



GRAND THEORIES AND IDEOLOGIES IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

Edited by
HOWARD J. WIARDA



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First published in 2010 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN®
in the United States – a division of St. Martin's Press
LLC, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10010.

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ISBN: 978-0-230-10392-4

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Grand theories and ideologies in the social sciences / edited by Howard J. Wiarda.

p. cm.

ISBN 978-0-230-10392-4 (alk. paper)

1. Social sciences—Philosophy. 2. Political sociology. I. Wiarda, Howard J., 1939–

H61.G653 2010

300.1—dc22

2009053368

A catalogue record of the book is available from the British Library.

Design by MPS Limited, A Macmillan Company

First Edition: September 2010

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Printed in the United States of America.

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PREFACE

I have long been interested in Grand Theory and Ideology. In elementary school (fourth grade) I was introduced to geography and did a fifty-page (!!!) report (including pictures) on Latin America. In high school my favorite subjects were history, English, social studies, and, as it was known then, civics. At university (Michigan) I majored in history, political science, and interdisciplinary studies.

At Michigan I took a wonderful course with Professor Carl Cohen in the Philosophy Department that set me on my future academic career path. The course was called “The Philosophical Basis of Communism, Fascism, and Democracy.” Not only did we read all the major authors undergirding these grand theories in the original (respectively, Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, Pareto, Mosca, Mussolini, the corporatists, Hitler, Locke, Madison, Tocqueville, and Mill), but, since it was a philosophy class, we were asked to write a weekly paper critiquing their logic as well. The course gave me a fascinating introduction to Grand Theory and Ideology from a comparative perspective, and it also taught me analytic and logical skills—for example, how to spot logical flaws and biases even in the most elevated political writing—that have stayed with me for a lifetime.

For several decades now, I have been teaching in the political science subfield of comparative politics. I teach courses and seminars on such topics as Latin America, Southern Europe, the politics of developing areas, Eastern Europe, introductory comparative politics, comparative labor relations, comparative theories of social change, and comparative democratization. So I am interested in how different countries and regions in the world develop, modernize, and build institutions, and the theories and conceptual frameworks they use to do so. I am still interested in the differences between socialist routes to modernization, authoritarian and statist routes, and democratic paths, although the collapse of the Soviet Union has discredited the socialist route and perhaps the authoritarian one as well. In addition, I am interested in non-Western and indigenous models of change, and the degree to which these have adapted to Western ways, or

alternatively continue to follow their own course. All this has led me to Grand Theory and Ideology and the questions of its use in the social sciences.

By Grand Theory and Ideology we mean those large, overarching explanations of social and political behavior—liberalism, Marxism, socialism, positivism, corporatism, political culture, institutionalism, psychoanalysis, rational choice theory, environmentalism (Jared Diamond), sociobiology, and now chemistry and genetics—that give coherence to the social sciences, help us to organize and think about change and modernization, and give us models to understand complex behavior. The reemergence of Russia as a major global player coupled with recent bank nationalizations and the fact that democratization is incomplete or in the process of being reversed in many countries make the old arguments about the merits of socialist, statist, and liberal routes to modernization and development open once again.

That is what this book is all about. Here we present the leading Grand Theories and Ideologies in the social sciences. Our goal is to explore which of these provides us with the best approach, the best “handle,” the best conceptual framework to understand modern reality. We focus on both developed and developing countries. Our approach in examining competing Grand Theories and Ideologies is to see which offers us a better understanding of reality, what are the contributions as well as biases and limitations of each, and what final assessments we reach about the contributions of each. Toward the end of the discussion we begin to explore if some of these Grand Theories can be combined and reconciled; alternatively, can we now say that there is an approach that offers us more explanatory power than the others?

Following the general introduction, in each succeeding chapter, we, the authors, examine one of the main Grand Theories and Ideologies. To facilitate discussion, comparison, analysis, and critique, each theory is examined by using the same outline and analytic framework. For each Grand Theory and Ideology, we will want to know its background, the history and development of the concept, its main spokesmen and traditions, the different schools of thought within that theory, the contributions of the approach as well as its biases and limits, and our overall assessment of the theory. The concluding chapter sums up our findings on the individual Grand Theories and Ideologies, looks for comparisons and contrasts in time, and explores both the possibilities for building bridges among the several islands of theory *and* the issue of whether there is one particular theory that subsumes all the others.

