

# Introduction to Political Psychoanalysis of a Group in the Middle East

Seyedfateh Moradi, Abas Ali Rahbar

**Abstract**—The present study focuses on investigating group psychoanalysis in the Middle East. The study uses a descriptive-analytic method and library resources have been used to collect the data. Additionally, the researcher's observations of people's everyday behavior have played an important role in the production and analysis of the study. Group psychoanalysis in the Middle East can be conducted through people's daily behaviors, proverbs, poetry, mythology, etc., and some of the general characteristics of people in the Middle East include: xenophobia, revivalism, fatalism, nostalgic, wills and so on. Members of the group have often failed to achieve Libido wills and it is very important in unifying and reproduction violence. Therefore, if libidinal wills are irrationally fixed, it will be important in forming fundamentalist and racist groups, a situation that is dominant among many groups in the Middle East. Adversities, from early childhood and afterwards, in the subjects have always been influential in the political behavior of group members, and it manifests itself as counter-projections. Consequently, it affects the foreign policy of the governments. On the other hand, two kinds of subjects are identifiable in the Middle East, one; classical subject that is related to nostalgia and mythology and, two; modern subjects which is self-alienated. As a result, both subjects are seeking identity and self-expression in public in relation to forming groups. Therefore, collective unconscious in the Middle East shows itself as extreme boundaries and leads to forming groups characterized with violence. Psychoanalysis shows important aspects to identify many developments in the Middle East; totally analysis of Freud, Carl Jung and Reich about groups can be applied in the present Middle East.

**Keywords**—Politics, political psychoanalysis, group, Middle East.

## I. INTRODUCTION

**P**SYCHOANALYSIS is tool for understanding primitive aggressive and destructive aspects of social and political processes [1]. Psychoanalysis is always politically relevant precisely because it always deals with how experiences with the social become engaged with in ways which are deeply, personal and because it searches out the unrecognized forces that give pattern to our desires, dreams and neuroses [2].

Psychoanalysis has expanded to a great extent in politics and it has taken an essential application. Politics is a comprehensive matter and requires a multilateral identification. Individual and collective behaviors derived from politics or leading into political decisions and movements have always been disputed. Collective behavior is one of the factors that need to be seriously considered. In the perception, group behaviors and collective violence have increased in politics. The highest point of these events is in the

Seyedfateh Moradi is with the Allameh Tabataba'i University, Faculty Members at Faculty of Law and Political Sciences, Tehran, Iran (e-mail: fateh.moradi@yahoo.com).

Middle East. Regardless of some of the factors that have already been addressed, these developments have to be analyzed psychologically. Psychoanalysis gives us important tools, especially for groups, to be able to check these fields and related matters.

Freud, in group psychology and the analysis of the Ego (1921), described a primary group as a number of individuals who have substituted one and the same abject for their ego ideal (later called the super ego) and have consequently identified themselves with one another in their ego. Also, other important psychoanalysts have scrutinized theoretical grounds in the group. There are serious concerns about an increase of group behaviors in politics. Psychoanalytically unconsciousness [and sometimes group behaviors or the emission into groups] has an origin from childhood [3].

The main concern of this study is a preliminary study of psychoanalysis in the Middle East; since serious research has not been done in this field. Nowadays, groups in the Middle East arbitrary, fundamentalist, legal, or others, play a serious role in the authority. But it seems that most of these effects can be reproduced in the form of violence and conflict and it has faced the world and the Middle East with serious threats. Therefore, the main questions that come to the mind in this regard are: What connections does group psychoanalysis have with theoretical descriptions in the Middle East? How can we attain an understanding of political behavior psychoanalytically in the Middle East? What justification and explanation does psychoanalysis has for the formation of fundamentalist groups in the Middle East? In general, can we imagine a particular vision for the future in the Middle East by using political psychoanalysis? Questions and ambiguities of this kind lead us to serious investigations. Therefore, achieving the current political psychoanalysis situation in the Middle East can lead into the development of solutions.

## II. METHOD

This study is a descriptive-analytic research. In this study, library data are used to analyze groups in the Middle East. Researcher's observations were also influential on the position and production of research materials and literature. Lives in some parts of the Middle East, in different audio-visual forms, have helped the research to be conducted with more valid evidence. For example, verbal and physical behaviors, severe identity tensions as well as using proverbs and poems which are related to group behavior have been considered in brief in the research. Statistics show an increase in group conflicts and tensions which are identifiable nowadays more than at any previous time.

