Politicization of Religion and Religionization of Politics in Islam: The Madkhaliyah and Surūriyah Narratives as Case-Studies

Nafiu Ahmad Arikewuyo
Department of Islamic Studies, Al-Hikmah University, Nigeria
abuamina20@gmail.com

Abstract
The interplay between religion and politics is of particular interest to sociologists and historians. On many accounts, the state has often used religion as a sacred weapon to promote its political legitimacy while religion on the other hand has used the reigning power to impose its doctrine on the masses. This manifestation has featured in the historical development of Muslim scholarship and political ascendancy respectively. Against this backdrop, this study examines the aforementioned feature in the contemporary Muslim narratives using the Madkhaliyah and Surūriyah trends as case studies. The study adopts historical and analytical methods of research. It reveals that the rise of the Surūriyah trend in Saudi constitutes a formidable threat to the political interests of the ruling dynasty; hence, the resort to its persecution by the state authorities. The theology of the Madkhaliyah group is opposed to political reformation, opposition, and awareness and it promotes a peaceful society under an unchecked tyrannical system.

Keywords: Religion, Politics, Islam, *Madkhaliyah*, *Surūriyah*

Introduction
The relation between religion and power with its most virile instrument, politics, has caught the interest of sociologists and historians respectively. In his foreword to the magisterial work of Kukah, Onaiyekan posits, "There is a lot said about separation of religion from politics. But this should not make us forget the fact that for most of human history, politics and religion have gone hand in hand."[1] This phenomenon has conspicuously been featured in the history of Islam and Christianity. Since our study is related to Islam, it is instructive to point to some antecedents of this truism in the history of Islam. The Abbasid dynasty (749-1258 A.D.) most especially during the regime of Ma'mūn (813-833 A.D.) promoted the ideology of Mu'tazilism to the detriment of the traditionalists.[2] The cooperation between Muhammad bin 'Abdul-Wahhāb (d. 1792 A.D.) and Muhammad bin Saʿūd (d. 1765 A.D.) led to the concession of religious headship to the former, and political control to the former in what is now called the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is another testimony of how power and religion relied on each other in actualizing the interest of the concerned players.

It is against this background that this study addresses the feature of the interplay of politics with Islamic scholarship in contemporary narratives with a focus on the *Madkhaliyyah* and *Surūriyah* trends. The former has been used by the authority of Saudi Arabia against the latter in theological matters relating to political participation, awareness, and opposition. The story of the two schools of thought in contemporary time is replete with using the state power to persecute a religious bloc perceived as a threat to the political interest of the constituted authority. It is noteworthy that both *Madkhaliyyah* and *Surūriyah* belong to the doctrine and

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[1] Mathew Hassan Kukah, *Religion, Politics and Power in Northern Nigeria* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited, 1993), vii.

[2] A. Rahim, *Islamic History* (Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau, 1981), 195.

teachings of the school of modern Salafism but are polarized by polemics relating to the political interests of the Palace.

Previous researchers have focused more on the discourses relating to the influence of politics on ḥadīth and the outbreak of theological sects in Islam. Abu Riyyah, Amin, and Ali have postulated that the state power had greatly influenced the content of the ḥadīth.[3] In contrast to their submissions, Sibāʿī, Abū Shuhbah, Al-ʿAjlān, and Imam have refuted the above postulation.[4] Fawaz argues that the evolution of sects in Islam is mainly caused by political conflicts; therefore, the theology relied upon by Muslim sects is highly influenced by the various political gladiators of the time.[5] His view is supported by Mahmud who asserts that the political conflicts experienced by the Muslim community in its formative stage are responsible for the outbreak of major theological schools in Islam.[6]

The interplay between Islam and politics on a general note has also sparked a lot of research interest. Ulker asserts that the 20th-century hypothesis of secularization theories which predicted the expulsion of religion from the public sphere has been belied by the global developments in America and Asian continents.[7] Pandya argues that "…when political aspirations are articulated in religious and cultural terms, it is important to unpack and separate the political, the religious, and the cultural."[8] An-Nai'm supports the above assertion when he states that, "..Islam, state and politics must be institutionally separate to safeguard the possibility of being Muslim out of personal conviction rather than conformity to the coercive will of the state."[9]

The majority of traditional scholars of Islam in contemporary times have refuted the claim of separating Islam from politics and governance. Prominent among them are Al-Muti'i, Khallāf, and Qaraḍāwi.[10] The above and other scholars asserted that Islam and politics are not separable.