This book is meant to be a serious, scholarly examination of the main Grand Theories and Ideologies “out there” in the field, but it also has important policy implications. As a book, it has textbook possibilities in courses on social change, political development, the Third World, comparative politics, and developing areas. It would also be appropriate in introductory graduate seminars on approaches and methods in the social sciences, comparative politics, and “the discipline,” whether that be political science, philosophy, political sociology, or development studies. Note that with its fourteen chapters (including the introduction and the conclusion), it is designed specifically to fit a semester-length course.

The book has clear policy implications as well. Obviously it would be comforting to U.S. policy-makers if they knew, à la Fukuyama, that history indeed was “over” and that the world would turn out to look just like we are, or as we imagine ourselves to be—liberal, democratic, open, a modern capitalistic or mixed economy. But suppose there are multiple endpoints, not all of which are compatible with American goals. Or that one of the major alternatives—socialism, statism, corporatism, mercantilism, authoritarianism—stages a comeback, and emerges triumphant in more than a few countries. Then we will surely have to reexamine many of our democracy-promotion and free-market initiatives of the last twenty years. For in our present troubled financial and political circumstances, the so-called Washington Consensus of the last two decades on which so much of U.S. foreign policy has rested—democracy, open markets, free trade—looks increasingly fragile, if not dead altogether.

This book grew specifically out of the seminar on Grand Theory and Ideology that I offered at the University of Georgia, Athens, Georgia, in the fall of 2008. Each of the twelve students in the seminar reported on and wrote about one of the Grand Theories. Their papers have been worked and reworked, written and rewritten; I have closely and tightly supervised the entire process. Kathryn Johnson did yeoman service on this and other projects in preparing the manuscript for publication; my research assistant, Ann P. Kryzanek, was instrumental in ensuring that the chapters were well coordinated and had a common format. We are grateful to all those who contributed to the manuscript; however the final conclusions, assessment, and recommendations are mine alone.

Howard J. Wiarda
Athens, Georgia

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INTRODUCTION

Howard J. Wiarda

The purpose of this book is to examine the bases and biases of Grand Theory and Ideology in the social sciences. By Grand Theory we mean those large, overarching, all-encompassing explanations of social and political behavior that give meaning to existence, enable us to order our lives, and provide us with conceptual frameworks to think about reality. The Grand Theories and Ideologies considered here include liberalism and developmentalism, Marxism and dependency analysis, culture theory, sociological explanations, psychology and psychoanalysis, institutionalism, rational choice theory, environmental determinism, sociobiology, explanations from chemistry and physics, and non-Western or indigenous concepts of change.

Grand Theory offers coherence, methodology, and an approach to the social sciences. It operates at the level of the Big Picture, as compared to individual or mid-level theory. Here we are interested in those major paradigms, conceptual models, and intellectual frameworks that have dominated the social sciences over the last two or three centuries, as well as in newer models. Theories of liberalism, socialism, and authoritarianism have of course been around for a long time; the other Grand Theories and Ideologies we cover emerged in the post-World War II period; still others, such as sociobiology and the theories that we are nothing but chemicals and electrical impulses, are of very recent vintage. All of these theories compete to explain the behavior of men, societies, and nations.

Almost two decades ago, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the liberation of Eastern Europe,

Francis Fukuyama famously proclaimed that history was “over.” Both socialism and authoritarianism were thoroughly discredited; democracy, “the only game in town,” seemed to be everywhere triumphant. But by now we know that Fukuyama’s triumphalism was at best premature, at worst simply wrong. Globalization, which seemed to carry with it the universal spread of open markets (capitalism), free trade, and democracy, may have triumphed, but it did so only partially in many parts of the world, and it means different things and occupies different priorities to different peoples. The “clash of civilizations” has replaced the “end of history.”

