



UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

**FUTURES STUDIES IN
CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC AND WESTERN
THOUGHT:
A CRITICAL STUDY OF THE WORKS OF ZIAUDDIN
SARDAR, MAHDI ELMANDJRA,
ALVIN TOFFLER AND DANIEL BELL**

By

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to,

*My father, Wan Zakaria Abdul Rahman,
My mother, Faudziah Abdullah,
My dear sisters and brothers,
Wan Nazahiyah, Wan Fakhrul Anwar, Wan Ahmad Zukri, Wan Zuraiha,
Wan Farahiyah, Wan Farhana, Wan Zakirah,
Wan Mohd. Abdul Hakim, Wan Hakimah Atirah,
My beloved grandmothers, Hajjah Wan Kalthum and Hajjah Wan Lijah,
My late grandfathers, Haji Abdul Rahman and Haji Abdullah,
My late uncle, who inspired me in many ways, Mohd. Shahir Abdullah,
And my dear soulmate, for his love and patience.*

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TRANSLITERATION TABLE

CONSONANTS

ء	'
ا	a
ب	b
ت	t
ث	th
ج	j
ح	ḥ
خ	kh
د	d
ذ	dh
ر	r
ز	z
س	s
ش	sh
ص	ṣ
ض	ḍ
ط	ṭ
ظ	ẓ
ع	ʿ
غ	gh
ف	f
ق	q
ك	k
ل	l
م	m
ن	n
و	w
ه	h
ة	h
ي	y

VOWELS

Long

آ
ؤ
إي
أى

Shorts

ـَ a
ـِ i
ـُ u

Double

ئ iy (final form ī)
ؤ uww (final form ū)

Diphthongs

أو aw
أي ay

ABSTRACT

Futures Studies, or the study of future, is a post-Enlightenment new field of inquiry in Western history of intellectual tradition. It attempts to study the probable, possible and desirable futures for human. Nevertheless, the study and concern on future is not a unique Western phenomenon. Indeed, every society and civilization has its own version of “futures studies”, as found in astrology, numerology, palm reading and so on and so forth. Islam - as the religion of *fiṭrah* (primordial nature) - regards future within an eternal conception of time – the *dunyā* and the *akhīrah*. With the influence of Western analysis on future, this research attempts at firstly recognizing the notion of future in both Islam and Western traditions. In so doing, we chose two Muslim scholars, Ziauddin Sardar and Mahdi Elmandjra, who are both prominent in the study of future, and also two Western scholars, Alvin Toffler and Daniel Bell as representatives of Western tradition in studying future. Secondly, this research traces the development of futures thinking in both Western and Islamic context and argues that futures thinking, indeed Futures Studies, has become a significant mode of thinking in Western society within its reception of modernity, and now postmodernity. The development of Futures Studies and futures thinking on their Muslim counterpart shows similar interest, though with much slower pace. Our analysis therefore focuses on the thematical aspects of the scholars’ thoughts and compares the divergences between both Muslim and Western views on future, as well as their resemblances. We then conclude that the significance of futures thinking and Futures Studies should be urgently recognized by the Muslims in order to resolve their present condition in which they become part of the contributing factor. This, as we argue and believe, should be realized through an *ijtihādīc* struggle – to be ready to criticize oneself, and recognize one’s weaknesses and mistakes in understanding and practicing one’s own religion and then to set forward the best resolution to be implemented for a desirable future. Only through this process of self-criticism and self-awareness that we can contemplate a self-renewal process for ourselves, and most importantly, for the Muslim society and its civilization in the future.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The rise of futures concerns in contemporary Islamic Thought is rarely recognized despite its significance to the future of Muslim societies in particular and Islamic civilization in general. Nevertheless, global concern regarding the future is still new in Islamic discussion. Such concern towards Islamic Alternative Futures where Muslims could achieve brighter futures therefore has become crucial.

Contemporary discussion regarding the future of Islamic civilization within the modern framework of Futures Studies¹ – a specific study of future - had been firstly brought out by Ziauddin Sardar through his magnum opus, *The Future of Muslim Civilization* (1979). He was born on 31 October 1951 in Dipalpur, Northern Pakistan and migrated to England with his parents at an early age. He studied physics and information science at the City University, London. After completing his study, he worked at various institutions, mainly as a journalist. Although his formal educational background was in so-called ‘secular’ disciplines, his thirst for finding the truth of Islam has brought him to various experimental journeys within Islamic movements, including

¹ According to *The Norton Dictionary of Modern Thought*, the definition of Futures Studies, also known as futurology, is:

A conjecture or intellectually disciplined speculation; a forecast, which is based either on a continuing trend or on some defined probabilities of occurrences; and a prediction, which is a prognosis of a specific event.

As far as the definition is concerned, there are a number of crucial elements in *futurology* or Futures Studies, mainly: (a) the activities of predicting or forecasting through various methods; (b) a thorough study of the present trend in social, political, economic, technological and natural sectors; and (c) the possibilities of the future, namely the state of the world in the future time. The researcher employed this definition of Futures Studies throughout this study. Further discussions on the subject will be dealt in Chapter 2.

the Sufi's group, as well as the Jama'at Tablighī, an Islamic *da'wah* group originated from Pakistan. During his university's years, he read classical Islamic disciplines through an informal group discussion (*usrah*) with Jaffar Sheikh Idris and this experience, according to him, has immensely exposed him to classical Islamic knowledge.² An internationally well-known scholar and futurist³, he is considered to be an expert in Islamic sciences and a pioneer in Islamic futures thinking. He has an extensive intellectual contribution of some 45 books and over 200 learned papers, articles, essays and reviews, and has been described by The Herald as 'one of the finest intellectuals on the planet'.⁴

In his book, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Sardar indicated his message of writing the book that, "...the Muslim *Ummah* cannot continue lying inactive and polluted like a stagnant lake – full only of potential resources. It must think about and plan for its future. And where necessary it must steel itself to grasp this future. But we cannot contemplate a harvest before we have sown the seed – and nourished it!"⁵ He

² Ziauddin Sardar, 2004, *Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of a Sceptical Muslim*, London: Granta Books, pp: 1-19; then pp: 40-84.

³ By the term 'futurist', the researcher employed the definition currently accepted as "the practitioners of futures field, aim to demystify the future, to make their methods explicit, to be systematic and rational, to base their results on the empirical observation of reality where relevant, and to test rigorously the plausibility of their logic in open discussion and intellectual debate. They also use creativity and intuition." (Wendell Bell, 2005, *Foundations of Futures Studies: History, Purposes, and Knowledge*, Vol.1, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, p:5). Hence, Futures Studies is regarded by Bell as "part of modern humanism, both philosophical and scientific" and thus secular (ibid). The recognition of Ziauddin Sardar, and also Mahdi Elmandjra as Muslim futurists therefore is according to this specific terminology in this discipline and not as generally understood as including any kind of futuristic thinkers, Muslim and Western alike. It is also important to state that the term "Muslim futurist" used in this study therefore refers to their identity as "Muslim" regardless of their location, whether they reside in the West – with regard to Ziauddin Sardar, or in the Muslim countries – with regard to Mahdi Elmandjra.

⁴<http://www.riseofthewest.net/thinkers/sardar01.htm>, 07/01/09;

<http://www.ziauddinsardar.com/Biography.aspx>, 07/01/09. This is the official website of Ziauddin Sardar and the best electronic source for his publications, biography, interviews and programs. A list of Sardar's publications is provided in APPENDIX 2.

⁵ Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk

thus stressed that the process of its regeneration must begin from now, and urged the Muslim intellectuals as the *Ummah*'s guardians to take the responsibility to develop the new Islamic civilization which is capable of manifesting Islam as a practical way of life in the postmodern society. Sardar in this book proposed an action plan namely '**Project 'Umrān**' which outlined the strategies towards achieving the regeneration of the Islamic civilization.⁶ At the centre of the project is the model of the Medīna state and its society, in which Muslims of all generations referred to, and which the project aims to find the source for regeneration. In *An Early Crescent: The Future of Knowledge and Environment in Islam*, Sardar, in the introduction of the book, reinforced his previous premise that the problems of Muslim societies require a different approach that must emerge from the world view and cultural milieu of the Muslim civilization itself.⁷

Our observation revealed that this new wave of futures thinking within Islamic thought is still under development. During the 80s and 90s, most of the writings pertaining to the study of future were done by Sardar and a few of his colleagues, namely Meryll Wyn Davies, Zaki Kirmani, Ayyub Malik, Asaria, Parvez Manzoor, Munawar Ahmad Anees, Gulzar Haidar and Ibrahem Sulaiman who mainly act as a think tank group – the *Ijmāli* group.⁸ Sardar with his *Ijmāli* fellows attempted to promote new Islamic Alternative Futures which encompass the whole of Islamic teachings thus manifest Islam as the most relevant way of life. Likewise, an urgent need for preparing a blueprint for that future society had been strongly urged by Sardar and the group. He says: "...planning is about preparing blueprints, but these need not to be

Publications, p: 11.

⁶ Ibid, pp: 133-134. Details of the project are discussed in Chapter V.

⁷ Ziauddin Sardar (ed), 1989, *An Early Crescent: The Future of Knowledge and Environment in Islam*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., p: 49.

⁸ Ibid, pp: 48-49. A brief explanation of the group and its movement is discussed in Chapter IV, under the section 'The Emergence of Futures Studies in Contemporary Islamic Thought'. It sometimes written as *Ijmalis*.

rigid, prepared once-and-for-all; they could be evolved continuously and modified and updated.”⁹ He also argues that “...it is a gross error to assume that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) did not plan or prepare blue prints of his future activities.”¹⁰ For instance, the Prophet’s (p.b.u.h) migration to Medina involved detailed planning. Therefore, it is sufficient to say that the Prophet (p.b.u.h) had a clear idea of what he wished to achieve and acted accordingly towards realizing his desired objectives.¹¹

Another Muslim scholar who involves in the future discussion is Mahdi Elmandjra, a graduate from Cornell University who obtained his doctorate from the London School of Economics. He occupied important positions in the United Nations organizations from 1961 to 1981, including the Assistant Director General of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). He was the President of the World Future Studies Federation and the Futuribles International of Paris, as well as the Founding President of the Moroccan Association of Futures Studies and the Moroccan Organization of Human Rights. Elmandjra has published over 400 articles in the fields of the human and social sciences, and has been selected by the International Biographical Centre as one of the “200 Outstanding Scholars of the 20th Century.”¹²

Elmandjra believes that Islam is a dynamic way of life whereby man has been given the opportunity and free will to choose his own fate and influence his environment through his cautiously-made action. The power of changing things in accordance with the will of man is a crucial recognition of man’s capabilities that

⁹ Ibid, p: 50.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid, pp: 50-51.

¹² <http://www.elmandjra.org/summary.htm>. 07/01/09.

signifies the concept of predestination (*qadar*) in the Islamic conception. As Muslims passed their Golden Era, the awareness of man's ability to influence his future by cautiously planning his action has vanished and this had affected his entire life by believing that it is being predestined by God, and consequently became directionless and futureless. In this regard, Elmandjra's argumentation that Muslims must differentiate between the concept of *bid'ā* (heresy) and *ibda'ā* (innovation) becomes crucial in order to sustain man's vitality in general and the Muslim *Ummah*'s survival in particular. Failure to distinguish these two concepts will definitely leave the *Ummah* in its present predicaments.¹³

Like Sardar, Elmandjra strives to verify the significance of futures thinking with the Islamic propagation. He stresses that the futuristic approach has been endorsed by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) through his own deeds and actions. Indeed, the Muslim is constantly reminded by the implications of his action in his life whether on the earth or in the hereafter. This kind of awareness therefore undoubtedly signifies the importance of futures thinking in the Muslim mind and hence rejects the notion of fatalistic view which has widely tarnished the dynamic concept of *qadar* within the Islamic world view. As Elmandjra rightly asserts that "...if the Prophet Muḥammad (p.b.u.h) and his companion had failed to imagine and visualize the future, there would probably not be as many as 1,200 million Muslims in the world today."¹⁴

Interested on the issues highlighted by Sardar and Elmandjra, particularly those concerning the future of Islam, this study attempts to investigate both scholars' thoughts. It will also focus on the significance of their thoughts, particularly in the field

¹³<http://www.elmandjra.org/livre3/ENGL25.htm>. 07/01/09.

¹⁴ Ibid.

of Futures Studies within their major thematic perspectives. This will be done by evaluating and analyzing their major books and learned papers, as well as reviews from other scholars related to the discussion.

In tracing the development of Futures Studies in Western countries, Elmandjra concedes that it was based on researches undertaken by a group of expert strategists in the Rand Corporation, for the Pentagon in 1946.¹⁵ This military study, which based on operational research, has been conducted in accordance with the request from the Defense of United States and can be linked with the West's struggle to conquer the world after the World War 2. The next level of the development can be traced from the establishment of a number of research institutions such as the Club of Rome by Aurelio Peccei which resulted with the famous report 'The Limits to Growth', and others like the Commission of The Year 2000 established by Edward Cornish in the United States and the Futuribles Group established by Bertrand de Jouvenel in France. Further establishment of a few departments or units at universities and academic institutions offering Futures Studies as a new subject or program were also part of the development. Such universities are the University of Houston-Clear Lake in the United States, and the Leeds Metropolitan University in the United Kingdom. For instance, at the University of Houston, Futures Studies is offered at the postgraduate level under the program *Master of Technology in Futures studies in Commerce*, conducted by the Department of Human Development and Consumer Sciences.¹⁶ It is clear that the soaring interest in the study of the future within Western context has been fueled by the government's funding through its various research and think tank institutions conjoining with strategic

¹⁵ <http://www.elmandjra.org/Futures.htm>. 07/01/09. This paper was presented in the Symposium on 'The Future of the Islamic World', Algiers in May, 1990.

¹⁶ <http://www.cl.uh.edu/futureweb/program.html>, 07/01/09.

research and policy making agencies.

In discussing the questions related to Futures Studies, the most important aspect to understand is the concept of future itself. Sardar, in *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, rightly illustrates that "...the future is now - this instant. This second. And it extends forever."¹⁷ By this statement, he stressed that the concept of future signifies that the future begins now and at this instant-period and the time range extends forever which connotes the large opportunities and alternatives of actions. Although the time range is infinite and open, it still begins from now, this instant. In other words, future is the time where men can plan and take control of their actions. They could not change or rewrite their history differently. The only possible and potential time to be controlled is their future which obviously begins at this very moment and time.

Although forecasting is an essential element in Futures Studies, the purpose of the discipline however, is not merely to predict the future – it is mainly aiming to explore various alternatives for future which occurred as a result of today's decisions and actions. In this connection, Sardar asserted that:

The object of futures studies is not to predict the future, as one could easily be misled to believe, but to explore various alternative futures which may arise as a result of the present decisions and actions which may be accessible to us.¹⁸

Hence, it is apt to say that Futures Studies is a systematic study on future that attempts to assist men in choosing and planning their actions in more positive and

¹⁷ Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, p: 4.

¹⁸ Ibid, p: 5.

proactive ways, through the process of forecasting various future possibilities and act strategically to achieve better life in the future.

Schwarz has quoted Bertrand de Jouvenel, a well-known French futurist that the role of Futures Studies "...is to clarify shapes of the possible future and create images of the future which are attainable and preferable."¹⁹ Wendell Bell in an article entitled 'What Do We Mean By Futures Studies' elucidated that the purpose of the futurists' research is to know causes of changes, that are the dynamic processes which underlie technological developments and changes in politics, economics, social and cultural orders, as well as to determine the estimated changes that need to be acknowledged by men for their irrepressible nature and that can be brought under human's control.²⁰ They also seek to discover the unforeseen consequences of individual and social actions. Citing from Laswell, Mau and Polak, Bell concluded that the futurists attempt:

...to clarify goals and values, describe trends, explain conditions, formulate alternative images of the future, and invent, evaluate, and select policy alternatives (Laswell 1967). They also study images of the future held by various groups, such as national leaders or slum dwellers (Mau 1968), and they analyze the dominant societal images of the future and their implications for the rise and fall of entire civilizations (Polak 1961).²¹

Roy Amara in his article entitled 'Probing the Future' specifically underlined six important objectives of Futures Studies as below:

- (1) To identify and examine alternatives futures.
- (2) To characterize the degree of uncertainties associated with each possibility or

¹⁹ Brita Schwarz (ed), 1982, *Methods in Futures Studies: Problems and Application*, Colorado: Westview Press, p: 110.

²⁰ Wendell Bell, 'What Do We Mean By Futures Studies' in Richard A.Slaughter (ed), 1996, *New Thinking for A New Millennium*, London: Routledge, p: 10.

²¹ Ibid.

alternative future.

- (3) To identify key areas which are the precursors or warnings of particular futures.
- (4) To examine a variety of “if—then” sequences
- (5) To acquire an understanding of the underlying processes of change.
- (6) To sharpen our knowledge and understanding of our preferences.²²

Therefore, Futures Studies can be understood as a discipline that regards the future as the object of study, considering the present as an initial point through the process of scrutinizing and understanding phenomena and processes of changes that occur in the present and whether or not they continue to exist in the future. Consequently, it will assist the process of decision making and provide relevant information within a longer perspective to help individuals and organizations in establishing plans, and creating appropriate alternatives for future. Thus we briefly conclude the crucial elements in Futures Studies as follow:

- (1) Future time as the object of study and present time as the initial point.
- (2) The processes and phenomena of changes as well as their accelerative development as the focus of futurical investigation.
- (3) The positive and negative impact of the changes.
- (4) The construction of various alternatives and contingencies in facing the unexpected risks.

Further development in Futures Studies signifies the development of particular methods and techniques to acquire deeper understanding on the phenomenal changes and the predictive notion in future. This attempt eventually ensued with various

²² Roy Amara, 1978, ‘Probing the Future’ in Jib Fowles (ed), *Handbook of Futures Research*, London: Greenwood Press, pp: 42-43.

methods created by the futurists, such as Delphi Technique, Trend Extrapolation, Simulation, and Scenario Writing. For instance, in Schwarz, the methods of Futures Studies were studied from the perspective of its problems and applications. The development of such methods is basic yet crucial in sustaining the validity of the forecasting processes and results.²³ In this respect, Martino differentiates Futures Studies with other disciplines whereby the important criteria in determining the benefits of forecasting activities do not depend on their precision or exactness, but on their value for the policy makers.²⁴

Our observation on future investigation within contemporary Islamic thought demonstrates that there is an emerging tendency among a number of Muslim scholars to instigate alternative discourse distant from the conventional ones - be they the traditionalists, modernists or reformists²⁵ – in understanding and employing the Islamic principles in accordance with the contemporary context of the Muslim *Ummah*. In other words, such approach to integrate Futures Studies within contemporary Islamic thought attempts to regenerate the strategic and operational values in the Islamic teachings in order to rejuvenate the veneration of the past Muslim civilizations. This raises the

²³ Brita Schwarz (ed), 1982, *Methods in Futures Studies: Problems and Application*, Colorado: Westview Press, pp: 11-42.

²⁴ Ibid, p: 110.

²⁵ Detailed discussion in modern and contemporary Muslim thought regarding their response in dealing with their predicament after experiencing Western colonialism and modernity has resulted in various proposals. Such examples could be found in Mahmud A. Faksh in *The Future of Islam in the Middle East: Fundamentalism in Egypt, Algeria and Saudi Arabia* (1997). He categorizes Muslims into three courses: (1) Liberal Modernists – those who embrace modernity and came from Western education background; (2) Fundamentalists – those who reject modernity and hold steadfastly to the Islamic teachings and principles; and (3) Nationalist Modernists – those who try to adapt Islam to modern national objectives. Another example is as discussed by Andrew Rippin in *Muslims: Their Religious Belief and Practices Volume 2: The Contemporary Period* (2001) who cites a more complex categorization of modern Muslim thought as proposed by William Shepard that is: (1) Secularism (2) Islamic modernism (3) Radical Islamism/fundamentalism, (4) Traditionalism (5) Neo-traditionalism. Tariq Ramadan in *Western Muslims and The Future of Islam* (2004) proposes another categorization that is: (1) Modernists (2) Reformists (3) Fundamentalists (4) Traditionalists.

importance of Futures Studies within contemporary Islamic thought and thus implies the significance of both Sardar and Elmandjra in contemporary context. Sardar in this regard, urges for a renewed understanding of Islam, innovation of new methodologies and realistic long term planning. Hence, he believes that any effort in transforming the present state of Muslim affairs requires creative methodology through a systematic and futuristic study – an integration between Islamic thought and Futures Studies – as has been discussed in some of his major works.²⁶

In this connection, we seek to outline an emerging development in the contemporary Islamic thought that requires special recognition. Historically speaking, the development of modern and contemporary Islamic thought has evolved through many stages – at once has caught in rigidity and stagnancy. The problems of the modern and contemporary Islamic thought have been greatly discussed and studied by many modern Muslim scholars such as Muhammad °Abduh, Muhammad Iqbal, °Ali Shari°ati, Murtadha Muttahhari, Mālek Bennabi and Ismail Al-Farūqi, to name but a few, based on their individual viewpoints and interpretations, which could not be stripped of the influence of their personal experiences and socio-economic, cultural and political context. Their reflections on the Muslims conditions were part of the revivalist responses within different settings in diverse Muslim societies throughout modern Islamic world. According to Aziz Al-Azmeh, revivalism (*nahda*) is “...the retrieval and restoration of the original qualities that made for strength and historical relevance. No progress without the retrieval of pristine beginnings (which reside in the early years of Islam, the teachings of the book of God, the Koran, and the example of the Prophet

²⁶ Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, in the Introduction.

Muhammad.”²⁷ Furthermore, he also stresses that the cleansing of the essence from the adulteration of history is the fundamental principle of revivalism.²⁸

All of the contributions of the previous revivalists were therefore significant to the need of the periods, contexts and situations they belonged to. Their attempts to understand and find answers for the Muslims’ problems in the repercussion of the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire were of high importance in the process of identifying the root of the Muslims’ malaise. However, facing the 21st century that is manifested by multi-dimensional challenges and problems ensuing the process of globalization and the emergence of a new shape of colonialism, namely the virtual colonialism, the Muslim *Ummah* needs a fresh paradigm in thinking and methodologies in order to safeguard their culture and identity in the future. This can be regarded as part of continuous revivalist efforts in the Muslim history. Consequently, we believe the analyses of Sardar and Elmandjra as representing the current Muslim futurists are therefore valuable and significant. We share their thoughts that the Muslim *Ummah* needs a fresh approach and mechanism in understanding and employing the Islamic precepts compatible to the challenges, problems and requirements of their age through a dynamic and strategic study on future to find unconventional solutions.

Though futures thinking is found in many Islamic sources and traditions, it is considerably important to contextually study it within the Western intellectual tradition. This is because Futures Studies – as a structured and well-defined discipline - originally

²⁷ Aziz al-Azmeh, 2007, *The Times of History: Universal Topics in Islamic Historiography*, Budapest: Central European University Press, p: 18.

²⁸ Ibid, p: 21.

emerged, evolved and developed in the Western milieu and culture.²⁹ Thus, it manifests the Western values and perceptions. In this connection, Maruyama's statement in *Cultures of the Future* regarding the attributes of futures research is noteworthy as he says, "...in spite of its rapid development, Futures Studies still remains basically ethnocentric. It mainly expressed the views of futurists in industrialized countries."³⁰

Maruyama's argument clearly revealed the 'true colour' of Futures Studies that is mainly being opinionated by the futurists from the developed and industrialized countries. The perspective of the study is still based on the eyes of the developed countries, especially the Western countries. Therefore, the views that underlie the study have become "one-sided" and subject to the requirements of their people, and interpreted by those in power in accordance to their specific agenda.

Apart from being a product of military agenda, the emergence of Futures Studies as a new discipline in the Western countries resulted from the efforts of a number of Western scholars to explore new methodologies in dealing with problems following the accelerating process of development and the advancement of science particularly after the Second World War. As Thompson rightly stated in his *Understanding Futurology: An Introduction to Futures Studies*, the source of failures in undertaking most of the problems in a complex modern age basically lies in its fragmented and isolated

²⁹ Here, the researcher emphasizes that this claim is based on the emergence of Futures Studies as a specific discipline within modern intellectual discourse, and not as futures thinking as generally perceived within many societies and cultures since the beginning of human history as could be found in the range of techniques of fortune-telling, dream interpretation, omens and other oracles. Wendell Bell puts all of these sorts under methods of divination (Bell, 2005, vide: 2-3). However, like primitive divination, Bell further argues that the modern approach of studying future "...includes an effort to discover and often, if possible, to control the future, to bend it to human will." (Ibid, p: 5).

³⁰ Magoroh Maruyama (ed), 1978, *Cultures of the Future*, The Hague: Mouton Publishers in the Introduction.

solutions. He points out that: "...we still tend to consider problems in isolation and apply remedies in isolation."³¹

In this connection, Toffler's analysis of changes in his *Future Shock* argued that human beings have experienced accelerating changes that have contributed to the occurrence of what he termed as *future shock*. As a result, millions of people have experienced a feeling of disorientation and disability to rationally cope with the new environment. He said:

In the three short decades between now and the twenty first century, millions of ordinary, psychologically normal people will face an abrupt collision with the future. Citizens of the world's richest and most technologically advanced nations, many of them, will find it increasingly painful to keep up with the incessant demand for change that characterizes our time. For them, the future will have arrived too soon³².

Based on the aforementioned premise, Toffler stressed that men need to equip themselves by understanding the phenomenal changes sufficiently, be it at the individual or societal level, as well as the effective methods of response. He believes that the best way to deal with *future shock* is through adaptation or self-appropriation. Thus, he claims that the main purpose of him writing *Future Shock* is:

...to help us to come to terms with the future - to help us cope more effectively with both personal and social change by deepening our understanding of how men respond to it. Toward this end, it puts forward a broad new theory of adaptation - but not only theory - it also intended to demonstrate a method.³³

Therefore we can conclude that Futures Studies resulted from efforts made by

³¹ Alan E. Thompson, 1979, *Understanding Futurology: An Introduction to Futures Studies*, USA: David & Charles Inc., p: 17.

³² Alvin Toffler, 1970, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 9.

³³ Ibid, p: 3.

some Western scholars to understand a whole complex of problems occurred in their society through the process of social change that heightened by technological advancement. Within this framework, this study attempts to understand the Western futures thinking, particularly through a socio-historical analysis. This is done by examining Alvin Toffler and Daniel Bell - two prominent arch-figures in the field - in particular, to their thematical perspectives on future. The reason for selecting the two scholars is based on their credible contributions to the development of Futures Studies from its early stage and their influence in disseminating future awareness in Western society and worldwide alike, especially through their theory of future society.

Alvin Toffler has written many bestsellers including *Future Shock*, *The Third Wave*, and *Powershift*. He has vast working experiences in industrial factories, thereafter in journalism in Washington. Most of his intellectual works have been written with his life and intellectual partner – his wife, Heidi.³⁴ As a prolific futurist and writer, he has consulted many international leaders, especially in matters related to future prospects as well as communication and corporate restructuring. He founded The Institute for Alternative Futures, a think tank group since 1977 with Clement Bezold and James Dator. He also owns Alternative Futures Associates, a consulting firm that deals specifically with corporate organizations in evaluating future business prospects.³⁵

While Toffler bases his futures work mainly in the business and corporate world, Daniel Bell is more of an academic and an intellectual figure, working in the academia. He is the Henry Ford II Professor Emeritus of Social Sciences at Harvard University. He is also the Scholar-in-Residence at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and

³⁴ <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/lm/toffler.htm>, 07/01/09.

³⁵ <http://www.altfutures.com/>, 07/01/09.

also a co-founder of the journal '*The Public Interest*'. Formerly, he was the President of the Commission on Technology (1964-66) and the President of Commission on a National Agenda for the 1980's (1979). An influential figure in sociology and social theory, he has written many books in the field, including *The End of Ideology* (1960), *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (1973) and *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976). His *The End of Ideology* and *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* appeared on the Times Literary Supplement's list of the 100 most important books of the second half of the twentieth century. A multi-identity intellectual, Bell regards himself a liberal in politics, a socialist in economics and a conservative in culture.³⁶

Thus, we found the scholars' thoughts as invaluable for further academic research and to fill in the intellectual vacuum within the field, particularly through a comparative analysis that evaluate two major worldviews and civilizations – Islam and the West – towards creative engagement. This would be an interesting passage towards understanding the underlying paradigm which constitutes the ideas and thoughts and searching for its benefits for the betterment of the *Ummah*, as well as for the humanity in the future.

1.1 THE PROBLEM

Muslims have encountered many obstacles and problems throughout their history but recently, the problems have become increasingly significant. This is because Muslims nowadays are in their worst state in history – their lands have been captured and invaded

³⁶ http://www.pbs.org/arguing/nyintellectuals_bell.html, 07/01/09.

(Jerusalem, Iraq and Afghanistan), they are divided into pieces of nations based on their national origins and races, they are subjugated to the Western politics and economic power and imperialism, and most importantly, they have been victimized in the process of globalization and neo-colonialism.

The *Ummah*'s problems and their solutions have been discussed by many Muslim scholars for a long time. Since the 19th century, Muslim reformists such as Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghānī, Muhammad ʿAbduh, Muhammad Iqbal, Mālek Bennabi, ʿAli Shariʿati, to name a few, have sought to find solutions on the Muslims problems. Modern discussions within Islamic Thought mainly focuses on important issues such as how Muslims should response to modernity, and how to develop their countries and societies after gaining their independence from the colonial powers. Whereas all these great efforts by the Muslim scholars were very much appreciated for their significant contributions to understanding the Muslims malaise and ways to resolve their continuous calamities relevant to their particular time and contexts, the Muslim *Ummah* of the 21st century faces even greater problems and challenges that need to be tackled with new approaches that suit to their changing environment and demands. In mapping the challenges of the 21st century, the researcher outlined three areas of challenge bearing the significance of studying the future within Muslim perspective:

- a) The constant conflicts in Muslim countries demonstrate the urgent need for studying future solutions systematically, rather than haphazardly;
- b) The present or current methodologies in Islamic thought which traditionally faith-based needs to be evaluated for more dynamic and multidisciplinary methodologies that are relevant to changes within the Muslim societies and the global world;

- c) The process of globalization causes increasing pluralism that transcends boundaries, cultures and religions, thus requires Muslims to reevaluate their approach in dealing with the impact of globalization within the diverse Muslims settings and with the global world in general.

Attempts on continuous and meaningful revival and reform programs within the Muslim societies are therefore need to be urgently addressed and further facilitated so as to improve their current predicaments. One of the developing yet not fully tapped efforts is the significant debate on the future of Islam and the Muslim *Ummah* through the implementation of futures thinking in which alternative futures for Islam and the *Ummah* will be systematically studied and options on solutions are analyzed, scrutinized and thereafter developed into models. This new development has provided new challenges and opportunities which need to be addressed in order to establish mutual respect and peaceful coexistence within the global societies. The current situation in studying the future of Islam and Muslims therefore needs to address a number of challenges:

- a) The scarce amount of materials on futures thinking, specifically Futures Studies written by the Muslim scholars;
- b) The small number of professional Muslim futurists in the Muslim world;
- c) The scarce number of specific strategic research centre or organization that studies the future of Islam and Muslims, except that of national strategic centers established for national purpose and are working independently;
- d) A growing development approach introduced by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in implementing futures thinking through the Project 1440H – an

ambitious long-term project to rectify the socio-economic conditions of the less-developed Muslim countries.

Taking the importance of continuous efforts on reform into account, and also the growing development on futures thinking in contemporary Islamic thought, the researcher attempts at finding answers for these questions:

- (a) Do the current problems faced by the Muslim societies are the result of their lack of understanding or perhaps misunderstanding of their religious sources pertaining to the importance of future in which they should attempt on improving their condition as part of their duty as God's vicegerents in this world?
- (b) In what way that Muslims can justify the disorganization and chaotic situations in their societies with their religious precepts and not for their own incapability to live up to the standard set up by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and according to the Qur'ānic injunctions on being the best *Ummah* (*khayra Ummah*) ever in human history? By this, does it not logical for the Muslims to engage in renewing their understanding of the present challenges that they are facing and hence improving their future through systematic thinking and strategic planning?
- (c) And if they realized the importance of such effort on renewal process through systematic and strategic thinking and planning, are they capable of implementing such thing without studying the currently available method already applied by the present system, namely the Western methods of futures thinking?

Based upon the abovementioned questions, this study attempts to explore the significance of Futures Studies within contemporary Islamic Thought and its

development, particularly in the thoughts of two Muslim professional futurists, Ziauddin Sardar and Mahdi Elmandjra as an alternative approach to solving the *Ummah*'s malaise in a more practical, directional and systematic way. The Muslim *Ummah* should not allow their future to be directionless for this means that they will remain under the current situation of subjugation and predicament. Therefore Muslims need fresh paradigm and methodologies to solve their problems, and this urge for revivalism has also been advocated by many contemporary scholars such as Tariq Ramadan, ^cAbdulkarim Soroush, and others. The approach of both Sardar and Elmandjra however, is regarded as quite different from their contemporaries. They sought their efforts through a systematic futures thinking in the line of the modern field of Futures Studies that is not widely recognized within contemporary Islamic discourse. However, this could not mean that they have accepted and applied the Western methodologies of Futures Studies wholeheartedly without any filtration. As Sardar rightly emphasized:

Disciplines which have evolved within western paradigms cannot be stripped of their values and metaphysical assumptions. Indeed, it is these very values and assumptions which constitute the paradigm.³⁷

Following the aforementioned statement, it is crucial to consider Futures Studies within Western thought for it was originally evolved from their context and situation. The research will thus analyze Toffler and Bell as representatives of Western futurists in order to evaluate the impacts of futures research in solving their problems. This type of analysis is very important to assess the benefits of its applications onto the Muslim *Ummah* in the present and future time. Besides, we will explore whether there are any similarities or differences between both worldviews regarding their values,

³⁷ Ziauddin Sardar (ed), 1989, *An Early Crescent: The Future of Knowledge and Environment in Islam*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., p: 49.

development, applications and directions within the thoughts of these selected scholars. If so, in what areas do they share the similarities and if not, what and why are the differences? Most importantly, what are the implications behind those differences in values, methodologies and the direction of the *Ummah*'s future in particular, and the global society in general?

