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## **Religiosity from Culture to Practice: Institutional Program and Actors' strategies**

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### **Abstract:**

This article was formulated based on testimonies and interviews conducted with some local actors in the religious field in the city of Relizane, where a group of preachers belonging to the same generation, who had a religious framework and message from some professors and sheikhs, helped them to follow the path of preaching, focusing on a group of local preachers, national and international references, after preparing the atmosphere by some sheikhs who graduated from the schools of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars, as there were Quranic and regular schools spread throughout the city, supervised by sheikhs with a reputation in the local religious field, and these young people also consider that the break with the first local religiosity and the beginning of the (correct) and actual preaching was with the arrival of Sheikh Adel Hassouna (1968-1970).

**Keywords:** Religiosity, local context, Salafism, Muslim Brotherhood, generation, preaching field, path, the decline of the institution, program and actors.

### **Introduction**

In a context in which the entire society has come to live under the cover of (liquidation) and a return to (origins) (Salhi Ibrahim and Ramaoun Hassan, 2006), a new religiosity built on new cultural and cognitive foundations with its evidence, references, and methods of recognizing these references, the certificate and the educational and academic level of the imam have great importance in forming the latter's reference within the mosque and the city in which he is active, because we are facing a social bloc that exclusively recognizes the university certificate, especially in the religious sciences that have a special status and wide social recognition, as society has its own projects for the university and certificates, and these are variables that are controlled by the young generation and the elderly at least, and imposed on the sheikhs in consideration of the urban space and the mosque discourse.

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Raed Al-Samhoury says in his book "Critique of Salafi Discourse" that the prevailing thought today is the product of various inherited cultural and social components, but the deepest and most influential element in the mind of the nation is undoubtedly religious thought, as many Islamic movements represent the intellectual reference and the basis of the collective mind of the nation, which responds to them with passion, is deeply affected by them, listens to them with reverence, and looks at them with reverence (Al-Samhoury, 2010).

The nature of each religious thought or movement or its image reflects the reality of Islamic societies internally, as well as the discussions taking place between them and other ideologies and movements about the project of society and political, ideological, and even economic options, as it is an attempt to internationalize or globalize a local religious thought of a specific country over other countries, as from the fifties to the late seventies of the last century, we witnessed the globalization of the Brotherhood's thought, which accompanied the liberation movements and established a dynamic religious culture that defended the state and society project in the newly independent countries, followed by Salafism, supported by Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States, whose emergence was heralded by the increasing Shiite tide after the 1979 Shiite Islamic Revolution, which necessitated the presence of a culture based on conflict and methodological doctrinal arguments derived from the conflicts of the rigid Hanbali jurisprudential doctrinal school with the Mu'tazila, and the debates of Ibn Taymiyyah with the Rafidis and the theological groups.

The "national religious reference" has been one of the axes of the official discourse of the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Endowments in Algeria since the end of the nineties of the last century, which is considered a continuation of the national historical narrative, with the religious dimension added to it in this case. (Al-Mestari, Nouar, Medjahdi, 2022, pp. 37-76).

In the field of consolidating its religious identity, the state adopted a general religious tradition consisting of three elements (the Ash'ari doctrine, the Maliki school, and Sufi behavior), which resulted in several questions regarding the contents of the official doctrine, and the extent of the ability to interpret the contents of traditional rituals, so as to make them suitable for new situations, and capable of resisting external influences. (Abou Al-Louz, 2016).

The Maghreb space was known for the abundance of reform movements and revolutions preaching for change, as these movements tended to cover themselves with the preaching for reform, and thus establish a new religious institution, with its own doctrinal and jurisprudential program and its own activists, supervisors, who would be followed imams. Those who wish to establish a new religious preaching in the Maghreb space resort to denouncing the model of religious upbringing and the existing religious institution by bringing a model from outside the Maghreb space, which is mostly from the

Levant, and they resort to theological debates in the faith, which took place between the various Islamic sects throughout history, such as what “Al-Mahdi Ibn Tumart”, the founder of the Almohad state, did, as many historical studies, especially recent ones, indicate (Adda Al-Sheikh, 2022, p. 663), as Ibn Tumart began the stage of jurisprudential debates with the Maliki jurists in the Almoravid capital, Marrakesh, and denounced the Almoravids in their faith, as “Ibn Al-Athir” confirms that the entry of Al-Mahdi into Marrakesh was accompanied by enjoining good and forbidding evil (Abdul Aziz Shaki, 2013, p. 153), and those present in the council were Almoravid jurists, knowledgeable in the branches but ignorant of the science of principles based on the study of Sharia and its derivation from the Qur’an and Sunnah, the study of legal texts and rational evidence, and the details of beliefs and the principles of jurisprudence, and knowledge of prophecy and the message and everything related to them (Aada Al-Sheikh , 2022, p. 668), to establish the foundations of a new state based on the Ash'ari doctrine, which witnessed strong and resounding victories in the science of theology, in contrast to the decline of the religious doctrinal institution of the people of hadith, the victors of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, who are known for the Salafi doctrine, and accused them of anthropomorphism, and thus he demolished the walls and foundations of the religious institution on which the Almoravid state was built, thus, we are facing a historical moment that witnesses the decline of a religious institution with its program and its actors, and the rise of another institution with its program and its actors in a different way, which means that the establishment of states in Morocco was based on religious preachings originally.

This general context of Maghrebi religiosity repeats itself in the local Algerian context, as the establishment of the reform movement in the religious field in Algeria was a project that was studied in the Levant by its founders (Ibn Badis and Al-Ibrahimi) to be a counterpart to popular and Sufi religiosity that was an institution for religious upbringing for society, so the association came up with a new model of religiosity and a new program, with new actors in the local field, who received their education in Al-Zaytuna and Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah in the Hijaz, which was spreading the principles of the new Saudi state, based on the doctrine of the people of Hadith and the revival of the heritage of the Hanbali school in the form of the reformist preaching of Mohamed ibn Abd Al-Wahhab, which succeeded in enabling the establishment of the foundations of a state and a political king, which is the Saudi state, so it was a model that was marketed to Islamic countries that were under the yoke of colonialism.

