IDEOLOGY: A COMPARATIVE REVIEW

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The emergence of an ideology is the result of a process of interaction between man and his environment. Ideology reflects the expression and synthesis of events and of man's experiences. The environment, natural or cultural, provides the matter which forms and shapes man's mind. The cultural environment produces a relatively greater immediate impact upon man's mind than does the natural one. In other words, 'the materials for man's explanations may be said to lie in two places: in the part of the culture . . . and in himself.'[1] However, the relationship between man and his environment is observable by the fact that man is able to form a subjective image of the things lying outside his immediate physical and sensual contact. That is to say that man 'thinks of foreign places,' and that the image he has of the unknown 'out there', or of strangeness in people and places, all give direction to his thought.[2] Man's spontaneous reactions will be more obvious in relation to his immediate physical or cultural environment. Such reactions are not only spontaneous. They also enable him to think creatively. There is a close relation between matter, observably existing things, and sensation, man's experience of being immediately aware of existing things, in the process of his thinking.[3] Man is able to see and perceive events occuring within the environment. Thus matter or events are the raw materials for man's thinking. But man's ability to think about the causes and effects or to telelogically formulate a concrete ideology differs in one dividual and the next.

All these three elements, i.e. man's rationality, his environment and the subjective image, are the basic factors determining the behaviour or action of man. These are also the basis for the development of man's thinking which may be expressed in different ways. In other words, the expression of thought is characterised by the nature of his knowledge. Thus events or experiences can be expressed and explained politically or sociologically. It is at this point that Converse's definition of 'political ideologies as belief systems characterised by high constraint, great rangs and centrality of political items,'[4] seems to be comprehensive. Events in human life can be

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[1] Robert E. Lane, *Political Ideology*, New York, 1962, p. 310.

[2] Ibid., p. 295.

[3] Cf. Bertrand Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, London, 1974, pp. 1–6.

[4] Philip E. Converse's, 'The Nature of Belief Systems in Mass Publics,' quoted by

transformed into a concrete form of ideological expression. The ideology normally produces several consequences, in the sense that 'the ideology of a society shapes its social and political institutions.'[5] Thus to a greater extent, the interaction takes the form of a movement in a circle, the starting point is the environment, events or experiences which influence man's creative thinking. Then men creates the ideology or belief system based on these events or experiences. However, the ideology will in turn influence the environment, events or experiences. The constraint may be taken to mean the success we have in predicting, given initial knowledge, that an individual holds a specific attitude, or that he holds certain further ideas.[6]

If the explanation of the term ideology, as stated above, appears to be two general and comprehensive, Maurice Duverger's explanation seems to be more precise. For him 'ideologies are systems of ideas, of opinions and beliefs.'[7]

The whole structure of ideology is, therefore, based on events occurring in man's life. Man's life is not free from problems or needs which must be solved or satisfied. This is the area in which lies the inevitable relationship between man's problems or needs and the possibility of their being respectively solved and satisfied. Ideologies are an attempt, at least in this sense, at providing a means or, to a certain extent, to express all these situations. This similarly indicates that the creator of ideas, forms and techniques works under the pressure of social needs on the other hand, the fate of his work depends on the welcome given to it by society: between the two occurs the mysterious alchemy of individual creation.[8] Not all men can create ideologies and not all ideologies can produce ideologies of similar shape or form an effect. The reason is simply that there are different abilities of, and different social or political responses from, different individuals or nations. The influence of Marxism in Russia differs in its nature and degree from that of Montesquieu's 'Separation of Power' in the United States of America. Viewed in this light, the ideologists are the builders, the architects who gather materials for erecting the ideo-

Richard M. Merelman, 'The Development of Political Ideology: A Framework for the Analysis of Political Socialization,' *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. LXIII, No. 3, Sept. 1969, p. 750.

[5] Robert E. Lane, *Political Ideology*, p. 439.

[6] Converse quoted by Richard M. Merelman, op. cit., p. 751.

[7] Maurice Duverger, *The Idea of Politics*, tr. by Robert North and Ruth Murphy, London, 1971, p. 74.