1.2 RATIONALE

This study is significant and relevant based on the following reasons:

- (a) The limited discussion regarding Futures Studies and futures thinking within Islamic disciplines, while Western scholars have been immensely exploring and developing this field and applying its methods in planning and policy procedures. This imbalance situation has placed the Muslim *Ummah* in permanent subjugation and domination of the Western civilization. In order to free them from this neo-colonialism, the Muslim *Ummah* needs to look and create fresh methodologies in understanding and dealing with their problems and seek appropriate and practical solutions capable of bringing them out of their long misery and therefore to survive in the future.
- (b) The current approach in the Islamic teachings that is more text-based³⁸ needs to be re-evaluated, in the sense not to be rejected completely but to introduce fresh methodology in thinking and acting that is more capable and relevant to the contemporary development in the Islamic *Ummah* and the global world.
- (c) A serious exploration of Futures Studies within contemporary Islamic thought is

³⁸ The problem of the current text-based approach in Islamic thought has been recognized by Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi and Malory Nye in their report on the future of Islamic Studies in the British education system. The report entitled *Time for Change: Report on the Future of Study of Islam and Muslims in Universities and Colleges in Multicultural Britain* was published by Al-Maktoum Institute Academic Press, Dundee.

hoped to eventually develop alternative paradigms that could assist the Muslim *Ummah* in planning and outlining concrete and practical plans of action in order to restore the Muslim civilization in the future.

- (d) Analysis regarding the development of futures thinking within contemporary Islamic thought has a long term justification in which to provide mechanism in understanding problems in the Islamic thought through holistic perspective, as planning for the future requires deep consideration about the past and the present alike. It is also hoped to provide systematic analysis on the future of Islam and Muslims in dealing different challenges relevant to the context of their times and therefore to instill a sense of directional future rather than directionless one.
- (e) Critical analysis through comparative approach between Islamic thought and Western thought regarding Futures Studies would bring clearer justifications of the advantages, limitations and many other aspects to be considered before applying its methods, and hopefully give new values based on the Islamic worldview.

1.3 OBJECTIVES

The main purpose of this study is to analyze the similarities and differences in the perspectives of both contemporary Islamic thought and Western thought with regards to the study of the future. This is done by analyzing the thoughts of selected scholars from both worldviews, based on their major thematic views concerning to futures thinking. The scholars are Ziauddin Sardar, Mahdi Elmandjra, Alvin Toffler and Daniel Bell, who have been selected for their prominent positions in contemporary future discussion and significantly contribute in this new field.

Generally, this study aims to introduce Futures Studies into Islamic discourse, and to investigate its principles and methodologies within the framework of contemporary Islamic thought. Specifically, it attempts to analyze Futures Studies through comparative approach in the context of Islamic and Western thoughts by discussing their prominent scholars representing both worldviews in this field, and studying the contribution of their thoughts to their particular civilizations and the global civilizations in general.

1.4 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS

The main focus of this study is to discuss about Futures Studies and its significance within the thoughts of the selected Muslim and Western scholars that are Ziauddin Sardar, Mahdi Elmandjra, Alvin Toffler and Daniel Bell. A critical study of their thoughts is approached through comparative analysis concerning the main selected themes within Futures Studies and how their worldviews would affect and influence their understanding and interpretations on issues pertaining to the general well-being of both the Muslim and Western civilization. This study therefore approaches the subject through civilizational framework in which the civilization and its system are regarded as a holistic structure.

In order to put their thoughts in a wider perspective, it is important to examine the status of futures thinking within Islamic thought, particularly from the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. As such, the researcher analyses these two Islamic sources to trace the origin of futures thinking from the Islamic perspective. The researcher also discusses the

concept of Futures Studies and its development, problems, purpose and methodologies in Western thought and its influence on the Islamic thought as such.

1.5 DEFINITION OF TERMS – FUTURES STUDIES

Futures Studies is a popular term referred to a recent futures research. However, the term *futurology* is still widely used in modern dictionaries referring to the study of future, while the term *futures studies* is hardly ever acknowledged. In *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, *futurology* is defined as:

The activity of predicting the state of the world at some future time, by extrapolating from present trend. Mainly a pseudo-science, given the complexities of social, political, economic, technological, and natural factors.³⁹

In *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, the definition of *futurology* is an “...inquiry into the methods of forecasting, and into what the future will hold.”⁴⁰ *The Norton Dictionary of Modern Thought*, on the other hand, defines *futurology* as:

A conjecture or intellectually disciplined speculation; a forecast, which is based either on a continuing trend or on some defined probabilities of occurrences; and a prediction, which is a prognosis of a specific event.⁴¹

Further elaborations on the terms will be discussed in Chapter II, but it is suffice to conclude in this section that scholars of Futures Studies or futurology (the futurists) employ extensive speculative, conjunctive and predictive methods developed in

³⁹ Simon Blackburn, 1996, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p: 151.

⁴⁰ Antony Flew (ed), 1984, *A Dictionary of Philosophy*, London: Macmillan, p: 200.

⁴¹ Allen Bullock & Stephen Trombley (eds), 1999, *The Norton Dictionary of Modern Thought*. New York: W.W.Norton. p: 172.

systematic techniques in their analysis and divides the future into possible, probable and preferable future.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

As a new field of inquiry, publications related to Futures Studies within contemporary Islamic thought are relatively small in number. The earliest work discussed future perspective of the Muslim *Ummah* was a book of collective essays written by Wilfrid Scawen Blunt⁴² in the *Fortnightly Review* entitled *The Future of Islam* (1882). The focus of this book was to highlight the problems in the Muslim worlds which have been dominated by the Western imperial power, mainly the British and French. He argued that the Islamic community was in decline, and it must be reformed from within. The adoption of western institutions, as he pointed out, will not by itself bring about the much needed reform. He criticized the Ottoman's reformation, the *Tanzīmāt*,⁴³ as have been "...instituted not by and through religion, as they should have been, but in defiance of it. ...All changes so attempted must fail in Islam because they have in them the inevitable vice of illegality".⁴⁴ Although written by a non-Muslim, Blunt urged the Muslim *Ummah* not to be troubled with the political

⁴² Blunt, a British Ambassador to the Middle East for ten years, was a good friend of Jamāl al-dīn Al-Afghāni, the influential figure of the *Islāh* movement in the 19th century. According to Hourani, Blunt had met °Abduh and Afghāni, when he settled for a time in Egypt to improve his Arabic and study the modern movements and problems of Islam. Through °Abduh and Afghāni and his personal observations, he had become acquainted with the new spirit of reform in the world of Islam and embodied these observations and thought in the book. The experience helped to develop a deep empathy with nationalist movements, and caused him to play a certain part in the Egyptian crisis of 1881-2 (Albert Hourani, 1962, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798-1939*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p: 110).

⁴³ *Tanzīmāt*, a Turkish term for "reorganization", was a period of reform of the Ottoman Empire between 1839 and the proclamation of the Ottoman constitution in 1876, under the reign of Sultan Mahmud II (1808-1839), who sought to centralize and modernize government by implementing European model in military, education and finance. http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761588419/tanzimat.html, 07/01/09.

⁴⁴ Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, *The Future of Islam*, Lahore: Sind Sagar Academy, p: 78.

devastation they were experiencing but to struggle for a better future. Blunt's prediction about the collapse of the Ottoman Empire however came true after 50 years of the book publication. This book had informed the researcher on the type of socio-historical analysis employed by Blunt in discussing the future of Muslim society. Blunt's method was timely, as the Muslim society at that time was in the state of great confusion as secularism and modernism penetrated and gradually transformed the society's structures and systems. Although Blunt did not offer any theory of future society, this study benefits from his socio-historical approach in studying the Muslim society.

In *Towards A New Destiny* (1974), Kalim Siddiqui has shown a new tendency in using future orientation analysis in discussing contemporary problems faced by the Muslim *Ummah*. In this magnificent report, he emphasized that the Muslim *Ummah* should move forward, and insisted the Muslim intellectuals to produce a programmatic blueprint which outlines the conceptual and operational framework to regenerate the political and socio-economic systems in the Muslim society.⁴⁵ Despite the insistence, Siddiqui himself did not propose any plan of how to develop such a blueprint. The discussion about the programmatic blueprint therefore remained unanswered. The book assisted the researcher in understanding alternative discourse within Islamic thought regarding the future of the Muslim *Ummah*, but its rather rhetorical approach lacked the crucial aspect of futurical analysis – the systematical and practical offerings. This study therefore took this limitation as a criterion for evaluation of constructive futures studies.

The works that combined futures thinking and methodologies within the discourse of contemporary Islamic thought are *The Future of Muslim Civilization* and

⁴⁵ Kalim Siddiqui, 1974, *Towards a New Destiny*, Slough: The Open Press.

Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to Come, both were Sardar's contributions published in 1979 and 1985. In *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Sardar underlined the significance of futures thinking as a way to develop fresh paradigm and methodology in understanding and employing Islamic teachings within civilizational perspective to facilitate the regeneration of Muslim civilization in the future. He proposed a model of civilizational project named as the '**Project 'Umrān'**', and outlined an action plan to be realized by the Muslim *Ummah*, more specifically their intellectuals.⁴⁶ The content of the book has been analysed and discussed by the researcher quite extensively, specifically in Chapter V. Sardar's programmatic model was also presented in this study as representing systematic analysis within Futures Studies discipline that combined the conceptual framework of both the Muslim and Western worldviews and systems, with the practical and methodological mechanisms on the implementation of futures thinking.

In the *Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to Come* (1985), he stresses more on the main purpose of Islamic futures which is to synthesize Islam as a dynamic and progressive worldview. He discusses the shape of ideas that challenging contemporary Muslims and hence requires them to redevelop the Islamic methodologies, enhance the functions of *Shari'ah* as a method in problem solving, shape of the Islamic states in the post-industrial era, enhance the function of Islamic technology, and emphasize an axiomatic approach in Islamic economics and Islamic environmental theories.⁴⁷ The book contributed in providing alternative discourse based upon conceptual and axiomatic approach in which Islamic principles were extensively discussed in the

⁴⁶ Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications.

⁴⁷ Ziauddin Sardar, 1985, *Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to Come*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd.

context of modern and postmodern demands. The overall discussions put forward by Sardar in this book have immensely influenced the researcher in searching the dynamic type of analysis that differentiates a future-orientated analysis with the others. Principally, these two important books by Sardar are considered as early formulation to his conceptual framework in discussing Futures Studies and introducing the subject into Islamic discourse. Most importantly, they guide the researcher in understanding the use of futures thinking as well as its contribution to the contemporary intellectual discourse.

In *The Touch of Midas: Science, values and environment in Islam and the West* (1984), the writers such as Ravetz, Anees, Manzoor and others attempt to “...examine whether a synthesis can be achieved between the growing awareness of a crisis in science in the West and the various attempts to rediscover the spirit of Islamic science in the Muslim world.”⁴⁸ The overall intellectual framework of this book is based on appreciating two basic assumptions. The first is there is no dichotomy or conflict between Islam and science, and the second is that science is not neutral or value free. In fact, it is a value-laden activities in which specific worldview prevailed itself through sets of hypotheses, theories and ideas. Based on the preceding assumptions, the writers explore various significant topics from the Islamic perspective, ranging from issues concerning science and values, planning, urban development, and environment. This work had opened new understanding in dealing with the issue on the compatibility of modern science with the Islamic values, hence brings out new dimension of future possibilities of the Muslims societies.⁴⁹ In general, this book has informed the researcher on the problems that need to be tackled in new perspective offered by Futures

⁴⁸ Ziauddin Sardar (ed), 1984, *The Touch of Midas: Science, Values and Environment in Islam and the West*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., p: 10.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

Studies. The alternative discourse that combined futurical analysis shed new understanding of the relationship between values and their impact on the overall structure of Muslims' systems.

In *Today's Problems, Tomorrow's Solutions: The Future Structure of Muslim Societies* (1988), Naseef indicates that the present work attempts to reinforce "...the reformist strivings to make Muslim thought more 'relevant' to the current realities."⁵⁰ It has been argued that the problems surrounding the implementation of the *Shari'ah* are not new and have been effectively dealt with by the previous generations. Thus, the writers discuss about issues concerning the role of *Shari'ah* and its challenge in contemporary world, the Islamization programme and strategies for change, and other socio-economic issues such as Islamic economics, Islamic banking and family life. Such discussions raised the important role of the modern Muslim scholars in understanding "...the essential features of the 'real world', the marginalization of Muslims, both physically and intellectually, the interconnection and interdependence of all reality."⁵¹ Without such understanding, it is undoubtedly impossible to imagine any positive changes or reforms in the present Muslim societies. The methods employed in this book assist the researcher in looking the issues concerning Ummah from futuristic viewpoints, thus significantly improved the researcher's understanding of the challenges and prospects of this new perspective.

In *An Early Crescent: the Future of Knowledge and the Environment in Islam* (1989), the writers such as Sardar, Manzoor and Anees attempt to evaluate

⁵⁰ Abdullah Naseef (ed), 1988, *Today's Problems, Tomorrow's Solutions: The Future Structure of Muslim Societies*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., p: 8.

⁵¹ Ibid.

contemporary Islamic thought from epistemological perspective. Sardar for instance, is critical on the Islamization programme introduced by Al-Farūqi for its failure to solve the epistemological problems in the Islamic sciences from their root. In fact, he argues that Al-Farūqi's Islamization programme has been developed in conjunction with the Western epistemology and disciplinary boundaries. Manzoor on the other hand, discusses the crisis in the Muslim's thought that value the separation between ideas and actions; whereas Nasr, Kirmani, Ateshin and Malik attempt to open new futures paradigm in discussing the problems of modern science, urbanization, and environment from the Islamic perspective.⁵² This book informed the researcher on the epistemological challenge when dealing with Western sciences which rooted in a worldview totally alien from the Islamic worldview.

In *Beyond Frontiers: Islam and Contemporary Needs* (1989), the writers attempt to develop "...a fresh perspective on *da'wah* and relates *da'wah* specifically to community development and the evolution of contemporary (both traditional and modern) modes of communicating Islam."⁵³ In this regard, *da'wah* is not merely about disseminating the Islamic precepts in conventional way through lectures or sermons. Instead, *da'wah* can be carried out using various methods and media of communications that capable of manifesting its beauty and diversity. The writers also discuss the significance of *da'wah* as a practical yet underdeveloped method and tool to deal with the present predicament of the Muslim *Ummah* towards their improvement in future. This work is of clear significance in enhancing future discussion within Islamic thought, particularly for its wide coverage on issues such as poverty, change, problems of

⁵² Ziauddin Sardar (ed), 1989, *An Early Crescent: the Future of Knowledge and the Environment in Islam*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., p: 50.

⁵³ Merryl Wyn Davies & Adnan Khalil Pasha (eds), 1989, *Beyond Frontiers: Islam and Contemporary Needs*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., p: 11.

refugees, media and communication.⁵⁴ This book helped the researcher in recognizing the issues in communicating Islam and the importance of capacity building through fresh understanding of Islamic precepts such as da^cwah.

Discussion concerning the future of Islam in South East Asia context has attracted some Muslim scholars in Indonesia. This particular interest can be found in a number of publications such as Amsyari's book entitled *Masa Depan Umat Islam Indonesia: Peluang dan Tantangan (The Future of the Indonesian Muslim Community: Opportunities and Challenges)* (1993). Amsyari discusses the future of Indonesian Muslims in their socio-political life, and proposed a model of an ideal Indonesian society. He also discusses the challenges and priorities of the Muslim actions, including the role of the spirit of Muslim brotherhood (*al-ukhuwwah al-Islāmiyyah*) and da^cwah movement to achieve the ultimate goal for future. The overall discussion of this book contributes in supporting the significant role of futures thinking when dealing with the Muslims problems in a more systematic and practical way.⁵⁵

Al-Qardāwi in *Al-Ummah Al-Islāmiyyah: Ḥaqīqah la Wahm (An Islamic Ummah: Reality Not Fantasy)* (1996a) regards that the solution for of the Muslim problems is through the unity of all the Muslim countries.⁵⁶ Despite being considered as a utopian dream, this idea clearly signifies the strategic aspect of such unity in terms of adding values in the human capital and natural resources.⁵⁷ However, to implement the idea into reality is not a simple undertaking as it requires clear and practical

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Fuad Amsyari, 1993, *Masa Depan Umat Islam Indonesia: Peluang dan Tantangan*, Bandung: Penerbit Al-Bayan.

⁵⁶ Al-Qardāwi, 1996a, *Al-Ummah Al-Islāmiyyah: Ḥaqīqah la Wahm* (trans. Ahmad Nuryadi), Selangor (Malaysia): Thinker's Library.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

methodologies and Al-Qardāwi clearly failed in proposing any blueprint. Yet, it has opened the discussions on how Muslims could find solutions in regaining their political and economic power. In another book entitled *al-Thaqāfah al-ʿArabiyyah al-Islāmiyyah bayna al-Aṣālah wa al-Muʿāṣirah* (The Islamic Culture between Tradition and Modernity) (1996b), Al-Qardāwi asserts that futures thinking does not contradict the Islamic precepts, but instead, he advocates the importance of this thinking by quoting various Qurʾānic verses and *hadīth* that support it.⁵⁸ This clearly shows his deep understanding of the Islamic stance on futures thinking. In fact, he stresses that although Futures Studies evolves in the West, it has a firm basis and significance in Islam. Despite his traditional religious background, futures thinking is not regarded as an alien idea, and this openness towards new knowledge differentiates him from other traditional *ʿulamāʾ*. He clearly urges the Muslims to release their mind and understand the realities of the contemporary world, particularly the knowledge development and technological advancement of the Western societies. The grandeur of the Islamic civilization in the era of the *Ṣaḥābah* (the Prophet’s Companions) and the early Muslim generations, according to him, was the results of dynamic understanding and realization of Islam in their life.⁵⁹ These two books by Al-Qardāwi were referred extensively in Chapter IV.

Elmandjra in his paper entitled *The Future of the Islamic World* (1997)⁶⁰ analyses the Qurʾānic verses related to futures thinking, and stresses that Muslim must realize the true meaning of the Qurʾānic advices that against foretelling the future, but rather encourage them to make projections and find out various options for better future. He asserts that Islam is a vision of life on earth and also in the hereafter, in

⁵⁸ Al-Qardāwi, 1996b, *al-Thaqāfah al-ʿArabiyyah al-Islāmiyyah bayna al-Aṣālah wa al-Muʿāṣirah* (trans. Ahmad Nuryadi Asmawi, Selangor (Malaysia): Maktabah Al-Qardāwi.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ www.transnational.org/forum/meet/2003/Elmandjra_Civilisation.18/12/07

which man is given power to define his fate and to adopt dynamic approach in his political, economic, social and cultural initiatives.⁶¹ In this regard, he argues that change is a crucial element in building the future whereby the Qur’ān says: “Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts.”⁶² Furthermore, he stresses that the Muslims have misunderstood the concept of “*bid‘a*” (heresy) and “*ibda‘a*” (innovation) in which Islam condemned the first and encouraged the second. The concept of “*ibda‘a*,” he argues, will stimulate the community’s development and vitality. However, the consequences of this misunderstanding, he concludes, has led to “...the decline of the Islamic world and the proliferation of its problems.”⁶³ This paper was referred in Chapter IV.

Mahmud A. Faksh in *The Future of Islam in the Middle East* discusses the emerging threat of Islamic fundamentalism in the Middle East, specifically in Algeria, Libya and Saudi Arabia. He claimed that today’s fundamentalism is “...all cause and no programme.”⁶⁴ They are more concerned about restoring “...the religious-moral order as they believe it to have existed in the early days of Islam (*salaf*) than with offering an elaborate blue print for a future order.”⁶⁵ Thus, he claims that their ultimate destiny is to replace the existing ‘un-Islamic’ regimes rather than toward well-planned change which goes beyond their rhetoric slogans of ‘Islam as the solution.’ This kind of attitude will consequently limit the impact of which could be achieved by the Islamic movement and therefore diminish its prospects. As he put it rightly: “...in the quest for the future good

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Sūrah 13: 11.

⁶³ www.transnational.org/forum/meet/2003/Elmandjra_Civilisation.18/12/07

⁶⁴ Mahmud A. Faksh, 1997, *The Future of Islam in the Middle East: Fundamentalism in Egypt, Algeria and Saudi Arabia*. London: Praeger Publishers, p: 47.

⁶⁵ Ibid, p: 48.

life, imposed morals and values alone are no substitute for programmatic approaches.”⁶⁶ Therefore, the realization of the inadequacy of such attitude towards regenerating the present Muslim societies is extremely crucial to enable Muslims to redirect their methods of action and thinking as they are the prerequisites of future reform and changes. This work contributes in understanding the significant problems facing by contemporary Muslims and their consequences, particularly to the Muslims in those countries. However, Faksh himself did not offer any methodical solution in the form of alternative models or programs to those Muslim countries and this somehow disappointing as we are left questioning of his own attitude towards programmatic approach that he was talking about.

Shireen T. Hunter in *The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilizations or peaceful Coexistence?* (1998) studies the nature of relations between Islam and the Western countries based on Huntington’s theory of clash of civilizations. She argues that the future of both Islam and the West will remain a combination of conflict and cooperation, and the dynamics of the relations between both world will be principally determined by the underlying character of these relations – the interstate relations – not civilizational factors.⁶⁷ Hunter’s analysis is based on the relevance of Samuel Huntington’s premise on the clash of civilizations. Her conclusion shows that there are many factors and characters that influence the nature of the relationships between the Muslim countries and the West and the interplay of all these factors and characters can be bring a different and unpredictable consequences and results in the future of their relations. This book contributes in its comparative approach of studying the future of

⁶⁶ Ibid, p: 49.

⁶⁷ Shireen T. Hunter, 1998, *The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilizations or peaceful Coexistence?*, London: Praeger.

Islam and the West.

Sohail Inayatullah in 'Exploring the Futures of the *Ummah*: A Review of Simulation Models and Approaches to the Study of Alternative Futures' (1998) asserts that imaging the future of the Muslim *Ummah* "...is problematic because of the predominance of (1) economistic thinking (2) international relations neo-realist paradigm of self and nation, (3) our rigid training in history and conventional disciplines, and (4) our fear of being ridiculous or controversial."⁶⁸ Despite the aforementioned problems, imaging such future is possible provided that Muslims have met a set of criteria, in which he discussed in details in this work.⁶⁹ He further elaborates that thinking about an alternative future does not disregard the Islamic history of the inspirational model of Madīnan polity and other Muslim historical successes, but rather to be used, through its interpretive approach, to create the future.

According to Muhsin Khādir in 'Kayfa Nastashrif al-Mustaqbal Al-^oArabi'(1999), the emergence of future discourse within contemporary Islamic thought in the Middle East has been pioneered by a number of Muslim scholars such as Mahdi Elmandjra, Ismail Sabri ^oAbdullah, ^oAli Nasar, Samir Amin, Sayyid Yasin, Sa^oduddin Ibrahim, and Hamid ^oAmmar. He also elaborates the emergence of Futures Studies and

⁶⁸ Sohail Inayatullah in 'Exploring the Futures of the *Ummah*: A Review of Simulation Models and Approaches to the Study of Alternative Futures', *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* **15** (1) 1998.

⁶⁹ Inayatullah elaborates the criteria of the Muslims' vision as follow: (1) It must have legitimacy amongst its interpretive community, that is a vision cannot be merely one individual's fantasy, it must have agreement from its members. (2) A vision must touch upon the physical layer of reality (the material world of goods and services).(3) It must have some bearing on conventional views of rationality, even as it contests them. (4) A vision inspires and ennoble a people. (5) To be realizable, a vision must be neither too far into the future (and thus appear utopian, unreachable) nor too near term (and thus be fraught with emotional ego-politics, with cynicism towards transformative change). Finally, (6) a vision must redefine the role of leadership, the vanguard, and it must be mythical.

its development in the Western societies. Consequently, he stresses the significance of this study to improve the future of the Arabs. This article provides very basic yet crucial points on the development of Futures Studies within the Arab circles.⁷⁰ The author's historical analysis however, did not contemplate on how such development would have effect meaningful and desirable changes in the future of the Arab societies. Critical assessment on the relevance of such discipline to be implemented in different Arab contexts was also absent.

From the perspective of Western Muslims, Tariq Ramadan in his book, *Western Muslims and The Future of Islam* (2004) argues that Muslims who reside in the Western countries play a significant role in defining modernity within Islamic worldview as they are at the forefront in facing the challenge of Western modernism. Their understanding of the texts and their contexts is therefore crucial for the demand and requirement for a fresh synthesis of their religious precepts with their environment that will guarantee their survival. Ramadan's analysis on the text-context relations within the demand of modern understanding and interpretation is therefore invaluable.⁷¹ It provides fresh analysis on how Muslims should understand and use their own religious sources as these are the strength of their identity. Moreover, Ramadan's discourse on the prevalent issues that confront the Western Muslims, particularly the issue of citizenship, participatory democracy and human rights shows how Muslims could positively engage and contribute in the secular societies as this will be part of the emerging trend in the future because of migration.

⁷⁰ Muhsin Khādir, 1999, 'Kayfa Nastashrif al-Mustaqbal Al-°Arab'?' (How We Contemplate the Future of Arab?), *Al-°Arabi* (489).

⁷¹ Tariq Ramadan, 2004, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Another important contribution in the study of future in contemporary Islamic thought is a report written by Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi and Malory Nye entitled *Time for Change: Report on the Future of Study of Islam and Muslims in Universities and Colleges in Multicultural Britain* (2006). It is based on research project carried out by a group of scholars from Al-Maktoum Institute of Dundee on teaching and research in the Study of Islam and Muslims in the British higher education system. The project examined fifty five higher education units where Islam and Muslims Studies is taught, including Islamic Studies, Religious Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, as well as Department of Politics and International Relations. According to El-Awaisi and Malory Nye in the Preface, this report "...provides a very important overview of the current situation, some key issues and challenges facing the field, and makes recommendations of how the field must be reshaped and developed so as to make the Study of Islam and Muslims relevant to contemporary multicultural British society. The aim of this new agenda should be to challenge and develop current teaching and scholarship and to bring scholars from all backgrounds, based on a principle of mutual respect, in order to develop a common intellectual goal in the field of the Study of Islam and Muslims."⁷² Specifically, they explicitly describes in their own words that the report aims to: (a) map out the current situation in the field of the Study of Islam and Muslims in British higher education institutions; identify key contemporary trends and difficulties within the field; and to present a framework for the development of the field which responds to the needs of a diverse and multicultural twenty-first century.⁷³ The premise that has been proposed by the report is based on the following statement: "...The challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century are very different to those of the nineteenth and twentieth

⁷² Abd al-Fattah El-Awaisi & Malory Nye, 2006, *Time for Change: Report on the Future of Study of Islam and Muslims in Universities and Colleges in Multicultural Britain*, Dundee: Al-Maktoum Institute Academic Press.

⁷³ Ibid, p: 7.

centuries. The twenty-first century is diverse, multicultural and globalised. The one-way flow of colonial power has been replaced by the requirement for two-way traffic in which people need to identify a common intellectual space of engagement. At the same time, it is clear that scholarship both in Muslim countries and by Muslim academics needs to develop and respond to the changes and new contexts of this century and, in particular, to take up the responsibility for partnership and the mutual engagement that globalization enables. In addition, the divorce between traditional Islamic Studies approaches and social sciences needs to be recognised as an unhelpful and unacceptable separation which causes one major crises in Muslim countries.”⁷⁴ This report can be regarded as timely and crucial in the context of reevaluation of current approach in teaching and studying Islam. Albeit done in accordance to the need of the British higher education system, this could be useful for such reevaluation in the study of Islam in other Muslim countries.

Recently, Hans Küng’s *Islam Past, Present and Future* (2008) offers another interesting analysis on the future of Islam. He uses trilateral method, in which he compares the development of Islamic paradigm throughout its history with the development of Judaism and Christian paradigms. This monumental work by Küng, attempts at building a constructive and creative civilizational and religious dialogue between the three Abrahamic religions. He contends that Islam should contemplate on its future to bring self-renewal – the processes undergone by both Judaism and Christian alike. This work by Küng and his comparative approach requires serious attention for building mutual respect and understanding between the religions.⁷⁵ As far as the literature investigation on future discussions within contemporary Islamic thought is

⁷⁴ Ibid, p: 41.

⁷⁵ Hans Küng, 2008, *Islam Past, Present and Future*, Oxford: Oneworld.

concerned, the comparative approach that the researcher attempts to apply throughout this study is in close affinity with Kūng's trilateral method, as compared to the researcher's bilateral method – between Islam and the West, in which the West is treated as a worldview, rather than geographical divisions. The Western worldview is therefore encompasses its Judaeo-Christian origin and thereafter its secular outlook in life.

1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study mainly focuses on qualitative, rather than quantitative method of research in comparing both Islamic and Western futures thinking. It is therefore text-based in which the researcher will be fully occupied with and closely attached to the text, trying to understand, evaluate and, finally, to determine and reconstruct, and perhaps be able to draw a comprehensive picture of the foundation of theoretical framework that lies behind the text throughout the whole process. Within this method, the broad definition of texts is applied as contains books, book chapters, essays, articles, and interviews.⁷⁶

In this regard, the researcher employed qualitative content analysis method, in which the method defines by Shapiro as: "...any methodical measurement applied to text (or other symbolic material) for social science purposes."⁷⁷ Bernard Berelson on the other hand, defines content analysis as "...a research technique for the objective,

⁷⁶ <http://www.gslis.utexas.edu/~palmquis/courses/content.html>, 12/08/09.

⁷⁷ Gilbert Shapiro, A Matter of Definition by in by in Carl W. (ed.), 1997, *Text Analysis for the Social Sciences: Methods for Drawing Statistical Inferences from Texts and Transcripts*, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, p: 14.

systematic, and quantitative description of manifest content of communications.”⁷⁸ According to Hijmans, “...qualitative content analysis procedures emphasize the capacity of texts to convey multiple meanings, depending upon the receiver.”⁷⁹ Accordingly, Krippendorff distinguishes two key concepts of framework and logic in relation to content analysis. He says that “...The framework of a content analysis involves a clear statement of the main research question, the kind of data, the context relative to the data, and the naming of inferences from data. Therefore to accomplish this, the researcher needs to have an operational theory of the data – context relationships. Logic deals with the procedures involved in the selection and production of data, the processing of data, methods of inference and analysis, including assessment of validity and reliability.”⁸⁰ Hijmans distinguishes several types of qualitative content analysis, in which interpretative analysis would suit best for the researcher’s purpose in this study. This form of qualitative content analysis is mainly of social scientific origin as shown in its design and procedural elements whereby the researcher asks descriptive research questions aiming at the discovery and formation of theory, whereas analysis procedures are cumulative and comparative.⁸¹

This study thus employs both the conceptual analysis and relational analysis within the general categories of content analysis method. Within this method, the conceptual analysis attempts at “...establishing the existence and frequency of concepts in a text”⁸², while the relational analysis builds on “...conceptual analysis by examining

⁷⁸ Bernard Berelson, 1952, *Content Analysis in Communication Research*, New York: Free Press, p:74.

⁷⁹Hijmans cited in Barrie Gunter, 2000, *Media Research Methods: Measuring Audiences, Reactions and Impact*, London: Sage Publications, p: 82.

⁸⁰ Krippendorff cited in Barrie Gunter, 2000, *Media Research Methods: Measuring Audiences, Reactions and Impact*, London: Sage Publications, p: 82-3.

⁸¹ Hijmans cited in Barrie Hunter, vide: 90.

⁸² <http://www.gslis.utexas.edu/~palmquis/courses/content.html>, 12/08/09.

the relationship among concepts in a text."⁸³ This is done by evaluating the most common concepts or themes in the scholars' works and thereafter by examining the relationship among the themes

The reason behind employing this method is mainly because the aspects of research interest are more concerned with understanding the similarities and differences between both worldviews regarding futures thinking and seeking for the results and implications in both societies/civilizations in particular and the human societies/civilizations in general. As such, the sources are mainly of written materials consisting of books, articles and learned papers related to the field. It is also hoped that the findings of this study will stimulate further research of this nature.

The researcher also had interviewed one of the scholars, Ziauddin Sardar, a prominent futurist and an esteemed intellectual in both contemporary Islamic and Western thought on his capacities as a pioneer in Islamic futures thinking, and also an expert in both Islamic and Western futures thinking. In addition, he was also reasonably accessible due to his location. His appointment as the Editor of *Futures: The journal of policy, planning and futures studies*, one of the most referred journals in Futures Studies proved this credential.

The thesis advanced in this study suggests that the notion and application of futures thinking in contemporary Islamic thought is slightly distinctive from its Western counterpart, not only in its underlying basis, but most importantly in its direction and orientation. Indeed, as we argue throughout the study, the emergence of futures thinking

⁸³ Ibid.

in contemporary Islamic thought basically originated from the primary sources of the Islamic worldview - the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*. Therefore, in spite of similarities within which this discussion attempts to demonstrate from the selected thematic ideas of these scholars, the results and implications are totally different.

Overall, the methodological system of the present research can be summarised as employing the following: (1) conceptual analysis of the scholars' worldviews and thoughts whereby the common themes found were studied and analyzed; (2) relational analysis on the relationship among the concepts in the scholars' thoughts; (3) comparative and interpretative analysis on the scholars' views and methods as well as the implications of their thoughts into wider society. Within the framework of the aforementioned methodological system, this study focuses its analysis of the scholars' thoughts on the impact on their ideas on future society, which is done comprehensively, as much as comparatively, in Chapter III, V and VI.

1.8 CHAPTERS ORGANIZATION

The organization of this study has been divided into seven chapters:

The first chapter is the introduction of the research whereby the researcher discusses the problem statement, the rationale of the study and its objectives, the scope and limitations of the study, the definitions of key terms in futures studies, the hypotheses of the study, the research methodology and finally the literature reviews.

The second chapter deals with the Western futurists' view on future and the development of Futures Studies as a distinct intellectual discipline in the Western context. It also discusses the methods employed by the futurists in their futurical endeavour such as the Delphi techniques, trend analysis and global modeling. The employment of these methods is now extensively accepted, not only in the 'traditional' field such as strategic, military and tactical studies but most significantly in many other disciplines including social sciences and health services.

The third chapter deals with the views of the two Western scholars, Toffler and Bell on future within their specific reference to the Western context. This is also done comparatively and in unity with their thematic discussions on the subjects so as to seek for significance similarities and differences with the aim of finding the common basis for mutual benefit. The chapter also analyses the scholars' thoughts and views in the framework of socio-historical perspective within the study of future. This approach is chosen due to its related theory of human society and methods in understanding the scholars' thoughts which are mainly concerned with human development and progression in history and society.