The first Algerian Muslim Scholars Association, led by Abdelhamid Ben Badis and Bashir Al-Ibrahimi, focused on education to teach the new generation this new program to create a new image of religiosity that can transform the conflict into a doctrinal conflict with the colonizer, and build a new religious culture that requires getting rid of the cultural restrictions of colonialism, to achieve geographical independence. This model continued after independence, with the transition from traditional religiosity to activist religiosity,

which was witnessed by the advocacy field in Algerian society, especially within the local community in the city of Relizane during the seventies of the last century when young people resorted to a model and a religious institution outside the norm and the local scope (the Muslim Brotherhood/Salafism), when Saudi Arabia was an incubator for symbols of Brotherhood thought, after they were persecuted by the Egyptian nationalist regime led by DJamal Abd Al-Nasser, to direct criticism at popular religiosity, and to establish the foundations of a new religious institution with new actors and new spaces (prayer halls).

The field of advocacy later witnessed the emergence of Salafi religiosity, at the beginning of the eighties and nineties of the twentieth century, especially when the divisions emerged in the ranks of the Brotherhood movement, as a result of the echo of the first Gulf War and the position of the awakening movement, which carries the Brotherhood's thought in Saudi Arabia, on the issue of seeking help from the Americans to repel Saddam Hussein's aggression against Kuwait, which affected the cracking of the Brotherhood movement in Algeria by severing the relationship between the Brotherhood movement and the Saudi Salafi movement, and the emergence of the scientific Salafism movement.

Therefore, we would like to pose some questions that will help us track the process of the decline of the religious institution within the contexts of a local community, through an ethnographic methodological process, as follows:

- Has popular (traditional) religiosity witnessed a decline within the local space of the city of Relizan? Does this decline express a change in the way the actors practice religion, and thus are we facing a social change in the religious perception in a local context?
- What are the mechanisms that the new religiosity relied on to establish the foundations of a new religious institution versus the religiosity described as traditional (perception of the process of change)?

### **Justification for the methodological choice:**

The ethnographic approach was chosen to identify the changes that affected the social structures of religiosity, its forms and patterns, and consequently the transformations that occurred in perceptions, representations and discourses, and established new paradigms of religiosity, and formed religious institutions within the local community, which required us to have direct contact through field study based on direct observation, interviews, and biographies, as this type of approach requires the ethnographic researcher to be an observer and participant, and thus ethnographic research falls on the borders of qualitative sociological research that aims to understand, so it required us to live with the subject for more than 15 years in the local community in the city of Relizan, so that we relied on the steps of direct observation of the process of religiosity that expresses a collective process and individual paths, and we made a description in which we sought accuracy, sequence, and smoothness, and we also tried at a later stage to analyze the data that we obtained from the field of study to classify it and link the processes that were observed and recorded.

We believe that religious ideas, knowledge and historical experiences create religious paradigms, models and institutions that move from the local to expand towards the regional and global, which contemporary sociologists call the decline of the institution (François DUBET), which enables us to read the social changes of socialization institutions over a long period of time, because here we are not talking about an ORGANIZATION, but about an INSTITUTION, which means the existence of a program, actors and strategies for socialization from within, considering the institution a symbolic program that contains the rules of specific action, therefore, the religious institution is a symbolic and practical apparatus responsible for educating and raising people, and through this datum we can defend the argument of the decline of the institution (François DUBET, 2010).

On this basis, a program is built that aims to create loyalists to the new religious ideas and culture of the movement, far from the traditional culture of popular religiosity, through a set of principles and values that are defined as sacred, and as homogeneous origins that do not need justification, as the program of the religious institution is subject to a basic belief in social upbringing through several processes and institutions such as the family, the mosque, the school, etc.

In the context of searching for the decline and deterioration of the traditional religious institution, as a result of the globalization of religious knowledge outside the system of producing religious knowledge that was built within the local system, which is characterized over time by contradictions with the principles that established it, and is unable to provide answers or solutions to the issues facing members of society, especially issues related to origins and beliefs, and thus it will be criticized and bypassed by models outside of it, which will enter the scope of change, which led to the gradual disintegration of the traditional religious institution.

### **Theoretical Framework:**

The theoretical framework of the study is the theory of practice developed by sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, where Bourdieu discusses mental structures and objective structures and borrows Pascal's saying "We are as corporeal as we are spiritual", and he wanted to overcome this Cartesian opposition between the soul and the body, as the mind is part of the world and this falls within the framework of material theory, and is subject to material conditions such as history, economics and society, and thus the mind is not a timeless product (not linked to time, place and human history), and thus we cannot talk about the mind except in its social and historical context and in a specific place, because the mind for Bourdieu only appears in behavior, and we cannot know the internal states that stir the individual's interior except through their appearance in his behavior and practices, and this is the essence of the theory of practice, which does not give priority to the interior and what is internal, but rather priority to what is external such as observable behavior, so here

epistemological cognitive problems arise: How do we define this hidden? How do we observe this interior?, and for Bourdieu, people do not agree in ideas but in practices.

