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REVISITING THE CONCEPT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAMIC RESURGENCE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD: WESTERN AND MUSLIM SCHOLARS PERSPECTIVES

Penilaian Semula Konsep dan Ciri-Ciri Kebangkitan Semula Islam di Dunia Islam: Perspektif Sarjana Islam dan Barat

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Abstract

In the 1970s, the world had witnessed the emergence of Islamic Resurgence with diverse theories and reasons for its revival. The resurgence of Islam is a manifestation of Muslims spiritual transformation of life, as well as one of the factors bringing about change. The term “Islamic Resurgence” has been critically discussed by Western and Muslim scholars after the initial shock of the Iranian revolution 1978-1979 which brought sudden realization of the on-going importance of religion in today’s concept of modernization and made a significant impact to the Muslim World and in the local context of Malaysia. Thus, this article aims to discuss Western and Muslim scholars critical discourse on the concept and characteristics of Islamic Resurgence which has occurred in the Muslim World. The findings reveal that many terminologies and expressions have been used to visualize the concept and characteristics of Islamic Resurgence in the Muslim World. Presently, the debates on Islamism and Islamic Resurgence in the context of the modern world have been discussed by scholars with different points of view. Islam has been described by negative aspects relating to elements of fanaticism, extremism and fundamentalism. From this critical appraisal, the following outcomes are anticipated. Results and discussions are further discussed.

Keywords: Islamic Resurgence, characteristics, scholars, Muslim, Western.

Abstrak

Pada tahun 1970-an, dunia menyaksikan kemunculan Kebangkitan Semula Islam dengan pelbagai teori dan faktor kebangkitannya. Kebangkitan semula elemen keagamaan seperti Islam adalah manifestasi transformasi spiritual umat Islam terhadap kehidupan, dan juga salah satu faktor yang membawa kepada perubahan tersebut. Istilah "Kebangkitan Semula Islam" telah dibahas secara kritis oleh para sarjana Barat dan Muslim setelah kejutan awal revolusi Iran 1978-1979 yang secara tiba-tiba menyedarkan umat Islam tentang pentingnya agama dalam konsep pemodenan hari ini dan memberikan kesan yang besar kepada dunia Islam dan dalam konteks tempatan di Malaysia. Oleh itu, artikel ini bertujuan untuk membincangkan wacana secara kritikal para sarjana Barat dan Muslim mengenai konsep dan ciri-ciri Kebangkitan Semula Islam yang berlaku di dunia Islam. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa banyak istilah digunakan untuk menggambarkan konsep dan ciri Kebangkitan Semula Islam dalam kalangan umat Islam. Kini, perbincangan mengenai Islamisme dan Kebangkitan Islam dalam konteks dunia moden telah dibincangkan oleh para sarjana dari pelbagai sudut pandangan yang berbeza. Islam telah dijelaskan dalam aspek negatif yang berkaitan dengan unsur fanatik, ekstremisme dan fundamentalisme. Dari penilaian kritikal ini, hasil berikut dapat dijangkakan. Hasil dan perbincangan dibincangkan lebih lanjut.

Kata kunci: Kebangkitan Semula Islam, ciri-ciri, sarjana, Islam, Barat.

INTRODUCTION

Islamic Resurgence in the recent decades has been debated as well as discussions on the contemporary image of Islam, has impacted the world community in different ways. This phenomenon has also created general non-Muslim and western attitudes and suspicions by negative responses labelling such Muslim groups as “fundamentalists” and this has permeated their mind set of Muslims everywhere as the whole. As a result, many terminologies have been used to reflect change and transformation of Muslim society either with negative or positive connotations or point of views. Some scholars used the term “Islamic Resurgence”, whereas the others used other terms like revival, reassertion and movements. These terminologies have their own justifications in line with the perception and thought of the scholars who characterised such terms. Thus, this article aims to critically analyse Western and Muslim scholars discourse on the concept of Islamic Resurgence in the Muslim world and it reviews its characteristics by analysing the tangible and intangible features that emerge in the context of Muslim society.

THE DISCOURSE ON THE CONCEPT OF ISLAMIC RESURGENCE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD BY MUSLIM AND WESTERN SCHOLARS

Many terminologies have been used to refer to many efforts of appealing to Muslims to their sacred religion, through the right teachings of Quran and the tradition of the prophet Muhammad. On-going debates have continued to discuss the right terminology which reflects the phenomenon. Some scholars chose resurgence, some chose revival while others used fundamentalist, Islamism, activism, revivalism, and movements.¹

Youssef M. Choueiri (1997), for example, treats revivalism, reformism, and radicalism differently in terms of historical context, socioeconomic environment, and conceptual frame of reference, but regards them as fundamentalism, which means an ideology for a return to the supposed classical form of Islam, to the golden age of Islam, to the past, and to the text.²

