



ISLAMIC RESURGENCE IN CONTEMPORARY
CAMEROON: THE IMPACT OF THE TABLĪGHĪ
JAMĀ'AT

BY

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the factors behind the phenomenon of Islamic resurgence in contemporary Cameroon and focuses on the role, contribution and impact of the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at*. It adopts an analytical, a critical and a historical approach in examining the reasons for the ongoing rise of Islamic awareness in contemporary Cameroon. This work argues that the methodology and strategy used by the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at*- as one of the most widely followed and successful Islamic organizations in the country based on reviving and promoting Islamic consciousness within the Muslim community- has immensely contributed to Islamic religious fervor witnessed in the country during the past three decades. It highlights the reason why many Cameroonian Muslims, who are followers of the movement, believe that the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at*'s emphasis on self-reformation provides a better solution to the moral decadence, crisis of identity and backwardness of the Muslim community in the country. The *Tablīghī Jamā‘at* is still, however, underestimated as a revivalist movement in contemporary Cameroon because it operates only within the Muslim community and does not have any political agenda. The study investigates the methodology of the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at* considered controversial and questionable by its detractors. The critics claim that the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at*'s methodology of *da‘wah* is an unlawful innovation, arguing that it is not supported by the Qur’anic and Prophetic tradition. Furthermore, they blame the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at* for putting the responsibility of *da‘wah* in the hands of the masses instead of the *ulamā*. Other opponents consider the movement’s abandonment and aloofness from socio-political issues, sufficient reasons in preventing Cameroonian Muslims from joining the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at*.

خلاصة البحث

ينتاول هذا البحث العوامل التي مهدت لظاهرة الصحوة الإسلامية في المجتمع الكاميروني المعاصر مع التركيز على دور وتأثير جماعة التبليغ. ويتبنى البحث المنهج التحليلي والنقدي والتاريخي في تفسير الأسباب التي أدت إلى زيادة الوعي واليقظة الإسلامية في الكاميرون. ومن مهمة البحث إبراز المنهج الدعوي عند جماعة التبليغ في إحياء الدعوة الإسلامية الذي أدى إلى تهيئة جوٍّ إسلاميٍّ مناسبٍ لإيقاظ المسلمين في الكاميرون. ويعتقد أعضاء جماعة التبليغ أن التركيز على الانضباط الشخصي والمحافظة على فرائض الإسلام وتحسين الأخلاق تمثل الحل الأمثل لمشكلة تأخر المسلمين بالكاميرون. وعلى الرغم من جهودها الجبارة لإحياء الدين الإسلامي لا تزال جماعة التبليغ مجهولة لدى كثير من الباحثين كعنصر مؤثر في الصحوة الإسلامية في الكاميرون. ومن الأسباب التي أدت إلى ذلك غياب الجماعة عن الساحة السياسية وعدم اهتمامها بدعوة غير المسلمين. يعتمد جزءٌ من هذه الدراسة على بحثٍ ميدانيٍّ ومشاركةٍ فاحصةٍ عن أنشطة جماعة التبليغ في الكاميرون. ويتوصل البحث إلى أن جماعة التبليغ كانت ولم تزال من أنشط الجماعات وأكثرها أتباعاً وأعمقها تأثيراً في الأفراد والمجتمع الكاميروني المسلم. بيد أن هناك ناقدين يعتبرون منهج جماعة التبليغ في الدعوة من محدثات الأمور التي لا أصل لها في الدين. وهناك ناقدون آخرون يعتبرون عدم إلتفات الجماعة إلى القضايا السياسية والاجتماعية والثقافية أسباباً كافية في تنفير المسلمين من الانضمام إليها. وعلى أية حال لا تزال جماعة التبليغ قوةً إصلاحيةً جاذبةً ومؤثرةً في المجتمع المسلم بالكاميرون. وهذا الأمر شبه مجمع عليه لدى أكثر المسلمين في البلد.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Arts in (The Contemporary Muslim World: Regions and Issues).

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Hassan Ahmed Ibrahim
Dean, International Institute of
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references, and a bibliography is appended.

Name: Ahmed Khalid Ayong

Signature..... Date.....

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IMPACT OF THE TABLĪGHĪ JAMĀ'AT

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

“The center of gravity of the African continent- Cameroon can be considered as an Africa in miniature and its study is beneficial for whoever wishes to be initiated into the problems of Africa”¹.

