Islamic Revivalism and Social Change in Muslim Societies: A Rethink of Marxist Historical Materialism

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Abstract: This paper is conceived to achieve two major objectives. First, it aims at providing a critique of the materialist conception of history. Second, it aims at explaining the underlying factor behind Islamic revivalism and social change in Muslim societies. Given this, it offers a comparative analysis of the Madinan and Marxist societies based on their evolution, characteristics and transformation. It also offers a systematic analysis of the phases of Islamic revivalism across the Muslim world in old and recent times. It therefore forwards the central argument that Marxism lacks the capability to explain the evolution and character of the Islamic society on the following grounds. The history of the Muslim society is not a product of materialism, but a belief system. Its belief system represents its foundational structure, while it also directly conditions all other aspects of the society including its politics, economy, laws and foreign relations. Furthermore, a Muslim man's social consciousness is not centered on his socio-economic condition, but his socio-religious condition. He therefore conceives societal problems as a reflection of the degeneration of the core values of the societal belief system. This therefore accounts for a social movement that aims at reviving the belief system representing the base structure of the society and evolving a completely new social order that conforms to its established standards.

Key words: Islamic revivalism · Belief system · Social, consciousness · Social movement · Historical, materialism · Social change

INTRODUCTION

Given Samuel Huntington's popular *civilizational* thesis on contemporary global politics [1], Islam represents a major issue in modern times. The global phenomenon of Islam should therefore be closely monitored in the international system. The September 11 event further validates the hypothesis of Huntington. What follows are several writings with catchy titles, disparaging in some cases, such as *Terror in the Mind of God* [2]; *Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam* [3], *The Shade of Swords: Jihad and the Conflict between Islam and Christianity; Violence in God's Name: Religion in an Age of Conflict*; *Jihad, from Quran to Bin Laden* [4]; *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror* [5], *Is Religion Killing Us? Violence in the Bible and the Quran* [6] and a host of others, trying to give a panoramic view of this scenario. Against this backdrop, several theoretical positions have been advanced from various quarters of the academic

world to argue the cause of the sudden rise of Islam in modern times, despite the allurements of technological modernity. Relative deprivation, inequality and poverty have chiefly been arrived at as the causal factors of the forceful drive toward Islam across the Muslim world [7]. These, according to them, have their origin in the predominant authoritarian regimes and political corruption in many countries of the Muslim world [8].

Their positions may somewhat be true given recent events in the modern Muslim world. However, there is a clear ignorance of the influence of the belief system as an important factor to explain this phenomenon in the Muslim societies. As would be argued in this paper, all the aforementioned factors are dependent on a stronger force - the belief system, as a result of its strong influence on the life of Muslims and all aspect of their social relations. Therefore, the belief system would be treated as an independent variable, while other factors including socio-economic and political issues would represent intervening variables that explain the "forceful" revivalism

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in modern Muslim societies. This position is particularly advanced as a critique of Marxist conception of man and society, which only reduces man to an ordinary economic being and the society a reflection of materialism.

Against the backdrop of the above, this study provides an analysis of the history and character of societies in the Muslim world in the light of Islamic revivalism as a critique of historical materialism. It questions the generalizability of historical materialism and answers the following questions. One, can the history of Islamic society be linked to materialism? Two, what explains the history of the evolution of the Islamic society? Three, what informs social consciousness in the Islamic society and how does it lead to social mobilization? What defines the basis of internal struggle within the Islamic society? Finally, how do all these explain Islamic revivalism?

Conceptual Clarification: The concepts that are strategic to this study are given as follows: Islamic revivalism; belief system; social consciousness; social group; social movement; and social change. Islamic revivalism is a move aimed at dislodging an existing status-quo as a result of its perceived gross discrepancy with the standards of the authentic Islamic tradition and restoration of the Prophetic social order. This perception is generated upon the realization of a general societal decay as well as challenge from external forces [9]. In modern times, it was reactivated in Muslim societies as a response to the devastation of the Islamic institutions occasioned by their contact with colonialism and Western modernization [10]. Going by Kane's analysis, it can also be conceived of as a process that mediates social change [11]. Thus, Islamic revivalism is also a transitory process from a degenerated social order to a new one in accordance with the traditional model of Islam.

