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Article

The Paradigm of the Traditional Religious Market in Algeria

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Abstract:

This study seeks to reveal the reality of the traditional religious market in Algeria, and to understand the stakes of the religious discourse (mosque discourse) first by revealing the nature of the conflict that emerged in its early stages as an organizational and functional conflict as a result of the reproduction of the official religious field with an organizational and legislative perspective by the administrative religious actor, and secondly towards the informal religious field adopted by the former Islamist religious actor, which emerged at the beginning of the eighties in the twentieth century. With its religious practice and resistance to change, i.e. (ideological conflict), and third towards the religious counter-field adopted by scientific Salafism, i.e. the socio-religious conflict; and finally towards the digital revolution, that is, up to the final stages of the struggle represented in the "struggle for recognition"; the latter, which takes on a symbolic or conflictual dimension or is the final result of the conflict, and in the end it can be the multiple process to end the ongoing conflicts and manage the problems of difference and cultural and digital diversity.

Key words: religious discourse, religious field, the religious market, reproduction, religious practices, Religious capital.

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Introduction

There exists no social space that is not, in its very essence, constituted as a field of difference and distinction on one hand, and, on the other, as a space wherein positions and statuses are hierarchically stratified and ranked — a space of power and domination, and simultaneously a space of resistances, struggles, and counter-struggles. In short, it is a domain of authority and control, within which individuals become involved as participants expressing a "will to power" that manifests itself, according to Pierre Bourdieu's terminology, through a form of social libido. This libido acts as a driving force that compels them, within the context of their social relationships, to enter into conflict — whether to preserve their current social positions or to transform and improve them.

Pierre Bourdieu considered that concepts have an operational nature, in the sense that they do not possess meaning intrinsically, but rather derive their significance only within the context of their usage in reality and within the framework of a specific system of relations.

There is no room for doubt that Bourdieu has provided the sociological field with a set of novel conceptual tools for analyzing and approaching social phenomena, such as: the field (le champ), symbolic capital, and habitus.

In his analysis of the concept of the "field," Bourdieu deconstructs the notion of "society" — which he regards as an empty category — and replaces it with the concepts of field, social space, domain, and market. For him, society is not a differentiated and homogeneous whole whose integration arises from systemic functions, shared culture, interwoven disputes, or an overarching sovereign authority. Rather, society is a collection of relatively autonomous "playing fields" that cannot be subsumed under any totalizing social logic, whether that logic is that of capitalism, modernity, or postmodernity.

Religious practices in Algeria manifest a sociological plurality that reflects the multiplicity of religious expression present within society. There exist diverse modes of religiosity that cannot be confined within a single doctrinal mold. However, amidst this ever-changing reality, a dynamic movement has arisen, which has led to the weakening of traditional modes of religiosity and the emergence of new forms that have produced religious imaginaries and symbols unlinked to the local cultural environment. Nevertheless, these new forms remain aligned with the Algerian social reality, particularly in the sense that

the movement of religiosity has tended toward a religious life structured upon individualism and self-realization.

The discipline of sociology, alongside other human sciences concerned with the study of religion — or what Émile Durkheim referred to as "the religious phenomenon" — departs from a basic definition, one that retains the most widespread and circulated meaning of religion within the literature of religious studies, while at the same time supplementing it with new analytical elements. Sociology, although it accepts the definition that views religion as "a set of ideas and beliefs adopted by a specific group of people regarding life and the cosmos, which they rely upon in organizing their natural, social, and political behaviors — a body of knowledge that may be based on the acknowledgment of the existence of metaphysical beings or natural elements that govern the course of events and shape their outcomes," nevertheless, Durkheim, as one of the founding figures of social science, regarded the task of defining the religious phenomenon as one of the most difficult assignments a social scientist could undertake. This difficulty, in his view, does not stem from an ontological complexity intrinsic to the process of definition per se — regardless of its nature — but rather from the multiplicity and abundance of religious practices, the diversity of spiritual beliefs, and the fact that religion has, from ancient times, constituted the subject matter of all forms of human knowledge, both scientific and popular, even before the institutionalization of the modern sciences of religion in their various forms.

