The Post-development Thought of Sayyid Mortaza Avini

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Abstract

It became significant in finding development in Iran after the emergence of the new industrial order in the West that leads to a debate on how Iran should confront the phenomenon of high economic development. In contemporary Iranian history, Western-oriented elites have attributed Iran's backwardness to not following the methods that the West used to achieve development. Therefore, especially during the Pahlavi era, development planning with a Western-centric approach was implemented to address this backwardness. Undoubtedly, the realization of the Islamic Revolution can be considered as a confrontation with this style of modernization, which has led to serious criticisms from some thinkers. The present study examines the Sayyid Mortaza Avini's thoughts on development economics, who is one of these intellectuals. This paper aims to investigate the question of 'What components Avini's thought on development is based on?' The findings indicated that Avini has criticized Western development while also aligning with some post-development thinkers. Although he goes beyond the post-development approach and, influenced by the ideas of the Islamic Revolution and based on Islamic and indigenous elements such as religious identity and Islamic justice, he presents an alternative version of development (progress accompanied by spirituality). This way, he addresses his most important concern regarding the issue of progress positively. The method of this article will be grounded theory and data collection based on library research.

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The Implications of the Islamic Theory of Fitrah in International Regimes: Power, Plenty and Pride

Introduction

The growth of welfare-oriented ideas after World War II sparked debates on the nature and origin of crises such as poverty and deprivation. The repercussions of such encounters, under the influence of the victory of Northern countries, gave rise to the mindset that crises are the result of the social construction of the Third World. Therefore, from then on, the meaning of development was at least perceived as an escape from the humiliating state of underdevelopment (Zaks, 1998 AD/1377 SH: 15).

In other words, the term Third World became synonymous with crises. Therefore, many opinions claimed that with economic and industrial growth following Western mechanisms, crises in the Third World would soon fade away. So, the only thing that Southern countries needed to do to achieve "Development" were to act like developed countries (Matthews, 2004: 375).

A look at the history of economic development in Iran shows that Iran was not exempt from this rule. In particular, the first and second Pahlavi eras attempted to align with these theories. The economic focus of the first Pahlavi era and the modernization program of the second Pahlavi era support this reality. The first and second Pahlavi eras pursued development plans with a Westernizing approach that ultimately faced defeat with the Islamic Revolution. It was under these circumstances that intellectuals like Avini, influenced by the foundations of Islamic Revolution thought and emphasizing that Western development does not have many positive aspects, tried to present an alternative model of development. Therefore, this research raises the question of 'What components Avini's thought on development is based on?'

The research findings suggest that Avini, under the influence of Islamic Revolution thought and in conjunction with some post-development thinkers, has addressed the rejection of Western development; although he goes beyond the post-development thinkers in his positive approach and offers an alternative version of development based on Islamic and indigenous elements such as religious identity and Islamic justice.

1. Background of the Research

Momeni and Darvishi (2019 AD/1398 SH) in an article titled "A Look at the Post-Development School" emphasize that this school considers development as a wrong response to the genuine needs and aspirations of the South, shaped under the influence of Northern development ideologies.

Anbari and Piri (2016 AD/1395 SH) in an article titled "Development as Moral Desolation: A Study of Majid Rahnama's Thought" demonstrate that in the late decades of the twentieth century, some intellectuals like Majid Rahnama have challenged the idea of development in many parts of the world, especially the Third World. Based on the findings of this research, Rahnama identifies societies that have not yet embraced the discourse of development and refers to them as ethical communities whose people possess numerous virtues but gradually find themselves falling into economic distress and moral desolation due to the glittering allure of development schemes.

Ahmadi and Beidullahkhani (2013 AD/1392 SH) in an article titled "Post-Development and Critical Representations of Development Discourse; A People-Centered Approach" show that post-development is a product of fundamental criticisms of economic logic and growth-oriented development, universalism and Western-centric development, environmental degradation, and increasing industrialization, as well as the government-centered development model focusing on work and industrial plans.

Imami and colleagues (2010 AD/1389 SH) in an article titled "A Critical Analysis of the Use of Conventional Global Development Indicators" have delved into the globalization and legitimization of their governance through all possible means (media, educational, advisory, international organizations, motivational, influential, etc.) by hegemonic countries.

Anbari (2003 AD/1382 SH) in an article titled "Post-Development Thought and Cultural Circulation: An Examination of the Relationship between Economy and Culture in Development Perspectives" has addressed the issue that with the spread of modernist thought, development thinking has also declined. The results of this research indicate that recent theoretical developments in the field of development, unlike previous eras where it was defined by scarcity logic and economy, are now characterized by a focus on culture and the dominance of its elements and factors in social transformations.Within this framework, the innovation of this research lies in firstly exploring Avini's critical approach to Western development based on the Grand Theory method, and secondly, in this path, it also focuses on the comparative examination of Avini's approach and post-development thinkers in this field.