Belief system is conceived of by Rokeach [12] as the "total universe of a person's beliefs about the physical world, the social word and the self." It becomes religious when it is generated from and attached to Divinity and thus, transcends the aforementioned definition to include a composition of man's vision and belief about the seen and unseen world. This is conceived by Durkheim [13] as a "unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden." An Islamic belief system therefore implies that belief which is founded on its Holy Books, the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (SAW). Belief system will therefore be interchangeably used with Islam in this paper.

Social consciousness is a realisation or awareness of the decadence or problems of a particular society. It explains the conditions members of a class (group) become aware that they have a common situation and interests and thus, organize in common defence for. Social group simply represents a group of social agents or actors in a particular society. Social movement according to Zeitlin [14] is a process that involves "a single leader of striking qualities and a small band of followers. At first such a band is scarcely distinguishable from numerous similar ones in the vicinity. In time however, it does distinguish itself from the others. Its utterances and practices being to appeal to even-larger members of the people and the originally minute circle find its doctrine spreading and wide." Furthermore, social movement is characterized by four major elements, ideology; organization; charismatic leadership; and prevailing social context [15]. Finally, social change implies the process through which a society and culture is transformed [15]. This is undertaken through the process of the alteration of an existing order for a new one.

Marxist Society: Marx conception of the history of society is founded on some salient points. First, the materialist conception of history; the history of the society is a product of the dynamics of the economy. This suggests that history should be understood within the context of developments in the economic structure of the society. In his Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, he states that all forms of the society "could neither be understood by themselves, nor explained by the so-called general progress of the human mind, but they are rooted in the material conditions of life" [16]. Second, the society is a complex whole structure consisting of several elements that are not only inter-connected, but also inter-dependent upon each other. Third, it emphasizes the significance of the economic system as the bedrock of the society. Marx further states that, "the mode of production of material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual process of life" [16]. Thus, the *mode of production* of the society which represents the economic system in modern parlance is the most salient in the social formation of societies. It is conceived as the *base structure* upon which the *superstructure* including the political, religious, cultural and legal aspects of the society is founded.

In the fourth consideration, he further suggests that at all periods of history the mode of production is characterized by two major elements; the *means of*

production and *relations of production*. The means of production implies the factors that determine the smooth running of the production process in the society. It is a combination of labor, technology and tools required for production [17]. The relation of production implies the existing relationship among individuals involved in the production process [18]. Fifthly, the mode of production produces unequal social classes which are dictated by their role in the production process. The social classes are basically divided between the owners and non-owners of the means of production. They constitute the *master* and *slave* in the slavery mode of production; the *feudal lords* and *serfs* in the feudalist mode of production; and the *bourgeoisie* and *proletariats* in the capitalist mode of production. The owners of the means of production represent the privileged social group in the society. As a result, they tend to protect and maintain the status-quo. The non-owners on the other hand, represent the unprivileged in the society and thus, oppose the existing status-quo. In addition, the state is a conscious organization of the society [18]. It is also a power organization and its apparatuses including the police, civil service, judiciary, prison and laws are manipulated by the privileged class for the promotion of their economic interests. Finally, the consciousness of a class, particularly the unprivileged, of belonging to a group as a result of the social condition orchestrated by the production process, leads to struggle or conflict among the social classes in the society. According to him, "it is not the consciousness of men that determines his being, but on the contrary, their social being determines their consciousness" [19]. The end of the struggle leads to the emergence of a new social order governed by another mode of production.

Madinan Society: The concept of the Madinan society symbolises the first and model society of the Islamic belief system. Contrary to the Marxist materialist conception of the evolution of society, it emerged as a result of a belief system governed by Islam. In fact, its first men, an emergent social group in the Arabian society, under the charismatic leadership of Prophet Muhammad (SAW), had to be dispossessed of their wealth and other worldly possessions, both living and non-living, by virtue of the *hijrah*, in order to build the society. Like Marx's, the society is also organic in nature as it is composed of closely connected and interdependent parts that form a whole structure [20]. The social consciousness that informs its emergence was against the backdrop of a Divine inspiration, which later translates into the

standards of the Islamic belief system. Given Choueiri's analysis presupposing that Islam represents an endeavour to rectify the false scriptures of old religions and pushing for the restoration of the Abrahamaic faith [21], it is not out of place to suggest that the Madinan society is a product and project of revivalism; revival of the monotheistic faith.