The Republic of Cameroon has witnessed a renewed vitality of Islamic religious fervor in the last three decades. In order to understand this phenomenon, one needs to investigate the reasons behind the growth of Islamic spirituality among the Muslims in the Cameroonian society. Muslims after leading the country from 1958-1982 in a system where there was no room for religion in the leadership of the state and the society, felt the dire need for faith revitalization and renewal. The task of “re-Islamizing” the Muslim society was urgently needed to re-connect Muslims with their religion. The revival of faith and dedication to Islam needed to be invigorated in a context where Christian missionaries were intensifying their efforts towards the Muslim community. Furthermore, Western culture and secular education were identified as the main threats facing the Muslims in Cameroon. Considering these factors, Islamic movements found a suitable environment to provide solutions to the lethargy and backwardness of the Muslim community. The necessity of creating hope through spiritual re-awakening was highlighted by Islamic movements as the solution to please the Creator for being neglectful and ungrateful of Him during the time they were in power despite the relative prosperity, welfare and stability achieved. Islamic movements advocated that the solution to the social, political, economic and cultural problems was

¹ Jean Imbert, “*Le Cameroun, Que Sais-je?*” (Paris: Presse Universitaires de France, 1982), 3.

the return to Islam. Although the methodology, strategy and ideology of these Islamic movements were different, they all agreed that adopting an Islamic way of life was the panacea to save the Muslim community from the alienating influence of Westernization, Christianization and secularization.

In response to the challenges facing the Muslims in Cameroon, the *Salafi* movement through its Islamic schools and institutes focused on “purifying” Islamic teachings from “un-Islamic” doctrines and practices, advocated the return to “pure Islam” and the rejection of all kinds of innovations and superstitions. The Muslim Youth Movement on the other hand emphasized developing Islamic consciousness among the youth, especially the students, the leaders of tomorrow, who should not repeat the mistakes of their elders in considering Islam as just a cultural heritage. The Sūfī orders emphasized mystical aspects of Islam, asceticism and the remembrance of Allah through isolation and exclusion from worldly affairs and the preparation for the hereafter.

The Tablīghī Jamā‘at on the other hand identified the problem of the Muslim community in Cameroon as originating from the lack of self-discipline and cultivation of deep faith. The Tablīghīs argued that individual self-reformation can be achieved during outreach tours which provide welfare, peace of mind and self-purification. Every single Muslim in Cameroon, as they believe, should engage in purifying himself and by doing so, one automatically becomes a preacher and guide to Islam. Roaming about for the sake of Allah and persistent efforts in rectifying oneself through the perfect example of the Prophet and his companions would gradually produce a good Muslim community. The strategy of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at was based on proselytism, persuasion, accompanied by the good moral character of its followers as they believed this was the only way of winning Cameroonian Muslims over to the movement’s

teachings and reformist agenda. However, the remarkable role played by what is regarded today as the biggest grass root Islamic movement of Islamic revivalism in the world² is still underestimated and not given due credit as one of the most active agents of Islamic faith renewal in the 20th century in Cameroon.

The objective, ideology and methodology of what are considered as the three most influential Islamic movements of the 20th century are concisely explored. These movements are: *Al-Ikwān al-Muslimūn*, (Muslim Brotherhood), the *Takfīr wa al- Hijra* (excommunication and exile) movement, with focus on the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at* (proselytizing group). The main purpose in discussing the ideology, methodology and objective of these Islamic movements is to cultivate an understanding of these movements, what they stand for, and how their conduct and behavior is shaped according to the circumstances, social or political pressure they face. The research intends, by looking into other influential Islamic movements, to enable the reader to differentiate between the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at* and other revivalist and reformist contemporary Islamic movements.

Despite the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at*'s growing prominence in Muslim communities, the movement has received little academic attention in Cameroon or broader Sub-Saharan Africa.³ The upsurge of the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at* in Cameroon still lacks serious study. The fundamental question this dissertation addresses will be: Why the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at*'s ideology, methodology and objective contributed to creating the fertile environment for the present Islamic re-awakening, witnessed since the last three decades in Cameroon? This work seeks to explain how the strategy implemented by the

² John L. Esposito (ed) see: “*Tablīghī Jamā‘at*” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of Modern Islamic World*, vol.2 (New-York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 165-166.

³ Mumtaz Ahmad, “The *Jamā‘at-i-Islami* and the *Tablīghī Jamā‘at* of South Asia”, in *Fundamentalisms Observed*, edited by Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 511.

