

A Study of Belief & Impartiality Behavior in the Muslim Political Religious Ideology

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ABSTRACT:

In everyday life, there appear to be a rise in poverty, crimes, war and hatred, both within a community or society, and between societies and cultures. Often, religion has been misused as a vehicle to instigate such events even though the issues at hand have had nothing whatsoever to do with religious ideology. Religion is not the subject of the dispute or even of the grievance. In order to create a better world, we first need to understand the causes of the problems as well as the symptoms. Through a critical study of Islam, it is possible to get an insight into religious philosophy related to social order and the means to maintain stability in our society. This paper examines the root causes, depth and scope of the phenomenon of political violence and the road to social peace in Islam in detail.

KEY WORDS: Islam, political violence

INTRODUCTION:

The difficult encounter between the Muslim world and the West at the level of security policy, diplomacy, and politics is complicated by cultural and ideological tension, and a degree of intellectual incomprehension. Western concerns about violence and political extremism in the Muslim world, and their impact on the security of the West, often rest on assumptions about the philosophical, cultural, and intellectual character of Islamic thought and Islamist political movements. Muslim concerns about Palestine, Western geostrategy and oil policy, and Western support to autocratic regimes are often accompanied by similar assumptions. Mainstream Western commentary on these issues has overstated the importance of culture and religion as factors in Muslim anti-Western sentiment. We should acknowledge that other equally important factors are at work. These include a clash of objective interests, a sharp debate about what political objectives should be pursued, and a divergent understanding of the objective world, of the meaning of the principal trends observed in world affairs, and of the intentions of the key actors. These would remain sources of contention between the Muslim world and the West even were there not a high degree of mutual suspicion about the philosophical, cultural, and intellectual character of the other. It is in Western discussions of political mobilizations on the basis of Islam and the place of violence in Islamic thought that security policy and interest in ideological trends converge most closely. This paper, in discussing the ideological context of these issues in the Muslim world, cautions against simplistic understandings because of the complexity and richness of intellectual developments there.

The Muslim world today is struggling with modernization, and with the relationship among the local, traditional, and global. Muslim societies are grappling with economic development, effective governance, corruption, and democratic mobilization against dictatorships or entrenched elites. These challenges have given rise to a rich intellectual life. This includes contestations over the reach of religious faith into the public realm, regional variations in the ways that Islamic thought bears the marks of its cultural and historical contexts, and secular discourse on global political issues that are shared with the non-Muslim

world, such as climate change and migration. What may appear to outsiders as merely opposition to the West, based on a sense of grievance, is experienced from the inside as a Muslim renaissance, a renewal of thought and culture, an aspiration to development and modernization without loss of identity.

POLITICAL CONTESTATION AND RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGY:

Often overlooked is the extent to which varieties of anti-Western sentiment in the Muslim world are actually critiques of the economic and social dimensions of the global order, similar to non-Muslim political ideologies. To many Muslims, the phrase “Islamic law and justice” refers not to harsh penal sanctions, but to exercising constraint on rulers, a mechanism that in theory ensures justice for all. The phrase is a cognate of Western notions of “the rule of law.” In many large Muslim societies, including Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan, religious thinkers have articulated responses based in Islamic law to government corruption and the chronic effects of economic crisis. The broader aspirations of the Muslim world are reflected not only in a cultural struggle against a culturally and religiously hostile and uncomprehending West. They also reflect protest at an unjust and unequal global order, considered unjust in the economic and political arrangements between societies and nations and within autocratic Muslim societies, the latter most often sponsored and protected by the West.