2. Theoretical Framework: Post-development

Post-development, through the use of post-structuralism and postmodern theoretical tools, claims that development does not

necessarily indicate an improvement in living standards (Rapley, 2004: 352). Therefore, post-development seeks to reassess a positive interpretation of development. According to them, Northern societies have succeeded in persuading Southern countries under a beautiful narrative of meaning that they have brought a great mission to the world, which is the smoothing of the development path. In this regard, post-development thinkers emphasize that the West, through the discourse of development, has constructed a network of meanings that portray the world outside of development as grim and depraved. Therefore, in the development discourse system, worlds are distinguished from each other to construct a positive meaning of development. However, according to post-development thinkers, the assertion of different worlds that has emerged under the development discourse system must be questioned again from an ontological perspective. In their view, such an assertion only finds meaning within the development discourse and the West's attempt to dominate developing countries, lacking any meaningful sign outside of this discourse system. In other words, they strive to demonstrate how the West has engaged in cultural alienation to subjugate and homogenize the Third World (Pitt, Wick, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 205).

They emphasize the consequences of development as evidence of the matter. In their belief, development, as it is talked about, has failed to alleviate the crises of the South; it has even exacerbated them to a large extent. This is why Serge Latouche, a French economist, believes that development is a tool for Western advanced countries to eliminate cultures and the autonomy of nations throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America (Goulet, 1998: 147).

As a result, such consequences of development have led post-development intellectuals to the idea that the only way to save Southern countries from crises is not to move along the path of development but to expel the development discourse. In other words, this school of thought speaks of alternatives to development instead of the development paradigm (Escobar, 2000:12).

Based on post-development theories, unlike the views of development that reject elitism and top-down development, post-development emphasizes localism, taking grassroots movements seriously, promoting social justice, preserving the environment, confronting poverty, and respecting cultural institutions in relation to the economy and cultural differences. Following this line of thought, Jakimow considers the knowledge employed in development as a product of "Western" epistemological perspectives (Jakimow, 2008: 312) that aim to marginalize the role of localism by emphasizing

specialization and top-down development. Escobar, another prominent theorist of the post-development movement, challenges top-down development by promoting ideas that highlight the importance of culture and localization in development. He critically analyzes Western development institutions and believes that developed countries, through international organizations such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, and development agencies at the grassroots and local levels, have reproduced discourses that perpetuate social inequalities under the guise of development, reducing the role of local elites and marginalizing indigenous discourses (Escobar, 1984: 383).

The particular focus of post-development thinkers on culture, local knowledge, and solidarity with grassroots movements demonstrates a clear rejection of the fundamental ideal of transferring power from the hands of "External Experts" to members of their own society for interpreting problems and providing solutions to their internal dilemmas (Schoburgh, 2016: 17). This is evident in government planning as well, which also emphasizes the effective role of people in formulating and implementing programs instead of imposing top-down development models (Schoburgh, 2016: 18). Poverty is another central issue for post-development thinkers. Researchers in this field have discussed poverty from various perspectives, arguing that poverty is fundamentally a relative and cultural concept that should not be viewed solely as a simple material deficiency. According to these researchers, poverty should be considered in relation to the social and cultural contexts in which societies are situated. Therefore, this issue is seen as changeable from cultural and historical perspectives (Pieterse, 2000: 177). In the face of development, post-development thinkers consider the most important concern to be the lack of necessary attention to ethical values and social justice issues. They warn that in order for development not to turn into anti-development, social justice and ethical norms must be emphasized. According to them, the development epistemology is devoid of such an approach. Post-development theorists emphasize that the market, as the central concept of the development paradigm, has failed to achieve its main objectives. They argue that wealth is currently distributed unequally in many societies, and ethical issues such as civic responsibility and mutual trust have been influenced by the external costs of the market. In other words, the primary goal of development ethics, which is to humanize development decisions and actions, has been sidelined (Crocker, 1991: 458). In this regard, Goulet emphasizes that ethics should be transformed into a goal for development because economic programs and projects have different impacts on individuals who become victims of poverty, class

privilege, economic exploitation, or political domination (Goulet, 1998: 158).

3. Article Method: Grounded Theory

Grounded theory, in terms of type, is a qualitative method and in terms of purpose, is of the exploratory study type, systematically seeking to develop a systematic approach rather than relying on existing and pre-formulated theories to create an inductive theory about existing phenomena. Therefore, the process of forming this theory is based on key concepts derived from data, moving from the specific to the general (Golizar, 2020 AD/1399 SH: 8).

3.1. Society and Sample under Study

In this article, data collection was done using the documentary technique, or library research; the society under study in this article includes all the articles and notes published by Sayyid Mortaza Avini on economic and development issues in the journal Jihad under the pseudonym Mortaza Haqgu.

Given that this article has used the grounded theory method to solve the problem at hand, the most appropriate sampling method has been theoretical sampling. As Glaser and Strauss believe, the process of data collection and interpretation by the researcher continues until theoretical saturation is reached (Glaser and Strauss, 1967: 45). In fact, this sampling method mainly continues after the collection and analysis of a specific number of research materials and items based on their relationship with the theory.

