

Abstract

This study deals with a range of fundamental questions that present themselves in development thinking- particularly after the changes that took place in late twentieth century- and tries to identify the changes imposed by globalization and how Arab thought dealt with these developments.

The research utilizes (through the analysis of qualitative content analysis approach) a variety of study and research materials; books and articles on the subject of this thesis have been selected at random, this thesis will try to answer questions surrounding the shift in popular thought within society, primarily: what are the trends in Arab thought on development? Are the achievements of Arab development serious? What is the impact of globalization on Arab thoughts on development? Have there been any serious changes in Arab thinking on the issue development?

This study has tried to address the question of if Arab ideas on development are a distorted echo of popular thought in the West, and, effectively acting as a tool to facilitate the placement and dependency of Arab countries; and also if globalization is shaking the foundations of and ultimately shaping thought in all the various fields of development.

This study has reviewed many of the writings in this field of thought since the late nineteen sixties and seventies, quoting Western concepts of development, and found that the focus shifted from thought experimentation seeking to explain and clarify these theories and concepts; to, later in the eighties and nineties focusing more on the assessments of ideas and experiences of development in the Arab world. Currently in this stage after September 11th and the era of the war on terrorism, development has been used as a tool to fight terrorism, rather than empowering individuals and fighting poverty.

The study analyses the historical context of the development process of Arab society and thought from the Renaissance to current times, and highlights an inability to overcome crisis and meet challenges,

culminating in the inability to produce a single model of successful development. Instead, the Arab states took the role of global consumers rather than producers; beyond this, Arab thought focused on copying, consuming and commenting on the Western model of development rather than forming a new model of development tailored to the developmental issues faced in the region. There is almost unanimous agreement that Arab developmental thought has emerged from and reflects ideological beliefs and the dialogue of religious rhetoric on issues of modernity, rather than dealing with the pressing questions of Arab reality

The study concludes on the basis of the above ideas, that Arab thought on development is not purely Arab, but mostly, if not in its entirety a distorted reflection of Western ideas, whether capitalist or socialist, and the data actually refers clearly to the failure of Arab development in making gears and serious changes that indicate successful developmental advance. The facts on the ground indicate that there is no room for doubt that it is increasingly difficult for the Arab states to meet and deal individually with challenges without the cooperation and integration of other Arab countries.

The research found that the individual in the Arab world is at high risk from its ruling political and power systems, the philosophy of education, conflicts and wars, military occupations and lack of self determination, and removal from participation in the political economy. The lack of access and control to these economic and political resources cause severe limitations in the possibility for development.

Arab development thinking has not provided precise and clear explanations for the big defeats and failures of the Arabic states and societies at large; in the light of current realities, it is difficult to say if Arab countries are able to face the risks of globalization and declining opportunities with their inability to exploit the possibilities provided by globalization.