Bourdieu focuses on the concept of social immanence to go beyond the Cartesian theory, which is that the internal and external are inseparable, because from the sociological aspect when Bourdieu addresses habitus and field, habitus is a set of physical preparations, knowledge and mental structures resulting from the process of socialization of the individual, and the field is the objective space in which people occupy certain positions and struggle and form alliances, so the external is the field or society and objective structures, as well as language, religion, social classes and all social structures, he speaks of immanence between habitus as knowledge and society as fields. Bourdieu gives an example of the internal Arab marriage to a cousin in his critique of structural anthropological theory, saying that the rules of marriage are not transcendent or exist in the transcendent mind of individuals, because the rules of marriage exist in the concrete logics of action, and thus the logical action in marriage is based on the logic of honor and warding off the shame of spinsterhood, therefore, cousins must marry their cousins to preserve the honor of the family, and also from the logic of the common economic unit which is the land, which led Bourdieu to talk about marriage strategies and not marriage rules, and the concept of strategies refers to the mind and the interior.

Bourdieu also raises the concept of intentionality that guides an action, which is socially constructed and not present in the minds of individuals, because rules have an implicit character and are present in the behaviors and practices of individuals. Bourdieu criticizes the scholastic theory, or the scholastic mind that uproots the word from its multiple contexts, and turns it into independent things whose meaning lies within it, while the word only carries its meaning in the context of the sentence in which it was said and the general context surrounding it and in which it was said, and language is not a mental construction but rather a social product and construction, as rules only derive their strength through practice, as the rule is subject to violation, and rules derive their strength from the situation in which they exist within society during practice.

### **Field framework**

This article was formulated based on testimonies and interviews conducted with some local actors in the religious field (a group of preachers belonging to the same generation) in Relizane, who were framed and religiously trained by some professors and sheikhs to follow the path of preaching, focusing on a set of local, national and international data, after preparing the atmosphere by some sheikhs who graduated from the schools of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars, in light of the presence of Quranic schools spread throughout the city, under the supervision of famous sheikhs in the local religious field.

In this context, Sheikh Ben Yamina taught in the Ben Jador Mosque, relying on the teaching method of Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis, as he was one of the old students of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars, and in return, Sheikh Berrached taught

jurisprudence according to the Khalil method in the old mosque, which later became known by its name (Berrached Mosque), which in turn was the scene of circles of a group of young people, most notably Ahmed Beljilali, Ali Dahmani, Ali Maqni and Mohamed Al-Aref, as they were among his most prominent colleagues, and their sessions dealt with topics of correcting worship, based on reading the book “The Jurisprudential Summary” and listening to the sessions and lessons of Sheikh Berrashid, as these young people consider that the break with the first local religiosity and the beginning of the (correct) and actual Islamic preaching was with the arrival of Sheikh Adel Hassouna (1968-1970).

### **Study objectives:**

The most prominent objective of this study is to cover the subject of the study, and to reveal, even partially, the details on which new religious ideas are based to adopt a unique pattern of religiosity within the local community, and to penetrate the heavy social structures, to express problems and disparities between generations and the transfer of knowledge and traditional forms of religiosity, and consequently, young generations were isolated from the religious process and authority within the local space, which caused an intellectual and practical break in religiosity.

We also found ourselves facing the task of revealing another objective, which is the issue of building religious references in a local, micro-local and even global context, in light of the social and cultural history of the religious field, actors and institutions, which are a reference for fatwas and devotional practice.

### **New religious culture with new references:**

A religious cultural model was established, which Pr. Benaouda Hirrech called “the transition from innate religiosity to the religiosity of the idea” (from popular religiosity to movement religiosity). The sheikhs and preachers of the Brotherhood movement in the city of Relizane confirm that the first person to introduce Islamic movement work to the city, after it was based on teaching elderly sheikhs who were fanatical about the Maliki school and Sufi orders, was a professor who taught at the Belazem Bessafi School named Adel Hassouna, between 1968 and 1979. This professor was a student of Sheikh Said Hawwa, the author of the book (This is my experience and this is my testimony) in the city of Salamiyah in Syria, the city of Sheikh Adel, and he was close to Sheikh Mahfoudh Nannah, Sheikh Abd Al-Rahman Chiban, and Djaballah.

His activity touched on the general preaching framework, from good morals and correcting worship, and others from 1968 to 1974, and after studying the preaching environment and understanding the local community, he wanted to expand his activity and move to the movement, and discussed the idea with his colleague Abu Ali from the city of Mohammadia in Mascara, thus, Sheikh Adel began to plant the first seeds of the intellectual movement work, which would later be called "the awakening (sahwa)", and until this moment (1974-1975), there is no presence of Salafism, Tabligh, or any other trend in the local preaching field in the city of Relizane.

The youth who surrounded Pr. Adel Hassouna at that time were student in the second year of middle school until the third year of secondary school, as he was teaching in the old mosque (Berrached) currently, and the Sidi Mohamed Ben Yahya Mosque (Hadj Menaour) located on Sidi Abed Street, and his residence was close to these mosques, as he was living in the foreign teachers' residences in front of the old headquarters of the Relizane State, and these residences in the middle of the city were converted into the headquarters of urban security No. 01.

Pr. Adel taught at the Agricultural Intermediate School without a beard or moustache, and he insisted on matters of worship to his students, a group that gathered around him, including Benaouda Hirrech, Ahmed Beljilali, Mohamed Kassar, Ali Dahmani, Nour Eddine Gharbi, Hussein bin Abd Al-Rahman and others.. He focused his work on this group and taught them lessons in spiritual education, literature, and awareness, and provided them with books to read, and famous magazines that represented the Brotherhood's orientation, and he paid their subscriptions to motivate them, such as the "Al-Ma'rifa" magazine from Tunisia, issued by the Islamic Ennahda trend, the "Al-Raed" magazine, issued in Germany by a Syrian opposition, as well as the "Al-Nadheer" and "Al-Da'wa" magazines, the mouthpiece of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

These young men began to feel that they were prepared to carry and defend an idea, a project, a specific approach, and a guiding school, as this group devoted themselves to reading intellectual and advocacy books, and became acquainted with the Muslim Brotherhood school, led by Hassan Al-Banna, and they also explored Islamic work and the Islamic movement in the Levant, Syria, Iraq, Egypt, Jordan, and the West more than they knew about the history of the Islamic movement and advocacy in Algeria, as even the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars did not know much about it, as they knew Ibn Badis like the rest of the people.