The present study deviates from the focus of the aforementioned by highlighting the feature of the interplay between scholarship and politics as represented by the narrative of *Madkhaliyah* and *Surūriyah* in contemporary time.

Religion and Politics: A Sociological Perspective
The interplay between religion and politics falls within the realm of social studies. Hence, no discipline can better fathom the intrigues and intricacies of this social phenomenon than sociology. According to Berger, the sociologist is someone concerned with understanding

3   Mahmud Abu Riyyah, *Aḍwā'u 'Ala as-Sunnat al-Muḥammadiyah* (Iran: Muassasat al-Ansariyah, 1995); Ahmad Amin, *Fajr al-Islām* (Cairo: Lajnat Ta'lif, 1354 A.H.); and Abdur-Rāziq 'Ali, *Al-Isām Wa Uṣūl al-Ḥukm* (n.p, n.d.).

4   Mustafa Sibāʿī, *Al-Sunnah Wa Makānatuhā fi at-Tashriᶜ al-Islāmī* (Cairo: Darus Salam,2012); Muhammad Abū Shuhbah, *Difāᶜu ᶜAn al-Sunnah* (Cairo: Al-Azhar ash-Sharīf, 2016); Ibrāhīm Ṣāliḥ Al-ʿAjlān, *Al-Muḥaddithūn Wa al-Siyāsah* (Ph.D. Thesis, Riyadh King Saud University, 2008) and Ya'qub Abubakr Imam, "A Critique of Abu-Riyyah's Technique of Matn Analysis" *Alore Journal* 19 (2011).

5   Ali Fawaz, "Athar al-Ṣirāᶜāt al-Siyāsiyah fi Nash'at al-Firaq" Uploaded September 2018 at www.researchgate.com.

6   Salim Mahmud, *Tārīkh al-Firaq Wa ᶜAqā'iduhā* (Cairo: Al-Maktabat al-Wataniyah, 1998), 16.

7   Ozlem Ulker, "Religion and Politics in a Sociological Perspective" *International Journal of Social Inquiry* 6.2 (2013), 74.

8   Amit Pandya, "Faith, Justice, and Violence: Islam in Political Context" in *Islam and Politics: Renewal and Resistance in the Muslim World*, edited by Amit Pandya and Ellen Laipson (Washington DC: Stimson Pragmatic Steps for Global Security, 2009), 74.

9   Abdullahi Ahmed An-Nai'm, "Shari'a and Positive Legislation: is an Islamic State Possible or Viable?" in *Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law*, edited by Eugene Cotram and Chibli Mallat, vol. 5 (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 2000), 30.

10   Muhammad Bakhīt al-Muṭi'I, *Ḥaqīqat al-Islām Wa Uṣūl al-Ḥukm* (Cairo: Al-Azhar, 1926); Abdul-Wahhāb Khallāf, *al-Siyāsat al-Sharᶜiyyah* (Cairo: Muassasat Risalat, 1997); Yusuf Qaraḍāwi, al-Siyāsat al-Sharᶜiyyah (Cairo: Maktabat Wahbah, 2005).

society in a disciplined way.[11] Of the various phenomena that are indispensable in every human society are religion and politics. Starting from politics, it has been discussed by sociologists alongside other inter-connected words such as power, authority, and governance.

According to John & Ken, politics is the social institution that distributes power, sets a society's agenda, and makes a decision, while governance is the exercise of political, economic, and administrative authority in the management of a country's affairs at all levels.[12] The goal of every politics and governance is power, which according to Weber, is the ability to achieve desired ends despite resistance from others. However, according to Weber, authority is a kind of power that derives legitimacy from people's recognition or coercive means.[13]

Durkheim claimed that the focus of religion is things that surpass the limits of our knowledge.[14] Religion, then, is a social institution involving beliefs and practices based upon a conception of the sacred.[15] Religiosity designates the importance of religion in a person's life. Glock distinguished five distinct dimensions of religiosity namely, i. Experiential which refers to the strength of a person's emotional ties to a religion; ii. Ritualistic refers to the frequency of ritual activity such as prayer and church attendance; iii. Ideological concerns an individual's degree of belief in religious doctrine; iv. Consequential has to do with how strongly religious beliefs figure in a person's daily behavior, and v. Intellectual refers to a person's knowledge of the history and doctrines of a particular religion.[16]

