açıkça belirtir (Said 1993, 25). Bu anlayış, Said'e göre, toplumsal değişim için uygun ve layık hale

gelmek adına bir norm, bir *sünnet* olarak kabul edilir; bu, esasen Allah'ın yönlendirdiği daha büyük sosyal değişim için bir ön koşuldur (Said 1993, 40).

Tazkiyah'ın Sosyal Boyutu: Topluluk Ahlakın İnşa Edilmesinin Temel Taşdır

McNeill ve McNeill, *The Human Web: A Bird's Eye View of World History* adlı kitaplarında, insan tarihini yönlendiren merkezi unsurlardan birinin insan sosyal ağları, yani "etkileşim ağları" olduğunu savunurlar. Tamamen tarihsel bir analizle, insan hırsının ve eylemlerinin esasen insan tarihini yönlendirdiğini, ancak insanların maddi ve manevi alanlardaki umutlarını gerçekleştirmelerinin, "onlara sunulan fikirler, bilgiler ve örnekler"e dayandığını ileri sürerler. Temel düzeyde, insan ağı, konuşmanın gelişimiyle bağlantılıdır. Bugün genellikle göz ardı edilen dil gerçekte, başka biriyle iletişim kurma ihtiyacından doğmuştur; böylece, en azından temel düzeyde, bilgi ve malların iyi bir şekilde takas yapılabilmesi sağlanmıştır. Etkileşim ağları, işbirliği ve rekabetin bir dengesiyle toplumun gelişimini tetikler. Bu kitaptaki yazarlara göre, insan ağları, ilk başta antik medeniyetlerden dijital Dünya Ağları'na kadar, sosyal ve tarihi gelişimin temel birimi olmuştur (McNeill ve McNeill, 3-4). Ancak kapitalist dünya düzeninin etkisiyle, toplumsal gerçeğin ortak bir gerçeklik olarak algılanışı, bireyci bir anlayışa çekilmiştir ki bu da Batı modernliğinin önde gelen bir özelliğidir. Moderniteyi "katıların sınıvlaştırılması ve kutsalın profanlaşması" süreci olarak tanımlayan Bauman, "katıları eritmek, her şeyden önce, rasyonel hesaplamanın önünde engel olan 'gereksiz' yükümlülüklerden kurtulmak" anlamına geldiğini savunur; yani, "işletme girişimlerini aile-hanevi yükümlülüklerinden ve etik sorumlulukların yoğun dokularından kurtarmak... sadece 'nakit bağlantılarını' bırakarak, insan karşılıklılığı ve karşılıklı sorumlulukların tüm bağlarını" (Bauman 2000, 4).

Başka bir deyişle, toplumun sanayileşmesi, ilk olarak ortak malların çözülmesi ve toplulukların ayrı bireylere dönüşmesiyle başlamıştır; böylece, "öz-düzenlenen piyasa"nın ihtiyaçlarına daha uygun bir toplum ortaya çıkmıştır (Esteva, Babones ve Babcicky 2013, 95). Modern ekonominin tanımı, bireyin rasyonel kendi çıkarına dayandığı için, organik toplulukların çözülmesine neden olmuş ve bu da yaratılışın bir uzantısı olan yerin yaşanabilirliğini yok etmiştir (Jha, 2023). Gerçekte, modern dünya

düzeninin başardığı şey, insan etkileşiminin ve dolayısıyla yaşamın temelini oluşturan sosyal altyapıyı yok etmek olmuştur; bunun yerine fiziksel altyapılar inşa edilip mali sermaye güvence altına alınmıştır. Bu açıklama ışığında, deRivero'nun gelişim modelini bir medeniyet krizi olarak daha derin bir şekilde değerlendirmesi oldukça anlamlıdır.