The fourth chapter deals with the Islamic perspective on time, future and futures thinking through evaluating the Qur'ānic texts. This is also done by discussing the *'ulamā'*'s view on the relevant texts and sources, as well as their own assessment and evaluation on the conceptual and practical implementation of futures thinking in Islam throughout the Prophet's age and subsequently by his *Sahābah* as valuable guidance. Finally this chapter discusses the development of futures studies in Muslim context by focusing on a number of Muslim scholars' view on the study of future through their

writings. This development of awareness on future among the Muslim scholars arose as a consequence of their dealings with the demand of modern times and the constant struggle faced by the Muslim *Ummah* is considered significant and important in cultivating new seeds of hope.

The fifth chapter discusses the two Muslim scholars, Ziauddin Sardar and Mahdi Elmandjra and their view on the future of Islam and Muslims with regard to their responses towards modernity and postmodernity and their dealings with the many challenges that continue to transform the very nature of their religious and cultural identity. This had been done comparatively and in accordance to their thematic discussions on particular subjects so as to seek for significance similarities and differences with the aim of finding the common basis for mutual improvement. Apart from their individual concern on the future of Islam and Muslims, the chapter also discusses their view on the future of humanity as a whole.

The sixth chapter contains the researcher's proposal on an Islamic futurical investigation within the framework of the socio-historical study developed by Ibn Khaldun, *ʿilm al-ʿumrān*. Using his framework, the researcher introduces three crucial elements in an Islamic study of future within the general study of human society in the context of human civilization. The elements are *fiṭrah*, freedom and future. This three elements resembles the nature human encapsulated in the notion of *fiṭrah*, the execution of human power through the concept of freedom (*ikhtiyār*) and finally the potential time where human executes his power.

The seventh chapter finally concludes the discussions in the preceding chapters and suggests that the survival and course of human history in general, and the Muslims history in particular, will be the outcome of firstly, their understanding of their understanding of the requirements of the present and future time; and secondly, by the implementing the dynamics of the *ijtihad-jihad* relations. The *ijtihad-jihad* relations or the thought-action relations signify the importance of combining the understanding of the theoretical aspects of their religious knowledge and to differentiate the permanent element with the flexible ones, with the understanding of the changing environment in terms of its time-space relations. This, undoubtedly, has long been discussed by Muslim scholars including Sardar and Elmandjra.

1.9 CONCLUSION

This study suggests the significance of rethinking the present methodologies that is more text-based in Muslims' way of thinking and acting in dealing with the Muslim malaise within contemporary Islamic thought. As fairly exposed in this study, the contributions of Futures Studies in realizing the Western ideals into practice are widely acknowledged, but this forward thinking is hardly appreciated among the Muslims in general. Efforts to improve the application of futures thinking are therefore significant to renew the methods in which Muslims deal with their problems and towards improving their present conditions. We argue that this way of thinking is crucial, in fact a prerequisite in the process of regenerating the Muslim society at large. Finally, it is hoped that this study will facilitate to enhance future awareness, and assist the Muslims towards charting a new destiny. By employing futures and strategic thinking in their

individual and societal life, the Muslim *Ummah* can really become “*khayr Ummah*”⁸⁴ and restore their civilization in the future.

⁸⁰ Sūrah 3: 110.

CHAPTER II

INTRODUCTION TO FUTURES STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY WESTERN THOUGHT

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we will discuss the concept of time and hence future, and the rise of future consciousness in the West. By studying future consciousness, we meant to situate its specific product, Futures Studies, as "a new field of inquiry" in the Western society particularly among their scholars since the past few decades. It will also trace the historical development of Futures Studies, as the knowledge of its developmental stages is indisputably crucial in understanding its evolutionary factors, context, and how it corresponds to the Western environmental, cultural and social milieu. This chapter will also discuss the definitions of Futures Studies and its concepts and purposes, as has been set up by the researchers of future (the futurists), including the problems which it encompasses.

Moreover, we will also study the methodologies commonly used by the futurists in their investigation on futures. By scrutinizing these methodologies however, we do not intend to cover all of the methodologies which are currently implemented within this field, partly due to the comprehensiveness of the methods, and partly owing to the limitations of this discussion. Hence, we would only discuss a number of chosen methods based upon its popularity and widely used in future analysis, such as Global Modeling, Trend Analysis and Delphi Technique. The

structure of the chapter is then followed by discussing futures perspectives in which views on future, whether optimistic or pessimistic, or something in between, were evaluated as to understand the degree of confidence towards future possibilities. Finally, the researcher made a general conclusion on the overall assessment on contemporary study of the future in Western thoughts.

2.2 THE CONCEPT OF TIME AND FUTURE

As far as Western history of ideas is concerned, the first serious attempt to analyze the concept of time occurs in Aristotle's *Physics*. Time, according to Aristotle, is defined as the "number of movement in respect of 'before' and 'after.'"⁸¹ In connection with this, he considers movement or motion as an attribute of a substance, and time therefore, is an attribute of motion. Motion is, in Aristotle's understanding, *potentially* time and thus becomes such in reality only when its temporal succession is noted and measured by some attentive mortal. Aristotle deduces the continuity of time – its infinite divisibility – from the continuity of motion, which in turn is deduced from the continuity of the space traverse. Time is made continuous by the indivisible, present now-moment, which links the past to the future by serving as the termination of the past and the beginning of the future.⁸²

Rejecting many of Aristotle's analysis of time, Plotinus, in the Third *Ennead*, explicitly criticizes Aristotle's definition of time as luring the grave deficiency of circularity. His criticism however, turned against his own definition of time as "the

⁸¹ Aristotle, 'Physics', in Richard M. Gale (ed), 1978, *The Philosophy of Time: A Collection of Essays*, New Jersey: Humanities Press, p: 1.

⁸² Ibid.

Life of the Soul in movement as it passes from one stage of act or experience to another.”⁸³ These two definitions and analysis of time illustrate the influence of the Platonian ‘form and matter’ relations in which form related to the notional realm of the potential time, whereas matter is, in actuality, substance in which the motion or movement is attributed to. Both ‘form and matter’ of time, or the potent and substance of it, are thus function in continuity and circularity. The circularity of time of the ancient Greeks subsequently turned to the medieval notion that time is a “protraction” of the mind, and as Augustine argues, our measurement of time is in fact, the measurement of a certain expanse in our conscious memory. The difficulty in searching an accurate definition of time, he asserts, is due to its ostensive attribute because the conception of past, present and future is ambiguous as the present cannot have a definite duration. For Augustine the only way out of this anomaly is to say that time is essentially subjective or psychological: past, present, and future times depend on the mind. There is only a “...present of things past, memory; present of things present, sight; present things of future, expectation.”⁸⁴

⁸³ Ibid, pp: 1-2.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p: 5. Augustine offered the following description of God’s perception of time: “It is not that there is any difference in God’s knowledge according as it is produced by things not yet in existence, by things now or by things that are no more. Unlike us, He does not look ahead to the future, see the present before him, and look back to the past. Rather he sees events in another way, far and profoundly different from any experience that is familiar to our minds. For he does not variably turn his attention from one thing to another...Hence all events in time, events that will be and are not yet and those that are now, being present, and those that have passed and are no more, all of them are apprehended by him in a motionless and everlasting present moment...Nor does it make any difference whether he looks at them from present, past or future, since his knowledge, unlike ours, of the three kinds of time, present, past and future, does not change as time changes...Neither does [God’s] attention stray from one subject to another for he knows events in time without any temporal acts of knowing of his own.” (Al-Azmeh, p: 140).

The twentieth-century's treatment of time particularly found in analytic philosophy which includes logical atomism, logical positivism, rational reconstruction, and linguistic analysis (ordinary language philosophy). In this age, marked by the positivity of history (past), present and future, time is conceived in rather a fusion of the prior age. Combining the Aristotelian potential time (or a Platonian time in its conceptual form) and the Augustinian "protraction" of the mind, with the notion of becoming, the modern conception of time views time in its dynamic linearity yet flowing through the river of a continuous changing. One could refer to the McTaggart's paradox, which is deeply rooted in two fundamentally different ways of conceiving time - the one in a dynamic or tensed way, the other involves a static structure or order. The dynamic sphere of time in which events are accordingly represented as being past, present, and future, and as continually changing is, in a way, views time in its transiency and thus the process of temporal becoming.⁸⁵ On the other hand, the static sphere of time, in which "...the very same events which are continually changing in respect to their pastness, presentness, or futurity are laid out in a permanent order whose generating relation is that of earlier (or later) than."⁸⁶

Another product of modern theory of time is the A-Theory which "...held temporal becoming to be an objective property of events and claimed that because of this the past and future differ ontologically, the future being open and the past closed."⁸⁷ It also claims that these asymmetrical relations between the past and future are more ontologically revealing: (i) all statements about the past are either true or false now while some statements about the future are neither true nor false now; and

⁸⁵ Richard M. Gale (ed), 1978, pp: 65-6.

⁸⁶ Ibid, p: 66.

⁸⁷ Ibid, p: 169.

(ii) statements about the future must be general in logical form while statement about the past can be singular.⁸⁸ The influence of logical determinism in this theory views the continuity of time in history (the past) in it's closed system whereas future is seen as an open and full of possibilities for man to perform his freedom of action.⁸⁹

The notion that the past is closed and therefore cannot be changed is challenged by the historicist method applied by many of post-structuralist philosophers. Hegel, when discussing the vision of history possessed by industrial society, explicates that "...[t]he historical belongs to us only when we can see the present in general as a consequence of those events in the chain of which the characters or actions described constitute an essential link."⁹⁰ Put simply, in Hegelian notion of time, the past and the future are both open for possibilities and interpretations. The essential link that connects the past and the present and subsequently the future is, by no means, the liberal idealism of the post-Enlightenment, the relativity of history.⁹¹ It is within this framework that the general perceptions of the futurists subscribe to and work throughout their future endeavors.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ In his selection on "*Fatalism*," Richard Taylor argues that logical positivism requires fatalism as it believes that human beings are incapable of making choice – that "...it is both within our power to perform some action and also within our power to forego performing that action." (ibid, p: 172). In this connection, he identifies the interesting fact that there is no fatalistic view about the past that allows human freedom. At the same time, he stresses that the future is believed to be open to possibilities that subject to human choice. He argues that the reason for this "...is found in the aforementioned logical assymetries between the past and future which concern human action: we can bring about (cause), deliberate, plan, intend, and choose in regard to future events, but not past ones." (ibid, p: 173).

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹This liberal vision of history possesses numerous characteristics; first, the positivity of history in which event is regarded as a fact or an action that determines other facts, other actions; therefore both the present, which is explained by the past, and the past, that can be judged by the present, are interconnected and interacted with each other in a process of dynamic interpretation and re-interpretation. Second, as all the past actions are inequivalent, it is possible to criticize or pass judgment upon historical participants. Third, history is a continuity in which, at each instant, the knowledge of the past informs the present and the

2.3 THE RISE OF FUTURE CONSCIOUSNESS IN THE WEST

By and large, we have touched on the general concept of Futures Studies in the first chapter, but it is obviously important to stress that awareness on future, at least in the mind of the Western futurists, emerges as a result of the increasing consciousness and confusions on the pace of change that ever experienced in human history. With the increasing awareness comes the curiosity on how man can effectively and efficiently influence the course of change to meet the requirements of the society and not to be overwhelmed by its force and power.

Though thinking of future is itself as old as mankind, a systematic venture on future through studying various perspectives and alternatives, with specific methods of applications in predicting and forecasting the possible and preferable future is a unique Western construction. With the advancement of science and technology, and the dominant positivistic outlook among many of the theorists and practitioners in studying the future, it is common to find the implementation of mathematical application and statistical method in many of the techniques in futures research. The implementation of such approaches can be found not only in dealing with technological forecasting but also in other spheres of human life and in various issues, themes and problems that are usually based upon present knowledge and information.

Tom Whiston agrees that interest in the future questions is not new, but this interest had recently brought about the development of a new systematic research on

present transforms the past. At the bottom of the interrelation and interplay of history (and therefore of time) is relativism (ibid, pp: 26-27).

the possibilities of future. He asserts that forecasting activities have now become standard procedure in government departments, industries, the United Nation's agencies and many other research institutions around the world.⁹²

According to Gerald Feinberg, there are many reasons or factors causing the remarkable increase of current awareness and interest in future in the last few decades. One of the reasons, he affirms, is the awareness of the dramatic changes of today's societies compared to the past, and this change is both welcomed and not welcomed. He says:

Since the forces which produced these changes may still operate to produce more changes in the future, we are impelled to try to identify such prospective changes before they occur in order that we may better deal with them when the time comes. Another source of interest in the future is the purely intellectual aim of bringing more of the world under our understanding.⁹³

As we can see, along with the exceptional interest in future is the particular interest of the Western futurists in the pace of change. McHale describes that this increasing pace of change had been taking place within a hundred year, in which human being has achieved revolutionary advancement in technology, scientific, social and economic. This advancement consequently caused dramatic changes in the world system towards interdependent relation in a complex global community.⁹⁴

⁹² Tom Whiston (ed), 1979, *The Uses and Abuses of Forecasting*, Sussex: Science Policy Research Unit, p: 1.

⁹³ Gerald Feinberg, 1977, *Consequences of Growth: the Prospects for a Limitless Future*, New York: The Seabury Press, p: 7.

⁹⁴ John McHale, 'Shaping the Future: Problems, Priorities and Imperatives' in John D. Roslansky (ed), 1972, *Shaping the Future: A Discussion at the Nobel Conference*, Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., p: 4.

One of the crucial aspects which should be understood in the process of these changes is that it marked the emergence of human activities in a bigger scale, and has influenced the ecological stability in the long term. The impact of the increasing rate of changes and complexities in human activities and the consequences that follow it had a tremendous effect in creating awareness on issues and problems pertaining to the future. In accordance with McHale's view on the pace of change that caused dramatic transformation, Alan E. Thompson observes that:

In the past few years, there has been a great increase in interest in the future. The main reasons for this are a realization that many of the present problems are a result of bad decisions taken in the past, coupled with the faster rate of change which is now occurring due to the cumulative effects of advances in science and technology.⁹⁵

From Feinberg's argument on future awareness and its relationship with changes, and McHale's view on pace of change and its effect of making the world becoming more and more interdependent, it is evidently clear, as Thompson observes, that the main reason for the increasing of such awareness on future is partly the result of bad decisions that have been made due to the lack of knowledge of their impacts in future as well as the irrepressible advancement in science and technology. In addition, Waddington asserts that awareness about the future becomes rampant when human being are faced with a series of complex problems such as demography, food supply, energy, natural resources, pollution, and urbanization - all interconnected to each other, and cannot be resolved separately. Rather, all these problems not only produced a major problem but led to what he dubbed as **Problematic** or multi-problem.⁹⁶

⁹⁵ Alan E. Thompson, 1979, *Understanding Futurology: An Introduction to Futures Studies*, Newton Abbot: David & Charles Inc., p: 7.

⁹⁶ Conrad H. Waddington, 1978, *The Man-Made Future*, London: Croom Helm, p: 9.

Therefore it can be assumed that awareness on future is parallel with the demand in finding new ways and methods in dealing with multiple problems that challenge our creativity and capability for future survival.

However, despite the awareness and demand for new methods, Thompson believes that what happens is remorsefully repeating, in which methods in dealing with the problems are still based on the old methodology and paradigm, and most of the problems and ways of dealing with them are still fragmented and compartmentalized. Furthermore, the process of reassessing all the actions taken was hardly done, or whether the desirable objectives have been achieved or not, let alone consideration on the implications of certain decisions or actions which have been made. Therefore, the result of any decisions and actions is useless and a waste of time, energy and sources.⁹⁷

It is interesting to note that some of the Western scholars perceive the root of the current predicament lies in the Western worldview. These weaknesses basically exist in the Western approach to sciences which have been fragmented or compartmentalized into various disciplines with various focuses, aims and problems, whereby all connections between these various aspects or disciplines have been neglected or overlooked. To make things worse, the advent of science and technology has helped pave the way for various inventions to suit the endless human desires without considering the consequences of these inventions onto the ecosystem and biosphere system, and hence, causing many damages in present environment.

⁹⁷ Alan E. Thompson, 1979, *Understanding Futurology: An Introduction to Futures Studies*, Newton Abbot: David & Charles Inc., pp: 18-19.

It is also fairly significant to realize that the compartmentalization approach in Western disciplines stems from its epistemological imbalance which characterizes Western worldview in fragmenting human being into different components that are spiritual, mental and physical – and thus treating them separately. The compartmentalization of the functions of these three fulcrums of the human being resulted in disproportion of spiritual, mental and physical relationship, for the main concern is the exploitation of mind and the fulfillment of physical needs based on desires. This kind of attitude which underlies deeply in the Western secular worldview manifested in every sector of life whether it is economic, social, or political.

Although Futures Studies is not totally stripped off its Western roots, it at least challenged the basic nature of Western compartmentalization way of thinking which, in this regard, is a great achievement. Therefore, Futures Studies is a new holistic approach in addressing humanity's problems in which a system will be examined and evaluated comprehensively, and then modified them to achieve their purposes, hence avoiding attending the problems in pieces. In other words, Futures Studies is a combination of holistic model and system dynamism.

2.4 FUTURES STUDIES - DEFINITIONS

There are many definitions of Futures Studies regarding to the different perceptions among the futurists. In this chapter, we will look at the various definitions that are being used by the futurists and seek for a common and acceptable definition. Therefore, it would be useful to understand various terminologies used to represent

futures research such as *futuristics*, *futurology*, *forecasting*, *futures research*, *futuribles* and *prognostics*.⁹⁸ In addition to these terminologies, Wendell Bell added that Futures Studies is also known as *futures fields* and *prospective*.⁹⁹

According to McHale, the term *futurism* was used widely in Marinetti's, Boccioni's and Sant Elia's writings in the earlier period of 1900s. However, the term became a major theme in contemporary literature and was no longer used in the academic research regarding the future. The term *futurology*, he added, was introduced by a German historian, Ossip K Flechtheim in 1949 to describe a new science regarding prognosis.¹⁰⁰ Beginning from 1965, many efforts have been done in implementing this field in long-range forecasting activities such as politics, sociology, economy, and ecology. McHale elaborates that the use of the term *futurology* has been criticized by Bertrand de Jouvenel, the founder of the Futuribles Group in France.¹⁰¹ His argument is that this term connotes that the results of futuristic research are scientific, whereas they were not. Instead, he asserts the role of conjecture in forecasting activities and thus suggests the term *futurible*.¹⁰²

Furthermore, McHale stresses that the terms *futurology*, *futuribles* and *futuristics* however, are being used interchangeably, particularly in the Europe, whereas the term *prognostics* is more popular in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

⁹⁸ McHale, John & McHale, Magda Cordell, 1976, 'An Assessment of Futures Studies Worldwide', *Futures* 8 (2), p: 135.

⁹⁹ Wendell Bell, 1996, 'What Do We Mean by Futures Studies' in Richard A. Slaughter (ed), *New Thinking for a New Millennium*, London: Routledge, p: 3.

¹⁰⁰ The term *prognosis* is used when referring to futuristic research in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (McHale & McHale *Futures* Vol.8 No.2 1976, p: 135).

¹⁰¹ See the group's website, <http://www.futuribles.com/home.html>, 10/01/09.

¹⁰² McHale, 'The Emergence of Futures Research' in Jib Fowles (ed), *Handbook of Futures Research*, 1978, London: Greenwood Press, p: 8-9.

The term *futures research* on the other hand, is preferred in the academic context and also in the United States. In this regard, he asserts that the terminological usage of Futures Studies is more accurate, owing to its more open-ended meaning and the absence of rigorous connotations implied by the word “research” as well as its implication of scientific objectivity and values neutrality.¹⁰³ Therefore we find that Futures Studies is more popular and widely accepted in the academic discussion regarding futuristic research, and used as a standard name in the *Futures*, an established journal of planning, policy and futuristic study. Similarly, there are also a number of popular words that seem to have similar meaning used in Futures Studies but in actual they have different connotations. These words are anticipation,¹⁰⁴ conjecture,¹⁰⁵ forecasting¹⁰⁶ and prediction.¹⁰⁷ However, to avoid confusion of using these words, we would use all the terms interchangeably, as already done by futurists when discussing this subject.

As mentioned earlier, the term Futures Studies is more popular when referring to contemporary futures research. However, research in modern dictionaries of philosophy and sociology suggested that this term is very uncommon, in fact, it is almost absent. Instead, the term *futureology* is still widely used in these dictionaries. In the *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy* for instance, *futureology* is defined as “...the activity of predicting the state of the world at some future time, by extrapolating from

¹⁰³ Ibid, p: 9.

¹⁰⁴ *Anticipation* means the action or state of anticipating something (Hornby, 1995, *Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p: 43).

¹⁰⁵ *Conjecture* means (1) to form (and express) an opinion not based on firm evidence; to guess; (2) a guess; guessing (ibid, p: 242).

¹⁰⁶ *Forecasting* means to say in advance what is expected to happen; to predict something with the help of information; a statement that predicts something with the help of information (ibid, p: 461).

¹⁰⁷ *Prediction* means (1) a statement that something will happen; a forecast (2) the action of predicting something (ibid, p: 908).

present trend. Mainly a pseudo-science, given the complexities of social, political, economic, technological, and natural factors.”¹⁰⁸

In *The Dictionary of Philosophy*,¹⁰⁹ *futureology* is defined as "...inquiry into the methods of forecasting, and into what the future will hold", whereas in *The Norton Dictionary of Modern Thought*,¹¹⁰ the definition is:

A conjecture or intellectually disciplined speculation; a forecast, which is based either on a continuing trend or on some defined probabilities of occurrences; and a prediction, which is a prognosis of a specific event.

As far as all these definitions are concerned, there are a number of crucial elements in *futureology* or Futures Studies, mainly: (a) the activities of predicting or forecasting through various methods; (b) a thorough study of the present trend in social, political, economic, technological and natural sectors; and (c) the possibilities of the future, namely the state of the world in the future time. Considering all these elements, it is evidently important to understand the futurists' definitions of Futures Studies. According to Roy Amara, Futures Studies is:

- (a) Any systematic attempt to improve our understanding of the future consequences of present development and choices.
- (b) Any efforts to systematize our assumptions and perceptions about the future.

These fall into three categories: the exploration of possible futures (the art of

¹⁰⁸ Simon Blackburn, 1996, *Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p: 151.

¹⁰⁹ *The Dictionary of Philosophy*, 1985, p: 200.

¹¹⁰ *The Norton Dictionary of Modern Thought*, 1998, p: 172

futurism); the exploration of probable futures (the science of futurism) and the exploration of preferable futures (the politics and psychology of futurism).¹¹¹

Another definition for Futures Studies is given by Denis J. Loveridge in an article, 'Values and Futures' as follows:

Futures research seeks to raise, in the present, believable, interrelated issues that may occur in the future; these set present possibilities for development in a wider context, and longer time frame, than usual. The emphasis is on the interconnectedness of events and the synthesis of information into forces for change, which can give rise to a spectrum of possible futures ... In this sense futures research is concerned with the derivation of what ought to be in human affairs and should not be confined with what can and will happen, which are the realms of strategic and tactical planning.¹¹²

In terms of the nature of its study, some futurists regarded Futures Studies as part and parcel of system analysis. Among them are E.S.Quade and Wayne I.Boucher. According to Quade, system analysis is a strategic research which seeks to find practical ways in assisting the decision makers.¹¹³ He defines system analysis as follow:

A systematic approach to helping a decision maker choose a course of action by investigating his full problem, searching out objectives and alternatives, and comparing them in light of their consequences, using an appropriate framework - insofar as possible analytic - to bring expert judgment and intuition to bear on the problem.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Roy Amara, 'The Futures Field: Functions, Forms and Critical Issues', *Futures*, Vol.6(4), pp: 289-90.

¹¹² Denis J. Loveridge, 'Values and Futures' in Harold A. Linstone & W.H. Clive Simmonds (eds), 1977, *Futures Research: New Directions*, Canada: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.Inc, pp: 53-4.

¹¹³ Quade, Edward S., 1977, 'System Analysis and Policy Planning: Application in Defence' cited in Wayne I. Boucher (ed), *The Study of the Future: An Agenda for Research*, Washington: The Futures Group, Inc. p: 6.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

In accordance with Quade's definition of system analysis, Boucher summarizes the major characteristics of Futures Studies as follow:

- (a) Future research as new way of looking at the future; a new approach; a practical enterprise that focuses on affecting changes;
- (b) It cannot and does not tackle the future in its infinite possibilities but rather to study the problems;
- (c) Pragmatic methodology;
- (d) In forecasting and evaluating a spectrum of alternatives relevant to the problem, it is concerned with the future or future-oriented.¹¹⁵

If Futures Studies is regarded as a branch of system analysis, it raises the question as to whether there are any differences between them. In this case, Boucher elaborates that the differences between these two fields are more related to the degree of emphasis towards particular issues. Futures Studies, for example, is more concerned about describing subjective ideas and reality models which shared by particular groups in societies or organisations and the foundation of their choice. In other words, Futures Studies focuses more on explaining the images of the future that restore in every human's mind and analyzing them in a systematic way and provides utility values unto that images in order to assist people to plan and act within their capabilities to achieve a better future, whether it is in the individual life, society, nation and the whole ecosystem and biosphere.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁵ Wayne I. Boucher (ed), 1977, *The Study of the Future: An Agenda for Research*, Washington: The Futures Group, Inc., pp: 6-7.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p: 7.

In this regard, Olaf Helmer is in agreement with Quade and Boucher, when he asserts that Futures Studies is basically produced from system analysis, which is a branch of operational research, whereas its purpose is to be an aid in long-range planning. The main characteristic that differentiates Futures Studies from operational research is its objective, in which the former aims to improve the decision making process in the long-range context, whereby the latter, on the other hand, focuses on the short-range context.¹¹⁷

2.5 THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF FUTURES STUDIES IN THE WEST

According to Ian Miles, the history of future studies could be traced as early as the human existence. In this regard, he indicates:

In traditional societies, conceptions of the future would be substantiated in terms of the cosmologies embedded in folklore and religion. In ancient civilizations, the systems of astronomy, meteorology and mathematical analysis, that were developed in parallel with agriculture, maritime trade and architecture, would also have been important...Forecast of the fate of individual, the outcomes of marriages, treaties or battles, can be traced back into our early history. They may well have always been bound up with the systems used in making decisions related to recurrent economic activities; when to plant, harvest, set soil, and so forth. Astrology, numerology and divination would be seen as exact and logical procedure, applicable to natural and human affairs alike: sharp distinctions between a natural world of facts and a social world of values were not drawn.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁷ Olaf Helmer, *Looking Forward: A Guide to Futures Research*, California: Sage Publications Inc., p: 99.

¹¹⁸ Ian Miles, 1979, 'The Development of Forecasting: Towards a History of the Future' in Tom Whiston (ed), *The Uses and Abuses of Forecasting*. Sussex: Science Policy Research Unit., pp: 6-7.

Although writings pertaining to the future in the Europe emerged as early as 1890s, there are many perspectives based on the approach of different writers. However, efforts to underline the study of the future systematically and set its agenda have been pioneered by H.G.Wells through his work, *Anticipations*, which was published in 1901.¹¹⁹ Further development of Futures Studies experiences different form due to different parts of the Western world. For instance in the Europe, Futures Studies has many themes and concepts. Its rapid development largely took place after the Second World War when many European countries were struggling to reconstruct their nations and deal with the war trauma. Thus, it could be assumed that Futures Studies is always influenced by the current social, cultural and political context.

In the European context, major influence in the development of Futures Studies came from France, in which the works of Gaston Berger, Pierre Masse, Bertrand de Jouvenel and Jerome Manod have great effects in the early formation of Futures Studies in 1950s and 1960s.¹²⁰

An in-depth study of the scholars' works demonstrate a few similarities in their thoughts, for instance, de Jouvenel in *The Art of Conjecture* argues that conjecture would assist man in looking into the futures based on the probabilities as mental framework considering the past and the present. Thus, future-oriented thinking is not deterministic in nature, but rather the form of the possibilities of what might happen. In other words, he believes that the future is unknown but could possibly be anticipated based on the possible scenarios that might happen and prepared

¹¹⁹ Solomon Encel et al. 1975, *The Art of Anticipation: Values and Methods in Forecasting*. Sussex: Science Policy Research unit, p: 4.

¹²⁰ Eleonora B. Masini, 'Futures Studies in Italy and the Limits to Growth', *Futures* 33 (1) 2001, Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd, p: 22.

alternatives to face the possibilities. This criteria, he asserts, indicates that Futures Studies is an art and not a science.¹²¹

In this regard, de Jouvenel's view is close to Berger in which the latter believes that the operational time is a constructional time whereby the concept of projects intertwined with the prospective term it used, that is a process of concerning the past and the present for various future possibilities. On top of de Jouvenel's view of future alternatives, Berger has added choice, action and proposal for change. The practical form of both de Jouvenel and Berger has been implemented by policy makers in France through economic, political and technological long range planning.¹²²

In spite of the development of Futures Studies in Europe that marked by the works of those individual futurists, the development of Futures Studies in the United States is largely stimulated and initiated by national institutions such as The Twentieth Century Fund, the Hudson Institute, and the Rand Corporation.¹²³

In general, the implication of futures thinking has become more obvious in the 1970s whereby many prolific writings emerged and created a new polemic within the Western intellectual circle and later on extended to the public. Such writing is the publication of *The Limits to Growth* in 1972 by the Club of Rome, has marked a significant event in the history of Futures Studies. This report has been written by a group of intellectuals from the Club and led by Dennis and Donella Meadows. It

¹²¹ Ibid.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Fred Polak, 1971, *Prognostic: A Science in Making Surveys and Create the Future*. Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd., p: 210.

subsequently created what has been best coined by Alberto Gasparini as the emergence of the *Limits Debate*. Furthermore, the establishment of the Club of Rome in Italy in 1968 coincided with the students' demonstrations throughout the Europe. This club has been established by the initiative of Aurelio Peccei and a group of intellectual in which their main concern is about the **Global Problematique**. It has recruited many academics to research these issues, especially the relationship between the societies and our global environment and resources.¹²⁴

For the scientific community, the significance of *The Limits to Growth* is beyond the global issues which have been brought out. Bruckmann in a review published after ten years of the *Limits*' publication argues that its model was a great scientific advancement which was really needed in the post-war growth mania.¹²⁵ He firmly emphasized that the systematic thought behind the *Limits* was obviously opposed with traditional thought which was characterized by disciplinary compartmentalization.¹²⁶ In addition to Bruckmann's assertion, Colombo considers the publication of the *Limits* as the birth of a global awareness regarding the complexity and interconnectedness between overpopulation and sustainable development.¹²⁷ The aim to introduce futures thinking as part of general education, according to Wendell Bell, is not merely the futurists' bigoted purpose, but rather the conviction that Futures Studies have a significant contribution to mankind.¹²⁸

¹²⁴ Sam Cole and Eleonora B. Masini, 'Limits Beyond the Millennium: A Retrospective on The Limits to Growth', *Futures* 33 (1) 2001, Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd, pp: 1-2.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p: 4.

¹²⁶ Ibid, p: 3.

¹²⁷ Colombo, Umberto. 2001. 'The Club of Rome and Sustainable Development'. *Futures* 33 (1). Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd Ibid, pp: 7-11.

¹²⁸ Wendell Bell, 1996, 'What Do We Mean by Futures Studies' in Richard A. Slaughter (ed). *New Thinking for A New Millennium*. London: Routledge, p: 5.

According to Bell, there were many ways of which have brought the development of Futures Studies, mainly:

- (a) The works of W.F.Ogburn, the President of the Research Committee on Social Trend and his colleagues in social trends analysis and the role of technology in social change.
- (b) The national planning that began with national mobilization after the First World War until the Great Depression in 1930s introduced by Russia, Italy and Germany and then extended to the Eastern Europe after the Second World War and finally to the rest of the Third World countries.
- (c) The development of hundreds of new nations which had been established since the mid 1940s, most of them were former European colonies in Africa, Asia, as well as the Caribbean and Pacific Islands.
- (d) The establishment of many think tank groups and operational researches marked by the establishment of the RAND Corporation which based on military research.
- (e) The establishment of the Commission on the Year 2000 by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences which involve elite intellectuals from universities, the government, corporate companies and foundations in the United States.
- (f) The development in policy science and evaluation research contributed in the development of this field such have been done by H.D. Leswell, D.Lerner and others.¹²⁹

¹²⁹ Ibid, pp: 6-7.

Despite all these development, the Muslim counterpart has been hardly contributing to this field except for a small number of Muslim futurists. According to Elmandjra in the Symposium of "*The Future of the Islamic World*", almost 97% of world expenditure is used to sponsor futuristic studies, particularly in training, documentation, scientific research and its application, and two third of these researches are done by military institutions and multinational companies. Despite making up almost 80% of the world's population, the Third World countries, many of which are Muslim, contribute only 3% of the findings of this field. This reality implies the negligence of strategic values of the future among the Muslim leaders and thus caused the present predicament of the Muslim ummah.¹³⁰ Therefore, it is understandably evident that the Third World countries, especially the Muslim countries would remain backward for the West has already prepared to colonize their future.

2.6 THE PURPOSES OF FUTURES STUDIES AND THE FUTURISTS

In general, Futures Studies is a wide range of study for it encompasses all human endeavours within a futuristic and long-range perspective. In citing Bell, Victoria Razak and Sam Cole emphasize that futures research is not like other disciplines which have specific specialization.¹³¹ They insist that it is an action science, comprehensive, integrative, transdisciplinary and depends on all other

¹³⁰ <http://www.elmandjra.org/Futures.htm> 07/01/09.

¹³¹ Victoria Razak & Sam Cole, 1995, 'Anthropological Perspectives on the Future and Society', *Futures* 27(4), p: 378.

sciences including social science.¹³² This statement agrees with Waddington's view that:

Anyone who wishes to take a responsible attitude to the affairs of mankind, or, on a more pragmatic level, would like to feel some competence to deal with the problems that are likely to come his way during his lifetime, will have to acquire at least an inkling of understanding about all of the major problems and about how they interact with one another to produce the Problematique.¹³³

Both views signify the responsibilities of the futurists, the nature of Futures Studies and its wide range of problems as well as its interconnectedness with each other (problematique). This goes to the nature of the future itself with its infinities and open-ended characteristics. In discussing the formal characteristics of the future, Abraham Moles elaborates that they are:

- (1) Short-range - to study the phenomenon and its time quantification;
- (2) Medium-range – to study the growth rate for policy control on the basis of observation of changes;
- (3) Long-range – to forecast the consequences/implications of particular phenomenal changes in the society or nation in the future;
- (4) Very long-range – to study the interaction between different phenomena using statistics.¹³⁴

The purpose of analyzing the formal characteristics of the future is to look into the future regarding particular period – the short-range, medium-range, long-range and finally the very long-range. In Moles' analysis, the short-range involves the time

¹³² Ibid.