In a bid to accomplish the aforementioned mission, there was a heated struggle between the social group headed by Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and that of the traditional Arabs belonging to a polytheistic belief system. At its actualization, it has the belief system represented by the Qur'an and Sunnah as its foundational structure. The law is not separate from the belief system, it derives its source from it, while "it covers every aspect of human behaviour and deals extensively with the intention as it does with rituals and civil and criminal matters"[21]. The other structures of the society derive their existence from the belief system, including the economy, politics, judiciary, culture, civil service and others. The authority of the state and its accompanying apparatuses has its roots in the belief system. Contrary to Marx's conception, the society is a classless one as Islam prevents the emergence of class conflict in the society [22]. In addition, none possesses the wherewithal or penchant for the manipulation of the structures of the state for selfish interests. Thus, the question of injustice does not surface in any way in the topology of the Madinan society. This therefore represents the historic model and standard which Muslims appreciate to guide the conduct of their lives at every period of existence. The consciousness of a divergence from this set of standards explains internal contradictions and social conflicts in the Muslim societies [23].

Early Revivalism: This period represents the immediate Islamic societies that succeeded those of the four rightly guided Caliphs in the Islamic calendar. At different occasions, the consciousness of a digression from the principles of the societal belief system within the context of the Madinan society generated social conflicts among social groups and occasioned social change in the Muslim societies. The digression is manifested in rampant social injustice, acute immorality, political corruption and despotism, intellectual crisis, sectarianism and most especially, innovation and importation of strange socio-religious and cultural practices into the Islamic belief system. The societies emerged from one another through a process of fall and rise, factored by the belief system. Dekmejian's study [24] establishes the fact that

all the societies that emerged after the period of the rightly guided Caliphs are closely connected and most especially flows through the cycle of decline and revival. Decline in this sense translates to a shift away from the base structure and revival in response to the decline occasioning transformation and evolution of another social order in accordance with Islam. The social movements of 'Umar Ibn 'Abdul al-'aziz (d.720), Imam Abu Hanifah (699-767), Imam Malik (718-798), Shite/Abassid (750) at different occasions, explain the flow of social consciousness, resistance and revival processes, during the Umayyad reign.

In the Abassid epoch, the movements led by Ibn Hanbal (780-855), al-Shafi'i (767-854), Qaramitah (c.890) and 'Ubaydah al-Mahdi (909), signify those that effected transformation of the social order in response to discernible societal degeneration in the period. And the society undergoes this process till the era of the social movements of the groups of Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328), Ibn al-Qayyim (d.1359) and Ibn Kathir (d.1373) [24]. For instance, revolt was staged during the Umayyad reign as implied by a prominent soldier of the period, Yazīd bin Anbasah, to one of the Caliphs of the time, al Walīd bin Yazīd, that, "we don't have any personal grudge against you. We are against you because you have violated the sacred ordinances of God, because you have drunk wine, because you have debauched the mothers of your fathers' sons and because you have held God in contempt" [25].

And in some other cases, Ibn Taymiyyah, declared that his mission was to effect social change in three major areas against the backdrop of prevalent heresy of the belief system in the society. First, the establishment of principles that appreciate "how to follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah (correctly) in the matter of God's names attributes and unity in both utterance and belief." Second, "to show that the Quran and the Sunnah contain all guidance and that heretical splits and misguidance come about by abandoning of it." Finally, "to warn that all corresponding innovations have occurred by excess on the negative side or the positive side and their source lies in ambiguous language (resulting in) divergence and splits that necessarily led to mutual heresy (*takfir*) declarations among divergent groups"[25]. Furthermore, Ibn Taymiyyah was opposed to the group of intellectuals whom he considered as *semi-morons* because of their gross ignorance and attribution of some controversial opinions to Imams al-Shafi'i and Malik. Given this, he preached and led a social revolution against the Tartars, Isma'ilis, 'Alawis and Durze, considered culpable in the corruption of Islam in the society. To him, reviving the belief system is more critical, than any other practices established by Islam, including prayer and pilgrimage [25].

