AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE FOR POLITICAL SCIENCE IN NORTH AFRICA

Hamdy A. Hassan

Professor of Political Science, College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Zayed University, Dubai

ABSTRACT
The Arab Spring in early 2011 caused a heated debate about the ability of North African political scientists to make predictions about the future. They failed to forecast the trends and complex events that unfolded in countries such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya. Political Science in its North African tradition was unable to foresee the course of democratization process in the region. Revolutionary experience in Tunisia and Egypt during January and February 2011 highlighted the weakness of some assumptions that prevailed in regional political and social thinking during past years. As a consequence, the discipline failed to develop a useful framework to forecast future events based on past evidence. This paper primarily focuses on the following question: What are the true factors impeding the ability of Political Science in North Africa to predict political phenomena? The question can alternately be framed as asking whether the Arab societies in North Africa can survive and prosper without their political scientists. This study discusses the factors and variables that have affected the orientations and the substance of political science in North Africa. It seeks to assess the current status of political science,especially after the Arab Spring, from a non-western perspective.

Key Words: Arab Spring, Egypt, Morocco, Behavioral Approach, Postmodernism, Maghreb, Sharia, Political Development

Introduction

The vast majority of specialists on the Arab world and North Africa failed to predict the events of the Arab Spring, and the status of political science in Egypt and the Arab region generally reflects a deep crisis. I have studied the features of this crisis in a previous study (Hassan, 2015). In addition, Jacqueline Stevens (2012) has criticized the ability of political scientists to predict future developments:

> It's an open secret in my discipline: in terms of accurate political predictions (the
> field's benchmark for what counts as science), my colleagues have failed

spectacularly and wasted colossal amounts of time and money. The most obvious example may be political scientists' insistence, during the Cold War that the Soviet Union would persist as a nuclear threat to the United States. In 1993, in the journal *International Security*, for example, the cold war historian John Lewis Gaddis wrote that the demise of the Soviet Union was "of such importance that no approach to the study of international relations claiming both foresight and competence should have failed to see it coming." And yet, he noted, "None actually did so." Careers were made, prizes awarded and millions of research dollars distributed to international relations experts, even though Nancy Reagan's astrologer may have had superior forecasting skills.

The crisis in political science and its lack of success in predicting future developments originated decades ago. In 1969, David Easton wrote that political science as a field of study had failed to anticipate crises throughout the world at that time, such as issues of nuclear terror, environmental problems, and situations of severe social inequality. Easton (1969:1052) called for a "Credo of Relevance" with seven key points:

- Substance must come first before technique. It is more important to be relevant and meaningful for contemporary urgent social problems than to be sophisticated in the tools of investigation. What is studied matters far more than how it is studied.

- Behavioral science conceals an ideology of empirical conservatism. It tends to focus on what is rather than what might be.

- Promoting sophisticated methods will help political science address real human needs in a time of crisis.

- Science cannot be and has never been neutral: What one chooses to study is driven by value judgment. Hence we need to be aware of the value premises underlying the topic.

- Political scientists bear the responsibility to promote and protect the humane values of civilization.

- To know is to carry the responsibility to act, and to act is to engage in reshaping society. Scientists have a special obligation to put their knowledge to work.

- This obligation should be expressed through professional associations and universities. They cannot be set aside. Politicization of the professions is inescapable as well as desirable.

The critical explanations and analyses of the Arab Spring have reflected this irrelevance according to the Eastonian explanation and have challenged the North African tradition of political science. A pressing question centers on the difference between science and political action. Some scholars believe that political science based on Western concepts has failed to understand the complex reality of the Arab world. Rather, it contributes negatively to the identity crisis of the Arab community (Latouche, 1996). Thus, the main purpose of this paper is to look for an authentic Arab perspective in the study of politics, specifically from an Islamic viewpoint.

Arab Spring and the Failure of Political Science

If the mission of political science is to examine and understand the reality of political power and predict future trends, political scientists in Egypt since the late 1950s failed miserably at predicting the events of the Arab Spring. None of the Egyptian political scientists were able to imagine the fall of the Mubarak regime or the ban on his ruling party, much less the ascension to power of the banned Muslim Brotherhood. The political scientists were also unable to conceive that the Egyptian army would overthrow the first elected civilian president. In the same context, none of the political scientists in the Arab Maghreb could predict the flight of President Ben Ali from Tunisia or the killing of Muammar Qaddafi in Libya. However, political scientists continued to mistakenly favor the ruling power, and some pessimists have referred to this deficit as "the death of political science" in Egypt and the Arab world (Soffar,2013).