To avoid this definitional difficulty, the social sciences propose a new approach to the study of the religious phenomenon — one that is better equipped to engage with its complexity and variability.

I. Research Problem and Hypotheses

1. The Research Problem:

The period encompassing the late 1990s and the first decade of the 2000s witnessed a noticeable tendency on the part of the political authority in Algeria — represented by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments — to move in the direction of institutionalizing the religious field. This tendency manifested itself through a series of decrees, legislative texts, and executive instructions that were issued during this time. These legal and administrative measures clearly demonstrated a focused attention on redefining the status and position of the imam, particularly through his integration into the structure of the national civil service. The Executive Decree No. 08-411, dated December 24, 2008, which

contains the fundamental law pertaining to employees belonging to the specialized corps of the administration responsible for religious affairs and endowments, constituted a significant shift in the symbolic standing of the imam and in the nature of the duties assigned to him. Indeed, the position of imamate within mosques was transformed into a formal public function governed by the rules and regulations of the civil service — including in terms of conditions of appointment. During the exercise of this function, the imam was now represented by professional bodies advocating for his rights, namely through an independent union and a coordinating syndicate.

It must be emphasized that this transformation in the institutional and symbolic place of the imamate within the "mosque institution" was in fact the continuation of a broader sequence of decrees issued throughout the previous ten years. These decrees aimed to organize the religious affairs and endowments sector at multiple levels — including the construction of mosques, Qur'anic schools, Sufi lodges (zāwiyas), and even spaces of worship related to non-Islamic religious rites. In addition, these decrees addressed the task of defining the prerogatives, duties, and functional roles of the various services and directorates of religious affairs, both at the central and local levels. This process eventually culminated in a clear delineation of the responsibilities and tasks assigned to various actors operating across the religious affairs sector — including imams, inspectors, endowment officers, female religious guides, Qur'an instructors, and mosque assistants.

The frequent invocation of the need to preserve the "Algerian religious reference," which is itself a direct expression of the state's adopted policy within the religious field, reveals the existence of a full-fledged public policy architecture. At its core, this policy seeks to produce what is termed "Algerian Islam," as opposed to an "imported" or "foreign" Islam allegedly coming "from outside." Accordingly, the principal objective of the administrative actor — that is, the state — is to exercise control over the religious field and over the content of the sermons delivered by imams and by all those entrusted with the management of places of worship. It is from this vantage point that the stakes of institutionalizing religious authority in Algeria and the practical procedures for implementing such authority become readily visible.

And since the Algerian state has chosen to adopt a modern democratic societal project that is not detached from its religious identity, it has found itself compelled to supplement the dominant Mālikī school of jurisprudence with certain interpretive contributions from the

Ḥanafī school, with the aim of confining and restraining various extremist currents. This implies that the state is not currently engaged in the management of a deep structural contradiction with its religious adversaries; rather, it is primarily focused on containing the jihadist Salafi current — a task which, in turn, requires it to manage less significant contradictions with other Islamic groups that do not share the state's theoretical orientations and ideological visions.

Finally, the relationship between the religious field and the political field in Algeria is one of interdependence and interpenetration — in direct contrast to the situation in European countries, where one observes the exclusion of one field from the other, as in the formal separation between religion and politics. In Algeria, by contrast, political authorities exercise a guardianship role over Islam and work toward its institutionalization under the oversight of a specific ministry (namely, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments). However, this relationship between the two fields displays varying characteristics when viewed from a macrosociological perspective, while there also exist other microsociological variables that are directly connected to the dynamics of the relationship between the fields. These variables help to clarify the mechanisms by which the religious field operates — both officially and unofficially — through the uncovering of the transformations and strategies adopted or pursued by the Algerian political authority in its efforts to dominate, manage, nationalize, and instrumentalize the religious field in order to secure political, social, and religious legitimacy.