“They are more Islamic than us,” says a Bangladeshi intellectual about Western welfare states such as those of Scandinavia. Many Islamists speak of the need for a moral revolution against a highly aggressive corporate capitalism, even while other Islamists excoriate socialism and extol the virtues of markets as a shared value with the West. In the Philippines, Islamist parties worry about failing at the polls because their promotion of an Islamic economic and social agenda is mistaken by many voters for a socialist or communist platform. The concern about their political platforms being mistaken for secular ones underlines two points. Muslims are concerned with issues of social justice that concern non-Islamists as well; yet there is a specifically Islamic world view that eschews a sense of identification or solidarity with those others. Progressive Muslim intellectuals, seeking to correct Western misperceptions about what the Muslim revival really consists of, often emphasize principles found in the Quran and other sources of religious authority: women’s empowerment, equitable distribution of wealth, opposition to monarchy, and other egalitarian principles. The essential duties of a Muslim relating to tithes, alms, and fasting are seen to bolster the message of social and economic justice. The first two embody the redistributive principle, and the latter encourages empathetic solidarity with the hungry and the poor. One is reminded often that the earliest adherents of Islam were women, freedmen, servants, slaves, and lesser “weak” clans; that this was a community of oppressed persons, explicitly opposed to the wealthy and powerful. In this discourse, the terms “neo-liberal” and “neo-colonial” recur liberally and are often used interchangeably. According to this school of thought, the Muslim world is “targeted” by the West not because it is Muslim but because it is weak. In this view, Islamic ideologies are not seeking to opt out of or stand against globalization. They believe there is an alternative global community of which the Muslim world is a more enthusiastic participant: a global community characterized by street power, mass mobilizations, antiwar protests, and gatherings such as the World Social Forum. The Muslim world, in this view, is athwart the long-range Western agenda of dominating the world’s natural and technical resources.

There is a strong line of argument among some Islamist movements that seeks to make Islam the champion of a global movement promoting justice for all, including non-Muslim “oppressed groups.” In some guises, this argument emphasizes the ideological tools provided by Islamic precept for the liberation of mankind. In others it adopts a more pragmatic stance of common cause with already mobilized groups. In yet others, it appeals to secular popular grievance and resistance principally as a tool for the victory of Islam in societies where Muslims are a minority. For example, the Students Islamic Movement of India, which has been blamed by the Indian government for recent terrorist bombings in Indian cities, seeks to position itself as the vanguard of an antistate movement to overthrow the current Indian state on behalf of victims of caste and other social and economic oppression, offering an Islamic India as a preferable alternative to the current

political order. The Indian Jamaat-e-Islami has in recent years adopted a similar solidarity-based approach to political mobilization, albeit with a less revolutionary subversive thrust. Professedly Islamic armed insurgent movements in the southern Philippines, southern Thailand, or Afghanistan-Pakistan border regions are seen by many Muslim and non-Muslim activists and analysts as reflecting common elements with communist, Maoist, and “Naxalite” rural insurgencies: a sense that traditional communities and ways of life are beleaguered by demographic encroachment, and by economic exploitation and environmental degradation by powerful outsiders.

VIOLENCE AND TERRORISM:

Jihad has often been described by Muslims and Islamic scholars as a core principal of Islamic faith and ethics. For its part, the West today is preoccupied with the threat of violence emanating from the Muslim world and sees jihad as the intellectual source of that problem. In effect, the West holds distinctly Islamic culture and ideas responsible for an existential threat. The combined effect of these two perceptions is highly toxic. Muslims take offense at the calumny that their religion promotes violence, while Western opinion consciously or otherwise blames Islam as a religion for its own sense of insecurity and unease. This is the essence of the clash of civilizations. Political concerns poison cultural perception, and vice versa. It is necessary to carefully examine the nature of political violence in the Muslim world as well as the varieties of Muslim understanding of jihad. The discussion of terrorism is perhaps the most obvious example of how confusion of the political and the cultural poisons perceptions and creates mutual ill will. The Muslim world sees a crude and simplistic understanding of terrorism in the West. The West perceives a permissiveness and tolerance of violence among substantial segments of Muslim opinion. Quite apart from the shaping of mutual perceptions, these fixed views are also central to the shaping of political, diplomatic, and military behavior on both sides. Several factors lead many Muslims to discount Western concerns about the perceived tolerance of extremism in Muslim societies. Representative Muslim opinion considers the “global war on terror” a fig leaf for the political and economic goals of the West. Muslims note that terrorism is not the only significant form of political violence, and the West’s obsession with it obscures the pervasive violence found in Western societies and the extent to which Western states and private interests perpetrate violence in the Muslim world, and thereby spawn violence that is political in origin.