Hegland on the other hand, disagreed with the approach to use the term of “Islamic Resurgence” because it implies regression in religious movement. From her point of view, resurgence is a response to dislocation, social instability or “anomie”, confusion which is set off in turn by major changes such as the shock of western contact for traditional people, distress of defeat by Western economic, political, military and cultural forces, which seems as defensive and non-constructive reaction to drastic change. Thus, Hegland suggested using the term “movement” as a replacement which reflects as creative, innovative and active responses to change and to the perceived needs of society, group and individuals. Hegland used the term Islamic movement despite of the others for the reason that this term might offer both “cause and effect of change” and is regarded as adaptive mechanisms through which change is shaped and directed.³

Hegland also added that by using this term, this would eliminate a negative picture towards movement leaders and participants. They are seen, not as immigrants receding from scary of new changes, but as motivated, confident and abled people who actively seek to influence their lives and social environment according to their principles and objectives, their character are motivated by hope, positive thinking and determination rather than defeat and destruction.⁴

¹ Hussin Mutalib. (1996). Islam Resurgence in the Twenty-First Century: Redefining Old Agendas in a New Age. *The American Journal of Islamic Social Science*, 13, p. 86.

² Youssef M. Choueiri. (1997). *Islamic Fundamentalism*. London: Continuum.

³ Gerlach, Luther P., and Virginia H. Hine. (1970). *People, Power, Change: Movements of Social Transformation*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, p. xiv; Gerlach, Luther P., and Virginia H. Hine. (1973). *Lifeway Leap: The Dynamics of Change in America*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Frédéric, Robert. (2004). The Rhetoric of Social Movements: Differential Images of the Recruitment in Students for a Democratic Society (SDS), 1960-1965, *Revue française d'études américaines*, 1(99), pp. 85-102.

⁴ Antoun, Richard T., Hegland, Mary Elaine., (1987). *Religious Resurgence: Contemporary Cases in Islam, Christianity, and Judaism*. New York: Syracuse University Press, pp. 1-2.

In contrast with Hegland's term, Chandra (1987), pointed to the term resurgence to reveal the accurate description of the phenomenon, rather than using other words like "reassertion" or "revivalism" for three reasons. This claim is basically referred to the definition provided by academic dictionary. Resurgence is defined as 'the act of rising again' gives a few important points. First, it expresses the belief that Islam is becoming significant again, that it is redeeming its self-honour. Second, 'rising again' proposes a phenomenon which has occurred before and there are rudiments or factors in the current development of Islam which are connected to the previous history of Islam. In other words, the past magnificence of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions' life affects the thoughts of those who believe in the "Islamic way of life" today. Third, resurgence reflects the reality of notions on two groups of people: first, many Muslims consider the Islamic option or alternative as a challenge to the Western dominant culture and systems, while the second group believes that the emergence of Islam as a portent to their modern life.⁵ Norshahril Saat (2019), analysed Chandra's synthesis on the Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia based on multi-fold causes: the internal and external factors. Malaysia was undergoing rapid urbanization and industrialization due to political and economic changes, and those from the working class sought to strengthen their religious values which lead to revitalize spirituality in social life. Second, international events that seemingly oppressed the Islamic world.⁶

The above explanation conveys the dynamics of Islamic Resurgence that always rises and emerges in Muslims society to ensure that Islam remains vital in Muslims lives everywhere, in all places and times. In his description of the term, Chandra (1987) defined the meaning of Islamic Resurgence as

"a description of the endeavour to re-establish Islamic value, Islamic practices, Islamic institutions, Islamic laws indeed Islam in its entirety, in the lives of Muslims everywhere. It is an attempt to re-create an Islamic ethos, an Islamic social order, at the vortex of which is the Islamic human being, guided by the Quran and the Sunnah".⁷

According to Khurshid Ahmad (1983), contemporary Islamic Resurgence should be seen as a positive reaction of the Islamic *Ummah* to recover its position after losing it due to Western domination. For him, the rise of Islamic awakening is a creative and positive response to the challenge of modernity where people find their identification with Islam as a source of personal ethics and dominant inspiration for socio-economic order. As a socio-political movement, the resurgence sought for returning to the

⁵ Chandra Muzaffar. (1987). *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia*. Petaling Jaya: Fajar Bakti, pp. 2-3.

⁶ Norshahril Saat. (2019). The Politics of Islamic Discourse in Malaysia. Alternative Voices in Muslim Southeast Asia. In Norshahril Saat and Azhar Ibrahim (ed.). *Alternative Voices in Muslim Southeast Asia Discourses and Struggles*. ISEAS Publishing.

⁷ Chandra Muzaffar. Opcit., pp. 2-3.

original message of Islam, to establish its relevance for all times and to struggle to replace the present situation or the status quo; to reconstruct the society and its institutions in the light of the Islamic principles and society; and to stimulate the individual with a new fortune and vision. Thus, it is not a new phenomenon in Islamic history because it has been described as *tajdid* or renewal which manifested as a response of the Muslims to the new challenges.⁸

The above definition by Khurshid draws a clear description on the nature of the Islamic Resurgence and it should be understood as a continued response of the Muslims to seek its relevance in space and time guided by the original source of Islam. So, Islamic Resurgence is not merely a product of certain specific contemporary challenges, but it must be viewed in the context of historical continuity as Khurshid (1994) stated, that the Islamic Resurgence is “a built-in mechanism for change, innovation and meeting the exigencies of time”.⁹

