



The discourse challenges of Islamic fundamentalism and the west

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Abstract: The Islamic fundamentalism similar to a radical interpretation of Islamic religion has played an especial role in international relationships connections particularly in the last two decades. The fundamentalists unlike the other Islamic groups such as the moderate or the secular Islamists are pursuing to become face to face with the westerner teachings (human rights, democracy, terrorism and the secularism) and making efforts to challenge the hegemony and the absolute dominance of the west. They are trying to prove this fact by mentioning the witnesses that these indicators are not pervasive and troubleshooter and the western teachings should be seen from other perspectives. The major question in this writing is that how could the fundamentalism challenge the western hegemony as a strange and others' discourse or dialogue? To answer this question, the Laclau, and Mouffe's discourse analyzing approaches were used to criticize the ideologies of human rights, democracy, terrorism and the secularism based on Islamic fundamentalism.

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Introduction

The western civilization has been engaged in challenges and various confrontations with Islamic civilization since long ago. After the expansion of Islamic religion in Middle East, the Muslims reached the European gates (Ondulas and present Spain) and institutionalized the indicators of Islamic school of thought in this region. The crusade wars between the Muslims and the Christianity comprised the bloodiest period of challenges between west and Islam. After the relative domination of Islamic civilization, by the emergence of renaissance and the religious reforms movement, the west increased its colonial dominance in different areas. This trend was continued until the collapse of colonialism, a mosaic of Islamic countries resulted from the westerners' interests was shaped in the Middle East and Africa that set up the ground for every day excellence of the west on Islamic countries. The cold war was also a considerable assistance in Muslims self defeat during global transitional period where the USSR and the USA played important role as the shelter and refuge for these country. By the collapse of eastern bloc, the Islamic fundamentalism slowly out braved as another against the west and during the 9/11 attacks, the world perceived that the Alqaeda and the Taleban who were the representative of Islamic

fundamentalism, are following the struggle against western hegemony (USA). After this event, the Islamic fundamentalists were pursuing to challenge the western teachings by referring to the pure Islamic thoughts from the view point of their violent thinking standpoint. Now we should reach this grasp that which indicators and concepts of western school have been put under question by fundamentalists? Whether the Islamic fundamentalism could out brave against western hegemony similar to another and trans tradition? Which type of discourse and theory can express this role of fundamentalism in global arena? These questions prepared the ground to shape this text to study the role and place of Islamic fundamentalism.

Theoretical framework for research

The theoretical framework of this research is the theory of discourse analysis. Based on the Laclau, and Mouffe's theory by amenability from Michael Fouco, the discourse is a semantic system which bring the grasping and discussing possibility into existence about the world or the part of the world and make the topics and subjects possible and actually construct them and covers linguistic and trans linguistic elements (1). Laclau, and Mouffe expand the concept of discourse that is specific to political processes. (2) From their viewpoint the power and politics are the two faces of

the coin in a sense when it enjoys the ability to generate the terms such as society and identity. Politics is an onlooker of the possibility of perpetuity of such types of terms (3). Now look on the elements of Laclau, and Mouffe's theory briefly.

1. The nodal point

Laclau, and Mouffe have loaned this concept from Lucan. The nodal point is the sign that all other signs or symbols take order around it, the nodal point refers to the state that the meaning of the sign has reached a freeze state but the flouting signifier implies to a state that the sign is suspended and flouting in the field of different discourses to stabilize the meaning. (4)

2-flouting signifier

The flouting signifiers are the signs that the different discourses strive to give a meaning using their specific method. The nodal points are also considered the flouting signifiers, but the difference is in that that the nodal point points to a state where the sign meaning has come to freezing and blockade state but the flouting signifier points to the state that the sign is suspended and flouting in the field of different discourses to stabilize the meaning. (5)

3- Field of discursivity

Laclau, and Mouffe, name the field of discursivity to the possible meanings of the signs which are rejected from the discourse.

The field of discursivity in fact is the meaning which overflows from a discourse; i.e. the meanings that has or had a sign in other discourse but rejected or omitted from desired discourse so that a semantic slickness is achieved in that discourse. (6)

The alienating

The social alienating and their experience for discourse theory are of high importance. In the beginning of social alienating, a negative and discordant idea is presented across the social relationships. (7)

Islamic fundamentalism

The fundamentalism is named after the Latin word (fundamental) and gives the meanings of foundation and base. From the equivalent terminologies of fundamentalism, the principality or the ultra conservativeness and reactionism can be referred to. The Islamic fundamentalism from the politico-scientific cultural viewpoint is a disagreed term in Europe and America which is implemented to every movement that supports the accurate execution of the teachings of holy Quran and Islamic jurisprudence. In the west, this terms has been changed equivalent to religious dynamism especially the dynamisms of third world as well as Islamic streams. (8)

Different definitions have been presented of fundamentalism that the following definition species this term simply and truly. The Islamic fundamentalism means the return to the principle and initial faiths

(Quran and Sunnat of holy prophet). They believe that the religious sources should be obligated without manipulation, alteration or the justification based on personal opinions.

