

An Approach to the Islamization of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Abstract

In this paper I have tried to argue that the two widely used paradigms of Individualism in Western social science, and Collectivism in Soviet social science, are not appropriate for Islamic social science on account of the secularism (disregard of revelation) of the former and the "scientific atheism" of the latter. I have further tried to argue that the hypothetico-deductive and empirical methodology (often called logical positivism) of natural and physical science is not appropriate for social and behavioral science in general, and Islamic social behavioral science in particular. It would be more fitting to regard the various disciplines of social and behavioral science as moral sciences in order to incorporate the values, morals, and purposes of society in theory-building and hypothesis-formation. Accordingly, I am arguing in favor of a moral explanation of human behavior and social processes. A moral explanation is one which seeks to discover the causes (immediate antecedents) as well as reasons (including motives and intentions) behind human behavior with the greater responsibility for the explanation resting with the latter.

A paradigm, conceptual framework, or what is called grand theory is essential for the formulation of theories in various fields of social and behavioral sciences, on the one hand, and for guiding empirical research, on the other. Western social science and Soviet social science have their respective paradigms. The immediate need of Islamic social science is to construct a distinguishable paradigm of its own. I have tried to formulate a list of the underlying concepts of such a possible paradigm, conceptual framework, or grand theory, but not such a theory per se.

Finally, I have made the suggestion that, inasmuch as the understanding of human behavior is our goal, the social and behavioral scientist could enhance the understanding of human and social phenomena by trying to understand his/her own motives, behavior, and actions.

Introduction

In 1965 Dr. Fazlur Rahman, who at the time was the Director of the Central Institute of Islamic Research in Pakistan, wrote in his *Islamic Methodology in History*:

When new forces of massive magnitude—socio-economic, cultural-moral or political—occur in or to a society, the fate of that society naturally depends on how far it is able to meet the new challenges creatively. If it can avoid the two extremes of panicking and recoiling upon itself and seeking delusive shelters in the past on the one hand, and sacrificing or compromising its very ideals on the other, and can react to the new forces with self-confidence by necessary assimilation, absorption, rejection and other forms of positive creativity, it will develop a new dimension for its inner aspirations, a new meaning and scope for its ideals. Should it, however, choose by volition or force of circumstance, the second of the two extremes we have just mentioned and succumb to the new forces, it will obviously undergo a metamorphosis; its being will no longer remain the same and indeed, it may even perish in the process of transformation and be swallowed up by another socio-cultural organism. But more surely fatal than this mistake is the one we have mentioned as the first extreme. Should a society begin to live in the past—however sweet its memories—and fail to face the realities of the present squarely—however unpleasant they be,—it must become a fossil; and it is an unalterable law of God that fossils do not survive for long: "We did them no injustice; it is they who did injustice to themselves" (XI:101;XVI:33,etc.).¹

I regard this as an accurate statement of the problem facing not only Pakistan but all of the Muslim World. What intellectual response we make in the face of it and what direction we recommend that the Muslim societies of today adopt in the foreseeable future may well determine whether or not the vision which Allah revealed in the Qur'an fourteen centuries ago will endure in the fifteenth century of Islam and beyond it. Before all else, it is an intellectual task.

¹Fazlur Rahman, *Islamic Methodology in History* (Karachi: Central Institute of Islamic Research, 1965), pp. 175-176.

General Character of Social and Behavioral Sciences and Its Implications

This paper is an attempt to formulate an approach to the Islamization of social and behavioral sciences in a systematic form. Let me state here parenthetically that my own field is Economics, which is recognized as a leading social science by all, but a behavioral science only in those parts of it which make use of especially psychological “laws” in analyzing the behavior of the consumer. I put the word “laws” within quotes not particularly because it may be doubted if psychology has discovered any laws but because economists usually make up their own psychological laws as they go. When I was a graduate student I once happened to be talking to a psychology professor about three fundamental psychological laws: the psychological propensity to consume, the psychological attitude toward liquidity, and the psychological expectation of future yield from capital assets of which John Maynard Keynes speaks in his *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* only to be told by him that in all of psychology there were no such laws. But let it be. Among the modern sciences, behavioral science came into being at about the same time as quantitative science, and a little earlier than environmental science. Like them, it too draws upon the methods and findings of a whole variety of disciplines. Bernard Berelson dates the birth of behavioral science with the Ford Foundation report made public in 1949. Let us look briefly at the situation existing at that time.

It was the time of the coldest phase in the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. It was feared, understandably, that the word “social” in the term then accepted for the sciences in question, i.e., social science, needed only the addition of “ism” to add up to “socialism.” This, in the estimation of the ideological and scientific, more the former, leaders of American society gave the Soviet Union an advantage in the world-wide propaganda race of the superpowers for the minds of people in the less-developed world. Indeed it could very well be argued that as capital logically gives rise to capitalism, alcohol to alcoholism, so social does to socialism. Even before the Ford foundation report, the representatives of the social sciences were dismayed to learn that some senators had their own name for the social sciences, “the socialistic sciences,” and hence were understandably reluctant to underwrite this particular type of research.

