



EMPOWERMENT NARRATIVE IN SPEECH OF EXTREMIST GROUPS

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Empowerment is a disciplined Islamic concept. Empowerment *per se* is mentioned in the Holy Quran: Allah has promised, to those among you who believe and work righteous deeds, that He will, of a surety, grant them in the land, inheritance (of power), as He granted it to those before them; that He will establish in authority their religion - the one which He has chosen for them; and that He will change (their state), after the fear in which they (lived), to one of security and peace: 'They will worship Me (alone) and not associate aught with Me. 'If any do reject Faith after this, they are rebellious and wicked. (55) Surat Al-Nur. Although empowerment is a concept that requires among its connotative meanings that Muslims be in a state of security and stability that enables them to establish prayer, pay zakat and command virtue and forbid evil, the concept of empowerment is among the concepts that have been distorted by Islamic extremist groups.

This is because the establishment of prayer along with other rituals of Islam while it was still in its infancy was not the path which Muslims have adopted later. When Muslims immigrated with the Messenger (peace be upon him) to Medina at the beginning of their reign, they were not immune to the attacks of polytheists around. Sometimes they used to pray with their weapons on them. The interpretation tells that the Messenger (peace be upon him) called for the immigration to Medina, he along with his companions stayed there in fear with their weapons on them day and night. Then a man asked the Messenger (peace be upon him) when a day should come to feel more secure and stable and put away all the weapons. The Messenger (peace be upon him) replied, saying: "Do

not sit cross-legged for long in the public without having a piece of metal". Then Allah revealed this verse of the Holy Quran: " Allah has promised, to those among you who believe".

Against such a backdrop of preparedness and caution, the context of why this verse was revealed indicates that the sign of empowerment means security and stability in the homes of Muslims in such a fashion as to make them assured of the establishment of prayer and Islamic rituals. This also means that the fear that was common in the early days of Islam has now disappeared and has been replaced by empowerment of religion since before the conquest of Mecca. Simply put, this means that the concept of empowerment today has been achieved in the homes of Muslims and their countries for centuries.

Perhaps it is very important to research how this Islamic concept was distorted, veering off rectitude to other meanings that reflect an ideological identity of extremist speech, making the concept of empowerment paradoxical within the labyrinthine framework of a conceptual network of extremist groups that distort the concept of empowerment, perverting other meanings to influence and impact on the psychology and mentality of recruits in a fashion that makes their ideological awareness based on a different perception of the concept of empowerment. It is a perception that has nothing to do with the disciplined scientific meaning of the concept; rather, it has to do with the ideological meaning of extremist groups so that the concept is "decoyed" with an overload that reflects a distressed perception. Given this overburdened and camouflaged or twisted interpretation, new recruits do suffer the sensitivity and a critical commitment to the perception, which can be addressed only by applying the imagined meaning of empowerment in reality where the terms and metrics of which do not respond to this concept. As such, any attempt to implement the concept of "empowerment" as is in the minds of extremists necessarily leads to violence. This is because linking the concept of empowerment with a relentless pursuit of "applying *Sharia*" (which often means the concept of limits) considers that the application of the extremist group to *Sharia* is the meaning of empowerment that is not well addressed except through

the pursuit of that application without looking at the conditions and barriers required by mental consideration.

This distortion rose to the surface from the representations of identity speech, which extremist groups made a barrier to see concepts of Islam within the limits of disciplined scientific knowledge. The establishment of the Islamic groups, which initiated with the Muslim Brotherhood, was originally a kinetic understanding against the colonial movement that was prevailing across the Muslim world. This is because the speech of identity, which confines the identity of the ego in a closed frame, reflects at the same time a closed speech due to self-center and subjection to stereotypes, which leads to a unilateral vision that does not look at ideas in multiple relationships.