The wider picture of Islamic Resurgence described by Khurshid was also agreed by Huntington. In his work, “*the Clash of Civilization Remaking of World Order*”, Huntington (1996) sketched this resurgence as massive numbers of Muslims turn towards Islam “as a source of identity, meaning, stability, legitimacy, development, power and hope, hope epitomized in the slogan “Islam is the solution”.¹⁰ This definition does not posit the West as a source of solution, but it would accommodate Islamic civilization and the West in finding solutions to most of the problems in Muslim society. It accepts a concept of modernity but not in western culture, instead, by returning to Islam as the guidance to modern life. Islamic Resurgence is the Muslims effort to integrate the whole intellectual, social, cultural and political movement throughout the Muslim world. Although most scholars considered Islamic “fundamentalism” as political Islam, Huntington (1996) differed that it is only a part of more extensive revival of Islamic ideas and practices. The resurgence from his point of view is globally “mainstream” not extremist and is widespread or a universal movement in its nature.

In its political context, Huntington (1996) correlated Islamic Resurgence with Marxism because both have a vision to construct a perfect society, committed to basic important changes, rejection of the powers of the nation state and consist of diverse doctrines coming from moderate, reformist and radical revolutionary.¹¹ Therefore,

⁸ Khurshid Ahmad. (1983). ‘The Nature of the Islamic Resurgence’, in Esposito, John L., *Voices of Resurgent Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 220-221.

⁹ Khurshid Ahmad. (1994). ‘Islamic Resurgence: Challenges, Directions and Future Perspectives,’ In Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi’ (editor), *Islamic Resurgence: Challenges, Directions & Future Perspectives*. Florida: World and Islam Studies Enterprise, pp. 49-51.

¹⁰ Huntington, Samuel P. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster, p. 109.

¹¹ See, Huntington statements and descriptions of the Global Politics of Civilizations’ Emerging Alignments in his book, *The Clash of Civilizations*, p. 245.

based on this similarity, Huntington hypothesized Islamic Resurgence as a new threat and a warning to the West, and he predicted conflicts to occur between civilizations, particularly between Islam and the others.

But in its religious manifestations, Islamic Resurgence bears more resemblance to reformation as it was constructed in Protestant Christianity. Both are reactions to the lack of progress and dishonesty (corruption) in the existing institutions, supporting a return to a pure religion and a demand for religion, to preach the religion, and to follow its rule and principles and to quest for the emergence of dynamic middle-class people. Otherwise, in the consequential aspect of the community, the Protestant Reformation largely impacted a limited part of northern Europe, while Resurgence has covered the global realm of Muslim society.

There were many views coming from the West, responding to the emergence of Islamic Resurgence by what is commonly known and referred to the rise of political Islam. Some scholars have come to use different labels to describe this phenomenon of greater visibility and political Islam as Islamic fundamentalism, militant Islam and showing their responses to it have been characterized by confusion, by a lack of careful investigation, hence by overreaction and fear.¹² The rise of political Islam was seen as incompatible to modern life as well as democracy. Participation of Islamic political activists and figures are continuously viewed as a threat to national stability and democracy since values of democracy are believed to be solely suited for western culture with a few similarities to other cultures.¹³ These views can be seen through the works of many writers, such as Colin Rubenstein, Ernest Gellner, Alan R. Taylor and others.

In contrast to Huntington, Colin Rubenstein (2002) compared the term 'Islamism' and 'fundamentalism' to refer to radical definition of Islam more as political ideology than a religion. Rubenstein defined fundamentalism as the desire to have only the *Shariah* as the law. The fundamentalist postulates a single sacred text or a set of text in hierarchical relation with each other and authority within religion for the state to enforce religious identity. While Islamism addresses in its holistic aspects of life, in economics, culture, law and politics. For this group, the *Shariah* is just a part of the agenda, and they ask for restructuring Muslim society along with the original Islamic lines, returning to an idealized "golden age" society in line with divine intention.¹⁴

¹² Stowasser, Barbara Freyer. (editor), *The Islamic Impulse*. London: Croom Helm; in association with Washington, D.C.: Center for Arabic Studies, 1987, p. 1.

¹³ See, Nagata, Judith. (2001). Beyond Theology: Toward an Anthropology of "Fundamentalism". *American Anthropologist*, 103(2), June 2001, pp. 481-498.

¹⁴ Rubenstein, Colin. (2002). 'Political Islam in Southeast Asia,' In Isaacson, Jason F. and Rubenstein, Colin. (editor), *Islam in Asia: Changing Political Realities*. New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, pp. ii-iii.

Rubenstein's definition of Islamism and fundamentalism draws a negative side of radical Islamic Resurgence that is far from a just and accurate judgment of the Islamic consciousness phenomenon. The central argument is emphasized on the word *jihad* (literally meaning "striving in the path of God") that Rubenstein (2002) claimed as associated to tendency for violence and holy war which is used by all that he called "*Islamic fundamentalists*". In this case, Rubenstein (2002) merely views Islam as a threat to modern life and puts it in negative perspective. He fails to understand the real factors and nature of Islamic Resurgence as a dynamic force to Muslim's social and political phenomenon.

