

## Religiosity and Economic Attitudes in Algeria

### التدين والمواقف الاقتصادية في الجزائر

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**Abstract:** Few studies have discussed the impact of Islamic religiosity on economic attitudes (Davis & Robinson, 2007) (Guiso, Sapienza , & Zingales , 2003). Most results from these researches are considered negative from an open economic perspective; Muslims are presented as opposed to markets (less support for competition and Privatization). This paper tries to challenge this conclusion by using a sample of Algerian people from Sufi, Salafi background and non-affiliated to observe the impact of the affiliation to a religious group on their attitudes toward open markets. This study is based on data collected by a social survey with a questionnaire. The main results showed that Sufi's have more favorable attitudes than Salafi's toward open markets.

**Keywords:** Sufism, Salafism, Market, privatization, corruption,

ملخص باللغة العربية: عدد قليل من الدراسات اهتمت بدراسة تأثير التدين الإسلامي على المواقف من اقتصاد السوق. وأغلب نتائج الدراسات المتوفرة تظهر ان المتدينين في البلدان الإسلامية لديهم مواقف اقتصادية محافظة ترفض اقتصاد السوق وترفض الخصخصة الاقتصادية للمؤسسات. الورقة تنطلق من عينة من المتدينين ينتمون الى التدين الصوفي والسلفي واخرون بدون انتماء في الجزائر. واعتمدنا المسح الاجتماعي كأداة لجمع المعطيات من خلال اعداد استمارة تحتوي بنودها جملة من المواقف تقيس المواقف المؤيدة لاقتصاد السوق (مشاركة النساء في السوق، الثقة والتسامح مع غير المسلمين، الخصخصة والمنافسة) وتوصلت الدراسة الى ان الانتماء الى المجموعات المتدينة عموما له أثر إيجابي على المواقف الاقتصادية المؤيدة لاقتصاد السوق وان المتدينين الصوفيين لديهم المواقف الاقتصادية الأكثر دعما وتشجيعا لاقتصاد تنافسي ومنفتح وادماجي لكل الهويات في اقتصاد البلد. كلمات مفتاحية: التصوف، السلفية، السوق، الخصخصة، المنافسة

### 1- Introduction:

Sufism and Salafism are two different religious perspectives in Islam. There is a large polemicist literature that either defends or attacks one of the two main schools from one perspective or the other. Social Scientists have looked into the two religious' groups as producers of values and norms for individuals and society. After the 11 September 2001 terrorist attack, both Salafism and Sufism were under scrutiny, the first was related to terrorism and the second was presented as an alternative

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peaceful Islam. However, few studies have looked at the economic impact of Sufism. Some studies have looked at the political impact of Sufism in Africa (Soares & Otayek, 2007), other at the social impact of African Sufism (Weiss, 2002). Some studies have focused on the civic impact of modern Sufism (Bruinessen & Howell, 2007). The neglect of the economic impact of Sufism justifies the necessity to introduce this paper in a way to highlight the economic impact of Sufism and Salafism in Algeria.

A Long time ago Sufism was viewed by scholars as a backward version of Islam and the responsible for the attitude of refusing modernity during the 18<sup>th</sup> century which corresponds to the Ottoman period (Weber, 1958). On one hand, Sufi Islam was described as rural, charismatic, non-scriptural, heterodox religiosity and on the other hand, the Salafi Islam was described as urban, rational, orthodox, scriptural religiosity (Gellner, 1981).

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a religious war took place in Muslim countries between Sufi leaders and Salafi Associations in North Africa and West Africa. After the independence from the French control, the new elites in power have supported the Salafi reformist groups to reduce the cultural and economic influence of Sufi Orders in society (Brown, 1966), (Piga, 2003), (Soares & Otayek, 2007), (Joffe, 1997), (Adamason, 1998), (Isichei, 2004).

The aim of this paper is to emphasize the effect of belonging to Salafism or Sufism, whether Sufism is conducting to prosperous societies or Salafism is more related to economic freedom. The research question is about the economic impact of Islam, and precisely on the role of belonging to a Sufi or Salafi group on the culture of an open market. The main issue is formulated in the following questions:

Which of the two Islamic identities (Sufi or Salafi) is more relevant to the culture of open markets?