The “end of history” always seemed to apply more to the developed than to the developing world. In North America, Western Europe, and Japan, democracy, open markets, and a modern, mixed (private and public) form of capitalism seemed to have triumphed. In the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the “Washington Consensus,” that seemed to have been the agreed-upon formula. But recently the United States and Europe have pulled further apart. In the state’s seizure and nationalization of banks and financial institutions, the specter of a new form of socialism or at least statism looms. Meanwhile in Putin’s Russia, authoritarianism has reasserted itself; Marxism-Leninism or “twenty-first century socialism” is alive and well in China, North Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, and Ecuador; almost everywhere the celebrated “third wave” of democracy is over, slowed, incomplete, or in reverse. In seeking to explain these important social and political phenomena, Grand Theory is similarly making a comeback.

The issues we wrestle with in this book are the following: What is Grand Theory? What are the main alternative Grand Theories and Ideologies? Does any one of them provide a full and complete explanation of social change and political development? What accounts for the popularity and explanatory power of a particular Grand Theory and Ideology at one point in time, and its decline and the rise of other Grand Theories and Ideologies at another? What are the biases and assumptions as well as the contributions to our understanding of each of these Grand Theories and Ideologies? Are any of these Grand Theories and Ideologies complete explanations? Are they sufficient unto themselves, or should they be supplemented by other explanations?

Should we therefore be pragmatic and eclectic in picking and choosing among several explanations, combining them to form a more complex multicausality, or does one of these explanations (class analysis, culture, psychology, rational choice, sociobiology, and

the “new institutionalism” are among the claimants) have greater explanatory power and is it all-encompassing? Is the pursuit of Grand Theory and Ideology still useful, or, in this new, more scientific, and empirical era driven by demands for hard data, should we now focus on smaller, more manageable issues amenable to clear empirical research? But then, how do we do our empirical research if our larger ideas are still unclear, inchoate, and fuzzy? If Grand Theory and Ideology are still relevant and useful, how do we decide which Grand Theory or Ideology to use? These are among the big issues discussed and analyzed in this book.

In the social sciences generally and in policy circles over the last two decades, the assumption has been widespread that the era of Grand Theory and Ideology has ended, that we already know the answers. Democracy after the Cold War seemed to have emerged triumphant; the so-called Washington Consensus seemed to have arrived at a final solution: free trade, democracy, and private enterprise. The Fukuyama thesis, however, seemed more relevant to the highly developed, postindustrial nations than to the developing ones. Surely we would be hard-pressed to say that in China, India, Pakistan, Indonesia, the Philippines, Iraq, Afghanistan, Egypt, Nigeria, South Africa, Venezuela, Bolivia, even Brazil or Mexico, history is, definitively, “over.” Actually, political, ethnic, religious, sectarian, tribal, and other rivalries and conflicts signal that “history” is alive but not necessarily well; revolution, civil war, and failed states are with us too, with no happy or final ending in sight.

Even in the developed or “First World”—think of conflicted Belgium, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Canada, maybe even the United States with its hardening cultural and political divisions between Red and Blue—history may not be quite as terminal as we had thought. In many areas of the globe, with considerable disillusionment over democracy’s failure to deliver higher living standards and the collapse of global markets, the old arguments about the benefits of “strong government” (often a euphemism for authoritarianism) or a statist economy are being revived. Even among the modern, Western states where Fukuyama’s case was the strongest, we see vast gaps between the social-democratic or “social model” countries of Western Europe and the much more individualistic, private sector-dominated economy of the United States.¹

This book reexamines the role of Grand Theory and Ideology in helping us to understand human behavior and the development of nations. It explores not only the older paradigms of liberal developmentalism, Marxism, psychoanalysis, culture studies, and

institutionalism (old and new), but also more recent approaches, such as sociobiology (Edward Wilson), environmentalism (Jared Diamond), genetic and chemical explorations (from our biology and chemistry departments), and evidence from physics that we are merely a collection of nerve endings and electrical impulses. The issues are: Which of these conceptual frameworks or Grand Theories, in a time of rising uncertainty and conflict about the future, still carry validity and explanatory power? Which of these are still useful in understanding our present condition? Is any one of these Grand Theories or Ideologies sufficient unto itself, or does it have the possibility of developing in that direction in the future, or must we be eclectic, choosing the most useful and relevant aspects of several theories? Can we thus combine several theories into a more all-encompassing explanation; alternatively, could we devise a technique of multivariate analysis and complex multicausality that helps better than competing paradigms to get at that complex, ever-changing phenomenon called truth?