The tributary coming from the East to the West, represented by some books, such as the books of Sayyid Qutb, which were studied in depth because they are considered the founding texts of the Brotherhood movement, as well as Mohamed Qutb's books on thought, psychology and education. The advantage of these young men is that they studied these books collectively, under the guidance of professors who knew Sayyid Qutb, which prevented them from being swept away by the extremist Qutbist currents later, and these ideas and writings became sources and references that these young men used to discuss with their professors in philosophy and history who were influenced by the Darwinian theory of evolution.

Later, collective behaviors appeared from these young men, represented by the light beard, and the first to put it on were Nourredine Gharbi and Ali Dahmani and about 18 to 20 people, and the idea of supervised educational camps began, so the first camp set up by the youth of Relizane was in 1978, between the borders of Chlef and Mostaganem, in the "Al-Bahara" area, an educational camp, aiming to maintain prayers, glorifications, reading the



Quran, night prayers, and reading during free time, and some admit that the effects of these camps remain to this day, especially reading intellectual and literary books.

Pr. Adel used to insist on his followers to focus on their studies, and after the baccalaureate, he used to recommend that they work in education, as he saw it as the most appropriate field for education and advocacy. He believed that the field of advocacy that the city of Relizane and Algeria in general needed was education. However, he was subjected to harassment starting in 1979, so he went to the city of Mostaganem, then went to Libya, where he stayed six years, and then went to Kuwait, however, communication with his students was cut off, and he used to meet some of them in Saudi Arabia, until he died in 2006.

Pr. Adel Hassouna is considered the first founder of the preaching and intellectual religiosity in Relizane and its surroundings, such as Chlef, Mostaganem and Ain Defla. His fame has spread to us, as he has written about 40 books on education. Professor or Sheikh Adel Hassouna organized seminars with his students, which are sessions at the end of the week and on holidays, taking the form of a path starting from the city of Chlef to Wadi Rhiau, Jdiouia and Hamadna (every day in a city), and sometimes an hour is allocated to each city, until these sessions and seminars reach the city of Oran, especially at the University of Oran and its university neighborhoods.

Sheikh Ahmed Beljilali, one of Sheikh Adel Hassouna's students, demonstrates his Sheikh's asceticism and austerity, saying that he divides his salary into three parts: one part he eats from, one part he gives to the people of the preaching, who are the young men and students whom he supervises teaching in the field of Islamic preaching, and one part he saves and converts into hard currency and sends to Palestine, expressing the extent of this person's great commitment to the mission of the preaching, which he wanted to transmit and instill in his students and followers, as he wanted to create a generation committed to the preaching locally. At the beginning of the eighties (1983-1984), Sheikh Mahfouz Nahnah left prison, and a group of Sheikh Adel's students contacted him and joined his lectures at the University of Algiers, as they were impressed by his speech and style, and he conveyed to them the greetings of their Sheikh and first teacher Adel Hassouna, as they were members of the International Islamic Charitable Organization in Kuwait.

With this work or Islamic movement that was present in Relizane, it was only the Brotherhood, because the founder of the Islamic activity, Adel Hassouna, was a Brotherhood member, so their thought was present in the person of this professor, and their style, organization, and approach to advocacy were present, just as the names of their leaders were present through books, magazines, and intellectual production, but fanaticism for this name (the Brotherhood) had not yet appeared in the local space.

As we mentioned earlier, at the end of the seventies and the beginning of the eighties, Professor Adel Hassouna left the city of Relizane, leaving behind a generation of young people, about 25 to 30 people, who formed the first nucleus of the Islamic awakening in Relizane, as they were all young in age, thought and organization, because they had not yet completed the process of maturity. This group, which surrounded Sheikh Adel and drew

from him, suddenly found itself alone, without a leader, without a sheikh, without a mentor, without a guide, and thus each one of them took his own path, between those who entered training institutes, those who succeeded in the baccalaureate and entered university, and those who immigrated to continue their studies, especially in Saudi Arabia.

The new generation facing challenges in the local advocacy field:

At the end of the seventies, the sheikhs of the mosques in the city of Relizane, especially Sheikh Brashid, the imam of the old mosque, where the religious youth held their circles, began to have reservations about their method, such that they were viewed as competitors within the mosque space, and they became the focus of attention for their new religious discourse based on thought, carried by young people characterized by activity and mobility, to refuse to hold these young people their circle inside the mosque that he later supervised (the old mosque).

A new shift occurred after the departure of the founder and leader (Sheikh Adel Hassouna), when these young men moved from the old mosque or the great mosque and the Hadj Menaouar mosque to a prayer hall that they called "Osama Mosque" in the neighborhood of Al-Qaraba, as this mosque was previously known as "Sidi Khalil Mosque", owned by the Wadah family from Sidi Lazrak, a clan known for their family and honor, and it was named "Osama bin Zaid Mosque" by force, as it is a clear symbolic expression of the spirit of youth, because Osama bin Zaid is considered one of the young companions, so this prayer hall was closed and is considered one of the oldest Quranic schools in the city during the liberation revolution, and it was a prayer hall that could accommodate about 40 people.