To answer these questions, we have asked others three sub-questions;

1. Which Islamic identity is more appropriate for the inclusion of all identities (religions, races, nations, and gender) into opened markets?
2. Which Islamic identity is supportive of lowering barriers to access Markets (Taxes and bribes)?
3. Which Islamic identity is supportive of competitive markets?

## **2-Methods and data:**

The Study is based on collected data by social survey (De Vaus, 2002). This Social Survey is characterized by social content, the structured form of data and is accomplished through quantitative analysis (Jupp, 2006). Our data is structured in cases and variables with values. This

survey targeted Sufi and Salafi groups in Algeria as well as anon-affiliated group. A multivariate analysis was conducted with controls (gender, age, education, social status) (Cramer & Howitt, 2004).

### **1. Sample Study: Sufism and Salafism**

This survey is designed to deal with people affiliated with Sufi and Salafi associations to highlight the impact of religiosity on certain economic attitudes and values. We have also included a sample of people with non-affiliation to the two groups in order to obtain a convenience sample ( Jupp, 2006, p. 196). This country was estimated to have 99 percent Muslims but no data is shown to prove the different religious groups inside the Algerian Muslim population. We have used a voluntary sample to extract more participants. We have 82 participants from a Sufi Organization (Association International Sufi Alawi – AISA) affiliated with The Alāwiyya Order based in Mostaganem (33 percent) and 69 Salafi participants (27 percent) from a Salafi association running a local mosque in Blida. As a control sample, we included 79 participants with non-affiliation (31 percent). The non-affiliation was defined as the reference group for the comparison. A dummy variable was created for the non-affiliated group (=0) while the affiliated group (=1) (Fox, 1999), ( De Vaus, 2002).

### **2. Measuring economic attitudes.**

To measure our dependent variables in economic attitudes some items related to values and behaviors favorable for an opened market policy were created. The questionnaire includes several items measuring pro-open market attitudes (Trust in others, Accepting diversity, Private ownership and Competition between companies and workers, Taxation and corruption, access for women to the market).

#### **2.1. Attitudes toward other identities: Trust and tolerance**

Trust in others was measured by trust in individuals from other identities: non-Muslims (1item), non-national (1 item). Accepting diversity was measured by accepting neighbors from different national, ethnic and religious groups (3 items). The items are coded from 1 to 10, from low trust and to high trust and acceptance of diversity.

#### **2.2. Attitudes toward the Law: Taxation and corruption**

Attitudes toward taxation and corruption were measured by attitudes toward fraud taxation and accepting corruption. The questionnaire is about the degree of refusing to justify these behaviors. The items in the questionnaire are associated with two issues and were rated between 1 and 10 from justifying to refusing the behavior of fraud taxation and giving bribes.

#### **2.3. Attitudes toward pro–market policies.**

Attitudes toward pro-market policies were measured by opinions on salary differences between workers (1), opinions on issues of privatization national companies owned by the government (2), opinions on competition vs. state monopoly (3).

#### **2.4. Attitudes toward working women.**

Five items were used to measure if participants are more favorable for working women. Five statements were introduced to know the attitudes of participants on these issues: the education of girls, barriers for women to work, women's leadership in work, married working women, the importance of work for women. The variables were coded from 1 to 4 from the negative attitudes to positive attitudes.

#### **2.5. Controlling the effects of Religiosity.**

To control the impact of religious affiliation (Sufi, Salafi, and independents) on pro-attitudes toward market some demographic variables (age, sex, education, positions, salary, subjective happiness) are introduced. Multivariate analysis (OLS) is used to know the weight of the impact of religiosity on attitudes toward markets. The standardized Beta and The R Adjusted Square were used in this sense.

### **3-Results**

#### **3.1. Descriptive results:**

Table (1) below shows the main descriptive results of the sample. As shown, the sample is 69 percent male, aged 29.6 (the mean) with 66 percent having diploma from university; with 33 percent Sufi people and 27 percent Salafi people and 31 percent non-affiliated who are neither Sufi nor Salafi.

The attitudes of our sample toward economic issues related to the opened markets, obtained data are shown below. The main results have shown that they have moderate attitudes toward opened markets for all but have negative attitudes toward the privatization of companies. The results are explained in the next section.