The relation between religion and politics building on the above sociological discussion can be obvious in two dimensions. First, religion has always been a political tool to secure the legitimacy and acceptance of the people. This view tallies with the famous statement of Marx who saw religion as the 'opium of the people. The narratives of the Iranian revolution and the Vatican are a good example of how religion can be used as a viable tool to secure a theocratic government. It becomes easy for religion to serve the interest of power gladiators because one of the social functions of religion, according to Durkheim, is social cohesion. Religion unites people through shared symbols, values, and norms.[17] Hence, it will be near impossible for someone to rule over a citizenry that professes different religion in a non-secular setting. Second, religion needs politics to acquire the power of freedom of faith and belief. In another expression, power is inevitable for the proselytization and propagation of religion, and the only means to it is politics, formally or informally. Adherents of religion have often used the weapon of politics to protect their faith, promote it and give it legitimization. It is thus obvious that the relation between politics and religion is 'give and take'. It is also reciprocatory and complimentary. The two have served each other positively and negatively.

Politics and Islamic Scholarship: An Historical Background

The interplay between politics and Islamic scholarship dates back to the aftermath of the Battle of Camel that occurred in 656 C.E. and the Battle of Siffīn, 657C.E. The battles which from the outset were driven by political tendency culminated in the birth of three theological sects in Islam namely, the *Khawārij*, *Shi'ah*, and *Ahl as-Sunnah*.[18] Shihristāni admits that no matter has greatly influenced the Muslim scholarship as did the *Imāmah*, which is the terminology for political ascendancy in Islam.[19] The polemics over who had the divine legitimacy to lead the

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[11]   Peter Berger, *Invitation to Sociology* (New York: Anchor, 1963), 27.
[12]   Macionis John & Plummer Ken, *Sociology: A Global Introduction* (England: Pearson Education Limited, 2012), 538.
[13]   Max Weber, *Economy, and Society* (EA: University of California Press, 1978).
[14]   Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: Free Press, 1965), 62.
[15]   Macionis John & Plummer Ken, *Sociology: A Global Introduction*, 661.
[16]   Charles Glock, "On the Study of Religious Commitment", *Religious Education* 62.4 (1962), 98.
[17]   Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, 68.
[18]   Musa O. Abdul, *The Historical Origin of Islam* (Lagos: Islamic Publications Bureau, 1978), 78.
[19]   Muhammad Abdul-Karīm Shihristāni, *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal* (Cairo: Al-Maktabat Tawfiqiyyah: 2003), 37.

Muslim community precede the two battles mentioned above. The political polemics continued to haunt the Islamic scholarship until it reached its zenith with the murder of the only surviving descendant of Prophet Muhammad, Husayn, on the order of the sitting Muslim ruler, Yazīd in 680 C.E. The comments of Abdul are very germane when he asserts that,

> The murder of Husayn cost a lot to the Umayyad. Before the date, the word shi'ah signified merely a party; thus shi'at 'Ali meant the partisans or supporters of 'Ali and the greatest significance then was probably political. But the massacre at Karbala gave the word a new significance- a religious one. Those who followed 'Ali and his son Husayn by it came to conceive a passionate devotion with religious undertones to the cause of the House of 'Ali. Thus the Shi'ah as a group as well as a religious and political doctrine emerged in Islam.[20]

While asserting the role of the Karbala scene in the emergence of a religiopolitical group in Islam, Rahim affirms that " …the scene gave the Shias a battle-cry for unity, organization, and revenge. The first ten days of Muharram gave them the national days for lamentation. The mausoleum of Husain at Karbala provided them with a national and religious sanctuary. These national institutions drew nearer together the supporters of 'Ali's family in a common platform."[21] Fawaz submits that the political conflicts in the formative stage of Islam later metamorphosed into theological schools of thought, each of them relying strongly on the textual provisions that seem to support its position against its opponents.[22]

The interplay took another dimension during the Abbasid dynasty (749-1258). One of its dynastic rulers, Ma'mūn (813-833) declared the Mu'tazilite doctrine to be a state religion in place of the Orthodox faith. He also ordered that 'Ali should be honored as the best creature of God after the Prophet and forbade the praise of Muᶜāwiyah.[23] As occurred in the preceding dynasty the Muslim ruler used the power of the palace to persecute scholars who belong to opposing theology including Imam Aḥmad bin Ḥanbal (d. 240 A.H.). However, the luck of the Mu'tazilite was overturned by another Abbasid ruler, Mutawakkil (847-861) who issued a ban on the rationalist school of theology.[24]