When the founding sheikh left and the younger generation came, signs of applying the Sunnah appeared, clasping the hands in prayer, shortening the garment, and the beard. These practices were initially strange to society at that time, and these new rituals of worship and appearance were applied because the sources of receiving worship and jurisprudence began to differ from the sources that were taught by the sheikhs and imams of the mosques of the local space, such as Sheikh Berrached and Sheikh Si Mohamed Ben Yahia, who were Malikis, while the new generation of preachers had other sources outside the local space, such as the jurisprudence of the Sunnah by Sayed Sabiq, and they began to read other books brought by the youth who went to perform the rituals of Umrah or Hajj (pilgrimage), and these books were exchanged between the members of the Brotherhood in methodology and thought, as most of these books were present with the sheikhs and imams of the mosques, but they hid them from the public to preserve the jurisprudence and the inherited school.

The Library of Knowledge also appeared, which was the first library in the city, bringing books from outside the local field, and it was among the factors that helped develop the spirit of awakening, also, the knight of oratory and pulpit, "Sheikh Abd Al-Hamid Kishk", became popular, as his tapes began to spread, and the new generation awaited them with great eagerness and greed, as they represented a source from which they

could draw religion, belief, hadith, morals, and global politics, and his lessons were like a channel of formation on which they were raised.

In the late seventies, 1979, the Iranian Islamic Revolution appeared, which found that these young people had fortified themselves to stand in the face of the Shiite tide. Sheikh Benaouda Hirrech says about this stage: "Ah, when we started practicing the Sunnah in some of the large mosques, it started strange, as the imams started to get annoyed, because the elders had been accustomed to praying with their hands down all their lives, so how could a young man come and fold his hands, sit and apply these Sunnahs! What happened? The elders started to complain to the imams, the imams were embarrassed, so a kind of conflict occurred between the sheikhs and their adult followers and this young generation that was 16, 17, 20 years old, so we were forced to look for a safe place to apply our convictions in, it is difficult in our homes, we in Relizane God blessed us with this mosque that we named Osama Mosque and even the name was intentional, Osama Ben Zaid is a young man and we are young and we want to imitate him, this is on the one hand, and this name you might find in Oran in the mosque of the volunteer neighborhood, and now, if you search, even the newborns They are called by this name to express this new young generation, and there, in the Osama Mosque, we were liberated and began to pray the prayers alone, and to apply the Sunnah alone, whoever is convinced by us comes, but we did not enter into conflict with society". (Interview with Sheikh Benaouda Hirrech conducted on February 5, 2015 at 19:00, in the city of Relizan).

This generation found a place to apply its own convictions and religiosity, and with it the conflict began to appear in the homes, families and households of these young men, then it spread to the institutions, young men studying in middle and secondary schools who let their beards grow because shaving them is forbidden, a generation in the process of adapting and shaping according to events and social change, and most of these young men lived in the popular neighborhoods of the city of Relizan, specifically in its southern part, as some testimonies mention that there was a mosque of Sheikh Allam bin Dahman on Nour Al-Din bin Dris Street (Al-Arabi al-Tabasi Mosque), and it is considered one of the remnants of the first Association of Muslim Scholars. Sheikh Allam taught monotheism from the book "Al-Fath Al-Majid li Sharh Kitab Al-Tawhid" by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, as he practiced the association's teaching method, talking about shrines, heretical Sufism, saints...; Sheikh Allam embraced this group that attended his lessons, because he found them fanatical about new convictions in the local community in the field of worship, rituals, and practices, such as clasping the hands, shortening the garment, and other practices close to his convictions. These young men also interacted with the remnants of the first association of scholars, such as Si Belazarq Lazraq and Si Benaouda Al-Suwaidi, who would come and argue with Sheikh Allam about matters of monotheism in order to make people understand, and pass messages through these discussions.

In 1981, these young men began to think about opening another prayer hall and another outlet, and exactly one of the people who were in solidarity with these young men built and equipped a prayer hall (Hamza Mosque), next to the old Education Directorate, as this mosque was closed in the black decade due to the crisis, and then it was reopened, so it became another outlet for the young men, circles and lessons in Osama Mosque and circles and lessons in Hamza Mosque, which imposed the existence of a weekly program of activities between these two mosques. In Ramadan 1986, these young men performed the Eid prayer in Lasas in the stadium, and thousands attended, as they held it in the open space to apply the Sunnah, and Sheikh Benaouda Hirrech led them in prayer, and women, men and children attended, because the young people of the new generation announced it, as it was preceded by the Tarawih prayer in Osama Mosque, and another ritual came from Saudi Arabia, which is the Qunut prayer, and the Salafi thought began to arrive gradually with the people of Umrah and Hajj, which caused the conflict between the Brotherhood youth and the Directorate of Religious Affairs and some imams, which reached the intervention of the governor of Relizane, Mr. Shaaban Djamel. In describing these negotiations, Sheikh Benaouda Hirrech says: “The governor and the security director at the time hosted us, and during the negotiations, they reassured him that we were not the ones with problems, but that the imams had harmed us. He said to me, ‘I promise you (I was only 24 at the time, I was new to teaching in middle school), I promise you that I will dismiss or transfer any imam who touches you or mistreats you during the sermon.’ I said to him, ‘And I promise you, Mr. Governor, that a stone will not be thrown away and a leaf will not be plucked’” (Ben Aouda Hairesh, 2015), and this negotiation with the local administration gave them shrewdness, experience, and legal culture, in the name of the youth of the mosques, because they were not allowed at that time under the rule of the one-party state to establish a party or association.