Raw	Articles Name	Date
1	Schools about development and foundations of Western civilization	Mehr 1364
2	Development, utopia of the present century	Farvardin 1365
3	Earthly paradise	Ordibehesht 1365
4	The naked ape	Khordad 1365
5	Development for enjoyment	Tir 1365
6	The civilization of extravagance and waste	Mordad 1365
7	Catastrophe depth	Shahrivar 1365
8	Dictatorship of the economy of more consumption for more production (1)	Mehr 1365
9	Dictatorship of the war economy, the main factor of economic prosperity (2)	Aban 1365
10	Planetary system of economy	Azar 1365
11	From the dictatorship of money to the free economy	Dey 1365
12	What is our understanding of bank?	Bahman 1365
13	Profiteering, the basis of free economy	Farvardin and Ordibehesht 1366
14	Educational system and the goal of development	Khordad 1366
15	The western education system is a product of the separation of science and religion	Tir 1366
16	Man is descended from monkeys, an ignorant superstition (1)	Mordad 1366
17	Man is descended from monkeys, an ignorant superstition (2)	Shahrivar 1366
18	More reflection on the creation of the first man	Mehr 1366
19	Prophet Noah and the history of civilization	Aban 1366

Table 1: Sayyid Mortaza Avini's articles about economy and development in Jihad Monthly

3.2. Coding stages

Three stages of open, axial, and selective coding for data analysis in this study, have been used in the following manner: First, we coded the existing data based on the analytical unit "Concept," then in the axial coding stage; we categorized this information based on similarities, overlaps, and semantic intersections and brought them into central categories. In the final stage, namely selective coding, the obtained categories were integrated into a new category called the core category in a cohesive manner, and then to establish a relationship between the extracted categories in the proposed classification of Strauss and Corbin, which includes conditions, interventions, context, phenomenon, action/interaction strategies, and consequences, we placed them.

3.3. Validity and Reliability

Assessing the validity and reliability is an important part of any research aimed at examining repeatability and achieving consistent results. Therefore, in this article, the technique of intra-subject agreement has been used by colleagues to assess the reliability and validity of the data and components.

4. Research Findings

The result of coding and data reduction is 15 components, as shown in the table below. These findings will be further explained and detailed after Table 2.

1	2	3
Rejection of western development	Capital governance and multinational companies	Imperialism
4	5	6
Western lifestyle	Specialized education system	Work and alienation
7	8	9
Emphasis on Islamic ethics	Advertising tools and methods	Making discourse of development
10	11	12
Substitution from the concept of development	Achieving social justice	Islamic model of progress
13	14	15
Environmental problem	Identity Crisis	Poverty Reduction

Table 2: Research Findings

4.1. Central Concept

The central concept or idea recognized as the central category represents what the researcher introduces as the main subject of the research (Corbin and Strauss, 2022 AD/1401 SH: 190). In the thought of Sayyid Mortaza Avini, this concept is the "Rejection of Western Development."

4.2. Rejection of Western Development

After examining the data and analyses conducted in the views of Avini regarding the issues of economy and development, the "Rejection of Western Development" was discovered as the core of Avini's theories. Avini, in an article entitled "Development, the Utopia of the Present Century," has discussed his reasons for rejecting Western development. He believes that by accepting the ideals of development, "The spiritual and moral dimensions of human existence under the influence of these ideals will lead to corruption and decadence." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 19)

Avini explains that as a result of the dominance of Western economic culture as a utopia of development, human life is influenced by these materialistic ideas, and humans as economic animals have deviated from their true nature (Avini, 1987 AD/1366 SH: 34).

Avini also admits that material and economic development in the West is not necessarily accompanied by the meaning of evolution and excellence in Islam; "On the contrary, spiritual excellence is accompanied by contentment, asceticism, and less consumption..." (Avini, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 21)

4.3. Causal Conditions

Causal conditions are those background factors that influence the experiences of subsequent phenomena and their related conditions, leading to the occurrence of a phenomenon (Yakushko, 2010: 260). In the thought of Avini, these conditions can be explained as follows:

4.3.1. Dominance of Capital and Multinational Corporations

Sayyid Mortaza Avini considers the dominance of the economic perspective over economic development to create unrealistic needs and consequently lead to the formation of economic dictatorship in the West, which has "A side contrary to the real goals of human creation and his real needs." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 7)

According to Avini's perspective, the focus solely on economic growth in the economic governance model of Western countries, besides ignoring the ethical and human dimensions of development, has resulted in unfair distribution of wealth and resources in developed Western countries; in a way that a significant portion of power and capital has unfairly concentrated in the hands of cartels and large multinational corporations.

4.3.2. Imperialism

Avini in his article "And What Do We Perceive as Banks?" focuses on the concept of Western economic imperialism and states that one of the main roots of capitalism and economic imperialism has been realized through banks in the contemporary world. He believes that "The spread

of long-distance trade that completed the economic imperialism globally led to the creation of a global market." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 31)

He refers to the role of banks in preserving Western interests and perpetuating imperialism, stating that banks have played a role as a centralized and global system in serving the preservation of Western interests and the continuity of imperialism. He believes that "In the Western world, banks are actually centers that use everyone's capital to create giant private ownerships and develop capitalism and extend the dominance of imperialism." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 32)

The prominent role of banks in creating a usurious economic system has led Avini to emphasize this issue by stating, "In the capitalist system, banks are giant usurious institutions on which the industrial system and the capitalist mode of production are entirely based, and essentially, these two - the banking system and industrial development - cannot be separated from each other." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 32)

4.4. Background Factors

Background factors are essentially the structures and contexts in which a phenomenon occurs. They constitute actions and interactions and to some extent contribute to the emergence of a phenomenon (Tillmann and Goddard, 2008: 93).