In response to Islamic Resurgence, Gellner (1981) mentioned that Islam is the most energetically fundamentalist, because of it being a remarkably anti-secular religion. Gellner (1981) in his book "*Muslim society*" noted that Islam, as a religion, shows some historical elements favourable towards fundamentalism based on four reasons. First, Islam claims to be the perfect and final revelation and it is a textual divine book. Second, Muhammad is considered by Muslims as the final messenger. So, there is no room for new prophets. Third, Islam has no clergy who lead religious services. Therefore, there is no difference between people in religious matter. Finally, there is no dichotomy between state and religion in Islam because of its holistic way of life.¹⁵ Then Gellner (1981) analysed his view on the practicality of democracy in the Muslims world stating that Muslims 'could have democracy, or secularism, but not both'. This means that if Muslims adopted democracy, they would ensure that secularism will be gradually worn away, being conducive towards development of *Shariah* religious based society.

Otherwise, as reviewed by Marranci (2011) on Gellner's analysis, the secular model of society can only be enforced by a dictatorship, away from Islamic influence because it can control and manipulate power in the society. Thus, Gellner considered Islam in both positive and negative viewpoints. Positively, Islam as a complete way of life which covers all aspects of human beings and there are efforts to restore its political dimension through modern democracy rooted by Islamic *Shariah*. He pointed out his erroneous knowledge about Islam on its administrative and leadership features. Even though, Islam does not discriminate people in religious matters; but it does not mean that Islam has no structure in conducting religious services.¹⁶

As opposite to the previous views, Alan R. Taylor (1988) described the rise of Islamic Resurgence as a comprehensive re-Islamization of the area by the neo-fundamentalist movements. It is an effort to reinstate all the traditional legal, social

¹⁵ Gellner, Ernest. (1981). *Muslim Society*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p. 100. See also, Marranci, Gabriele. (2011). 'From Anthropology to Politics: The Myth of the Fundamentalist Arab Muslim Mind' in *Islam, Muslims, and an Anthropologist*, 2011.

¹⁶ Marranci, Gabriele. (2011). 'From Anthropology to Politics: The Myth of the Fundamentalist Arab Muslim Mind' in *Islam, Muslims, and an Anthropologist*. Retrieved on 28 February 2011, http://marranci.wordpress.com/2011/02/28/from_anthropology_to_politics/.

and political institutions as originally established and all signs and traces of Western culture must be removed. In order to accomplish this goal, resurgence organizations must repoliticize Islam and announce the jihad as a primary mission giving rise to a new Islamic populism renewal. Then, Taylor (1988) visualized Islamic Resurgence as the militant form of neo-fundamentalism which is characterized in three forms.¹⁷

First, the movement is often too simplistic when dealing with reality and having a black and white narrow-minded view of present circumstances. For example, western culture was simply rejected by the movement as the product of the modernization process even though it has penetrated Muslim society and is very hard to be removed. Second, resurgence ideology holds a one dimensional of understanding Islam. By repoliticizing Islam and launching jihad, the militants have emphasized the doctrine of socio-political order. In addition, most of them are blind to the real history of Islam and have limited understanding of the concept of reality developed by the great scholars of early Islamic civilization. Third, although the concept of “the end justifies the means” was discarded by this group in the early formation of launching the call to Islam, but it was used and abused when the group held legitimate power. Taylor puts forward his incorrect perception on Islam which is accused of seemingly seen to struggle against tyranny, but in fact, once in power it formed an authoritarian type of rule and it was also involved in the infringements of human rights.¹⁸

Unlike Rubenstein, Gellner and Alan Taylor, M. A. Muqtedar Khan (2001) discussed the political philosophy of contemporary Islam resurgence and did explore the arguments developed under three categories or central dimensions namely, critical, reconstitutive, and programmatic. He also makes a distinction between first-generation and second-generation Islamists and illustrates the evolution of the Islamist discourse from critical to programmatic.¹⁹

Although some scholars see Islamic Resurgence as a warning of a clash of civilizations²⁰ and a threat to modern society, but the other western scholars such as, John L. Esposito (1998) optimises with a pragmatic accommodation of Islamic polity as is in the recent progress of Muslim development in some Islamic countries.²¹ He observed that the involvement of Islamists in a modern political mainstream had shaped flowering patterns of democracy and in some cases it was harmonized in

¹⁷ Taylor, Alan R. (1988). *The Islamic Questions in the Middle East Politics*. London: Westview Press, pp. 11-13.

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 11-13.

¹⁹ M. A. Muqtedar Khan. (2001). ‘The Political Philosophy of Islam Resurgence,’ *Cultural Dynamics*, 13(2), July 2001, pp. 211-229.

²⁰ See for example, Samuel Huntington argument on his thesis of the clash among civilizations. Huntington, Samuel P., (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. New York: Simon & Schuster.