One of these young men had an experience in Saudi Arabia, where he went to study and joined the Institute for the Training of Foreign Imams in Medina, which the Salafi Jami and Madkhali thought dominated, as this young man took advantage of the Hajj and Umrah season to send books to his colleagues, thus, the idea that was originally Brotherhood-based with the color of Hassan Al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb remained, but another tributary was added to it, which is the Salafi thought, as these young men devoted themselves to reading the mothers of books such as the major fatwas of Ibn Taymiyyah, and the books of Ibn Al-Qayyim and Ibn al-Jawzi. Here, after these young men's interest was intellectual, they found themselves in need of paying attention to the legal aspect imposed by the logic of Salafi thought, so they began to memorize the Holy Quran and study the rules of its recitation and interpretation, as well as paying attention to the doctrine and lessons in the biography of the Prophet, so lessons were scheduled in this framework from Saturday to Friday, so Saturday was taught the rules of recitation, Sunday doctrine, Monday the biography of the Prophet, Wednesday the jurisprudence of the Sunnah by Sayyid Sabiq...etc., which means focusing on the legal aspect with a Salafi background.

In the period 1981-1982, the fatwas of Sheikh Ibn Baz and Al-Uthaymeen, two prominent and famous scholars among the youth of the mosques, were reviewed, and several Sunnahs were revived, such as the Sunnah of the Witr prayer, the Sunnah of I'tikaf, and the youth began to tend towards extremism, such as abstaining from listening to songs and music after they used to listen to them after they were convinced by the fatwas of Ibn Baz and Al-Uthaymeen.

Two important occasions, weddings, and funerals, were also exploited to hold religious lessons, so the songs and plays at weddings were changed to sermons and lessons, but when they were convinced that this was not permissible because they were innovative issues in the field of preaching, they stopped, and an attempt began to revive funerals according to the Sunnah and fight innovations, such as the collective reading of the Qur'an, so they replaced the reading with presenting lessons and sermons to fill the void, which constituted a great awakening in social circles.

Another phenomenon related to religiosity, which was contributed to by the young generation of mosques, was the spread of Islamic dress, known as the hijab, as these young people were in contact with a group of the Brotherhood in Algiers, under the sponsorship and responsibility of Sheikh Ahmed Sahnoun, who is considered one of the remnants of the Association of Muslim Scholars, and was at the Osama Mosque on Chevalier Street, so they were active in spreading the wearing of the hijab. The young men of the mosques in Relizane provided poor girls with free hijabs from the Osama Mosque in Algiers, in 10 or 15 days.

The path of this type of religiosity (the Brotherhood) began from the large mosques to the small prayer halls, and these young men later went out to the street and the local space through weddings and funerals, then entered the institutions by spreading the veil in educational institutions and appearing with beards, arriving at the Technological Institute for Education.

These young people followed this path and began to reap the fruits of their efforts that began in 1970 and continued until 1986, when the phenomenon of exporting Shiite thought began through exporting the Khomeini revolution, as well as exporting Salafi thought by Saudi Arabia. Here began the phenomenon of exporting intellectual organizations, and the emergence of the Djaballah group, or what was called the local Brotherhood of the East (Al-Jaza'ara), and the Nahnah group in Blida (center of the country), and in Oran there were the Qutbiyyin, and these organizational currents emerged as a division of the Brotherhood current in the universities and university neighborhoods to reach neighboring cities, through communications between young people, meaning entering the city through its gates, and its gates are the preachers and activists in the field of preaching, who have a balance in the field and enjoy a good reputation among the local community.

The youth of the missionary field in Relizane were aware of the events of the big cities, through their visits to the universities, especially during the holidays, whether in Oran

or Algiers, and most of them were present there. The first organizational thought that entered the city in 1986 was the thought of the International Brotherhood led by Mahfouz Nahnah, for two reasons, the first is that the youth had known Sheikh Mahfouz Nahnah since 1981 when they received the magazine “An-Nadhir” which was published from Italy, and it was written on its front page “*Good news to the Brotherhood in Algeria, we have been informed that the preacher brother Mahfouz Nahnah has been released*” (from the interview with Sheikh Benaouda Hirrech). At that time, the youth were living in a period of absence of the leader and guide, and they did not know or even hear of Mahfouz Nahnah, after that, the youth began to search for this new leader, who had the characteristic of permanent presence in Algerian territory, meaning a leadership that had the characteristic of permanence and continuous supervision by this new preacher on these youth in the method of organization, but they shared with him the nature of the thought similar to the thought of the first founder (Adel Hassouna).

After searching and investigating, they discovered that he was one of the opponents of the ruling regime, and was thrown into prison by the Boumediene regime in 1976 in the famous case of the Charter, where the first meeting with Sheikh Mahfouz was in 1984, when they were visiting their colleagues at the University of Kouba, and at that time it was announced that Sheikh Mahfouz would give a lecture within the framework of the university’s activities, and here, as Sheikh Benaouda Hirrech narrates, the auditorium was filled to the brim inside and outside, and here the fascination with the Sheikh’s speech, his language, his improvisation, and most importantly his thought and project began, with new ideas in a loud voice that reached the ears, hearts and minds of the youth of Relizane and attracted their attention, and when the organizational issues were presented in which the fellow students at the university coordinated with the youth of the city who were studying in Algiers, the matter was received with all simplicity and ease, because the thought and the actors were identified, and the identity of the organization was determined to be similar to what they received from their teacher and first leader Sheikh Adel Hassouna.

After that, Sheikh Mahfouz visited Blida, and an agreement was reached on the issues of organization and coordination based on the unity of the source and the unified intellectual orientation, which is the Muslim Brotherhood. The Sheikh suggested contacting the person in charge of the organization in the western region, who was present at the University of Oran, to localize the thought and organization of Sheikh Mahfouz Nahnah and close the door in the face of other organizations. After that, Djaballah came to the city, sought, and returned empty-handed, and during this period from 1986 until the emergence of pluralism with the 1989 Constitution, there were no religious movements other than the Brotherhood, neither Tabligh nor Salafism in the Saudi sense.