4.4.1. Western Lifestyle

In an article titled "The Naked Ape," within the framework of his critical perspective on Western cultural structure and lifestyle, Avini believes that the West, with its emphasis on limitless material consumption as a confirmed and fundamental ethical value and the basis for judging other moral values, has led to neglect of spiritual and moral values; in a way that "Western legal systems are shaped in a way that allows free persuasion of desires for all individuals. " (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 11)

Avini emphasizes the point that in the Islamic perspective of moral education, sacrifice, moderation, and selflessness are considered the main pillars of Islamic lifestyle. He views the ultimate goal of this as the cultural systematization for a return to the divine nature (Avini, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 20). According to the viewpoint of Avini, social development of individuals in Islam is based on spirituality. While in developed Western societies, hedonistic ideology is perceived as the primary motivator for individuals, and laws are formulated to enable free persuasion of desires.

4.4.2. Specialized Educational System

In his article "The Educational System and the Ideal of Development," Avini discusses the distinction between the Western educational system

and the Islamic educational system. He believes that the educational system of developed Western societies has been shaped by materialistic approaches based on the ideal of "Economic Growth," with its ultimate goal being to achieve high economic development indicators to increase the enjoyment and efficiency of human beings in the world. Avini states that "If we want to maintain this trend of economic development, we must necessarily meet its needs, and the need for specialists is the most important reason that has led to the current educational system." (Avini, 1987 AD/1366 SH: 37)

Avini criticizes the approaches adopted in the Western educational system and believes that unlike the educational system of seminaries where jurisprudence in religion and reaching divine perfection is the goal, the current educational system aims solely at training specialized personnel needed for this civilization (ibid: 57).

Accordingly, Avini considers his desired educational system to be similar to what is currently being practiced in seminaries, and therefore, he states that the idea of unity between seminaries and universities will occur when the educational system deviates from conventional methods and revisits the content of humanities (Avini, 1987 AD/1366 SH).

4.4.3. Work and Alienation

The crises of mental and social issues arising from industrial work in the West have led Avini to this concept. He believes that in Western culture, work is seen merely as a means to provide for material needs, rather than a tool for refining the self and spiritual elevation, creating a ground for people's alienation from themselves. Avini writes, "In this dry and inhumane perspective, the only motivation that drives people to work is earning more money, and the spiritual bond of individuals with their work is completely severed... By compulsion, one only engages in work for livelihood, and since all their needs are met with money, this money becomes the ultimate aim and source of all values" (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 17).

This is in contrast to Avini's understanding of work in the Islamic economic system, where he indicates that "Each person's work is directly based on their beliefs and qualitative and spiritual distinctions, and what drives people to work is not money, but love. A believer is obedient to their own beliefs, not to the economy, and their actions are directly based on their intentions." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 17)

In the Western economic system, "Repetitive, highly specialized work empties the worker more than ever of their human qualities." (ibid: 15)

Therefore, Avini, in his theory, presents the concept of work as a form of worship and believes that this concept is a fundamental pillar

in building personality, refining the self, spiritual elevation, and spirituality in Islamic culture, which in itself can lead to the flourishing of talents and spiritual excellence in individuals. This is why he writes, "One of the most striking points that always amazed us in studying traditional Islamic societies was how - for example, in the case of potters in Meybod, Yazd - their work and life were intertwined with each other."

He emphasizes that in the Islamic perspective, work is different from what is prevalent in Western or Westernized societies today, and its effects are also present in the administrative and labor organizations in Iran. In his view, work is considered as a service to creation for the satisfaction of God and as a means to actualize human potential throughout one's life. In this approach, the work and life of a believing individual are so intertwined that their separation from each other is not possible. In his opinion, "One of the distinguishing features of revolutionary institutions and hereditary executive organizations that are the legacy of our Westernization is that work is perceived as a great form of worship in revolutionary institutions." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 15)

4.5. Intervening Factors

Intervening factors are general and extensive conditions that influence action/interaction strategies and can include factors such as time, place, culture, socio-economic status, technological status, occupation, personal history and biography (Vollstedt and Rezat, 2019: 88).

4.5.1. Neglect of Ethics

In his article "The Dictatorship of the Economy, the Main Factor in Economic Prosperity (2)," Avini discusses the evolution of ethics in the Western civilization system. He believes that in developed Western systems, ethics have been degraded, and he considers the predominance of economic standards over lofty spiritual values as the main reason for the moral decline in the West (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 7).

He, in his article "Naked Ape," believes that contemporary Western civilization has turned into a "Human Zoo," where individuals are only seeking material pleasures (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 12).