As previously mentioned, the main impetus for choosing this subject of inquiry was fundamentally the desire to uncover the reality of religious discourse — and more specifically mosque-based discourse — by tracing its trajectories within the religious field of Algeria.

The study thus proceeds from an attempt to answer the following central question:

How can the political-religious authority in Algeria control the reproduction of the religious market, if we consider that traditional religious discourse remains suspended between official and unofficial spheres in Algeria?

2. Research Hypotheses:

- The religious discourse adopted by the unofficial religious actor relies essentially on a margin of freedom that allows it to resist the process of transformation and institutionalization of the traditional official religious field.

II. The Conceptual Problem of the Religious Market

1. The Religious Market: A Reading in the Concept

The concept of the marketplace, in its simplest and most commonly accepted meaning, denotes a public space — whether geographic or digital — in which strangers may meet, in order to offer goods and services for display by the seller, and for evaluation and potential purchase by the buyer. In the book The Religious Market in the West, the religious market is defined as "a set of exchanges in which the rewards are promises of compensation in the afterlife." From this definition, it becomes evident that the study of religious capital cannot proceed without taking into account the religious market itself, which constitutes the arena where religious capital — in both its solid and liquid forms — is deployed and circulated.

A number of sociologists have integrated the notion of the market into many different social spaces and interpretive frameworks. In Pierre Bourdieu's justification, specifically in his article on the "linguistic market," he writes: "The reintroduction of the concept of the market serves to remind us of a simple and fundamental fact: competence has no value except in a context where it is exposed. Therefore, those who today wish to defend their values as holders of Latin capital find themselves compelled to defend the very existence of the Latin language market — that is, they are obliged to reproduce consumers of Latin through the educational system."

From this straightforward definition, we may assert that competence which lacks a market becomes devoid of value — or, to put it more precisely, it ceases to be a form of linguistic capital and instead reverts to being a mere competence in the strictly linguistic sense. From Bourdieu's conceptualization, it becomes clear that the market is the primary engine for any good or service. Accordingly, religious capital could not exist without the existence of a religious market — a market wherein religious goods and services are offered, promoted, symbolically valorized, and presented in such a way as to persuade and mobilize adherence.

Hence, the term "religious market" constitutes, in Bourdieu's view, the foundational base for all forms of symbolic capital. The religious market enjoys high degrees of

flexibility and adaptability. Furthermore, investment in religious capital occurs within its own specific market, targeting particular clients or audiences to whom social and cultural religious commodities are offered for evaluation and engagement.

III. Mechanisms for Regulating the Religious Market and Reproducing Traditional Religious Discourse in Algeria

Since the establishment of the modern nation-state in Arab-Islamic countries, two general types of state intervention in the religious sphere have emerged. Although these two modes of intervention differ in their premises, means, and objectives, they have nonetheless produced — with varying degrees — the same outcomes and phenomena. They have also contributed, in differing proportions, to shaping the relationship between the political and the religious domains in our contemporary societies in a state of acute and prolonged tension.

The first type of intervention — and the one most prevalent in state policies — is the instrumentalization of religion for political ends. The second, in contrast, involves its marginalization and exclusion.

The first model of state intervention in religious affairs has been dominant in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Sudan, and to some extent, Egypt. The justifications for this model vary: some states have sought to build political legitimacy upon religious foundations, while others have aimed to monitor and fully control the religious sphere. The degree to which the state monopolizes religion varies from country to country. This variance is linked, on the one hand, to differences in historical development, and on the other, to the degree of political evolution in each country. Moreover, the extent to which the state is able to grasp and dominate the religious sphere does not necessarily depend on the degree to which the state is "religious" in nature, or on how much it seeks to cast its policies in religious terms.