Tablīghī Jamā‘at, despite its South Asian origin, was successful in influencing nominal Muslims to become practicing Muslims and zealous proselytizers.

The study will examine the arrival and spread of Islam in Cameroon. Furthermore, a historical, analytical, social and critical study of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Cameroon from its emergence, establishment, growth, expansion and leadership will be addressed. This investigation attempts to demonstrate that the Tablīghī Jamā‘at has grown to become one of the most powerful driving forces of Islamic spiritual reformation in Cameroon since its inception in the country. Thus, the reasons behind the phenomenon of Islamic resurgence and revival in contemporary Cameroon will be better understood. The study of the movement focuses on the individual, social and religious implications of the objective, methodology, ideology and strategy of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at in reviving Islam in contemporary Cameroon.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Like the rest of the Muslim world, Cameroon has experienced a rise of Islamic effervescence accompanied by an explosion of conversion and a growth of religious fervor. The principal task of this work is to examine the reasons behind the phenomenon of Islamic resurgence and revival in contemporary Cameroon, with focus on the impact of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at. This transnational grassroots revivalist movement, whose center of attention is for a total spiritual transformation in the individual life, family and society, has always kept itself away from the media and does not operate formally in the country. Has the original methodology and strategy of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at to promote Islamic awareness and consciousness had an impact on individual and socio-religious life in contemporary Cameroon? And has it created fertile ground for an Islamic resurgence?

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1- What is Islamic resurgence and revival?
- 2- What are the factors that have created a suitable environment for Islamic resurgence in contemporary Cameroon?
- 3- What are contemporary Islamic movements' objectives, theoretical and practical methods to restore the strength and greatness of the Muslim community?
- 4- What are the Tablīghī Jamā'at's ideology, objective and methodology?
- 5- What is the individual and socio-religious impact of the Tablīghī Jamā'at in contemporary Cameroon?

1.4 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The following are the objectives of this study:

- 1- To study the ideology, methodology and strategy of Islamic movements with focus on the Tablīghī Jamā'at.
- 2- To investigate the origins, causes and manifestations of Islamic resurgence in contemporary Cameroon.
- 3- To explore the vulnerability and susceptibility of the Muslims in Cameroon and their struggle to preserve their identity.
- 4- To highlight the contribution played by the Tablīghī Jamā'at in Islamic resurgence in Cameroon.
- 5- To discover how the Tablīghī Jamā'at in Cameroon has successfully transformed its followers from non-practicing Muslims to practicing Muslims.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

There is no doubt that the impact of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Islamic resurgence in contemporary Cameroon has been neglected. This is due to the fact that the Tablīghī Jamā‘at does not follow a conventional and official organizational structure. The Tablīghī Jamā‘at managed to keep its distance from the mass media, and the details of its activities and membership have not been publicized. The followers of the organization, their weight, influence and striving to spread Islam, wake Muslims up from their lethargy in Cameroon are underestimated and lack academic study. This work will provide evidence that the Tablīghī Jamā‘at is actually one of the most active groups that have immensely contributed for the Islamic resurgence in contemporary Cameroon and likewise to the rest of the Muslim world.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study will concentrate on the Islamic resurgence in contemporary Cameroon focusing only on the impact of the Tablīghī Jamā‘at. The reason behind this choice is that the Tablīghī Jamā‘at’s intense activity in West-Central Africa especially Cameroon remains largely unknown despite its impact on Muslim societies in the country. People do not really pay attention to this movement, as they do with *Salafi* reformist groups, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the Sufi orders. This stems from the fact that the Tablīghī Jamā‘at has always been discreet, and projects a non-threatening apolitical image. Thus, there will be no pretension that the dissertation will cover all the movements that have played an important role in the resurgence of Islam in contemporary Cameroon.

1.7 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

For appropriate understanding of the subject matter of this dissertation, the approach and key words need to be defined: Islam, resurgence, Cameroon, impact and Tablighī Jamā'at.

