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Editorial

Particular versus Universal: Inserting Theory into Middle East Studies

The main problem with the so-called Middle East studies is the weakness of its theoretical dimension. Needless to mention, theory plays a major role in enriching every field of humanities. But in spite of its long history, in the Middle East studies, theory has been applied irregularly and arbitrarily. Most of authors deal with the Middle East in a descriptive way and regard it as a particular region which is not rational and predictable. This phenomenon, on the one hand, has culminated in the illusion of being particular. While every field of study has to connect with 'the universal' in order to produce accumulating knowledge, and theory is the most significant means for connecting to the universal. On the other hand, considering the Middle East as a particular region has resulted in many misuses and violations, including the violation of human rights, because when you are treating a region as a particular one which is quite different from other regions of the world and it does not obey universal rules, you are going to justify the status quo of inhumane conditions. It

is obvious that the violators claim that their realm is a particular which is not understandable by universal theories.

Obviously the Middle Eastern issues are not essentially different from other parts of the world. Therefore, theory as a universal tool for analyzing problems is necessary for this purpose. But applying theories on a subject does not mean to 'find' appropriate theories for describing some phenomena but it means to look at the phenomena from a theoretical point of view. In this manner, the researcher is not looking for a suitable theory that can explain the topic of research, but they already have theoretical concerns and have chosen a philosophical-theoretical stance. By this intellectual strategy, the researcher is a thinker who studies a topic, not a neutral human being who acts like a robot according to some formula.

In this direction, our journal tries to collect and publish those researches which are rich in terms of theory. Fortunately, we have managed to collect and present several strong articles which have applied theoretical frameworks on their topics in order to present a deeper reflection. Akam Ahmad examines the Turkish foreign policy as one of the most controversial topics of the Middle East in recent years from a constructivist point of view. Through this, the author tries to look at the subject from a new angle so that it can be meaningful and understandable. In the second article, Azad Haji Aghaie attempts to analyze the relationship between nationalism and state in the rhetoric of the Republic of Kurdistan in Mahabad. In his article, Sabah Mofidi is going to study how religion affects the political culture in East Kurdistan. For this purpose, the theory of Almond and Verba has been used. In her detailed article, Helale Ghafouri has focused on the topic of Kurdish women's suicide from a grounded theory point of view. This is the first study about Kurdish women's suicide from a theoretical perspective.

We know that these attempts should be accumulated for several decades so that we can talk about producing theoretical approaches to the Middle East issues but we hope that these theoretical attempts can open new horizons in political and social analysis of the Middle East.