



Mayhem vs. Transformation: Reexamination of a Perplexing Attitude

Saeed Shoja Shafti*

*Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry, New York, USA

*Corresponding author: Saeed Shoja Shafti, Emeritus Professor of Psychiatry, New York, USA

Received: 📅 February 25, 2023

Published: 📅 March 08, 2023

Opinion

Nowadays, it is understandable why every nation looks toward egalitarianism and implementation of democratic policies for resolving social clashes or problems and selection of main political objectives or interests. So, it seems that backing such kinds of inclinations should be a normal trend among intellectuals and influential figures, whether locally or globally. But it seems that in recent decades, at least academically, it has not been an unvarying tendency. For example, as said by Samuel P. Huntington, who had stated that while the age of ideology had ended, the most significant difference among the populace is cultural, not political, ideological, or economic, and, as a result, the world had only returned to a normal state of affairs characterized by cultural clashes and identity crisis [1], and in search of a new sense of meaning and purpose [2,3], the widespread Western belief in the universality of the West's values and political systems is raw and that continued insistence on democratization and such worldwide models will only further upset other nations, and, accordingly, in future the central axis of world politics tends to be the conflict between the West and the Rest.

As a result, Huntington maintained that though neither financial nor social development could progress without political order, the experience of recently independent countries being one of increasing social and political chaos, and modernization is in fact a reason for instability, owing to education and the spread of media, rising expectations due to literacy, urbanization, etc., and since the process of social modernization that creates this chaos is not matched by a process of political and institutional modernization, which creates political institutions capable of managing the stress of modernization, the result may be violence. Thus, the most important political distinction among countries is not their form of government, but their degree of government. Therefore, Huntington rejected the prevalent and more optimistic modernization theories,

which believe that order and stability themselves are crucial goals in developing countries. He also discussed that political decay was at least as likely as political development, and while neither economic nor social development could happen without political order, the experience of newly independent countries displays increasing social turmoil and political confusion [4].

Accordingly, in the words of him, modernization theory that believes that economic change and development being the prime factors responsible for the creation of stable and democratic political systems, is unsound. Also, according to Huntington, the existence (or lack) of order should not be confused with the issue of the type of that order (both on a political level - democratic, authoritarian, and on economic level - socialist, free-market, etc.), because while modernity equals stability, modernization is actually a cause for instability, due to urbanization, rising expectations due to literacy, education and the spread of media, etc., which are many times out of control of developing countries. Nevertheless, while Huntington's ideas have been criticized by various academic writers, who have empirically, historically, logically, or ideologically challenged his claims [5], no doubt, his doctrines, whether as a so-so political idea or biased radical wish, had an influential role in shaping the political cognizance of a great number of statesmen or stateswomen. Though the focus of the present paper is Huntington's dissection of modernization from Westernization, his attempt to introduce a new kind of political categorization, which was shifting between sociocultural values and ethnic characteristics, cannot be overlooked.

First of all, it seems that, while he is thinking prospectively, he is proposing retrospectively or better to say regressively. In spite of the importance of cultural values, political figures ordinarily make decisions commonsensically and based on national security or benefits. Moreover, in contrast to Huntington's scheme, in the

last decades, most domestic and foreign conflicts have taken place between similar cultures. In addition, his exaggerated stress on the existence of consolidated civilizations, which could not exist so wholly that he was trying to portray, except maybe in an idealistic or fictional formula, could not be useful enough for practical designs. Such an inference is comparable to Berman's criticism that distinct cultural boundaries do not exist in the present day and there is no Western vs. non-Western civilization [6], or Ash's disagreement with Huntington's extreme cultural determinism [7], or Said's dispute that his fixed categorization omits the dynamic interdependency and interaction of cultures [8,9]. Such challenging attitudes regarding developing countries, in addition to repeated recommendations to the West for reevaluation of political tactics and obligatory compromise, may display an innate inconsistency in the said erratic categorization.

On the other hand, in contrary to his expectations, as a plausible proponent of globalization and neoliberalism, brain drain and movement of skilled workers, as human capital of every society [10], plus removal of subsidies, which could protect against unexpected monetary stresses, decreasing value of national currencies, monetary hyperinflation or mark-up price inflation, awkward and thoughtless privatization, which could accelerate economic complications and economic slump or recession, as the palpable consequences of enactment of neoliberal economic policies [11], in the last decades in some of the developing countries, was parallel to increasing social inequity, and an unending and paradoxical dependency on foreign investments and alien experienced workforces. Assuredly, such an outcome is not in harmony with the prediction of another notorious political scientist and economist, Francis Fukuyama, who hoped that, by the help of biotechnology, humans can control their own evolution, and an altered human nature may end the existing radical inequality, because inequality is an important obstacle to growth, and an unequal distribution of wealth leads to social turmoil, which undermines growth [12].