Accepting other people from different identities to participate in the national market is very important for supporting open- market policies. In general, participants have moderate attitudes to accept people from other identities (No- Muslim, No-national and women) to integrate the Algerian economic market. They have moderate trust in other people in general (7.6 points of 14) they moderately accept other people from other identities as neighbors (5.8 from 10 for no-Muslims, 7.7 from 10 for No- national). They also have moderate attitudes toward accepting women in the Job Market (31 points on a scale of 50 points).

Taxation and Corruption are two barriers to entering markets for entrepreneurs and workers. People who refuse high taxation and high corruption go more for opened market with low barriers. Participants refuse moderately tax cheating (3.8 from 5) and strongly refuse to give bribes to the governmental agents (4.7 from 5).

Some interesting and ambiguous results about attitudes toward open markets policy (Market privatization and competitive market for companies and for salaries) are to be explained in other sections. The participants strongly support competitive markets for companies (8.6 from 10) and competitive salaries (7.8 from 10) but moderate support for privatization of national companies owned by the government (5.8 from 10).

**Table (1): The descriptive data**

	Measurements	Mean	Standard deviation	Low-high values
<b>Independent variables</b>				
Sufi	1=yes	0,33		
Salafi	1=yes	0,27		
Others	1=yes	0,09		
No affiliated	0=yes	0,31		
<b>Controls</b>				
Age		29,6	10,5	16-71
Males		0,69	0,46	
University		0,66	0,47	
Social Status		9,32	4,10	4-18
<b>Dependents variables</b>				
Trust in others				
No-Muslim		7,6		4-16
accepted		5,8		0-10
No- National		7,7		0-10
accepted				
Taxation fraud	1= Always	3,81		1-5

Justified	Justified	4,71	
Corruption	5=Never		
justified	Justified		
More competitive	10=Strong	7,8	1-10
salaries	support	5,8	
More Privatization		8,6	
More Competition			
Scale	of 50=Very	High	31,8
supporting	support		14-50
De-gendered			
market			

**3.2. Religiosity and opening market attitudes.**

Table (2) below shows the impact of Sufi and Salafi affiliation (comparatively with the non-affiliated group) on the attitudes toward the open market for all identities (no-muslim, no-national and women), attitudes toward competition for all entrepreneurs and workers (privatization, competition) and low barriers (Taxes and corruption).

The main results show the positive impact of Sufi affiliation (comparatively with non-affiliated people) on the attitudes toward the open market. The Sufi people are more inclusive toward all identities, they accept no-Muslim and no–National as neighbors and they have strongly supported women’s integration in the job market.

In contrast, the Salafi people have a strong negative impact on opening market for other identities, they refuse no-muslim and no –national as neighbors and refuse women to be part of the job market.

Religious identities have an opposite impact on taxation and corruption as barriers to access the open market. The Salafi group justifies cheating on taxes and justify accepting corruption to access the market but the Sufi people refuse to justify these behaviors as immoral. The Sufi people have strong support for an opening market for more private entrepreneurs, but the Salafi identity has no impact on this issue.

**3.3. Impact of religiosity on economic attitudes: Multivariate analysis**

In this section, we will show the impact of the religious affiliation on market attitudes by introducing other demographic variables. OLS analysis is used to assess the importance of religious identity as a factor to explain the attitudes toward an open market in this study. The statistic value of R adjusted

square in table 3 will demonstrate the weight of religious identity in explaining the diversity in attitudes of people in our sample.

**Table ( 2): Correlations between Religious affiliation and Attitudes toward open Market**  
(Measured by r Pearson)

	Sufi Identity	Salafi Identity
Trust in others	0,58**	-0,22**
Non-Muslim accepted	0,50**	-0,29**
Non- National accepted	0,33**	-0,20**
Taxation fraud Justified	0,30**	-0,36**
Corruption justified	0,16*	-0,03
More competitive salaries	0,08	-0,01
More Privatization	0,15*	0,03
More Competition	0,03	0,01
Scale of supporting De-gendered market	0,49**	-0,66**

\*\* Significant relation at 0.01 level

\* Significant relation at 0.05 level

Table 3 shows that people with Sufi identity are more inclusive to other religious and national identities. After introducing demographic control, the impact of Sufi Identity remains strong in significance to the Salafi people whom have a strong negativity towards non-Muslims.