We note that these young people, as we said, did not take a unified path in building their personal future, as some went to university, and some traveled to study in Saudi

Arabia...etc., which caused the emergence of differences and personal problems between the sons of the same movement, as Hussein bin Abdul Rahman studied history at university, then returned as a professor in the specialization, but after he was with his colleagues in one ship called the Muslim Brotherhood, he would become in the early nineties one of the advocates of the Islamic Salvation Front and its representative in the city of Relizane, Nourredine Gharbi who studied in Saudi Arabia after 1986 was influenced by Saudi Salafism and would also join the Front, on the basis that it represents Salafist thought among Islamic movements.

Sheikh Ahmed Beljilali joined the University of Oran in 1980/1981, and had his first meeting with Abbassi Madani in the context of his activity and lectures in the ENSET neighborhood (later volunteer), as all the broad outlines of the call in the western region began in the ENSET neighborhood, and there is an anecdote that Sheikh Ahmed tells, that during the same period in which Abbassi Madani was holding his lectures in Oran in the context of the call work, the Syrian poet Nizar Qabbani came to the University of Sania, and that some brothers from the Islamic movement prevented him from presenting his love poetry, and during this period the trend began and the picture became clear, what do we want and what do others want. (Interview with Sheikh Ahmed Beljilali on September 13, 2014, at 10:00).

### **From advocacy to political practice**

With the adoption of pluralism within the framework of the 1989 Constitution, the first party established after the FLN was the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), meaning the transition from a single party to a dominant party (ADDI Lahouari, 2005), the leaders of this Islamic party, whose leaders were inclined towards the Salafist trend, began to search for branches of this new born in the cities of the national territory, and Sheikh Ben Aouda Hairesh was the first to be contacted in Relizane by the leaders of the Front in the capital, however, the lack of experience of the organizers at the FIS level in local fields and the local advocacy field, and the acceleration of events and chaos in adopting the party, did not give a clear picture of the religious organizations and ideas, as their interest focused on increasing the number of the new party and adopting the largest possible popular base, therefore, the party included all the currents coming from the Afghan war and the Brotherhood in all their classifications, because the FIS leaders wanted to benefit from the lead and the time difference that separated them from establishing other Islamic parties to direct all the Islamic forces present in the arena, to structure them in the new party, and they did not take into consideration the differences in sources, ideas, perceptions, projects, loyalties, and local areas for the formation of each Islamic movement or organization in Algerian society. The Front's activity began, Relizan became a destination for preachers, lessons, lectures, and gatherings, and a new ideology also began in the local religious field, and Sheikh Ahmed Beljilali was one of its pioneers and preachers.

Sheikh Bin Aouda Hairesh had pledged allegiance to Sheikh Mahfouz, as we mentioned, since 1986, and they had the orientation of the Guidance and Reform Association, so he did not get involved and considered those movements ideological, and a trend different from his convictions and loyalties that he had previously presented to the global Brotherhood trend in the person of Mahfouz Nahnah, Benaouda Hirrech says: *"They gave me forms and told my family that it was from the Algiers group, and when I found the Islamic Salvation Front, I left it, and no one contacted me by phone. Things remained like this for two months until a popular gathering was held in Bel Abbas, headed by Sheikh Abbassi Madani and Ali Ben Hadj in a popular gathering, and huge gatherings were held in the stadiums, every time the gathering was said Oran, all the states would take buses and go, because the matter was new and they saw it as a savior and a changer. A group of Relizan arrived, after the gathering they approached Sheikh Abbassi Madani alone and told him: We in Relizane did not receive the forms, he told them I am not responsible for organizational matters, so they contacted the person in charge of the organization and he told them that they had sent the forms. A group of Relizane came and called me, I said yes I have them, they said: Give them to us, I said I will not give you who you are, I had a position, what prevented me was not knowing them, but I had my convictions at that time, I do not walk like this, I tell you the truth, I had taken my position"* (Sheikh Benaouda Hirrech), because Sheikh Benaouda Hirrech was prevented by his position, connections, Brotherhood orientation, and the system of allegiance on which the Brotherhood movement was based from distributing those membership coupons, the new movement would not invest in the symbolism of the Sheikh, and because he saw in the front a strong competitor that would come to destroy everything he had built for years, because the movement was stronger than him, also his conviction that change according to the Brotherhood's thought requires stages, and requires calm, an idea, and a project, and change cannot be achieved through demagoguery and populism, and because he was also aware of what was happening through his contacts in the capital, Algiers, with the new movement and the new thought, and he did not want the new movement to exploit his name on a local level, and exploit his reputation in the field of local advocacy.

The friend and companion in the Brotherhood complex, Hussein bin Abd Al-Rahman, became the competitor today when he became the representative of the FIS in the city, so, a person whose level and history are no less than Sheikh Benaouda Hirrech chose the FIS, as they all formed the youth of the mosques of the call and awakening in Relizane.

The struggle for leadership in the field of preaching and rhetoric began to appear on the horizon between the enemy brothers, a struggle to gain the space of the mosque, to deliver sermons, to pray in congregation, to pray Tarawih, and to pray Eid, and the struggle broke out between the sons of the Islamic awakening in the city, who devoted their time and effort to rooting the new religiosity, the religiosity of the idea and the Islamic project, which when its fruits began to appear, the front came to put the sons of the same complex in a position of peer to peer.



During this period, the phenomenon of Umrah and Hajj flourished, especially among the residents of Algiers, and the books and fatwas of Al-Uthaymeen and Ibn Baz began to enter, and many religious people went to Jordan and received Albani's thought, which means that we are, according to some local preachers in Relizane, facing an imported Salafi thought, not stemming from a local reality, and that the new Salafism began with the emergence of armed movements, because the youth believe that reformist thought does not work with Arab regimes, and they also criticize Salafism today for not developing a local thought and orientation, but rather relying on the sheikhs of Saudi Salafism who did not leave Saudi Arabia, so their thought remained fossilized, and that the problem of Salafi thought remains in the sources, as they did not bear the trouble and difficulty of the ijthihad required by reality, the era, and local specificities, so scientific Salafism began with the Islamic Salvation Front according to local testimonies.