In this sense, “behavioral” in place of “social” met both the scientific and the ideological need as a label for the sort of research which the Ford Foundation report recommended for funding. The original intent of the Ford Foundation was to encourage research strictly on “individual behavior and human relations” in industry without any concern for the larger questions

of social and economic organization or political form of government. Behavioral science completely by-passed the question of what, in social science theory, is known as the Grand Theory. Capitalism and Western-style democracy constituted the paradigmatic frameworks under which the methodologies and substantive theories of behavioral sciences were developed. This is important to keep in mind in order to attempt Islamization of these sciences. The first requirement for the construction of theories in the various disciplines of the social and behavioral sciences of a society is that there exist and be understood, and indeed, there be, a general consensus on the basic theory of that society as a whole. We can call it the General Theory, the conceptual scheme, or the paradigm of the society in question. Once such a theory has been articulated, it becomes apparent what forms the separate theoretical systems of the various specialized disciplines must take, and only afterwards can the detailed work (of fashioning specialized methodology and theory construction, hypothesis formation, and the testing of hypotheses in order to make generalizations and laws governing particular phenomena) proceed. Not until a conceptual scheme or paradigm is generally accepted within at least the scientific community dedicated to a given discipline or science can that discipline be said to be well on its way to produce knowledge which will easily add up to a systematic and coherent whole.

There had been a long and rich tradition of both natural and social sciences in the West before the arrival of behavioral science. It was like being born in a rich family with old money, property, and fortune; one can afford to pursue any lifestyle. Likewise, behavioral sciences took what they wanted from natural sciences, on the one hand, and social sciences, on the other. All that the behavioral scientists needed to do was to pick and choose sensibly. It may be doubted, however, if they were always able to do so, which, by the way, also explains the "conceptual confusion" in behavioral sciences today. Probably the chief confusion is whether behavioral sciences (the same can be said for social sciences) are physical sciences or moral sciences. Depending upon whether one considers them the former or the latter, the paradigms, methodologies, and research designs and strategies which one uses, and the descriptions, explanations, and predictions which one comes up with, are patterned on either the natural and physical sciences or the moral and ethical sciences. Great emphasis has been placed on imitating the methodologies of the natural and physical sciences, especially physics, in formulating hypotheses, conducting research, and doing experiments in behavioral sciences. They have been particularly concerned with what the proper and legitimate methodology ought to be. This has been the preoccupation of behavioral scientists from the very start. "The results of this preoccupation with methodology (i.e., with what is taken to be the proper and scientific form of any investigation) have been, in my view," says A.R. Louch in his

Explanation and Human Explanation, “disastrous in the disciplines investigating human behavior...It has led sociologists and psychologists to design their studies in accordance with some conception of proper form and almost wholly without reference to the subject-matter; in consequence the putative laws are often thinly disguised tautologies. . . . To put it in a form acceptable to sociologists: methodological soundness is inversely proportional to factual significance. Triviality, redundancy, and tautology are the epithets which I think can be properly applied to the behavioral scientist.”²

Like many philosophers of science, and social and behavioral scientists, Louch rejects the idea that a naturalistic or quasi-physicalistic explanation of human behavior, social action, and social facts are satisfactory or a reliable basis for prediction. Thus, Max Weber theorized that the proper explanation of human behavior can only be achieved through the method of *verstehen*, meaning empathy with the actor or an interpretative understanding of his motives, intentions, reasons, situation, and purpose in acting the way he did. Others have since invoked what has been designated as the ‘complementarity-thesis’ whereby human behavior can be efficaciously explained only by combining the methods of empathetically understanding the reasons, motives, and intentions behind purposive-rational action, on the one hand; and the antecedent factors acting as the quasi-physicalistic causes, on the other. One cannot be reduced to, or eliminated by, the other. Only by following the methodology implicit in the complementarity thesis can human actions be explained and predictions about it be scientifically made. Louch would not be satisfied even with this. According to him, any attempt on the part of behavioral scientists to incorporate physicalistic or quasi-physicalistic explanations in the paradigmatic explanation of human behavior would only lead them astray. This is necessarily so because an efficacious explanation in social and behavioral sciences must seek the grounds for human conduct, which always have a reference to a set of moral codes or norms of behavior by which the actor feels entitled to act as he does. Thus he offers the paradigm of what he calls the “moral explanation” of human conduct for all social and behavioral sciences except for economic science. But whenever the behavior of a man as moral agent is in question, only a paradigmatically moral explanation will have the scope and capacity to bring out the contextual grounds or the cultural entitlement for a given human act. To understand human conduct morally is the equivalent of understanding it rationally and scientifically. Thus the hypothetico-deductive-empirical method has no place in social and behavioral sciences, which is to say, moral sciences. But what the behavioral scientist has been doing is applying this very same method. Louch writes:

²A.R. Louch, *Explanation and Human Action* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 9.