According to the reform movement led by the Afghani and Muhammad Abdo around the beginning of the last century, two levels of the West can be seen: the first level is the colonial West that should be resisted; the second level is the civilized West that should be a source of education, knowledge and learning. As such, the speech of identity motivated the Muslim Brotherhood to reject the reformist speech and adopt one speech against the West through an ongoing conflict relationship within the resistance to colonialism. The Muslim Brotherhood envisioned that in Islamic history there could be an alternative to the present. Thus, the speech of identity, which wastes possible opportunities for openness and understanding the relationship of Islam as a religion with the modern world, according to a scholarly and oriented view. Consequently, it led to a severe closure common among the groups that split from the Muslim Brotherhood and raised the tone of the speech of identity to an acute relationship of conflict with the West.

As such, extremist groups, being too much introvert, reclusive and withdrawn on the one hand, and not adopting the sources and references of the legitimate Sunni tradition on the other hand, and their rupture with the West on the third hand, made them in a severe conflict relationship that can be critically manifested in the 9/11 Attacks by Al-Qaeda, and the establishment of the Daesh (ISIS).

In the midst of the political dynamics of extremist movements, the perverted concept of empowerment according to the ideological perception of these movements was one of the most prominent motivations and rationale for which novice fighters were recruited, on the pretext of regaining the glory of Muslims by empowering them on the ground again. It is contrary to what can be seen when the true definition of the concept of empowerment is as revealed by the sources of scholars and through cognitive connotations, not ideological connotations.

There is, of course, a clear correlation between the converging indications of an understanding of extremist groups in their distortions of other concepts of Islam along the lines of the concept of empowerment. Here, we notice that the concept of empowerment in their awareness is linked to the concept of the application of Sharia. As the concept of empowerment is deviated from its real meaning, we also find that the concept of Sharia has been confined to "limits". We also see that what combines the two concepts mentioned in the ideological speech of extremist groups is the pursuit of governance and power.

The kinetic ideological reference of extremist groups should overcome the scholarly nature of concepts in Islam liberated by the Sunni tradition and jurisprudence of scholars to accommodate their demand in the pursuit of power. To this end, these groups have to distort such concepts to harmonize with their vision and kinetic doctrine. Inasmuch as the laws of knowledge are more accurate in matching their credibility with the movement and challenges of reality and inasmuch as the ideological awareness of extremist groups is a non-scientific awareness, the results of such ideological understanding of extremist groups about the concepts of Islam such as the concepts of empowerment and Sharia. Telling examples include when its requirements are applied in reality, its clear effects are manifested in violence and destabilization, which caused destabilization of the Arab and Islamic region and caused a vertical division in Muslim societies. Misrepresentation of Islam concepts will remain a notorious feature of extremist groups, in the absence of many

conditions required by the reality of Muslims today to overcome the dilemma of underdevelopment.

The speech of identity, which makes the pursuit of the establishment of statehood a religious obligation in effect through the pursuit of empowerment and the application of “Sharia,” is an impossible pursuit of illusory statehood, which has become a strain in the extremist groups’ perceptions of Islam concepts, because dismantling or defragmenting the extremist groups’ view of such concepts through critical thought and knowledge will reveal the seriousness of ideological references and the role in destroying, dismantling and destabilizing the fabric of societies.

Likewise, the reflections of identity speech among extremist terrorist groups make the national feeling a rejected feeling under the constant pressure of the ideologies of identity and empowerment overbearing and arrogant to the homeland and citizenship. Inasmuch as the convergence imposed by the ideology of extremist Islamic groups between the homeland and the concept of the House of Islam is one, the source of which is the misrepresentation of the concepts of Islam, which reveals ignorance of the purposes of Sharia in managing priorities.

As such, we find that the concept of empowerment as seen by extremist groups is closer to the narrative than to be a coherent Islamic concept. It does not reflect the cognitive content in the consciousness of these extremist groups, or it does not contain objective logic for rationalization.

Narrative, as “stereotyping regarding the vision of a group,” is the closest to describing the concept of empowerment as it is in extremist groups. Narratives have roles that correspond to the doctrine of certainty in the hearts of people. In this case, narratives are more severe and dangerous in their reactions reflected in the actions of the individual or group. The concept of empowerment is part of a conceptual network through which extremist groups seek to gain power without adhering to the meanings and spirit of Islam that reflect the meaning of religion and great values more than any meaning to statehood.