In addition, as stated by Fukuyama, this extended period of application of neoliberal financial policies and indefinite conviction in the profits of unregulated bazaars, in many ways had dreadful effects [13]. Furthermore, the resurrection of extremism in a new era, which was parallel to the commencement of globalization, and in many instances acts as a catalyzer for the demolition of preceding nation-states and the institution of new systems, has only slowed or stopped development in many of the affected geopolitical areas, with lots of unsolicited complications. Though there is no unconditional agreement with Fukuyama that the worldwide spread of liberal democracies and free-market capitalism of the West and its lifestyle may be regarded as the end of history [14], because while history is shaped by supremacies and bazaars, it is not limited to them, he seems correct about the mutual impact of culture and finances, and the value of supporting ordinary believers around the world for fading extremism. On the other hand, perhaps Huntington was right that economic and social progress cannot guarantee the creation of stable democracies in decolonized countries, but authoritarianism, also, may not guarantee constant order and stability in evolving

states, for materialization of great ideas in future.

Then again, while political decay is not limited to developing countries, development of political systems is not possible without development of social systems, and strengthening of both of them is not possible without monetary development, an interrelated process which is not imaginable without stability [15]. In contrast to the said challenging belief, the violence is, usually, not due to modernization or its speed; it is due to socioeconomic problems, which are derived from unbalanced fiscal growth and can be avoided if managed by wisdom programmers and administrations, a necessity which is not guaranteed by totalitarianism, as well [16]. Likewise, liberalization, whether rapid or gradual, is not a comprehensible reason for sociopolitical chaos, if real justice for implementation of the rule of law, and judiciary independence is available; if not, then liberalization, as well, is a fictional phenomenon. Furthermore, the reform process in evolving states cannot be successful without morality and a systematic approach, and faith in freedom and equality cannot be materialized without the supremacy of the rule of law, which is naturally in contraindication with absolutism.

Though he believes that Western belief in the universality of Western culture can be false, immoral and dangerous due to ethnic conflict and civilizational clash, Western democratic values, which are the outcome of mental and cultural advancement of human beings, cannot be separated from Western scientific progressions, which are among the usual imports by developing countries. Exporting technology without attendant cultural values, metaphorically, is comparable to arming unknown persons around your own household without known principles for using weapons, which can be turned easily, rapidly and evocatively against yourself, too. The problem is not Western culture per se, because nobody is forced to adopt it thoughtlessly, but can perceive that individually. Parliaments and polling are good examples of democratic political achievements, which are now implemented in many systems, whether thoroughly, in democratic administrations, or incongruously, in despotic regimes. The other aspects of modernism, as well, are being accepted or rejected based on domestic values and sociocultural developments of systems.

Though alien cultural values are not, effortlessly, acceptable when they are disharmonious with domestic ideals, national principles, too, can be modified by legislative bodies, when interior or exterior inevitabilities demand revision. So, Huntington's recommendation for leaving behind the necessity of universal democratization may have an unwelcome side-effect, too; that is, justification of existing or upcoming absolutism, or even barbarousness. A politician, who believes that in a globalization era, global elites can have little need for national loyalty, and may view national boundaries as obstacles that, thankfully, are vanishing, and, also, can see national governments as residues from the past whose only useful function is to facilitate the elite's global operations, while he is looking longitudinally and theorizing universally, at the same time, by separating democratic outlooks from westernization, he is denying individualization, which is a

necessary proviso for turning elites into an unnationalistic person. Nonetheless, at this juncture, another question may arise. How could nations survive without their borders and elites? In the same way, no house may persist without its walls, and no family may endure without its members.

In addition, with regard to power struggle, no evolution is achievable without a series of conflicts between internal political rivals, on a national scale, and different kingdoms, transnationally. Accordingly, while in-house conflicts can result in the foundation of local regimes, transnational struggles, too, may conclude in hegemonic political order. Anyhow, internal struggle is an indispensable process in political affairs that may end, ultimately, either in a firm democratic system, or another monocratic arrangement, or final dissolution. On the other hand, since democracy is the outcome of the mental and cultural evolution of human beings, its occurrence is parallel to the specific development of every civilization, unless being interrupted, nastily, or induced deceitfully (and weakly), by exterior incursions [17]. So unwarrantable supporting or setting up of local despotic systems by more influential outsiders, which has been a frequent happening in history and international political affairs, may postpone the said reformist processes in punier states, by amplification of anarchy and in-house encounters.