It is worth noting that political science in its Egyptian form has been dominated by a behavioral approach in spite of its numerous pitfalls. This paradigm was dominated by political and professional authoritarianism that determined the scientific agenda(Soffar,2014; Al Sayyid,2007). Research topics were determined by academic programs, scientific committees, the promotion system, and so forth. Thus, political science was divorced from

reality, with professors using old Western theories that were not only outpaced by events but did not even suit Egyptian and African realities.

Despite the dominance of the behavioral approach within the political science literature in the Arab world, only a small number of researchers were able to conduct quantitative analyses because of the scarcity of political information, the lack of funding, and the opposition to scientific research on foreign policy issues. The roots of political science in Egypt and North Africa lie deep within Western concepts and theories, as opposed to Islamic and Arab cultural heritage, which hinders the production of any new knowledge.

Meta-narratives, like liberalism, socialism, nationalism, democracy, and so forth have controlled the processes of both teaching and research in political science. Real issues affecting the life of the society, such as poverty, social marginalization, identity and exclusion dilemmas, nationalization of public space by the state have all been neglected (Soffar,2013)[1]. For example, the debate on governance and gender in Islamic societies has lasted for some time. Usually, all topics were addressed by political scientists based on the "pure" philosophy of the Qur'an, and the essential question was focused on the roles of Shariah(Islamic Law) and Hadith in the practice of *Ijtihad*, or diligence. Diligence represents the principle of change in the structure of Islam: in Islamic law, it means the effort to form an independent judgment on a legal issue. The majority of current studies in Islamic cultures, especially in light of the events of September 11 and the consequences of the "war on terrorism," tend to reproduce a western discourse dealing with fundamentalist Islam and the premise that Islam is basically authoritarian. In the context of gender studies in Islamic cultures, the effect of that western trend appears to have been largely negative because it confirmed the traditional dread of Islamic law as being more repressive for women than secular law. In contrast, in the Tunisian context, family law is more egalitarian and more supportive of women's rights, particularly in the areas of inheritance and divorce (Brand, 1998,177).A great deal of literature emphasizes the higher status of Tunisian women compared with women in other Arab countries.

The increasing criticism of the behavioral approach in general, the emergence of a new generation of Arab researchers who are critical of Western perspectives of political science, and the emergence of political Islam movements have all led to the rejection of Western political science and calls to establish an Arab school of political science (Bashir, 2013).Many researchers have called for a revival of the Islamic paradigm in the study of political phenomenon. However, as Mohamed Soffar explains, this civilizational approach

> . . . lacks significant theoretical effort on ontological issues (related to concepts of existence in general, and human existence in particular) and epistemological issues (related to sources of knowledge, their limits, substance, and degrees). As a result, this approach when using Islamic concepts (Qur'anic and historical) as analytical preambles, fails to employ them at the level of concepts-building, units of analysis or approaches. This is when the same western concepts, this approach is rejecting, are recalled, and draped with Islamic concepts, in the same spirit the approach seeks to fight. As a result, for this philosophical backwardness, the limit of analysis of the Islamic world would be limited at the international level to area studies that focus on the Islamic world or nations as unit of analysis, and on Muslim issues or problems.

David Easton (1969) speaks of the need to politicize political science professors and enhance their role in the public sphere through professional associations and universities, but that does not necessarily apply to the Egyptian case. Scientific associations clearly play an important role in the development of the science, but Egypt lacks an institutional framework to bring together political scientists. Despite the legal existence of the Egyptian Society for Political Science, which issues a periodical magazine with a limited distribution, it is not active on the ground (Salim, 2009). At the Arab level, the Arab Association of Political Science has encountered political turmoil in the Arab world, which might explain why its founding conference in 1985 was held in Cyprus rather than an Arab capital. The association is still searching for a permanent headquarters, and it is also vulnerable to the political orientations of the Arabic state that hosts its annual conference.

At the first glance, the development of political science in North African countries appears to be very different from that in Egypt. Like other disciplines, political science in the Arab Maghreb, excluding Libya, is mostly associated with the study of law, probably because of the influence of French traditions (Alchenbobi,2012& Mouden, 2013).In my own research, I could not find a real debate between Moroccan researchers on the need to classify political science in terms of subject or institutional structure. However, the declining role of the state in Morocco at the expense of extended public space with a clear role for foreign institutions has led to the emergence of new academic studies that stress the need for political science to take an active role in the Arab Maghreb.