Psychologists and social scientists, keen on achieving status among the natural sciences, have been led to suppose that they could refine action-descriptions into quantitative descriptions, and so have failed to address themselves to what people do. What is needed, in both psychology and ethics, is not measurement, experiment, prediction and formal argument, but appraisal, detailed description, reflection and rhetoric. If science is characterized by discovery and prediction, there are no sciences like psychology and the social sciences . . . Psychology and social sciences are moral sciences; ethics and the study of human actions are one.³

I have said above that the behavioral sciences were born in a family of inherited riches. One of their inheritances was the presence of a conceptual framework, or nineteenth-century-style Grand Theory, or what has come to be called a paradigm since the publication of Thomas Kuhn's book, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Not only did there exist received-paradigms in all the various branches of physical sciences, but there also existed accepted-working-paradigms in the various branches of social sciences. That was not all. The real boon which behavioral science received was the twofold existence of a universal paradigm of all social science as a single intellectual and scientific enterprise, on the one hand; and of a real and actual society which embodied that paradigm in the practical life of the West, on the other. This Western paradigm, both in theory and practice, is the conceptual framework of Individualism in accordance with which the economic, political, social, legal, governmental, judicial, familial, organizational, intellectual, financial, and all other institutional systems, arrangements, and relations in society were organized, conducted, and evaluated. Before behavioral scientists sat down to formulate methodologies and theories of individual behavior, the concept of the individual and the philosophy of individualism had not only achieved complete acceptance in the society but also methodological status in science. There existed a common consensus among the scientists as well as the common people that every man or woman was an individual in his or her own right and had an inalienable right to conduct himself or herself as one with no external entities impinging on him or her. The individual was literally free to do as he or she pleased. This paradigm of Western society and science is widely accepted today as well. How important this is for all behavioral sciences is brought out by Peter M. Hall in his article "Individualism and Social Problems: A Critique and An Alternative," published in the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* (V 19:1, 1983).

³*Ibid.*, p. 235.

Individualism has been and remains a powerful influence in our society. Not only is it one of our most cherished values, but it structures how we apprehend society and how we conceive and respond to social problems. Individualism assumes and values that human beings are autonomous, responsible, creative, and active persons who should be free to develop their personalities and abilities to the maximum extent so long as they do not infringe upon others' rights ... A further assumption stemming from this belief is that society is made up of an aggregate of individuals and provides a benign setting for them to develop their potentialities. Human behavior, it follows, is explained by individual characteristics, abilities, desires, and motivations. The rights of individuals are protected in order that they can achieve as much as their drive and capacity allow. Failure is *ipso facto* an evidence of lack of ability or motivation.⁴

Individualism in real life could not give rise to what has been called methodological individualism in the philosophy of social and behavioral sciences. According to it:

Only an individual has a mind; only an individual can feel, see, sense, and perceive; only an individual can adopt values or make choices; only an individual can *act*. This primordial principle of "methodological individualism," central to Max Weber's social thought must underlie praxeology as well as the other sciences of human action. It implies that such collective concepts as groups, nations, and states do not actually exist or act; they are only metaphorical constructs for describing the similar or concerted actions of individuals. There are, in short, no "governments" as such: there are only individuals acting in concert in a "governmental" manner.⁵

Methodological individualism picks a bone with social scientists who treat social entities as if they were individuals and ascribe to these social entities purposes, motives, and goals. As stated above, only individuals made of flesh and bone can have purposes, motives, and goals. Hence, all social explanation including the explanation of social and historical processes has

⁴Peter M. Hall, "Individualism and Social Problems: A Critique and An Alternative," *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 19: 1, 1983, pp. 89-90.

⁵Murray N. Rothbard, *Individualism and the Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, (San Francisco: Cato Institute, 1979), p. 57.

to be reduced to what individuals are moved to do, i.e., to individual actions. Because methodological individualism treats psychological explanations as hypothetical, these explanations have to take the hypothetico-deductive form after the standard logico-positivistic form of explanation in the physical sciences. Psychological and social processes are not only treated as being akin to physical processes, they are dealt with as physical facts. This paradigm of social explanation is necessary if one is to make the crucial distinction between methodical individualism and metaphysical holism (in keeping with the two conditions of logical positivism that a theory has to be logically determinate and empirically verifiable). What has to be avoided at all costs is the organic view of society and social groups. Louch's criticism of methodological individualism (he sees "no logical gulf to be crossed or logical barrier to be breached in applying moral explanations to society") can be summed up in the following:

But it is not clear how explanations of social processes, any more than explanations of individual actions, can be deterministic in this sense. It is not clear either why methodological individualism is necessary, how it will solve our problems of social explanation or, for that matter, what problems it is supposed to solve.⁶

Before proceeding further, I want to draw implications for a methodological approach to the task of Islamization of knowledge in the fields of social and behavioral sciences from the above discussion of methodology.

1. Every system of social and behavioral science needs a conceptual framework, a paradigm, or what is called a Grand Theory of society. Individualism meets this need in the American type of society, and the materialist conception of history and society in the Soviet type of society. **Implication:** We need first of all a conceptual framework, a paradigm, a Grand Theory of the Islamic society.
2. Ignoring the question of whether social and behavioral science is inferior to natural and physical science, the methods of the latter are not applicable to the former except, say, in economics where the quantification of data pertaining to input, output, income (national or individual), prices, etc. is clearly the case. But even in the case of economics, there are fundamental issues of the economic ordering of society where

⁶Louch, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

a physicalistic and hypothetico-deductive approach does more harm than good. **Implication:** Islamic social and behavioral sciences must not follow Western social and behavioral sciences which imitated natural and physical sciences in fashioning their methodologies and substantive theories, on the one hand; and in conducting empirical research, on the other.