**Table (3): Religious Identity and open Market attitudes**  
**Multivariate analysis (OLS)**  
**(After demographics controls)**

	Sufi Identity	Salafi
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		Identity
Trust in others	0,56**	-0,04
Non-Muslim accepted	0,42**	-0,03
Non- National accepted	0,29**	-0,05
Taxation fraud Justified	0,24**	-0,23**
Corruption justified	0,26*	-0,22**
More competitive salaries	0,08	-0,01
More Privatization	0,19	0,07
More Competition	0,03	0,01
Scale of supporting	0,40**	-0,35**
De-gendered market		

\*\* Significant relation at 0.01 level

\* Significant relation at 0.05 level

**Summary of main results.**

The hypothesis was about the impact of Islamic identity (Sufi identity, Salafi identity) on positive or negative attitudes toward open competitive markets for all entrepreneurs and workers from all identities (Non-Muslim, non-National, Women) and with attitudes towards low barriers for entry (Low taxation; low corruption). To test this hypothesis is a social survey was organized to have structured data by performing multiple analyses. Finally, the tables above show the following results.

1. Sufi Islam has a strong impact on the culture of open markets. Sufi people are strongly favorable for an open market, for all identities (other religions, races, and nations), and with strong support for gender equality in the job market.
2. In contrast, Salafi Islam has a strong negative impact on the culture of the open market. Salafi are against other religions, national identities, and sexual identities to participate in the market. Salafi Islam has strong anti-working women attitudes in the sample, 44 percent of attitudes toward working women are explained by religious affiliation.



3. The Salafi's are more against taxation and they can justify taxation fraud and accepting bribes to facilitate business. On the other hand, the Sufi groupies more pro- taxes and anti-corruption and a for a moral participation in the market.

4. The religious identity has no significant impact on attitudes toward as competitive markets for all entrepreneurs and workers (competition between entrepreneurs and workers for profits and salary). That means all participants in the survey are favorable for competitive market.

5. The ambiguous result in this paper was the behavior toward the privatization of the companies owned by the government. The data shows some low support from Salafi's and moderate support from Sufi's (The Male educated with high social status). The data also shows that religious affiliation explains 7 percent of change in attitudes toward privatization.

#### 4. Discussion

The Sufi's in this sample are champions in defending open attitudes to all identities (non-Muslim, non-National and Women) to participate in an open market for all people without distinction of religion, nation or gender. We can describe our Sufi group as **inclusive Sufi Islam**. Our Sufi sample is linked to ONG Association International Sufi Alāwiyya) (AISA) affiliated to Algerian Sufi Order lead by Sufi Leader Sheikh Khaled Bentounes. The Cheikhis a charismatic leader, famous for his success in lobbying in the UN to introduce the 16<sup>th</sup> May as the International Day of Living Together in Peace (resolution adopted by the UN assembly in December 2017). Cheikh Khaled Bentounes is known by his inclusive perspective for diversity, gender quality and his active participation to introduce the culture of peace in education. A big women conference was organized by Sheikh Bentounes in 2015 in Algeria to defend a pro- gender equality Sufism. (Bentounes, 2018).

Some new studies recently have shown through many cases in muslim countries that Sufism today is engaging with ongoing modernity, mobilizing resources for serving communities and networking diaspora (Bruinessen & Howell , 2007). In contrast, the Salafi's in this sample have the opposite impact and are strongly against the economic participation of women and non-muslims. The Salafi group in this sample is influenced by Saudi Islam, which is known for its exclusivist attitudes against women and non-muslim people. (Moaddel , 2006).

Salafi Islam has a mixed impact on attitudes toward the open market. On onehand Salafi's support exclusivist attitudes towards women, non-muslim and restrict access to market for other groups under certain conditions, but on the other hand the Salafi's as in the sample are against non-religious taxes (taxes on services and goods and salaries), which will be considered as pro-libertarian attitudes strongly against taxes. Many studies based on the WVS conducted in many countries have shown

that 60 percent of religious people during the years (1995-2001) was against cheating on taxes (Norris & Inglehart, 2004).

Some papers have given an explanation of the negative attitudes of Salafi toward Taxes relating to these attitudes on religious opinions de-favorable for non-religious taxes in GCC countries (Torgler, 2006)(Deliong-Bas, 2004)(Ross, 2008) which is good news from a pro-market perspective.