According to Abdelhay Mouden (2013), two key factors contributed to the development of Moroccan political science. The first factor is the efforts of the founding generation of political scientists to define the field as an independent academic field of history and economics with links to law, sociology, and anthropology. These efforts focused on the concept of *Makhzan*, both in contemporary or historical manifestations, to understand the structure of the state as the essence of political science.[2] The second factor is the phenomenon of political Islam in Morocco, which became the subject of various theses and academic literature. I believe these scientific approaches to the Islamic phenomenon have exceeded prior intellectual biases related to the study of Islam and have thus paved the way to the peaceful participation of the Moroccan Islamic movement that has been in power since 2012.
An academic study on the state of political science in Morocco shows the following characteristics (Alchenbobi,2012:42):

- Research topics are linked to professors' research agendas and to academic plans of graduate studies program, which do not necessarily reflect the needs of the society and the state in the field of political science.
- Many political science researchers have graduated from the Moroccan University and many Moroccan cities have political science departments, however, this momentum has not contributed to the rationalization of the Moroccan political scene or to the emergence of a political elite that combines political theories with field experience.

- Ideological inclinations direct political science research in Morocco, which often conflicts with the requested scientific objectivity.

- In the field of political science, Moroccan University largely relies on indoctrination, and most research is related to theoretical topics distant from the field studies that would improve the discipline.

- University research centers expected to work in research teams to study certain political phenomena in accordance with an envisaged academic plans are lacking. In addition, an institutional framework that brings together political science researchers is absent.

However, a growing number of students are studying political science (the number reached 119,467 students in 2006), and a number of political science research centers and academic journals have been established. These modest achievements represent a quantitative development, but they may later lead to successful models and experiences. Despite these attempts and the scientific efforts of a number of political scientists in Egypt and North Africa, a question that reflects the crisis of political science, as demonstrated in the Arab Spring revolutions, remains: How effective is the discipline? Further, how is it related to society's problems? In other words, a hundred years after the founding of political science in Egypt, we must ask whether it is possible to develop an Egyptian and Arab society without the need for political scientist. Sadly, the answer is yes. This answer may be applicable to other social sciences bound by rigid theories and biased paradigms.

Abd Rabou, a young Egyptian political science professor, has identified five major challenges faced by political science in Egypt in the aftermath of the January 2011 revolution (2015):

1. The state–society dilemma. The Deep State[3]organs have returned to control the public sphere under the pretext of security and stability. Thus, the study of some social groups and movements by political scientists has become challenging.

2. The political theory–application problem. Political scientists are driven into a reality that contradicts their beliefs and principles. The prevailing political practice may label whoever demands justice, freedom, and citizenship as an "agent with foreign agenda."

3. Contradiction between political action and political science. After the overthrow of Mubarak's regime, scientific concepts like revolution, coup, and the Constitution have clearly lost value in Egypt because many political scientists manipulated the use of these concepts to support particular political parties, especially after the overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi. Thus, political practices surpassed political values.

4. The challenge of teaching politics in a politically divided society. For example, how can one teach subjects like peaceful alternation of power, the relation between religion and the state, or civil–military relations when the political reality differs from the theory?

5. The challenge of academic freedom. After the fall of the Mubarak regime, the circle of action for some political scientists has expanded from traditional academic circles to larger media and academic circles. However, the return of central political and administrative authority has led to restrictions on those professors, which means a high cost to political scientists concerned with public issues.

A Critique of Western Political Science from a Different Perspective

Political science since ancient Aristotelian tradition reflects a European-centered vision. When the American school embraced contemporary political science during the 20th century, the discipline became more closely associated with the realities and problems of American society, and this development has certainly influenced the paradigm shifts within political science ever since. A behavioral revolution associated with the traditions of positivism brought about a paradigm shift in political science, which was influenced in the late 1950s and the 1960s by the concept of grand theory that incorporated technological shifts and rationalism. At this stage in the development of political science, we can observe the influence of two important variables: first, what Robert Packenham (2015) called the "ideology of American liberalism," and second, what Susanne Bodenheimer (1971) called the "ideology of developmentalism."