JIHAD, JUSTICE, MOBILIZATION, AND MILITANCY:

Opposing the facile assumption that the religious concept of jihad justifies political violence, Muslim exponents and Islamic scholars in speaking to non-Muslims have propounded the argument that jihad refers more properly to spiritual and moral struggle. This may be an equally facile misstatement of a more complex idea. The term does indeed appear to mean more than simply striving for spiritual and ethical improvement. We might perhaps say that even as a spiritual and ethical precept, the idea partakes of a characteristically Islamic refusal to separate the inner or personal and the social or political. Even if not a justification for violence, jihad does refer to struggle in the political world against the enemies of Allah and those who would harm the Muslim ummah (the worldwide Muslim community). At issue is the duty to mobilize against injustice and other threats, a duty of militant resistance. This relates jihad to the central importance of justice discussed above. In this respect, it is of the highest importance that many Muslim intellectuals see mobilization as not only a central principle of Islam, but also as a distinguishing characteristic. Islam is seen as an intellectual and social tradition based neither on radical personal autonomy nor on authority and obedience. Thus the beneficial organization of an Islamic society is seen as requiring mobilization for common endeavor, based upon a common ideological understanding among its members. To discuss jihad in terms of political mobilization and contestation, of practical day-to-day politics, can also explain why, despite the almost universal condemnation of terrorism in Muslim societies, attitudes toward political violence remain more ambiguous. Many Muslims accuse the West of the same in its attitudes to political violence, at least toward the Muslim world.

Muslims who categorically reject terrorism as a political and ideological distraction from the jihad of the struggle for social justice and equality nonetheless still reserve judgment about the use of violence against entrenched injustice. Many also embrace the notion of ideological war against the enemies of Islam, defined either as those who violate basic social justice (understood as a core Islamic precept applied to Muslims or non-Muslims), or those whose perpetration of injustice harms particular Muslim communities or the ummah as a whole. Others embrace the notion of unyielding struggle against non-Muslim ideologies in the conviction that only Islam can secure justice.

ARMY OF GOD:

The areas straddling the border of Afghanistan and Pakistan are the epitome—almost a caricature—of the confrontation between the West and Islam. The area is both a meeting of conflicting cultural systems and the epicenter of the “global war on terror.” This region embodies almost all the West’s anxieties about ideological developments in Islam and the security of the West. By most measures it is a highly conservative society suspicious of outsiders. It is also home to fundamentalist and antiwestern religious-political movements; indigenous and foreign armed groups devoted to war against regimes friendly to the West; and military training facilities and educational institutions that are attended by young Muslims from around the world and devoted to the waging of jihad, against not only non-Muslims but also against “bad Muslims.”

CONCLUSION:

The ways in which religion marks identity and inspires action is anything but simple. Its adherents seek in it one or more of spiritual world view, ethical precepts, and marker of group identity. Each of these may also be the basis of political ideology and action. The faith of its adherents will variously emphasize religious duty, mysticism, and attachment to particular philosophical schools of thought. A religion may inspire a generalized pride in the political, social, and intellectual history of the faith, and all else that constitutes its civilization. The political stances of its adherents will vary according to the requirements of their societies as well as their convictions, and will be influenced significantly by the intellectual posture they adopt toward tradition, history, authority, or scripture—skeptical, critical, liberal, conservative, fundamentalist, progressive, or modernist. If we allow society to polarize too far, social unrest is inevitable. It is often poverty or injustice that leads people to turn to a violence and crime as a means to get their message heard or to seek revenge even though they may cloak it under a religious banner.

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