A Comparative Study In Jihadism: The Relation Between Society And Jihadists In Egypt And Algeria In The Nineties

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Abstract: There is no doubt that, the contemporary global politics is more complicated especially in the last three decades. Nowadays, the global Jihad movement is one of the main important issues which faces the great powers and roiling them, when Jihad is one of the basic duties of Islam, which focuses on self-defense against the aggressor, we find that lots of Muslim individuals and groups using the concept of Jihad to fight against the political regimes in many Muslim countries and other areas. This article discusses the relationship between Jihadist groups and some Muslim societies, and we focused on some countries, which witnessed important historical events such as Egypt and Algeria, where jihadists began their holy war from these countries, which are still far, these continuing jihadist experiments have had a different impact on Muslim communities, whether on the political, social or the psychological aspects.

I. INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that, the contemporary Jihadist movements became a political, social and security dilemma for the political authoritarian regimes in the Muslim world, especially in the last 20 years, where the reasons of the appearance of these movements significantly increasing because of the absence of public freedoms, restrictions on the moderate Islamist currents, the absence of social justice and the spread of political and administrative corruption within the state structure in many Muslim Countries, especially in the Arab countries, in this article we will discuss the relation between the Jihadist movements and societies to know how the both sides acted with each other and what is the reflections of this relation on the results of the conflict between Jihadists and the political regimes in Egypt and Algeria.

Actually, choosing the paradigms of Egypt and Algeria is because of the similarities between the two cases, where the Jihadist view and tactics in the conflict with the authoritarian regimes in Egypt and Algeria based on the strategy of fighting the near enemy (political regimes), who doesn’t want to implement Islamic Sharia laws and they entered in alliance with the Crusader West (the far enemy) in the face of Islamism, so Jihadists considered the political regimes in Egypt and Algeria as the agents of the Crusader Western governments, so the Islamic Sharia law and the volition of Muslim people will not be achieved without the removal of these authoritarian regimes. The nature of the conflict between the both sides passed through several levels such as Intellectual, military and social confrontation, when the balance of power between the parties of the conflict was in favor of political regimes, that have the security, military and media wings, which gave them the preference in the conflict, On the other side Jihadists used the suppression and administrative corruption of political regimes to convince the Muslim society to participate with them in the confrontation.

This article focuses on the Jihadist experience in that period and the community’s role in the conflict, whether negative or positive and how the political regimes could to abort the armed jihadist revolutions and dismantle those organizations in that period, and what is the historical and ideological background of Jihadists that, they adopted to convince the Muslim society to share them their approach.

The beginning of the conflict:

Jihadists in Egypt and Algeria aspired to create Islamic regimes instead of the non-Islamic regimes there, The method of accessing the power varied between the both experiments, where Jihad organization and the Islamic group in Egypt resolve their refusal to democracy and decided to start armed conflict with authority, which is illegitimate authority imposed itself on the popular volition beside the lack of implementation of the Islamic law and its rapprochement with Israel and Western countries, but the Jihadist in Algeria who are represented in FIS decided to use democracy to achieve the power then they can cancel it and create the Islamic regime. While GIA decided to start the conflict immediately because they don’t believe in democracy and they...
consider the political regime in Algeria as non-Islamic system, so the armed conflict is the only way to dislodge this regime and establish an Islamic state. \(^1\)

Jihadist ideology have passed through several stages contributed to constant development of its theories and methodology. Since the Islamic fundamentalist ideas have appeared in the writings of the contemporary Egyptian thinker Sayyad Qutb, many of contemporaries’ jihadists have found in the ideas of Sayyad Qutb the reference guide to their ideology, regarding the general Islamic culture and especially in the Jihadist ideas, the Jihadists in Egypt and Algeria combined between the fundamentalist religious texts and the conscientiousness of understanding the contemporary religious conditions that being experienced in Muslims’ daily life. \(^2\)