¹³³ Conrad H. Waddington, 1978, *The Man-made Future*, London: Croom Helm, p: 9.

¹³⁴ Abraham Moles, 'The Future Oriented Society Axioms and Methodology', *Futures* Vol.2(4), p: 320.

ranging between one to three years, whereas the medium-range involves four to ten years; the long-range involves ten to twenty years and finally the very long-range involves more than 20 years.¹³⁵ This framework of time is used as a guiding schema for the futurists in their observation, evaluation and planning, particularly in politics, diplomatic relation and economy. The wide range of Futures Studies, however, is circumscribed with its objectives, purposes and clear functions, as perceived by Whiston as follow:

Most of these efforts have a practical purpose: to help policy makers in their difficult decisions that may affect not only the present generation, but our children, grandchildren and beyond.¹³⁶

This view is approved by Helmer in which he underlines the purposes and objectives of Futures Studies as to assist the decision makers in long-term planning and to provide information and analysis in order to achieve better results. Based on the preceding purposes, he underlines that Futures Studies consists of two salient elements which are:

- (a) The construction and improvement of methods of future analysis;
- (b) The application of these methods in forecasting and long-range planning.¹³⁷

In particular, futurists attempt to trace issues such as technical innovations, values transformation, geopolitical binding, ecological imbalance, economic development, demographic profiles and other trends of changes. Therefore, as a mechanism and methodology to deal with these issues, Futures Studies stresses on:

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶Tom Whiston, 1979, *The Uses and Abuses of Forecasting*. Sussex: Science Policy Research Unit, p:1.

¹³⁷Olaf Helmer, 1983, *Looking Forward: A Guide to Futures Research*, California: Sage Publications,p: 102.

- (a) The construction of mathematical models that permit sophisticated extrapolation from the past;
- (b) A thoroughly cross-disciplinary treatment of its subject matter;
- (c) The systematic use of intuitive expert judgment; and
- (d) A systems-analytical approach to its problems, which does not neglect paying close attention to resource constraints and cost-effectiveness considerations.¹³⁸

Moreover, Helmer emphasizes that future analysis should be directed towards the following objectives:

- (a) Providing a survey of possible future in terms of a spectrum of major potential alternatives;
- (b) Ascribing to the occurrence of these alternatives some estimates of relative *a priori* probabilities;
- (c) Identifying preferred alternatives based on given basic policies;
- (d) Identifying which decisions that are subject to control and which are not, whose occurrence would be likely to have a major effect on the probabilities of these alternatives.¹³⁹

According to Helmer, a rigorous scientific approach consists of three interrelated elements, which are the theory development, accumulation of empirical data and experimental control. However, the nature of Futures Studies is different, in which there is no concrete data about the future and a dependant unto the judgmental data from the experts through observation. The real experimentation being used in

¹³⁸ Ibid, pp: 18-9.

¹³⁹ Ibid, p: 319.

pure science is replaced by pseudo-experimentation using simulation models in which the players acting as the decision makers producing alternatives models of the world in the future. The roles of the experts in this case are crucial, they are, as Helmer put them in his own words:

- (a) To provide judgmental data about the future based on their intuitive insights into real-world phenomena;
- (b) To construct *ad-hoc* models or to judge the suitability of existing model;
- (c) To apply their expertise as the role players in simulation games;
- (d) To use their imagination and inventiveness to design the instrumentalities and long-range strategies that result in appropriate action programmes for dealing with the problems of the future.¹⁴⁰

According to Sardar, "...the object of Futures Studies is not to predict the future, as one could easily be misled to believe, but to explore various alternative futures which may arise as a result of the present decisions and actions which may be accessible to us. It concerns itself with two basic activities: long-range planning and forecasting."¹⁴¹ There are also differences between future planning and conventional planning, in a way that he asserts future planning is:

- (1) Directed by the planner's values and is action-oriented. It stresses on alternatives, relationship among probabilities, cross impact analysis and the possible implication of such influences.
- (2) Designed to create alternative of actions and to consider every idea indiscriminately.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid, pp: 115-6.

¹⁴¹ Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, p:5.

- (3) More realistic and considers the need to anticipate and to plan different concepts of the future, rather than utopian tendency as found in traditional planning.
- (4) Relies more heavily on the rational study of anticipated development and their consequences, despite mere concentration on statistical analysis or future projection.¹⁴²

Furthermore, Sardar emphasizes that forecasting, the secondary activity of Futures Studies, "...relates to the study of global trends, shaping data and improving the process on the basis of which policy decisions can be made in such various fields of human endeavour as technology control, monitoring environmental pollution and business management. The basic purpose of forecasting is to help policy makers to take wise decisions."¹⁴³

Regarding the role of the futurists, Razak and Cole agree with Wendell Bell's insistence that the futurists objectives is to search or invent, examine and propose the desirable or preferable future.¹⁴⁴ They argue that the futurists, in their goal to understand the future, attempt to know what would happen, what might happen and what is supposed to happen in the future for these will assist the decision making process in choosing appropriate objectives for particular policies and creating a rather intelligent and effective social action through prospective thinking.

¹⁴² Ibid, p: 6.

¹⁴³ Ibid, pp: 6-7.

¹⁴⁴ Victoria Razak and Sam Cole, 1995, 'Anthropological Perspectives on the Future and Society', *Futures* 27(4), Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd, p: 378.

In this regard, Toffler points out that the main purpose of the futurists is "...to maintain or improve the welfare of humankind and the life-sustaining capacities of the earth itself. Futurists distinctively carry out this purpose by systematically exploring alternative futures. They try to create new, alternative images of the future - visionary explorations of the possible, systematic investigation of the probable and moral evaluation of the preferable."¹⁴⁵

As a new discipline, the development of Futures Studies is yet to be completed. Attempts to introduce new input in order to enhance this field have been done continuously. Such an attempt could be found in Tony Stevenson and Sohail Inayatullah's writing which underlines a few basic criteria that must feature in the future oriented study, these are:

- (1) Visions/Scenarios of the future, preferably more than a generation ahead, and preferably alternative visions/scenarios.
- (2) Methodologies of Futures Studies that are;
 - (a) how to engage in a study of the future or future alternatives;
 - (b) ways to research how people and civilizations (as well as other units of analysis) study or think about the future;
 - (c) analyses of procedures for forecasting and anticipating
- (3) Epistemological assumptions of studies of the future, for example, the layers of meaning hidden in various forecasts;
- (4) Means for attaining a vision of the future, for example, backcasting (certainly going beyond strategic planning and strategy in general);

¹⁴⁵ Toffler in the introduction to *Cultures of the Future*, Magoroh Maruyama (ed), 1978, The Hague: Mouton Publishers, p: x.

- (5) Explicit consideration of the longer-term (from 25 to 1000 years, from one to seven to 30 generations) consequences of today's action.
- (6) Theories of social, spiritual, economic and technological change that directly examine where and how society is moving and can move to, ie. The shape of time, space and perception;
- (7) Analysis of events and moments in human history where a different future could have been followed and why it was not, that is, historical or geneological alternative futures;
- (8) Deconstruction of texts explicitly on the future to show what is missing from a particular scenario, image of the future, that is, critical and value-oriented analyses of a particular future or alternative futures;
- (9) Novel social analysis or social innovation that can create different or unconventional futures different from today;
- (10) Differences and similarities in how civilizations, men and women imagine, create and know the future including historical changes in the idea and the practice of the future;
- (11) What ought the future be like and who should make such decisions including discussions of the ethics of forecasting.¹⁴⁶

Our overall and general assessments on the purposes of Futures Studies demonstrate that the study is treated more as a methodological tool to serve greater purposes in effecting social change within the context of a civilizational worldview.

¹⁴⁶ Tony Stevenson and Sohail Inayatullah, Futures-oriented writing and research. *Futures* 30 (1) 1998, Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd, pp: 1-2.

The futurists therefore, are those who deeply concerned about human civilizations and their processes of changes throughout ages, and how these changes can be geared towards better future through effective and purposive actions enlightened by positive visions and images of futures. Futures Studies is therefore, a holistic project, as well as a methodological discipline that crosses barriers and boundaries in order to achieve better futures for mankind.

2.7 THE METHODS OF FUTURES STUDIES

There are many methods which are being used and developed in Futures Studies, as could be found in various techniques that are currently applied by the futurists. Beginning with H.G. Wells in the *Anticipations*, the orientation of the study of future is mainly focused on technological aspect, as also could be visibly recognized through the works of Herman Kahn and Anthony J. Wiener in *The Year 2000* (1967) and *The United Kingdom in 1980* (1974), and also in Erich Jantsch's *Technological Forecasting in Perspective* (1967).

The imaginative techniques for instance, could be found in satirical writings such as *The Rise of The Meritocracy* (1958) by Michael Young and *Inventing The Future* (1963) by Dennis Gabor, whereas advanced speculations technique can be found in *The Art of Conjecture* (1967) by Bertrand de Jouvenel, and the groups' reports based on computer calculation such as the EEC's *Europe 2000 Projection*, *The Limits to Growth* (1972) by The Club of Rome and *Civilization at the Crossroads* (1967) by Radovin Richta and Czechoslovakia group. The methods of projection and experts' speculation within their disciplinary boundaries could be found in the works

of Daniel Bell, *Towards the Year 2000* (1968) and Robert Jungk and Johan Galtung, *Mankind 2000* (1969).

Other popular technique including the group game called *The Delphi Technique*, in which experts' evaluation in forecasting activities are completed by a group of experts and their evaluations or answers will then be assessed by other experts within the group and then selected with the aim of understanding particular trends or events that might occur in the future. Brita Schwarz has categorized methods in Futures Studies as consist of:

- (a) The formal method based on analytical thinking;
- (b) The intuitive method based on intuition and psychology.¹⁴⁷

In explaining the categorization, she argues that these two methods cannot be implemented or applied separately, for both complement each other in their own way.¹⁴⁸ The formal method or analytical method in futures research consists of many techniques of application, such as Delphi technique, trend extrapolation, scenario, mathematical models etcetera. The intuitive method, or to use Moles' term, the "mythological or psychological analysis,"¹⁴⁹ on the other hand, is more concerned in using illusion and understanding human desire in managing life. He further elaborates that all the methods in studying the future are basically based on prophetic analysis. Thus, the subject of social science is significantly crucial in technical development. He firmly stresses that to think rationally about the future, one must discuss the

¹⁴⁷ Brita Schwarz (ed), 1982, *Methods in Futures studies, Problems and Application*, Colorado: Westview Press, p: 40.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, pp: 40-1.

¹⁴⁹ Abraham Moles, 'The Future Oriented Society: Axioms and Methodology'. *Futures* 1970 2(4). Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd., pp: 324-6.

irrational, that is the impossible things, because the human being that influences the future are actually irrational.¹⁵⁰

Another kind of categorization methods of Futures Studies as outlined by the World Futures Society are:

- (a) The descriptive or extrapolative method which aims to describe the shapes of the possible/probable future.
- (b) The prescriptive or normative method which focuses on the preferable future. It aims to assist the public by explaining the values and preferred things in order to construct visions for the desirable future.¹⁵¹

We believe that there is no contradiction between the classifications of methodologies proposed by Schwarz with those proposed by the World Futures Society. In fact, both classifications are complementing each other in which Schwarz's methods are viewed from the analytical-intuitional perspective, whereby the World Futures Society's methods are viewed from the purpose/aim of forecasting activities. Thus, the combination of both classifications is fairly significant in Western futurists' view for the similarity of their purpose, which is to better understanding future possibilities and thereafter to decrease the elements of uncertainties so as to make better decision in the present. As far as the methods of Futures Studies are concerned, we will only discuss the most three important methodologies that are (1) Global Modeling (2) Trend Analysis and (3) The Delphi Technique. The reason for

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ <http://www.crab.rutgers.edu/~goertzel/futuristmethods.htm> 10/01/09

this selection is chiefly for the wide usage of these methodologies among the futurists within the discipline.

2.7.1 Global Modelling

According to Gerhart Bruckmann , the definition of global modeling is:

Computer modeling done to investigate social questions or problems of global scale...Global modeling is distinguishable from other types of modeling of social systems only by the questions it asks. Its methods, strengths and weaknesses are identical to those of all policy-oriented computer models. It draws from the same base of theory, data and technique. Therefore, if there are any distinct properties of global modeling, they follow directly from the characteristics of global problems.¹⁵²

In the development of this method, there are a few models of global modeling which have been invented in accord with the purposes and needs of their inventors, as studied by Bruckmann as follow:

- (1) The *System dynamics world model (World 3)* as has been introduced in *The Limits to Growth* by the Club of Rome in 1972.
- (2) The Mesarovic-Pestel model as published in *Mankind at the Turning Point* in 1974.
- (3) *The Fundacion Bariloche* model which has been developed as a direct response to the other two previous models, and considered to be descriptive about the fate of humankind in the future and represented the general outlook of the developed countries. This model is regarded as a *normative model* which

¹⁵² Gerhart Bruckmann, 2001, 'Global Modeling', *Futures* 33 (1), Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd., p: 3.

not only concerns forecasting questions of what could happen if the present desire of humankind continues, but rather focus on the efforts in underlining ways to achieve the ultimate goal in order to free the world from poverty and chaos. Methodologically, this model has brought great advancement in defining the goal of basic needs and the production functions.

- (4) The MOIRA (*Model of International Relations in Agriculture*) which has been developed by a group of Dutch researchers. Compared to the preceding models, it focuses only on food and agriculture with the main agenda is to search for methods in reducing famine problems globally.¹⁵³

According to Bruckmann, after the invention of these models, global modeling became an activity organized in parallel by a number of teamworks. Later, more new models have been developed and introduced in an annual scientific forum organized by the *International Institute for Applied System Analysis (IIASA)* held in Schloss Laxenburg, Austria such as GLOBUS, SARUM, FUGI, and other smaller models. The implementation of global modeling techniques in Futures Studies has marked new dimensions in Western methods of thinking and problem solving.¹⁵⁴ In his analysis, Bruckmann asserts that:

Throughout the history of science, every period has had its compartmentalization: Aristotle's subdivision into mathematics, physics, and theology; Xenocrates' logic, physics, and ethics; the seven liberal arts of the Romans; the seven additional mechanical arts of medieval times; and through the disciplines. The field of global modeling, however, stubbornly resists any compartmentalization of this kind.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Ibid, pp: 15-6.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, pp: 16-7.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p: 13.

Clearly, the development of *global modeling* techniques in particular and Futures Studies in general, he added, has brought a new holistic paradigm in Western societies. In his elaboration, he stresses that:

In the time of Aristotle, science and religion were interwoven. During the Renaissance science became distinct from religion. After the Enlightenment, science fell apart with Goethe generally being considered the last universalist. Global modeling constitutes a decisive step to reverse this trend. It can show that both a persistent exponential trend and the subsequent trend reversal are caused by the same set of underlying relations. It also teaches the sciences to be less self-assured, showing us that there is more than one truth, and more than one valid answer to many questions. It thereby introduces a kind of Eastern thinking into our Western self-confidence. Global modeling also reflects, in a sense, a reunification of physics and metaphysics, or science and religion. One cannot work on a global model without a deep feeling of commitment - commitment to a goal defined by Aurelio Peccei as human survival in dignity.¹⁵⁶

Based on this statement, he has indirectly acknowledged the source of weaknesses in the Western thought and problem solving methods after the Renaissance, which resulted from the apparent separation between the role of religion and the function of science in societies. At the same time, he also acknowledged the Eastern influence, in this case, including Islam, which could offer holistic approach based on the unity of thought and action as perceived by the concept of *tawhid*. It is clearly evident that Western scholars have realized the problematic nature in their worldview and are trying to address it through various methods of thought based on multi-disciplinary/transdisciplinary techniques such as global modeling in particular and Futures Studies in general.

¹⁵⁶ Gerhart Bruckmann, 2001, 'Global Modeling', *Futures* 33 (1), Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd, p: 18.

2.7.2 Trend Analysis

In an article entitled 'Methods and Approaches of Futures Studies' published by the World Futures Society, trend analysis involves the application of various techniques based on historical data.¹⁵⁷ The most straight-forward component and objective in trend analysis is trend extrapolation. The trend extrapolation method basically consists of retrieving historical data, appropriating curves in the data and extrapolating them to the future. The method assumes that something that could change in the future is actually following the way it changes in the past. What should be done is merely to extrapolate the curve forward in order to know its position at a particular time in the future. For instance, if we know the population number in a particular city increased at 2% rate annually, it could be forecasted that this will increase within the same rate in the future, therefore the population number of the city within five years could be known.

In other words, we could do forecasting by observing the changes and make projections of these changes in the future. However, not only projection, but this method requires us to ask about what caused some trend to happen, and what caused them to continue to happen, or what is the limit of a particular trend or whether there are any forces that could affected these trends. At this level, trend analysis method is more dependent on subjective judgment as opposed to objective projection based on historical data. This method generally does not consider short-term changes because the paramount thing is the long-term changes, which are the trend themselves. This is

¹⁵⁷<http://crab.rutgers.edu/~goertzel/futuristmethods.htm>, 10/01/09.

the most common methodology being used in producing projection, and it is commonly applied by city planners, economists, and demographers.¹⁵⁸

2.7.3 The *Delphi* Technique

According to Bell in 'What Do We Mean by Futures Studies', the method involves participation of the experts as the respondents of series of panel surveys distributed among them in order to know their perception on future. It was developed by Helmer and Dalkey for the RAND project. The questions are firstly given to the experts during the survey sessions concerning to the nature and timing of future development, and they will be questioned again, perhaps a few other times after a group of expert panels or other experts within the group have been informed on the answers at the early stage of the survey.¹⁵⁹

This method is combined with cross-impact analysis method in order to study what will occur in particular events due to some changes in a particular way. The development of computer networking among the experts, in this regard, has enabled the information to be transferred easily and a set of forecasting could be done within hours.¹⁶⁰

Fredric Bolling elaborates that this technique was developed after the Second World War for the purpose of strategic planning by the military agencies in searching for alternatives to the Cold War. In details, the procedure of the survey session will be

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ Wendell Bell, 1996, 'What Do We Mean by Futures Studies' in Richard A. Slaughter (ed), *New Thinking for A New Millennium*, London: Routledge, pp: 17.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

firstly the selection of a group or panel that will be given a set of questions of which the answers are tabulated and then analyzed. Then, a next round of questions will be formulated based on the answers in the first round and it might have subsequent rounds, which are often limited to four. The nature of the questions is basically looking into forecasting events, and eventually followed by comments which are usually encouraged to expand on the probabilities or improbabilities of the futures. Though beneficial, this technique, as argued by Bolling, is not without pitfalls for the questions and the way they are asked can lead to biases. Thus, the selection of the panel or group of experts must be done with great care.¹⁶¹

With the increasing complexity of the subject matters in which Futures Studies seek to examine, it is considerably difficult to use one method without combining it with other methods. Therefore, the World Futures Society has outlined practical principles in increasing the efficiency of methods application, that are (1) the implementation of combination of various methods to recognize most of future problems such as the combination of environmental scanning, trend assessment, Delphi Technique and scenario techniques; (2) the involvement of the stakeholders and the decision makers directly in the process of forecasting development or scenario writing.¹⁶²

The preceding discussion also indicates that future research, though using recent techniques in computing, is basically depends on human judgment. Thus, it is crucial to realize the limitation of its methods, such as:

¹⁶¹ Fredric G. Bolling, 1996, *The Art of Forecasting*, Vermont: Gower, pp:75-8.

¹⁶² <http://www.crab.rutgers.edu/~goertzel/futuristmethods.htm>. 10/01/09.

- (1) The incompleteness of forecasting exercise.
- (2) The inaccurate nature of human forecasting.
- (3) The future depends on chances.
- (4) The accurate forecasting for a few unparallel and complex systems is almost impossible.
- (5) The forecasting might be wrong.
- (6) The forecasting and planning process should be dynamic and capable of responding to the new information and understanding.¹⁶³

Based on a few examples of Futures Studies' methods, it is evident that this attempt to explore and develop future research has opened new dimension in dealing with world issues and problems or world problematique, and this has become dominant procedures in various levels of decision making process in the developed countries.

2.8 FUTURES PERSPECTIVES

There are two main categories of perspective regarding the image of the future; the first one is positive/optimist and the other one is negative/pessimist. In describing the optimist's view, Edward Tenner states that:

Optimists counter projections of global warming, rising sea levels, population growth and soil depletion with scenarios of gradual adjustment and adaptation. If the crisis of life in the oceans is the problem, then fish farming is the answer. A true optimist sees a silver living even in the destruction of rain forests and wilderness; there may

¹⁶³ <http://www.crab.rutgers.edu/~goertzel/futuristmethods.htm>, (30/01/2009).

be much less acreage, but more and more people will be able to travel and see it.¹⁶⁴

His statement explains the basis of the optimist premise in dealing with global problems such as population that is through the process of adaptation. This positive attitude towards problems faced by human being assumes that there are always ways and solutions for every problem and man will consequently be able to manage and control the problems. Another example of the optimist view is as argued by Herman Kahn, founder of the Hudson Institute, that “...if we keep on going as we are, everything will work out.”¹⁶⁵

This optimistic view represented by Kahn can be found in his book *The Year 2000* in which he emphasized that the trend of economic growth will continue positively until the next 30 years [i.e from the year he wrote the book in 1967] and onwards. The image of a good future time in Kahn’s view obviously did not refer to the global society in general but rather, as Gribbin suggests in *Future Worlds*, as the 'western good times' in which the American images of culture such as fast food and television will become dominant throughout the world. This stereotype attitude of Western scholars is originated from the post-colonial subconscious, however, has changed in his another book, *The Next 200 Years* in which he deliberately opened his futuristic image to the “good times for others” too.¹⁶⁶ In commenting on Kahn’s optimistic vision regarding the economic growth in the future, Gribbin claims that this

¹⁶⁴ Edward Tenner, 2001, *Why Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences*. New York: Knopf p: 101.

¹⁶⁵ As quoted by Victor Ferkiss, 1978, ‘The Pessimistic Outlook’ in Jib Fowles (ed), *Handbook of Futures Research*, Connecticut: London: Greenwood Press, p: 493.

¹⁶⁶ Herman Kahn in John Gribbin, 1979, *Future Worlds*, New York: Plenum Press, pp: 27-8.

view is basically entrapped within Western capitalistic mind. Thus, it is obviously too optimistic and unrealistic to be true.¹⁶⁷

If the optimistic view looks into the future in a positive outlook very confidently, the pessimistic view is extremely the opposite. According to Ferkiss, pessimism about future is not new – in fact it is as old as human civilizations.¹⁶⁸ The classical civilizations were dominated with the theory of historical cycle, in which a society emerges, advances and expands, and later on deteriorates and then disintegrates. Early pessimistic view can be found in Aldous Huxley's *The Brave New World* (1932) and Jacques Ellul in *The Technological Society* (1964). The foundation of their thesis is that the industrial civilization which entailed rational, secular, scientific and technological advancement is currently struggling to address the undesirable and intimidating consequences. Such criticisms concerned about the problem of values of modern Western civilization that caused massive destructions to humanity.

New facet of contemporary pessimistic view, on the other hand, is slightly different. Criticisms are made on the factual questions, such as whether there is enough food supply for the future generation, or whether there is enough water to supply future needs and other issues. These concerned issues which have been raised by postmodern pessimists are no longer about a gloom future where the world will be ruled by tyrants, but rather about the human physical survival. Therefore, it is sufficient to say that the pessimists tend to look and anticipate bad consequences

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, pp: 31-2.

¹⁶⁸ Victor Ferkiss, 1978, 'The Pessimistic Outlook' in Jib Fowles (ed), *Handbook of Futures Research*, Connecticut: London: Greenwood Press, p: 479.

resulted from today's decisions and actions. The most pervasive issue which is being highlighted by this group is demographic problems and related issues such as food supply.¹⁶⁹

Such example of postmodern pessimistic view is the well-known report, *The Limits to Growth*, which has been published by the Club of Rome in 1972. This report has raised great debate concerning the world ability to supply for the survival of its inhabitants if the current trends continue to exist - population growth, resource utilization, industrial productivity and pollution – all which is predicted to bring global devastation in the first decade of the 21st century.¹⁷⁰

The dichotomist aspect of future perspective in which we see the optimist pitched against the pessimist or positive versus negative, does not only persist in the postmodern era. It can also be found in pre-modern debate such as shown by Sam Cole in his article entitled 'The Global Futures Debate 1965-1976', when he categorized futuristic perspective into neo-Malthusian and non-Malthusian.¹⁷¹ The neo-Malthusian perspective is a representation and continuation of the pessimistic view of Thomas Malthus¹⁷² pertaining to population growth which has been believed as the cause of scarcity in food supply as found in the report, *The Limits to Growth*. The non-Malthusian perspective, on the other hand, claims that overpopulation is not

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, pp: 481-2.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, pp: 486-7; also look in Aurelio Peccei, 1981, *One Hundred Pages for the Future*, New York: Pergamon Press, p:127.

¹⁷¹ Sam Cole, 1978, 'The Global Futures Debate 1965-1976' in Christopher Freeman and Marie Jahoda, *World Futures: The Great Debate*, Oxford: Martin Robertson & Co. Ltd., p: 11.

¹⁷² Thomas Malthus is a mathematician who wrote the *Essay on the Principle of Population* which was published in 1798. He anticipated cause famines, wars and diseases. (John Gribbin, 1979, *Future Worlds*, New York: Plenum Press, pp: 31-2).

the cause, and this view was represented by Herman Kahn, and a group of Soviet and Latin America scholars who called themselves the Bariloche Group. As far as the basis of the debate is concerned, their main apprehension is about the same, which is the connection between population and economic growth albeit expressed in different lights.

This dichotomist perception between the optimist and the pessimist or the neo-Malthusian and the non-Malthusian, can be traced back to the utopian and dystopian conceptions in Greek thought.¹⁷³ According to Wendell Bell, the term 'utopia' was used by Thomas More in his book *Utopia* (1516) which literally means 'no place'.¹⁷⁴ It refers to all fiction genres and also the concept of an ideal place. The term dystopia on the other hand, means 'bad place' or 'the dreadful society'. The utopian or optimist thought in the Greek context is associated to Plato especially in his masterpiece, *The Republic*, in which he discusses the nature of justice and social relation in order to achieve the perfect society and the perfect state that is reign by the perfect ruler/prince, which, in Plato's view, is the philosopher.¹⁷⁵ The significance of Plato as the first Greek thinker who proposed that social change must be directed towards the realization of a formulated vision is considered as the seed of Western futures thinking.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Descriptions of the utopian-dystopian concept can also be found in Anthony J. Wiener's article entitled 'Faust's Progress: Methodology for Shaping the Future' in John D. Roslansky (ed), 1972, *Shaping the Future: A Discussion at the Nobel Conference*, Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing Co., pp: 25-35.

¹⁷⁴ Wendell Bell, Wendell Bell, 1996, 'What Do We Mean by Futures Studies' in Richard A. Slaughter (ed), *New Thinking for a New Millennium*, London: Routledge, pp: 4-5.

¹⁷⁵ Leslie C. Tihany, 1978, 'Utopia in Modern Western Thought: The Metamorphosis' in Jib Fowles, *Handbook of Futures Research*, Connecticut and London: Greenwood Press, p: 21.

¹⁷⁶ Evan Vlachos, 1978, 'The Future in the Past: Towards a Utopian Syntax' in Magoroh Maruyama (ed), *Cultures of the Future*, The Hague: Mouton Publishers, p: 304.

However, this dichotomist view has been criticized by Elise Boulding in which she argued that the image of futuristic perspective cannot be envisaged in a vis-à-vis relation between the optimist/positive/utopia/non-Malthusian and the pessimist/negative/dystopia/neo-Malthusian whatsoever. Instead, she asserts that the image of the future can be generally categorized into four categories:

- (a) The pure optimists who view the world as generally good and man can make it better.
- (b) The optimists combined with pessimistic view such as this world is good but it is moving to destruction and man could not change the cause of the events.
- (c) The pessimists combined with optimistic view such as this world is not good but man can make it better.
- (d) The pure pessimistic view such as this world is not good and man can do nothing to change or improve its course.¹⁷⁷

In our view, Boulding's categories are more moderate than pure dichotomist view that perceives the world in black and white. It reflects the true reality of life that combined both the positive and negative elements at the same time, thus the optimistic and pessimistic view of life is always mixed up and difficult to separate.

2.9 CONCLUSION

The general approach of Futures Studies in which future is driven by technological advancement works well within the paradigm of technological

¹⁷⁷ Elise Boulding, 1978, 'Futuristic and the Imaging Capacity of the West' in Magoroh Maruyama (ed), *ibid*, p: 9.

determinism. Hence, we found many of the techniques used in the study related to technology for instance technological forecasting, simulation, computer modeling, and trend extrapolation. This technological advancement is viewed in its impact on human society and their general well being, as well as to the earth. The study of future could not be fairly assessed without understanding not only the development of the study as a discipline per se, but to put it in the light of the general evolution of Western history of ideas, particularly with regard to its theory of socio-historical change, marked mainly by the works of prominent sociologists such as Karl Marx and Max Weber, and in our postmodern time by Daniel Bell and Alvin Toffler. Earlier work on future society can also be found in Plato's *Republic* in the form of a utopian society. Along with the idea of the utopian society, the modern Western analysis on the attainment of such society follows by the socio-historical theory of ideal future society.

This framework of a linear view of historical progression of human society which had long dominated the mainstream of Western sociological thinking, aims at unveiling the fundamental dynamics and laws governing human history and civilization, hence discovering a rigorous theory of society capable of providing both schematic and nonschematic structural analysis and an adequate theory of action. Discussions on future society through the theories in the form of either post-industrial society or super-industrial society in the Third Wave civilization demonstrate an evolutionist paradigm within Western sociological analysis. The discussions on our two Western futurists will follow subsequently in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III

FUTURES STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY WESTERN THOUGHT: ALVIN TOFFLER AND DANIEL BELL

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The preceding discussion has introduced the study of future in contemporary society, specifically the Western society. In this chapter, we attempt to analyze the thoughts of two Western futurists, Alvin Toffler and Daniel Bell. Both were chosen for their prominent positions in pioneering some important theories in the study of future: Toffler is the proponent of the theory of 'The Third Wave society', whereas Bell is best known for his theory of the 'Post-Industrial society'. According to Krishan Kumar, the theory of future society has fascinated many Western scholars since long time, as he claims that:

Over the past quarter of a century there have been persistent claims that Western societies have entered a new era of their history. While still being undoubtedly industrial, they have undergone, it is suggested, such far-reaching changes that they can no longer be considered under the old names and by means of the old theories. Western societies are now in various ways 'post-industrial': 'post-Fordist,' 'post-modern,' even 'post-historical'. Some years ago, in *Prophecy and Progress* (1978), I considered the claims of the earlier varieties of post-industrial theory. These were associated particularly with figure such as Daniel Bell and Alain Touraine, together with a significant section of East European opinion. Their theories concentrated largely on the move to a service economy and a 'knowledge society', and the social and political changes that could be expected to follow from this. Those theories are still with us, but they have joined by others with a more ambitious scope. In these newer theories we encounter claims that go beyond economics and politics to encompass western, and indeed world, civilization in their entirety. In the information and communication revolution, in the transformation of work and organization in the global economy, and in the crisis of political ideologies and cultural beliefs, these theories see the signs of a turning point in

the evolution of modern societies.¹⁸⁵

It is evident that the futurists' social theories cannot be separated from the theories of social change, such as evolutionary, conflict, cyclical, functional, and technological. In fact, discourse on future has explicitly incorporate theories of social change purported by social theorists such as Karl Marx and Max Weber.¹⁸⁶ Their analyses on classical industrialism and the type of society inhabited by most westerners, though no longer significant, yet still discussed in contemporary times in the form of post-industrialism. There are at least three different theories of post-industrialism – the information society, post-Fordism, and postmodernism, of which sometimes overlap one another.

The differences of these three theories are more on their emphasis, but there are also certain themes and figures recur in each theory, for instance the centrality of information technology which defines the information society idea, is also found in the other two theories. Such are the case of globalization, decentralization and diversity which, according to Kumar, feature prominently in all accounts of the new era. He concedes that "...the information society theories tend to adopt an optimistic, evolutionary approach that puts all the emphasis on major new clusters of technological innovations. The information revolution is the latest, and by so much

¹⁸⁵Krishan Kumar, 2001, *From Post-Industrial to Post-Modern Society: New Theories of the Contemporary World*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers. This book is a brilliant reference for essential understanding of the differences between the social theories he mentioned - post-industrial, post-Fordist and post-modernity.

¹⁸⁶ Karl Marx proposed a theory of an ideal society in the form of communism and socialism as the final synthesis after capitalism in which the social struggle of the proletariats over the bourgeoisies ensue radical changes in societies that enthroned the capitalist system in the former Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. Max Weber on the other hand, studied the dynamism of Protestant ethics which influenced the life of the pre-industrial Western societies and thereafter spread the seeds of capitalism and industrialism.

the most progressive, step in the sequence of changes that have transformed human society since earliest times – such can be found in Alvin Toffler’s conviction on history as a ‘succession of rolling waves of change’¹⁸⁷

However, the over-optimistic tone of the earlier post-industrial theory as persistently echoed by Alvin Toffler in the form of ‘super-industrial’ society had been replaced with the later 1970s debates concerning ‘the limits to growth’ and the dynamic potential of industrialism. The growing concern over the limitation of growth had influenced the discourse on the future society based on a rather realistic appraisal on the importance of ‘theoretical knowledge’. Bell in this regard, had identified this development of the new information society rather firmly, and insisted on its potential application to the extent defining the new society by “its novel methods of acquiring, processing and distributing information.”¹⁸⁸

Margaret A. Rose in *The Post-Modern and Post-Industrial: A Critical Analysis* discusses Arthur J. Penty’s understanding of post-industrialism in which he specifies its central issues as the regulation of machine and the sub-division of labour between both persons and machine.¹⁸⁹ In this book, Rose implicitly indicates both Toffler and Bell as the proponents of the theory of the post-industrial society on the basis of their analyses on technology and its impact on future society.¹⁹⁰ According to Wendell Bell, both theories are part of an emergent theory of social change that have been proposed by some other futurists in different names, such as Etzioni’s

¹⁸⁷ Krishan Kumar, 2001, *From Post-Industrial to Post-Modern Society: New Theories of the Contemporary World*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, pp: 36-7; Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, 1981, p: 13.

¹⁸⁸ Krishan Kumar, 2001, vide, pp: 2-3.

¹⁸⁹ Margaret A. Rose, 1992, *The Post-Modern and Post-Industrial: A Critical Analysis*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p: 24.