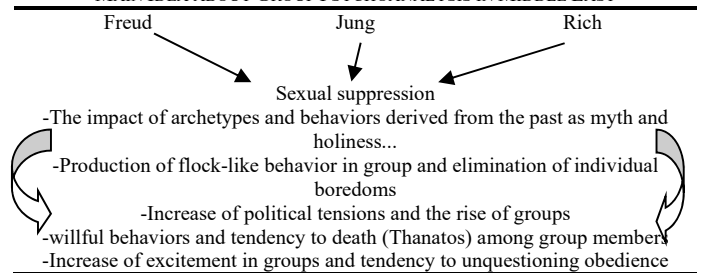
### III. FRAMEWORK

The behavior and formation of groups have been important theoretical and research matters that psychoanalysts have dealt with. Their attention focus has dramatically increased, especially in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Prominent psychoanalysts such as Freud, Jung and others have scrutinized this matter. It seems that in topics related to group psychology, Jung and Freud have more similar views than other subjects. Both of them, by accepting the classic descriptions of Gustave Le Bon about the huge crowds, believe that a person in crowds returns to the initial and emotional situation rationally. They assume that group psychology has been the primitive form of human consciousness and claim that under extreme emotional tensions or conflict conditions, this form of self-awareness once again comes to the surface and manifests itself. In the next step, the group becomes a passionate and fanatic lover of a leader, and it demands a charismatic authority and strict rules from him. Freud regards that group cohesion and interest arose from the mutual sexual bond and prohibitions between from one hand libido of the individual and, on the other hand, libido of the leader. It sees libido of the leader as the ideal ego of himself and it is in common with the libido of others which have an ego-ideal. But, Jung adds that the intensity and integrity of the group depends on a variety of archetypes or collective imaginations and emotions as well. Therefore, under the appropriate circumstances, groups and emotions can return to the initial conditions and basic archetypes. So, the more these archetype symbols reflect the collective conditions of groups and be consistent with it, the more the formation of the group intensifies. And it attains unity by projection. Freud and Jung expressed freedom from moral constraints of the group (in such a way that the group continues committing a crime without feeling of guilty), Freud considers it as the result of the integration of ego and superego. Jung assumed God-Almighty power as a result of identification of the individual with the contents of the collective unconscious and regarded it with psychic inflation [4], [1].

Consequently, since humans fall into unconscious layers among crowds, Freud had a negative view about the subconsciousness. Since the human masses are affected by the initial flock, they are pleased only if they are controlled by a harsh and paternalistic government. Jung, influenced by the same basis, explained the growth and spread of Nazism in Germany with archetypal principles of Wotan. Freud added the formation of an authoritarian character in the world and especially Nazism in the German middle-class. In addition, Wilhelm Reich considered the ambiguity of the intended situation from the duality of complying with the authority and hating it at the same time. It is characterized by a slavish obedience and the oppression to subordinates. He believed since a human is led to sexual suppression, he assumes himself as a weak, and consequently, a panicked individual, which leads to obedience and shyness. Totally, all the three theoretical models of Freud, Jung and Reich are impactful on the formation of group psychology, from the perspective of Freud's original flock-like structure in compliance which leads to confusion between the characters structure. And the rise of

former archetypes in the good conditions disbands the individual in the group [4], [6]. On the other hand, the formation of an authoritarian personality is due to fear of the facilitator of forming dangerous groups. The present theoretical model and comments discussed in the subjects' lives situation in the Middle East exists strongly; first of all, it reveals group analysis to us. In general, theoretical model of group psychoanalysis in the Middle East can be explained as follows.

TABLE I  
 MAIN IDEA ABOUT GROUP PSYCHOANALYSIS IN MIDDLE EAST



### IV. MIDDLE EAST AND PSYCHOANALYSIS OF GROUP

Freud and Jung emphasized education for inappropriate group formations, and society and family rules and restrictions for children to guarantee their survival [4], [5]. These behaviors exist strongly in the Middle East. That is, xenophobia and group paradox severity are always reproduced in family and school. Therefore, according to Jung's analysis [archetypes of father and hero] and based on Freud's view since human beings are willing to be ruled in a group by force and power, any sign of kindness from their leaders is considered as weakness [4], [6]. Therefore, behavior patterns in some communities, particularly in the Middle East, support and strengthen group tensions by relying on oppressive leaders. The Middle East is full of religious, ethnic, cultural and national groups. Most of the groups in this region have always been against each other with extreme tensions. Contradictory behaviors have always been growing among these groups.

#### A. General Characteristics of Group in the Middle East

This section refers to the behavior features of the people in the Middle East. Most foreign travel writers, who have traveled to the Middle East and Iran, almost have expressed common features about the general behavior of people, and accordingly, groups. From one hand, the collective unconsciousness in the Middle East is often integrated with myths, proverbs and legends that this feature contributes to the formation of groups. Thus, it leads the collective psyche with a great intensity and rules over these signs can be seen clearly in the daily public behavior of people.