The implementation of Islamic laws, the restore of the popular volition and the Palestinian dilemma were the main issues of the Jihadist uprising against the authoritarian regimes in Egypt and Algeria and in general in another Muslim countries, where Jihadists consider the Israeli occupation of Palestine as the mother issue of every Muslim individual and they believe that Palestine will not be liberated before overthrowing of the authoritarian regimes in Middle east who prevent Muslim peoples from uniting efforts to march towards Palestine and liberate it from the Zionists. \(^3\)There is another important factor in the contemporary Jihadist thought that we can’t divide it from the political and scientific Islamic movement in general and Jihadism in particular, it is the concept of Salafisation, where Salafism means the generation who followed the doctrine and the sayings of Quran and the Prophet Muhammad, especially the first three centuries after the Prophet, such as prophet Muhammad's friends and trustworthy Muslim scholars, and there are three main scholars who theorized to Salafism : Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyyah and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. \(^4\)

The Salafist school considered as the most adherent Islamic school to the teachings of the prophet Muhammad's Sunnah, where Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab Revived the Salafist ideology proceeding from Saudi Arabia, then Salafist ideology has become so widespread in most parts of the whole world not only the in Muslim world, So the Salafist school is the first reference for a lot of jihadist movements in the world, whether in the Middle East, Central Asia or even Southeast Asia. Also, many supporters of the Jihadist school are mainly members of the mother Salafist school, So it can’t be denied that the Salafist Muslim community can be considered as a fertile environment for the emergence of a lot of jihadist movements in the Muslim world one way or another, and the simplest evidence of this is the huge numbers of Saudi youth who participated in the Afghan Jihad in the eighties and who shared in the war in Iraq and Syria. \(^5\)

Salafism is considered as the contemporary Islamic fundamentalism, where it calls for the return to work with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah and the implementation of Islamic laws, and we will address during the search for a simple explanation of contemporary Salafist schools and their types. \(^6\)

There is another ideological factor in the Jihadist thought which was main reason in the bloody conflict with the regimes, this factor is the issue of Takfir, it means call non-Muslims as non-believers, so Jihadists issued verdicts on groups in society that they are non-believers and apostates from Islam because they don’t adopt the Islamic laws in their opinions and they don’t believe in the Islamic laws as governance system for Muslims, Thus the battle became between the two camps Faith camp and the camp of disbelief. \(^7\)

The balance of power between the parties of the conflict:

Political regimes in the Arab countries after World War II and the founding of the New World Order were mostly nationalist regimes especially in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and Algeria, the postcolonial era in middle east witnessed rising of nationalism represented in Abdul Nasser and the free officers in Egypt and the National Liberation Front in Algeria, so the Military became the heir of the old colonial in these areas, These officers in Egypt used the slogans of freedom from colonialism and nationalism, and gave themselves the right to rule as

\(^1\)Gharaibeh, I., 2004. Islamic movements and the wave of violence and extremism, Doha: Aljazeera.
\(^3\)Jamo, H., 2014. The centrality of the Palestinian cause is another point of departure between al-Zawahiri and al-Baghdadi. alhayat, p. 2.

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those who led the struggle against the colonial power, as Algeria has not seen a ruling party since the end of the colonial era so far, only the National Liberation Front.₈

The Arab region has not experienced the culture of the devolution of power after the exit of the occupiers. Many of the political parties and movements banned in many Arab countries especially the political Islam movements and the slogan of no religion in politics became famous among the ruling elites and forcibly implanted in social circles and because of Abdul Nasser's suppression of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, and the increase of French influence in Algeria again, so Jihadist ideas have emerged and called to fight these rulers as the first reason for the tyranny, injustice and sometimes rapprochement with the old occupiers.₉

The battle, which began between the jihadists and the political system in Egypt began by killing the former President Mohammad Al-Sadat in 1981. When the Jihad organization and the Islamic group decided to start an open battle with the political system in Egypt lasted until 1997, after the announcement of the cessation of violence initiative by the Islamic group, In Algeria FIS resorted to armed jihad after its victory in the 1991 elections which was annulled by the Algerian army, Then the organization of GIA appeared, Algeria has entered into a bloody conflict between the political power under the leadership of the National Liberation Front, backed by the Algerian army and the Islamic jihadist groups deployed in the Algerian mountains until the beginning of the twenty-first century.₁₀