[8] Ibid., p. 76.

logical edifice out of realities, events and social forces taking place within man and his environment.[9]

In relation to this, one may distinguish between ideology and myth as .commonly understood. As two principal categories, the former consists of more rational, formulated beliefs. The latter is based on irrational beliefs, which are more spontaneous.[10] Both can, however, be grouped into what is called a belief system of one kind or another.

The preceding discussion is an attempt at tracing the distinction between ideologies as commonly understood and the way the Muslims look at and understand their 'religion'. Applied to non-Western countries, the generalization of political events which is based on Western norms and experiences appears to result in either exaggeration or distortion, even to the eyes of some scholars trained in the West. This is not to question the validity of that method of judgement, but to take into serious account or consideration the cultural set-up, the standard of values and the ways of response, for example, among the peoples in Asia. Such a state of affairs is expressed by M.S. Agwani another way:

> Until not very long ago political science derived its generalization
> from norms and processes peculiar to the Western experience. As the
> political scientist extends his scope to systems other than Western,
> the inadequacy of these generalizations becomes increasingly
> evident. Thus it can no longer be maintained that all modernizing
> political systems are marching toward a single goal represented by
> the 'Western' model. As Organaki put it: 'The world is not marching
> toward monogamy, Christianity, free enterprise, and two party
> government. . ..' In other words, while all modernizing and modern
> political systems have some common properties, each one of them
> possesses distinctive characteristics derived from its cultural tradition
> and modes of acculturation.[11]

Based on Western experience and standards of judgement one thing is evident: ideology does not convey the same meaning to Muslims and non-Muslims alike. When ideology is generally understood as the product of man's mind or the formulation of thought based on the interaction between man and his environment, the Muslims understand their 'religion' as having been revealed by God. By saying that Islam is an ideology or that there is an Islamic ideology, does not mean for the Muslims that they have created the ideology or that the ideology has been

[9]Cf. Ibid.

[10]Idem, The Study of Politics, tr. by Robert Wagoner, London, 1974, p. 96.

[11]M.S. Agwani, 'Religion and Politica in Egypt', International Studies, Vol. 13, No. 3, July-Sept., 1974, pp. 385–386.

the product of their minds. What they believe is that they have a role to play. This role is partly to translate or make the 'words' of God clear to common understanding, as well as to interpret and organize them into an orderly system. So the *'ulamā'* (scholars) are those who are supposed to understand and explain God's revelation and the Tradition of the Prophet *(Ḥadīth)*.

Metaphysically this is derived from one basic principle, the belief in a Perfect Being Who is the creator and sustainer of nature,[12] without which the whole system regulating the material and spiritual life of Muslims becomes meaningless. Thus man has to conduct an Islamic life in this world in order to ensure salvation in the life hereafter. This is, however, the general feature, because the Muslims believe that Islam embraces all aspects of human life including what is termed the secular or mundane. That is to say that there is no separation between worldly and religious affairs. Obviously this kind of thinking is especially applicable in the field of Islamic political thought. The Muslims, therefore, do not accept the notion that Islam is religion as understood in the West, i.e. a religion which is concerned with private affairs and man's relation with the Supreme Being. The Muslims believe 'that Islam is something more than a creed, it is also a community, a nation, and the interests of the individual as a unit are subordinate to the interests of the community as an external symbol on Islamic principle'.[13] A more elaborate exposition of this sort of thinking is expressed by Mohd. Aziz Ahmad:

> *No other religion is so misrepresented and misinterpreted as Islam, yet it survives by virtue of its purity, vitality, and clarity of funda-mentals, 'Islam is religion' is the general view, and 'religion is politics.' Religion and politics cannot be separated in Islam. A true Muslims is shocked to think in terms of religion and politics; he only thinks in terms of Islam. Islam is not only a religion or a name for beliefs or certain forms of worship, it is, in fact, a way of life — a complete code for the guidance of the individual's entire life . . . The Holy Quran lays down the broad principles of life, the details came from the Prophet. Islam is all-embracing in its nature and affects all aspects of human activity, of the people, of the country and of humanity . . ..*[14]

However, this is not to say that there is no contradiction of thought among the Muslims. There is a diametrical contradiction. Evidently this is

[12] Stephan Körner, *Fundamental Questions of Philosophy*, Middlesex, England, 1973, p. 170.