In contrast to this first model — the interventionist, annexational, and exploitative approach — another model has prevailed in certain Arab and Islamic countries. Though different in its initial assumptions, it yields similar results. This is the exclusionary-subjugating model. The principal characteristic of this approach is the state's tendency to expel religion from the public sphere, either through legislative force or through excessive control and restriction of religious life. The examples of countries adopting this model vary according to their respective political environments, their internal determinants and rules,

and the degree of political accumulation and modernization that each has undergone. Among such countries are Turkey, Iran, and Tunisia.

Alongside the two models presented above — the annexational-interventionist and the exclusionary models — there exists a third approach, which may be described as the prudent or commendable intervention. This third model seeks to preserve the distinction and independence between the domains of religion and state. This is a legal form of intervention, intended to delineate the boundaries between the two spheres. Under such a model, the state may, through constitutional or legal principles, declare that Islam is a public good that belongs to society at large. Such a legal intervention is regarded as legitimate.

As for Algeria, the nature of the religious policy adopted by the state since 1962 has been characterized by an attempt to reconcile elements drawn from a traditional religious reference — notably Islam, the Mālikī legal school, and the Ashʿarī creed. Since gaining independence, the Algerian authorities have sought to develop a set of mechanisms aimed at consolidating what it defines as "State Islam," beginning with the establishment of the High Islamic Council (Haut Conseil Islamique) by decree on 13 February 1966.

The religious policy in Algeria is founded upon a central principle — namely, the "statization of religion." What is meant by this is the transformation of religion into a tool that serves the interests of the state by granting it legitimacy and contributing to national stability. This foundational principle has two essential dimensions: an institutional dimension and a political one.

However, following the events of October 1988 and the ensuing security crisis, the failure to properly manage the religious field — particularly in the context of the newly introduced political pluralism — allowed political Islamist parties to achieve initial dominance over the religious sphere. In response, the state took steps to reform, regulate, and more strictly control the religious field. This required several key measures:

First, the state undertook a process of restructuring the religious field in human terms by generating new actors who would align with and support its orientation. This was particularly evident in its renewed support for Sufi lodges and brotherhoods (zāwiyas), which had been marginalized during the first phase of its management policy. This renewed engagement came in opposition to the mobilization of scientific Salafism — especially its Wahhabi variant — in order to counter radical Islamist currents and to restore a lost

equilibrium. The state thus attempted to link the Islam of the zāwiyas and brotherhoods to its own political legitimacy as a constant and enduring religious foundation.*

Second, the state worked to regulate the religious field functionally by framing it within a set of religious institutions and by defining and limiting the role of the religious function — particularly the role of the "imamate" — in managing the sacred in daily life, in harmony and alignment with political authority, and in legitimizing its choices. This process led to the institutionalization of the religious function — a process of "professionalization" intended to make it responsible for safeguarding religious orthodoxy. The state succeeded in this endeavor by controlling the centers of production and reproduction of religious scholars and ensuring their containment through the institutionalization and reproduction of imams within official state institutions. These included the High Islamic Council, the Directorate of Religious Affairs and Endowments, and the Scientific Council for Fatwa.

Third, the religious authority in Algeria moved to institutionalize the religious field both administratively and legally. The period of the late 1990s and early 2000s witnessed the state — again through the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments — attempting to formalize and codify the religious field. This effort materialized through a vast array of decrees, legislative laws, executive instructions, and organizational regulations concerning the religious affairs sector in Algeria in general, and the religious institution — namely the "mosque" — in particular (see Official Gazette, 1991, Executive Decree No. 91-81). It also included the religious function (imamate), as well as the institutionalization of associative religious work — particularly the establishment of "mosque-based religious associations" (Official Gazette, 2012, Law No. 06-12). Here, we observe that the political authority — represented by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments — through the aforementioned decrees and through the drafting of additional decrees along the same lines, has engaged in a process of producing and then reproducing the religious field once again.