²¹ See Esposito’s writings in, Esposito, John L. (1998). *Islam and Politics*. New York: Syracuse University Press.

parallel with Islamic principles. Esposito explained that in recent years, moderate and militant Muslims hold the secularist position, while accommodationists believe that traditional concepts can develop Islamically acceptable of popular support, participation and democratization. For example, state domination and Islamist counter violence in Algeria are different with policies of co-option, inclusion or control in Malaysia, Turkey, Pakistan and Jordan, where non-violent Islamists participation has taken place in the electoral democratic process.²² This view is supported by Binder (1988) who observes a liberal interpretation of Islam and hope for the success of Islamic politics in facing the challenges of western democracy in Muslim society.²³ These opinions suggest that there are attempts to collaborate, cooperate, or co-opt those who adhere to Islamic politic of an Islamic population explosion which presents a demographic threat to national security and world peace.

The tendency to relate Islamic Resurgence from political perspectives led some thinkers to draw the nature of resurgence as the endeavour of restoring Islamic legal system or law by the government and opposition groups. As mentioned by Ali E. Hilal Dessouki (1982) in his definition of Islamic Resurgence, it refers to:²⁴

“An increasing political activism in the name of Islam by governments and opposition groups alike. It designates a politicized, activist form of Islam and the growing use in Islamic symbolism and legitimation at the level of political action”.

While observing Islamic political activism trends in the contemporary Muslim worlds, Ali Hillal (1982: 10-13) described its manifestations which indicated the increasing call of Islamic Resurgence in one or more of five areas. First, he described the resurgence as a call to restore the Islamic law and continue by it instead of the Western-imported legal systems. Second, there is a transformation in the language of politics and the increasing use of religious symbolism and Islamic legitimation. Third, there is the alternative to religious symbols and the increasing practise in personal religious orientations. Progressively, many young men grow their beards in traditional Islamic manner, meanwhile the number of educated young women covering up in a way unknown for decades; with their veil and dressing by covering the whole body. Fourth, there is the rise of socio-political opposition groups in the name of Islam.

²² Esposito, John L. (2000). ‘Political Islam and the West,’ *JFQ Forum*, Spring 2000, p. 53. See also, Esposito, John L. and Voll, John O. (1996). *Islam and Democracy*, New York: Oxford University Press; Voll, John O. and Esposito, John L. (1994). ‘Islam’s Democratic Essence,’ *Middle East Quarterly*, 1(3), September 1994, pp. 3–11.

²³ See Binder, Leonard. (1988). *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

²⁴ Ali E. Hillal Dessouki. (1982). *Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World*. New York: Praeger Publishers, p. 4.

Fifth, the establishment of several Islamic organizations encouraging political and economic relations between Islamic states which emphasizes on Islamic solidarity.²⁵

Furthermore, Ali Hillal (1982) exhibited the diversity of contemporary Islamic Resurgence, not as a monolithic phenomenon. He classified resurgence into three types: (a) the regimes with the superior outstanding Islamic identity, (b) the governments that use Islam as a pathetic excuse to rationalize and legalize their policies, and (c) the Islamic protest groups which support Islam as an alternative. Therefore, in a certain situation, Islam plays an important role either to maintain the present situation in the Muslim countries or the status quo of the elite group, or it acts as an agent of social change.²⁶

The similar view is also shared by Daniel Pipes (1982), who explained Islamic resurgence as an emergence in Islamic activism which “always involves working for the goals of the *Shariah*, the sacred law of Islam”. Based on that belief, every Muslim has to follow the rules and regulations of the *Shariah* every minute, as a daily routine, in exact detail based on Quranic commandments and other sources of Islam. Of course, the state has a major role in implementing *Shariah* goals. The failure in implementing the *Shariah* may lead to the uprising of social movements which seek to restore this goal by either changing the way the state governs or the rulers be thrown out of office.²⁷ Thus, Islamic Resurgence in this perspective is viewed through the prism of Islamic politics as a demand to uphold Islamic law and its position in acceptable political process or democracy.

Youssef M. Choueiri (1997) treats revivalism, reformism, and radicalism differently in terms of historical context, socioeconomic environment, and conceptual frame of reference, but regards them as fundamentalism, which means an ideology for a return to the supposed classical form of Islam, to the golden age of Islam, to the past, and to the text.²⁸

The above descriptions of Islamic Resurgence by many scholars and writers generally draw Islamic Resurgence in the political context rather than the holistic view. Therefore, scholars' views on Islamic Resurgence can be divided into two groups. First, those who are confident with the future prospect of Islamic Resurgence, whereby part of these efforts was launched through politics to revitalize the role and function of Islam in strengthening Muslim society. This religious social reform is regarded by this group as the natural process happening in the Muslim society in all spaces and times. The second group consists of those who see Islamic Resurgence with suspicion and fear. Islamic Resurgence is believed to be a threat to modernization, to the future progress of human life, and to social as well as political

²⁵ Ibid., pp. 10-13.

²⁶ Ibid., pp. 10-13.

²⁷ Pipes, Daniel., (1982). ‘Oil Wealth and Islamic Resurgence,’ in Ali E. Hillal Dessouki, *Islamic Resurgence in the Arab World*. New York: Praeger Publishers, pp. 35-37.