Another aspect through which politics has influenced Islamic scholarship is the Hadith, the second religious authority in Islam. Many orientalists led by Gold Zihr and some Muslim writers such as Ahmad Amin and Abu Riyyah have emphasized the influence of the Umayyad palace in the fabrication of a large number of Prophetic traditions in the reach of Muslims to date.[25] According to this school of thought, the Umayyad authority had succeeded in luring the pious *Muḥaddithūn* such as Imam az-Zuhri into fabricating some traditions that promote the dynasty and demote the opponent Alides. This phenomenon, according to them, has presented the hadith to the subsequent generation as a politically influenced compendium of Islamic tradition. It is pertinent to note that many Muslim writers have discredited this unfounded allegation. Prominent among them is Al-'Ajlān who, after studying all the politically-motivated traditions, submits that "…it is apparent that all the *Aḥādīth* were not reported in reputable and prominent collections of hadith in addition to their non-authenticity which is maintained by virtually all the classical specialists in the field."[26]

The relationship between politics and scholarship in Islamic history has always been engulfed by both positive and negative narratives. It used to be positive when it entailed mutual

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[20]   Abdul, *The Historical Origin of Islam*, 86.
[21]   Rahim, *Islamic History*, 123-124.
[22]   Fawaz, "Athar al-Ṣirāᶜāt al-Siyāsiyah fi Nash'at al-Firaq", 4.
[23]   Rahim, *Islamic History*, 199.
[24]   Rahim, *Islamic History*, 205.
[25]   Sibāᶜī, *Al-Sunnah wa Makānatuhā fi al-Tashriᶜ al-Islāmī*, 180.
[26]   'Ajlān, *Al-Muḥaddithūn Wa as-Siyāsah*, 149.

respect and promotion of collective interest. For instance, during the dynasty of the Mamluks (13th -15th Century) the scholars represented by the Qadis, Imams, and teachers became stooge of the Palace, while the dynasty gave them the power to mete out persecution against anyone threatening their traditional scholastic position.[27] This was the arrangement that exposed Ibn Taymiyah (d. 728 A.H.) to several persecutions including the confinement of his staunch students in Damascus.[28]

While Ibn Taymiyah was a victim of the ruling dynasty because of opposing traditional scholars who were mostly stipendiaries of the government, Muḥammad bin Abdul-Wahhāb (d. 1206 A.H.) was a beneficiary of the positive interplay between politics and scholarship. After quitting 'Uyaynah, his birthplace, because of rejection of the masses and the threat of the palace, he successfully convinced the ruler of Dir'iyyah, Muhammad bin Saʿūd, over the gains awaiting his acceptance of the *Daʿwah*.[29] The motive of bin 'Abdul-Wahhāb was to spread his ideology across the Arabian gulf while that of bin Saʿūd was to capture more neighboring settlements; the collaboration was a merger of political interest with religious propagation.[30] It is worthy of note that the reigning Caliphate at the time was the Ottoman Empire with heavy support from Sufi traditional scholars. Hence, the Jihad embarked upon by both bin Abdul-Wahhāb and bin Saʿūd was against the consent of the ruling empire.[31] The result of the battle waged against Muslims with opposing religious views was the imposition of Wahhābiyah on Hijaz and the rise of a kingdom attributed not to Islam but to the house of Saud. The descendants of the two figures later agreed to share the fruits of the "Jihad", giving the house of Saud the exclusive claim to political rule in what became the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and adopting the Wahhābiyah teachings with the concession of its promotion and headship of religious scholarship to the descendants and adherents of bin Abdul-Wahhāb.[32]