ISLAM

Literally means submission, surrender and obedience to Allah, the Creator of the universe. Abul A'la Al-Mawdudi describes Islam as an attributive title, he stresses that:

Anyone who possesses this attribute, whatever race, community, country or group he belongs to is a Muslim. According to the Qur'an, among every people and in all ages there have been good and righteous people who possessed this attribute-and all of them were and are Muslims.⁴

ISLAMIC RESURGENCE

The resurgence of something means literally "continuing after interruption"⁵; it also means a renewal, reawakening, rebirth, rejuvenation, comeback, revitalization, renaissance, resurrection etc.⁶ According to Chandra Muzaffar:

Islamic resurgence is a description of the endeavor to re-establish Islamic values, Islamic practices, Islamic institutions, Islamic laws, indeed Islamic in its entirety, in the life of Muslims everywhere. It 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 Qur'an and the Sunnah.⁷

⁴ Abul A'la Al-Mawdudi, *Towards Understanding Islam*, Translated from Urdu by Kurshid Ahmad, (Lahore: Islamic Publications, 1970), 5.

⁶ Cambridge Dictionary for Advanced Learners.

⁷ Chandra Muzaffar, *Islamic Resurgence in Malaysia*, (Kuala Lumpur Fajar Bakhti: Petaling Jaya: 1987), 2.

CAMEROON

The Republic of Cameroon, in French (*République du Cameroun*), is a unitary republic located in Central-Western Africa and is called “Africa in miniature” or the “Cross-roads of Africa”. The country is renowned of its ethnological, cultural, religious and geological diversity.⁸ French and English are the official languages. The political capital is *Yaoundé* and the largest city is *Douala*, the commercial and economic capital.

IMPACT

The impact means literally, “the force or action of one object hitting another”. It is also defined as “a powerful effect that something, especially something new has on a situation or person”.⁹ It also means the force exerted by a new idea, concept, technology or ideology. It means also the impression made by an idea, cultural movement, social group, etc.¹ In the Cameroonian context; it means the powerful effect of the methodology of *Tablighī Jamā‘at* as a revivalist group and its deep influence as driving force for Islamic faith rejuvenation.

TABLĪGHĪ JAMĀ‘AT

Tabligh is an Arabic term which means “to attain, convey, inform, to reach”¹. The verbal form is *ballagha*, from which the noun *tabligh* is derived, means to communi-

⁸ John Mukum Mbaku, *Culture and Customs of Cameroon*, (Greenwood Press: Westport Connecticut, 2005), 1.

⁹http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/impact_1?q=impact (accessed 10th November, 2010).

¹ <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/impact> (accessed 10th November, 2010).

¹ <http://www.almaany.com/home.php?word=بَلِّغ> (accessed 10th November, 2010).

cate, to report and also means to cause something to reach.¹ The Prophet (pbuh) says:
“Transmit from me even if it is only one verse”¹ . 3

The Tablighī Jamā‘at of South Asian origin could be described as one of the most important grass root Islamic movements in the contemporary Muslim world. Tablighī Jamā‘at or “conveying group” or “proselytizing group” is a Muslim revivalist and apolitical movement whose aim is the spiritual reformation of Muslims. It was founded in 1926 in Mewat North India by Muhammad Ilyas. Barbara Metcalf stresses that: “*The Tablighī Jamā‘at is a quietist, apolitical, movement of spiritual guidance and renewal that originated in Indian subcontinent, whose networks now reach around the world...*”¹ 4

1.8 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

The large source of information in this dissertation is mainly based on library collections where data and material are extracted from books, published and unpublished theses and dissertations, encyclopedias, journal articles, relevant websites and academic papers. The method chosen in conducting this research is qualitative, analytical, historical, and critical. Interviews are carried out with followers and critics of the movement in Cameroon. Participative observation and informal discussions with the adherents, sympathizers and critics of the movement are also part of the study. As a result of that, some of the names of the interviewees in this research will not fully appear, because the author feels obliged to keep agreements that were made during the course of the interviews and personal communications.

¹ Muhammad Khalid Masūd, (ed) *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablighī Jamā‘at as a Transnational Movement for Faith Renewal* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), xx.

¹ Muhammad ibn Ismāil al-Būkhārī Sahih Al Bukhārī, *al-Jami al-sahīh*, vol. 3 ed.1987: (Beirut: Dar al Yamāmah, 3edn. 1987), 1375.

¹ Barbara Metcalf: “Islam and Women: The Case of the Tablighī Jamā‘at”, *Stanford Humanities Review: Contested Politics, religious Disciplines & Structures of Modernity* vol. 5, no.1 59-90. <http://shr.stanford.edu/Shreview/5.1/text/metcalf.html> (accessed 13th November, 2010).