Totally, Middle Eastern and Iranian features such as insecurity, conservatism, pessimism, distrust, xenophobia, revivalism, negligence, exaggeration, generalization and so on are referred to in Middle Eastern general behavioral characteristics. Chardin believes fatalism is a characteristic among Middle Eastern and Iranians, the people attribute their

affairs to fate. Fuller and Brugsch [15], [20] argue that in societies like Iran, supremacy over others is a salient characteristic of them. Amy Marceline [7] refers to features such as verbosity, boasting, threatening and brutality. Morier [14] and Orsolle [13] describe features as lying, arrogance, and boasting. Jean Lartky [7] mentions hero worship, anarchism and conspiracy among Middle East people, especially Iranians; it reflects the consensus of travel writers and researchers focus on these attributes. Chardin believes that basically Middle Eastern people are indifferent toward new discoveries and inventions, and most of them are easygoing, satisfied with the existing situation and in general uneasy [21], [22]. Crosisnki and Chardin [18], [19] emphasize on extreme patriotism and nostalgia in the Middle East. The same feature is reproduced by Richards [16] for the Iranians who live in nostalgia. Similarly, Orsolle refers to the existence of legends in people's lives, Olearius [12] points to the tendency to violence, and Sir Percy Sykes [17] mentions selfishness and corruption.

Some specific issues of childhood cause people in adulthood to be pessimist, neurotic, anxious, paranoid, and xenophobic, agitators and overtly individualistic. Political sectarianism and its instability result from the psychic insecurity aspect in their personal relationships that they do not want [8]. Although these cases and features cause individualism and separate subjects, this separation causes searching for identity among the subject. Identity is defined in group and dispatching in group. The severity of group release in the Middle East results in this situation leading to severe tensions. In fact, group is meaningful in conflict with others. In other words, negative counter transference is resulted from group tensions in the Middle East.

### *B. Libido and Group*

These people are impatient with and anxious about others, because they have not satisfied those primary needs as discussed. Over the course of a lifetime, if these expressed needs are consistently unmet and become negative, then the subjects will become more anxious and upset. In other words, these people seek a new way to act against those longstanding, built in, problems. As a consequence of this, they might want to choose a group-based form of therapy because they essentially worry they cannot express themselves to others, and that other people will not notice or understand them. In fact, Reich showed us that a tendency toward violence in some individuals and groups is due to expressing and consolidating ego and libido desire against humiliation and sadism. Tendency toward violence, particularly in the Middle East, is due to proving masculinity in fundamentalist groups, in such a way that subjects have learned peacefulness and serenity or silence toward the environment is a kind of castration. Hence, without taking pride, in tension and conflict against other groups this desire is not neutralized. Neurotic lies against others turn into a principle as a duty. In other words Marcuse distinguishes between two forms of repression; basic repression, which is the constraint on instinct enforced by scarcity; and surplus repression, the intensification if the

constraint by the hierarchical distribution of scarcity and labor. Intriguingly, he appears to have a positive view of basic repression [2].

In most of the groups in the Middle East we often face surplus suppression, and it increases the tensions and counter-projections; because there are multiple constraints from childhood to adulthood in people's personal lives and collective identities. According to Jung, psychic inflation in groups is hidden in subjects, it can be followed by archetypes and it may be manifested at any time in different ways. If there is a social potential, eruption and tension of the situation is facilitated.

### *C. Tow Tips of Group in Middle East*

Political narratives, exegeses, of religious myths, or other ideological myths may contain narratives that appeal to and are congruent with such collective fantasies. When they are implicit they may function as non-conscious force that is not readily accessible for reflection or alteration. They then often appear as given truths. So, political, religious, and other intergroup conflicts with violent features are to a large extent determined by unconscious mental forces acting both at individual and group levels [1].

Subjectivity is generally divided into two periods of pre-modern and postmodern. In the pre-modern period, subjectivity has a traditional and materialistic power relationship, and subject in the pre-modern period is a place-centered and place-based. In fact, in the pre-modern period, subjectivity and identity are the same and are not separated. But in the postmodern period, the subject is variable and may be influenced from everywhere.

In postmodern subject identity and subjectivity are not the same [9]. Similarly, subjects in the new world are divided into several types and are used by authority and other governing institutions and different customs. Subjects can be studied in four types, subject of grammar, political-legal subject, philosophical and subject of a human person [10]. Confusion or blurring of borders in the post-modern subjects has not been without reactions and leads to reaction in them. This reaction, especially in the East and the Middle East in the current period, has been intensified. A given subject as is willing to return to the previous conditions and to have identity stability, it is also under pressure in the modern world. Therefore, two types of subjects can be named in the Middle East.