Shirin Hunter writes that, "The fundamentalism means to apply the Islamic laws as they are and in their pure form. From this viewpoint, the Islamic fundamentalism is really a fundamentalism. In fact, whatever differentiates the Islamic fundamentalism and causes it threatening is its all out political and ideological deduction of Islam through it. (9)

Islamic fundamentalism as a discourse

The Islamic fundamentalism as an identity is a collection of commandments, terms and the signs that shapes a diverse system. This discourse is not only different from that of liberalist and Marxist and the other discourses out of the Islamic domain but also different from the inside Islam reformist discourses. The fundamentalism has independent identity. Out of the most outstanding differences of this discourse versus the other Islamic discourses is that it does not accept the reconciliation with west and rejects all types of pluralism from Islamic commandments.

The fundamentalism discourse and alienation process

From discourse analysis viewpoint, every discourse takes shape in the process of alienation. The fundamentalism discourse and the discourses relevant to it are scrutinized based on alienation logic. The fundamentalist movements and organizations have been established in encountering the internal downfall and the assault of west's modernism. Therefore, the historical origin of radical Islamists has been basically in the alienating versus the modern west and their internal dependents. Of course the alienating process does not rely on westerners discourse, but also covers the internal discourse of Islam such as secular Islam, liberal political Islam as well as leftist political Islam. The alienating of fundamental Islam is following the foundation destructing of the concepts and ideas of west's discourse. The system fully rejects their semantic and pursuing the creation of novel identity to these indicators. The fundamentalist Islam by reducing the western teachings to nodal point of Quran and Sunnat, has completely rejected the concepts such as secularism and democracy and show an interpretation and tradition extracted from Islamic jurisprudence.

Quran and Sunnat as nodal point

The fundamentalists believe that the ideologies and the Islamic beliefs which have been extracted from Quran and Sunnat, must be the major focusing point of decision makings for the peoples affairs. The pure Islam is the main pyramid and the arbitrary interpretations cause the deviation from the right path from their view point. Quran and Sunnat are the final concept and the point which generate the meaning for

the concepts or the floating signifiers. The human rights, Democracy or the peace and security can be expressed and interpreted in different ways, however, from the fundamentalist viewpoint; these signifiers should be shaped only on the basis of ideas of Quran and Sunnat. They are of the view that all duties and tasks have been assigned by Quran and Sunnat so the Islamic principle should be referred to shape the coherent discourse.

Floating signifiers:

Human rights

Human rights is one of the challenging subjects between Islam and west, since the western believe that their charter and interpretation is rightful for human rights and should be globalized, although the Muslims and especially the fundamentalists are against this viewpoint and believe that the Quran and Sunnat teachings have correctly described the rights of human and there is no need to implement the western human rights teachings in Islamic countries. The Islamic fundamentalists believe that the commandments have excellence over the human intellect and human rights have been specified in Quran and Sunnat. They negate the nodal point of west (human intellect) and through this mean totally reject the interpretation of westerns floating signifiers.

The fundamentalists have severe/strong view regarding minorities and showed suppressing behavior against the non Muslims lived under their control. The fundamentalist's terrorist groups have killed many worshippers by attacking the churches in Pakistan. In Saudi Arabia, the Jews and Christians cannot have worship places for themselves and even it is also possible that they could not enjoy their religious vacations. The Taliban in addition to imposing their laws to people, have applied Wahabi interpretation of Islam and do not allow women to work and drive vehicles and only foreign women could cooperate in the NGOs. (10)

The covering and veil issues of women is of high importance in Islamic societies. The holy Quran advises the men and women to observe veiling cover and having a moderate and balanced behavior. Although it does not explain the type of cover or veil accurately yet, has two advises in this regard: to protect the body organs from the illegitimate looks and the cover status in view of the Sunnat and local traditions. From the fundamentalist viewpoint, the veil observation is a commandment and order. They preach this verse that the holy Quran requires the believer men that "he must protect his eyes" but avoid the other part of the verse which advises to men "the believer men should also avoid looking the aliens". (11)

From the viewpoint of fundamentalists, the laws of Islamic jurisprudence should be executed in Islamic societies, the human rights which is creation of human

intellect, cannot be appropriate for Islamic countries. The Muslims have independent identity extracted from their traditions, so it is impossible to flow the techniques and identification issues related to strange discourse in these societies.

Democracy

Democracy is one of the other floating signifiers that is also conflicting in discourse of Islamic fundamentalism. From the westerns viewpoint, the societies should be selected by the people and their opinion specifies the legitimating of government officials.

From the viewpoint of Islamic fundamentalists the democracy has no role in selecting or role playing of the society's executives. The ruler of the Islamic society should be selected by the religious authorities (ullamah) based on the teachings of Quran and Sunnat. "the democratic system is based on democracy and is a infidel or unbeliever system...but in Islam the rule belongs to Islamic jurisprudence not the people. The God is the lawmaker...(12)

Bin laden, Imen Azzavaheri and Abumasab Zargavi have common debates and discussions on democracy and political reforms in Islamic countries. In his communiqué issued in December 2004, Bin laden announces this opinion that the democracy and the governments based on constitutions or basic laws and the Islamic monarchies are equally unacceptable for Islamic societies because they consolidate the human rulers and human fabricated law system in place of Islamic law system.