The ambiguous news from liberal classical perspective was the negative attitudes toward privatization. This result is not surprising according to the review of literature on the issue of privatization in the Muslim world. In the papers of (Guiso, Sapienza, & Zingales, 2003) and (Davis & Robinson, 2007) based on data collected by the WVS, it is noticed that the male educated with high social status are the people who support more privatization of companies in the 70 percent of the world population. Surveys of World Values Surveys programs have collected data between 2000 and 2003 in six Muslim countries including Algeria have shown that half of the participants supported more ownership by governments companies (4.2 for Algeria and 6.7 for Egypt; 5.06 for the World population) on a scale of 10 points from less governmental ownership of companies (1 point) to more governmental ownership (10 points). Muslim population in the other hand are more supportive for competitive salaries (2.9 for Algeria, 2.7 for Egypt and 2.9 for the world population on a scale of 10 points from supporting competitive salaries (1) to more equal salaries (10) but Pakistan has a bad points of 7.17 points in supporting equality in salaries between workers (Davis & Robinson, 2007, p. 143)

Other papers have shown that the Muslim population share with Orthodox oriental countries very low support for the privatization process of governmental companies based on the data of WVS between 1990-2001. On a scale of 10 points from the low support to strong support (10 points) for the private sector, Muslim rate 5.6 and 6.8 for protestants. Whoever, the Muslim population is more favorable to competition between entrepreneurs (8.6 points from 10 points strong support for privatization) and more competition between workers (5.8 points from 10 points) (strong support for competitive salaries) (Norris & Inglehart, 2004).

For Davis and Robinson (Davis & Robinson, 2007) the religious people in Muslim countries support more involvement of the government in supporting the nationalization of companies and more engagement in social welfare but religious people support less equality of salaries for all workers. Some studies tried to explain why liberalism ideology is weak among the Muslim people as shown in this study and confirmed by other papers. Very well know paper (Rafael La Porta, et al, 1999) has given historical explanation relating to weak support of liberalism on the nature of Islam as a religion

that allows few spaces to individual freedom. But other scholars have given more good historical explanation relating the weak of liberalism to the practices of Muslim rulers as the owner of all things and persons in Muslim society (Kuran, 2004) Until today Muslim countries are dominated by a weak private sector (Rafael La Porta, et al, 1999) and low income population, (Paldam, 2001).

The notion of capitalism of convenience is more suitable to explain this issue. In many Muslim countries, politicians and entrepreneurs are friends; people in government give access to markets only for their friend entrepreneurs. In North Africa, only friends of politicians can do business and have access to information and resources to make a high profit. People in our research sample think that if there will be a privatization of national companies only entrepreneurs who are friends of politicians can have the opportunities to own the asset of the big national companies. People in North Africa are favorable for competitive markets between entrepreneurs and workers for salaries and opportunities but they are skeptical about the outcomes of privatization of the companies owned by the government economy, they think that the corruption is the main barrier for an open market but not Islam. (Moussaoui, 2016)

#### **5- Conclusion:**

How can Sufism help to diffuse the culture of a free market in the Muslim world? Sufism today is inclusive for diversity (gender, race, religion) in a globalized world which is very important for an open market for all nationalities, religions and genders (Bruinessen & Howell , 2007). To understand the support of Sufi groups for an open market we have to look for the entrepreneurial side of Sufi Islam. Sufi's generally are members in private organization sponsored by Waqf asset. Sufi leaders use the Waqf resources to sponsor different activities (education, culture, and social activities) by creating business activities (agriculture, commerce, and services) as it is well documented in Africa (Seemann, 2002)(Vikor, 2002) (Malik, 2016)

There is evidence that Sufi leaders are engaged in entrepreneurial dynamics. The case of The Gulan Movement was well documented in the creation of Business companies to sponsor the NGOs linked to *Khidma* Movement (Ebaugh, 2010). In Algeria, Sufism was under attack during the period of the socialistic regime (62-80), some Sufi Leaders were in prison and their Waqf assets were confiscated. The case of the Alāwiyya order is documented (Khatir, 2019) After the era of economic reform during the 1990s, the Alāwiyya leaders have opened new business companies in Computer (Hard and Soft) and engaged in developing Information Technology in Algeria. We can conclude that Sufi Islam in Algeria was excluded from the narrow national market under the socialist regime in the 1970s but it has given the evidence that it is more supporting entrepreneurial market culture for the country.

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