İslam paradigmasında, Tazkiyah'ın sosyal boyutlardan kopuk bir şekilde nadiren kavramsallaştırılması dikkat çekicidir. Bu, tazkiyah sürecinin temelde peygamberlerle bağlantı kurarak gerçekleştiğini öne süren sürekli Kuranî ayetlerle başlar. Bu ayetlerden biri şöyle der: كَمَا أَرْسَلْنَا فِيكُمْ رَسُولًا مِّنْكُمْ يَتْلُوا عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِنَا وَيُزَكِّيكُمْ وَيُعَلِّمُكُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْحِكْمَةَ وَيُعَلِّمُكُم مَّا لَمْ تَكُونُوا تَعْلَمُونَ ١٥١ – Sizden bir peygamber gönderdiğimiz gibi – size ayetlerimizi okur, sizi arındırır, Kitap ve hikmeti öğretir ve bilmediğiniz şeyleri size öğretir (Kuran 2:151). İslam'ın ilk dönemlerinden itibaren tazkiyah ve ahlak bilimlerinin gelişimi, sahabe grubundan, tarihi olarak turukların kolektif manevi loncalarıyla gelişmiştir. Şeriat sistemi bağlamında Sohail Hanif, “İslami hukuk sadece sosyal kurumlar aracılığıyla gerçeklik kazanır” (Hanif 2022a) der. Bu ışıkta, namaz, ilham verdiği türde bir sosyal organizasyon aracılığıyla medeniyet düzeninin temelini oluşturur (Hanif 2022b). Tazkiyah'ın bireysel boyutları elbette vardır, ancak İslam'daki neredeyse her ritüelin kolektif bir yönü de bulunmaktadır. Müslüman topluluğu, Cuma günü gibi ortak zaman ve fiziksel alanı paylaşarak kolektif bir alan oluşturur. Aynı şekilde, oruç, Ramazan ayının aynı zaman diliminde kolektif bir paylaşımı ifade eder. Zekât, özünde bir sosyal kurumdur, çünkü servetin zenginlerden yoksullara akışını güvence altına alır ve sosyal bağımlılıkları ve bağları oluşturur. “Zekâtın, Müslümanlara ve ideal olarak aynı yerleşim yerinde yaşayanlara verilmesi gerektiği gerçeğinden, zekâtın çok özel bağlar geliştirdiği ve bunları beslediği anlaşılabilir: Zekât, yerel bir inanç topluluğunda kimlik, aidiyet ve ilgi duygusu oluşturur” (Hanif 2022c). Değişimle ilgili daha önce bahsedilen ayet, Said'in yorumunda, sosyal değişimin kolektif bir çaba olduğunu ve yalnızca bireysel arınma uygulamalarıyla değil, daha geniş bir toplulukla olan ilişkiler içinde gerçekleşebileceğini vurgulayan bir *anfus* topluluğuna hitap eder (Said, 14).

Tazkiyah'ın Sosyal Boyutunda Değişim: Birey ve Toplum İlişkisi ve Yeni Bir Düzenin Önerisi

Bu bağlamda, hattâ yughayyiru ma bi anfusihim (“ta ki nefslerinde olanı değiştirene kadar”), değişimin temel aktörü olarak kolektife işaret eder. Bu kolektif, yalnızca “toplumun izole bireylerinin davranışlarını toplamak suretiyle türetilen toplumsal bir davranış toplumu” değil, “tüm bir sınıfı kapsayan şeyin, kendisinin de o sınıfın bir üyesi olamayacağı”na dair mantık türleri teorisiyle çelişen bir anlam taşır (Rist 2008, 262). Ayrıca, “İslami hukuk teorisinin (usul al-fiqh) temel ilkelerinden biri, kamu yararının (maslahah 'ammah) özel bireysel çıkarın (manfa'ah nafsıyyah) önünde gelmesidir. Bu nedenle ticaret, toplum, toplumsal ve komünal olanın aleyhine değil, onun içinde var olur” (Setia, 2023). Hallaq, “Kuran, ilk dereceden kozmolojik bir ahlak teorisi sunmaktadır” (Hallaq 2012, 83) diyerek, bu kozmolojik ahlakın, tüm yaratılışın insan için yaratıldığını ve bu yaratılışın, faydacılıktan çok ahlaki sorumlulukla temellendirildiğini ortaya koyar. Bu dünya görüşü, “yaptıklarımızı, sadece birey olarak değil, daha da önemlisi sosyal bir grubun üyeleri olarak kendimiz için yaptığımızı” kabul eder (Hallaq 2012, 83). Bu evrensel kozmolojik okuma ve yaratılışın içinde insanın yerini anlayarak, anfusihim ifadesinin, Taha Abdurrahman’ın I’timaniyyah paradigması ve el-Banna’nın Khala’iqıyyah anlayışı ışığında okunması, bireysel üyeler arasındaki etkileşimin kolektifi nasıl dönüştürdüğünü vurgular; aynı zamanda daha büyük insan ve insan dışı topluluklarla olan etkileşimde de benzer değişimleri içerir. Başka bir deyişle, gelişim ve hümanizm gibi geçişsiz anlamlar taşıyan kavramların aksine, I’timaniyyah ve Khala’iqıyyah kavramlarının dilsel yapısı, sosyal ilişkiler alanının varlığını doğrudan ortaya koyar. Bu alan, başlangıçta insanın Amanah yükümlülüğünü taşıdığı Tanrı-insan ilişkisiyle başlar ve bir egemen olan Tanrı olarak Khaliq, yani Yaratıcı’nın bir yaratılışının parçası olarak daha geniş bir yaratılışla olan ilişkisine kadar uzanır. Bu paradigma, sadece toplumu sosyal değişimin merkezi olarak yeniden konumlandırmakla kalmaz, aynı zamanda bireyi “çoğulcu birey” olarak yeniden tanımlar; insanı, “kendi başına bir ümmet” olarak görür. Taha Abdurrahman, bireyin ümmet olma anlayışını şu şekilde açıklar:

“Bu, ona gerçekliğin taşıyamayacağı bir şey yapmayı gerektirmez, ne de tarihinin benzeri olmayan bir şey yapmayı gerektirir; ne de çevresindeki yüzü kısa bir zamanda değiştirmeyi gerektirir, bu değişimi yönetmeye hazırlanıp, ruhların harekete geçirilmesi, kalabalıkların mobilize edilmesi, durumların ve kurumların devrilmesi gibi işler için girmeyi gerektirir. Ama eğer o, yaratılışı hakimiyet altına alma hırsıyla bu acil ve zorlayıcı

yöneticilik yolunu seçerse, bu, onun ibadet amaçlarına ulaşmasını engeller. Aksine, ondan istenen şey, sadece kendisini değiştirmek için gayretli ve samimi çalışmasıdır, böylece yaptığı amellerin iyiliği ve halinin doğruluğu, başkalarını da kendi örneğini takip ederek kendilerini değiştirmeye yönlendirebilir, bu da başkalarına örnek olabilir ve böylece devam edebilir, ta ki doğru kişilerin bulunduğu bir grup oluşana kadar; her biri bir ümmettir. Buna göre, düzeltici eylem esas olarak tabandan ve çevreden gelmelidir, ve ikincil olarak zirve ve merkezlerden, ancak adaletsizlikleri açıkça kanıtlanmışsa, kelimeler ve fiilleri onları adalete çekmek zorunlu olduğunda, değişim aşağıdan, yukarıdan değil gelmelidir. Eğer alt katmanlar, taban ve çevre, değişirse, zirve ve merkezler de değişmelidir, çünkü üst katmanların öğeleri, alt katmanlardan seçilmelidir; dolayısıyla şüphe yoktur ki iyi bir toplum, iyi bir liderlik yaratır” (Taha 2012, 503).

Bütün bu söylediklerimiz ışığında, İslam'ın tazkiyah paradigmasının sosyal değişim modeli sunduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Bu model, ilk olarak, birey-kolektif ayrımını, ikisini ayrı varlıklar olarak gören anlayışa meydan okuyarak ortaya çıkar; çünkü İ'timani bir özne, çoğulcu birey olarak tanımlanır ve al-insan al-umma (insan, bir ümmettir) kavramı, otomatik olarak bireyin psikospiritüel yapısında kolektifi kapsar. İkincisi ise, sağlıklı ve dirençli bir sosyal altyapının oluşturulmasında itici güç olarak işlev görmesidir; bu, kapitalist malların ve hizmetlerin maddi takası yerine, güven ağlarıyla birbirine bağlı, ahlaki değerlere dayalı bir *tabādul afḍāl* (iyilik ve karşılıkların değiş tokuşu) aracılığıyla yapılır.

Her ne kadar tazkiyah'ın bu sosyal değişim paradigması yeni bir öneri olmasa da, modern toplumsal hayal gücünden erozyona uğramış olması, ahlaki ve manevi esaslara dayalı sosyal grupların ve hareketlerin hatırlanması ve yaratıcı bir şekilde yeniden hayal edilmesi gerektiğini ortaya koyuyor. *Zawaya* ve *tekkeler* gibi halk yönetimi kurumlarından yıllardır var olan yerel kooperatiflerin çevrecilik yönetimine, Sufi tarikatlarının kolonyal direnişine, açık kaynak yazılım hareketlerinin siber güvenlik ve gözetim kapitalizmi karşısındaki mücadelesine kadar, tazkiyah paradigması, toplumsal değişimin bel kemiğini oluşturan sosyal altyapıyı restore etme ve güçlendirme konusunda geçerli bir öneri sunmaktadır. Gelecekteki çalışmalarda, kamusal alanların yeniden kazanılması, gönüllü kamu hizmetlerinin kurulması, toplumsal yükümlülüklerin (furud kifa'iyah)

sürdürülebilir sosyal refahın itici güçleri olarak yeniden canlandırılması, umut ekonomileri gibi duygusal ekonomilerin incelenmesi, küresel sivil toplum anlayışına karşı alternatif bir politik tahayyül önerilmesi gibi konular, tazkiyah'ı sosyal değişim paradigması olarak genişletmek ve alternatif bir dünya düzenini şekillendirmek adına oldukça faydalı olabilir.