3. Social and behavioral sciences are fundamentally and paradigmatically moral sciences. All human actions take place in a given moral context. They derive their meaning and significance from it. To explain human conduct is to bring to bear upon it a system of morality. Moral evaluation has to be a necessary part of any system of social and behavioral knowledge. **Implication:** We need to state or restate the system of Islamic morality in a way so as to systematically bring it to bear upon the efforts to Islamize social and behavioral sciences.
4. No individual lives his life outside society. Every man or woman is an ensemble of his or her social relations and relatedness. Even what is categorized and conceptualized as an individual is formed by society. An individual certainly becomes a person by virtue of being a member of society. It is false to say that society, social groups, and social institutions do not have motives, purposes, goals, and reasons for doing this, and abstaining from doing that, even forbidding it. To say "American society," "government of Pakistan," or "Arab nation" is not to utter a nonsensical phrase. **Implication:** Methodological individualism, both as a methodology for social and behavioral science as well as a philosophy of life, is wholly mistaken and cannot be applicable to Islamization of knowledge.

We have a cognitive interest in developing a system of Islamic social and behavioral science at various levels. Just now our greatest need is at the conceptual level. But we also have interest in social and behavioral science in order to administer our institutions and give direction to social change and economic development.

I recommend the study of these fields with a view to arrive at self-understanding at a personal plane too. We need an Islamized way of resolving our problems at all levels through a system of Islamic social and behavioral

science. The goals of an Islamization program may be as follows:

1. The formulation of a conceptual scheme, paradigm, or the Grand Theory of society;
2. Interpretive understanding of human conduct;
3. Explanation of human conduct and social action;
4. Prediction of human actions and social processes;
5. Generation of knowledge about social and behavioral processes necessary for the administration of social, political, and economic institutions;
6. Evaluation of human conduct, behavior, actions, and social change;
7. Guidance, regulation, and the ability to direct social change;
8. Ability to communicate the findings of social and behavioral sciences freely, opening, and simply;
9. Islamization of society, polity, economy, law, education, and the whole way of life in the Muslim countries; and
10. Human self-understanding leading to critical-emancipatory self-reflection, self-definition, self-assertion, and self-affirmation through Islamization of social sciences.

In order to meet the above needs of the Muslim community, what specific disciplines or branches are to be included in the curricula and what intellectual capacities are to be developed among Muslims? One thing is certain: as of now the conceptual resources of the Muslim community are rather limited. Some idea of it can be formed from the conclusions reached by Dr. AbdulḤamīd AbūSulaymān in his article "Islamization of Knowledge with Special Reference to Political Science," in *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* (Vol. 2, No. 2). He concludes:

Without going into details one could say that texts pertaining to Islamic political studies are no more than a handful of personal reflections on Islamic constitutional law, administration, biographies, and laws regulating war and peace. Despite, or perhaps because of that narrow scope, they occupy a marginal place in most academic curricula. These studies are insufficient because:

- a) There are scarcely any analytical studies in the field of Islamic political thought.
- b) There is no effort to trace the nature and significance of issues brought about by political phenomena in Islamic history.
- c) There is no attempt to distinguish between the original and

alien elements, or the permanent and ephemeral elements in the system.⁷

What Dr. AbūSulaymān has written with regard to the state of the theoretical art in political science is also applicable to political economy and economic science. This I can vouch from my own twenty-five year familiarity with those fields. Right now, we need to work simultaneously in the following social and behavioral science areas:

Sciences with More Social than Behavioral Components:
Sociology; Social Psychology; History and Historiography; Political Economy and Economic Theory; Political Theory and Political Science; Organization Theory and Management Theory; Philosophy of Culture.

Sciences with More Behavioral than Social Components:
Psychology; Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis; Educational Psychology; Personality Theory; Anthropology; Organizational Behavior; Linguistics and Communications Theory.

No attempt has been made here to list all the fields in which Islamization may be required sooner or later. Neither has an attempt been made to provide a strict classification of social and behavior sciences. The above classification is very arbitrary. At this point I would like to make some general comments about the nature of social and behavioral science, social values, and social policy.

Social Science, Social Values, and Social Policy

Social science is inconceivable without social values for the simple reason that all human conduct and choice involves human values and purposes. The segregation of fact from value gives the social scientist a distorted idea of reality. Thus, the basis of valuation as well as the process of evaluation has to always be made an integral part of a system of social and behavioral science. When this is not done and, instead, empirical observation and rational calculation are stressed exclusively, the usual result is a weakening of the basic values—social, religious, spiritual, etc.—in society. Paul Halmos stresses this point:

⁷AbdulHamīd AbuSūlaymān, "Islamization of Knowledge with Special Reference to Political Science," *The American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences*, 2: 2, 1985, pp. 288-289.