The investigation focuses on *Maroua*, capital of the Far-north region, the main *markaz* (center) of the movement in Cameroon and *Douala*, the commercial and economic capital. These two cities have always witnessed an intense activity of the Tablighī Jamā‘at’s proselytism in the country.

The motivation behind this methodology is that, a qualitative approach is much more useful and fits well with the research problem because of the dissertation’s emphasis on behavioral aspects. The absence of a survey was compensated for as well by a keen participant observation in many events and activities of the movement that took place and intensive personal communications, scheduled and random interviews. Furthermore, the number of fully reliable informants was increased and helped shed the light on the role and contribution of the Tablighī movement to the ongoing Islamic resurgence in contemporary Cameroon.

Three languages were used to conduct this study; English, French and Arabic.

1.9 LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The main obstacle of this study was the distance. Accessing the sample and the data necessitated a fieldwork. The time spent in Cameroon from the 30th of October 2010 to the 26th of February 2011 was used in selecting informants and setting guidelines for subsequent work. Since the first weeks, it became obvious that conducting a general survey would be infeasible for limited time and funds.

Also, the Tablighī Jamā‘at is well-known for its discretion. Hence, the author faced some hesitations in obtaining information from them. Some movement’s members were suspicious and unwilling to speak out, as a result of the sensitive issue of linking Islamic movements to the global network of international terrorism.

The most difficult challenge was the extreme hardness to find any form of academic writing about the Tablīghī Jamā‘at in Cameroon to facilitate the study.

1.10 LITERATURE REVIEW

The study of Islam in Africa in general and particularly Sub-Saharan has always attracted interest from the historians. This is due to the fact that the first generation of Muslims who were facing maltreatment; persecution and abuse in Mecca were asked to migrate to Africa where they found safety and protection under the Negus of Ethiopia. Since then, Islam has grown to become one the most widely practiced religions in Africa and has contributed to the establishment of great empires and vast civilizations. The ferocious resistance of the colonialists by Muslims throughout the continent has also motivated many academicians in studying Islam in Africa in general and Sub-Saharan Africa in particular.

The Islamization of Sub-Saharan Africa, the cultural and socio-political influence of Islam and the relationship between Muslims and the colonialist forces have been the center of attention of most Africanists.

John Spencer Trimingham in his book *Islam in West Africa* gives a significant description of the reasons that contributed to the spread of Islam in West Africa from a historical and analytical view. Trimingham asserts that one of main reasons that facilitated the spread of Islam in Africa is the commercial exchanges between North Africa and Sub-Saharan Africa. According to him, Muslim traveling traders from Southern Morocco and Mauritania and they can be considered as the first Islamic proselytizers to Sub-Saharan Africa. The author divides the development of Islam in West Africa into three stages: the first stage were African kings tried to discriminate and isolate Muslim societies, the second stage as an attempt to reconcile Islam and accom-

moderate it with local customs and traditions and finally the third stage was the adoption of Islamic law accompanied by the rise of reformist and revivalist movements of the 19th Century. The establishment of the Sokoto Caliphate in Northern Nigeria by Uthman Dan Fodio is the perfect illustration of the renewal and renaissance stage.¹

Fahmi Saad Abdurrazik in his book, *Intishār al-Islam fī Ifrīqiya fī al-Usūr al-Wustā* (The Spread of Islam in Africa during the middle Ages) emphasizes the strong, friendly and deep-rooted relationship between Arabs and the people of Ethiopia is the reason why Muslims were asked to migrate to Africa from the 6th century. This made Africa what Muslim scholars and historians call *Dār al Hijra al-Ūlā* (the land of the first migration in Islam) had a great impact on the spread of Islam in the continent. The author also mentions the resistance he faced against the Nubians¹ who were finally defeated during the take-over of Egypt. The tremendous role of Uqba Ibn Nafi (622-683) described as the “conqueror of Africa” and his disciples in spreading Islam in North Africa in the medieval period are also emphasized. The author argues that Muslims and their armies were considered as liberators and redeemers by the people of African continent. Fahmi stresses that before the coming of Islam, people of the continent were drowning in polytheism, idolatry and animism. The author highlights the tremendous contribution of Muslim Arab traders and their strong connections with the Almoravid movement of North Africa, the greatest West African empire of Ghana (790-1076) and kingdoms like Mali, *Songhai*, and *Kanem Bornu*. He mentions that, the transactions with these empires, especially in their search for gold, diamond, *kauri* and kola nuts have made places like *Gao*, *Jenne* and *Timbuktu* famous

¹ John Spencer Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa*, (London: Glasgow University Publications, Oxford University Press, 1985).