It was clear that, Jihadists went to armed war without taking into consideration the difference in the human, military and security capabilities between them and the political regimes in Egypt and Algeria and it seemed visible that, jihadists have entered the battle motivated by religious fervor, faith and a few military and administrative facilities, where they thought that, the masses will be around them and support them in the battle, which did not happen significantly.₁¹

Jihadists in their war relied on some of the elements who participated in the Afghan Jihad during the war against the Soviets in the eighties and they were able to recruit thousands of enthusiastic youth who are aspire to establish Islamic regime and they adopted the methods of the revolutionary guerrilla, they also tried to persuade ordinary people for supporting them financially and militarily, this superficial thinking and processing was a major reason for the rapid disintegration and weakening of jihadist groups in Egypt and Algeria, it also resulted in the arrest and killing of thousands of them, and they were forced in the end to stop the violence, lay down their arms and review their ideas.₁₂

The successful organizational management depends on several fundamental factors such as formulation of objectives and the concept of the message and the vision, schedules management and investment of resources, manage, direct and activate the human resources and skills to solve institutional problems and conflicts, it was clear that, Jihadists had deficiencies in the delivery of the ideas to society, especially the media machine that it was very weak and depends only on mosques, while the political regimes in Egypt and Algeria had a huge media resources and clear propaganda of anti-jihadist ideas, also, the jihadist movements witnessed divisions and ideological incompatibilities that, have led to significant splits in its ranks, especially in the case of GIA in Algeria, which has seen serious intellectual incompatibilities led to infighting within its ranks and to the end, finally jihadists also failed to establish their own security system, which enabled the governmental security services to penetrate their members, arrest and killing thousands of their leaders and influential members.₁₃

Jihadists thought that the enthusiasm, faith, entreaties people, get some weapons and military training will prepare them to confront and bring down the political systems and then achieve their goals in the establishment of the Islamic system. However, the absolute difference in the physical and military potential was in favor of Mubarak's regime in Egypt and the leaders of the army in Algeria, as the regional and global opinion was in favor of those regimes, claiming the fight against terrorism, extremism and Islamic reactionary, Consequently, there was an intelligence and security cooperation from some regional and Western countries with the political regimes in Egypt and Algeria, especially France, the United Kingdom and the United States with regard to drain

the sources of financing of these organizations, and the prosecution of its members fleeing abroad. (Munib, 2010)

The importance and role of the social incubators in political conflicts:

All political and social organizations are considered part from society, where humans are the main component of any society because they create the traditions and the social contract between the different factions in a particular geographic area to finally become a real state, so it cannot be overlooked that, the inevitability of interdependence between political and religious organizations on one hand and the society on the other hand, Where the society is the main component of the state, and all members of the political, economic and religious organizations are members in this society and an integral part of it, but not vice versa. (al-Suri, 2004)

Jihadists recognized the importance of social incubators in winning the battle against the political regimes in Egypt and Algeria and they focused on the advocacy in mosques to mobilize people against the government and clarify their disbelief, also explaining to people that, democracy is incompatible approach with the Islamic law Governorship, they considered the mosques and universities as an ideal place to attract enthusiastic and faithful youths who want to sacrifice for Islam. It was clear that jihadist movement in Egypt had fundamental mystery approach toward Egyptian society, and they didn’t have scientific vision in acting with society, and the reasons are that, the nature of jihadists regulatory was depending on two basic factors: 14

1- The principle of confidentiality in recruiting members as an armed movement and the regime shouldn’t have any information about their work (secret organization).

2- Jihadists considered their movement as revolutionary forefront for Muslims people in Egypt, it means that, jihadists should use the method of sudden military coup against the political regime.