He sees the main reason for the formation of this issue as forgetting and neglecting the innate nature of human needs. So, he believes that in non-Islamic systems, "Man is reduced to a set of animal instincts, and when this happens, inevitably, there is no more evolution and elevation of man in returning to his divine nature; it is about fulfilling his material and instinctual needs to the best and fullest extent." (Avini, 1987 AD/1366 SH: 34)

Avini believes that in Western ethical systems, unlike the Islamic ethical system, there is no distinction between genuine human needs and extravagant false needs. Therefore, he states, "Evolution and elevation in Islamic teachings refer to a comprehensive movement where cultural and spiritual dimensions with authenticity are returned to, while in the West, evolution is applied to the development of humans from lower animal forms to evolved forms." (Avini, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 20)

4.5.2. Tools and Advertising Methods

In his article "Development, the Utopia of the Present Century," Avini criticizes the dominant approaches in Western advertising and considers it as a promoter of a kind of epistemological system that, by modeling and creating false personalities like James Bond or Rambo, aims to absolve the face of capitalism from its countless crimes. In his view, one should not consider "The dissemination of crime films and the creation of characters like James Bond (007) as a coincidence with the Vietnam War." "The American government had no choice but to use promotional heroism to prepare the minds and souls of people around the world, especially American society, for the crimes and bloodshed that were taking place in Vietnam." He believes that even now, "Rambo," America's new idol, a soldier returning from the Vietnam War, has the same duty (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 19).

Furthermore, Avini emphasizes that the promotion of a false consumer culture as one of the main pillars of Western development has greatly contributed to the propagation of capitalist values. He believes that Western media advertising is based on animalistic aspects, leading to neglect of genuine human needs and steering individuals away from the path of genuine moral values (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 8).

4.5.3. Discourse on Development

Avini, in his article "Man from the Monkey Generation, an Ignorant Superstition (1)," has focused on the cultural dimensions of Western development. He believes that the cultural discourse arising from Western development has changed the dimensions of life in human societies in a way that, by creating false models, it has paved the way for their intellectual and cultural colonization. He says, "In Egypt, Jeddah, Istanbul, Moscow, Delhi, Peru... and even the most remote villages in Africa and Australia, as long as there has been a school and television - there is no other situation." (Avini, 1987 AD/1366 SH)

Avini believes that the West has created two extreme images, a poor rural society and an ideal developed urban industrial society, and by comparing these two images, it imposes development as an inevitable transition from the first situation to the second. The first image depicts

a human society that struggles in dirty rural environments with basic necessities of life and challenges such as floods and droughts. The second image portrays a human urban and industrial society that enjoys hygiene, personal and social relationships, and all educational facilities, feeling secure and self-reliant (Avini, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 20).

Avini emphasizes that the West presents this discourse relying on instinctual principles in a way that development appears as an inevitable and desirable matter for everyone, where human happiness is determined.

4.6. Strategy

Strategies in foundational theories consist of a set of behaviors that are invented to manage, execute, or respond to a phenomenon under specific understood conditions (Adams, Lunt and Cairns, 2008: 142).

4.6.1. Alternative Concept of Development

One of the strategies Avini has expressed for replacing Western development is indigenization of the concept of development. In his article "A Scholarly Article on: Development and the Foundations of Western Civilization," he first raises the question of whether the meaning of development can be aligned with the concepts of evolution and excellence in Islam. He completely rejects the Western concept of development from an Islamic perspective. Avini, with a historical analysis of the concept of development in Iran, believes that this issue was one of the earliest achievements of Westernization in Iran and has a long history in our culture. He emphasizes, "The word progress is one of the first words that our Westernized compatriots have used from the earliest days of acquaintance with the West to describe that land." (Avini, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 19)

In his view, if I consider growth as synonymous with indigenous development, then the Islamic government must fundamentally focus on the spiritual and existential dimensions of human existence for human evolution and remove the obstacles that hinder the spiritual ascent of humanity towards God (Avini, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 21).

4.6.2. Fulfilling the Social Justice

One of the fundamental concepts that Avini particularly emphasizes in his works is the issue of social justice. He believes that development in the West is based on economic principles and concepts such as economic growth, which inherently leads to a form of social inequality. Accordingly, Avini criticizes this approach and argues that the Islamic government, while focusing on the spiritual and existential dimensions of human beings, should eliminate social inequalities.

Avini believes that for the Islamic government to achieve a justice-oriented development, it must implement policies that lead to fair

distribution of wealth and resources among different segments of society (Avini, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 19).

Avini's emphasis on the concept of social justice is significant because in Islamic societies, alleviating poverty and deprivation takes precedence over other economic issues, and solving this problem lays the groundwork for social justice. "What we see in the term economic development is the alleviation of deprivation and poverty and filling the gaps that have resulted from oppression and injustice, but Western society sees in this term unlimited consumption and greater enjoyment of worldly pleasures." (ibid: 19)

4.6.3. Islamic Model of Progress

Avini has attempted to differentiate between the foundations of Western development and Islamic foundations by presenting and substituting the Islamic model of progress. He emphasizes that progress and growth in Islamic foundations are different from Western development foundations. Avini states, "The term growth and its various combinations are mentioned nineteen times in the Noble Qur'an, and the blessed verse that is most cited is verse 256 of Surah al-Baqarah, which explicitly contrasts growth with deviation.