[13] Alama Iqbal, *Islam as a Moral and Political Idea*, Karachi, Pakistan (n.d.), p. 24.

[14] Mohd. Aziz Ahmad, 'The Nature of Islamic Political Theory,' *Islamic Culture*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, Jan., 1943, p. 39.

the effect of Western influence which has produced a different form of thinking. It is adhered to by Muslim intellectuals who are called 'secularists.' If the impact of Eastern influence has given rise to 'reformism' in Islam, 'Islamic secularism' is its other aspect. Although the latter has attracted some followers, especially in the Arab world in its early growth, its influence is comparatively limited. Late developments indicate that the majority of Muslim intellectuals do not deny the existence of the political aspect of Islam. What they question is its applicability to the life of modern men. The most outstanding figure among the Muslim secularists is an Egyptian, 'Ali 'Abd. ar-Raziq. Unlike the reformist, the secularist lays greater emphasis on the negative political aspect of Islam. Their attempt is generally to reduce the role of Islam to the purely 'religious' sphere as understood in the West. According to 'Ali 'Abd. ar-Raziq, the political institutions or specifically 'the Caliphate is no part of religious plans.,. . political matters . . . do not concern religion, but they are matters of reason judgement and experience.'[15] From this premise he arrives at the conclusion that there is nothing in religion to prevent Muslim from competing with other nations in the political and social sciences generally, and from destroying this ancient system by which they have been humbled and to which they have succumbed, and from building the bases of their kingdom and the organization of their movement upon the most modern beliefs which the human mind has produced.[16] Immediate response to this kind of thinking, coming from as far as Indonesia, is as obvious as its failure to influence substantial numbers of Muslim intellectuals. Indignant at such thoughts, Rashid Rida depicted it as 'a modern innovation, the like of which no claimant of Islam in truth' has ever encountered and 'it is a devilish innovation which never crossed the mind of a Sunni, Shii', Khariji, Jahmi or Mu'tazili.[17]

In addition to the reformists and the secularists there is another group in contemporary Islamic world which is occupying a middle position. Its characteristics vary accoridng to place and time, exhibiting different degrees and nature of effects brought about by Western influence. The views of the members of this group are more or less a reflection of the impact of Marxism. For them Islam is interpreted in general terms, allowing a sort of incorporation of some foreign elements into it. Of many examples, the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) can be cited as a good one. This party does not disregard the ethical value of Islam, although its expressed goal is that of a classless society, i.e. equality of citizens and

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[15] Mohammed Aboulkhair Zaki, 'Modern Muslim Thought in Egypt and Its Impact on Islam in Malaya,' unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, London, 1965, p. 337.

[16] Ibid.

[17] *Ibid.*

fraternity under the rule of democracy in an order based on economic and social justice.[18] Even with such a stigma as that of Marxist influence, the PPP still confesses to strive 'to put into practice the noble ideals of the Muslim faith.'[19]

This is a typical, not exceptional, feature of a political party all over the Islamic world which claims to adhere to Islamic socialism.[20] However, this claim is neither acceptable to, nor reaches a common ground with, the 'Reformists' or 'Traditionalists'. Thus Islamic socialism has been characterised by the 'Traditionalists' as 'a new edition of Islam some of whose components have been taken from Islam and some from socialism .,. ., a synthetic mixture which deceives the Muslims people.'[21]

[18] Eqbal Ahmad, 'Pakistan-Signposts to a Police State,' *Journal of Centemporary Asia*, Vol. 4, No. 4, 1974, f.n. 2. It is excerpt from 1970 Election Manifesto of the PPT.

[19] *Ibid.*

[20] Anwar Hussain Syed, *China and Pakistan Diplomacy of an Entente Cordial*, the University of Massachusetts Press, 1974, p. 197.

[21] Sayyid Maudoodi, *Come Let Us Change This World*, compiled and tr. by Kaukab Siddique, Karachi, 1971, p. 54.