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid*, p: 25.

‘theory of societal guidance’, Dator’s ‘theory of transformational society’, and W. Bell and Mau’s ‘theory of cybernetic-decisional theory of social change.’¹⁹¹

Our discussions on these two Western futurists’ thoughts on future society through their theories in the form of either post-industrial society or super-industrial society in the Third Wave civilization demonstrate a distinct methodological pattern – the evolutionist paradigm influenced by Darwinian evolutionary stages of human progression or, usually ascribed as ‘Social Darwinism.’ It is within this paradigm that Bell and Toffler are attempting at discussing as current theories are regarded as inadequate to accommodate the various dimensions of futures thinking that require global perspective and civilizational approach. As many other futurists, a key theoretical concept for both scholars is the ‘sustainability’ of human society. This paradigm is based upon modern secular ideas in looking at human development or progress through its socio-historical process as the way of understanding human progression as a universal phenomenon.

Indeed, as far as Futures Studies is concerned, the theories of social futurism that corroborate both social theories with the study of future - whether in the name of the Third Wave civilization or post-industrial society - are therefore significant. Though they use different terms to present their investigations of tomorrow’s society, both Toffler and Bell seek to anticipate the kind of society that will emerge in the future in a new context - which, at least in our own understanding, is within the

¹⁹¹Wendell Bell, 1996, ‘What Do We Mean by Futures Studies?’ In Richard A. Slaughter (ed), *New Thinking for a New Millennium*. New York: Routledge, pp: 19-20.

Western enchantment on modernity¹⁹² and post-modernity¹⁹³, or beyond modernity as such.

This discussion pertaining to the nature of the future society within the aforementioned context will be our main concern in studying and analyzing the scholars' ideas. What evidently patent in our analysis is that the origin of such discourse regarding the super-industrial or post-industrial society idea lies in the "stage theories of social development,"¹⁹⁴ that suggests human societies' growth

¹⁹² Kumar differentiates the term 'modernity' and 'modernism', though he acknowledged that those two are sometimes used interchangeably. The term 'modernity' for him, is "...a comprehensive designation of all the changes - intellectual, social and political - that brought into being the modern world." 'Modernism', on the other hand, "...is a cultural movement that occurred in the west at the end of the nineteenth century and, to complicate matters further, was in some respects a critical reaction against modernity." But apart from that, he realizes the fact that both terms are certainly connected and it is difficult to keep them separate, mainly because both terms derive from the same root word, "[m]odernus, from *modo* ('recently', 'just now') [which] was a late Latin coinage on the model of *hodiernus* (from *hodie*, 'today'). It was first used, as an antonym to *antiquus*, in the late fifth century AD. Later such terms as *modernitas* ('modern times') and *moderni* ('men of today') also became common, especially after the tenth century." Modernity is therefore, he argues, "an invention of the Christian Middle Ages." (Krishan Kumar, 2001, *From Post-Industrial to Post-Modern Society: New Theories of the Contemporary World*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, p: 67).

¹⁹³ There are many disagreement on the meaning of post-modernity, as Kumar cited Charles Jencks' account of postmodernism as "...a 'double-coded' phenomenon, at once continuing and opposing (or 'transcending') the tendencies of both modernity and modernism." (Ibid, p: 173). Kumar's analysis is worth the attention as he further elaborates: "The confusions of the debate on post-modernity are well illustrated in the celebrated riposte to the postmodernists by the German thinker Jürgen Habermas. Habermas accuses the post-modernists of a defeatist and escapist conservatism in face of the still unfulfilled promise of Enlightenment modernity. But the 'postmodernists' he has in mind are cultural conservatives of 'neo-conservatives' such as Daniel Bell, whose *Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* is singled out for treatment as a postmodernist tract. Along with these neo-conservatives are nostalgic 'old conservatives' and a group Habermas labels 'the young conservatives'. This group includes Foucault and Derrida, namely the very people normally associated with postmodernism." (ibid, p:173) For Kumar, from the very beginning modernity supplied its own 'counter discourse'. Our contemporary radical critics of reason, the deconstructionists such as Foucault and Derrida, "...suppress that almost 200-year counter discourse inherent in modernity itself..." (Habermas quoted by Kumar, ibid, p: 174).

¹⁹⁴ Terminologically speaking, the theory of social development has been developed within the field of social anthropology by a British jurist, Sir Henry Sumner Maine (1822-88) and others. The idea is that "...society gradually advances, often explained in terms of stages from 'primitive' to 'barbarian' to 'civilized'." (Alan Barnard, 2002, *Evolutionism*, in Jennifer Bothamley (ed), *Dictionaries of Theories*, Detroit: Visible Ink Press, p: 186).

through several stages. But as Toffler and Bell demonstrated throughout their works, the stages of human development do not only occur in social sphere, but also in technology, economy, politics and even lifestyle.

In other words, these theories are the “grand theories” of humanity; and the theory of super- or post-industrial society in fact is a unique Western analysis to study the phenomenon of modernity and how it will continue to define and shape the Western society in particular and the global society in general in the future. Hence, the discourse on redefining modernity and the emerging new discourse of post-modernity are the crucial frameworks that will help us in understanding the images of the future in both scholars’ thoughts.

In terms of structure, this chapter will firstly discuss the scholars’ brief biography, followed by their major thoughts. This will be carried out separately for both scholars; firstly by discussing Toffler, and afterward Bell. Subsequently, the scholars’ thoughts will be discussed and analysed comparatively to facilitate their substantial contribution in the knowledge of the future or Future Studies.

3.2 ALVIN TOFFLER: BACKGROUND AND THOUGHTS

In this section, we will look at a brief biographical account of Alvin Toffler and his writings, followed by discussions on a number of selected themes in his intellectual works. This will be done by analyzing his trilogy – *Future Shock* (1970), *The Third Wave* (1980) and *Powershift* (1991) – which depict Toffler’s main thesis on the nature of future society, within the framework of a new civilization which he

called as 'The Third Wave civilization'. Other books written by Toffler will also be evaluated wherever related. Underlying his thesis is the element of change, and the impact of overwhelming change experienced by human that causes the disease of future - 'future shock'- and how human manage to adapt to the future.

Unlike many other futurists he emphasizes soft, everyday aspects of the future. His main conclusion is that the speed of change can often be more important than the direction of change, and people can actively choose their actions incisively by understanding change and employing planned change. His purpose of studying change within civilizational perspective is not to uncover any utopian idea of a perfect society in the future, as we can find in the Marxian idea of a socialist society, or even in the Platonian schema of the perfect 'republic', for he believes there is "...no vision of the present, let alone the future, [that] can be complete or final."¹⁹⁵

As he further emphasizes, "We who explore the future are like those ancient mapmakers, and it is in this spirit that the concept of future shock and the theory of adaptive range are presented...not as final word, but as a first approximation of the new realities, filled with danger and promise, created by the accelerative thrust."¹⁹⁶ Hence, it is for the matter of survival that human needs to study change and future. The development of futures research and the application of futures thinking in daily life, he believes, are therefore one of the healthiest phenomena of recent years.

¹⁹⁵ Alvin Toffler, 1980, *The Third Wave*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 6.

¹⁹⁶ Alvin Toffler, 1971, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 6.

3.2.1 TOFFLER: LIFE AND WORKS

Alvin Toffler was born on 3 October 1928 in New York City in a family of Polish Jewish immigrants. During his adolescence age, he was a Marxist activist, as he recalled:

When I was a Marxist during my late teens and early twenties - now more than a quarter of a century ago - I, like many young people, thought I had all the answers. I soon learned that my 'answers' were partial, one-sided, and obsolete.¹⁹⁷

In the light of his exposure to Marxist idealism and activism which strives for a social utopia of a Western ideal society, he gradually developed an astute apprehension on future. Marxist's socialist idealism however, did not find substantive ground in Toffler's mind more than Karl Marx's theory of developmental stages of human societies towards socialism as its ultimate and ideal stage. Toffler met his wife, Adelaide—nicknamed Heidi—Farrell at New York University where he was English major and she was starting a graduate course in linguistics. He earned his bachelor's degree from the university in 1949 and married Heidi in 1950. He spent the next five years working in factories as a millwright and welder. At the same time, he also worked in journalism as an editor and freelance writer since the mid-1950s. They then moved to Washington after Toffler's transfer by the union-backed newspaper.

From 1957 to 1959, he became a correspondent for several different newspapers and magazines. Toffler returned to New York upon *Fortune's* offer to become its labor columnist, later as its business and management columnist and

¹⁹⁷Alvin Toffler, 1980, *The Third Wave*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 6.

thereafter as an associate editor (1959 to 1961). On leaving *Fortune*, Toffler had been consulting many multi-national companies such as IBM, Xerox and AT&T on the social and organizational impact of technologies, including telecommunications. He had also contributed articles to such magazines as *Life*, *Reader's Digest*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Saturday Review*, *New Republic*, and *Nation*, among others. Three years later, he worked as a correspondent covering Congress and the White House for a Pennsylvania daily.¹⁹⁸

He wrote more than 10 books since the publication of his best-seller, *Future Shock* in 1970, many of them with his wife, Heidi. Among his early books are *The Adaptive Corporation*, *Preview and Premises*, *The Eco-spasm Resort*, *The Culture Consumers* and *Learning of Tomorrow*. He is renowned through his famous trilogy - *Future Shock*, *The Third Wave* and *Powershift*. Toffler's new book - *Revolutionary Wealth*, published in 2006, continues his thematical work on the nature of the Third Wave society or the Information society.

The most apparent themes in his writings are change and the emergence of a new super-industrial or information society. He had also known with works in the digital, communication and corporate revolutions and technological singularity. Together with Clement Bezold and James Dator, he established *The Institute for Alternative Futures*, a think tank institution centred in Alexandria, Virginia since 1977. The establishment of the institute aims to assist individuals and organizations in choosing and creating their preferable future consciously and wisely.¹⁹⁹

¹⁹⁸ <http://www.tmsfeatures.com/bio/alvin-and-heidi-toffler/25615194.html> 11/01/09.

¹⁹⁹ <http://www.altfutures.com/about.asp>, 12/01/09.

In 1996, with Tom Johnson, one of America's top business consultants, they co-founded Toffler Associates, an advisory firm designed to implement many of the ideas about which Alvin and Heidi Toffler have written. The firm has worked with businesses, NGOs and governments in the United States, South Korea, Mexico, Brazil, Singapore, Australia and other countries. Toffler also write *Beyond Future Shock*, a monthly column that appears in many of the world's most important newspapers.²⁰⁰ Toffler has also served as a consultant to various companies and organizations concerned with technology and the future.

His ideas on future society, especially the notion of ‘future shock’, have been warmly received by popular audiences while also exerting a significant international influence on important governmental leaders. In addition, he has been designated to various academic positions such as the Visiting Professor at Cornell University and the Visiting Scholar at the Russell Sage Foundation. He was an Honorary co-chair of the United States Committee for the United Nations Development Fund for Women, a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies and also a Fellow for the American Association for the Advancement of Science. He was also the recipient of McKinsey Foundation Book Award for Contributions to Management Literature. His intellectual works had been recognized through various prestigious awards such as *Le Prix du Mueller Livrev Estranger* in France and the Golden Key Award in China.²⁰¹

²⁰⁰ <http://www.tmsfeatures.com/bio/alvin-and-heidi-toffler/25615194.html>, 12/01/09

²⁰¹ <http://www.leighbureau.com/speaker.asp?id=17> 12/01/09.

3.2.2 MAIN THEMES IN TOFFLER'S THOUGHTS

This section aims to expose Toffler's ideas and critically analyze them based on a number of selected themes according to their strong visibility in many of Toffler's writings, especially his main works - *Future Shock*, *The Third Wave*, *Power shift* and *Revolutionary Wealth* respectively. The themes are knowledge, change and technology, and the type of future society in creation, based on the pace of change experienced by mankind in their life through the significant production of knowledge fueled by the innovation of technologies. He specifies six principles typical of all industrial societies: standardization, specialization, synchronization, concentration, maximization, and centralization. All of this principle, he claims, is now under the attack of a new civilization in which human life and consciousness, the organization of work, family, and politics is being transformed. Underlying Toffler's views are two interrelated theories of change, one dealing with the social consequences of new technology and another, dealing with a theory of human choice.²⁰²

3.2.2.1 The theory of the Third Wave Society

Toffler sets the framework of his intellectual analyses on the stages of human development by studying changes and the underlying forces that brought these changes and their impact on human life and experience. In *The Third Wave*, Toffler argues that these changes are in fact parts of a revolutionary process of what he metaphorically termed as colliding "waves" of change in creating a new civilization

²⁰²Alvin Toffler, 1971, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books.

that "...challenges all our old assumptions."²⁰³ He asserts that in this new wave of civilization, the Third Wave civilization,

...old ways of thinking, old formulas, dogmas, and ideologies, no matter how cherished or useful in the past, no longer fit the facts. The world that is fast emerging from the clash of new values and technologies, new geopolitical relationships, new lifestyles and modes of communication, demands wholly new ideas and analogies, classifications and concepts. We cannot cram the embryonic world of tomorrow into yesterday's conventional cubby holes. Nor are the orthodox attitudes or moods appropriate²⁰⁴.

Toffler's use of the image of "waves"²⁰⁵ is not original, as he admitted in the book but the application of the metaphor in describing such a phenomenon to the current civilizational shift is regarded as fresh.²⁰⁶ It focuses more on the new structural framework of the civilizational process that taking place and "...covers a much wider sweep of time - past as well as future.²⁰⁷" In describing the process of social change experienced by human society, Toffler argues that every civilization has its own atmospheres: (a) techno-sphere - an energy base - production system - distribution system; (b) socio-sphere - inter-related social institutions; (c) info-sphere - channels of communication; (d) power-sphere, including relationships with outside world - exploitative, symbiotic, militant or pacific; (e) super ideology - powerful cultural assumptions that structure its view of reality and justify its operation.²⁰⁸

²⁰³ Alvin Toffler, 1980, *The Third Wave*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 2

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ He traces the use of the "waves" term in different works, such as of Norbert Elias in *The Civilizing Process* who refers to "a wave of advancing integration over several centuries"; a writer's description about the American West's settlement by using the term "waves" to describe first the pioneers, then the second, the farmers, followed by the third, the business migration in 1837; and Frederick Jackson Turner's citation and analogy in his classic essay 'The Significance of the Frontier in American History in 1893'(Alvin Toffler, 1980, *The Third Wave*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 5).

²⁰⁶ Ibid, p: 5.

²⁰⁷ Ibid, p: 3.

²⁰⁸ Alvin & Heidi Toffler, 2006, *Revolutionary Wealth*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, pp: 349-

According to this waves theory and the structure of their atmospheres, Toffler divides human societies into three distinct categories:²⁰⁹ the First Wave is the society after agrarian revolution and replaced the first hunter-gatherer cultures; the Second Wave society, Toffler writes: "...is industrial and based on mass production, mass distribution, mass consumption, mass education, mass media, mass recreation, mass entertainment, and weapons of mass destruction...combine[d]...with standardization, centralization, concentration, and synchronization, and...a style of organization we call bureaucracy."²¹⁰

All the six principles of the Second Wave society, he asserts, grew out from basic cleavage between producer and consumer and the ever expanding role of the

50.

²⁰⁹ He elucidates: "For the purpose of this book we shall consider the First Wave era to have begun sometime around 8000 B.C. and to have dominated the earth unchallenged until sometime around A.D 1650-1750. From this moment on, the First Wave lost momentum as the Second Wave picked up steam. Industrial civilization, the product of the Second Wave, then dominated the planet in its turn until it, too, crested. This latest historical turning point arrived in the United States during the decade beginning about 1955 – the decade that saw white-collar and service workers outnumber blue-collar workers for the first time. This was the same decade that saw the widespread introduction of the computer, commercial jet travel, the birth control pill, and many other high-impact innovations. It was precisely during this decade that the Third Wave began to gather its force in the United States. Since then it has arrived – at slightly different dates – in most of the other industrial nations, including Britain, France, Sweden, Germany, The Soviet Union, and Japan." (Alvin Toffler, 1971, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 14).

²¹⁰ In details, he described the principles of the Second Wave civilization as follow: 1. **Standardization** - identical products (hardware); business procedures and management (software); curricula (for schools), accreditation, policies, admission procedures; job - pay scale; one-price policy. 2. **Specialization** - diversity in work sphere; divisions of labour doing different type of jobs; fragmentation, limited skills and knowledge; rise of professionalization which he claimed as refined division of labour claiming to monopolize esoteric knowledge. 3. **Synchronization** - concerned with how people dealt with time which equals money; the beat of heart to the beat of machine; punctuality became necessity; 9-5 job time. 4. **Concentration** - to certain/specific place, person etc; energy; population; work (factories); criminals (prison); students (school); corporation/industries (trust and monopoly). 5. **Maximization** - "the addiction to bigness"; big became synonymous with efficient/efficiency; maximizing "growth" to increase GNP. 6. **Centralization** - in business, management, politics, government, power, banking. (Alvin Toffler, 1971, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books, pp: 87-99).

market.²¹¹ The Third Wave society on the other hand, is regarded by Toffler as the new breed in formation - therefore it is still in its embryonic stage, not yet realized but could be recognized through some of its characteristics. The characteristics of the Third Wave society, he elucidates, could be seen in many categories - the new image of nature; the new idea of progress, time and space; new causality and holism.²¹²

In terms of its image of nature, Toffler emphasized that the Third Wave society contains symbiosis, harmony, recycle and renewable energy and the idea that nature must be protected. In terms of progress, it no longer measured by material or technology; in terms of time, it is relative and in terms of space, it is global and local at the same time; in terms of rule of causality, equal attention is given to both negative and positive feedback and mutual interacting forces. Above all, the Third Wave society/civilization values the concept of holism, or, so to say, a holistic approach that unites system approach with more integrative outlook on problem-solving methods, appreciative to multi-disciplinarianism and a combination of analysis and synthesis approaches.²¹³

By acknowledging that the Third Wave society/civilization is still at its formative period, Toffler argues for the need for invention of "...innovative strategies and stop looking for models either in industrial present - or in the pre-industrial past".²¹⁴ But one can ask, what are the criteria of this new model? What values that embedded it? What are its guiding principles? And more importantly - is he talking about model, or, models?

²¹¹ Alvin Toffler, 1980, *The Third Wave*, New York: Bantam Books, pp: 46-56.

²¹² Ibid, p: 51.

²¹³ Ibid, pp: 299-306.

²¹⁴ Ibid, p: 336.

Many of the works in theories of social change tend to envisage future society in the framework and parameters of Western worldview, which in one side, is not surprising because that is the context that today's societies, whether in the Western countries or most of the rest of the world are living. But generalizing the Western context to other societies and implying that the Western model is 'The model' is something problematic. And Toffler, in this case, does not try to impose such Western model in the Third Wave civilizations.

He also admits that his Third Wave civilization does not provide a ready-made model - because it is not fully formed yet.²¹⁵ In other word, Toffler does not regard his Third Wave civilization as an extension of modernism (if modernism ever means industrialism). In fact, he raised the question of the formation of a new kind of 'society' or 'civilization' based on congruity between the features of the First Wave and the Third Wave civilization.

As Toffler persistently argues, the guiding principles of his Third Wave civilization are synthesis, symbiosis and fusion. It is an amalgam and melting pot of different values, cultures and worldviews that suits both the affluent of the developed countries and the needs of the less developed one. However, he indicates that the new-wealth creation system of the Third Wave civilization and its possibility to help the poor should be realized by the leaders of the less developed countries for the precarious forces of the Third Wave will sweep the unprepared ones. He says:

The new wealth-creation system holds the possibility of a better future for vast populations who are now among the planet's poor. Unless the leaders of the Less Developed Countries anticipate these changes, however, they will condemn their people to perpetuated misery - and

²¹⁵ Alvin Toffler, 1980, *The Third Wave*, New York: Bantam books, p:349

themselves to impotence.²¹⁶

Toffler's assertion on the 'openness' of his Third Wave society towards the less advantaged people does not provide any answer and solution to the question of choice - whether or not the super-symbolic economy of the Third Wave civilization is the only possible and viable future for the rest of the world, and if so, how can the poor countries keep up with the current advancement? The synthesis between the new forces with the non-Western own cultural and ethical heritage is the crucial question. At one hand, the promise of a new 'modernity', and on the other, the existing systems that still operate within the capitalist paradigm. Toffler in this regard, did not offer any proposal on how to facilitate such transitions and at a deeper lever, how people from different cultures should merge themselves pleasantly in this new society in formation.

The spiritual vacuum that is the result of Second Wave secularist idea²¹⁷ is recognized and discussed by Toffler generally under the topic pertaining to conflicts between religious or ideological forces and secularism which he admitted as the landmark of the Second Wave civilization. These religious or ideological forces which he sees in ideationalizing the glorious past are a 'pre-industrial' utopian future. This, according to Toffler, prevails in organized religious views such as fundamentalist Christians, Muslims and even Jews, and also in groups such as what he termed as the 'eco-fundi' or fascists in the form of Green movements.²¹⁸ These forces are pushing for a power shift toward the past whereby the past becomes the

²¹⁶ Ibid, p: 398

²¹⁷ Alvin Toffler, 1991, *Powershift: Knowledge, Wealth and Violence at the Edge of the 21st Century*. New York: Bantam Books, p: 365.

²¹⁸ Ibid, p:373

term of their reference. Toffler's proposal in order to save both development and democracy is the need of "...political systems to leap to a new stage, as the economy itself is doing...the primary ideological struggle [will be] ...between 21st century democracy and 11th century darkness."²¹⁹

In his evaluation on the invention of new technology in the Third Wave society, he says that it led changes in the nature of knowledge, from which he assumes the 'controlled mind' or the 'centralized knowledge power' of the Second Wave will transform with the rise of decentralization of knowledge in the Third Wave civilization and this he convinced, is the freedom of mind. The monopoly of knowledge in the hand of the authority, another feature of Second Wave, is about who has the power. Therefore he regards knowledge as a power question and thus, is a political issue.²²⁰ Further, in the Third Wave civilization, the democratization of knowledge will also bring a non-hierarchical communication networks.²²¹

The whole idea in Toffler's works, as he claimed it, is to rethinking the structure and civilizational framework, premises and principles of the industrial civilization or the Second Wave civilization. Hence, he persistently stressed on the need for new tools, methods, frameworks to deal with new system. The central subject of his thought is change and the impact of such dramatic and colossal changes to people when their entire societies abruptly transform itself into something new and unexpected.²²² All his three books probe a single life time - 1950s until 2025 (75

²¹⁹ *ibid*, p:379

²²⁰ *Ibid*, p: 145.

²²¹ *Ibid*, p: 173.

²²² Alvin Toffler, 1991, *Powershift*, New York: Bantam Books, p:xvii.

years). They discuss transformation of power;²²³ the redefinition of power;²²⁴ once knowledge is redistributed, so, too, is the power based on it.²²⁵ He discusses about the power triad - knowledge, violence (force) and wealth (money); muscle, money and mind.²²⁶ It is about the quantity versus quality of power; those who understand “quality” will gain a strategic edge.²²⁷ Among the three, Toffler regards knowledge as the highest quality power because it implies efficiency and used to punish, reward, persuade and transform.²²⁸

In terms of methodology, all the three works of Toffler are typical Western futurists’ works of his time, that is, technological determinism. This technological determinacy relates to a specific Western experience whereby the advance of technology changed the setting of the society, and creating new understanding and new lifestyle. Toffler’s conception of taming technology – as one of the solutions for selective application of technologies - demonstrates shallow understanding on the real culprit of the problem; it is not technology but man himself that must be ‘tamed’ for it should begin by taming ‘the beast within’ not without. Indeed external solutions will never succeed when comes to dealing with human nature.

Toffler is consistent in his civilizational approach since 1970 - it evolved within the framework that he has chosen, “waves of civilizations”; his persistency on the idea of change and the need to understand it to enable human to have a better future - keeping the spirit of public intellectual who concern about humanity at large

²²³ Ibid, p: 4.

²²⁴ Ibid, p: 7.

²²⁵ Ibid, p: 8.

²²⁶ Ibid, p:14.

²²⁷ Ibid, p:15.

²²⁸ Ibid, p:15-16.

and their future generation. Toffler's strength could be appreciated in his distinct style of presenting his ideas in journalistic approach. This is the advantage of such an approach compared to the academic style that sometimes bound to be beyond the general comprehension. However, his journalistic approach also exposes its disadvantage of presenting a rather simplistic analysis on the complex nature of human historical progressions and therefore lacks of deeper understanding on socio-historical change that transforms human history through times.

3.2.2.2 Knowledge, Change and Technology in the Third Wave Society

In tracing Toffler's thoughts chronologically, we found that his book *Future Shock* (1970) was the initial premise of his whole intellectual works. By studying changes and the pace of changes that taking place in contemporary society and will continue to take place in the future, Toffler argues that the challenge of our time is the acceleration of change that transform our outlook and lifestyle, and hence caused the phenomenon he termed as 'future shock.'

According to Toffler, the term 'future shock' "...is the dizzying disorientation brought on by the premature arrival of the future... [it] is a time phenomenon, a product of the greatly accelerated rate of change in society. It arises from the superimposition of a new culture on an old one. It is culture shock in one's own society."²²⁹ In other place, he defined future shock as "...the distress, both physical and psychological, that arises from an overload of the human organism's physical

²²⁹ Alvin Toffler, 1971, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 11.

adaptive systems and its decision-making processes.”²³⁰ Put more simply, future shock in Toffler’s terminology “...is the human response to overstimulation.”²³¹

In this situation, Toffler distinguished that people’s reactions on future shock are different, and the symptoms also vary according to the stage and the intensity of the disease. He further explains that “...[t]hese symptoms range all the way from anxiety, hostility to helpful authority, and seemingly senseless violence, to physical illness, depression and apathy. Its victims often manifest erratic swings in interest and life style, followed by an effort to ‘crawl into their shells’ through social, intellectual and emotional withdrawal. They feel continually ‘bugged’ or harassed, and want desperately to reduce the number of decisions they must make.”²³² Toffler then signifies that the accelerative changes experienced by millions of psychologically normal people of the world’s richest and most technically advanced nations will cause the ‘disease of change’, the ‘future shock’ – that is, the inability to sustain with the excessive changes that brought to the edge of breakdown by incessant demands to adapt to novelty – in short, the overwhelming reaction of the early arrival of future.²³³

Toffler’s *Future Shock* and its notional repercussion unto society had attracted widespread attention and facilitated the overwhelming expressions on the nature of “changing times” that have been experienced by many people over the colossal changes of the early 20th century which consequently inverted their sense of ‘normalcy’ and predictability of a settled social order. Instability therefore became the norm in many domains of social and economic life and for many, ‘the future’ no

²³⁰ Ibid, p: 326.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² Ibid.

²³³ See N.Cross (ed), 1974, *Man-Made Futures*, London: Hutchinson.

longer appeared normal and natural as it was during the pre-modern life. This sense of continuing transformation, existential threat and the intuition that the future would be very unusual that Toffler expressed in *Future Shock* grasped the mind of the ordinary people and their sense of being.²³⁴

The correlation between the future shock phenomenon with the accelerating pace of changes that occur in one's life, society, and the world one lives as Toffler argued persistently, has sufficiently demonstrated the way our future will be affected by the small part that each individual play and experience in his or her life when dealing with continuous changes. He indicates:

Change is the process by which the future invades our lives, and it is important to look at it closely, not merely from the grand perspectives of history, but also from the vantage point of the living, breathing individuals who experience it.²³⁵

These changes in process, according to his analysis, would be evidently perceived in at least three significant parts in modern society: rapid urbanization, human's consumption of energy and the acceleration of economic growth. In this connection, he argues that the engine of change is technology while its fuel is knowledge, which in this case, scientific knowledge. The pace of changes that resulted from knowledge and technology has created what Toffler called as 'transience' in which everything is temporary - in fact he argues for the death of permanence.²³⁶

²³⁴ <http://www.metafuture.org/articlesbycolleagues/RichardSlaughter/futureshock.htm>
12/01/09.

²³⁵ Alvin Toffler, 1980, *The Third Wave*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 1.

²³⁶ Ibid.

In putting his argument on the current trend of changes, Toffler stresses that these occurrences are "...not a crisis of capitalism, but of industrial society itself, regardless of its political form."²³⁷ Conclusively he asserts that "...we are in the midst of the super-industrial revolution."²³⁸ He, unlike Daniel Bell, believes that the underlying forces that move the society towards new civilization lay not in capitalism but industrialism. However, he does not acknowledge the thin line that separates between capitalism and industrialism as both are the product of the same root that is modernism. This is the most conspicuous frail in Toffler's analysis on the structures and systems that construct the bedrock of the Western societies.

The nature of this new super-industrial revolution therefore, he believes, lies in transiency, diversity and novelty, which he discussed in great detail in the book. He also argued that a new force had entered history, what he called 'the accelerative thrust.' Furthermore he pointed out that individuals, organizations, society and the entire world were completely unprepared to dealing with it. Thus, he urged the need for both individuals and societies to learn ways to adapt to and manage the sources of over-rapid change which particularly meant bringing technological innovation under some sort of collective control.²³⁹ The theory of adaptation that he put forward in almost half of the book, attempted at assisting people in coping with the distresses and confusions that he claimed as the result of future shock.

The type of collective control over technological innovation that capable of preventing mass future shock, he emphasizes, must "...involve the conscious

²³⁷ Alvin Toffler, 1971, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 186.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid, p: 428.

regulation of scientific advance.”²⁴⁰ For this reason, what needed, he believes, are more sophisticated criteria for selection of technologies.²⁴¹ In other words, technologies must undergo through strict selection procedures to evaluate the purpose of their innovations and applications in the society. Serious efforts are also needed to be devoted to anticipating the consequences of technological developments. Toffler firmly believes in managing technology by regulating its advancement to prevent secondary social effects resulted from technology through the process of anticipating them in advance, estimating their nature, strength and timing and if necessary, to impede the new technology that would damage the societies in long term. In short, he affirms that technology cannot be tolerated to charge the society.²⁴²

Concluding the solution for technological regulation, Toffler says that what is needed is ‘a machinery for screening machines’²⁴³ through the ‘environmental screening’ procedures which are carried out by the ‘technology ombudsman’ for protecting society from unseemly effects. This means creating new political institutions for guaranteeing that the questions of environment are investigated and for promoting or discouraging, even banning certain proposed technologies. However, Richard A. Slaughter criticized the practicality of Toffler’s proposal as his analysis apparently did not embark on the underlying basis of technological advancement that creates such chaotic consequences – the worldviews, presuppositions and ideologies

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ Alvin Toffler, 1971, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 433.

²⁴² Ibid, p: 438. Toffler suggested a number of critical questions to be asked before introducing any technologies: (1) What are the potential physical side effects of any technology; (2) what is the long-term impact of a technical innovation on the social, cultural and psychological environment; (3) how will a proposed new technology affect the value system of the society? (4) What are its accelerative implications? (Alvin Toffler, 1971, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books, pp: 438-440).

²⁴³ Alvin Toffler, 1971, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 440.

that he argued as deeply embedded in the current global system.²⁴⁴

Toffler's view on the important role of political and also social institutions cannot be underestimated as the culmination of his sociological analysis in *Future Shock* has been devoted on 'the strategy of social futurism'. The central part of the strategy is the significance of decisional processes made by various political and governmental institutions to affect desirable changes within society in relation to their future. He goes on to outline some of the social innovations needed to ameliorate change. There is an emphatic call for social indicators: a sensitive system of indicators geared to measuring the achievement of social and cultural goals, and integrated with economic indicators, is part of the technical equipment that any society needs before it can successfully reach the next stage of eco-technological development. It is an absolute pre-requisite for post-technocratic planning and change management.²⁴⁵

With the detail accounts devoted to exploring these themes in different areas of human experience and culture, Toffler then put forward the theory of adaptation as the key strategies for surviving and coping with colossal changes in human life by introducing new educational revolution, helping individuals and society by building personal stability zones, group counseling, and enclaves of the past and the future; by taming technology through selective measure of cultural styles, environmental screen and technology ombudsman; and by having strategy for social futurism through humanization of planning, anticipatory democracy, and ending technocracy.²⁴⁶

²⁴⁴ <http://www.metafuture.org/articlesbycolleagues/RichardSlaughter/futureshock.htm>
12/01/09.

²⁴⁵ Alvin Toffler, 1971, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 413.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

The main component in his theory of adaptation lies in education. In his assertion on the introduction of revolutionary improvement in education system, he powerfully criticizes that "...what passes for education today, even in our 'best' schools and colleges, is a hopeless anachronism."²⁴⁷ Despite all the rhetoric about the future, Toffler signifies that the schools remain backward and entangle in the old system that provide the younger generations the tools of the past, rather than preparing them to an emerging new society they will be living and becoming part of.²⁴⁸ Thus he considers that the prime objective of education should be to 'increase the individual's 'cope-ability' which he can adapt to continual change.'²⁴⁹

The habit of anticipation, in this case, is central to develop the habit of adaptability, in which assumptions, projections, images of futures would need to be inculcated and experienced by every individual during their schooling age. In so doing, the student's 'future-focused role image' would be nourished and democratic 'council for the future' was needed in every school. In addition, Toffler believes that science fiction was an appropriate form of literature to encourage these capacities.²⁵⁰

Conclusively, the idea of change, or to use his verbose term, the Gospel of change, is the real message that America sends to the rest of the world, and "...this gospel doesn't specify whether change will be good or bad...The Gospel of change is most dangerous to established institutions and order precisely because it is not inherently right-wing or left-wing, democratic or authoritarian. Its implicit meta-message is that all our societies, all our current ways of life and even our beliefs are

²⁴⁷ Alvin Toffler, 1971, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 413.

²⁴⁸ Ibid, p: 202.

²⁴⁹ Ibid, p: 364.

²⁵⁰ Ibid.

inherently temporary.”²⁵¹ The self-claim value-free changes that precipitated in today’s world engender the sense of transiency – the temporality of experience and being that becomes one of the characteristics of the postmodern society.