Transnational political antagonisms between different exterior challengers, as well, may boost, relentlessly, the said breaks. The outcome of such an evil sequence is nothing except the stoppage of local reforms. So, though Huntington's advice that gradual democratization in developing countries is safer than fast modification, due to lack of democratic foundations for the management of ensuing chaos, seems functional, it could not be applicable if it is being disturbed by hostile external influences, intrigues or attacks. In addition, at this time, sociopolitical awareness of the general public is not as inert as in earlier times. Modern communication technology and mass media have increased their accessibility to news bulletins and reliable informative resources, which are augmenting incessantly their social and political insight. In such a situation, expecting people to behave impassively and to tolerate indefinitely every mistreatment is not a realistic hope. So, they begin to investigate the roots of their sociopolitical problems, and sooner or later reach some kind of formulation, which determines their outlook and judgment. Extremism is usually due to an induced verdict, which is based on biased or unbiased proof of dishonesty of administrators.

Amalgamation of internal corruption and external collusion galvanizes radicalism and starts encounters, which may change the political games unpredictably. In the modern era, politics is an indispensable part of the daily life of everyone, disregarding subjective attitudes or personal deeds, because it has direct influence on socioeconomic conditions of general public. Therefore, expecting people to ignore the political situation of their society, which could be understandable in the past due to prevalent illiteracy, is not logical now, due to a greater level of education, communication, and international interaction. Along with facts,

abandonment of democratic outlooks by developed states and overlooking autocratic dogmas in other territories, due to freaky doctrines or intentions, in the last decades, has not been without charge or complication. While belligerence, by identification with the aggressor and taking its standards, may warrant further violence, danger and turbulence are transmissible phenomena and there is no guarantee of their quarantine in specific geopolitical areas, especially in looked-for globalized political set-up.

Anarchy, vehemence, or fire in somebody's household can, directly or indirectly, threaten other neighbors' homes, too. Volcanic damage is not restricted to its foothills. So, supporting or overlooking absolutism, as a general political doctrine, is comparable to spitting upwards. Wishing commercial prosperity and liberty cannot be choosy if globalization is going to be an all-encompassing premise, though the never-ending struggles between political rivals for getting the hegemonic position in a new political order seems to have challenged, actually, the ideal pacifism of pacifist theorists or globalists [18]. But, disregarding academic or humanistic doctrines, was Huntington's pessimistic view regarding the democratization of developing countries totally baseless? While harmonious evolution of a system may guarantee stress-free implementation of democratic policies, incongruent evolution of intellectuals, common people and officials may not be without complications. Excessive prolongation of democratization, recurrent de-democratization of the system and returning to the previous despotic situation, internal challenges, outsiders' interventions, economical side effects and desperateness of masses are among the palpable consequences of an awkward democratization in an inconsistent or unprepared society.

But, while democratic reform is neither easy nor fast, its necessity, as well, is neither baseless nor autochthonous. On the other hand, while instigation of any movement may be energized by outsiders' inspirations, its progression may be interrupted by outsiders' geopolitical rivalries. academically, while it seems that a compete dictatorship may guarantee sociopolitical stabilization of a developing country more than an incomplete and fragile democracy, its internal contradictions, which may be exploited by rivals, persistently deteriorates its legitimacy, especially if it does not respond aptly to domestic basic needs. on the other hand, installation of democracy in developing countries and amid competition of geopolitical conflicts or competitions may not be similar to developed ones, and due to supposable dependency of the developing countries on developed ones and uneven assets or abilities, creation and saving of the formed system may not be ever complete or ideal. Sometimes, saving a system is more difficult than its creation, and democracy may not be out of such formulation. If for installation of a program a kind of harmony between culture, staffs, setting, and program is necessary, no doubt, provision of such an accommodation is more difficult in developing or non-developed societies.

