



The Politics of Decolonization: Addressing Eurocentrism in Politics and Policy

Shahid Ul Haq Wani

Department of Political Science, University Of Kashmir
Shahidpolsc123@gmail.com

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Abstract— This paper examines the Eurocentric bias that plagues the discipline of political science and explores ways to evaluate geography. Historically, political science has been dominated by Western theories and methods, leaving non-Western political theories lacking. This Eurocentrism not only ignores the diversity of international politics, but also leads to international conflict. This paper argues for a more unified and representative approach to politics by examining the political realm, the laws that currently govern, and the integration of Global South theory into international relations theory. This paper also explores the need to address research using alternative methods that reflect the complexity of non-Western political systems. Finally, decolonizing political science requires not only a broadening of inquiry but also a rethinking of the discipline's fundamental assumptions in order to create a more equitable and universal understanding of politics.



Keywords— Indigenous governance, Global south, International relations, Postcolonial theory, Cultural Theory, Western theory, Decolonization Studies.

I. INTRODUCTION

Political science, like many other sciences, has a history of deriving from European ideas and theories, most of that have dominated the North America. This Eurocentrism often ignores the political and ideological differences of other regions of the world, thereby diminishing their involvement in the region. As the world becomes more interconnected, and formerly colonial countries gain greater political influence, calls for political decision-making are increasing. This means recognizing and addressing Eurocentric biases in political theory, research, and teaching methods is an imperative. Decolonizing political science is not about adding new voices; it is about rethinking the principles that have enabled the country to form a unified and representative discipline. By engaging with indigenous political institutions, postcolonial theory, and Global South perspectives, we can build a more equitable and rational understanding of global politics.

II. EUROCENTRISM IN POLITICAL SCIENCE: A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The dominance of science began during the European Enlightenment, when thinkers such as Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau laid the intellectual foundations of Western thought. Their ideas were often flexible, with implications for international politics, such as the social contract, individual rights, and national sovereignty. But these ideas emerged from a specific history and culture (17th- and 18th-century Europe) and were not applied to the rest of the world in the middle. As European powers expanded their control over large parts of the world, they developed their own policies and ideas on colonial societies, often viewing local political institutions as primitive or backward. This legacy continues today; political science systems in many countries still incorporate Western texts and methods. As a result, political organizations and ideas in Africa, Asia, and Latin America are often seen as marginal or “exceptional” rather than central to the mainstream world of political analysis.

Realism and Marxism have shaped how world politics is taught and understood. But these methods often fail to account for the political realities of non-Western peoples. For example, basic liberties such as individual rights and democratic governance may not adequately explain the public and administrative structures in many African societies. Similarly, realism, which views international relations as a struggle between states' powers, has difficulty explaining the region and the collaborations that have led to the various policies of Asia and Africa. For example, the political ideas of thinkers such as Confucius, Mahatma Gandhi, or Ibn Khaldun have received little attention in political science, despite their profound influence on control and thought in their respective fields. By focusing solely on Western perspectives, political science ignores the richness and diversity of cultures and ideas that exist in the West.

Integrating Indigenous and Non-Western Political Systems

A significant part of the decolonization process is the recognition of the value of Indigenous and non-Western political systems. These organizations are often based on social and cultural values and provide a model of governance that challenges Western ideals of freedom, justice, and liberty. For example, the Panchayati judiciary in India uses a system of local self-government by the local community, representing a form of participatory democracy distinct from Western liberal democracy. Similarly, African presidential rule and consensus-building policies regarding public decision-making and conflict resolution are incompatible with the human rights that underpin Western thinking. Non-Western political systems should not be viewed as anomalies or exceptions, but should be examined on their own terms as alternatives to Western models. This should not only broaden political studies, but also create new theoretical frameworks that can ground the diversity of international politics. Even after independence, many countries in Africa, Asia, and Latin America retained political institutions abandoned by European powers. This legacy has had a profound impact on the governance of postcolonial states, shaping everything from legal systems to bureaucratic structures.

Similarly, most African countries retain laws based on European models, but these are often associated with local standards of justice and governance. In some cases, these foreign political systems have proven hostile to local realities, leading to governance problems such as corruption, conflict, and weak states.

Decolonial political science must not only acknowledge these old policies, but also explore how postcolonial states reclaim their own political institutions and structures. This may involve integrating indigenous governance into

modern state structures or creating new political structures that transcend colonial systems. Like political science as a whole, it has traditionally been driven by Western thought. Ideas such as realism and liberalism were created in the context of European and North American politics and often reflect the interests and concerns of Western countries. This made sense in a political world where the Global South was often seen as a peripheral actor, looking to the power of the North in business. Regional organizations such as ASEAN, BRICS, and the African Union are challenging the energy-use model of global governance and politics. These organizations emphasize regional cooperation, negotiation, and other development methods, in contrast to the competitive, state-centric social theory of the Western world. For example, the Non-Aligned Movement, founded during the Cold War, rejected the binary logic of Western international relations theory and advocated a three-way approach that was critical to democratic governance and the independence of newly independent states. Today, countries in the Global South continue to struggle against Western control of organizations such as the United Nations and the World Trade Organization, advocating reforms that affect the supply pressures of developing countries. A comprehensive and inclusive approach that transcends the narrow confines of Western thought.

Traditional research methods used in political science, such as quantitative analysis, case studies, and comparative politics, are often based on Western epistemology and refer to objectivity, rationality, and empiricism. While these methods provide good insights, they may not be suitable for examining non-Western policies, which tend to be more complex and context-dependent. Decisions may not fit well within the rigid framework of Western politics. Similarly, participatory research that involves working closely with communities to create knowledge can provide a more comprehensive and inclusive approach to political education. These lessons are more important than local knowledge and experience, and are difficult to generalize from traditional, top-down research.

III. CONCLUSION

Decolonizing political science means embracing this alternative research methodology to help scholars construct more nuanced and contextualized analyses. This could include using ethnographic methods to examine politics within its cultural context, using narratives to understand the political significance of oral history, or conducting research on the importance of the needs and voices of marginalized communities. Through the study of politics, scholars can develop a unified and representative approach to political science that is not in line with Western

knowledge. If the discipline is to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world, the dominance of Eurocentric theories, frameworks, and methods limits the scope of political research, marginalizes non-Western perspectives, and reinforces the world's hierarchies of power. By examining these biases and integrating studies of regional politics, the Global South, and other issues, scholars can create a unified and representative picture of politics. It is about bringing new voices to politics. It is about rethinking what we have learned and understood about politics. Political science can transcend the narrowness of Eurocentrism and become an international discipline that can solve the political problems of the 21st century. The future of political science lies in its ability to embrace diversity of ideas, methods, and perspectives.

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