Toffler’s ideas on future, especially his analysis on the psychological impact of future shock has created public attention on futures-related issues including the complexity of transformational processes and the rate of change and its related consequences. However, Toffler’s overemphasis on the impact of ‘change’ as “a wholly external force” has neglected the more important fact that change works through what Richard A. Slaughter called as “specific social formations and the structures and processes that maintain their interests.”²⁵² Slaughter argues that Toffler’s diagnosis on the ‘disease’ of future shock had also overemphasized the response of “these decontextualised and ‘shocked’ individuals” and at the same time disregarded the rest of the general public (or in Slaughter word, social entities) that “...were (and remain) complicit in generating and sustaining ‘change’”²⁵³ In his explicit criticism on Toffler’s approach on change, he maintains that:

...this was a disempowering approach that displaced autonomy from individuals and groups into poorly defined and shadowy social locations that could neither be readily located nor challenged. Linked with this is the way that Toffler ascribed the prime responsibility for ‘rapid change’ to ‘technology’ - not to the agencies and powers that have the ability to define, focus, develop, market and apply it. The effect was mystificatory in effect, though not, I am sure, in intent. While Toffler sought to encourage ‘social futurism’ and ‘anticipatory democracy’ he did so in a way that completely overlooked the difficulties people face in (a) understanding and (b) attempting to intervene in their historical context. In summary, the Future Shock thesis can be seen as an expression of a journalistic view of macro-

²⁵¹ Alvin & Heidi Toffler, 2006, *Revolutionary Wealth*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, p: 209.

²⁵² Richard A. Slaughter, *Future Shock Reassessed*.

²⁵³ Ibid.

change from a very particular viewpoint in space and time. It foregrounds the habits of perception that are characteristic of that time and attempts to universalise them. As noted, this framework certainly provided some useful suggestions for possible ways forward. But as an interpretive agenda it was unworkable in practice. Conspicuously lacking were ways of understanding, and coming to grips with, other dysfunctional imbalances in culture. ‘Change’ is only one of them. Meaninglessness, lack of purpose, hyper-materialism, technological narcissism and spiritual hunger are a few of the others that might be encompassed within a wider view. But ‘Future Shock’ was silent upon them all.²⁵⁴

As far as future shock is concerned, Slaughter considers Toffler’s “vivid social imagination” had surpassed its practical grasp, lacked of means and needed a lot more work before they could be put into practice. A greater concern for him, was Toffler’s journalistic inclination on “the outer empirical world (facts, trends, change processes)” and thus missed “the inner interpretive one (worldviews, paradigms, social interests)”.²⁵⁵ The lack of interpretive analysis hindered the understanding of how to transfer futures proposals from their idealistic forms into social action, and this, according to him, is what lack in Toffler, and indeed many other futurists. He also argues that “...while Toffler’s research had provided him with numerous indicators and examples from which emerged a rich store of futures-related ideas and proposals, most of those reading his work were unable to translate his proposals into action for one simple reason. They did not have the means to cross this symbolic gulf. To move from ideas to action in fact requires progress though several ‘layers of capability’ which had not yet been described at that time.”²⁵⁶ Toffler’s concern over technological assessment is principally right but Slaughter advances his criticisms on Toffler’s shallow analysis of “...the worldviews, presuppositions, ideologies and

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ Richard A. Slaughter, *Future Shock Reassessed*.

embedded interests that were driving (and continue to drive) the global system has put him in a weak position to call into question the apparent inevitability of technological advance or to propose means of dealing with it at a constitutive level. Hence his well-meaning suggestions were, and are, outstripped by vastly more powerful forces.”²⁵⁷

Overall, Toffler has efficiently demonstrates that knowledge and technology are the two powerful determinants in facilitating changes in society, and thus effectively bring the society to an unprecedented process of transformations to a new type of order he termed as “the Third Wave society/civilization”. And it is at this point that relates Toffler’s idea of the super-industrial society in the form of the Third Wave society/civilization with the theory of the post-industrial society purported by Daniel Bell in which the centrality of theoretical knowledge and technology is the hallmark of his future society.

3.3 DANIEL BELL: BACKGROUND AND THOUGHTS

Following the brief biographical account of Alvin Toffler, this section continues the same structure by firstly looking at Daniel Bell’s biographical background and thereafter discussing similar selected themes of his thoughts. This will be done by scrutinizing his main intellectual works, particularly with regards to his theoretical analysis on the future society, namely the post-industrial society. The books are *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (1973), *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976) and *The End of ideology* (1960). Other materials written by Bell are also consulted wherever related.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

3.3.1 BELL: LIFES AND WORKS

Daniel Bell was born in 10 May 1919 in the Lower East Side of New York City from a Jewish family who mostly had chain-migrated from Bialystok, an area that lies between Poland and Russia. Been an orphan as early as eight months old when his father died, he was often placed in a Hebrew day orphanage because of the demands of his mother's work as a full-time pattern-maker. Bell had a new legal guardian at the age of 11 - his paternal uncle Samuel Bolotsky who was a dentist. For career sake, his uncle chose to use a new family name, Bell. These experiences exposed Bell "...the full gamut of poor, immigrant Jewish experience: Yiddish as the first language, Hebrew school, ethnic street gangs, petty crime, racketeering and the public poverty of waterfront shacks"²⁵⁸ that almost unsurprisingly made him a socialist by the age of 13 when he joined the Young People's Socialist League after reading Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*. He then declared that he had found the truth and no longer believed in God to his teacher.

Most of his teenhood age was spent in the Ottendorfer branch of the New York Public Library reading socialism and sociology and by the age of 15, he was taking courses in dialectical materialism at the Rand School of Social Science. He joined a socialist reading group called 'Alcove No.1' when he was studying at the City College of New York. Aside from his activism with the socialist group that was mainly Trotskyites²⁵⁹ and his reading on communism, Bell remained a democratic

²⁵⁸ Malcolm Waters, 1996, *Key Sociologists: Daniel Bell*, London: Routledge, p: 13.

²⁵⁹ Trotskyites are radicals who support Trotsky's theory that socialism must be established throughout the world by continuing revolution (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/Trotskyite>). Waters describes that other members of 'Alcove No.1' socialist reading group such as Meyer Lasky, Irving Kristol, Nathan Glazer and Irving Howe, were mainly Trotskyites and many were later to convert to become the core of the neo-conservative movement.

socialist who opposed to violent revolution and committed to a mixed economy.²⁶⁰

He went to the City College of New York in 1935 and chose classics as his major on the influence of Moses Finkelstein, a young communist instructor who suggested that ancient history was the best preparation to study sociology for the kind of exposure one has in its examination of entire and coherent cultures. Bell spent a year in graduate school at Columbia University after graduated from the college in 1938, but left without any result and explanations.²⁶¹ He spent most of the next 20 years of his life working as a journalist: Firstly as staff writer and then as managing director at the *New Leader*, a pro-social-democratic magazine during most of the war years and then as staff writer and Labor Editor at *Fortune* from 1948-1958. These roles had taught him the realities of political struggle and he acquired the skills to produce large volume of written material in short time, mounting to almost 426 articles within 20 years after 1948, and this journalistic ability remained even after his permanent admission to the academic life thereafter. He founded *The Public Interest* with Irving Kristol in 1965 as a forum for the rehearsal of great public debates²⁶².

Bell's academic career began in 1945 after accepting a three-year appointment teaching social science at the University of Chicago. During the *Fortune* years between 1952 until 1956, he became an adjunct lecturer in sociology at Columbia University. In 1958, he decided to move out of journalism permanently as an Associate Professor in the same university where he received his PhD. in 1960. The thesis was a compilation of his published work and he was then promoted to full

²⁶⁰ Malcolm Waters, 1996, *Key Sociologists: Daniel Bell*, London: Routledge, pp: 13-14.

²⁶¹ *Ibid*, p: 14.

²⁶² *Ibid*, pp: 14-15.

Professor in 1962.

Later in 1969, he moved to Harvard and was appointed to the prestigious chair as Henry Ford II Professor of Social Sciences in 1980.²⁶³ As a public intellectual, he never ceases public life in which was devoted to insisting on a sociological contribution to planning for the future at the national level. He was a member of the President's Commission on Technology, Automation and Economic Progress between 1964 until 1966 and co-chair of its Panel on Special Indicators. He also chaired the Commission on the Year 2000 which he founded under the aegis of The American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 1964 to 1974 and edited its celebrated report, *Toward the Year 2000: Work in Progress*, published in 1968. In 1976 until 1979, he was appointed as the American representative on the OECD's Inter-futures Project, a member of the president's Commission on a National Agenda for the 1980s and chair of its Panel on Energy and Resources. He was a member of the National Research Council Board on Telecommunications and Computers.²⁶⁴

In the later years of his career, Bell has been the recipient of numerous honours, prizes and visiting lectureships. The most prestigious of these include: Guggenheim Fellowships in 1972 and 1983; the Hobhouse memorial lecture at the University of London, 1977; Vice President of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences Talcott Parsons Prize for the Social Sciences, 1992; an American Sociological Association Award for a distinguished career of lifetime scholarship, 1992; and no less than nine honorary doctorates. Bell retired from his professorship in 1990 but remains a Scholar-in-Residence at the American Academy of Arts and

²⁶³ Ibid, p:15.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, p:16.

Sciences in Cambridge, Massachusetts.²⁶⁵

As we contemplate the era in which he lived his early years between 1930s-40s, we could presume the influence of the contemporary ideas of that period in his writings and intellectual works which were very much related to understanding and examining the theory of social development, and most importantly his theory of post-industrial society. Upon reflecting the developmental stages of his concept of post-industrial society, Bell stated the four works that influenced his thoughts:

1. The implicit theme in his first book, *The End of Ideology* (1960) in which he examined the role of technical decision making in society and the exhaustion of old political passions. He argued that contradicted to the misapprehensions that brought by the title of the book, his genuine argumentation was that “the exhaustion of the old ideologies inevitably led to a hunger for new ones.”²⁶⁶

2. A series of studies he did in *Fortune* magazine in the early 1950s on the changing composition of the labour force whereby the decline of unskilled workers took place coincidentally with the increase of technical and professional employee in the occupational system.²⁶⁷

3. His rereading of Joseph Schumpeter’s work, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* on the notion of technology as an open sea had turned his mind to the question of technological forecasting and the feasibility of its role of charting technology in order “...to iron out the indeterminacy of the future.”²⁶⁸

4. An essay by Gerald Holton, a physicist and historian of science on the significance

²⁶⁵ Ibid, pp:15-16.

²⁶⁶ Daniel Bell, 1973, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, p: 34.

²⁶⁷ Ibid, p: 34.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

of theoretical knowledge and the codification of theory.²⁶⁹

Authoring fourteen books, including such classics as *The End of Ideology* (1960), where he examined the fading of Marxism in American intellectual life and the rise of a new post-ideological generation for whom the radical passions of the 1930s were no longer relevant.²⁷⁰ In *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting* (1973), he anticipated a near-future America in which the great majority of workers will find employment in professions and services. The book appeared in 1973, but Bell launched the concept of ‘post-industrial society’ as early as 1962. The principal source of wealth, he argues, will be information, grounded in the empirical sciences. Bell has revisited and fine-tuned his prognosis of a “post-industrial” society in his 1987 *Daedalus* article “The World and the United States in 2033.” Another book, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* (1976), follows his study of the disintegration of ideology with a plea for the renewal of religious faith.²⁷¹

His works have huge influence in the study of social development in the Western world, particularly his theory of post-industrial society which he propagated consistently and persistently since the past 35 years. *The End of Ideology* and *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism* have appeared in the list of the 100 most important books of the second half of the twentieth century of the Times Literary Supplement.²⁷²

²⁶⁹ Ibid, p: 35.

²⁷⁰ W. Warren Wagar, 1996, ‘Daniel Bell’ in George Thomas Kurian and Graham T.T. Molitor (eds), *Encyclopedia of the Future*, Volume 1, New York: Macmillan Library Reference and Simon & Schuster Macmillan, p: 50.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² http://www.pbs.org/arguing/nyintellectuals_bell.html 12/01/09.

3.3.2 MAIN THEMES IN BELL'S THOUGHTS

Following the previous section of Toffler's main themes of thoughts, this section aims at exposing Bell's ideas within selected thematical discussions, mainly pertaining to his future idealism and his views on contemporary and future challenges. This is done firstly by analyzing the concept of his future idealism – the post-industrial society – followed by discussing the contemporary and future challenges that he views will be facing the future society. The contemporary and future challenges are knowledge, change and technology and its relation to his theory of future society in the form of the so-called “post-industrial society”.

3.3.2.1 The Theory of the Post-industrial Society

The discussion on Bell's thought in this section draws mainly on his masterpiece on future society, *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society* (1973), and also his other famous works, *The End of Ideology* and *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*. Other less popular works written by him were also consulted wherever related. In proposing the theory of post-industrial society through *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, Bell clearly stated that the main thesis in the book is that “...the major source of structural change in society is the change in the character of knowledge: the exponential growth and branching of science, the rise of a new intellectual technology, the creation of systematic research through R & D [research and development] budgets, and, the codification of theoretical knowledge.”²⁷³

²⁷³Daniel Bell, 1973, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, p: 44.

Elucidating the debate on post-industrial society in the Introduction of his book, he says: “In the last hundred and fifty years, the social tensions of Western society have been framed by these contradictory impulses towards equality and bureaucracy, as these have worked themselves out in the politics and social structure of industrial society. Looking ahead to the next decades, one sees that the desire for greater participation in the decision making of organizations that control individual lives (schools, hospitals, business firms) and the increasing technical requirements of knowledge (professionalization, meritocracy) form the axes of social conflict in the future.”²⁷⁴

Bell also acknowledges that the identification of what he called as “historical keys” in the verge of historical transition that he attempts to study is quite tricky. He analyzes it within the social frameworks which he regards as “...the structures of the major institutions that order the lives of individuals in a society: the distribution by occupation, the education of the young, the regulation of political conflict, and the like. The change from a rural to an urban society, from an agrarian to an industrial economy, from a federalized to a centralized political state, are major changes in social frameworks.”²⁷⁵ Therefore, he emphasizes that those major changes allow the human society “...to identify an “agenda of questions” that will confront the society and have to be solved.”²⁷⁶ Thus, the theory is not a mere prediction, but rather setting a schema or an outline for future society. To show the distinct features of human development, Bell outlined the conceptual scheme as demonstrated below:

²⁷⁴ Ibid, p: 8.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid, pp: 8-9

	PRE-INDUSTRIAL	INDUSTRIAL	POST-INDUSTRIAL	
Regions:	Asia Africa Latin America	Western Europe Soviet Union Japan	United States	
Economic sector:	Primary Extractive: Agriculture Mining Fishing Timber	Secondary Good producing: Manufacturing Processing	Tertiary Transportation Utilities Quinary Health Research Government Recreation	Quaternary Trade Finance Insurance Real estate Education
Occupational Slope:	Farmer Miner Fisherman Unskilled worker	Semi-skilled worker Engineer	Professional and technical Scientists	
Technology:	Raw materials	Energy	Information	
Design:	Game against nature	Game against fabricated nature	Games between persons	
Methodology:	Common sense experience	Empiricism Experimentation	Abstract theory: models, simulation, decision theory, system analysis	
Time perspective:	Orientation to the past Ad hoc responses	Ad hoc adaptiveness Projections	Future orientation Forecasting	
Axial principle:	Traditionalism: Land/resource limitation	Economic growth: State or private control of investment decisions	Centrality of and codification of theoretical knowledge	

Table 5.1: General Schema of Social Change
Source: *The Coming of Post-industrial Society*²⁷⁷

The concept of post-industrial society, continuously stressed by Bell, is an analytical construct, or a conceptual scheme, not a picture of a specific or concrete society, as he insists: “It is a paradigm or social framework that identifies new axes of social organization and new axes of social stratification in advanced Western society...As a social system, post-industrial society does not “succeed” capitalism or

²⁷⁷ Ibid, p:117

socialism but, like bureaucratization, cuts across both. It is a specification of new dimensions in the social structure which the polity has to manage.”²⁷⁸

In *The Coming of Post-Industrial Society*, Bell sought to demonstrate how technology and the codification of theoretical knowledge were shaping the future society in the techno-economic order, and consequently, the society’s bureaucratic and hierarchical system. He also stresses that unlike almost other contemporary social scientist who think society as some unified “system” or as a monolithic one, he, on the contrary believes that this view is misleading, and modern society could be analyzed by regarding it as “an uneasy amalgam of three distinct realms.”²⁷⁹ These realms, according to Bell, are first, the social structure or the techno-economic order; the second is the polity and finally the culture.²⁸⁰ The idea of post-industrialism, he further argues, is limited to changes in the techno-economic order. All the three realms in modern society, he emphasizes, are ruled by distinct axial principles, in which have resulted in tensions and conflicts within Western society for the past 150 years; the rules for the techno-economic order is efficiency; for the polity, it is equality and for the culture, self-realization.²⁸¹

Bell rejects what he considered as “seductive and simple” visions of the future and proposed instead what he claimed as “a more complex and empirically testable sociological argument.”²⁸² Linked to this is his criticism on nihilism, which he sees as

²⁷⁸Daniel Bell, 1973, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, p: 8. Ibid, p: 483; also in Daniel Bell, *The Future of Technology*, 2001, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, p: 114.

²⁷⁹ Daniel Bell, 1996, *The Cultural Contradiction of Capitalism*, New York: Basic Books, p: xxx.

²⁸⁰Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid, p: xxxi.

²⁸² Daniel Bell, 1973, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social*

representing such simplistic a vision of future. His arguments are based on two reasons: first, the distortion of historical time, in which the nihilists viewed the world and social change in an apocalyptic perspective. This view, according to Bell, resulted from a tradition preoccupied with revelation. He argues that the structures of a society are not reversed overnight; in fact he believes that societal structures change much slower because the processes of changing the habits, custom and established tradition are more complex, long and difficult.²⁸³ The second argument is with the monolithic view of society, in which he ascribed to Hegel and Marx. This view regards society as a “structurally interrelated whole” and governed by some unified inner principle. Bell lamented that “...[i]n this view, history is dialectical, the new mode negating the previous one and preparing the way for the next to come, the underlying tow being the *telos* of rationality.”²⁸⁴

Bell’s interest in the structure and functions of education, especially of higher education revealed almost as a passionate commitment in the ‘post-industrial society’, where his belief in the virtues and possibilities of the university leads him to overstress its capacity to determine the future shape of society.²⁸⁵ He believes that education should be liberal, that is, open in the opportunities that it offers and in providing individuals with the chance to discover their own identity in relation to the stock of human knowledge, rather than doctrinaire or inculcative, insisting that their identities should be cast from a common mould – a pluralistic tune of different identities. Bell specifies the content of liberal education more closely through the purposes: To overcome intellectual provincialism, that is, the myths, ideologies and

Forecasting, Middlesex: Penguin, p: 7.

²⁸³ Ibid, pp: 7-8.

²⁸⁴ Ibid, p: 8.

²⁸⁵ Daniel Bell, 1973, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ibid, p: 89.

biases that people can hold by virtue of their formative experiences and the narrow specialization that can be acquired by training in a particular expertise.²⁸⁶

Far more important in the social realm of the post-industrial society, Bell indicates, is the more people are becoming a “communal society” in which the public sector has a greater importance and in which the goods and services of the society – those affecting cities, education, medical care, and the environment – that will increasingly have to be purchased jointly. Hence, this creates the problem of social choice and individual values and the question of how to reconcile conflicting individual desires through the political mechanism rather than the market that can cause a potential source of dissension. In this relation, the relation of the individual to bureaucratic structures will be subject to even greater strain.²⁸⁷

In the management realm, Bell believes that the increasing centralization of government creates a need for new social forms that will allow the citizenry greater participation in making decisions. He argues that the growth of a large, educated professional and technical class, with its desire for greater autonomy in work, will force institutions to reorganize the older bureaucratic patterns of hierarchy and detailed specialization. The individual in this ultra-advanced society, he concedes, will live longer and face the problem of renewed education and new careers.²⁸⁸

On the familial plane, Bell insists that the family is the source of primordial attachment that may become less important for the child, in both his early schooling

²⁸⁶ Ibid, p: 92.

²⁸⁷ Ibid, p: 95.

²⁸⁸ Daniel Bell, 1973, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, p: 111.

and his emotional reinforcement. With this detachment, there will be a more mobile and more crowded world, raising problems of privacy and stress. He elucidates that the new densities and “communications overload” may increase the potentiality for irrational outburst in the society. Finally, Bell anticipates that there is the growing disjunction between the “culture” and the “social structure” in which society becomes more functionally organized and directed to knowledge and the mastery of complex bodies of learning. The culture, on the other hand, becomes more hedonistic, permissive, expressive, distrustful of authority and the purposive, delayed-gratification of a bourgeois, achievement-oriented technological world.²⁸⁹

He argued that decision making process will become the main characteristic of the post-industrial society which stipulated by social choices that reflected by individuals “ordering” preferences. But these social choices, as he referred to The Condorcet paradox developed by Kenneth J. Arrow, cannot be created. The only possible way, in his view, is the bargaining power between groups, which he believes unattainable at the present society where mechanisms for social accounting and verification of social goals did not exist.²⁹⁰

By stressing the nature of post-industrial society, Bell indirectly confirmed the fact that his theory of post-industrial society is nothing more than an extension of Western idea of modernity or perhaps a counter discourse of modernity, as in Kumar’s analysis in *From Post-industrial to Post-modernity: New Theories of the Contemporary World*²⁹¹ when he clearly stated that the post-industrial cycle within

²⁸⁹ Ibid, p: 123.

²⁹⁰ Daniel Bell, 1973, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, pp: 43-4.

²⁹¹ Krishan Kumar,1995, *From Post-industrial to Post-modernity: New Theories of the*

the United States national economy will be repeated at the global level. The social and technological determinism that follow the world's advancement into modernity in Western term henceforth sealed its fate in the future.

3.3.2.2 Knowledge, Change and Technology in the Post-Industrial Society

Bell's theory of the post-industrial society predicts the emergence of a post-industrial society that represents a dramatic change in the social framework of the Western world. Certainly, there is considerable evidence to support his speculations of the coming of the knowledge or information society: the shift from a goods-producing to a service economy, the rise of the professional and technical classes, the axial principle of the centrality of theoretical knowledge as the source of innovation and of policy formulation for the society, the spread of information technology, the increase in future orientations, and the increasing importance of the 'axial structures' of the university, research organizations and other intellectual institutions, among other things. A major engine of social change for Bell is the growth of knowledge, especially theoretical knowledge, and a new intellectual technology, while a major steering mechanism for the direction of change is the character of the political managers who have the power of decision.²⁹² There are, according to Bell, three types of technology as been conveyed from the historical development of technology:

Contemporary World, Oxford: Blackwell, p: 55.

²⁹²Daniel Bell, 1976, *The Coming of Post-industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

	Pre-industrial society	Industrial society	Post-industrial society
Period	Up until 1765 when James Watt devised a way to harness steam power	1765-1970	1970- (post World War II phenomenon)
Type of technology	Craft/hand technology where muscle power, exogenous to the technology, is used to power tools.	Steam technology and electric technology bring an enormous increase in power. Power is no longer exogenous but is embodied in machines and tools.	Intellectual technology. Information (derived from knowledge) is encoded in comprehensive technological systems.

Table 5.2: General Categories of Technological Innovations

Source: *The Future of Technology*²⁹³

The three type of technology is categorized according to their specific technological innovations, in which the pre-industrial society was characterized with muscle-based technology; whereas the industrial society, with machine-based technology and the post-industrial with knowledge/intellectual technology. In discussing the post-industrial technological revolution, Bell identifies four technological innovations that are:

- (a) The change of all mechanical and electric systems to electronics – electronic systems is obviously based entirely on intellectual technology because it is mathematical calculations and the writing of software and programs that allow them to function.
- (b) Miniaturization – the shrinkage of devices that conduct electricity or switch electrical impulses.
- (c) Digitalization – information is represented by digits/digital form.
- (d) Software – frees the user to quickly and easily do various tasks without having

²⁹³ Daniel Bell, 2001, *The Future of Technology*, Selangor (Malaysia): Pelanduk Publications, p:114.

to learn an entire programming language.²⁹⁴

Although the new post-industrial society is basically based on intellectual technology,²⁹⁵ Bell disregarded the overwhelming attitude and reactions toward technological changes. He argued that one must not be confused by “the pace of change”²⁹⁶ and how people have to keep abreast with new theories and new technologies that caused “cultural lag”, which is the social equivalent of jet lag. He bluntly says, a bit cynically:

My advice to people who feel overwhelmed by change, and particularly by new technology, is simple – just sit back and think. Calm down and wait...²⁹⁷ Technological change, or the pace thereof, is not something to fear. Change does not occur as some sort of automatic process with no one in control.²⁹⁸

²⁹⁴ Daniel Bell, 2001, *The Future of Technology*, Selangor (Malaysia): Pelanduk Publications, p: 115.

²⁹⁵ Bell emphasizes on the distinctive nature of the intellectual technology which characterize the post-industrial society by differentiating the past technological advancement which he regards were mostly not based on any systematic application of scientific or theoretical knowledge, but started with an idea then been realized through a long process of empirical trial and error (Daniel Bell, 2001, *The Future of Technology*, Selangor (Malaysia): Pelanduk Publications, p:27). He stresses that today’s technology on the other hand, develops from the unfolding of the codification of theoretical knowledge whereby scientists and technicians a scientific program and agenda that lead the direction of change (Ibid, p: 29). Intellectual technology, he convinced, is based on mathematical and linguistic algorithms, and the specific programs and tools used for the applications (Ibid; also in Daniel Bell, 1973, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, pp: 30).

²⁹⁶ According to Bell, there are ways to avoid being either deceived or overwhelmed by exaggerations about “the pace of change” that are: (a) to realize that technology has an inherent tendency toward increasing simplification that makes it workable, and most of the tools have become ever more user-friendly (Daniel Bell, 2001, *The Future of Technology*, p: 9); (b) to look from a historical perspective, and examine the larger picture. He gave an example of the technological changes experienced by Western society in 1800 to 1860 whereby a person would have experienced working in factories by the invention of steam-powered pumps in coal mining industry, thus, transformed the organization of work. He obviously criticized Toffler’s idea on the accelerative pace of change when he asked, quite openly: “Were the “future shock” experienced by individuals living through each of the sixty-year periods describe above any less of an upheaval that the changes happening to the present generation? On what grounds can one reasonably argue that “the pace of change” is faster and more disturbing today?” (Ibid, p:11-12).

²⁹⁷ Daniel Bell, 2001, *The Future of Technology*, Selangor (Malaysia): Pelanduk Publications, pp: 7-8.

²⁹⁸ Ibid, p: 10.

Moreover, contradicting the belief of the “uncontrolled technology”²⁹⁹ as purported by Toffler, Bell on the other hand believes that “...the crucial question today is thus not simply whether you can ‘keep up’ or ‘run fast enough’, but rather where you want to run and how. Our concern should not be whether or not ‘culture’ is lagging behind technological change.”³⁰⁰ For him, this perspective is misleading from a very important question, and what is most needed “...is a sound set of judgment, some guiding principles, to make one’s own, balanced appraisals of both merits and demerits of technologies now in their infancy.”³⁰¹

With regard to change, Bell says that in general, there are four sources of change in society: the first source of change is technology. He argues that technology opens up many possibilities of mastering nature and transforming resources, time, and space, and also, in many ways, technology imposes its own constraints and imperatives. The second source of change in his view represents the diffusion of existing goods and privileges in society, whether they are tangible goods or social claims on the community. The third kind of change, he states, involves structural developments in society, that is the transformation of the economy into a “post-industrial” society which has shifted the weight of economy from the product sector

²⁹⁹ Bell explains that it is hard to define technology - whether it is tools, machines or hardware plus software, and understanding technology in light of those answers, he argues, is insufficient and inadequate in today’s world. This is because the very nature of technology has changed fundamentally within the last 25 years or so, and the reorganization of the use of technology can only be achieved by working with better concept of what technology is and with some awareness of the social implications of technological change (Ibid, p:18). Further, he elaborates that “The utilitarian and instrumental nature of technology is crucial for an initial understanding of technology. In the most fundamental sense, technology can be defined as the making of materials and tools to adapt to and transform nature. Here emerges another distinction crucial for a true understanding of the nature of technology: we must distinguish between the invention of a new technology and the dissemination, or diffusion, of that technology to other people and other parts of the world.” (Ibid, pp: 20-21).

³⁰⁰ Daniel Bell, 2001, *The Future of Technology*, Selangor (Malaysia): Pelanduk Publications, p: 21.

³⁰¹ Ibid, p: 15.

to services, and more importantly, the sources of innovation are becoming lodged in the intellectual institutions, principally the universities and research organizations, rather than in the older, industrial corporations.³⁰²

For Bell, the consequences of such a change are enormous for the modes of access to place and privilege in the society in which the universities, the academia, becomes the “gatekeepers” of society. The universities, in his view, breeds “human capital,” rather than financial capital, and this raise crucial sociological questions about the relationship of the new technocratic models of decision-making to the political structures of society. The fourth source of change in Bell’s views is perhaps the most important one, that is the relationship of the United States to the rest of the world.³⁰³

If Bell’s idea is to be taken into serious account, it is his provocative questions that, often in an unintended controversial way, pose intellectual stimulation that can be hardly satisfying, unless one find the way to quench the thirst. “Is this our fate – nihilism as the logic of technological rationality or nihilism as the end product of the cultural impulses to strike down all conventions?...I believe we are coming to a watershed in Western society: we are witnessing the end of the bourgeois idea – that view of human action and of social relations, particularly of economic exchange – which has molded the modern era for the last 200 years. And I believe that we have reached the end of the creative impulse and ideological sway of modernism, which, as a cultural movement, has dominated all the arts, and shaped our symbolic expressions,

³⁰² Daniel Bell, 1973, *The Coming of Post-industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, p: 233.

³⁰³ Daniel Bell, 1972, ‘The Future as Present Expectation’, in Alvin Toffler (ed), *The Futurists*, New York: Random House, pp: 260-1.

for the past 125 years...the structures of a society – modes of life, social relations, norms and values – are not reversed overnight...Societal structures change much more slowly, especially habits, customs, and established, traditional ways. ..If the intention of any science is to show us the structures of reality underlying appearances, then we have to understand that time-dimensions of social change are much slower, and the processes more complex, than the dramaturgic mode of apocalyptic vision, religious or revolutionary, would have us believe.”³⁰⁴

3.4 DISCUSSIONS

Our preceding discussions on the two Western futurists’ thoughts on future society through their theories in the form of either post-industrial society or super-industrial society in the Third Wave civilization demonstrate a distinct methodological pattern – the evolutionist paradigm that deeply entrenched in Western sociological analysis influenced by Charles Darwin’s evolutionary stages of human progression. According to Frank Webster, this evolutionist thinking, usually ascribed as ‘Social Darwinism’, confers a rather haughty attitude among the scholars of the industrialized countries.³⁰⁵

In his analysis on the theories of the information societies, Webster concedes that there are two notions connected to this evolutionist paradigm; the first is *historicism* and the second is the *teleological*³⁰⁶ thinking. Within this paradigm, it

³⁰⁴ Daniel Bell, 2001, *The Future of Technology*, Selangor (Malaysia): Pelanduk Publications, p: 88.

³⁰⁵ Frank Webster, 2002, *Theories of the Information Society*, London: Routledge, p: 34.

³⁰⁶The word teleology originated from Greek *telos*, means “end”; and *logos*, means “reason,” that is explanation by reference to some purpose or end; also described as final causality, in contrast with explanation by efficient causes only

suggests that the logical movement of history works in its deterministic way in which problems faced by the societies such as injustices, inequalities, poverty, racial divisions and so on will cease away and that the society will move towards a better and more desirable order. In contemporary terms, he claims that this evolutionist thinking has become identifiable trends of development in the direction of Western Europe, Japan and, especially, the United States.³⁰⁷

This evolutionist³⁰⁸ paradigm, specifically its historicist method, is strongly criticized by Karl Popper in his books, *The Poverty of Historicism* and *The Open Society and Its Enemies* as a deterministic understanding of historical development.³⁰⁹ In its Hegelian variant, historicism is best explained in his historical materialism in which the dialectical process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis interacts in human society and causes social change throughout their history in its continuity. But unlike this historicist claim of historical continuity, both Toffler and Bell argue for a discontinuity of history, in which the characteristics of the previous societies and their civilizations – be they the pre-industrial and industrial societies, or, the First Wave or

(<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/585947/teleology>, 22/12/08). In Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, the word teleology can mean: (1) a: the study of evidences of design in nature b: a doctrine (as in vitalism) that ends are immanent in nature c: a doctrine explaining phenomena by final causes; (2): the fact or character attributed to nature or natural processes of being directed toward an end or shaped by a purpose; (3): the use of design or purpose as an explanation of natural phenomena (<http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/teleology>, 22/12/08). In other words, it is the notion that societies change towards some ultimate goal.

³⁰⁷ Frank Webster, 2002, *Theories of the Information Society*, London: Routledge, p: 34.

³⁰⁸ Criticism within Western tradition on the evolutionist method comes from phenomenological study on human experience as conceived throughout history. Phenomenology finds new ways to the meaning of being human.

³⁰⁹ Popper regards Marx's view that history develops according to scientific laws is one example of what he calls 'historicism.' He used the term to mean "...an approach to the social sciences which assumes that historical prediction is their principal aim, and which assumes that this aim is attainable by discovering the "rhythms" or the "patterns," the "laws" or the "trends" that underlie the evolution of history."(Karl R. Popper, 1974, *The Poverty of Historicism*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, p: 3). Popper's attack on historicism was based on what he termed as a 'method of generalization' that is deterministic, fatalistic and utopian – all that he regarded as the 'enemies to an open society.'(Ibid).

Second Wave civilizations – are now under serious threat in the upsurging of a new breed - the post-industrial society or, the Third Wave society.

Underlies in both concept is the magnanimous power of technology as the driving force of this disjuncture in human history that transforms the whole society or civilization from their traditional characteristics into a new kind unknown in any history. This overwhelming outlook on future, particularly in Toffler's populist works as compared to Bell's academic venture, evidently demonstrated the technological deterministic analysis on future. Though quite different from Hegel's historical materialism and Marxist's socialist utopia, both post-industrial and Third Wave theories of human progress fall in the same fatalistic and deterministic nature of historical prediction as opposed by Popper. This post-Enlightenment liberal interpretation of the past and the future is found in both Toffler and Bell's application of the concept of future in their understanding and view on historical change. It is evident that the theories of the Third Wave and the post-industrial society were developed in the framework of the positivist and liberalist outlook of history. Liberalism, projected onto the future in a peculiarly forceful way, reveals a rather optimistic vision of possibilities.

In Toffler's Third Wave civilization for instance, he envisages a global society in which many cultures and faiths can live together in a fair and equal manner – a true global and plural civilization of the future. Indeed, it is through the appreciation of plural historical validities, in which all cultures and faiths are equal in the eyes of the world history that a plural future of multi-cultures and multi-faiths can truly flourish. In other words, the Third Wave civilization is a vision of a “multi-centric” global

civilization in the future. This, without a doubt, is pure optimism at the very core.