It is worth noting that our view of political development studies conducted in the late 1950sto the early 1960s, under the direct influence of the Comparative Politics Committee affiliated with the American Social Science Research Council, showed a complete break from what was

called the "legal tendency of skepticism." Behavioral studies in political science offered a methodological shift from a focus on legal and institutional variables to a focus on economic and social variables.

The foundations and pillars of behaviorism, as the essence of modernism in social science, have been criticized, thus undermining the development paradigm related to it. This criticism apparently represents a perspective crisis according to the global concept in political science, thus leading to the emergence of postmodernism models. Postmodernism is characterized by excessive pluralism that lacks preferentiality or normativity. Paradigms and moral systems, both individual and group, are all dismantled in the postmodern world.

Postmodern philosophy has led to shifts in the paradigms and methodologies of political science. It has focused on the concepts of cultural relativism, away from the major theoretical concept of political science, in accordance with the postmodern tradition that rejected the concept of meta-narratives based on Logos. This focus also ruins the paradigm foundations of the other (which is us). Religious and human truth are not embraced; they are merely a minor narrative with limited legitimacy exactly like a self-centered linguistic system (El-Messiri, 1997, 94-95).

Western sociology has witnessed paradigm shifts since the beginning of modern thought, and the Western mind has never exceeded, whether consciously or unconsciously, the Western paradigm's parameters and constants. In terms of knowledge, modernism and postmodernism, although diverse, still believe in human reason and the centrality of man. Western reason is abstract and inclined to mathematical coding, and it also excludes religious and moral factors. Some researchers have argued that with the technological and information revolution, Western reason has lost part of its powers and sacredness and has become an instrumental reason, according to Jürgen Habermas (1987).

Michel Foucault, in his book *The Order of Things*, presented the concept of displacement and consequent knowledge discontinuity or ruptures. The striking aspect of Foucault's thought is the link between paradigm shifts and a state of fragmentation in philosophical thought.

The holistic vision of existence that included the universe, God, and man is reduced through phases and time periods, according to the concept of knowledge displacement. Reason, in Kant's terms, dismissed the external world in one knowledge period; the material and economic world and the existence of God and metaphysics in another period; and finally, text and language displaced both reason and economy. Thus, postmodern discourse turned to language and became, as Jean Baudrillard stated, a personal individual discourse that could only be understood by the speaker (Hammouda,1989 & El Meseiri,1987,93-122). The question raised and faced by any Muslim who feels alienated from his world and experiences conflict between his beliefs and his reality and lifestyle is where to escape? How can the Islamic revival, as a force for cultural renewal at the global level, confront postmodernism globalization? However, before discussing features of the confrontation, several issues must be understood.

First, the Western paradigm, since the behavioral movement, is based on the principle of Western globalization; that is, globalism revolves around a Western centralism based on the values of secularism, individualism, freedom, and human rights. To say that postmodernism Forced political science to relinquish its commitment to the concept of grand theory and to consider the issue of cultural specificity is questionable in two respects. To start, the values of modernism or postmodernism are European centric. Europe, as Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr., stated, is "the source—the unique source [of the] ideas of individual liberty, political democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and cultural freedom. . . These are European ideas, not Asian, nor African, nor Middle Eastern ideas, except by adoption . . . ."(Huntington, 1996,28-47).Next, the specificity embraced by postmodernism or demanded by the Arab world, emerged from the same Western paradigm: globalization. We may question whether the "new"global order would accept renaissance projects that specifically rely on the cultural heritage of the Islamic world.

Second, related to and confirming the first issue, postmodern globalization bases its hegemony on a set of major monopolies in the fields of technology, natural resources, exchange markets, media, and communication, in addition to weapons of mass destruction (Amin, 196,3-5). Thus, to say that the information age will eliminate inequity between developed and underdeveloped countries propagates neo-colonialism. Let us carefully considers the prediction by Bill Gates about the post-Internet world:

> . . . the net effect will be a wealthier world, which should be stabilizing. Developed nations and workers in those nations are likely to maintain a sizable economic lead, but the gap between the have and the have-not nations will diminish—great news for the countries that are behind economically. Some developing countries will never pass through the "industrialization" state with its attendant problems. They'll move directly to the information age.(Gates, 1996,297).

It is no secret that the United States monopolizes about ninety percent of the world's media and strongly influences those that do not fall under its direct control. This control magnifies the American discourse and helps spread the country's popular culture and lifestyle (Winkle, 1996,166).Hence, what are the implications of a Muslim intellectual watching Donald Trump's electoral campaigns through CNN while holding a cell phone at the same time that many families a few blocks away from him are unable to get clean water and adequate housing?

