

## CHAPTER III

### EXTRINSIC THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1 George Lakoff's Strict Father and Nurturant Parent Models

George Lakoff (2006) stated that the Strict Father model and Nurturant Parent models are cultural frameworks embedded in American society. Since people grow up in the same culture, they are generally familiar with both of these models (Lakoff, 2006). However, people can rely more on one model in certain areas of life. For example, someone may apply the Strict Father model in religious matters but use the Nurturant Parent model in other social contexts. These two models also are fundamentally opposed and cannot operate at the same time in the same context or person (Lakoff, 2006). Moreover, he stated that this model also provides insight into why certain religious groups are often associated with conservative positions. The reason is because their authority and morality aligns closely with the Strict Father framework (Lakoff, 2006).

According to Lakoff (2016), the Strict Father and Nurturant Parent models are not limited to politics. He also uses these models to explain how different Christian groups understand religion and morality. They are called Strict Father Christianity and Nurturant Parent Christianity (Lakoff, 2016). These two models have different perspectives about human nature. Strict Father Christianity assumes that people are motivated by rewards and punishments. It believes discipline and obedience build strong character. Meanwhile, Nurturant Parent Christianity believes that when people are loved and supported, they naturally grow into caring and responsible individuals (Lakoff, 2016).

### 3.3.1 The Strict Father Model

The Strict Father model presents a moral framework based on authority and control. This model assumes that the world is dangerous and competitive, where there are clear winners and losers. That is why the family needs a strong father figure who protects the family from external threats and maintains internal order. A father is an ultimate moral authority who determines what is right and wrong in this model. His decisions are not to be questioned and obedience to him is considered morally correct while disobedience is viewed as immoral (Lakoff, 2006). Core values that develop from this model include discipline and hierarchy. Hierarchy is viewed as something natural because individuals who are more disciplined and capable are believed to deserve higher positions in society. Authority and control, both over oneself and within society, are central to maintaining moral and social order in this model (Lakoff, 2006).

Strict Father Christianity believed that humans are naturally sinful because humans are morally weak from birth. They begin life with a moral debt and they see God as a strict father where He is the ultimate moral authority and sets absolute rules. If humans ever disobeyed Him, they deserve to be punished and obedience is expected of them. Moreover, if they succeeded to obey and submit to God, salvation will be their reward (Lakoff, 2016).

### 3.3.2 The Nurturant Parent Model

The Nurturant Parent model presents a moral framework based on empathy and responsibility. One parent or both parents are equally responsible for guiding their children's moral development in this model. The primary goal is to

help them grow into happy and fulfilled individuals. Nurturing involves two main elements, which is empathy and responsibility (Lakoff, 2006). This is directed both toward oneself and toward others. Parents teach children that caring for others also requires self-care and social responsibility is an important part of a good moral life. Nurturant parents are authoritative without relying on fear. They set fair and reasonable rules, explain their decisions, and allow open discussion. Obedience is rooted in mutual respect and love rather than punishment. Protection is seen as an expression of care, not control just like in the Strict Father model. This model forms the basis of progressive morality, which emphasizes empathy as the ability to understand and share the feelings of others, and responsibility as the willingness to act on that empathy. From these principles emerge American core values such as protection, freedom, opportunity, fairness, equality, prosperity, and community (Lakoff, 2006).

Nurturant Parent Christianity believes that humans need God's grace in order to learn how to act morally and to feel spiritually supported. They learn to be nurturing by nurturing themselves first. However, no parent is perfect and when children grow, they naturally begin to separate from their parents and become independent. This means that humans are born separated from God who is seen as the ultimate nurturant parent and to become fully moral means reconnecting with God and rely on His grace to grow morally (Lakoff, 2016).

### **3.2 Religious Fundamentalism**

Religious fundamentalism involves a strict adherence to the original teachings, texts, and doctrines of a religion, which are seen as the ultimate and

sacred truth (Oliveira de Souza, 2024:211). This phenomenon can happen for many different reasons. It can happen because religious groups want to preserve their traditions or political purposes like keeping power within religious authorities (Oliveira de Souza, 2024:211). Fundamentalists reject any modern or evolving interpretations of their beliefs, holding that the original teachings are unchanging and must guide every aspect of life. To be a fundamentalist means being deeply committed to these foundational principles and viewing them as eternal rules to live by and respect (Oliveira de Souza, 2024:211).