²⁸ See Choueiri, Youssef M., (1997). *Islamic Fundamentalism*, rev. ed. London and Washington: Pinter.

stability from national and global perspectives. This view is tremendously accepted and becomes the dominant acceptance in determining current global politics.

To conclude, Islamic Resurgence can be defined as a description of efforts and attempts to regenerate Islamic way of life guided by the Divine source of the Quran and Sunnah through creating the awareness of Islam practices, Islamic values, and Islamic social order in the everyday lives of a Muslim. As an effort towards the establishment of an Islamic society, this religious movement tries to re-establish Islamic laws, Islamic institutions and included Islam in social, economic and political entities as a reflection of its complete system of life (*Nizam al-Hayah*). It is the endeavour to revitalize the truth and pure teachings of Islam that was delivered by the Prophet Muhammad P.B.U.H and to remind Muslims to perform their obligations to serve God and govern Earth as His vicegerent.

After reviewing the concept of Islamic Resurgence, one might want to know about the common features of Islamic Resurgence. The next paragraph discusses its characteristics as mentioned by various scholars.

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF ISLAMIC RESURGENCE

Most scholars who studied contemporary Islamic Resurgence classified a variety of forms of the resurgence rooted on the basis of its origin and nature. Youssef M. Choueiri (1997) identified his theoretical assumptions of various revivalist groups based on the following common characteristics:²⁹ First, Islamic Resurgence is an effort of the return to original Islam as a religion of oneness of God (*tawhid*). This belief directed to the guidance on purifying Islam of uncivilized practices and the growth of foreign culture. Second, the encouragement of independent reasoning in matters of legal judgments (*ijtihad*), coupled with an abhorrence of ignorant imitation (*taqlid*). Third, the essential migration to or from (*hijrah*) the territories dominated by nonbelievers, polytheists and heathens. The practice of migration is a part of *jihad*, whereby open war is declared against the enemies of Islam. Fourth, members of the resurgence have the enthusiastic belief in one single leader as the embodiment of the renewer.³⁰

These four characteristics of Islamic Resurgence by Youssef reflect only a part of the resurgence with an effort to return to the ideal of Islamic faith. Even though the concept of *hijrah* is regarded as a part of *jihad*, but it does not just constitute the *jihad* which is only acknowledged against the enemies of Islam. *Jihad* can be described as a struggle towards the ideals of Islam in its holistic structure of life in social matters, politics, and economics and seeking knowledge. The fourth characteristic can be applied to all Islamic movements, as the resurgence in Islamic countries is motivated by their own internal and external factors.

²⁹ Youssef M. Choueiri. (1997). *Islamic Fundamentalism*. London: Continuum, p. 11.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 11.

John L. Esposito (1991) views on the features of Islamic Resurgence could be considered to reflect the current trends of Islamic Resurgence in the Islamic world in particular, Malaysia. In his book *“the Straight Path”*, he recognized the ideological framework of Islamic Resurgence throughout the world which are concluded in six features of the beliefs.³¹ First, Islam is a comprehensive and total way of life. Religion is connected to law, politics and society. Second, the failure of Muslim societies is due to their departure from the straight path of Islam and their following of a Western secular path, with its secular, materialistic ideologies and values. Third, the renewal of society requires a return to Islam, an Islamic religio-political and social reformation or revolution that draws its inspiration from the Quran and from the first great Islamic movement led by the prophet Muhammad.

Islamic Resurgence is also characterized by the notion to restore God’s rule and inaugurate a true Islamic social order, Western-inspired civil codes must be replaced by Islamic law, which is the only acceptable blueprint for Muslim society. Fifth, although the Westernization of society is condemned, modernization as such is not. Science and technology are accepted, but they are to be subordinated to Islamic belief and values in order to guard against the Westernization and secularization of Muslim society. Finally, the process of Islamization, or more accurately, re-Islamization, requires organizations or associations of dedicated and trained Muslims, who by their example and activities call on others to be more observant and who are willing to struggle (jihad) against corruption and social justice.

John L. Esposito’s (1995) observation on the impact of Islamic Resurgence in most aspects of society in the Muslim countries has identified manifestations of an Islamic awakening in Muslim personal life:³²

... *“increased attention to religious observances (mosque attendance, prayer, fasting) proliferation of religious programming and publications, more emphasis on Islamic dress and values, the revitalization of Sufism (mysticism). This broader-based renewal has also accompanied by Islam’s reassertion in public life: an increase in Islamically oriented governments, organizations laws, banks, social welfare services and educational institutions. Both governments and opposition movements have turned to Islam to enhance their authority and muster popular support”*.

Esposito’s views on the features of Islamic Resurgence and his observations on the manifestations of an Islamic awakening in Muslim personal life are used to guide this study in developing the concept of Islamic Resurgence and its relation to the Malay Muslim religiosity in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur.

³¹ Esposito, John L. (1991). *The Straight Path*. New York: Oxford University Press, p. 163.

³² Esposito, John L. (1995). *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality*, 2nd ed., New York: Oxford University Press, p. 10.