Fourth, the new political-religious authority adopted a particular approach to the management of religiosity and religious reference. A traditionally oriented ministry — such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments, with its specific cultural and human composition (a traditional mindset grounded in the Islam of the zāwiyas, brotherhoods, and popular religiosity) — as noted by Hadi Bouchama (2017), has come to manage religious affairs using the techniques of the new bureaucracy, techniques generated by neoliberalism and the economic and political reforms it entailed.

One of the clearest manifestations of this new policy has been the state's management of both private and public mosques, and the bureaucratization of religiosity. This includes the production of official booklets, pamphlets, sermons, political directives, and the implementation of a standardized Friday sermon — alongside efforts to define the attributes of the "ideal imam." Such instructions have been issued by supervising bodies such as the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments or by the directors of religious affairs at the provincial level. For example — and by no means exhaustively — an instruction issued by the Directorate of Religious Affairs in the Wilaya of Tizi Ouzou, which stirred controversy, ordered that only a single taslīma (salutation) be given at the end of the ritual prayer (El Khabar Daily, 2015, p. 04). This oral directive, delivered to imams shortly before the month of Ramadan in 2014, instructed them to cease the practice of giving two taslīmāt at the conclusion of prayer and to suffice with a single taslīma on the right side only.

IV. The Strategy of the Religious Actor Toward Religious Discourse (Its Consumability)

1. Religious Discourse as Religious Capital

Pierre Bourdieu expanded upon the interpretation of the concept of cultural capital, treating it as a model of symbolic capital that can be applied to all non-material forms of value. He divided cultural capital into two main types: inherited cultural capital, which refers to the role of the family in transmitting general skills and codes of conduct to individuals — a kind of aesthetic culture and everyday way of life maintained by the family and passed down through generations; and acquired cultural capital, which refers to the role of schools and universities in granting individuals formally recognized academic qualifications, thus endowing them with legitimacy in society (Al-Shuqayr, 2016, pp. 41–42).

Bourdieu also introduced two subcategories derived from inherited cultural capital: embodied cultural capital — referring to refined interests such as book collecting, photography, and museum visits; and linguistic cultural capital — meaning the ability to speak with confidence and eloquence.

When applied to the study of religious capital, this framework allows for a parallel classification, encompassing the following types:

a. Inherited Religious Capital:

This form of capital is represented by religious households — a historically rooted social phenomenon — such as the families of Ibn Taymiyyah, Banu ʻAbd al-Hādī, and Āl Qudāmah. In the Saudi context, there are also notable religious lineages such as the Āl al-Shaykh family.

From this inherited religious capital, two further forms emerge:

- **Embodied Religious Capital**: Indicators of its possession include the presence of home libraries, and licenses (ijāzāt) granted by scholars — particularly licenses for Qur'anic recitation with authenticated chains of transmission (isnād) received from senior reciters.
- **Linguistic Religious Capital**: Indicators include rhetorical eloquence, the ability to narrate the stories of the prophets, the biography of the Prophet Muhammad (sīrah), and Islamic history (Al-Shuqayr, 2016, p. 17).

b. Acquired Religious Capital:

Indicators of this form include university and postgraduate degrees in fields of Islamic studies or related religious specializations.

The criteria developed by Pierre Bourdieu for the investment of symbolic capital may be applied to religious capital as well. These criteria include: formal recognition by official institutions; social acceptance of the symbolic capital; the legitimacy of that capital and its consensus-based valuation as something intrinsically worthy (not merely a passing trend); and the family's ability to reproduce its symbolic culture across generations.

Using these criteria, we can identify many forms of religious capital — whether inherited or acquired — especially in light of the distinction between solid religious capital, which is characterized by stability and fixed values, and liquid religious capital, which reflects changing values. These various forms appear to be utilized, often implicitly, by many holders of religious capital and are presented for evaluation within the religious market. Some prominent examples include:

- **Asceticism (Zuhd)**: Asceticism represents one of the most significant forms of religious capital within the Salafi paradigm. In Islamic history, Salafi figures such as Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Ibn Taymiyyah came to embody this type of capital. In the

Saudi context, individuals like ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz ibn Bāz acquired considerable social standing through their ascetic lifestyle.