¹ The Nubians are an ethnic group which origins are traced from northern Sudan and southern Egypt. Nowadays they are mostly concentrated in East Africa and some part of Northeastern Africa. Nubia is also the native land of Black Africa’s oldest civilization and archeological history which can be found as far back as the fourth millennium B.C.

trade routes and high centers of Islamic learning, resulting to the spread of Islam in the whole region.¹ 7

John Hunwick in his article *Islamic Revival in Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, discusses the issue of Islamic revival in Sub-Saharan Africa and the struggle of the Muslims to survive and to preserve their religious individuality. Hunwick explains the reasons that led to the Islamic revival in West Africa. He starts with the revival movement of the *Mahdi* in Sudan, to the *Fulani Jihad* of Uthman Bin Fodio and its influence, to the neighbor countries and ends with the Salafi denunciation of Sufism. He also studied the impact of the Egyptian Muslim brotherhood with emphasis on Hasan Al-Turabi and his movement, the Islamic National Front; his strive to spread the socio-political ideology of the Muslims Brotherhood in the Muslim societies in Africa south of Sahara¹ . 8

Sulayman S. Nyang in a noteworthy article entitled: *Islamic Revivalism in West Africa: Historical Perspectives and Recent Developments*, examines the origins and roots of Islamic revivalism in contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa from the cultural historical and psychological factors which had contributed to its formation¹ . 9

In a book edited by Ioan M. Lewis entitled *Islam in Tropical Africa* a considerable ethnographic, historical and sociological study of the Muslim societies of Sub-Saharan Africa is the main focal point. The book emphasizes Central Africa to East Africa, areas Lewis believes they have received less attention than the Belt of Sudan. The territorial review of the diffusion of Islam, the factors that led the Islamization,

¹ Fahmi Saad Abdurrazzik, “*Intishar al Islam fi Ifriqiya fil Usur al Wusta*”, (The Spread of Islam in Africa during the Middle Ages), (Beirut: ‘Alam al Kutub, 2001).

¹ John Hunwick, “Islamic Revival in Africa: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives” in *Arabic and Islamic Studies*, edited by Amidu Sani, (Bariga Lad Lak: Debo Prints, 2003), 1-20.

¹ Sulayman S. Nyang, “Islamic Revivalism in West Africa: Historical Perspectives and Recent Developments” in *Religious Plurality in Africa: Essays in Honour of John S. Mbiti*, edited by Jacob K. Olupuna, Sulayman S. Nyang, (Berlin: New-York Mouton de Gruyter, 1993).

the encounter between Islam and local customs and the task of dealing with modernity and Westernization are discussed and elaborated in the book.² 0

Louis Brenner in his book *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* focused on how Muslims in Africa are trying their best to better of their social condition. The book which is a series of articles by several authors asserts the new strategies adopted by Muslims to achieve their goals, like self-representation and political contestation. The challenges of modernization, secularization and colonization according to the book, has contributed tremendously to motivate a vibrant new trend of Islamization of Sub-Saharan Africa in particular². The rise of a growing force led by a new generation of young educated Muslims has contributed to shaping interest groups to see no separation between Islam and politics. The row between Sufism and anti-Sufism has manifested in Africa, south of Sahara, and according to the study likewise in the wider Muslim world in general. This confrontation could be interpreted as indication socio-political conflict between young and old, poor and rich, rural and urban.

Alphonse Gouilly in *L'Islam dans l'Afrique Occidentale Francaise* in this extraordinary work breaks down the progress of Islam in Western French Africa into five phases: the first phase starting from the 6th century is considered as the Berber's expansion as a result of the efforts of the Almoravids warriors. The second phase starting from the 14th century which is regarded as the *Mandinka*² phase is considered 2 as the period when the task of propagating Islam was taken up by the African new

² Ioan M. Lewis, (ed) *Islam in Tropical Africa* (London, Oxford University Press, 1966).

² Louis Brenner, (ed) *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, (London: C Hurst and Co., 1993).

² The Mandinka people (also known as Mandinko) are one of the biggest ethno-linguistic groups in West Africa with approximately eleven million people. They are the descendants of the famous Empire of Mali (1230-1600) C.E.