The approach which reliance on confidentiality and secret tactic to create an organization had many basic problems such as Isolation from society, people's apprehension from the term of "secret organization" and the ability of the political regime to terrify people from those movements, when the regime can use its political, media, military and security arms to show these groups as Scarecrow, so the most important issue, which occupies the specialists and researchers in political Islam issues is the identity and the methodology of the Islamic movements, because it is a basic factor to analyze the contemporary Islamic movements within Intellectual and organizational terms, and the interaction of society with them. 15

We cannot ignore the importance and the role of the Salafi movement in the emergence of jihadist movements, where the Salafi movement emerged in Egypt in the early of twentieth century represented in the Al-Jameyya al Shareyya and Ansar al-Sunna association, in Algeria the FIS is mainly Salafist group and call to implement Islamic Sharia laws, and all of these Salafi groups fellow the of Jurisprudence of Ahmad ibn Hanbal’s doctrine Ibn Taymiyyah and Salafi scholars who cling Sunnah of the Prophet Muhammad, then the Jihadist groups drafted their approach according to the fundamentalist texts from the Koran and the Sunna. 16

The social incubator is the main source of recruitment of sympathizers and members of political or social organizations, so without social incubator there is no human reservoir, it means that there is no physical organization on the ground, that means if the organization missed the support of the society or a large sector of it, it means that there is no any kind of ability to achieve the goal of the organization, that’s what happened in Egypt and Algeria during the conflict with political regimes there in the eighties and nineties , when the political regimes have the alleged legitimacy and the military power, Jihadists had only the faith in their cause and the sympathy of some social sectors who are affected by the dictatorship governments in Egypt and Algeria. 17

The Jihadist dynamic approach in the Egyptian case was depending on organizational secrecy in recruiting new members, and it is not important to publish the idea of Jihad between wide segment of society in order to preserve the existence of the organization and the security of its elements and leaders, when the group should focus to recruit new members, who has strong religious tendency and enthusiastic to achieve the desired goal, when lots of normal people don’t have these qualities according to the ignorant society because of the absence of the implementation of Islamic rule, and this ignorant environment can open the way to the weak souls’


15Researches, Al Mesbar for studies and researchs, 2011. Kholasat aham Al kutub an Al jamaat Al Islamiyya (Summaries of the most important books about Islamic groups). Dubai: Al Mesbar for studies and researchs.


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holders to permeate the group. Thus, the methodology of clandestine organizational action proved extremely unsuccessful to win the trust of society.\(^\text{18}\)

In the Algerian case the FIS was active in the mosques and established many religious and charitable centers. They were also very well organized and managed which enabled them to achieve a landslide victory in the 1991 legislative elections by up to 81 per cent. But after the coup of the Algerian army on the outcome of the elections, so Islamist militants began to climb into the mountains and form armed groups such as the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) the armed wing of the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), and the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) which is based mainly on Arab Afghans, A fierce war has begun between the Islamic militants and the Algerian army in what is known as the Black Decade, which ended with the disintegration of the armed groups and did not achieve any positive goal except the social schism and strengthening the power of the army and the security services.\(^\text{19}\)

There is no doubt that, Egyptian and Algerian societies were not in the atmosphere of this war between jihadists and government, and normal people were practicing their daily lives and business, and Jihadists didn’t have any realistic or scientific approach toward society in that moment, also human nature is fundamentally based on humanity and tolerance. If someone wants to wage war against a party, it is required to prepare supporters religiously, intellectually and militarily, which is difficult to do by an organization that is often banned by the government towards the society, the majority of the Muslim peoples in the history of their struggle used to struggle against the foreign colonizer, But jihadist groups call for another type of resistance - the resistance of the internal colonizer, Which requires another kind of psychological and intellectual creation, considering that the conflict will be between the sons of one nation.\(^\text{20}\)