THE END OF IDEOLOGY?

If the seventeenth century is often considered the Age of Reason and the eighteenth the Age of Enlightenment, the nineteenth (extending to 1917) is dubbed the Age of Ideology. It was during this century that utopianism, Marxism, socialism, communism, positivism, anarchism, corporatism, and the forerunners of what would later be called (by Mussolini) fascism all emerged. Marxism, socialism, communism, anarchism, and fascism are all familiar to us, even though a little refresher course would probably be useful. For that I recommend my old teacher Carl Cohen's excellent book, *Communism, Fascism, and Democracy*.² Positivism and corporatism, however, had less impact on American society and politics, are less familiar to us, and therefore require at least a word of explanation, not least because these ideas come up at several points in the book.

Positivism was a philosophy—we could call it a Grand Theory—formulated by the French philosopher and sociologist Auguste Comte (1798–1857). Writing at the mid-nineteenth century (at about the same time Marx was writing his *Communist Manifesto*), Comte proposed an alternate theory to Marxian class analysis that was based on the development of culture, ideas, and religion. Comte's was an elitist orientation in which society's best-educated persons, social engineers, would lead the transition to modernization. Comte saw history and society as evolving through three stages: the supernatural (primitive law and religion in essentially tribal societies), the metaphysical (more

organized religion and the emergence of the modern nation-state), and the positivist in which society's intellectuals and scientists would rule. We could spend more time discussing Comte's philosophy or Grand Theory; suffice it here to say that he is considered the founder of sociology and that, while his ideas had little impact in the United States or Great Britain where dominant liberalism reigned supreme, in Latin America and Continental Europe Comte had, and still has, enormous influence. Among the reasons for his popularity there and not in the United States was that Comte was an elitist; he believed in top-down rule and a society governed by its intellectual elites, and he had little use for democracy, mass participation, or grassroots activity.³

Corporatism emerged at about the same time as positivism and liberalism (at least that of the John Stuart Mill variety), shortly after the emergence of Marxism, and as an answer or reaction to all three. Whereas positivism was a secular and even antireligious philosophy, corporatism in its early incarnations was born of Catholic political thought; while Marxism stressed class conflict and struggle, corporatism emphasized the organic harmony of labor and capital under state direction; while liberalism emphasized individual rights and responsibilities, corporatism focused on group or communal rights. In contrast to the totalitarian state that emerged out of Marxism with no subsystem autonomy, and to the inorganic one-person-one-vote and individual representation of liberalism, corporatism institutionalized representation by distinct groups or "corporations"—hence the name "corporatism"—business, labor, the Church, armed forces, farmers, etc. Portugal in earlier times may have been the "purest" corporatist system extant; in recent decades Austria has gotten the prize as the world's most corporatist system. We treat of corporatism at various points in the book; although corporatism may yet rise to the level of constituting a Grand Theory or Ideology in its own right, we have not included it here as one of the main Grand Theories discussed as we have written on that theme extensively elsewhere.⁴

While the nineteenth century was the century of ideology, it was in the twentieth century that these Grand Theories and Ideologies found expression in actual regime types. The Soviet Union was the first state founded on explicitly Marxist-Leninist principles, and was followed over time by Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, North Vietnam, Cuba, and other bedraggled Third World countries. The heyday of fascism was similarly in the interwar period, as exemplified by Nazi Germany, Mussolini's Italy, and, arguably, Franco's Spain. Salazar's Portugal, and other short-lived regimes in Greece, Romania,

Hungary, Croatia, and Poland were quasi-fascist. Liberalism was concentrated in "the West," meaning North America and Western Europe, which was designated as the "Free World" even though that designation sometimes included some embarrassingly unfree countries, such as Franco's Spain and the military dictatorships of Latin America, the Middle East, and South and Southeast Asia.