In contrast to Toffler, Bell's post-industrial society however, lacks the pluralistic features. Although he considers the possibilities of a non-Western or a religious post-industrial societies in other socio-cultural settings, his view on the characteristics of his post-industrial society remain "westerncentric" in which the prevailing and dominant cultural determinations will be founded only in the Western model, in fact, America as the archetype of an ultra-advanced society. Though different in their view on the model of an ideal society, the overoptimistic tone on the continuation of the Western image of future determined by technological advancement is very much echoed in Toffler, and to a lesser degree in Bell, who are considered as representing the mainstream of the Western futurists' scholarship.

Combined with this optimistic view on future is the favourable attitude towards change that had transformed the relationship between past, present, and future. As we have discussed in the previous chapter, the pace of change and the revolutionary transformations they help to produce, had transformed the life of human society for the past few centuries. The modern Western history has been fascinated with the idea of change and its associations – development, growth and progress – all recapitulated in the evolutionist paradigm. Both Toffler and Bell acknowledge the fact that the pace of change is the vital indicator of the society's movement towards progression. From this liberal orientation towards changes came the drive for reform - personal reform, social reform, even the reform of nature. In fact both scholars view change as a requisite for any future reform be it social, political, economic or religious.

Our analyses on the thematical cores of both scholars' thoughts demonstrate that there are at least founded on two major bases: the first is the rationalization of knowledge and system and the second is technology and its relation to industrialism. All these two bases can be found both explicitly and implicitly in the scholars' analyses on the present context that we are referring to, and also in their discussions on future society.

The first basis, the rationalization of knowledge and system, is the process in which systematic organization of knowledge and social structure gradually become apparent in a society. The rationalization process, as discussed by Max Weber in *The Protestant Ethics and the Spirit of Capitalism*, demonstrated how a religious precept, in this case, the Protestant asceticism had procreated capitalism. The Calvinistic quest for salvational security, Bryan Turner says, gives rise by a process of unintended consequences to a culture that emphasized reason, stability, coherence, discipline and world-mastery.³¹⁰

The Protestant ethic thesis, Turner further emphasizes, is seen as a major contribution to the sociological study of the socio-cultural forces which have produced the modern world. Thus, he considers Weber's historical sociology "...a global inquiry into the cultural conditions and consequences of the processes of modernization."³¹¹ Turner also regards that Weber's discussion on the processes of rationalization is a broad standing for an analysis of modernization through exposing its roots in the life-orders, cultural traditions and ethics as the consequences of the

³¹⁰ Bryan S. Turner, 1993, *Max Weber: From History to Modernity*, London: Routledge, p: 115.

³¹¹ *Ibid*, pp: 211-212.

rationalization of the ethical systems of the world religions.³¹² How this analysis on Weber's rationalization process relates to our discussion on the rationalization of knowledge and system?

We may remind ourselves of both Toffler and Bell on their schematic future society in the notion of Third Wave civilization and post-industrial term in which information and knowledge are the determinant feature. It is this 'information society', Bell insists, that was a transition to a service economy, where most jobs were interpersonal and increasingly professionalised that marked the arrival of 'post-industrialism'.³¹³

The 'information society', for Bell, is the hallmark of his post-industrial society.³¹⁴ As we have pointed in our preceding discussions, Bell focuses on the growth of services, but he argues that much of the jobs of the future will go disproportionately to the highly educated, knowledge professionals, and this signals a major social transformation.³¹⁵ According to Kevin Robins and Frank Webster, the strategic significance of information, namely theoretical knowledge, is presented by Bell as an 'axial principle' of his post-industrial society and as indicators of post-industrialism. They found that the interesting point in his analysis is the codification of theoretical knowledge and its centrality for innovation.³¹⁶ This means that we have arrived at a situation in which it is possible to codify scientific principles, and consequently this becomes the starting point of action.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Daniel Bell, 1973, *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*, Middlesex: Penguin Books, p: 15.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid, p: 20.

³¹⁶ Kevin Robins & Frank Webster, 1999, *Times of the Technoculture: From the Information Society to the Virtual Life*. London: Routledge, p: 82.

Robins and Webster regards that Bell has taken the 'primacy of theoretical knowledge' further when he suggests that it is pre-eminent not only in the realm of technological innovation, but even in social and political affairs.³¹⁷ The codification of theoretical knowledge that becomes the culture of the post-industrial society can be regarded as the result of advanced rationalization of knowledge in its quantification mode that produces scientific innovations. In other words, the rationalization process accelerates the pace of industrial society moving towards a post-industrial one and the central to the process is the theoretical knowledge.

In comparison to Bell, Toffler's analysis on the information society did not come across the rationalization process of the Third Wave societies in an in-depth study on the subject matter. He was more concern with the question of how it transforms power relation in the Third Wave civilizations, and also how it facilitates further invention of new technology. This, in his view, led changes in the nature of knowledge to decentralization of knowledge that frees the mind from the monopoly of knowledge in the hand of the authority.

Knowledge, for Toffler, is thus a power question and a political issue.³¹⁸ The democratization of knowledge through the advancement in communication technology also brings a non-hierarchical communication networks.³¹⁹ It is the question about the relationships between knowledge and power in society and the link between how people organize their concepts and how they organized their

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Alvin & Heidi Toffler, 2006, *Revolutionary Wealth*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf p: 145.

³¹⁹ Ibid, p: 173.

institutions.³²⁰

In Toffler, as we can see, the role of knowledge/information revolves to become the bargaining power. Both Toffler and Bell seems to agree on the point that developments in information and communications technologies will ensure a freer future for the ‘information society’. This pure optimist view on the significance of information as intrinsically beneficial is, as we have demonstrated in the preceding section, a typical evolutionist-historicist evaluation of future. The underlying assumption is that greater flow of information and communication will result in increased knowledge, creativity and understanding among people.

Suspensions and criticisms on the naïve judgment on ‘information society’ scenarios sketched by Daniel Bell and Alvin Toffler were raised on their basis that information/knowledge is represented as an important beneficial and progressive social force. One of the arguments against the notion of ‘information society’ that characterized the post-industrial society and the Third Wave civilization suggests that knowledge/information has long been a key component of regulation in the modern nation state and in capitalist economies;³²¹ it is in fact, not a uniquely post-industrial feature or the Third Wave civilization as such. Thus, the lofty role of knowledge/information in the future society has been overestimated in both Bell and Toffler in their theory of information society. Indeed, knowledge has been the hallmark in any advanced societies and civilizations since long time, whether in the past or in the present. Ibn Khaldūn’s analysis on the transformational process of the

³²⁰ Ibid, p: 174.

³²¹ Interesting criticism on this can be found in Kevin Robins & Frank Webster (eds). 1999. *Times of the Technoculture: From the Information Society to the Virtual Life*. London: Routledge, pp: 82-85.

badawa society to the state of *haḍāra*, with the emphasis on the role of knowledge as the main characteristic of the *haḍāra* state depicts such an instance.

If we to revert to the power that results from knowledge/information, we can suppose that the new technologies of information extend and intensify the rationalization of control in social management and administration. In fact, as Kevin Robins and Frank Webster critically assert, control has become an integral part of social scientific management.³²² In this context, they argue that the process whereby authoritative control has become subsumed within the machinery of allocative control helps power to express itself through the discipline of calculative and rational social management and administration, and with the advancement of communication technology, the system's weakness has been minimized through the form of 'mechanisation, automation, cybernetic direction'.³²³

This rationalization of control through bureaucracy, as with the rationalization of knowledge through the increase in the codification of theoretical knowledge that promised true freedom by both Toffler and Bell in their future society seems to results in human confinement in a systematic social control through the disciplinary and

³²² According to Robin and Webster, "...there are four related forces underpinning the system of information management and control. First, there are the institutions of active persuasion, such as propaganda agencies, public relations and advertising. Second, there are the various mechanisms of secrecy, security and censorship, which try to restrict popular access to 'classified' categories of information. Third, there are the increasing developments towards the commodification and commercialisation of information, which subordinate the flow of information to business values and priorities (via market forces, patents, copyright, etc.). And finally, there is the proliferation of information gathering by corporate and political interests (opinion polls, market research, social surveys, but also more sinister forms of surveillance); it is this collection of 'increasingly detailed information about individuals and family units that not only threatens their privacy, but dramatically increases the power of those with access to the data to create and deliver specialized propaganda'. What we have, then, is an ever more intensive and extensive regulation of the information environment."(Kevin Robins and Frank Webster, 1999, *Times of the Technoculture: From the Information Society to the Virtual Life*. London: Routledge, p: 236).

³²³ Ibid.

calculative management of existence prevailing in their culture, way of life and social relations.³²⁴ Thus, for Robin and Webster, the illusion that brought by the notion of ‘information society’ as a free and democratic society is indirectly rejected by the ‘management control’ of the knowledge/information.

A rather cynical interpretation of the ‘managed society’ puts forward by Richard Swift when he says: “...Management has become normal. It taps into all of us. We don't expect anything else. We are told what to do at work, what to buy at home and increasingly how to think. The modern world is too complicated. We can't imagine any other way for things to run.”³²⁵ This social management and control that systematically imposed onto human agrees with Jacques Rancière’s description on the time of contemporary society as “...a homogeneous time...with the future being nothing but an expansion of the present”.³²⁶ To perceive this alternative view on both Toffler and Bell enable us to see the consequences of their gigantic ideas that attempt for a grand theory of human society.

The second basis of the thematical cores observed in the scholars’ thoughts is technology. In Bell and Toffler, technology is almost a determining factor that produces changes and transformations in the contemporary society moving to the Third Wave civilization and post-industrial society. It is a powerful driving force; in fact in the Third Wave civilization, the cause of changes is technological innovations.³²⁷

³²⁴ Ibid, p: 94

³²⁵ Richard Swift, ‘Everything under Control’, *New Internationalist*, 1985, no.146, April, p. 7.

³²⁶ Jacques Rancière, ‘On the Shores of Politics’, London, Verso, 1995, p. 6 in Kevin Robins and Frank Webster, 1999, *Times of the Technoculture: From the Information Society to the Virtual Life*. London: Routledge, p: 236.

³²⁷ The conception of a determining technology can be found in many popular presentations

Toffler, for instance, writing of the “great, growling engine of change-technology”,³²⁸ envisages a “...dramatically new technostructure for a Third Wave civilization”,³²⁹ which is a “powerful tide...surging across much of the world today, creating a new, often bizarre, environment in which to work, play, marry, raise children or retire.”³³⁰ In Bell, the codification of theoretical knowledge in the post-industrial or the information society produces scientific innovations in massive ways. This technological deterministic view on sociological analysis perceives no future than what Robins and Webster termed as a ‘techno-utopian’ future where things become even more mechanized and automated, and the development of new technologies is allegedly set to bring about radical, but fortunately beneficent, social change.³³¹

Within this paradigm, we can say that the future is no longer contains the possibility of unknown encounters and events that would be transformative and room for human creativity or autonomy. Frank Webster views the otherness of the unknown future as the vital medium through which the process of creation and self-creation can

of the new technology. The alien invasion, so much has become popular themes since the work of H.G.Well’s classic, *The Time Machine*, is equipped with the most advanced technology effecting massive changes in social arrangements. The imagery of revolution is very much alive in contemporary popular culture such the Transformers and the Iron Man. John Fekete in his criticism on such trend which he termed as the neo-McLuhanite perspective, argues that it involves “...a focus on technology to the exclusion of social phenomena - the social is always adaptive and secondary to technology-and in doing so it 'abolishes history', thereby removing 'questions of human need, interest, value or goal'.” (John Fekete, *The Critical Twilight: Explorations in the Ideology of Anglo-American Literary Theory from Eliot to McLuhan*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978, pp. 78-80). Robins and Webster regards that the same promotion of technology also found in the populist writing of Alvin Toffler (Kevin Robins and Frank Webster (eds), 1999, *Times of the Technoculture: From the Information Society to the Virtual Life*, London: Routledge, p: 74).

³²⁸ Alvin Toffler, 1971, *Future Shock*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 25.

³²⁹ Alvin Toffler, 1980, *The Third Wave*, New York: Bantam Books, p: 164.

³³⁰ Ibid, p: 18.

³³¹ Kevin Robins and Frank Webster (eds), 1999, *Times of the Technoculture: From the Information Society to the Virtual Life*, London: Routledge, p: 74.

become possible. Without the otherness, he claims, there can only be the closure of meaning.³³² Toffler and Bell's future in this case, gave the impression of only one type of future based on one sort of the present feature of human society – industrialism-capitalism.

In Western history, industrialism generally means two things: capitalist economy, and technological advancement. This then recapitulated in the notion of “modernism”, whereas the process for achieving modernity is through development and progress. These words had become the magical elixir of the modern/industrial society and supposedly, in the post-industrial society and the information society as proposed by Toffler and Bell. Returning to Webster, he concluded that “...technological enclosure of the future impounds the resource of open time that is necessary for the creative disorder of the radical imagination. We are left with nothing but the expansion of the present.”³³³

The image of the future society in both Toffler and Bell's imagination is a paradise – a “practopian future” to use Toffler's term - for industrialism and its twin children, capitalism (in the form of service economy) and technology (in which the mastery of theoretical/scientific knowledge/information is the requisite). The first basis we discussed earlier on the rationalization process of knowledge and system demonstrated that the unlimited expansion of rational mastery has become the basic criterion in producing industrialism.

³³² Frank Webster, 2002, *Theories of the Information Society*, London: Routledge, pp: 236-7.

³³³ Ibid.

Both Toffler and Bell, however, admit that their Third Wave society/civilization or post-industrial society work as ‘conceptual maps’ or ‘conceptual schema’ for the new type of society that is in the formation. Therefore, their models of future society are not fully conceptualized, yet the characteristics are there to be taken place in its full character. Masuda as cited in Kumar calls “‘the past developmental pattern of human society’ is used as ‘an historical analogical model for future society.’” This, Kumar asserts, “is in fact no more than the familiar evolutionary typology to be found in sociology since the eighteenth century” in which “current changes are seen according to a model derived from (assumed) past changes, and future developments are projected following the logic of the model.” Therefore, “just as industrial society replaced agrarian society, the information society is replacing industrial society, more or less in the same revolutionary way.” Bell’s use of three-fold evolutionary schema based on the movement from ‘pre-industrial extractive’ to ‘industrial-fabrication’ to ‘post-industrial-information’ is therefore similar to Toffler’s systematic pattern changes from First Wave to Second Wave to Third Wave civilization that based upon new requirements.

According to Robins and Webster, capitalism becomes “...a perpetual movement of supposedly rational, but essentially blind, self-reinstitution of society, through the unrestricted use of (pseudo-) rational means in view of a single (pseudo-) rational end. It has made the world a more closed and diminished space, a space of constriction and even incarceration.”³³⁴ Following this argument on the nature of capitalism and in its connection to the rationalization process, Robins and Webster perceive the logic of this order that the future must be colonized for it means the

³³⁴ Kevin Robins, & Frank Webster (eds), 1999, *Times of the Technoculture: From the Information Society to the Virtual Life*, London: Routledge, p: 139.

colonization of possibility and through technology, the master of the information society, the economy of the information society is sought to overcome the time barriers – hence the phrase, “the future is now” in the real-time economic-capitalistic paradigm. This has been clearly explained by Robins and Webster as follow:

The technologies of the new world information economy have sought to overcome the 'barriers' of time, putting in place the infrastructure for what is called the 'real-time' economy, and creating what Manuel Castells describes as the 'timeless time' of the network society. What this means is that global society is being subordinated to a rational and standardised temporality. Paul Virilio describes the process in terms of the institution of 'a single global time which is liquidating the multiplicity of local times'. It is the time of an eternal present-in Virilio's terms 'an amputation of the volume of time' - void of potential for meaningful change or transformation. The information society is obsessed with the future, but the future of its obsession is merely the endless continuation of the present. Ashis Nandy suggests that this erasing of the future may reflect a fundamental fear of the future among the Western élites. The preoccupation with futurology is, he maintains, about the desire to control and secure the future. It is precisely about trying to make the future as much like the present as possible, for the fear is really 'the fear of a future unrestrained by or disjunctive with the present'. Whatever the futuristic rhetoric that surrounds it, the global information society in fact works to foreclose the real productive possibilities inherent in the future. What has finally been achieved in this respect is no less than the capitalist enclosure of the future.³³⁵

Conclusively, this techno-utopianism assumes the neutrality of technological innovation and its endorsement of a technologically determinist view of history.³³⁶ Our analysis shows that in terms of technology, both Toffler and Bell work within the mainstream of the Western futurists' scholarship that inclines towards technological determinism, whereas their Muslim counterparts attempt on the diagnostic aspect of the problem of science and technology in their respective societies. The huge gap that divides them is their treatment towards technology in

³³⁵ Ibid, pp: 234-5.

³³⁶ Ibid, pp: 84-5.

which the Western futurists – especially Toffler, and Bell, to a lesser degree - regard technology as determinant factor in social change that caused colossal transformation in the setup of the contemporary society and eventually extrapolate the present situation into a single direction in the future - the techno-utopian future.

The Western techno-culture has been fundamental to this industrialization project since the Enlightenment. Following the same lineal trend, this techno-culture of industrialization project will continue in the form of the Third Wave and post-industrial society, only in more sophisticated varieties thanks to the advance of technology. But underneath both Toffler and Bell's industrialization project is the context in which they speak – the post-modernity context. This context, although a specific experience of Western tradition, its influence encompasses the Western boundaries, in fact the grand ideas behind it has entered global plane since many decades.

3.5 CONCLUSION

In concluding our analyses on the thoughts of the two Western futurists, it is obvious that both Toffler and Bell derive their thoughts from modern Western tradition that values industrialism and scientism. The basis of their claim for their Third Wave or post-industrial society lies in these two main lines of modern socio-historical analysis within Western thoughts. This has greatly influenced their treatment and analysis on future society in the framework of Western futures thinking. This worldview and paradigm underlie the whole analysis of their approach and

methodology, the contents of their discourse, and eventually their outlook of the future. Naturally, this is the bedrock of their worldview.

It also clear that both Toffler and Bell, though tried to be objective in certain point of their analyses by looking into the possibilities of other worldviews in defining modernity, they could not depart themselves from thinking outside the box of the current Western mental framework - the lens they use to view the world. Even when Toffler shows some beliefs in different kind of modernity that could be achieved from the fusion and diffusion of different cultures within his Third Wave civilization theory that might brought what he termed as a new civilization “beyond capitalism”, he did not explain how this could be achieved if the current world systems still becomes the bedrock of his own theory of future society. The same goes to Bell who evidently regards the American system as his model of future post-industrial society.

With regard to the approach and methodology of their intellectual endeavours, it is obviously a socio-historical and civilizational approach in which the stages of Western civilizational development are studied from the meta-narrative perspective - a grand theory of human development. Bell therefore argues to look beyond technology; and that technology, in his view, is only instrumental; that it is only part of human reality and there are other important parts of human reality - such as culture, religion, value-systems, and spirituality that constitute human being. Indeed, in his final remark in *The Future of Technology*, he concludes that:

There is thus whole range of human endeavor which technology can never encompass. Technology rarely deals with that realm of human existence which we call ‘the spiritual,’ and spirituality is still essential because it gives people a sense of transcendence, a means to cope with

life's existential dilemmas.³³⁷

Bell's insightful approach in examining the most rudimentary element of human development, which inevitably the basic recognition of human nature and the nature of human history brought him to a different conclusion from that of Toffler, when he says:

The belief in perpetual scientific and technological progress has been a major theme in Western thought since the scientific revolution. Yet the last few decades have clearly shown that neither is the 'end of history' in sight, nor does technology provide the answers and solutions to all our problems. The values system of modern Western society, including Japan, has emphasized material growth and the increase of wealth above all other considerations. Yet uncontrolled growth has also brought many social costs, some of which are traceable to specific technologies.³³⁸

This conclusive view is what differentiates them - Toffler is a popular sociologist whereas Bell is a philosopher, and once, a devout religious. However, both are public intellectuals who – apart from their academic position at the academia – reach wider audiences outside the academic blocks in effecting desirable changes that would eventually shape the future of humanity.

The challenge therefore remains for the intellectual vacuum in conceptualization and reconceptualization of many significant issues pertaining to humanity and finding ethical and moral guidelines for alternatives future. This raise the significance of new religious and moral discussions and contributions in world

³³⁷ Ibid, p:125

³³⁸ Daniel Bell, 2001, *The Future of Technology*, Selangor (Malaysia): Pelanduk Publications, p:124.

affairs – and how ethical/moral/religious values could guide mankind in the new context – the Third wave, post-industrial or whatever. What Toffler and Bell are to demonstrate is the emerging of this ‘new context’ – with different set of values and systems of operations. According to Toffler, this new context need to be understood and human being must prepare themselves by understanding this new challenge so as to survive in the future.

Postmodernity as discussed by Kumar - indicates that it actually a critique or reflection on modernity and its idealism - its failure and its predicament to humanity and the world at whole.³³⁹ But the critique is still continues on the same basis - the secular basis - which raises the question of its ability to offer alternatives to the current exhausting modernity and its ideals and systems. Or, could there be a different kind of secularity or modernity? In Toffler and Bell, the question of alternative kind of modernity has not been highlighted in high-level discourse but they show some openness for a pluralistic future, even in the rise of religious sort, just as in the case of Bell.

In conclusion, we see that the general analyses of both scholars are very much entrenched in their particular tradition – the modern Western tradition. Although to some degree, they attempt at looking and appreciating other worldviews, their outlook on future is still confined within the mainstream paradigm. This, obviously, is not something unexpected; rather, it is inevitable, as thoughts and ideas can not be stripped off their origins. It is our conviction that their openness for new ideas, especially in their ‘open’ schematic society of the future that need to be appreciated,

³³⁹ See Krishan Kumar, 1978, *Prophecy and Progress: The Sociology of Industrial and Post-industrial Society*, Middlesex: Penguin Books.

although this would need a special treatment and criticism on the part of the other worldviews. We attempt at such criticism, in fact, a constructive engagement that looks both sides of the arguments – the Western and the Muslim scholars alike – in order to benefit both societies and both world in the spirit of a continuous civilizational dialogue that hopefully will bring mutual understanding and mutual learning, and finally peaceful co-existence. Within this framework, we will analyze futures thinking from an Islamic perspective in the next chapter, followed by the discussion on the two Muslim scholars' thoughts – Ziauddin Sardar and Mahdi Elmandjra in Chapter V.

CHAPTER IV

FUTURES THINKING FROM AN ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Of prime importance for the appreciation of a religious culture is the better understanding of its futurical value. In Islam, the notion of future is inseparable from religion (*dīn*), in fact it is built entirely on a holistic concept of time that ranges from the life in this world (*ad-dunyā*) and the hereafter (*al-ākhirah*). For that reason, the teachings of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* are the ultimate sources for Muslims to understand the concept of future. This chapter, therefore, attempts at discussing futures thinking from the Islamic perspective based upon these two main sources. This discussion is crucial as some would think that intellectual discourse regarding futures thinking and the study of future is contradicted to the Islamic injunctions.

For the purpose of understanding the very basic of the Islamic propositions regarding futures thinking, we will discuss the chapter by dividing it into a few headings; first, the Islamic concept of time based upon the Qur'ānic notions of *dahr* and *ʿasr* as a general terms, as well as other terms referred to time in its specific contexts. Consequent to this is the conception of time from the philosophical views as understood and discussed by the classical and modern Muslim philosophers. Second, the belief and concept of predestination (*al-qaḍā' wa al-qadar*), the sixth pillar of *īmān*. Discussion pertaining to this belief/concept has long preoccupied the Islamic thought in the classical Islam's discourse regarding human's free will and actions vis-

à-vis God's will and actions. The modern Islam's discourse on *al-qadar* was also discussed and evaluated. Finally, and most significantly, the *Sunnah* of the Prophets (peace be upon them) that manifested the realization of futures thinking throughout their prophetic missions and actions. We also refer to the practice of the Prophet Muḥammad's apostles (the *Ṣaḥābah*) in dealing with matters of their time which evidently proved their profound understanding of the essence of the Prophet's teachings, particularly concerning the implementation of futures thinking. The second part of this chapter will then explore the emergence of futures thinking within contemporary Islamic Thought and its recent development in seeking alternative approach for dealing with the malaise of the *Ummah*, thus signifying its contribution with the hope to improve their condition in the future.

4.2 THE CONCEPT OF TIME FROM ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

The notion of time from the Islamic perspective can be found in the Qur'ān in the words *dahr* and *ʿasr*. Both *dahr* and *ʿasr* connote the concept of Time as a whole, and related to its spiritual domain that influences the human psyche. Apart from these two terms, the Qur'ān also speaks of time in its specific contexts - *fajr* (early morning), *nahār* (day), *dhuha* (early noon), *ʿasr* (late afternoon) and *layl* (night). The Qur'ānic discourse on time is somehow different from the philosophical views on the concept of time in classical and modern Muslim philosophers' discussion. The preoccupation of the classical discourse on time for instance, focuses on the debates whether time is eternal or temporal. This was influenced by the Aristotelian discourse on the concept of the eternal time. The modern Islamic discourse on time as epitomized by modern philosopher such as, for instance, Muhammad Iqbal, focuses on

the nature of time as an organic whole. Following the classical and modern discourse on time, this section continues with the Qur'ānic view of future within its general usage.

4.2.1 Time in the Qur'ān

The concept of time in the Qur'ān is referred as *al-dahr*. The synonymous Arabic words for *dahr* are *ʿasr* or *zamān tawīl* which mean age, epoch, era, time, period, a long period of time.³⁴⁰ The word *dahr* has been mentioned explicitly in two specific verses. In the Qur'ān, we read: “And they say: ‘What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live³⁴¹, and nothing but Time (*al-dahr*) can destroy us.’ But of that they have no knowledge: they merely conjecture.”³⁴² In his commentary, Abdullah Yusuf Ali points out that the argument put forward in the verse “And nothing but Time (*al-dahr*) can destroy us’ suggests “...the materialist philosophy that Matter and Time are eternal backwards and forwards; and possibly also that though each individual perishes, the race lasts till Time destroys it.”³⁴³ In the following verse, the Qur'ān says: “And when Our clear signs are rehearsed to them, their argument is nothing but this: they say, ‘Bring (back) our forefathers, if what ye say is true!’”³⁴⁴ Abdullah comments that the argument that says “if there is a future life, bring back our forefathers and let us see them here and now!” is not a valid

³⁴⁰ Rūhi Ba'albaki, *Al-Mawrid*, p: 553.

³⁴¹ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1992, *The Meaning of The Holy Qur'ān*, Maryland: Amana Corporation, p: 1298.

³⁴² Al-Qur'ān 45: 24

³⁴³ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1992, p: 1298.

³⁴⁴ Al-Qur'ān 45: 25

argument because man does not have the ability to raise the dead according to his will, but Allah does. Therefore it was groundless and vain.³⁴⁵

In other verses, in a *sūrah* named after *al-Dahr* we read: “Has there not been over man a long period of Time (*al-dahr*), when he was nothing – (not even mentioned)?”³⁴⁶ Al-Jīlī in interpreting the verse suggests that time (*dahr*) in this context means Allah.³⁴⁷ Contrary to Al-Jīlī’s interpretation of *dahr*, Abdullah Yusuf Ali stresses that the word *Dahr* means Time as a whole, or for a long period and not as practiced by the pagan Arabs who worship Time in the same manner as the Greeks deify *Chronos* or *kronos*. *Kronos* (or Time), he says, was regarded by the Greeks as Zeus, the father himself. Abdullah asserts that the concept of *dahr* was found in pagan Arabs idea, which “...personified Time as existing spontaneously from eternity to eternity and responsible for the misery or the happiness of mankind.”³⁴⁸ This refers to the previous verse that read: “They say...‘nothing but Time can destroy us.’” He comments that this common attitude of the pagan Arabs is wrong because Time is a created thing and therefore is not eternal, as much as Matter. Time is also relative to human conceptions and therefore, is not absolute. From an Islamic point of view, Abdullah emphasizes that “...it is only Allah who is Self-Subsisting, Eternal from the beginning and Eternal to the end, the absolute Existence and Reality.”³⁴⁹ Hence, the deification of Time (*dahr*) as mentioned in the Qur’ānic verses is against the Islamic faith that worships a living personal God. This deification of Time, according to

³⁴⁵ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1992, p: 1299.

³⁴⁶ Al-Qur’ān 76: 1

³⁴⁷ B.A Dar in M.M.Sharif (ed.) 1963, pp: 851-2.

³⁴⁸ Abdullah Yusuf Ali, 1992, pp: 1570.

³⁴⁹ Ibid.

Abdullah, has given rise to the term *dahriyah*, as applied to an atheist or a materialist or in other term, *dahriyyun*, the materialists.³⁵⁰

Watt on the other hand, perceives the pagan Arabs or the pre-Islamic Arab's outlook on *dahr* as 'fatalism'. The fatalistic view on life lies in the pagan Arabs belief that their successes and misfortunes in life were controlled by Time (*dahr*). Time therefore is conceived as an impersonal force identified with 'fate' or 'destiny'. Unlike Abdullah who sees this pre-Islamic belief as some sort of deification, Watt views the pagan Arabs belief in Time is not as something to be worshipped, but rather, "a natural phenomenon which one must accept."³⁵¹ For Watt, in the pagan Arabs perception, there is a limitation in Time's control over human life for it only fixes the final outcome of his endeavour – particularly his 'term,' (*ajal* i.e the date of his death), his fortune and provision (*rizq*) - but not his every act. Fatalism of this kind, he asserts, "...was appropriate to the life of the nomads in the deserts and steppes of Arabia...[in bringing] the best hope of making success of one's life in the harsh conditions of the desert."³⁵²

With the coming of Islam, the Qur'an's message on *tawhīd* had transformed the thought of the Arabs in which God has become the sole source of control of human life. This, according to Watt, refers to the verse answering the previous one: "It is Allah Who gives you life, then gives you death; then He will gather you for together for the Day of Judgement about which there is no doubt": but most men does not

³⁵⁰ Ibid, pp: 1570-1.

³⁵¹ Montgomery W. Watt, 1985, *Islamic Philosophy and theology: An Extended Survey*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p: 25.

³⁵² Ibid, pp: 25-6.

understand.³⁵³ Here, Watt³⁵⁴ concludes that Time has been replaced by God as the source of misfortune, as the Qur'ān says: “No misfortune can happen on earth or in your souls but is recorded in a decree before We bring it into existence: that is truly easy for Allah”.³⁵⁵ Watt in his analysis has implied the influence of pre-Islamic fatalist view on the Muslims view regarding the concept of predestination (*qadar*).

In our view, the term *dahr* as used in verse 24 *sūrah* 45 and verse 1 *sūrah* 76 reflects on different points. The first verse refers to the concept and application of *dahr* within the thought of the pre-Islamic Arabs that concur with the fatalist stance as described by Watt. This understanding relates to the verse itself as it is the pagan Arabs who said such words that read: “...and nothing but Time can destroy us.” Meanwhile in verse 1 *sūrah* 76, the word *dahr* is mentioned by God Himself in the form of question that refers to the concept of time as a whole before the creation of man. Thus, whereas the former verse implies *dahr* as some sort of natural force determining and fixing the course of human life, the latter informs us on the concept of Time or *dahr* that operates under the power of God within the creation. Al-Jīlī's view therefore cannot be accepted as the conception of God as Time is similar to the pagan Arabs' understanding and not of the Islamic point of view.

Apart from *dahr*, the Qur'ān also uses the word *ʿasr* in describing Time as found in a *sūrah* named after the word *ʿasr* itself. Abdullah, in his own words, explains that *al-ʿasr* may mean: (1) Time through the ages, or long periods, in which case it comes near to the abstract idea of Time, *Dahr*, which was sometimes deified by

³⁵³ Al-Qur'ān 45: 26.

³⁵⁴ Montgomery W. Watt, 1985, p: 26.

the pagan Arabs; (2) or the late afternoon, from which the *ʿasr* canonical prayer takes its name.³⁵⁶ In the Qurʾān, we read: “By (the token of) Time (through the ages), verily man is in loss, except such as have faith, and do righteous deeds, and (join together) in the mutual teaching of truth, and of patience and constancy.”³⁵⁷ Abdullah asserts that the *sūrah* refers to the testimony of Time in history which shows that goodness will finally conquer evil, and those who have faith, live clean and pure life, patient and constant in their endeavour will succeed. If we were to understand verse 1 *sūrah* 76 correctly, it is for its semantical relation with verse 1 *sūrah* 103 in which Abdullah signifies that Time is as one of God’s creations and has mystical or spiritual bearing. In *sūrah* 103, it is clear that the notion of Time is related to its spiritual aspect that the human affairs in life will only be regarded as valuable according to its intrinsic values – lead by faith, good life, contribution to society and the path of Truth and Preserverance. In commenting on the *sūrah*, Abdullah elaborates:

If we merely run a race against Time, we shall lose. It is the spiritual part of us that conquers Time. If life be considered under the metaphor of a business bargain, man, by merely attending to his material gains, will lose. When he makes up his day’s account in the afternoon, it will show a loss. It will only show profit if he has faith, leads good life, and contributes to social welfare by directing and encouraging other people on the path of Truth and Constancy.³⁵⁸

The Qurʾānic discourse on Time has not been limited to these two terms – *dahr* and *ʿasr*. There are other terms used in the Qurʾān that refers to specific times for instance *fajr* (early morning), *nahār* (day), *dhuḥā* (early noon), *ʿasr* (late afternoon) and *layl* (night). In *sūrah* 89 verses 1-4, God swears with *al-fajr*: “By the break of day (*al-fajr*); by the nights twice five; by the even and odd (contrasted); and by the night

³⁵⁵ Al-Qurʾān 57: 22.

³⁵⁶ Abdullah Yūsuf ʿAli, 1992, p: 1693.

when it passeth away – is there (not in these an adjuration (or evidence) for those who understand?”³⁵⁹ In commenting the verses, Abdullah stresses that there are four striking contrasts mentioned “...to show Allah’s Power and Justice, and appeal to ‘those who understand’. The first is the glory and mystery of the break of day. It just succeeds the deepest dark of the night, when the first rays of light break through. Few people except those actually in personal touch with nature can feel its compelling power. In respect of both beauty and terror, of hope and inspiration, of suddenness and continuing increase of light and joy, this ‘holy time’ of night may well stand as the type of spiritual awakening from darkness to faith, from death to resurrection.”³⁶⁰

In other *sūrah*, we learn that God swears with *al-layl* and *al-nahār* “By the night as it conceals (the light); by the day as it appears in glory; by (the mystery of) the creation of male and female – verily, (the ends) ye strive for are diverse.”³⁶¹ According to Abdullah, “...the evidence of night and day, and the conclusion as stated in verse 4 that men’s aims are diverse, but similarly there are contrasts in nature. What contrast can be greater than between night and day? Man pursuing diverse aims may find, owing to his own position, Allah’s light obscured from him for a time, but he must strive hard to put himself in a position to reach it in all its glory.”³⁶² Further, Abdullah conveys that “...the contrast between night and day are appealed to for the consolation of man in his spiritual yearning. Here we are told to strive our utmost towards Allah, and He will give us every help and satisfaction.”³⁶³ Again, Time in its

³⁵⁷ Al-Qur’ān 103: 1-3.