Transformation and social change therefore oscillated within the dialectic process of fall and rise driven by the belief system. Upon dislodgement of a particular order, a new one that is consistent with the standards of Islam is established. When the newly established system also gravitates toward degeneration, a social movement for revival of the foundational structure of the society arises to challenge the system and champion the cause for its displacement. For instance, at the end of the aforementioned Umayyad era given its shift from the base structure of the society, the 'Abassid social order that led a revolt against the former under the leadership of Caliph 'Umar ibn 'Abdul al-aziz, emerged, while this societal formation based on the pristine Islamic belief also reached its point of decline later during the rule of Caliph al-Ma'mun. General opposition to his reign was rife when he introduced the Mu'tazilah doctrine as a state ideology. Mu'tazilah doctrine emphasizes a rationalist approach toward dealing with the Qur'an. Imam Hanbal and others that were the Caliph's allies and followers assumed the group that conflicted with him to displace his regime [24].

Revivalism in the 18th and 19th Century: In the history of Islamic societies, this period serves as an intermediary between the abovementioned early historical era and the modern period. Specifically, it predates the era of the transformation of the Muslim societies into modern nation-states. The society founded in this epoch is also characterized by the same social structure where the belief system represents its base. Social concerns are also informed by the belief system, which directly influenced violent moves toward its restoration upon a shift away from it. Given the supremacy of the West in the world system, imperialism and capitalism gained prominence and had much influence in the pollution of Islamic practices in the Muslim societies. Thus, this also contributed to the catalogue of concerns and activated the social consciousness of the people in the Muslim societies. In addition, a gradual fall in the spiritual practices established by Islam was prevalent in these societies. Muslims became semi-pagans and innovators of new practices into the core of their lives. From central Arabia, to Africa, the Indian sub-continent and south-east Asia, there was an intense social struggle for the restoration of the Islamic belief system. In Saudi Arabia, Imam Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahab (1703-1792) basically was

concerned about the state of the belief system against the backdrop of increased adoption of social-cultural and spiritual practices that contradict those of Islam. These include seeking intercession or supplicating to pious living or dead people and making vows to them; offering sacrifices and praying at tombs and attributing the power to harm or give benefit to them; learning and practicing magic and astrology; the use of amulets and talismans; accommodating innovators; and befriending unbelievers of Islam, among others. Greatly influenced by the thoughts and movement of Ibn Taymiyyah and motivated by the first battle of the first Caliph, Abu Bakr al-Sidiq, against Muslims who refused to pay their taxes after the demise of the Prophet (SAW), he mobilized against the social group deeply involved in the aforementioned practices. For him, terminating these social practices and their innovators "is not only justifiable, but is itself a condition for proper belief" [27].

In the Indian sub-continent, Shah Wali Allah (1703-1762), Shah 'Abd al-'Aziz (d. 1824), Sayyid Ahmad Shahid (1786-1831) and Isma'il Shahid (1779-1831) represent the strong force toward Islamic revival in the region [27]. Shah Wali Allah, for instance, directed his consciousness toward serious disunity in the society against the backdrop of increased differences of opinion on Islamic jurisprudence, Sufism, Hadith studies, among others [27]. Furthermore, he was concerned about the state of Islamic scholarship in the society, which to him was responsible for the debasement of the values of Islam in the society. With this, his was more of an intellectual engagement and opposition to the philosophers of his time in consideration of Islam. He was against the Sufis that maintain the essence of God and the world as one, declaring them as unbelievers and harmful to the general society [27]. Influenced by this line of thought, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and Isma'il Shahid mobilized against elements of the Hindu and Sikh prevalent among Muslim Indians in the society. Later, Sayyid successfully established a social order in consonance with the accepted traditional belief system in some parts of the region [27]. In Africa, the movements of 'Uthman Dan Fodio (1754-1817) in northern Nigeria, Muhammad 'Ali al-Sanusi (1787-1859) in Algeria, Muhammad Ahmad (1844-1885) in Sudan and Sayyid Muhammad 'Abdallah Hasan (1864-1920) in Somalia, represent some of the major revivalist process undertaken during the period on the continent [27]. Dan Fodio's consciousness was basically informed by the drastic fall in the practice of Islam and rampant social injustice in the society [27] and not the urge to dominate and establish his hegemony in the