The path of growth is a path that guides humans towards the ultimate cause of their existence and the specific purpose for which the exalted Creator intended human creation, translating it as the path of righteousness. Thus, this word is never meant to signify development or progress, although in a sense it refers to the transcendence and historical evolution of humanity; however, the meaning of development or progress in the Western sense is never intended from this word and its derivatives in the Noble Qur'an." (Avini, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 19)

Avini believes that by introducing the divine motivation into life affairs, the grounds for the growth and elevation of human beings will be provided. While in the Western model, development is considered to revolve around securing livelihood and personal interests, leading Western individuals to become slaves to their livelihood. Consequently, they lose their spiritual and intellectual connection with their actions and suffer from an identity crisis. Therefore, Avini has also focused on the concept of progress in the Islamic model by emphasizing detachment from money and monetary economic growth.

He states, "There is no doubt that monetary economic growth analyzes emotional relationships between people, and the axis of the relationship between individuals is personal interests - even with the criteria of money and currency." (Avini, 1987 AD/1366 SH: 13)

He only recognizes economic growth when it leads to spiritual and moral elevation of humanity (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 8).

4.7. Consequences

In the theoretical framework, consequences include the results of using strategies in a way that their implementation directly influences the creation and shaping of consequences (Srivastava, 2015: 180).

4.7.1. Environmental Crisis Reduction

According to Avini, the development of nuclear industries, especially atomic bombs, was the most significant consequence of Western development. The current trend of economic development in the world has necessitated the use of atomic energy resources and advanced technologies. Avini, in his article "The Dictatorship of Economic Consumption for More Production," criticizes this process and believes, "The danger of radioactive pollution is so immense that words are incapable of expressing it." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 6)

On the other hand, Avini states that developed Western countries often induce the exploitation of nature as if there were no risks involved. Therefore, Avini emphasizes that economic development without adhering to environmental standards cannot lead to the improvement of the social situation of people and stresses that the outcome of the Western development model is the exploitation of natural resources by wealthy countries.

Even in a situation where no benefits remain for the Third World from this nature: "Rich countries, which hold 29% of the world's population, consume and, I should say, destroy eighty percent of fuel and raw materials... Poorer countries will never reach an 'industrial revolution' era: by the time they get to that era, the best raw materials available have been consumed." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 14)

Therefore, Avini emphasizes that in his alternative model of economic development, excessive use of natural resources for the purpose of increased production is irrelevant. Hence, Avini's model of development not only leads to a reduction in environmental problems but also paves the way for sustainable development.

4.7.2. Identity and Meaning Assignment

Avini believes that the dominance of capitalist culture and the pursuit of economic growth have led to a crisis of identity growth in industrialized countries and alienation of workers. Avini criticizes this approach in his article "From the Dictatorship of Money to the Free Economy" and emphasizes that "The current factory system considers workers as unified parts of a machine" where each has a specific function or role in the service of the whole machine.

Man is a being with both a soul and a body united with one another, and if only a part of this particular creation called man is utilized (for example, his hand, foot, or eye), it negates his true identity. Therefore,

in his view, "the current factory system is fundamentally afflicted with this pain" (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 16).

In such circumstances, man is practically like screws and bolts that make up a factory system. Avini believes, "Employees of an organization are not pure quantity that can be put to work in a factory system without considering their spirits and qualitative distinctions - such a system that, like a trigger, fires whoever pulls its string." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 16)

Consequently, Avini, while identifying one of the most significant gaps in Western development, aims to provide a strategy to overcome this dilemma. Therefore, Avini attempts to reconnect the missing link of Western development, namely ethical values, to the recognition of meaning and identity based on religious and spiritual values. He believes that in the capitalist system, work ultimately ends in alienation and the disappearance of meaning. Whereas work as a form of worship and jihad, due to the existence of spiritual values, not only does not end in alienation but also gives individuals meaning within the framework of those values.

4.7.3. Poverty Reduction

In Avini's works, poverty has been highlighted as the most significant economic and cultural consequence of Western development. He states that in the Western cognitive system, countries are categorized based on poverty and wealth. The basis of poverty and wealth is also based on the level of "Consumption." Although he believes that poverty is condemned in Islamic society as well and that "undoubtedly, the ideal Muslim society is not a society of poverty." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 19)

Avini rejects this type of categorization and believes that the issue of economic development and, naturally, poverty, has influenced the mental health and psychological well-being of individuals. Based on this, he raises a critical question about the nature of economic development: "In order for a society to achieve complete mental health and spiritual well-being, should it adopt specific rules and regulations in consumption and enjoyment of pleasures or not? ... Is the goal of development to bring human society to a simultaneous balance of spiritual and physical health?" (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 20)