In the post-World War II period, which also corresponds to that of the Cold War, the world was similarly divided into three distinct blocs. In keeping with the emphasis on national development in this period, these blocs were referred to as the "three worlds of development."⁵ The "First World" consisted of the familiar group of the United States, Canada, Western Europe, Australia, and New Zealand, but it has now expanded to include Japan as well. The First World was made up of developed, industrialized, and, above all, democratic nations. The "Second World" consisted of developed communist states, a misnomer since we discovered after the collapse of the Soviet Union that these states were far poorer and far less developed than we had thought. The Second World included the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), Eastern Europe, China, North Korea, and the other communist states listed earlier. The "Third World" included all the rest, all the poor, underdeveloped, or "developing" countries of Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East. Of course these designations were not perfect—China was both Second World and Third World, and South Korea and Taiwan were coming closer to First World—but they served as a convenient classificatory scheme for over thirty years, from roughly the early 1960s until the collapse of the Soviet Union in the period 1989–1991.

In 1958, at the height of the Cold War and the "great systems debate" between communism, authoritarianism, and democracy, the Harvard sociologist Daniel Bell published an important and prescient book entitled *The End of Ideology*. In it, Bell analyzed the rise of a new and large middle class, the growing prosperity of the working class, rising literacy, rising consumption, growing affluence, and the corresponding decline in intense, extremist, strongly ideological political parties and movements. On the basis of what Bell saw as the growing *embourgeoisement* of North America and Western Europe, he predicted a decline in intense ideological differences and conflict. I recall some of my more radical teachers and later colleagues were strongly critical of Bell because they preferred that ideological (and other) conflict continue, not "end." And at the time, on the face of it, and at the height of the Cold War, it seemed far-fetched that ideological conflict would end anytime soon.

Around the same time, and echoing, even if indirectly, Bell's themes, one of the Grand Theories treated in this book, developmentalism, emerged. Developmentalism was associated with some of the great names in the economics, sociology, and political science fields: W. W. Rostow, Karl Deutsch, Seymour Martin Lipset, C. E. Black, and Gabriel A. Almond.⁶ It posited that there were various stages of growth, that there were common processes of change through which all societies went, and that the final outcome of this process was societies that were democratic, developed, and socially just. All we needed to do was pour in economic aid, stimulate social modernization, and, devoid of any ideological conflict, democracy would inevitably follow. Surely it was comforting, at the height of the Cold War, to *know* that the final outcome of development was countries that looked just like we do—democratic, middle class, and socially just—and that ideological conflict would play no role in national development. Alternative models such as socialism, communism (Rostow called communism a “disease of the transition”), populism, or corporatism were thus ruled out. This formulation, which paralleled Bell’s “end of ideology” theme and served furthermore, however hopeful the endpoint was, as an instrument of U.S. foreign policy, was remarkably parallel to the “end of history” theme developed by Francis Fukuyama, the transitions-to-democracy literature formulated in the 1980s and 1990s, and the “Washington Consensus” during the same period.

The Soviet Union’s collapse, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the tearing down of the Iron Curtain meant the old designations were no longer useful and needed to be revised. Especially now, as Russia and Eastern Europe embarked on a course seemingly leading to democracy and a market system, the line between First and Second Worlds appeared useless. Actually, having lived and traveled widely in Eastern Europe and Russia during this period, I continued to use the Second World category, no longer as a way ideologically to designate communist states but because these countries were still poor, disorganized, inefficient, and had a very long way to go to catch up with the First World. Meanwhile other countries in Asia *did* catch up, including Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan earlier, as well as Hong Kong and Singapore now. Clearly, with these and other anomalies, the social sciences needed a new set of categories, a new language, to deal with the new contingencies of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century realities.

The social sciences found that new language in the “transitions-to-democracy” and the “Washington Consensus” literature. The transitions-to-democracy literature was based on the notion that since the Soviet Union, and socialism in general, had proved