region as alleged in some quarters [29]. Members of his society had fallen to the extent of worshiping stones and trees and patronizing sorcerers despite being Muslims. In addition, there was proliferation of "Muslim" soothsayers who claim knowledge of the hidden and make sacrifices to the dead. Moral corruption was rife in most families as men married more than the stipulated four, while the most senior amongst the wives gained full control of others. And, commercial transactions totally contradicted the model established in the Prophetic order [27]. He therefore launched a revival movement against the social groups involved in these acts and successfully established a new social order in the Sokoto Caliphate in 1803 that exhibited a good model of the Madinan society.

In North Africa, besides al-Sanusi's revivalist thought which aimed at addressing religious zealotry and providing grounds for the protection of the societal core values, Algeria recorded several social movements aimed at upholding the Islamic belief, especially, against the backdrop of the invasion of the colonial powers. Notable amongst these are those led by Mustafa ibn 'Azzuz between 1844 and 1866 [30] and al-Murqani and Shaykh al-Haddad in 1871 [30]. In Sudan, it was a social conflict that surrounded the incorporation and infusion of local customs into Islamic practices and resistance to external influences and aggression from the Western colonial powers, threatening the survival of Islam in the society. Muhammad Ahmad's consciousness, although inclined toward Mahdism, was informed by noticeable tendencies of homosexualism, prostitution, smoking, extravagant wedding ceremonies and most especially, foreign practices introduced into the society from external influences. He therefore declared a movement in opposition to "these unfaithful people and to win the world for the purified Islamic community"[31]. Elsewhere in Africa, Hasan in Somalia mobilized Somali clans and nomads against foreign infidels and pagan innovations from local and internal forces [31].

Modern Revivalism: European colonialism, imperialism and capitalism and their accompanying anti-Islamic cultures had spread widely to the heart of the Muslim societies. It must be noted that the expansionism of the Europeans worked within the context of Marxist theoretical postulations. It was basically a product of struggle for economic expansion. The process of invasion of the Muslim territories gradually began in the aforementioned medieval epoch as shown in the previous section. Its intensity and successfulness was recorded during this era, occasioning wide disruptions in the

social composition of the Islamic societies. In the Arab world, Egypt had her first experience with colonialism in 1798 given the French invasion, which was exterminated by the Ottoman forces in 1801 and followed by the British invasion and rule between 1882 and 1952 [32]. The Arab East was fragmented and divided along British and French territories in the aftermath of the World War 1, occasioning the disintegration of the Muslim societies of Syria, Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and the Hijaz [24]. Algeria was conquered by the French in 1830 and ruled till 1962. The Mahdist reign was finally crushed after a series of intense struggles in 1899 by the British until 1956 when she gained her independence [33]. In West Africa, the expansive Sokoto Caliphate was expelled by the British in 1903 and subsequently disintegrated into several independent nation-states across Africa [33]. It also marked the period of the fall of the Ottoman Empire in 1922.