Avini considers poverty in capitalist societies as a result of this unsafe consumption, which has occurred as a result of advertising for more consumption and the consumerist education system. Therefore, Avini believes that if social justice is practiced in consumption to achieve a more balanced form of consumption, then poverty will decrease. He states: "In our belief system, valid development relies on

the spiritual excellence of humanity and the spiritual excellence of humanity leads to abstaining from excessiveness and multiplicity, preventing extravagance and waste, and following a balanced consumption pattern." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 18)
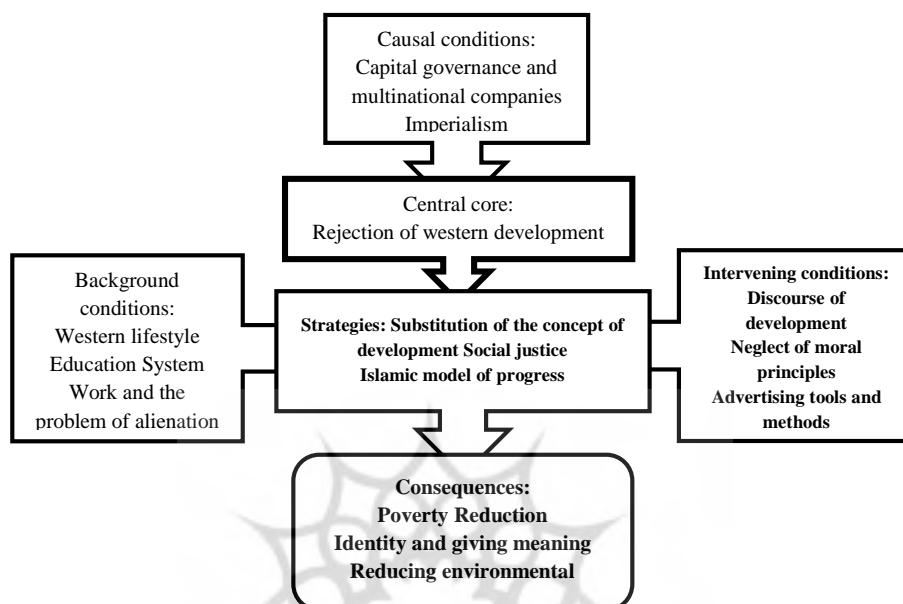
Authors: Conceptual model of post-development based on the ideas of Sayyid Mortaza Avini Source

5. Comparison of Sayyid Morteza Avini's Thought and Post-developmentalism

The emergence of economic development in the West played a significant role in shaping the strategies and theories of economic development. However, the consequences of Western models were so unfavorable that a new wave of radical theories emerged regarding development in the Third World. They posed a fundamental question about development, which later became known as the post-development approach, believing that development has lost its function and that the outcome of development is not improvement but rather the destruction of human conditions.

Therefore, post-development theorists discuss alternative models for development. According to post-development theorists, development theories have been modeled without the necessary attention to the cultural and indigenous dimensions of Southern countries. In their view, an appropriate development model should be based on the culture and indigenous structure of each country. As a result, post-development theorists, considering what has been said and the consequences of development in the Third World, turned their

attention away from Western development (Mo'meni and Darvishi, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 89).

Avini, while sharing conceptual similarities with post-development theorists in confronting Western development models and based on the values of the Islamic Revolution, has rejected Western development. He considers the inefficiency of Western models to be due to neglecting indigenous culture and ethical values of human societies, similar to post-development theorists.

Therefore, he, like post-development theorists, believes that development should be based on indigenous models and values specific to that society. However, Avini's development thinking does not stop here, unlike post-development theorists. Thus, Avini's distinction from post-development theorists lies in presenting alternative models of economic development, which he emphasizes. He presents Islamic concepts such as Jihadic work, work as worship, growth in excellence, spiritual desirability, balance in consumption, Islamic justice, religious identity, etc., to present a model of "Progress accompanied by spirituality" in line with Islamic standards. He believes that "If an Islamic government wants to plan for human growth and development, it must fundamentally pay attention to the spiritual and divine dimensions of human existence and, in the first stage, remove the obstacles that have hindered the spiritual growth of humans towards God." (Avini, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 21)

Avini considers the primary duty of an Islamic government to be the cultivation and education of society. He believes that "If in a broad and long-term planning, the fight against material poverty is adopted as the axis and principle, then education and culture will also serve as subordinate matters; but if cultural elevation (i.e., cultivation and education) is placed as the axis and principle, then the fight against poverty will be considered as a subordinate and hindering matter on the path of spiritual evolution and excellence." (Avini, 1985 AD/1364 SH: 21)

With this perspective, Avini views the reform of the educational system based on Islamic values as a fundamental and vital matter in constructing an ideal society. He emphasizes that "Development is a multidimensional flow that entails organizational renewal and a different orientation of the entire socio-economic system. Development, in addition to improvement in production and income levels, involves fundamental transformation in institutional, social, and administrative structures, as well as the values and public opinions of the people; development in many cases even encompasses the habits, customs, and beliefs of the people." (Avini, 1986 AD/1365 SH: 17)