Therefore, large quantitative or qualitative gaps between intellectuals and the public, deficiency of resources or human capital, incongruent organizations and traditional sociocultural

structure may prevent an apt political reform and may even result in a regressive course; comparable to some surgical procedures or medical treatments, which are essentially for treatment of illnesses, but may cause unexpected side effects, morbidity, and mortality. While years ago, modernization was necessary for enhancement of communication and internationalism, it seems that intellectual modernization may be problematic if it results in independence, resistance, or challenge. So, democratization, which is a derivative of modernization, may not have enough advocators among outsiders, rivals, or enemies, who may prefer oblivious competitors or incompetent neighbors. Therefore, it seems that the general outline of democracy in developing countries may not be similar to the democratic profile of developed systems, and may involve, unavoidably, more challenges, risks and failures.

For example, the appearance of more despotic republics in developing countries in the last decades may have derived from mismatch between the aforesaid four elements, disregard to outsiders' influences. The internal sense of unsafely in leaders with respect to outside people or rivals, systematic weakness of philosophy or essence of 'rule of law' or inconsistency in judiciary system, existent laws or law enforcement forces, large gaps between officialdoms and people regarding democratic values and concept of liberty, specific sociopolitical circumstances which demand violation of law and particular sociocultural situations that justifies or promotes totemic selection of charming figures are among usual reasons, which may de-democratize a system and turn any republic into a tyrannical regime. On the other hand, unavoidable dependency of developing countries on developed states may reflexively decrease possibility of establishment or maintenance of democratization in them. Similarly, sometimes assets of developing countries are not enough for survival of democracy, which may demand large expenses for saving of sociopolitical stability.

On the other hand, maybe, humanistic doctrines are not debatable before provision of basic needs, like security. Moreover, it is supposed that contradictory standpoints regarding democracy or despotism in developing countries may be, a bit, derived from different sociopolitical position of related thinkers. For example, while losers try to reverse the course of natural selection, winners try to save the same course because it guarantees their survival. Then again, while the correctness of a movement does not reassure its success, its dynamic is determined by a number of internal and external forces, which are not necessarily parallel or

consistent with each other. Moreover, there are some skeptics, who believe that while despotic regimes usually approach overtly and cold-bloodedly, deep states of some of democratic regimes may approach the same objectives silently and diplomatically, especially with respect to foreigners; an endless debate, which is not devoid of ambiguous proofs or unproven accusations, too.

References

1. Russett BM, Oneal JR, Cox M (2000) Clash of Civilizations, or Realism and Liberalism Déjà Vu? Some Evidence. *J Peace Res* 37(5): 583-608.
2. Huntington SP (1996) *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. Simon and Schuster, New York, USA.
3. Sen A (2000) Democracy as a Universal Value. *J Democr* 10(3): 3-17.
4. Huntington SP (1968) *Political order in changing societies*. Yale University Press, New Haven, CT, England.
5. Harari, Yuval N (2018) *21 lessons for the 21st century*. First edition. New York, USA.
6. Berman P (2003) *Terror and Liberalism*. W. W. Norton & Company, USA.
7. Ash TG (2000) *History of the Present*. Penguin pp. 388-389.
8. Said EW (2001) *The Clash of Ignorance, The Nation*.
9. Said EW (2004) *From Oslo to Iraq and the Road Map*, Pantheon, New York, USA.
10. Shoja Shafti S (2021) Unindustrialized Nations and Migration of Work Force: Evaluation of Human Capital during Globalization Era. *New Medical Innovations and Research* 2(4): 1-6.
11. Scott Bruce R (2006) *The Political Economy of Capitalism*. Harvard Business School Working Paper: Massachusetts, USA.
12. Fukuyama F (2003) *Our Posthuman Future: Consequences of the Biotechnology Revolution*, Profile Books, London, UK.
13. Fukuyama F (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man: The Free Press*, New York, USA.
14. Shoja Shafti S (2021) Clash of Theories in the Realm of Behavioral Sciences: Globalization vs. Pop Sociobiology. *Am J Soc Issues Humanit* 12: 11-22.
15. Shoja Shafti S (2022) Political Economy and Mental Health: A Reconsideration in Modern Era. *CRN* 3(4): 1-5.
16. Shoja Shafti S (2021) Jung as a Fascist Theorist or Philanthropic Victim: A Second Look. *BJSTR* 38(2): 30160-30167.
17. Shoja Shafti S (2022) Manipulation of Public Opinion by Outsiders: Reappraisal of an Old Doubt in the Field of Political Psychology. *Int J Psychiatry Med* 4: 11-20.
18. Shoja Shafti S (2022) Why War? Parallel with Freud's Reply to Einstein's Query. In *J Fore Res* 3(2): 121-125.