Third, political science could not dispose of its ideological content in post-behavioral era. An example can be used to illustrate this ideological bias. Political development, as a field of study, came laden with norms as well as an unfair differentiation of "Western" from "non-Western."The inception of the modernization theory of development after World WarII reflected the Cold War rivalry between Western and Eastern blocs, and it was used to counter the threat of Communist expansion in developing countries. It is not surprising then that

political development is viewed as being anti-communism and pro-United States, with an aim of achieving political stability (Packenham, 1966: 194-235). Despite the paradigm crisis faced by political development studies since the late 1960s,aconscious reading of development literature clearly demonstrates the existence of an ideological commitmentof the core values of political development theory towards capitalism, both internationally and as a model for economic and social change that should be followed by developing countries. If the epistemological analysis of development theory shows its dependenceon modernity assumptions, it is evident that the project embraces the idea of developing societies becoming culturally attached to the West.

That slant was evident when international and regional conditions that prompted the development project were over; what has changed is the label, while the values and goals have remained. In the early 1990s, the process of establishing a new approach for political development began. This process was reminiscent of what happened with the first generation of political development scientists in the early 1960s, when the Ford Foundation was displaced by other institutions including the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the Hoover Institution at Stanford University, and the Latin American Program for Scholars atthe Woodrow Wilson Center founded in 1977.

Certainly, these institutions confirmed previous efforts in the field of political development. In1990, NED issued the journal *Democracy* and published numerous studies by well-known writers like Samuel Huntington, Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and others. These studies are considered to be similar to the political development studies series begun in 1963. The firm American liberal tradition imposed several central assumptions that dominate the study of development theory. These assumptions are identified as follows(Packenham,2015,20):

- Change and development are easy.
- All good things go together.
- Radicalism and revolution are bad.
- Distributing power is more important thanaccumulating power.

Needless to say,accepting these issues helps to define the nature of underdevelopment andaffects the options for solving problems, while also helping to protectthe elite, maintain the system, and raisefundamental questions related to bilateral relations.

Fourth, the cultural awareness movement that regarded the Western post-materialism paradigm as exemplary, proceededfrom the same premise asmodernism because it stems from the West toward less developed parts ofthe world. In this context,we refer to environmentalpreservation movements, the valuation of beauty, and nature idealism launched by supporters of the new left in the West. Such movements do not oppose capitalistlifestylesbased on luxury and individual pleasure. Zygmunt Bauman, a post-materialist supporter, noted in 1989 that young, educatedprofessionals fled from East Germany to the Westto seek better economic opportunities; they were not running from the prevailing political philosophy. Widerchoices of consumer goods and the temptations of daily lifestyle from a Western capitalist perspective are not only attractive to immigrants from Eastern Europe, but also influence aspirations and lifestyles around the globe. The proliferation of fast food shops and major shopping malls in many developing countries provides clear proof of that (Janos, 1997,118-149). This psychological explanation demonstrates that the economic prospects of individuals are formed by the consumption patterns of others, or according to Veblen's expression, through simulating expenditure levels (Veblen, 2005,74-78). Failure to achieve these demands doubtlessly leads to a painful experience of deprivation. This hypothesis has been supported by empirical research of new economists who proved that both consumption and savings are not shaped by current income but are the result of the others' behavior or individuals' previous experience.

However, despite these empirical models, the question remains: Why does imitating the well-being of the few become the desire, expectation, and frustration of the many who fail to achieve it? This question can be justified by noting that the wealth disparity within societies prior to the 17th century never led to such serious consequences as those seen in the modern era.

What can be done? Towards a civilized alternative

The alienation experienced by people at the end of the 20thcentury arose from their failure to control their world and induced them to reconsider their relationship with Nature, the universe, and their fellow humans. As previously mentioned, this process led to dramatic paradigm and epistemological shifts in the West: from Behaviorism to post-Behaviorism, from Modernism to post-Modernism, from Capitalism to post-Capitalism, from Industrialization to post-Industrialization, from Materialism to post-Materialism, from Structuralism to Deconstructionism, and so forth. Clearly, change is the norm in the Western paradigm, but it does not exclude the centrality of humans and their welfare and personal pleasure. Many modern technological inventions actually target the negative aspects of modern technology in the West! However, if we start from the unifying civilized paradigm that is mainly founded on revelation (Qur'an and Sunnah), we realize that it includes a holistic vision of humans, the universe, and God as the creator and the master of everything. In contrast to the views of Michel Foucault, the belief system does not encompass the concept of elimination; the relationships between system components are based on a set of fixed pillars, as follows:

- Monotheism is the supreme value in the system, and its name is derived from it.
- A belief differentiation emanates from the Muslim's concept of servitude to Allah. The Islamic State aims to perpetuate the concept of divine succession of man on Earth.
- Intellectual diligence is accounted as one of the sources of Islamic legislation, like the Quran and the Sunnah.
- Addressing actual issues thrusts the need to reform Islamic jurisprudence and social thought.

This model of civilization holds good deeds as the general aim of human existence(Abdul Majid, 1993,22) because they are the foundation for populating Earth and enriching it with life and civilization. God says: "Blessed is He in whose hand is dominion, and He is over all things competent[He] who created death and life to test you [as to] which of you is best in deed - and He is the Exalted in Might, the Forgiving -" (67:1-2).Populating Earth with good deeds and establishing truth and justice are the substance of true civilization:"It is He Who

hath produced you from the earth and settled you therein" (11:61). Further, as is written in the Quran:"Allah commands that you should render back the trusts to those, to whom they are due; and that when you judge between men, you judge with justice" (4:58). Islam holds Justice even between enemies:". . . and do not let the hatred of a people prevent you from being just. Be just; that is nearer to righteousness. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is Acquainted with what you do" (5:8). Understanding the position of politics in this monotheistic paradigm is important because it clearly determines the state of political theorization in Islam; its pillars, values, and functions; and even the prospects for political change. Politics in this paradigm are legitimate, and their focus is good deeds in this world and the hereafter. Consequently, close interdependence exists between politics and religion in the Muslim experience. Imam Ghazali says: "religion depends upon kingship, kingship upon the army, the army on wealth, wealth on material prosperity and material prosperity on justice"(Al-Ghazali,1987). This statement reflects the degree of interdependence between material and value elements in the Islamic paradigm of civilization.

If legitimate politics is consistent with Shariah, it serves as general rules and offers wide space for movement, theorizing, and construction. Here, human endeavor, a component of the monotheistic Islamic paradigm, is achieved. Political jurisprudence, however, is based on three pillars: Fiqh al Usul,"jurisprudence" of the political sphere; Fiqhal Waqi'a,jurisprudence of political reality; and Fiqh al tanzeel, or application of jurisprudence in political reality. These pillars show the link between political theory and practice, as in the ideal model of the City State in the era of the Prophet in which three issues were highlighted: the idea of the Constitution of Medina, twinning between immigrants and supporters, and unifying all people spiritually through the mosque (Manjoud, 1996,66-70).

The Five Higher Goals of Shariah Law—protection of religion, protection of human life, protection of the mind, protection of prosperity, and protection of progeny—form the value setting of an Islamic State and emphasize human rights within the Islamic perspective. However, dealing with these objectives takes into account the jurisprudence of the reality and the provisions of necessity, including the following principles:

- Necessity makes the unlawful lawful.

- Necessity is measured in accordance with its true proportions.

- Harm must be eliminated but not by means of another harm.

- A greater harm is eliminated by means of a lesser harm.

- Prevention of evil takes priority over the attraction of benefit.

Unlike the Western substantive paradigm based on clear European centralism, which does not recognize the other or only recognizes him to stultify him, the monotheistic paradigm is based on multiculturalism because an Islamic State, relying on it, seeks to achieve its civilizational missionary purpose. This purpose is only accomplished through communication with the other, which in turn requires knowing the other from various viewpoints.

Therefore, any paradigm based on the monotheistic paradigm should help to understand the general norms of the movements of humans, the universe, and life. Methodologically, rules of the scientific method can be introduced because they do not contradict God's word. Recall that Muslim and Arab scholars have adopted modern experimental methods and rules throughout history. Two prominent examples can be stated. First, in his book *Kitab al-khawass al-kabir* (*The Great Book of Chemical Properties*), Jabir Ibn Hayyan stated in the introduction: "You must learn that we deal in this book with the properties of what we only saw, not what we heard, or been told or read, after examination and trial. So what is included is confirmed with concrete observation and what was rejected we excluded." Second, Ibn al-Haytham (Alhazen) wrote in the introduction of his book *Kitab al-Manazir* (*Book of Optics*) that"we start our search with examining the facts related to sight with regards to vision, and what is steady and unchanging for sense, and then build the research and standards on staging and exercises with a selection of entrees and reservation of result mistakes, and gradually reach the end which is a certainty."