Source: Authors Comparison of post-developmentalism components with Islamic development by Mortaza Avini
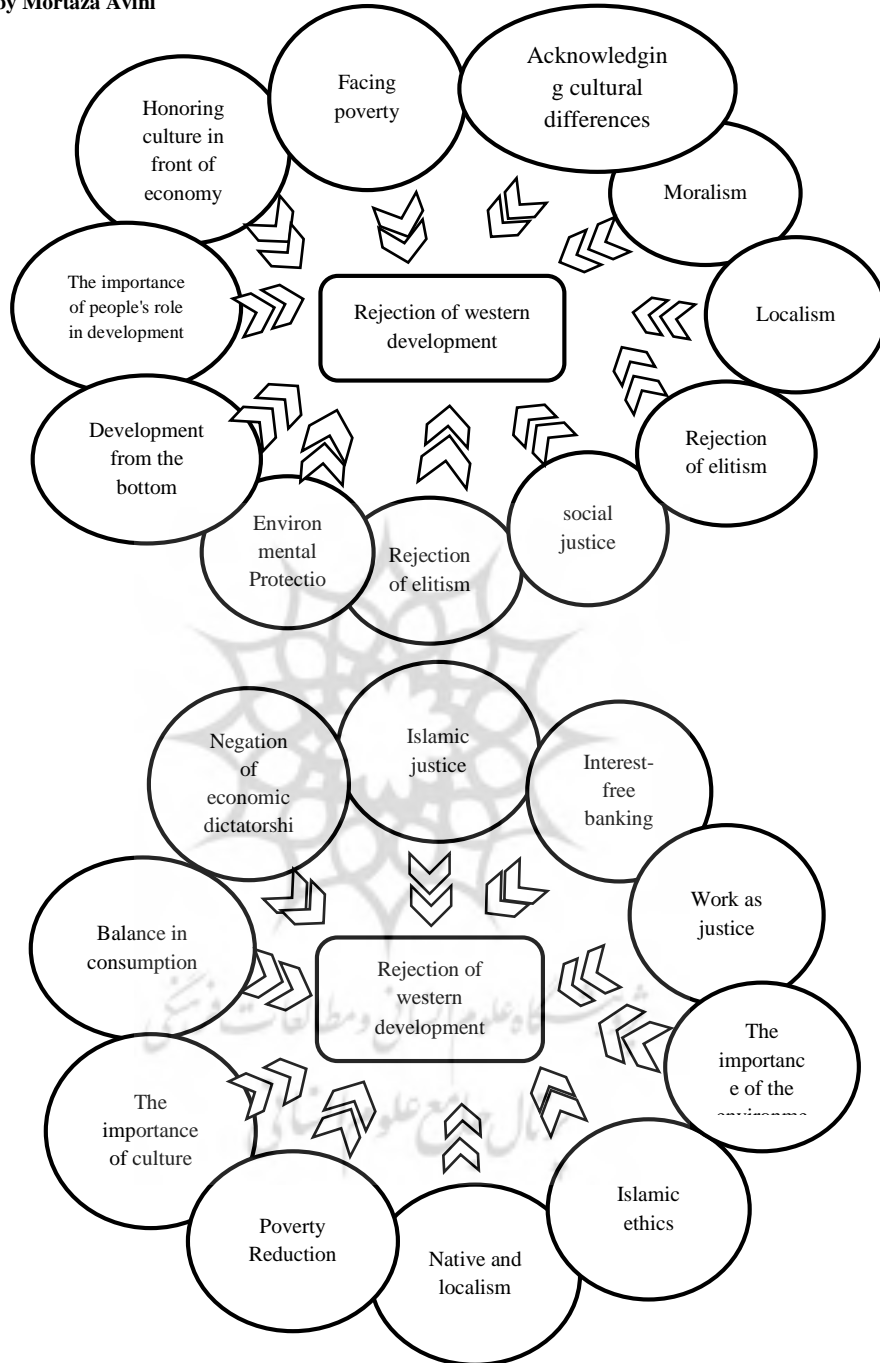
Conceptual model of post-developmentalists- Sayyid Mortaza Avini Conceptual model of progress with spirituality

Conclusion

This article attempts to examine Sayyid Mortaza Avini's narrative on development economics. The collection and analysis of Avini's texts and writings on development using the grounded theory method show that Avini, in line with post-development theorists, has challenged the concept of Western development. In this regard, Avini, like post-development theorists, demonstrates that development is not inherently anti-crisis but has become a source of crises in southern countries. Crises such as environmental problems, increasing class disparities, commodification of society, moral decay, child exploitation, and societal destruction. He believes that such crises have occurred as a result of the dominance of Western development models supported by capitalist governments and educational systems. However, influenced by the ideas of the Islamic Revolution, Avini goes beyond post-development theory and strives to present an alternative version of development based on Islamic values. In this regard, he emphasizes the inefficiency of materialistic perspectives on development and believes that spiritual progress and excellence are essential principles of human development and progress. Therefore, in Avini's view, true development can only occur through spirituality and higher values such as religious and Islamic identity. Avini, therefore, presents a model of "Progress Accompanied by Spirituality" based on concepts such as Islamic progress, spirituality, work as worship, economic jihad, Islamic justice, spiritual excellence, etc., to offer an Islamic version of the concept of development. He believes that the main reason for the inefficiency of Western models is neglecting these very principles.

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