To create social science is to influence society in its very method of making fundamental choices, and it is to expect society to manage itself in a scientific way . . . The discipline and rationality of the social sciences have understandably placed so much stress on calculability and determinism that they contributed to the weakening of man's faith in eschatological and non-scientific categories. In this way the influence of social science on society has been doctrinaire and ideological.⁸

"The concern of the social scientist with the values which motivate behavior," writes T.S. Simey in his *Social Science and Social Purpose*, "is therefore inescapable, for it is impossible to understand the reasons which lie behind one pattern of behavior or another without it, and it is equally impossible to influence the course that behavior takes if one is ignorant about the purpose it incorporates."⁹

The concept of a "value-free" social science is no more than a pipedream. Neutrality in social science is no more a practicable policy than it is in international relations. In human affairs we instinctively place valuations on alternatives, choices, and actual conduct of individuals as well as social groups and whole societies. We inevitably evaluate and pass judgements, including judgements of value, and say "yea" and "nay" to what is proposed or done. It is a little naive, indeed downright dishonest, for social and behavioral scientists to pretend that they are neutral between alternative social policies. Gunnar Myrdal writes in his *Value in Social Theory*:

Scientific terms become value-loaded because society is made up of human beings following purposes. A "disinterested" social science is, from this viewpoint, pure nonsense. It never existed and never will exist. We can make our thinking strictly rational in spite of this, but only by facing the valuations, not by evading them.¹⁰

Leo Strauss maintains in his *Natural Right and History* that it is not possible to define significant social phenomena in a value-free way. He is often quoted for posing the following rhetorical question: "Would one not laugh out of court a man who claimed to have written a sociology of art who actually had written a sociology of trash?" Obviously the selection of something as "art" and rejection of something as "trash" would call for a

⁸Paul Halmos, "Social Science and Social Change," Quoted in T.S. Simey, *Social Science and Social Purpose* (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 177.

⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

¹⁰Myrdal quoted in *ibid.*, p. 121.

judgement of value. Conceivably, logical arguments can be found for such things as homosexuality, premarital sex, abortion, racial discrimination, etc., which we know to be morally wrong. We approve of what we believe to be good and disapprove of what we believe to be bad. We invariably have to judge. The value-relevance of social science makes value-free social science logically impossible. Michael H. Lessnoff is right when he observes in *The Structure of Social Science: A Philosophical Introduction*: "In social science, it seems, a statement is true only if it promotes the good."¹¹ It has been argued that social and behavioral science theory, when it formulates its paradigms, theories, and research methodology by taking a due account of values, does a far better job of describing, explaining, and even predicting human behavior than does one which is ostensibly value-free. That is the point which W.H. Werkmeister makes in the following statement:

If this fact is not taken into account, human behavior, in so far as it is purposive, remains inexplicable, and social science cannot advance beyond the stage of mere description . . . Explanation and prediction are impossible without reference to the basic value commitments of the agents involved. A change in those commitments may alter the whole series of events with which the social scientist is concerned. But once basic value commitments are understood, many otherwise inexplicable phenomena fall into a coherent pattern in their relation to these commitments.¹²

All things considered, values and a comprehensive system of evaluation are a necessary part of any system of social and behavioral science: they reinforce the morals of the people in the society. When the system of morals is incorporated in the system of social science, the former legitimizes the latter and the latter justifies the former. "The greater the degree of moral justification there is, for instance, for an action, the more effort it is reasonable to expect from the members of a society to carry it to a conclusion, when they take an active part in the world of action. Morals, even more than values are incorporated or implied in social processes, determining the actualities of conduct and effort."¹³

If the above line of reasoning is correct, then it would stand to reason that it would be utterly impossible to formulate social policy without taking full account of values. This is the conclusion to which we are logically driven.

¹¹Michael H. Lessnoff, *The Structure of Social Science: A Philosophical Introduction* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1974), p. 153.

¹²W.H. Werkmeister, "Theory Construction and the problem of Objectivity," in Llewellyn Gross, ed., *Symposium on Sociological Theory* (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), p. 449.

¹³Simey, *op. cit.*, pp. 190-191.

Lord Simey reaches the same conclusion in his *Social Science and Social Purpose*:

The most important part of the argument of this book is in the section in which it is argued that experimental science on its own, cannot establish the ends or even the outline of any policy, economic or social. Social science is much wider than an experimental science properly so-called, though experiment may make a vitally important and even an indispensable contribution to the totality of its activities. Values, in particular, cannot be prevented from intruding into sociological enquiries, and, much more important, assistance must often be sought by the social scientist from the philosopher. Values frequently play a leading part in the drama of social policy: they always constitute an essential factor in its formulation. The objectives of social administration must embody components, established by evaluation, with which it is impossible to dispense.¹⁴

The implication of the above discussion is clear. Islamic social science must incorporate the fundamental Islamic values pertaining to society, polity, economy, morality, and ethical conduct befitting Muslims in its theories and methodologies of theory construction and conduct of social and behavioral research. In what follows I will discuss the possible construction of an Islamic Grand Theory of society as a conceptual or paradigmatic scheme for all social and behavioral theories.