One of them is the classical subject that has a tendency to return to the foundations. On one hand, the postmodern subject is dealing with primitive desires resulting from confusion. While on the other hand, the modern subject in the Middle East is alienated or is in constant conflicts. The modern subject is bound to psychic alienation; as a result, it is looking for an excitement beyond the modern world. And it has the potential of absorption in violence centered groups. On the other hand, the classical subject has a constant fear of losing the past that has been an ideal to it. Both subjects find themselves in belonging and absorption in group. The result of both processes is group belonging and severity based on violence. Consequently, these groups do not have projection

and negative projection (i.e. attributing human issues to self). Modern and confused subjects are often attracted to fundamentalist groups in the Middle East and classical subjects are in authority.

TABLE II  
 TWO MAIN TYPES OF SUBJECT IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Modern Subjects	Classical Subjects
Main feature: alienated	Main feature: return to the past
Result: absorption in group to make identity and sense of belonging	

#### D. Perspective

Power is an opportunity to create ego and express their ego forces. Using and adherence to group, especially among communities of the Middle East, is an opportunity to escape from psychic alienation. Avoiding force use and staying away from group in the Middle East is considered libido weakness and castration. Therefore hero-like and warrior politicians are popular to the public and often the tensions they create are accepted by the group. Such a situation requires another-self, so xenophobia is a principle in politics that is constantly reproduced.

Melanie Kline refers to the relationship between children and parents, he believes that if the relationship between parents and children is good and children have a positive impression about them, it will have positive effects in the future. The same trend is also effective in creating and joining a variety of groups [3]. Considering the living environment in the Middle East is inappropriate, most of the relationships between children and parents are troublesome; interpersonal relationship tensions in families, large numbers of orphaned children and others, do not give a proper vision to them.

Many patricides among patients suffering from schizophrenia are related to the authority competition and the lack of appropriate relationship of patients with their fathers [11]. In fact, the formation of ideas of groups comes from families and they cause unconscious control in later stages in life. Joining groups also happens in this respect [3]. In the Middle East, an uncertain and mistrustful unconsciousness is formed and development of different fundamentalist groups can be interpreted from this viewpoint. In the Middle East, family has an important impact on forming character and abnormal groupings.

#### V. CONCLUSION

It is almost impossible for most of people to live without a collective identity. In undeveloped societies in the Middle East, group in classic styles is already the most important home of subjects. In these communities, due to technocrat regimes, the effects of myth and past nostalgia, unstable political regimes and insecure collective memory are still the most common thrills of life. When emotions have the greatest influences on people's unconsciousness, it increases the continuation of dispatch to the group.

Group in the Middle East still has the same descriptions of Freud, Jung and Wilhelm Reich. Freud viewed the excitement

flock-like in the group which is rooted from the distant past. People join these kinds of groups to avoid thinking about stresses and to tolerate more sufferings from developing wisdom. As a result, most of the political and social damages are reproduced and society under group coverage suffers from various forms of constant crises and tragedies.

Both classic and modern subjects in the Middle East are common in dispatching toward groups. For these reasons, the Middle East is full of various groups and the potential to form more dangerous groups. On the one hand, group in the Middle East is consistent with Jung's ideas and research; collective unconsciousness in group reaches its highest form and intensity. Jung believes that many archetypes exist in the collective unconsciousness of most cultures and nations. These archetypes rule the psyche and individual behavior; and, at any time they may emerge in dangerous forms in collective forms.

Archetypes have been revived in the Middle East in a variety of ways. Archetypes of hero, father, anima and animus, old wise etc., have a major role in group behavior and in politics in the Middle East. Hence, we are not dealing with the current time but a few thousand years that rule collective and group behaviors. If these forms are not directed and interpreted in proper ways, unavoidably we will deal with new tragedies. Similarly, Wilhelm Reich cared about the basis of individual and sexual suppressions. Regarding the Middle East, circumstances of these kinds of suppressions are frequent and the frequency can also be reproduced as violent behaviors. In the Middle East, it seems power and the struggle for power in group and also individually come from a sense of opposition toward libido inferiority; that is, if someone does not participate in power, he feels castrated.

So, different theoretical and research aspects of the current situation in the Middle East often apply to the groups. The aim of this study is a further and preliminary identification on the political psychoanalysis of groups in the Middle East. Therefore, in the future, more serious research will be conducted in this issue.

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