**The Influence Of The Prevalence Of Salafi Thought In Society On The Emergence Of Jihadist Ideas:**

There is another important factor in the contemporary Jihadist thought that we can’t divide it from the political and scientific Islamic movement in general and Jihadism in particular, it is the concept of Salafisation, where Salafism means the generation who followed the doctrine and the sayings of Quran and the Prophet Muhammad, especially the first three centuries after the Prophet, such as prophet Muhammed's friends and trustworthy Muslim scholars, and there are three main scholars who theorized to Salafism: Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Taymiyyah and Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab.\(^\text{21}\)

The Salafist school considered as the most adherent Islamic school to the teachings of the prophet Muhammad's Sunnah, where Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab Revived the Salafist ideology proceeding from Saudi Arabia, then Salafist ideology has become so widespread in most parts of the whole world not only the in Muslim world. So the Salafist school is the first reference for a lot of jihadist movements in the world, whether in the Middle East, Central Asia or even Southeast Asia. Also, many supporters of the Jihadist school are mainly members of the mother Salafist school, So it can’t be denied that the Salafist Muslim community can be considered as a fertile environment for the emergence of a lot of jihadist movements in the Muslim world one way or another, and the simplest evidence of this is the huge numbers of Saudi youth who participated in the Afghan Jihad in the eighties and who shared in the war in Iraq and Syria.\(^\text{22}\)

Salafism is considered as the contemporary Islamic fundamentalism, where it calls for the return to work with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah and the implementation of Islamic laws, Although the Salafist school was later divided into several schools, such as the scientific Salafism, kinetic-Salafism, and the Salafists


\(^{20}\text{researches, Al Mesbar for studies and researchs, 2011. Kholasat aham Al kutub an Al jamaat Al Islamiyya (Summaries of the most important books about Islamic groups). Dubai: Al Mesbar for studies and researches.}\)


\(^{22}\text{researches, Al Mesbar for studies and researchs, 2011. Kholasat aham Al kutub an Al jamaat Al Islamiyya (Summaries of the most important books about Islamic groups). Dubai: Al Mesbar for studies and researches.}\)
who are loyalists to the ruling authority the case in Saudi Arabia and another Salafist groups in Egypt and other countries. 23

In spite of all these doctrinal differences between the Salafist currents, especially in the issues of Takfir and resort to jihad against the ruler or not, However, there is a fixed ideological ground among all Salafist groups that have a consensus on the invocation of the Qur'an and Sunnah, and the sayings of prophet Mohamed’s friends and those who learn from them, that’s Salafists in general are acceptable to a significant sector of society and thus they have got good social incubator, As well as their spread in mosques and their establishment of charities and their interest of religious education, So They imposed themselves as a social religious force in Egypt and Algeria, which enabled them to achieve the parliamentary majority in Algeria in the 1991 elections, Salafists in Egypt after the revolution managed to enter the parliament with 24% of the seats. However, after the July 2013 coup in Egypt, the political Salafist movement, especially in Alexandria lost its popularity, because of their support to the military coup and its leader Sisi. 24

II. CONCLUSION

The relationship between society and Jihadist movement depending on the culture, religious and political status of communities, for instance the beginning of the contemporary Jihadist ideas in Egypt have appeared in response to the socialist and nationalist approach of the political regime led by Abdul Naser in the fifties and sixties, Although he was so aggressive against Israelis and he was the most important supporter for Palestinian issue, but the internal policy of Abdul Naser was refusing the implementation of Islamic law, thus, a fierce struggle have occurred between him and the Muslims Brothers, eventually it led to the beginning of the emergence of radical Islamic ideas, which believes in jihad against the non-Islamic government.

Algeria in the seventies and until the end of the nineties has witnessed the emergence of Islamic movements adopted revolutionary jihadist approach, it was also kind of reaction to the non-Islamic political regime, which was established in Algeria after the end of the French colonialism period, and when radical Islamists represented by FIS and some remnants of the armed Islamic groups in the seventies and eighties, they decided first to achieve the political power through the ballot boxes, they could to achieve the overwhelming majority, but the Algerian army’s generals with external support from France have canceled the elections and the army jailed thousands of FIS and some other Islamic groups’ leaders and members.