- **Scholarly Production**: Scientific and academic production is among the most prestigious forms of solid religious capital, though only a few individuals have excelled in this area.
- **Memorization**: During the 1980s, the field of ḥadīth studies witnessed a surge in activity. Books on ḥadīth became widely disseminated, along with scholarly editions and manuscript studies. Those who possessed the largest corpus of memorized ḥadīth gained high religious capital. Competition and evaluation in this domain varied depending on the memorization of ḥadīth texts, the ability to cite them, and knowledge of their chains of transmission and narrational anomalies. Renowned figures emerged with deep ḥadīth expertise — even more than formally trained academics — such as Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Albānī and ʻAbd Allāh al-Saʻd.
- **Melodious Voice**: The 1980s also saw the rise of a trend that evaluated the beauty of Qur'anic recitation. Prominent reciters in this field gained mass followings and came to be treated as religious icons. Among the most notable were ʻĀdil al-Kalbānī and Muḥammad al-Muḥaysinī, among others (Al-Shuqayr, 2016, p. 17).
- **Modern Philosophy**: Another emergent trend was the exposure of young religious individuals — and even prominent figures of the Islamic awakening — to modern philosophy, which they began to use as a means of defending their methodology or responding to philosophical critiques. The strategy of these individuals rested on their familiarity with contemporary philosophical schools and theorists. They would extract philosophical texts compatible with their religious convictions and use them to intellectually dazzle their audiences while defending traditional religious positions. These individuals often offered their services voluntarily and varied in their levels of influence — from limited to substantial — as most did not seek financial gain or official positions. Two prominent figures in this domain were Ṣafar al-Ḥawālī and Ibrāhīm al-Sukrān (Al-Shuqayr, 2016, p. 18).
- It is also important to include the cultural context as a criterion for evaluating religious capital. It appears that the "Islamic awakening" phase (1979 and beyond) witnessed a substantial expansion in the religious information economy, contributing

to the emergence of personalities who might never have gained prominence without the intense popular religious sentiment that characterized that period.

Cultural capital, in Bourdieu's view, serves as a medium for social relationships. Likewise, spiritual capital can be understood as a new model for studying religion — one that diverges from the interpretations of scholars such as Iannaccone, Stark, and Finke regarding "religious capital." The Bourdieuian model treats religious knowledge, competence, and preferences as symbolic commodities indicative of one's social rank within a competitive symbolic economy.

2. Spiritual Capital

Whereas religious capital, according to Bourdieu, is something that is produced and accumulated within the framework of an institutional religious authority, spiritual capital may be regarded as a more diffused form of capital — one governed by more complex modes of production, distribution, exchange, and consumption.

Spiritual capital also differs from Iannaccone's version of religious capital. Drawing on the economic analyses of Gary Becker (1976–1981) concerning everyday life, Iannaccone defines religious capital as "the skills and experiences specific to one's faith, including religious knowledge, familiarity with rituals and church doctrines, and fellowship with committed worshipers." In this model — which treats religious capital as a form of human capital — it is understood as a personal commodity, one that can — unlike in Bourdieu's model — be accumulated by any ordinary individual. However, it remains an institutionalized and rigid commodity. If Bourdieu's production model is analogous to the factory (or more precisely, as with Horkheimer and Adorno, the cultural industry), then Iannaccone's model — akin to Becker's — is that of the household. Conceptualizing religious capital through the lens of domestic production presents it as a socially conservative force, one that inhibits doctrinal mobility and religious hybridization, for example.

Bourdieu identified three distinct forms of cultural capital: the embodied state, the objectified state, and the institutionalized state. Spiritual capital, as a derivative of cultural capital, follows these same three forms. In its embodied form**,** spiritual capital not only determines an individual's position but also his or her dispositions. It consists of the knowledge, capacities, tastes, and credibility that a person accumulates within the religious field.