As a consequence of the above, social classes emerged in the Muslim societies owing to their integration into the world capitalist system. There emerged the class of landlords that acquired large portion of landed property and employed workers for agricultural purposes. In addition, there emerged the Westernized elite's social group who were highly obsessed with Western sciences and modernity given their exposure to Western education. Among this are personalities like Jamal al-Din Al-Afghani (1838-1897), Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-1898), Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), Rashid Rida (1869-1935), Muhammad Iqbal (1877-1938) and others. To them, there was need for the process of reforming Islam in line with the Western philosophy. The need to rethink the Islamic philosophical and traditional currents as it was considered the major cause of the supposed backwardness of the Muslim societies, ignoring the great havoc caused by the usurpers to the distinct configuration of these societies. They therefore advocated for some reforms, chiefly the introduction of rational interpretation of the Islamic holy books, rather than blind imitation of the traditional Islamic scholars [33]. In response to this development, Isma'il Raji al-Faruqi (1921-1986) opined that the philosophical underpinnings of the Western educational system and its concomitant contents and institutional framework in Muslim societies, are harmful to all aspects of the life of the Muslims and therefore represents the major factor for the *malaise of the Ummah* [34]. Furthermore, new political elites in the post-independent Muslim nation-states embarked on multi-dimensional levels of liberalization project geared toward a proper adoption of the Western

model of development to enhance their proper integration into the world capitalist system. In some others, socialist driven policies were embarked upon as an indication of their radical opposition to Western liberalism, especially in the period of the bifurcation of the international system along Western liberalism and Eastern socialist-communism.

The scenario painted above manifests the appalling socio-religious condition of the Muslim societies, captured as the *dangerous situation* by Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi. The response to the situation cut across all angles of the Muslim world, including Egypt, Pakistan, Algeria, Malaysia, Indonesia, Syria, Nigeria, Sudan, Senegal, Iran and others. There was almost a general consensus for the revival of the base of the society against the backdrop of the highlighted devastation of its traditional principles. In Egypt, originally considered a society with the tradition "of an abiding conformity to religious and political authority" of Islam [35], it was a consciousness firstly gained by Imam Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949) which resulted in the establishment of the social movement, *The Muslim Brotherhood*, in 1929. The Muslim Brotherhood's tentacles were transnational as Banna conceived the Ummah as one and the socio-religious condition affecting the belief system as general, occasioning its reverberation across the Muslim world. According to Dekmejian [35], the Muslim Brotherhood is characterized by structures that fulfill a quintessential social movement as a result of its possession of an activist ideology; organizational structure; charismatic leadership; mass following; and pragmatic orientation. Banna's social struggle was principally advanced against the political elite group at various times during colonial and post-colonial Egypt on the basis of Islam. His mission of reviving Islam and the strategy for its achievement can be captured in the following quotation in an address he delivered to a congregation of his social group:

…talismans, incantations, geomancy, gnosis, fortunetelling, arrogation of knowledge of the unseen and similar practices are all detested atrocities that must be fought, except what is mentioned in the Qur'an or transmitted to us as an authentic incantation of the Prophet (PBUH).

Brethren, you are not a benevolent organization, nor a political party, nor a local organization with strictly limited aims. Rather you are a new spirit making its

way into the heart of this nation and revivifying it through the Qur'an; a new light dawning and scattering the darkness of materialism through the knowledge of Allah: a resounding voice rising and echoing the message of the apostle (May Allah bless and save him!)….We are calling you to Islam, which was brought by Muhammad (May Allah bless and save him!); government is part of it, freedom is one of its religious duties. If someone should say to you: This is politics!, say: This is Islam and we do not recognize such divisions. If someone should say to you: You are agents of revolution!, say: We are agents of the truth and peace in which we believe and which we exalt. If you rise up against us and offer hindrance to our message, Allah has given us the permission to defend ourselves and you will be unjust rebels [35].

This backdrop explains his drive toward Islamic revival until the baton was passed onto Sayyid Qutb (1906-1966). Qutb radically charged up the struggle toward the revival of the Islamic belief system in the Egyptian society and elsewhere in the Muslim world. He consistently maintained that the imperialist war against Muslim countries was targeted at destroying Islam and its doctrines. As a result of the predominance of Western civilization in present times, the world, to him, is once again thrown into the phenomenon of wide ignorance, after the end of the golden Islamic era. He was thus extremely opposed to modern concepts and ideas originating from Western philosophy, primarily, democracy, nationalism, capitalism, socialism and communism. Given this, he was fiercely opposed to the socialist regime of Gamal 'Abd Nasser. He championed the cause of social justice and development as established in the Medinan society. Islam to him therefore, possesses the wherewithal to clear the mess caused by Western influences in the societies and usher in the desired era of justice, equality and development. In respect to this, he dissuaded the perceived and alleged primitiveness of Islam, as a thinking derived from a lack of knowledge and understanding of the historical formation of Islam and its practicability in contemporary era [36]. Despite a strong clampdown from the government against his social awareness and mobilization resulting to his arrest and execution, the vibration for the restoration of orthodox Islam was far-reaching across Egypt. Other radical movements emanated from the social groups