In addition to Esposito's views, Huntington's analysis of the global Islamic Resurgence can be viewed in the four main features. First, the Islamic Resurgence is the effort by Muslims to return towards Islam as a source of life, meaning, identity, development, stability, legitimacy and power. Islamic Resurgence is a product of and an effort to grasp with modernization and as the alternative to the Western system as expressed by the slogans "Islam is the solution". Second, it combined and united Islamic groups, *ulama* or Islamic scholars, religious, social and educational associations, political organizations, urban middle-class people: merchants, traders, small business proprietors, bazaaris; oppositions and governments in one banner and objective, namely, to establish Islamic 'civil society' and Islamic legitimacy.³³

Third, social and cultural manifestations of the resurgence have been more pervasive than political manifestations, even though political Islam is one of the most important development in Muslim society. Islamic beliefs, practices, symbols, institutions, organizations and policies gained increasing support and commitment throughout the Muslim world. Moreover, from Huntington's observations, most of Islamists movements' participants were modern-oriented, younger, overpoweringly in their twenties and thirties. Eighty per cent were university students or graduates. Over half came from the intellectually most demanding fields of science and technologies. Over seventy per cent were from the lower middle class, and were the first generation in their family to get higher education. Their childhood was spent in small towns or rural areas and then became residents of large cities. On the other hand, rural elites, peasants and the elderly do not give much support to the movements.³⁴

Reviewing the dynamics of Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia, Mashitah (2016), highlighted the role of the Malay middle class in proactively responding to the state's Islamisation programmes and their active role to inculcate Islamic values and to establish various Islamic institutions which expand the strength of Islamic Resurgence in the country.³⁵ The government internal policy and support towards Islamisation in the early 1980s managed to upsurge the role and function of Islam in the public spheres. These initiatives by the ruling party and the government besides criticism from the opposition camp must be appreciated as it opened the door of many opportunities and attempts to strengthen Muslims and the Malay identity as well as through the development process based on Islamic principles and guidelines. The state's sincerity in the development of Islam in Malaysia is not arguable because as a

³³ Huntington, Samuel P. (1996). *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, pp. 109-116.

³⁴ Ibid., pp. 109-116.

³⁵ Chandra in his book said that "In 1982, the Islamic tone of the Government has become more pronounced. Essentially a response to the ever expanding strength of Islamic Resurgence within the Malay middle class, the programme seeks to inculcate Islamic values in Muslims and to establish various Islamic institutions." See, Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia*, p. 6.

result of the state's political will, Islam has emerged as a progressive religion in the country.³⁶

Mashitah (2018), then characterized the dynamics of Islam in Malaysia, in particular the urban states of Selangor and Kuala Lumpur which continue to be a strong element to determine the Malay Muslim identity which until now relied upon eight key features. First, the stream of consciousness to return to Islam involves three middle class educated backgrounds; the social sciences, the western science-technology and the Islamic studies upbringing. Second, the struggle in revitalizing Islam in the society covers various aspects of Muslims' life. This is in line with the holistic nature of Islam which comprises of the religious practices and blended with the world view of Islam in social, educational, economic and political aspects.

Third, there is a strong momentum and pressure addressed by the early *dakwah* activists directly and indirectly towards the state authority to change the structural mind of the Malays about the role of religion; as it is not just for ritual purposes which concentrates on prayer, fasting, marriage and official ceremonies, but, Islam is described as a comprehensive system of life. This system of life regulates all human activities which emphasize physical and spiritual qualities. The awareness of the true teachings of Islam as the comprehensive way of life has nurtured the Muslims' tendency to create a practical Islamic life at the epitome. This awareness encourages the emergence of Muslim attire or clothing (*busana*), Islamic halal foods, Islamic village, Islamic schools, Islamic health care and centers, and the Islamic banking and *takaful*, and various Islamic institutions which tag the "Islamic" title.³⁷

Fourth, since four decades after 1970s, Islamic Resurgence involves not only the student societies, but also participation of youth organisations, Non-Governmental Organisations (Non-Government Organisation - NGOs), political parties,³⁸ traditional *dakwah* movements of Al-Arqam and Tabligh and the Muslim middle class community. Fifth, there are increasing efforts to create an 'Islamic' community wide ambience which has been stimulating public interests extensively in the subject of Islam and the keenness to study to experience that unique concept of life under the Islamic worldview. Such physical attitudes can be seen in mosque and prayer room (*surau*) attendances, the organising of Islamic and spiritual programmes by local communities and authorities, NGOs and corporate agencies, in printed and electronic mass media. All of the above were led by a movement of Muslims who also contribute to the massive revival of religious awareness which fueled a more progressive Islam in Malaysia.

³⁶ Mashitah Sulaiman. (2016). *Islamic Resurgence and Religiosity Among The Malay Middle And Low Income Classes In Selangor and Kuala Lumpur, 1977-2014*. PhD Thesis. Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur.

³⁷ Siddiq Fadzil. (2012). *Islam dan Melayu: Martabat Umat dan Daulat Rakyat*, Kajang: Akademi Kajian Ketamadunan, Kolej Dar al-Hikmah, p. 120.

³⁸ Such as PAS and UMNO as the ruling party.