The Grand Theory

Our immediate need is for an exclusive paradigm for Islamic social science. We have seen earlier that a paradigm is a conceptual framework within which the detailed work of theory construction in the various social and behavioral sciences proceeds; it also governs the nature of hypothesis formation and the testing of the same through empirical research. The agreement on an exclusive paradigm ensures that the work of social and behavioral scientists remains on the right track and will add up to a coherent whole. We have already seen how Individualism constitutes the paradigm, the conceptual framework, or the grand theory of Western social and behavioral science. By seeming contrast, Soviet social science has a paradigm of its own which,

¹⁴*Ibid*, p. 193.

in just the way in which the Western paradigm of social science endeavors to achieve Western values, endeavors to achieve Soviet values. Not surprisingly, Western and Soviet systems of social science are radically different in their presuppositions, preconceptions, assumptions, hypothesis formation, verification of hypotheses, and empirical generalizations. Without going into details, we can say that individualism, liberty of the individual, and industrial capitalism are the principle components of the grand theory of Western society; and collectivism, historical materialism, and the theory of transition from capitalism to socialism are the principle components of the Soviet society. In the Western grand theory the autonomy of the individual is at its center; in the Soviet grand theory it is the welfare of the society as a whole. Western scientists are agreed among themselves that capitalism is the given socio-economic system within whose framework all social and behavioral theories are to be constructed and practiced. By contrast, Soviet scientists are agreed among themselves that capitalism can be, has to be, and must be overcome and transcended in order to establish a higher and superior social order. This comparison of the paradigms of social science will, I hope, suffice to bring out the methodological need for an exclusive paradigm for any system of social science. The need for such a paradigm for Islamic social science is clear.

In his book *The Sociological Imagination*, C. Wright Mills spoke of grand theorizing as an attempt to construct "a systematic theory of the nature of man and society." The idea of a grand theory refers to an overall conceptual scheme, paradigm, or science of society which lays down, as it were, the ground rules or basic theoretical system of society being talked about. In legal terms, it can be called the fundamental law of the land. Theoretical systems of such social scientists as Herbert Spenser, Karl Marx, August Comte, Emile Durkheim, Max Weber, Talcott Parsons, Thomas Kuhn, John Rawls, Jurgen Habermas, Louis Althusser, and Claude Levi-Strauss, provide instances of grand theorizing in accordance with differing conceptions of the nature of man and society. Depending upon whose grand theory one accepts, one would theorize accordingly.

We may ask ourselves the question: On what grounds would one accept or reject a paradigm, conceptual scheme, or grand theory of social science? Some of the relevant considerations may be as follows:

1. Does the paradigm in question, on the whole, have meaning to a people in the light of their metaphysical and cultural tradition;
2. Does it incorporate the value system and the moral code of the people seeking a conceptual scheme for doing social science;
3. Does the paradigm meet the cognitive needs, interest, and

- style of the people;
4. Does it provide a system of evaluative criteria which can be brought to bear upon life, society, and history; and
 5. Will it inspire commitment on the part of social scientists and bring forth their best.

In the light of the above criteria, most Muslim social scientists would find acceptable neither the Western paradigm of individualism nor the Soviet paradigm of collectivism. As a matter of fact, because of the secularism of the West and the atheism of the Soviet Union we initially look upon both paradigms in question negatively and virtually reject both without even looking further into the nature, scope, and promise of either. At any rate, it only accentuates our need for an exclusive paradigm of our own. What various factors such a paradigm may have to take into account will be taken up in the remainder of this paper.

The Islamic Grand Theory

In order to construct a grand theory we need concepts. A theory seeks to establish logical relationships between concepts in order to produce a coherent, theoretic whole. Concepts may take the form of assumptions, presuppositions, preconceptions, abstract notions, beliefs, convictions, or generalizations based on empirical observation of facts and tendencies. Once the concepts are specified, the construction of theory proceeds in accordance with the rules of deductive logic. No theory is better than the concepts it uses. With the help of a theory, testable hypotheses are formed and empirically tested. If the hypotheses are confirmed, we have a theory; but if they are falsified, the theorist goes back to the drawing board, revises and refines his concepts, formulates a new theory, and so the process continues. In social and behavioral theorizing no one ever has the last word.

What may appear to be an easy task, i.e., the selection of concepts, is seldom, if ever, easy. There is always the question of the relevance, realism, validity, and appropriateness of concepts to be used in a theory. But how can one judge these with regard to the assumptions, presuppositions, preconceptions, and concepts to be used in a theory before there is a theory? There is a paradox here much like that of the riddle, which came first, the chicken or the egg. The riddle is that one needs concepts to construct a theory but a theory to choose concepts. Abraham Kaplan has called it the *paradox of conceptualization*. He writes in *The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioral Science*: "Like all existential dilemmas in science, of which this is an instance, the paradox is replaced by a process of approximation: the

better our concepts, the better the theory we can formulate with them, and in turn, the better the concepts available for the next improved theory. V.F. Lenzen has spoken explicitly of 'successive definition.' It is only through such successions that the scientist can hope ultimately to achieve success."¹⁵

Methodologically, the task of grand theorizing for us, then, comes down to specifying the key concepts in the teaching of Islam.¹⁶ With the specification of these concepts, the next step will be to deduce logically a grand theory of Islamic society from them. What we get will be the proper paradigm, or conceptual scheme, for us as social and behavioral scientists to follow. Our first question, therefore, is what are these key concepts in Islamic teaching. I have listed these concepts under various headings. No effort has been made to provide an exhaustive list.