that share his consciousness, namely, the *Islamic Liberation Party*; *The Society of Muslims*; and the *Jihad Organization*. Subsequently, the regime of Anwar Sadat, despite its pursuit of a *De-Nasserization* policy which indicated a significant divergence from the socialist regime of his predecessor, the Islamic revival groups were opposed to him for his liberalization policy, alliance with America and subsequent rapprochement with Israel. This had a relationship with his assassination in October 6, 1981 [35].

Syria's case is a prototype of Egypt's, as the flag of Islamic revival was raised by *The Syrian Muslim Brotherhood*, strongly connected to the *Brotherhood* of the latter. Syria as an independent nation significantly shifted away from the base structure as a result of the liberalization and modernization policies pursued by her government. This occasioned a heated social conflict between the elite group and Islamic conscious ones in the society, which was fuelled by the later attempt to secularize the state through constitutional means. Besides, the government refused to give support to the Palestinian struggle, particularly, during the Maronite siege of Tal al-Za'tar, leading to the massacre of the Palestinians. Still dissatisfied and disenchanted with his public policies despite shifting a bit on some of his stance on secularism and subsequently identifying with Islam to assuage general discontents, the *Brotherhood* with the support of the 'Ulama declared series of collective action against his regime, notably, in 1976, 1979 and during its proscription in 1980. Immediately after the proscription, a new movement emerged onto the scene under the platform of the *Syrian Islamic Front*. The new movement has as its article of faith the restoration of Islam. As a consequence, they also engaged the political elite in an intense struggle from August 1981 to February 1982 [36].

Sayyid Abul A'la Mawdudi (1903-1979) represents another significant force of Islamic revivalism in this era. His consciousness was activated going by the socio-religious crisis he observed in his immediate society and beyond. To him, the crisis bedeviling the Ummah is multi-dimensional; it affects all matters of the life of Muslims. It is "intellectual, moral, technological, social, economic and political," and all of which boil down to the lost of the values of Islam. This, most especially is a function of materialist and godliness leadership the Muslim nations are unfortunately subjected to in present times. His concern about the Muslim society can be deciphered in one of his sayings, given thus:

Whenever corruption is let loose in the world, whatever injustice is done, whenever tyranny or oppression exists, whatever poison flows in the veins of human culture, economic life and politics, whatever misuse of resources and human knowledge for destruction instead of welfare and enlightenment there may be, the reason for bad leadership. There is no lack of good and high-minded people in society; the problem is that power is concentrated in the hands of people immersed in materialism and ungodliness [37].

Given the above, he therefore established a social movement that would facilitate the change of leadership and social change in the Muslim societies, especially in Pakistan, his immediate environment. The movement, named, *The Jama'at Islami*, came into existence in 1941, with the core objective of changing the leadership structure at all levels of life and the reorganization of human life in accordance with the Islamic belief system [37]. Albeit, his approach toward the actualization of a radical social change in the society was non-violent given his suggestion that "we should not overlook the basic law of nature that all stable and far-reaching changes in the collective life of people come about gradually" and "the more sudden a change, the more short-lived it generally turns to be", he still maintained the fact that *Jihad* (the social struggle) is a process that aims at bringing human life back to God [36].

Iran's case represents one of the most successful and radical transformation process experienced in modern times, not only in the Muslim world. Prior to the 1979 revolution, there was general disenchantment with Reza Shah's liberal regime as a result of its strong alliance with the West. The Shah's regime relegated to the background the traditional institution of the 'Ulama; he attempted a destruction of the spiritual practices of the people by banning the *rauzas* (recitations of elegiac verse commemorating the martyrdom of Imam Husayn at Karbala) throughout Iran; and introduction of several reform policies to liberalize the Iranian economic structure and society to give way to the penetration of West. Furthermore, his regime equated modernization with westernization, by outlawing the traditional Islamic code of dressing for women, besides, it was corrupt and promoted social injustice in the society. There was general uproar across the state which was echoed by an anonymous poet in the following poem:

O monarch! The affair of Islam and the Muslims is in disarray,

On a festive day when all should be singing joyously.