Sixth, there is a dynamic role between the government and the opposition Islamic political party; between Malay political Islam and Islamic NGOs; as well as government political will and the emergence of moderate Muslim intellectuals. These proactive pattern of responses by the Islamic-based organisations help to improve and enrich the function of Islam in its comprehensive form at the national and international level. Seventh, the role of printed, electronic and virtual channels of mass media and communications accelerating the spread of Islam, but also not least in its impact on positive and negative outcomes to the Malays. Eighth, the content and the coverage of Islamic discussions currently is all-encompassing, which extends from the question of personal obligation (*fardhu 'ain*) to the communal obligation (*fardhu kifayah*),³⁹ which covers all aspects of life.⁴⁰

Mashitah and Mohd Nazir (2018) summarized the structural tendency for the Islamisation process in Malaysia after 1970s, in general with Selangor and Kuala Lumpur in particular, had been designed in a systematic framework and process: as it was a bottom-up approach at the beginning of the Islamic Resurgence era (1970s - 1981), turned to a top-down approach in the expansion period of Islamisation (1982-1998), directed to an integrated approach in the progressive period of the Islamic Resurgence (1998 – 2003) and transformed to a dynamic approach in the pragmatic period of the Islamic Resurgence (2004 - the present).⁴¹ Such findings are also aligned with Bob Olivier's (2020) descriptions of how Malaysia has changed in the subsequent years. The key to the change is the increasing introduction of Islamic laws and regulations regarding what Muslims in Malaysia can and cannot do. He described how this process of regulation has been largely taken over by the religious authorities within the civil service, who have so much power that the politicians are reluctant to interfere.⁴² Significantly, the government has demonstrated its commitment to enforcing these regulations, which the author illustrates with a number of examples. He then explained how these actions are changing society, with manifestations including an increasing separation of the ethnic groups, creeping "Arabisation", and great pressure within the Malay community to conform to what are now considered

³⁹ *Fardhu 'ain* is the act that is required by Allah SWT from each and every morally responsible person, while *fardhu kifayah* is the act that Allah SWT requires from the collectively of those morally responsible, not from each of individuals. If someone able through himself and his property to perform the *fardhu kifayah* act which are obliged to Muslims, all Muslims are cleared of the sins, if neglected all the guilty of serious sins.

⁴⁰ This includes Islamic transaction or *Muamalat*, jurisprudence, laws, economics, social, education and ethics and any issues that are related to the state and politics.

⁴¹ Mashitah Sulaiman, Mohd Nazir Ahmad. (2018). The Dynamic of Islamic Resurgence In Malaysia. In Mohd Roslan Mohd Nor, Khader Ahmad, Mohd Yakub @ Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff. *Penyelidikan Serantau Islam dan Alam Melayu: Pemikiran, Falsafah, Dakwah dan Kebudayaan*. Kuala Lumpur: Akademi Pengajian Islam, Universiti Malaya. pp. 321-334.

⁴² Olivier B. (2020). Manifestations of Islamisation. In Olivier B. *Islamic Revivalism and Politics in Malaysia. Critical Studies of the Asia-Pacific*. Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan.

Islamic norms. The resurgence also has been contributed to the development of Islamic schools of thought among the elderly and youth emerging in new social movements, such as ABIM, JIM, Jamaat Tabligh, Darul Arqam and political parties in Malaysia.⁴³

The diverse forms and patterns within the Islamic movements led to either a positive or a negative impact of resurgence on overall Muslim societies.⁴⁴ These features of religious consciousness convey the impact of Islamic Resurgence activities and efforts in developing Islamic consciousness in Muslims community and these help to develop, measure religiosity and correlate it with the rise of Islamic Resurgence in the Muslim World.

CONCLUSION

Islamic Resurgence is a socio-religious phenomenon evolving mainly as a reaction to the current situation in the Muslim world. Islamic Resurgence is not only a modern phenomenon, the product to a large extent, but also of modern conditions which ironically enable it to use Islamic symbols to face new situations. Since the emergence of the contemporary wave of global Islamic Resurgence which traced its root to the 1970s, there are many terminologies describing the historical phenomenon of Islamic Resurgence, by Western thinkers and Islamic scholars. Some scholars hold sceptical views that Islamic resurgence is for an Islamic cause, but the others gave moderate analytical assumptions.

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⁴³ Ibrahim Majdi Mohamad Kamil, Mariam Binti Abdul Majid. (2017). Analisis Kritikal Perkembangan Intelektual Muslim di Malaysia Pasca Merdeka (1960-1990) Terhadap Kebangkitan Islam Di Malaysia. *Jurnal Pengajian Islam*, 10(II), 88-110.

⁴⁴ See for example, Khurshid Ahmad. (1994). "Islamic Resurgence: Challenges, Directions and Future Perspectives". In Ibrahim M. Abu-Rabi' (ed.). *Islamic Resurgence: Challenges, Directions & Future Perspectives*. Florida: World and Islam Studies Enterprise, p. 64; Esposito, John L., *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*; Voll, John O. (1992). Fundamentalism in the Sunni Arab World: Egypt and the Sudan". In Marty, Martin E. and Appleby, R. Scott (editor). *Fundamentalisms Observed*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

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