V. Salafi Religious Discourse and Religious Referencing

- The Salafi Wahhabi discourse generally relies upon the doctrinal legacy of Imam Ibn Taymiyyah and his student Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah.
- Salafi discourse emanates from a clearly defined ideology, one that is summarized in the doctrine of tawḥīd (divine unity), which ultimately aims to strip persons, objects, and ideas of all sanctity. It seeks to redirect religious sentiment into narrowly and precisely defined channels that Salafis deem to be faithful translations of the original Islamic teachings. The clarity of this ideological objective results in a high degree of uniformity among Salafi ideas, regardless of their proponents, to the extent that there exists a deep resistance to any alteration of this ideological ceiling. Consequently, Salafi discourses cannot be differentiated based on their flexibility or rigidity, except through the smallest of details.
- The methods for instilling Salafi ideology are encapsulated in the term daʿwah (religious outreach), which the Salafi discourse reduces to a process of proselytization. At its core, however, this process is a form of activism whose principal instrument is religious exhortation, devoid of any political preparation or qualification. It is an enduring and continuous endeavor.
- In addition to religious lessons offered through various Qur'anic schools and institutions affiliated with Salafi movements, this ideological inculcation is also achieved via a psychological mechanism — identification. This process leads to the construction of a specific identity as the ultimate outcome of continuous indoctrination. Through identification, followers learn many of the behavioral patterns expected of them, by observing such behaviors in others and internalizing them as sensory perceptions or symbolic responses. These are then used to mimic the behavior they have observed or to acquire information that enables them to employ that behavior in other contexts.
- This process of identification is realized through the unified collective performance of religious rituals, the use of symbolic substitutes for followers' real names, and the adoption of a uniform appearance — all of which permit the description of Salafism as a trend that exhibits ostentatious religiosity.

- Regarding the mosques through which the Salafi movement operates, despite official political measures aimed at nationalizing these religious spaces, Salafism benefits from them by establishing communicative networks that foster the care, furnishing, and even the construction of new mosques. This financial and logistical independence spares these mosques from needing state subsidies and helps to reinforce the Salafi movement at the grassroots level, particularly within neighborhoods and the cooperative networks surrounding mosques.
- Salafism has capitalized on the contradictions that have characterized the state's management of the religious field over long periods. These contradictions include prohibiting Islamic movements from political engagement while simultaneously allowing other trends — including Salafism — to engage in religious outreach. Salafism, in particular, has continued to operate freely through Qur'anic memorization efforts, the teaching of Islamic sciences, and adult literacy programs.
- From a sociological perspective, this religious trend manifests as movements striving to maintain independence from prevailing social relationships (Abu al-Louz, 2006). These are social movements that adopt an isolationist religiosity, distancing themselves from social and political institutions, and endeavoring to preserve the greatest possible degree of autonomy from the official society's customary religious practices. Their rituals are often inspired by alternative doctrinal traditions or are the result of differing interpretations of the official religion.
- It can be confidently stated that the information revolution and modern technological tools have become a rich reservoir of technical and informational resources for disseminating Salafi discourse. Given the limited space available for printed materials and pamphlets, digital technologies have provided a practical and technical means of circumventing official censorship, as well as avoiding the material, political, and security constraints that might hinder the spread of Salafi discourse in Algeria.
- One prominent example of this digital strategy is found in the intellectual and ideological investment of the Salafi current in the female sector. In Algeria, under the leadership of Muḥammad ʻAlī Farkūs, an entire website dedicated exclusively to women has emerged on the internet. This site contains links and references to prominent websites of leading Salafi scholars in Saudi Arabia and across the Arab

world. It even includes the telephone numbers of these scholars. Among the most notable examples are: the website of Muḥammad ʻAlī Farkūs (Algeria), Shaykh ʻAbd al-ʻAzīz al-Fawzān, Shaykh Khālid al-Muṣliḥ, Shaykh Sayyid al-Ḥusaynī al-ʻAfānī, Shaykh Muḥammad al-Amīn Bukhubza (Morocco), the audio encyclopedia of al-Albānī's fatwas, the website of Shaykh al-Albānī, and the website of Shaykh Ibn ʻUthaymīn.