With Algeria entering the black decade, as a result of the suspension of the electoral process on January 11, 1992, most of the activists in the field of advocacy in Relizane were arrested, and some of them fled the country, except for Sheikh Benaouda Hirrech, who retired from politics with Hamas, and continued in the field of advocacy and holding circles and lessons in the Othman Mosque next to the old swimming pool until 1993, where he was finally arrested until 1999, so the Sheikh resumed his activity again, and founded a branch of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars in the city of Relizane in 2000, and this after he became certain that the Brotherhood's faction and thought had prevailed over the association's direction, meaning that the association's direction became close to his convictions and ideas, and it is active to this day.

The Salafi discourse began to spread in Algeria during the seventies through the books of Salafi sheikhs, such as Muhammad Nasir Eddine Al-Albani, Abd Al-Aziz bin Baz, and Mohamed Salih al-Uthaymeen, and it began to sweep the Algerian markets through individuals or the book fairs held annually, where the Islamic movement in general, and Salafism in particular, entered into confrontation with the Boumediene regime, which forced it to work secretly (Al-Bashir Qalati, 2009).

The symbols of scientific or scholastic Salafism exploited the political openness in 1989, and expanded their activities in mosques and universities, and Abdelmalek Ramadan was in charge of leading people in prayer at the Al-Badr Mosque located in the heights of Algiers, and he was among their most prominent sheikhs during that period. This group exploited the dissolution of the Islamic Salvation Front, and the country's entry into a fierce conflict between the armed Islamic movements and the authorities, so it intensified its activities in various regions of the country, and marketed its Salafi discourse without any opposition from the authorities (Abdel Latif al-Hanashi, 2013).

### **The most important results of the study:**

1- Young people, while searching for their aspirations, produce practices that require definition and meanings that require understanding, as the abundance of meaning is difficult for society to absorb, re-include and direct based on the consideration of "youth as a social construction" that builds its path to adulthood through its actions and aspirations.

2- These phenomena that Algeria has known in the previous period of its history show us that young people constitute an important social category that can be considered an important indicator of the disintegration and re-formation of the religious field in Algeria, and that religion has a remarkable role in shaping both personal and collective identity, and has an impact on various areas of life.

3- Habermas believes in the necessity of preserving the semantic capacity of religion in times of foundation and major transformations on the societal level, and his position contradicts the view of Max Weber, who considers religion, "absolutely illogical, and an authority contrary to reason, which gives the "postmodern society" the relationship between religion and society a new dimension, so modern societies, thanks to their modernity, do not ignore the capacity of reason inherent in religions.

4- Indicators of recognition of religious references are social indicators subject to selectivity, imposed by social practices to form religious identities, therefore, sociologists agree in their definition of the youth stage as the stage of self-affirmation, or the age at which identity references arise.

5- The issue of different religious culture and references, whether from the authority, its actors and its institutions, expresses the process of building self-autonomy to rebuild power relations in the religious field.

6- We noticed that the most acceptable religious cultural references are those closest to practice, which answer the daily questions of individuals, which we noticed several years ago through our study of a religious movement such as Salafism, where this group was able to bring its own religious reference closer to the local community, whether related to the individuals such as sheikhs and scholars of this movement, or this reference was in the depths of the written heritage, where there was a large influx of religious references to create a religious culture that will establish a religious identity within the local community.

7- There are social foundations for creating the religious reference personality, as the religious reference is built socially, in addition to the given recognition, because the religious cultural reference of Salafism, for example, burdens individuals or social groups with the task of spreading this reference (in the advocacy framework), where the individual affiliated with it becomes an actor and moves from the stage of reception to the stage of action, and becomes like the religious reference for the family, neighborhood and city. Thus, the religious cultural reference (religious knowledge/religious appearance) can benefit from the network of social relations (social link) and social space (such as the mosque), and spread.

## **Conclusion**

This research presented a general scene of the religious field in the city of Relizane between 1970 and 2000, the date of the establishment of the branch or office of the Association of Algerian Muslim Scholars in the city, where we tried to highlight the beginning of the penetration of the religiosity of the idea, which is the religiosity of the Brotherhood movement, by professors and teachers coming from the Arab East, such as Syria, Egypt and Iraq, and carrying the thought, approach and vision of Hassan Al-Banna. We also touched on the challenges and difficulties that these young people faced within the local preaching field, whether from the family, the neighborhood or even the imams of the mosques, and their exploitation of the space of the mosques and small prayer halls, thus, this generation found spaces to apply its own convictions and religiosity, and the conflict extended to institutions, especially schools, institutes and colleges, as it is a generation in the process of adapting and forming according to circumstances, events and social change, where youth thought was influenced by the fatwas of Ibn Baz and Al-Uthaymeen at the beginning of the eighties (1981-1982), the two famous scholars among the youth of the mosques, as during this period the Sunnah was revived and the tendency towards extremism began, and weddings and funerals were exploited to hold lessons, revive the Sunnah and fight innovations, which constituted a new awakening and fashion in social circles, starting with the spread of Islamic dress such as the hijab. Thus, the path of the Brotherhood's religiosity began from large mosques to small prayer halls, and later went out to the street and local space through weddings and funerals, and then entered institutions by spreading the hijab, reaching the Technological Institute for Education, so that the religiosity ship reached the final station and crossroads brought by party pluralism, as the parties separated yesterday's friends and brothers for the sake of ambitions of leadership and position.

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