The relationship between politics and Islamic scholarship changed in the 20th century from what it used to, because of the influence of colonialists who succeeded in driving religion out of governance in many Muslim countries. The respect exclusively enjoyed by Muslim scholarship was tackled and rivaled by the large number of Westernized Muslims who saw themselves as "elites" in the discourse of national affairs. However, this assertion does not rule out instances of the casual interplay between the government and the scholars. For instance, in Egypt where the famous institution of Al-Azhar resides, the government has at different points in time attempted to lure the religious institution into adopting its political interest as apparent in its exclusivist policy against the Muslim Brotherhood.[33] Also, in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the government is notorious for using its Council of Elder Scholars to propagate its political vendetta as visible in the case of the Qatar-boycott in 2016 and the declaration of Muslim Brotherhood and Jamāʿat Tablīgh as terrorist organizations in 2020 and 2021 respectively. The polemics that visited the involvement of America in the Arabian Gulf war in 1991 by Saudi Arabia remain the most surviving manifestation of the manipulation of religious authorities by the state power. The political intrigues of the war gave birth to two conflicting blocs of scholarship in the Kingdom, namely, the *Madkhaliyah* and *Surūriyah*. The next sub-topic addresses the elaboration of the scene.

The Narrative of *Madkhaliyah* and *Surūriyah* in Saudi Arabia

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[27]   Qamarudeen Khan, *The Political Thought of Ibne Taymiyah* (New Delhi: Adam Publishers & Distributors, 2007), 7.
[28]   Qamarudeen, *The Political Thought*, 8.
[29]   'Ali bin 'Abd al-Rahman al-Tayyar, *Taysīr al-ʿAzīz al-Wahhāb fī Sīrat al-Shaykh Muḥammad bin 'Abdul-Wahhāb* (Riyadh: Maktabat Tawbah: 1429A.H.), 51.
[30]   'Ali, *Taysīr al-ʿAzīz al-Wahhāb*, 52.
[31]   Ahmad Amin, *Zuʿamā'u al-Iṣlāḥ fi al-ʿAṣr al-Ḥadīth* (Beirout: Al-Maktabat al-'Asriyyah, 2011), 17.
[32]   *Ibid*.
[33]   Husayn QāḍI, *Mawqif al-Azhar min Jamā'at al-Ikhwān* (Cairo: Darul Maqtam, 2016), 25.

In 1991 the Iraqi army with the order of Saddam Hussein invaded its neighboring Kuwait. The invasion was a bad signal for other sister countries that constituted the Arabian Gulf including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It is worth mentioning that Iraq was an ally of Russia while Saudi Arabia and most of its sister nations in the Gulf were allies of America. Hence, the invasion had some traces of international politics. There is no doubt that Iraq was powerful among the Gulf countries being the fourth largest nation with military power.

The Arabian Gulf led by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia secured the American intervention in combating the regional attack embarked on by Saddam. This was done at a time when there was a massive hatred making the round among Muslim youths in Arabia against the United States' policies in the Israel-Palestinian war. In addition, the *Mujāhidūn* who had successfully forced out the Soviet Union from Afghanistan in 1989 were already determined to defend the sanctity of the Gulf against the Iraqi invasion.[34] To the surprise of all, the announcement was made that America had been sought after to lead the expulsive mission in the Arabian Gulf by the Monarch. This decision which was seen by the majority of Muslim Arabs as an invitation of their harshest enemy to invade their land was sanctioned by the official verdict of the Council of Senior Scholars under the headship of Shaykh 'Abdul-Azīz bin Bāz.[35] In religious matters, the Council's verdict is held in high esteem by the masses. Perhaps, the state authority deemed the release of such an official verdict might put the uproar generated by its decision to an end. Unfortunately, the verdict only attracted an unprecedented religious opposition in the Kingdom led by some young scholars in their thirties namely, Sifr Hawali, Salman Audah, Nasir Umar, A'id Qarni, etc.[36]

The emerging scholars mentioned above overwhelmed the elderly scholars with sophisticated knowledge of modern politics, new social order, and international politics, in addition to higher academic qualifications in Islamic Theology and Jurisprudence. The scholars who later were to be referred to as "*Ṣaḥwah* scholars" pulled an unexpected crowd and resurrected the never existing political awareness in the Kingdom. The much respect with which the Council is accorded is being threatened by the new trend and the autocratic system being enjoyed by the House of Saud was fast becoming a subject of disagreement among the citizens. Initially, it was just a peaceful theological difference but as time went on it appeared as a political threat to the interest of the dynastic house. Hence, another bloc of scholars within the Kingdom joined the race of the religious discussion but with serious emotional attachment to the defense of the political interest of the ruling house. This bloc was flagbeared by scholars of Madinah under the auspices of Shaykh Muhammad bin Amān al-Jāmi (d. 1995) and Shaykh Rabi'u al-Madkhali.[37]

