Islamists’ Introvert Legacies

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In 1967, Yinger argued for the idea that any definition of religion can be satisfactory only to its author, which sounds logical as religious beliefs stand to be products of variable individual and communal sets of representations and practices. Yet, one can safely say that any definition of religion would conflate with assumptions on belief and group, implying a sense of sharing- therefore co-presence and belonging- as a natural human apparatus of integration, cohesion, self-definition, and self-reassurance through “the company of those who feel and think as we do” (Durkheim, 1893/1984, p.48).

This paper discusses Islamic groups’ affiliation rigidity which leads usually to religious discrimination between Muslims and Islamists of different frameworks and ideologies, and inhibits the dynamics of dialogue as well as the apprehension of the diverse Islamist perceptions, contesting Islamists’ slogans of defending the same case which is “the benefit of the Muslim Ummah”. Such rigidity has lead to a series of terrorist attacks and the huge turmoil the world has witnessed namely since 9/11 that has urgently put into debate “religiosity”, either as a concept or as a practice.

As an example, the paper investigates the self-centered tendency of a Moroccan Islamic group called “Atawhid w’Al- Islah”, questioning its legitimacy as the ‘only valid’ Islamic movement in Morocco.

Such self- centered tendency refutes the movement’s positive self-image as the most moderate Moroccan Islamic movement. It weakens the movement’s case and proves its calls for flexibility and religious tolerance to be mere elusive slogans raised to get a favorable public opinion and strengthen its socio- political authority.