Moreover, Moaddel and Karabenick (2021:670) stated that there are four core components that define religious fundamentalism in the Abrahamic religions including Christianity. In their study, the components were implemented into questions that were created to be understood and applied across different educational backgrounds, countries and social contexts to measure religious fundamentalism (Moaddel and Karabenick, 2021:683). They also stated that the study conducted with university students in countries such as the United States, specifically at the University of Maryland, and Canada showed stronger relationships between indicators of fundamentalism than the one in the Middle East (Moaddel and Karabenick, 2021:690). These are the four components in detail:

1. **Nature of Deity**, fundamentalists portray God as a strict disciplinarian. In the three Abrahamic religions such as Judaism, Christianity and Islam, God is understood as all-powerful, all knowing and present everywhere. Therefore, the believers feel they are constantly being watched and

nothing can be hidden from Him. This idea creates a strong sense of discipline. He also sent prophets to guide people toward the correct path so they can achieve salvation. Religious fundamentalists strongly believe in these ideas and treat them as absolute truths that must not be questioned. Fundamentalists stress that disobedience will lead to punishment and that people must repent of sins and false beliefs. Although they believed that God is to be forgiving, forgiveness only depends on their repentance and strict obedience (Moaddel and Karabenick, 2013:108-109).

2. **Inerrancy and Literalism**, from a fundamentalist perspective, religion's scriptures are seen as an absolute and flawless source of truth that covers everything in life. This means that when the scriptures describe something that happened in the past, fundamentalists believe it happened exactly as written, with no errors or exaggerations. Due to this, they see these texts as the direct word of God, it would be sinful to question, change, or reinterpret them. For this reason, they reject the need for man-made laws since they believe the meaning is already clear and available to everyone. This belief is also connected to the idea that God's word is more superior to human knowledge. As a result, fundamentalists always side with religion when there is a conflict between religion and science (Moaddel and Karabenick, 2013:110).
3. **Exclusivity and Religious Centrism**, religious fundamentalists believe their religion is the only completely true religion. They see their own religion as much better and closer to God than any other religion. They

think only people who follow their holy scriptures exactly as it is are part of the true religious community while others that interpret the scriptures differently are seen as straying from the real faith. For them, religion is more important than kindness or ethics so they don't believe in universal human rights outside of what their religion teaches. In their view, only true believers will be saved and go to heaven while everyone else will not (Moaddel and Karabenick, 2013:110-111).

- 4. Religious Intolerance**, religious fundamentalists believe their faith must stay pure, so they avoid interacting too much with people from other religions. They think that the beliefs and practices of others could corrupt their own faith and weaken its authority in their community. Therefore, they often believe followers of other religions should not have the same rights, such as the freedom to practice their religion openly or build places of worship. Fundamentalists reject, restrict, and discriminate against others who do not have the same belief as them (Moaddel and Karabenick, 2013:111).

In many religious fundamentalist perspectives, where God is seen as a strict disciplinarian, authority in religion becomes the source and recognized power that guides believers in what to believe, how to act and what to consider morally right or wrong. According to Martineau (1890), authority in religion means there is something that has the right to guide us and we feel a moral duty to follow it. He sees that when an individual feels morally compelled to do what is

right, they are responding to the divine speaking through their conscience (Martineau, 1890).

### 3.3 Religious Fundamentalism in American Society

Religious fundamentalism has existed for decades in the United States and has progressed alongside its many social and cultural changes. The roots of this particular phenomenon are often tied to early twentieth-century Protestant movements, especially through the publication of *The Fundamentals: A Testimony to the Truth* in 1910 to 1915. Milton and Lyman Stewart made this project to defend traditional Christian teachings and push back against modern religious views. The project included twelve volumes of essays defending biblical authority, the divinity of Jesus Christ, miracles, the virgin birth and the second coming of Christ (Ruthven, 2007:7). After the publication of these essays, Curtis Lee Laws introduced the word “fundamentalist” through his article in 1920. He used it for the people who defended the fundamentals of faith and wanted to keep traditional beliefs in the face of modern ideas like liberalism and evolution at that time (Ruthven, 2007:8). The project and the official use of the word “fundamentalist” showed that religious fundamentalism was starting to become more known in American society.