The latter scholars are labeled as Jamiyyah, which is an attribution to al-Jāmi, who is originally from Ethiopia and relocated to Saudi as a lecturer at the Faculty of Theology of the Islamic University of Madinah. Later on, the scholars were labeled as *Madkhaliyah*, which is an attribution to the man who took over the mantle of leading the trend, Rabi'u al-Madkhali, a Professor of Hadith at the Islamic University of Madinah.[38] The Madkhaliyah scholars are reputable for condemning any political activism, opposition, reformation, and awareness and labeling any scholar inclined to the above as Surūriyah, an attribution to Shaykh Muhammad bin Surur (d. 2016). Bin Surur is originally from Syria before relocating to Saudi where he trained the progressive young scholars of the Kingdom on the thoughts of Qutb's Islamic Supremacy (*Hākimiyyah*) and political reformation. He was a member of the Muslim Brotherhood for thirteen years before abandoning the Jamā'ah for modern Salafism which is

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34   Osama bin Laden, *Al-Mudhakkirāt al-Majhūlah* (Cairo: Madbuli Saghir, 2011), 28.
35   Rabī'i bin Umayr al-Madkhali, *Ṣadd ᶜUdwān al-Mulḥidīn* (Madinah:n.p, 1992), 35.
36   Abū Ibrāhīm bin Sulṭān al-Adnāni, *al-Quṭbiyyah Hiya al-Fitnah* (Cairo: Darul Minhaj, 2007), 170.
37   Saᶜīd Mushāri, *al-Jāmiyyah fi al-Mīzān* (n.p: 2019), 27.
38   Saᶜīd, *Al-Jāmiyyah fi al-Mīzān*, 24.

the state religion in the Kingdom.[39] He mentored the young Saudi scholars who later formed the religious bloc advocating for political reformation in the Kingdom, many of who later became Professors in Islamic Studies and Law including Nasir Umar, Awad Qarni, Salman Audah, A'id Qarni, etc.

The line of battle was drawn between *Madkhaliyah* and *Surūriyah* scholars. A lot of published works and lectures produced by their proponents bombarded the market. The leader of *Madkhaliyah* released a published book in support of seeking America's intervention in the Gulf war. He cited authorities from Islamic history and jurisprudence works to buttress the government's decision.[40] The scholars from the *Surūriyah* bloc maintained that applying the legal rulings on seeking the assistance of non-Muslims to the Gulf war is a sheer manipulation of religious texts because that is not the bone of contention in this case. The reality according to them is to search for the Islamic ruling on inviting a non-Muslim to invade the territory of the Muslims. [41]

It is obvious that the religious polemics raised by the war was leading to others. The *Madkhaliyah* was suspecting the *Surūriyah* of promoting a foreign political agenda which is not in the interest of the ruling house of Saud. They later found out that some elements of non-Saudi Muslim Brotherhood members were fanning the ember of national agitation through the citizen scholars of the nation. Hence, the next agenda of the *Madkhaliyah* was to uproot the elements of *Ikhwan's* thoughts among students.

Since Sayyid Quṭb's works were considered the spring for the political orientation of the new trend, Rabīᶜu al-Madkhalī launched an academic attack on those works and came out to publicize what he described as fundamental heresies contained in the works. Among the heresies alleged by al-Madkhalī against Quṭb are abusing the companions, uniformity of religion, revolutionary approach, *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* religion.[42] Before the publication of his submissions on Quṭb's works, Madkhalī sought the consent and review of another high-ranked scholar of the kingdom, Bakru Abū Zaydi. The latter after reading the manuscript replied in a written letter that the work did not worth being published and accused Madkhalī of twisting the views of Quṭb in all the alleged heresies.[43] Abū Zayd furthered that Quṭb was a great scholar who died for the cause of Islam and that even if he had committed a religious mistake, the unethical approach adopted by Madkhalī did not suit him. The manuscript however was published with the commendation of another *Salafi* scholar in the person of Nāsirudeen al-Albāni (d. 1999).