The nodal point that is the Quran and Sunnat specify the way of Governance. The major difference which lies between the floating signifier of fundamentalism discourse and the west is the vertical and horizontal viewpoint. The west's floating signifier is a horizontal viewpoint and of equal value reciprocal in relation to the theme of governance since it revolves round the nodal point (human intellect), while the Islamic fundamentalist faith is vertical, since it is extracted from the Speech of the God and his prophet that is superior to human intellect. The other important point is that the fundamentalist discourse on this signifier (democracy) has the generation aspect. Totally rejects it and mention completely a different imitation of it.

Terrorism and Sacred war (Jihad)

These two concepts undoubtedly, are the most important under consideration indicators between Islamic fundamentalism and the west. Terrorism means the horror and panic; it has the meaning of individual or the group actions who achieve the political goals by creating horror and panic. (13)

Both of the discourses define and explain the terrorism from specific viewpoints. For example, while the west regards the 9/11 attacks on USA as terrorist operation,

the radical fundamentalist called the operators of this event as the Islamic sacred warriors and praised them. When the Wahabi Islamists say by justifying the “heroic acts” of suicide bombers in their propaganda to the west, “you love life and we like the death”, man remembers the words of Hasan al-Bana written in his journal of sacred war which reflects his mentality. “God awards the nation who is expert of the art of death and knows the need to die magnificently.” Be sure that the death is not avoidable but who dies in God’s way receives bonus”. (14)

The discourse of Islamic fundamentalism completely rejects the concept of westerner floating signifier (terrorism) and sets its own floating signifier (sacred war) at its place. The terrorism is negated as one of the interpreting ideas of the west and the other Islamic teaching (jihad) substitutes it. The fundamentalist look-up type to Jihad is a sacred theme which causes the rescue of the Muslims from the dominance of atheism. The fundamentalist discourse by developing the indicator of sacred war creates a novel equi-identification itself as well as acts to create alienation. The identification of sacred war while has a conflicting meaning with western terrorism, it looks on it as a strange existence and challenges its semantic structure. The sacred war is floating signifier that is extracted from the interpretation of Quran and Sunnat understood by the fundamentalists, the interpretation which takes place to shape their identification optionally and by awareness.

Secularism and religious rule

Secularism is also out of the concepts that are criticized by most of the Islamic groups. The word of secular means the century that points to the present time and the events of this world versus the perpetuality. The first applications of this word in the last of the third century, were used to describe those groups of clerics who left the life of seclusion to live in this world. (15) Secularism is based on the culture which accepts the separation among the religious, spiritual and divine affairs from one side, and among worldly and materialistic life from the other side. This analysis of religion is principally related to spiritual world and has no effect in world of variables; the religious affairs are related to personal sphere and should not be interfered to general life? The worldly affairs should be handed over to the law written by human being. (16)

The religious rule is basically is different from that of secular dominance. The chief ruler is generally or specifically selected by God and godly religion. While the determination of government chief is implemented by the people in secular regimes or established on dynasty, codetta or the revolution basis and takes a forcible minimum legitimacy. The religious rule is based on religious commandments explained by the prophet (peace be upon him) in the society, while the

laws of secular rule depends upon the human intellect. The obedience of rulers in religious state is a religious duty before it considered a civil duty and probably such obedience may be the standard and criteria for the faith. The religious rule is a signifier which takes its sacredness from Quran and Sunnat. The religious commandments specify the laws related to religious government. From the fundamentalist viewpoint, the identification of religious government originates from the religion that is why the human and its intellect should not interfere in the godly commandments. Quran and Sunnat which are the nodal point of fundamentalists should interfere or involve in all walks of life and the ruling sphere is not excluded from this principle. The secular rule neither has any congruity with Muslims’s identification nor is extracted from divine laws, so the floating signifier should not be propagated in Islamic societies while originates from omanistic interpretation and the centrality of human intellect.

Conclusion

The Islamic fundamentalism has been the challenging subjects in international relations in the last few decades. This discourse has consolidated its position step by step by the collapse of the eastern bloc at the end of 1980’s decade. The 9/11th event which astonished the world, was the sign of pragmatism power expansion of this discourse. In fact, the Islamic fundamentalism reached the action stage from the thinking and reflecting arena.

This discourse has always endeavored to challenge the dominant ideas of the west and never agreed with them in their ideas. The Islamic fundamentalism by presenting the concepts such as jihad, Islamic system of rule and Islamic human rights, has challenged the teachings of western human rights, democracy, secularism and the west’s definition of terrorism. This approach by adopting the centrality of Quran and Sunnat define its ideas similar to the nodal point on this basis. The western discourse which was a dominant discourse in last few centuries was established on human intellect centrality and human is the nodal point of it. Naturally, the teachings of this discourse are originated from human intellect. Hence, the signs of the two discourses between Islam and the west are always in encountering position with each other, since the base and foundation of them are against each other. Someone determines the divine tradition as his nodal point while the other regards human intellect his guide. The interpretations are also established on the basis of these two axes.

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