An early example of the known conflict between religious fundamentalism and modernism in America was the Scopes Trial in 1925. John Scopes, a biology high school teacher in Tennessee, was accused of breaking state law by teaching Darwin’s theory of evolution. At that time, Tennessee had passed the Butler Act which banned the teaching of evolution theory in any state-funded school

(Ruthven, 2007:12). The trial shows how debates about religion were no longer only happening in churches but had also spread to public institutions like education and law.

While it is known that religious fundamentalism in America mostly came from Protestantism in the early twentieth century, fundamentalists in other denominations of Christianity, including Catholicism, are recognized in the later years. Authority in Catholicism does not come only from scriptures unlike Protestantism. Their authority also came from the Church's authority and traditions which are seen as equally important as scriptures (Ruthven, 2007:10). A Gallup survey conducted in 1980 showed that 40% of Americans believed the Holy Bible to be the actual word of God and should be understood word for word as literally as it is (Ruthven, 2007:40). This literal understanding of the Holy Bible further connected to the growing influence and threat of religious fundamentalism in American social political life at that time.

First, religious fundamentalists became more active in American politics through the rise of the New Christian Right movement in the 1970s. This movement supported policies such as allowing prayer in public schools again and preventing homosexuals from teaching in schools. They also opposed government actions against Christian schools and colleges that practiced segregation despite the civil rights laws passed in the 1960s. In addition, the movement worked against the Equal Rights Amendment and strongly rejected *Roe v. Wade* decision on abortion rights (Watt, 2017:130).

Also, there was a Roman Catholic Church which excommunicated their Archbishop because of his strong objection to reforms and liberal changes within the Church in 1988. There was also a bomb explosion at the World Trade Center in New York after terrorists planted a bomb in the building's underground garage in 1993. This bomb explosion killed six people and injured more than a thousand others. In the same year, a violent conflict between government officials and a Christian religious group called the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas ended in a fire that caused the deaths of eighty group members (Watt, 2017:147). These events made American society more aware that religious fundamentalism could influence social and political life in dangerous ways.

#### **3.4 Resistance**

Resistance is the actions or attitudes that oppose power, authority or dominant systems. Resistance can appear in many forms, such as protests, social movements or personal acts of disagreement. It often appears when individuals or groups feel that certain structures are unjust and oppressive. Empathy can challenge dominant systems by encouraging deeper understanding rather than hostility. It can make resistance to be more humane (Dreyer, 2018). Moreover, empathy lets individuals to respond to injustice with understanding and moral responsibility instead of responding to it with hatred or revenge (Dreyer, 2018).

An other-oriented perspective means prioritizing the well-being of others rather than focusing only on oneself. The motivation for this kind of empathy is often connected to ideas of altruism (Dreyer, 2018). Altruism refers to doing good for others without expecting personal benefit. Many religious traditions promote

altruistic behavior and teach believers to care for others selflessly. In Christianity, for example, helping others without seeking reward is central to its teachings. Furthermore, religious belief is sometimes linked to helping and positive attitudes toward others. People who report strong religious experiences often express higher levels of empathy and willingness to help. However, religion can also limit empathy when individuals refuse to understand those who challenge their beliefs. In cases like that, strong commitment to religious identity may reduce compassion for outsiders (Dreyer, 2018).

According to Roy (2019), empathy can help restore the humanity of the oppressed people who are often treated as less important in society. When people begin to empathize with those who experience injustice, they become more able to see unfair actions as morally wrong, especially when those actions are committed by powerful groups or political elites. Empathy also encourages people to see others as fellow human beings despite their differences (Roy, 2019:27). Not just empathy, responsibility is also important in fighting oppression and injustice because social problems are not caused by only one person but can also by many people, systems and social structures working all together over time (Roy, 2019:14). Since people are part of these systems, change cannot happen without individuals taking action as well. Structural change needs people who are willing to question unfair systems and change their attitudes toward it.