Theological Concepts:

Unity of God; Attributes of God: Goodness, Wisdom, Power, Justice, Compassion, Mercy, etc; Sovereignty of God; God created the world and everything between the heavens and the earth including man; Eternity of God; God revealed His Will in His revelation to the Prophets; Muhammad (SAAS) is the last prophet to whom God revealed His word which is the scripture of Islam—The Qur'an; and Abolition of prophecy after Muhammad (SAAS).

Eschatological Concepts:

The Day of Judgement; Resurrection of man (with all other species) on the Day of Judgement; Life after death; Heaven and hell; Individual accountability or answerability of all men and women before God on the Day of Judgement; Determination of reward and punishment by God; Rehabilitation of the righteous (the saved) in paradise and consignment of the wicked (the damned) to hell; and Everlasting duration of the comforts of paradise and the torments of hell.

¹⁵Abraham Kaplan, *The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioral Science* (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company, 1964), pp. 53-54.

¹⁶Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (Lahore: Sh. Muhammad Ashraf, 1968), p. 180.

Philosophical Concepts:

Unity of nature; Orderliness and uniformity of nature; Unity of humankind; Efficacy of divine revelation; Binding character of the injunctions of the Qur'an; Humankind's need for divine guidance; Man has freedom of will; and Islam provides an ideal, universal solution to the problems of human life in all spheres.

Anthropological Concepts:

Creation of mankind in the best mould; Mankind chosen by God; Mankind representative of God on earth; Mankind trustee of a free personality which he chose at his own peril; Mankind responsible for self; Mankind servants of God; Purpose of human life: service to God; Unity of human nature: man and woman created from a single cell; Adam and Eve alike responsible for the expulsion of humankind from Garden of Eden; Ontological equality of male and female of the human species; and Mankind given to weakness, impatience, contention, and susceptibility to error.

Societal Concepts:

Unity of the Ummah (Islamic community); Charismatic character of the Ummah; Unity of *al-din wa al-dunya* (joining together and integration of secular and sacred, state and church, religion and politics, and spiritual and temporal); Brotherhood of Muslims; Equality of Muslims; Responsibility of all Muslims for the state of the Ummah in peace and war; Governance of the Ummah through a process of consultation; Formation of social policy of Ummah on the basis of a. *Ijma'* (consensus in society), b. *Ḍarūrah* (social necessity), and c. *Maṣlahah* (public interest); Primacy and priority of collective over individual and public over private interest; and Collective responsibility of the Ummah for the well-being of all its members.

Societal Goals

We must ask here the crucial question: What will be the overall social and economic goals of Islamic society in today's world? To my mind, a considered program of Islamization of social and behavioral science has to provide for the achievement of the following goals in contemporary Islamic society:

Establishment of virtue and enjoining of what is right, and eradication of vice and forbidding of what is wrong; Establishment of the interest-free economy; Institution of zakah; Social justice; Economic equity; Economic stability; Full employment; Egalitarian distribution of income; Decentralization of wealth; and Economic development and growth.

We can tell intuitively that a grand theory, conceptual framework, or paradigm (which would subsume under it a whole spectrum of social and behavioral science in a comprehensive program of Islamization of knowledge in social thought) would have to be very different from all paradigms of social science that are available today. In the Western world social and behavioral sciences are methodologically secular, amoral, and have a concern with the problems of this world only. Moreover, it would be correct to say that Western social and behavioral sciences in their totality have a theory of individuality only, but no theory of sociality as such. Methodological individualism does not even so much as acknowledge the concept of community or society as a legitimate concept for scientific concern. Indeed it regards it as being pernicious for the organization of the life of humanity. By contrast, Soviet social science, which does accord the fullest theoretic recognition to the concept of society, is avowedly founded on the paradigm of what it calls "scientific atheism."¹⁷ Methodologically as well as substantively, in my opinion, Western secularism is identical with Soviet scientific atheism. While we should not flinch from studying the sources and the systems of social and behavioral sciences of either the West or the Soviet Union, we must remember the need to develop an exclusive paradigm of our own before we can, or even should, attempt an Islamization of social and behavior systems, methods, and knowledge. As to the need as well as the enormity of the task I have no doubt. On the personal level the first and foremost requirement is commitment.

¹⁷G.K. Shakhnazarov and Others, *Social Science* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), p. 435.