The economic and political tyranny and social injustice are the main reasons for the emergence of armed violence ideology, an example of this is that, the Middle East and North Africa region suffered from internal conflicts for decades, Although the Arab region is one of the richest regions in the world in natural resources, the reason of this is the lack of equitable distribution of wealth and the spread of political and economic tyranny among the elite bureaucracy and there are no comprehensive and genuine national programs for sustainable development and the lack of the prospects of the intellectual and personal freedom of individuals, so we can say that, The jihadist generation that, they are fighting in Syria and Iraq nowadays is the result of the American and Western policies against the volition of the Muslim peoples for freedom, national and intellectual independence, where the great powers control the Islamic world through the political regimes there, which they don’t allow to real democratic and political process.

Although many of Muslim nations suffered from dictatorship and repression, the Jihadist movement who raised tyranny's resist banner couldn’t to create clear methodology for the conflict, and there is no successful Jihadist paradigm which can represent the majority of Islamic nations, the reason of this fail that, Jihadists don’t aware the equation of the conflict inside the local Islamic societies , where Jihadists in Egypt, Algeria, Syria or Iraq couldn’t to sew up any battle in these areas, but on the contrary, they entered to ideological conflict with wide classes inside the society ,because many of them adopted Takfiri approach against people who support the government or work in the governmental institution , and even they started doctrinal battles with other Islamic scholars about the issues of Walaa and Baraa (Loyalty to Muslims and Enmity from non-Muslims), as they have started fierce ideological clashes with the official Islamic institutions, Where they considered it as a part of the political system.

Jihadists relatively are not aware of the importance of popular incubators in the Islamic societies, Where they lost the support of society when they start using violence, as happened in Algeria in the nineties ,FIS won nearly 80 percent of the seats in local elections, and after the Algerian army canceled elections, and the war began between the two sides, the army could to penetrate jihadist groups and implement massacres against civilians in areas where the Islamists enjoy popular incubator there, Thus, Islamists in general not only

23researches, Al Mesbar for studies and researchs, 2011. Kholasat aham Al kutub an Al jamaat Al Islamiyya (Summaries of the most important books about Islamic groups). Dubai: Al Mesbar for studies and researchs.


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jihadists lost sympathy and support of the Algerian society for a long time, and the Islamic Salvation Front was banned and stopped participating in politics until now.

Jihadists in general distinct among themselves, according to their ideology and approach they want to establish Islamic state and implement Islamic laws, but they don’t have clear and scientific approach to achieve their goals, and they don’t have the supporting of the majority of Muslims; in Syria there are several Jihadist groups and until now they fight against Syrian regime in independent organizations of each other, even sometimes they fight each other. Although Syrian people created this revolution to have freedom and dignity, the Syrian people still suffer from killing every day from all sides in this conflict under the pretext of fighting terrorists or radical thought. So jihadists could not succeed in one of their experiments, which have been going on for more than 30 years.

The Arab spring was another evidence for the authoritarian methodology that, the rulers in these areas for decades were practicing political repression against their people such as Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Syria, Iraq and Yemen, after the Arab spring revolution, the Islamic civil movements could to be in the power in Egypt and Tunisia, and the Islamists in Libya and Yemen could to fill the power vacuum instead of the obsolete regimes, but the deep state in Egypt and Yemen could to restore the power again, as the internal wars in Iraq, Syria and Libya still going on. Therefore, some researches argue these actions that, the Islamists couldn’t to protect the newborn democracy because of the lack of the political and administration experiences and the sharp polarization between Islamists on one side and the secularist and liberal parties on another hand.

Finally, the jihadist generation, that are fighting in Syria and Iraq nowadays is the result of the American and Western policies against the volition of the Muslim peoples for freedom, national and intellectual independence, where the great power controls the Islamic world through the political regimes there, which they don’t allow to real democratic and political process

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