See on every side the heads bent down with grief;

Arise, then and grant thin aid to the People of Faith;

Especially this Ayat, who is the support of the Muslims,

So that thy rule may be established in this age,

For the sake of Muhammad's prophethood, '*Ali's vilayat*! [4].

Despite repeated calls for respect of the traditional Islamic institutions and reversion to it as the base of the society, Shah under the influence of America was adamant and impervious to the demands of the people. Series of protracted struggles followed afterwards between the regime and the general masses, including the local clerics of the society, which was significantly influenced by the radical thought of Ali Shari'ati against corrupt leadership and for the restoration of an authentic Islamic society based on equality, fairness and justice 38].. Afterwards, a successful revolution was staged in 1979 revolution causing the exile of Shah and the fall of his regime. Imam Sayyed Ayatollah Khomeini (1902-1989), assumed power and established a system of theocratic Islamic orientation. The regime is fashioned in the context of their interpretation of the traditional model of Islam. It encompasses all facets of human life and founded on the principles of social justice and equality in the society.

The rage and wave of Islamic revivalism also shifted to sub-Saharan Africa. In northern Nigeria that housed the headquarters of the old Sokoto Caliphate, calls for the re-Islamization of the traditional Islamic societies consistently heightened. Sheikh Abubakar Gumi (1924-1992) played major role in the struggle. His agenda was two-pronged; to cleanse the society of innovative practices fast overwhelming the society as in the case of the aforementioned revivalists in the early and medieval periods and a push for the implementation of the Sharia legal system in the Islamic states in northern Nigeria. According to him, "by far the greatest point of contention centers around the claim by Sufis to have a special place above other Muslims, as a result of their access to hidden

and extraordinary knowledge, gained through direct experience. They claim to be able to communicate with the Holy Prophet and receive special messages or prayers from him"[38]. As a result he was determined to establish the brand of Islam preached by the Prophet (SAW) by maintaining that "certainly, there is no Islam without what the Prophet preached during his life time"[38]. To actualize his ambition he facilitated the establishment of a social movement named *Jama'at Izalatil Bid'a wa Iqamatus Sunnah* (Movement Against Negative Innovations and for Orthodoxy) in February, 1978. It has as its major objective the promotion of the fundamental teachings of Islam as laid down in the Holy Qur'an and the Hadith of the Holy Prophet (SAW) [38]. On the revitalization of the Sharia legal system in the society, he maintained that the colonial powers in a bid to facilitate the process of domination of territories, firstly destroy the cultural practices of the people and the first target was always the judicial system of the colonized territories. This, to him explains the dislocation of the Islamic societies in present day Nigeria and therefore there was need for its re-establishment in the former colonial territories of present day Nigeria [38].

CONCLUSION

We have embarked on a historical journey of Islamic societies to examine the hypothesis of Marx and discovered that it lacks the wherewithal to explain these societies. The societies are products of the Islamic belief system and not materialism. Their base structure is not the economic system, but the belief system. The *super-structures* in Marx's words are not conditioned by the economic structure, but the belief system. Therefore, Islamic revivalism as a path characterized by social conflict in these societies is not driven by the economic interests of individuals but their common belief system. It is occasioned by social consciousness, which is not determined by the socio-economic conditions of the people, but the socio-religious conditions of the people. Islamic revivalism is a natural feature of Islamic societies, as for every decadence or degeneration in the society there is a corresponding move for the revival of the base structure. Given the fact that the belief system is all encompassing, any observable defection in any other features of the society including its politics, education, economy, judiciary, foreign relations, is a reflection of a deviation from the base structure. Therefore, one should be less surprised at the current wave of intense struggles at the international level; it symbolizes the dialectic process founded in the history of Islamic societies.

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