Later on, other writers within the *Madkhaliyah* group laid down the theoretical framework that would guide students in identifying scholars who belong to *Surūriyah*, and by extension categorized as a heretic and anti-traditional scholars. Some of the marks include adopting an objective approach in dealing with other Muslims, approving of belonging to contemporary Muslim movements, emphasis on current affairs, advocacy for political reformation and public condemnation of government policies, and looking down upon the elderly and traditional scholars in the Kingdom who are mostly anti-modern state and promoting the Islamic supremacy of Sayyid Qutb.[44] Some scholars within the *Madkhaliyah* submitted that the *Surūriyah* trend constitutes an avenue for religious terrorists and a window leading to the hindrance of peaceful co-existence in the Kingdom.[45]

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[39]   Abū Ibrāhīm bin Sulṭān al-Adnāni, *al-Quṭbiyyah Hiya al-Fitnah*, 132.
[40]   Rabīᶜi bin Umayr al-Madkhali, *Ṣadd ᶜUdwān al-Mulḥidīn*.
[41]   Abū Ibrāhīm bin Sulṭān al-Adnāni, *al-Quṭbiyyah Hiya al-Fitnah*, 88.
[42]   Rabīᶜi bin Umayr al-Madkhali, *al-ᶜAwāṣim Mimmā fī Kutub Sayyid Quṭb min al-Qawāṣim* (Ujman: Maktabatul Furqan, 2001).
[43]   Saᶜīd Mushāri, *al-Jāmiyyah fī al-Mīzān*, 123.
[44]   Abū Ibrāhīm bin Sulṭān al-Adnāni, *al-Quṭbiyyah Hiya al-Fitnah*.
[45]   Zayd bin Hādi al-Madkhali, *al-Irhāb* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Hady al-Muhammadi, 2008), 64.

The major avenue for the *Surūriyah* scholars to ventilate their religious views was through the two widely-circulated monthly magazines of *As-Sunnah* and *al-Bayan*. Before the gulf uproar, the two magazines founded by Bin Surur were the most circulating journals among the youths of modern Salafism across the globe with headquarters in London. The elderly scholars in Saudi have commended the effort of the publisher in promoting the teachings of Salafism. In many columns of the two magazines, much emphasis was often made on the necessity for the Saudi monarch to change its policies in international politics, condemnation of America's hypocritical interventions and interruption in the affairs of foreign governments, Islamic supremacy, Caliphate, instigation of political consciousness and condemnation of autocracy and tyranny. The above themes are in collision with the traditional arrangements in the Kingdom where religious scholars need to maintain passivism regarding political discourses. Hence, the magazines seized to attract the recommendation of the traditional scholars.

The political activism of the *Surūriyah* trend reached the zenith when its scholars announced the take-off of the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights in Saudi Arabia (CDLR) with Ibn Jibrin, a leading traditional scholar as its chairman. The Council of Elder Scholars immediately condemned such an act under a government that has its religious apparatus.[46] The government relieved all the members of the said committee of their official assignments and banned them from further religious engagement in the country.

The effects of this religious dichotomy cannot be farfetched. The *Madkhaliyah* group has been accused of spying for the government.[47] Through this attitude many scholars have been jailed, not because of committing any crime but for ventilating their religious convictions. The government persecutes Muslim scholars with *Surūri* affiliation by dismissing them from jobs, jailing them, and banning public lectures and works. The list of scholars who are currently suffering on the gallows is unending, and some have died in jail without prosecution.

Conclusion

Some of the submissions of the study are enumerated below:

i. Religion has always been a political tool to secure the legitimacy and acceptance of the people. This view tallies with the famous statement of Marx who saw religion as the 'opium of the people.

ii. Religion needs politics to acquire the power of freedom of faith and belief. In another expression, power is inevitable for the proselytization and propagation of religion, and the only means to it is politics, formally or informally.

iii. The relationship between politics and Islamic scholarship changed in the 20th century from what it used to, because of the influence of colonialists who succeeded in driving religion out of governance in many Muslim countries.

iv. The relationship between politics and scholarship in the formative and classical eras of Islam is characterized by both positive and negative narratives.

v. The rise of *the Surūriyah* trend in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia constitutes a formidable threat to the political interests of the ruling dynasty. Hence, the resort to its persecution by the state authorities rather than appealing to superior arguments.

vi. The theology of the *Madkhaliyah* group is opposed to political reformation, opposition, and awareness and it promotes a peaceful society under an unchecked tyrannical system.

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[46] Abū Ibrāhīm bin Sulṭān al-Adnāni, *al-Quṭbiyyah Hiya al-Fitnah*, 211.

[47] Saʿīd Mushāri, *al-Jāmiyyah fī al-Mīzān*, 123.

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