- This has led Salafi sheikhs during that period to assume leadership over religious congregations, attracting a significant number of youth from the Islamic awakening movement. This especially intensified following the political changes and events, and after the government dissolved the Islamic political party. In the aftermath, Salafi leaders found in this situation the perfect opportunity to continue their efforts to expand their daʿwah influence, under the slogan of "education and purification," with ʻAbd al-Mālik Ramaḍānī at the forefront — a figure whose fame spread widely during that era, though he eventually relocated permanently to Saudi Arabia (Ashraf Sayed Abu al-Saʻūd, 2004, p. 228). Ramaḍānī served as the primary ideological reference for the Salafi trend in Algeria and played a crucial role in the emergence of numerous leaders who later began to compete for control of the Salafi movement. Among these figures were: al-ʻĪd Sharīfī (a university professor at al-Kharrūbah), Abū al-Muʿizz Muḥammad ʻAlī Farkūs (Imam of the Islamic Guidance Mosque in al-Qubba), and al-Zahr Sanīqrah (imam and preacher at the Pine Maritime Mosque).
- A new generation of preachers and sheikhs rose to prominence, assuming responsibility for religious activities and amassing large followings who regularly attended their sermons and lessons. Among them were: ʻAbd al-Ḥalīm Tūmiyyāt (imam of the ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb Mosque in Rāʾis Ḥamīdū), Murād Dībāsh (imam of the Tūtah Mosque in Ḥay Ḥidrā), Riḍā Karīmāṭ (imam of the al-Muwaḥḥidīn Mosque in Ḥay al-Abiyār), Muḥammad ʻĪsā al-Jazāʾirī, Yūsuf ibn ʻĀṭī, Yaḥyā Badr al-Dīn Ṣārī, and others among the students of senior Salafi preachers.
- "In light of current developments characterized by the proliferation of religious references within the Salafi trend and the sudden rise of young preachers who exert enormous efforts to promote Salafi ideology, Salafism — according to many observers — remains hostage to internal disputes that are difficult to resolve"

(International Conference, 2002), especially given that each faction claims to represent the authentic Salafi methodology.

Conclusion:

In the face of various global and regional transformations, the Algerian political-religious authority has found itself compelled to pay increasing attention to the components of the religious field or the religious marketplace, viewing it as the field that ensured consensus, recognition, and continuity of the regime throughout its darkest periods. It has also realized that the religious field is penetrated by structural contradictions, which were exploited by religious currents — especially the Salafi current — that had strategies to infiltrate the official religious field by confronting it with a counter-religious field. Thus, the political-religious authority worked to reconstitute the religious field in terms of human capital in order to consolidate its religious identity upon a general religious tradition composed of three elements: Ashʿarite doctrine, Mālikī jurisprudence, and Ṣūfī conduct. Then it institutionalized it functionally, organizationally, and legally, and subsequently the new political-religious authority adopted the management of religiosity and religious reference.

The religious field in Algeria is suspended between the official and the non-official. As a socio-religious space, it is a space for ranking positions and statuses; it is also a space of power and domination, as well as of resistance, conflict, and counter-conflict.

Despite its institutionalization and restructuring, it remains a field of fragile immunity, pulled into various types of struggle: functional struggle, identity struggle, and ideological struggle.

It is also a space of socio-religious struggle dominated by the political-religious authority — the religious administrative actor — through mechanisms of reproduction based on official control, legal regulation, and institutionalization. This is in contrast with the strategies and religious practices of other religious actors who seek to build a counter-religious field based on a socio-religious vision rather than a textual-legal one.

Moreover, it is a space of struggle for recognition, meaning that Islamist religious actors are calling for the Reinstitutionalisation of the religious field and the religious institution — a demand for recognition.

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