Based on these examples, does our belief in cultural or civilizational specificity mean rejection of the other? I do not think that is the aim of our study. We seek to understand, and

this understanding is an independent process that takes precedence over any conscious decision in dealing with the other.

Intellectuals in North Africa are invited, in light of material and technological backwardness and in their surrounding state of dependency, to understand the world around them. Do we really need the advanced technology patterns in the West? Many modern techniques are designed to deal with the Western reality and to address problems of modernity. The challenge we are facing in a new era is the possibility of restructuring our lives in a postmodern world, but this restructuring is based on our monotheistic paradigm. It requires a conscious understanding of the general norms upon which to build the movements of humans, the universe, and life. A Muslim country seeking to achieve land succession knows for sure that it will not change God's will. It also knows that advancement, progress, and reform are fixed norms. Failure to achieve these goals requires understanding the underlying reasons, based on God's enunciation:"..Say: It is from yourselves..." (3.165)). Is it useful to have advanced computer technology and complex information systems, to launch an Islamic satellite for communications, and to seek to destroy Muslim architecture? Or is it more useful to have a conscious plan for the best human interest in the land and its cultivation? The answer does not need a magic solution, but rather a consciousness of the need for understanding and an ability to understand and to have a sound plan.

Conclusion: Towards a Future Vision

Despite the crisis of political science in North Africa and its detachment from its cultural context, serious attempts to develop a civilized political science perspective can be attributed to the work of the scientist Hamid Rabie in the early 1970s. He taught courses in Islamic political thought, political theory in Islam, and other courses from civilized approaches that were considered methodological necessities, and he sought to activate the struggling role of political science(Nafaa, 2004). Moreover, he authored and supervised masters and PhD theses in Islamic topics. His work has contributed to establishing a national scientific community concerned with rooting and theorizing political science from an Islamic perspective. Mona Abu Alfadhl succeeded him, and through research and teaching since the early 1980s, in

establishing a civilized approach to studying Arabic political systems and women's studies compared to the feminist approach (Abu-'l-Faḍl, 1989).

Perhaps the first serious attempt to formulate an Islamic perspective in the study of international relations related to academic and research institutions was the project of International Relations in Islam, which was initiated in 1988 by a group of professors from the Faculty of Economics and Political Science at Cairo University and lasted for 10 years. This work was published in 1996 in 12volumes (Mustafa, 1996), and it was discussed in a conference at Cairo University. However, these efforts to develop a civilizational perspective faced serious hurdles associated with methodological considerations (problematic relationship between religion and politics) and opposition to political Islam movements (Mustafa,2006).

In any case, as Adele Jinadu argued, globalization of political science, on professional and institutional levels, is part of the cultural superstructure facilitating Western hegemony (Jinadu, 2000, 1-13). This superstructure is presented in the guise of universal science, which has serious implications on knowledge production in and around Africa, especially African policy, during the period of liberal supremacy. Thus, the process of cultural renewal, particularly in political science, needs to represent different cultural visions. Perhaps the future of a national school of political science in North Africa is associated with three major challenges. The first challenge is the elimination of tyranny and intellectual exclusionism, since the main objective of political science is the emancipation of thought and mind. Political science should play an important role in drafting renaissance projects in the region. Second, the struggling role of political science necessitates its relation to the country's issues, not just serving actual political agendas. Third, more attention should be given to the higher education system to achieve efficiency in research and teaching. These goals cannot be attained without the active participation of universities, scientific and research associations, and other civil society institutions.

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Notes

[1]Soffar argues: "Bearing the resemblance of Plato's Sophists, political scientists nowadays in Egypt are part of the problem not the solution. They are not the cure for the sick body politic. Rather, their existence is a striking symptom of its sickness. If Plato found no solution but to expel poets from his Republic for fear of destroying its ethical foundations, for the same reason political scientists should not be spared the same treatment."
[2]Makhzan originally meant "storing," and it refers to the contract between the government and its military organizations.

[3]The "deep state", Which originally came from the Turkish tradition, has become more common in Egypt in post Mubarak era. It refers to the influential groups of military, political and bureaucratic bedrock that dominate political life.

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