Concluding Comments

Compared to describing, explaining, predicting, and especially judging social phenomena, describing, explaining, and predicting physical phenomena is far easier a task. In physical science one looks at something which is out there, stays there, and continues to behave just the same in spite of being looked at. No planet changes its course because an astronomer gazes at it with a telescope. Do the same to a human being and your gaze would soon cause him to change his color, expression, and conduct. Of course, experimentation with human beings is virtually out of the question. This poses a very serious problem for the social and behavioral scientist. Wittgenstein has very aptly remarked: "The human gaze has a power of making things precious; it makes them cost more too though."¹⁸

But that is not all. Social and behavioral scientists often have to endure a peculiar kind of frustration which I call the "Jonah frustration." According to the Biblical story a reluctant Jonah was sent on a prophetic mission by God to Nineveh to warn the people there that a severe judgement from God awaited them on account of their evil ways. The people believed him and decided to renounce their evil ways and, on seeing "their efforts to renounce their evil behavior" God "relented . . . and did not inflict on them the disaster which He had threatened." But Jonah was frustrated and "very indignant" at being made a liar. He finally reconciled his situation after God assured him that the conversion of Nineveh and God's pardon was the best thing that could happen because, after all, a "great city" and the lives of "more than a hundred and twenty thousand people" were involved. I have often heard that Los Angeles is long overdue for a major earthquake. Several years ago a group of scientists predicted that it was going to happen in the coming summer. The authorities in Los Angeles chastised them for making the prediction at all on grounds that, if it was believed by the people, it would cause a panic and an exodus from the city which would disrupt the life, business, and functioning of the entire city. All talk of it was dropped forthwith.

Marx had predicted that the capitalist economic system would increasingly suffer from its inherent contradictions and that in it the position of the working men and women would progressively deteriorate increasing the absolute and relative misery of the masses, the level and intensity of class conflict, and consequently the militancy of class struggle, etc. He had further predicted that because of these tendencies of capitalism, the capitalist economic system would eventually be overthrown in a working-class revolution. Because the

¹⁸Wittgenstein quoted by Peter Winch, "Apel's 'Transcendental Pragmatics'" in S.C. Brown, ed., *Philosophical Disputes in the Social Sciences* (Brighton, Sussex: The Harvester Press, 1979), p. 62.

Marxian analysis of capitalism and his prognosis of the future course of capitalism were believed even by his foes, the capitalist countries, in order to head off the day of reckoning, took measures to counter the correctly described tendencies of the capitalist economic system based on the sort of individualism, Social Darwinism, and the total anarchy of production which existed in Marx's day. This conveys some idea of the power of social science and its impact on society.

Yet social science, much less behavioral science in the more specialized and technical sense, is powerless in telling an individual or society what to do, what is valuable, or what is ultimately right. Social science is poor wisdom philosophy. On crucial questions of life and life's purposes and values, social science is useless, indeed, its counsel misleading and dangerous. Not surprisingly W.H. Auden admonished his generation: "Thou shalt not sit with statisticians nor commit a social science."¹⁹ Social science can and ought certainly to be cultivated, but it cannot be reduced to a rule; there is no science which will enable a person to think of that which will suit his or her purpose. Endless preoccupation with methodology is self-defeating. Unfortunately, this is often the case which is why Henri Poincare remarked: "The natural sciences talk about their results. The social sciences talk about their methods."²⁰ We should take caution from it. Probably the advice of P.W. Bridgeman is the best: "The scientist has no other method than doing his damndest."²¹ We should not say: unto you your methodology, unto me my methodology. Instead, if someone wants to pursue a different or opposite methodology, we should wish him well and say to him: may you accomplish much with your methodology and contribute much with its help! Because, as Alfred Marshall put it: "In discussion on method and scope, a man is nearly sure to be right when affirming the usefulness of his own method, and wrong when denying that of others."²² We must remember that the enemy is not within, rather without.

In so large a project as Islamization of knowledge, no single person or a group would resolve all questions. Efforts will have to be made at all levels and by many people. One thing which will be required would be cooperation between the 'ulama and social scientists. It is an enormous task to develop expertise in both social science and Islamic learning. I do not know of any person who possess the requisite knowledge in both fields. (It is, however, my impression that there are more people who have a good knowledge of

¹⁹W.H. Auden, "Under Which Lyre: A Reactionary Tract for the Times" (Phi Beta Kappa Poem, Harvard, 1946).

²⁰Poincare quoted in Bernard Berelson and Cary A. Steiner, eds., *Human Behavior: An Inventory of Scientific Findings* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), p. 62.

²¹Bridgeman quoted in Kaplan, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

²²Marshall quoted in Berelson and Steiner, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

social science or a field within it and a fair amount of knowledge of Islamic teaching than visa-versa.) We must encourage each other to fill the gap in our knowledge. This will be essential for cooperation between scholars of Islam and the social scientists. We may take advice from an anecdote of the ancient Greek philosophers. "Prove to me," Epictetus was challenged, "that I should study logic." "How would you know it is a good proof?" was the reply of the ancient logician. Muslim social scientists would have to study Islamic thought in order to know that it has something essential to say to social science. The Islamic learned men, the 'ulama, will have to study social thought to know that it has something essential to say about how to interpret or reinterpret Islamic teaching, and incorporate the same in the social, political, and economic institutions of Islamic society. But without mutual help, enlightenment, cooperation, support, tolerance, and encouragement, the program of Islamization of knowledge will only flounder.



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