³⁵⁸ Abdullah Yūsuf^cAli, 1992, p: 1692-3.

³⁵⁹ Al-Qur’ān 89: 1-4.

³⁶⁰ Abdullah Yūsuf^cAli, 1992, p: 1644.

³⁶¹ Al-Qur’ān 92: 1-2.

³⁶² Abdullah Yūsuf^cAli, 1992, p: 1658.

³⁶³ Ibid, p: 1657.

contrasted form between day and night is valued on its spiritual implications on human psyche. In fact, Time can be regarded as a form of God's signs of His Power and Magnificent. Therefore we are again asked to reflect on Time and strive for God as He is the sole Creator.

In other *sūrah*, God swears with *dhuhā*: “By the glorious morning light, and by the night when it is still – thy Guardian-Lord hath not forsaken thee, nor is He displeased. And verily the hereafter will be better for thee than the present.”³⁶⁴ Abdullah comments that for the truly devout man, each succeeding moment is better than the one preceding it. Therefore in this sense, Abdullah asserts that the concept of “hereafter” refers not only to the life after death, but also to “the soul of goodness in things” in this very life for even though some outward trappings of this shadow world may be wanting, his soul is filled with more and more satisfaction as he goes on.³⁶⁵

The Qur'ān also addresses time in its futuristic framework. The terms found in the Qur'ān with regard to the concept of future are *ghad* and *mustaqbil*. The *Al-Mawrid Dictionary*³⁶⁶ defines the word *ghad* as “tomorrow, (the) morrow, (the) next or following day,”³⁶⁷ whereas the word *mustaqbil* or *mustaqbal*, derives for the root word *istiqbāl*, means “future.”³⁶⁸ Thus, in the Qur'ān we read: “Oh ye who believe! Observe your duty to God. And let every soul look to that which it sent on before for

³⁶⁴ Al-Qur'ān 93: 1-4.

³⁶⁵ Ibid.

³⁶⁶ Rūhī Ba^calbaki, 1995, *Al-Mawrid*, Beirut: Dār al-^cIlm al-Malāyīn, p: 807.

³⁶⁷ Ibid, p: 795.

³⁶⁸ Ibid, p: 1034.

the morrow.”³⁶⁹ Also, in other verse, we read: “Never say about anything, I shall do this tomorrow,” without adding, “if God so wills.” Should you forget, then call your Lord to mind and say, “I pray that my Lord will guide me even closer than this to what is right.”³⁷⁰ In commenting the verse, Sayyid Qutb views that the verse demonstrates God’s prohibition upon making pre-judgment on future events for it is beyond human perception. Furthermore, he stresses that every human action is subject to God’s will, hence he should avoid making any assertion about future but this does not imply a fatalistic outlook on life.

On the contrary, Sayyid Qutb asserts that the verse implies that every human should rely on God in his life but at the same time, work out with his plans in confidence for he is not alone in executing the plans. His submission to God’s will shall neither overtake him during failure nor deceive him during success for he will resign for whatever God’s will may determine.³⁷¹ In addition, Sayyid Qutb adds that the verse “Should you forget, then call your Lord to mind” advises a Muslim to “...remember God and renew his reliance on Him. He should also hope to remain always conscious of God, turning to Him in all situations and all future actions, always saying: “I pray that my Lord will guide me even closer to than this to what is right.”³⁷² Therefore, at the final line, a Muslim’s spirituality becomes elevated in every situation and endeavour. In this regard, Elmandjra stresses that the Qur’ān call human being to make the best possible use of the present and to carefully and intelligently prepare for the future, in which the future means the rest of human life on

³⁶⁹ Sūrah 59: 18.

³⁷⁰ Sūrah 18: 23-24.

³⁷¹ Sayyid Qutb, 2004, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān* Vol X (trans. Adil Salahi), Leicestershire: The Islamic Foundation, pp: 250-252.

the earth and the hereafter. It should also be noted, that the Qur'ān advises against making presumptuous claims of prescience and foreknowledge, but it does recommend human being to make projections and work out different options in order to enhance their ability to cope with the requirements of the future and to improve their well-being.

Elmandjra's analysis on the Qur'ānic convention of the word "*mustaqbal*" or "*mustaqbil*", states that there is a clear distinction between "*al-ghayb*", the hidden aspect of future which is within the realm of God and the term "*mustaqbil*", which implies the anticipation of developments arising from what we do or fail to do today. Hence, he asserts that the common usage of the word *mustaqbil* to denote future is clearly not about prophecies but forecasts. Elmandjra believes that Islam is a vision of life on earth and also in the hereafter. It calls on man to seek command of his own fate and to adopt a dynamic approach in his political, economic, social and cultural initiatives. Consequently, this dynamic approach towards life and its *qadar* perceives change as an essential ingredient for a better future. In the Qur'ān, we read: "Lo! God changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts."³⁷² Change, therefore, needs to be approached as a prerequisite to move forward, and it is the heart, the spiritual element of human intellect that needs to be changed first and foremost.

The Qur'ānic concept of Time therefore regards its spiritual aspect more than its material one. The quality of time is evaluated according to its spiritual significance

³⁷² Sayyid Qutb, 2004, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* Vol X (trans. Adil Salahi), Leicestershire: The Islamic Foundation, pp: 250-252.

for man in living his life in this world. This Qur'ānic approach is somewhat different from the philosophical and theoretical approach that study Time within the ontological and cosmological concepts of its existence. Within this understanding, we seek to understand the significant root of our futurical investigation.

4.2.2 Time in Classical Islamic Discourse

In classical Islam,³⁷⁴ the question of time has been discussed within the influence of Greek philosophy. Hence, the philosophical views of time are found in response to, or in agreement with the Greek's philosophical argument on the nature of

³⁷³ Sūrah 13: 11.

³⁷⁴ According to Peters, the term "classic" or "classical period" is a construct that has been borrowed from Greek and Roman phenomenon in periodizing Islam's history. He asserts that such categorization has not been much discussed by Muslim historians, many of whom the term regarded as "...the generation of Muhammad's own contemporaries, those revered "Companions of the Prophet," or, somewhat more generously, the sub-Apostolic age of the first four rulers of the Muslim community, the so-called Rightly Directed Caliphs (632–750 C.E.)" (F. E. Peters, 1994, *A Reader on Classical Islam*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp: 2). The term "classical" in Peters' view can be understood in both a broader and a more restricted sense. Peters refers the term to also mean "...the era when the classics of Islamic law and spirituality were written, works of such universally acknowledged importance that subsequent generations of Muslims understood themselves as "successors" and assumed scholasticism's unmistakably characteristic posture of casting their own meditations on Islam in the form of commentaries or glosses on the works of the masters." (Ibid. 1994, p: 3). Muhammad Abdul Rauf (1995, p: 14-15) in *The Muslim Mind: A Study of the Intellectual Life During the Classical Era 101-700 A.H (720-1300 A.D)* clearly refers the classical era as covering six centuries of the Islamic era; i.e., from the year 101 to the year 700 after the Hijrah of the Prophet (peace be upon him). During the so-called classical era, the world of Islam was ruled by the Umayyad Dynasty and then replaced by the Abbasid Dynasty until 656 A.H. (1258 A.D) when Baghdad, the capital city of the Abbasid Empire was completely ruined by the Mongols. While the Eastern Muslim cities were subjugated under the Mongols, the Middle Eastern Muslims were attacked by the Crusaders from Europe until the end the seventh century A.H. (1300 A.D). The reason for such classification, as implicitly implied in Muhammad Abdul Rauf's work, is more on the emphasis on intellectual and philosophical analysis influenced by the Greek philosophy, specifically the formal Aristotelian logic (Muhammad Abdul Rauf, 1995, *The Muslim Mind: A Study of the Intellectual Life During the Classical Era 101-700 A.H (720-1300 A.D)*, Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, p: 14). Here, we apply the second meaning of "classical" as being used and perceived by Muhammad Abdul Rauf as it is more close to our discussion on the intellectual and philosophical development of that era.

time. In the ancient Greek, time is regarded as eternal therefore the notion of the eternity of time has created controversy and Muslim philosophers as well as theologians have different views over the issue. In general, the Muslim intellectuals' response can be divided into three categories; the first is those who agree with the eternity of time and the world; the second is those who reject the eternity of time and believes in creation *ex nihilo*; and the third is those who attempt at reconciliation between the two camps. The first group is best exemplified by the views of Ibn Sīnā, Ibn Bajjah and to some extent, Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Rāzi; the second by Al-Ghazālī and the third by Ibn Rushd.

Ibn Sīnā believes that the world exists eternally with God, for both matter and forms flow eternally from Him. This emanationist account of Deity means the eternal emanation or procession of the world, since this emanation is grounded finally in the intellectual nature of God. Although the world is eternal, Ibn Sīnā thinks that its eternity is contingent to God and therefore dependent upon Him eternally.³⁷⁵ Another Muslim philosopher, Muhammad ibn Zakariya al-Rāzi also believes that time is eternal as he regards it as a flowing substance (*jauhar yajri*), but he rejects Aristotle's association of time with movements. Contrary to Ibn Sīnā, Al-Rāzi distinguishes between two kinds of time, in which the first kind of time, the absolute time, is what he regarded as duration (*al-dahr*) which is eternal and moving, and the second kind of time, the limited (*maḥṣūr*) time, as that of the movements of the spheres. In explaining the difference between both notions of time, he suggests the use of imagination whereby the absolute time is when we imagine the movement of duration, and this is

³⁷⁵ Fazlur Rahman in M.M.Sharif, 1963, p: 503

eternity; while the limited time is when we imagine the movement of the sphere.³⁷⁶ Ibn Bajjah, another philosopher, says that “...God causes the existence of a thing to continue without end after its physical non-existence. When an existent reaches its perfection, it ceases to remain in time (*zamān*) but exists eternally in the continuous flux of duration (*dahr*).”³⁷⁷

Leaman writes that Al-Ghazālī attacks the philosophers on their conception of the nature of time, specifically Aristotelian notion of time in which time is viewed in its close connection to change.³⁷⁸ Change is regarded as the determinant indicator of movement and its measurement, and based on the premise, the existence of time presupposes the existence of movement and therefore the existence of a moving being. For Aristotle, the eternity of time as the measure of movement can prove the eternity of this world as moving being. In his criticisms on Aristotelian time, Al-Ghazālī argues that the argument that the eternity of time proves the eternity of this world should not be the inevitable philosophical conclusion. Instead, he claims that the issue is whether they are either eternal or finite. Al-Ghazālī regards God as the Sole Creator of both time and movement in which He brought about time at the same time he created the first movement.³⁷⁹ In other words, Al-Ghazālī affirms that the first

³⁷⁶ Abdurrahman Badawi in M.M.Sharif (ed.), 1963, *A History of Muslim Philosophy*, Vol.1, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, p: 445.

³⁷⁷ Ibid, p: 525.

³⁷⁸ According to Oliver Leaman (2002, p: 65), Aristotle regards Time “...as the number of motion with respect to before and after; in other words, time is one movement measuring other movements by comparing the number of times the one takes place while the others take place. He is interested in the way in which we make the temporal judgments before and after, earlier and later, among events, and how our criteria for assessing periods of time involve comparing the changes we are concerned with in terms of other changes we use as standards or measures. And of course for Aristotle the fact that there are changes in the world is just a fact which cannot be denied. At the very basis of our temporal judgments lies the regularity and reliability of the movement of the heavenly bodies.”

³⁷⁹ Ibid.

moment of time existed when God set the universe in motion, therefore it proves that God exists outside time. Al-Ghazālī furthers his arguments by discussing the nature of space in proving the finitude of time. He uses an analogy between space and time in which he argues that if the philosophers admit the finitude of space because it is a property of a finite body then it also proves that time is finite for it too is a property of finite movement.³⁸⁰ The notion of the eternity of the world has caused theological objections as found in Al-Ghazali's arguments and also other Muslim theologians, particularly the Ash'arites.

Leaman writes that Ibn Rushd on the other hand, attempts at disposing the objections by reducing the controversy to the key term of which he said to be the naming of the pre-eternal being. He argues that both the ancient philosophers and the Ash'arites agree that the being "...is not made from or by anything and not preceded by time: and here too all members of both schools agree in naming it 'pre-eternal'. This being is apprehended by demonstration; it is God."³⁸¹ Ibn Rushd also argues that the theologians also agree with the ancients in the view that future time is infinite. The only thing they dispute is about past time and past being in which the theologians hold that it is finite, whereas Aristotelian holds otherwise.³⁸² According to Leaman, it is clear that Ibn Rushd liberates himself from the views of most of the Ash'arites and believes in the possibility of admitting creation *ex nihilo* without disposing the eternity of the universe.³⁸³

³⁸⁰ Oliver Leaman, 2002, *An Introduction to Classical Islamic Philosophy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p: 67.

³⁸¹ Ibn Rushd, *Fasl al-Maqal*, pp: 55-6 in Leaman.

³⁸² Ibid.

³⁸³ Ibid, pp: 74-5.

The notion of the eternity of time and the world exists throughout the history of thought. Fazlur Rahman maintains that it revolves around the idea that there is an infinite past, and this infinity is traversed to an infinite future therefore the notion of the eternity of time. Fazlur Rahman argues that the fallacy of the idea consists in assimilating the past to the future, for the past is something actual in the sense that it has happened and is, therefore, determinate once and for all.”³⁸⁴ Furthermore, he concedes that the concept of eternity signifies a state of beginningless and not a temporal concept, but the “infinity in the past” implies vice versa.

It is clear that the classical Muslim philosophers’ concern is more on the problem of the eternity of time and their responses on the issue depended on the degree of their affinity to the Greek philosophical discourse on time, particularly Aristotelian time. As our previous discussion on the Qur’ānic perception of time has demonstrated, time is valued according to its spiritual significance for man in living his life in this world. In fact, the Qur’ān sees that it is in the spiritual realm of time that man can proceed for his betterment. The absence of this dimension in the classical Islamic discourse has been recognized by Muhammad Iqbal, and he proposed a rather integrative understanding of time.

4.2.3 Time in Modern Islamic Discourse

Iqbal’s analysis regarding the nature of pure time as an organic whole has given different perspective in departing time from its conventional and linear characteristic of the Western time as well as the classical Islamic discourse of time as

³⁸⁴ Fazlur Rahman in M.M.Sharif, 1963, p: 503.

discussed previously. A deeper analysis of our conscious experience, he says, revealed that pure time,

is not a string of separate, reversible instants; it is an organic whole in which the past is not left behind, but is moving along with, and operating in, the present. And the future is given to it not as lying before, yet to be transversed; it is given only in the sense that it is present in its nature as an open possibility. It is time regarded as an organic whole that the Qur'ān describes as '*Taqdīr*' or the destiny – a word which has been so much misunderstood both in and outside the world of Islam. Destiny is time regarded as prior to the disclosure of its possibilities. It is time freed from the net of causal sequence – the diagrammatic character which the logical understanding imposes on it. In one word, it is time as self and not as thought and calculated.³⁸⁵

It is a dynamic conception of time which operates organically that gives the real sense of time – time as a whole and continuous process which never lasted in particular period – it actually 'lives' in past, present and future, and this is why *qadar* or in Iqbal's usage, *taqdīr*, could not be regarded as a fix and unchangeable matter. It is in fact a continuous process. As Iqbal explains:

Time regarded as destiny forms the very essence of things. As the Qur'ān says: "God created all things and assigned to each its destiny." The destiny of a thing then is not an unrelenting fate working from without like a task master; it is the inward reach of a thing, its realizable possibilities which lie within the depth of its nature, and serially actualize themselves without any feeling of external compulsion. Thus the organic wholeness of duration does not mean that full-fledged events are lying, as it were, in the womb of Reality, and drop one by one like the grains of sand from the hour-glass. If time is real, and not a mere repetition of homogeneous moments which make conscious experience a delusion, then every moment in the life of Reality is original, giving birth to what is absolutely novel and unforeseeable. "Every day doth some new work employ Him," says the Qur'ān. To exist in real time is not to be bound by the fetters of serial time, but to create it from moment to moment and to be absolutely free and original in creation.³⁸⁶

³⁸⁵ Muhammad Iqbal, 1999, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore: SH Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, p: 49.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid*, p: 50.

This dynamic concept of time also denotes the dynamic concept and application of *qadar*. It shows man open possibilities and opportunities in effecting his life in the future. However, this open possibilities and opportunities will never benefit man unless he has purpose in life. For Iqbal, life, though not teleological in the sense of being implemented according to a preconceived plan, is purposive activities. The concept of self too implies purposiveness. In this regard, Iqbal further explains that:

Life is only a series of acts of attention, and an act of attention is inexplicable without reference to a purpose, conscious or unconscious. Even our acts of perception are determined by our immediate interests and purposes...Thus ends and purposes, whether they exist as conscious or subconscious tendencies, form the warp and woof of conscious experience. And the notion of purpose cannot be understood except in reference to the future. The past, no doubt, abides and operates in the present; but this operation of the past in the present is not the whole of consciousness. The element of purpose discloses a kind of forward look in consciousness. Purposes colour not only our present states of consciousness, but also reveal its future direction. In fact, they constitute the forward push of our life, and thus in a way anticipate and influence the states that are yet to be. To be determined by an end is to be determined by what ought to be. Thus past and future both operate in the present state of consciousness...³⁸⁷

By describing the significant role of purposive acts, Iqbal points out his organic conception of time which integrates the past with the future through the present within the perception of human consciousness and unconsciousness. In fact, it shows that human in actual, is fully engaged in creating his life the way he chose it within the time-frame that has been granted to him. Therefore man has the ability to influence his *qadar* through his purposive acts executed with his free will. His future is not fixed in a pre-conceived plan by God, for Iqbal believes that God grants "...freedom to human egos who are to share His creative activity. He admits that the emergence of egos endowed with the power of spontaneous and hence unforeseeable

action is in a sense a limitation of the freedom of the all-inclusive Ego, but this limitation is not externally imposed. It is born of God's own creative freedom whereby He has chosen finite egos to be participators in His life, power, and freedom. Iqbal considers the prevalent idea of God's absolute omnipotence to be a misconception."³⁸⁸ Iqbal's explanation on this is said to solve the problem of free will by denying God's foreknowledge, in which he conceives as sacrificing His freedom as conceded by the orthodox theology and neglected the true Qur'ānic spirit. For Iqbal, Al-Ghazali's revolt against Greek intellectualism is a huge achievement in Islamic thought and philosophy, but his resort to Sufism demonstrated the failure in understanding the organic relationship between thought and intuition, and "...that thought must necessarily simulate finitude and inconclusiveness because of its alliance with serial time."³⁸⁹

The integrative conception of time within its organical relationship views time in its simultaneous consciousness between past, present and future, which, according to Iqbal, agrees with the dynamic spirit of the Qur'ān. Within this integrative paradigm, the modern Islamic discourse on time attempts at disclosing the whole human conscious experience in human history. According to Imad al-Din Khalil, the Qur'ānic interpretation of human history proceeds from the vision of God who "...has a comprehensive knowledge of historical events in their three time elements: past, present, and future, and in their fourth dimension which often vanishes from human

³⁸⁷ Ibid, pp: 52-3.

³⁸⁸ Ibid, p: 1627. God's knowledge is not omniscience in the sense of an immediate awareness of the entire sweep of history – past, present and future – regarded as an order of specific events in an eternal ever-present "now". To him this suggests a closed universe, a fixed futurity, a predetermined, unalterable order of specific events, which, like a superior fate, has once and for all determined the direction of God's creative activity.³⁸⁸

³⁸⁹ Ibid, p: 1624.

thought no matter how intelligent, incisive, and perceptive a person may be. This is the dimension that probes the depth of the human soul impinging on the nature of man, his intrinsic identity, and the dynamic movement of his inner being. It penetrates deeply into his intellectual, emotional, and psychic vibrations, and his antecedent will...For it is the vision of the divine being which permeates all things with knowledge and has fashioned the historical event and placed it in its ordained place in the design of human and cosmic history.”³⁹⁰

Obviously, the forth dimension of time which escaped Iqbal’s explanation of human consciousness, is regarded by Imad al-Din as the dynamic nature of man or, as we understood it and explained it in Chapter 6 as *fitrah*. And, whereas Iqbal relates human consciousness with his purposive acts that works within the time-frame that is given by God as an open possibilities influencing the human *qadar*, Imad al-Din stresses the Qur’ānic interpretation of history and time as being fashioned by the dynamic human nature incongruent with the determinist history of humanity through the work of general principles or laws (*sunan* or *sunnatullah*). These laws that governs both human and natural world, are the forces that influence human history in times. It is these laws that bind the human past, his present and future life, since the Qur’ān views times are as a unified whole, in which past, present, and the future commingle in a common destiny and continuous living unity. The movement of history which encompasses creation, Imad al-Din further asserts, becomes one movement towards the Day of Judgment.³⁹¹ Therefore, the modern discourse on time is seen to be closer to the Qur’ānic interpretation of human history, without delving into the depth of the

³⁹⁰ Imad al-Din Khalil, *The Qur’anic interpretation of History*, p: 188

³⁹¹ Ibid, pp: 188-9.

cosmological and ontological planes which, in the context of contemporary debates, can be regarded as futile and vain.

4.3 *QADAR*: THE HUMAN DESTINY IN TIME

In the preceding discussion, we have attempt at disclosing both the classical and modern Islamic discourses on time. Generally, as we try to show, the classical discourse on time as discussed by the Muslim philosophers were mainly influenced by the Greek philosophy in varying degree according to the degree of its affinity to the individual philosophers. The modern discourse on time, on the other hand, shows a different course diverted from the classical views. But what bind both the classical and the modern alike is the relationship between the understanding of time with the human destiny or qadar.

The word *al-qadar* derives from word ‘*qadr*’ means amount, quantity, magnitude, size, volume, propotion, deal, number, measure.³⁹² According to Şāleh as-Şāleh, the linguistic and Islamic meanings of *al-qadā’* and *al-qadar* are connected to each other. He elaborates that linguistically, the meaning of *al-qadā’* refers to the “...perfect commanding, decreeing, ruling, accomplishing and perfect precision in execution”³⁹³, while *al-qadar* refers to the “...setting, commanding, executing, and encompassing in due and precise propotions”.³⁹⁴

³⁹² Ba^calbaki, 1995, p: 851.

³⁹³ ^cAbdul Rahmān ibn Sāleh al-Mahmūd cited in As-Şāleh, Şāleh S., 1995, *Fate in Islam: The Salaf’s Guide to the Understanding of Al-Qadā’ wa al- Qadar*, Madīnah: Dār al-Bukhāri, p: 9.

³⁹⁴ Ibid.

In classical Islamic era, the discussion on the concept of fate (divine predestination) or *qadar* has created various debates with regard to its relationship with the problem of freedom (*hurriya*), choice (*ikhtiyār*) and free will (*irāda*). According to Leaman, the term *qadar* which means the measuring out or divine determination is used interchangeably with *qudra* which means ability or power. In the Qur’ān, *qadar* also implies God’s power and knowledge.³⁹⁵ Sayyid Hossein Nasr in this regard, emphasizes that the word *qadar* has been treated differently by various Islamic thinkers such as the jurists, the Sufis, the philosophers and the theologians (*mutakallimūn*) according to their respective concern. The jurists when discussing on *qadar*, are more “...concern with the rights and liberty that are the outcome of conformity to the divine law (*sharia*); Sufis seek inner freedom through liberation from man’s bondage to the lower self; philosophers generally assert the reality of human free will from the standpoint of al-Farabi’s (d.970) political philosophy; and the theologians (*mutakallimūn*) are mainly concerned with the relationship between the divine will and human will, and how the former limits the latter.”³⁹⁶

Predominantly, classical discourse on *qadar* is found in debates between two main sects, the Murji’ites and the Jabarites who believe that God had predetermined the human life at one hand, and the other, the Mu’tazilites and the Qadarites who believe in humana free will. The Murji’ites and the Jabarites found support for their views in the Qur’an. However, as we have discussed in the previous section on the Qur’ānic conception of time, these verses can be misunderstood to conform the pre-Islamic Arabs outlook of fatalism. In this regard, Watt views that it can therefore be

³⁹⁵ Sūrah 2: 256; 54: 49; 15: 21.

³⁹⁶ Nasr, 1981: 18-23 in Oliver Leaman, p: 203.

said that the pre-Islamic Arabs had influenced the mainstream Islam in giving the role of Time (*dahr*) or fate as the controller of human life to God.³⁹⁷

The modern discourse on *qadar* shifts to different tunes. It is believed that *qadar* was responsible for paralyzing the energies of the Muslims and was the chief cause of their moral degeneration. The doctrine of *qadar* causes the Muslims to regard all their actions and achievements as dependent on the will of God and, for the same reason, they were unable to safeguard their rights and protect their countries from tyranny – thus obstructing their overall progress.³⁹⁸ According to Moazzam Anwar, Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghāni set aside this criticism and held that it confused the doctrine of *qadar* with that of *jabr*. Explaining the difference between the two, he claimed that Afghāni condemned the doctrine of *jabr* as the deterministic view which reduced man merely to an inanimate being, having no will of his own and no power over his actions. Moazzam says that Afghāni also condemned the attitude presenting God as a coercive power upon whose will the existence of each and every event depended and which deprived man the right of choice (*ikhtiyār*) in his actions and thus rendered futile human faculties of thought and action. Such an attitude would rob man of all urges for positive struggle, learning and acquisition, and would make his life useless.³⁹⁹

In explaining the close relationship between nature and human will, Moazzam asserts that Afghāni believes that human will is produced by perception (*idrāk*) of the

³⁹⁷ William Montgomery Watt, 1994, *Islamic Creeds: A Selection*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, p: 16.

³⁹⁸ Moazzam Anwar, 1984, *Jamāl al-Dīn al-Afghāni: A Muslim Intellectual*, New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company, p:17.

external phenomena and it is, in fact, one of the links in the chain of causes. The source of the causes underlying external events is God, who has subordinated each event to a like cause. Thus Afghāni accepts God's power over human will, not directly but through the law of causation.⁴⁰⁰ In his further analysis on Afghāni's concept on the relationship between *kasb* (acquisition) and *ikhtiyār* with the notion and freedom and God's power, Moazzam writes : "...This situation leads to the question of human responsibility and brings in the issues of *kasb* (acquisition) and *ikhtiyār* (choice). Without making any distinction between the two terms and using both of them in the sense of *ikhtiyār*, he asserts that God has endowed man with full powers of choice over his actions. It is only the right of choice which makes human responsibility just and valid, and as such, man stands responsible to the laws of *Sharī'ah* for his acts and is liable to reward and punishment."⁴⁰¹

Thus, Moazzam concludes that Afghāni "...maintains that strong faith in law having full power over the events gives strength to human conduct. Belief in *al-qadā wa al-qadar* makes man brave, patient, bold, generous and self-sacrificing so that he is prepared to face the circumstances without fear. Again, belief in predetermined death, faith in God as the provider of one's livelihood, and complete trust in an Omnipotent Being gives sufficient courage to fight in defence of truth. He points out that it was in this sense that early Muslims which were brought about, according to him, by a religious momentum generated mostly by this belief. Besides, this belief does not rest exclusively on religious sanction as such. It is more a rational attitude than a theological dogma. The rule of this law prevailed over all great human achievements

³⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid, pp: 17-18.

wherever they took place.”⁴⁰² Afghāni’s understanding and treatment on *qadar* is thus not a fatalistic stance but a positivistic one.

Conclusively, the negative perception of the concept of *al-qadā’* and *al-qadar* or *taqdīr*, as demonstrated by Moazzam’s analysis on Afghāni, and also others clearly shows its frailty. Hence, as Al-Anāni asserts that “...it is only fair that Muslims face the cause and effect relationship between their behavior and their condition. Ignorance of this relationship is bound to harm the cause of da’wah and of Islam. Many Muslims feel that their tragic situation today results from the religion itself. Those who are ignorant of Islam feel that Islamic teachings have something in them that has caused their backwardness. They believe that Islam teaches a kind of fatalism incompatible with the responsible attitude needed to subjugate the forces of the universe and thereby keep pace with modern times and with the demands of modern civilization. Though this concept is totally opposed to Islamic teachings, the material success achieved by Western countries deepened their doubts about Islam and caused them to accuse it of passivity and backwardness.”⁴⁰³

As a matter of fact, the dynamic belief and concept of *al-qadā’* and *al-qadar* is the source of strength for Muslims must think about the future in positive-minded attitude - that it is the only space which they could actively participate and operate in order to choose their destiny, be it good or bad, whether on the earth as God’s servants and vicegerents, as well as in the hereafter where they will taste the consequences of their actions. Understanding the concept of *al-qadā’* and *al-qadar* and also its

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, p: 18.

⁴⁰² Ibid.

dynamic association with the organic concept of time is about knowing the consequences of human actions and this is the very basic of futures thinking in Muslim mind. This is supposed to change and uplift their mind and spirit in order to revive their understanding of their own religion, and hence to resolve their present malaise, as the Qur’ān says: “Verily, never will God change the condition of a people until they change their inner selves.”⁴⁰⁴

Another response for the modern discourse on *qadar* is the response of the *salaf* as found in the work of Ṣāleḥ As-Ṣāleḥ in *Fate in Islam: The Salaf’s Guide to the Understanding of Al-Qadā’ wa al- Qadar*. As-Ṣāleḥ relates his discussion on *qadar* with another term *qadā’*. The Islamic meaning of *al-qadar* according to him, “...is the ability of Allah: where He knew, wrote, willed, and created all things in due proportion before and according to a precise measure”⁴⁰⁵ and this knowledge encompasses all things even before they exist and all of them have been written in a Book called *al-Lauh al-Mahfūz* (The Preserved Tablet) due to their predestined proportions and specific measures. On the other hand, *al-qadā’* according to him, “...is the perfectly precise execution and accomplishment of all things predestined to occur exactly in accordance with God’s previous Knowledge, Writing, and Will”.⁴⁰⁶ Based on both meanings, the strong relationship between both words is obviously shown in which their meanings can be used interchangeably when separated, but differ when stated together. He also gives an example of how the usage of both words connote different

⁴⁰³ Hasan al-Anāni, 1990, *Freedom and Responsibility in Quranic Perspective* (trans. M.S Kayani), Indianapolis: American Trust Publication, p: 1.

⁴⁰⁴ Al-Qur’ān, Sūrah 13:11.

⁴⁰⁵ Ahmad ibn Ḥanbal as reported by Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah cited in As-Ṣāleḥ, Ṣāleḥ S, 1995, *Fate in Islam: The Salaf’s Guide to the Understanding of Al-Qadā’ wa al- Qadar*, Madīnah: Dār al-Bukhāri, p: 9.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid, pp: 9-10.

meanings, such as “...when it is generalized, *al-qadar* encompasses *al-qaḍā’* and vice versa. But when it is said, *al-qaḍā’* and *al-qadar*, then *al-qadar* means the predestination of things, and when the predestined matter occurs, it is then called *al-qaḍā’*.”⁴⁰⁷

In answering the second question whether there is a relationship between the belief in *al-qaḍā’* and *al-qadar* with the Muslims present backward condition, As-Ṣāleḥ stresses that we must understand the nature of the actions of Allah (*af’āl Allah*) and the actions of man (*af’āl al-‘ibād*). These two realms of actions denote the realm of God’s power/ability as well as the realm of man’s power/ability and thus, must be understood correctly, as the source of man’s actions is actually Allah Himself for He is the Sole Creator of everything, including man’s deeds. This fact refers to the Qur’ānic verse: “Verily! Allah is the Creator of everything, and He is the *Wakīl* (Guardian, Disposer of affairs, Trustee) over all things.”⁴⁰⁸ In another verse, it says: “That is Allah, your Rabb, the Creator of everything”⁴⁰⁹ and “Say (O Muḥammad) that Allah is the Creator of everything, and He is the One, the Irresistable.”⁴¹⁰ As-Ṣāleḥ’s explanation regarding the nature of these two realms needs further attention as he says:

The rank of *Al-Khalq* (The Creation) includes the Actions of Allah and the actions of His creatures. The Actions of Allah are true and real. They conform to what is entailed by His Names and Attributes. They influence all of creation in accordance with His Knowledge, *Mashee’ah* [Will], and Ability. Nothing moves, no matter how small it is, except by His *Mashee’ah*, Knowledge, and Ability...In all of His actions there is perfect wisdom. He does not do anything in vain nor His action devoid of any meaning. His Actions are Real, All-Wise, and All-Just. His creatures, and their deeds, are His creation. The slave of

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, p: 10.

⁴⁰⁸ Sūrah 39: 62.

⁴⁰⁹ Sūrah 40:62

⁴¹⁰ Sūrah 13:16.

God has real ability, will, choice and action. Man's ability to move and to believe is actions that are truly attributed to him. These actions are created by Allah. Man's movement, standing, sitting, etc are real actions which Allah decreed, set under His ability, willed, and created them for him. Man's will and actions are next to His...⁴¹¹

Al-Qadar connotes a limitation as well as ability. In this sense, every living creature has its own measure, limit, ability and due proportion and working within this system signifies God's Intelligent and His perfect wisdom for He has created the universe with distinctive characteristics which operates under particular law of order. This is the scientific aspect of the concept of *al-qadar* whereby it works compatibly with God's law of order (*Sunnatullah*). Therefore, the whole concept of *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar* should be understood in a bigger picture or framework – to understand the nature of God's law of order or system that has been preordained to all of His creations. In fact nothing in this systematic world of God can be operated without specific understanding of the methods of their operations. With this in mind, it is impossible to correlate the cause of the backwardness of Muslims with the belief in *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar* except that Muslims themselves have unconsciously

⁴¹¹ As-Ṣāleḥ, Ṣāleḥ S, 1995, *Fate in Islam: The Salaf's Guide to the Understanding of Al-Qaḍā' wa al-Qadar*, Madīnah: Dār al-Bukhārī, pp: 70-1. In further detail, he elaborates that this medium and straight way of relating the Actions of Allah to those of His creation is the course of *As-Salaf al-Ṣāliḥ* and their followers, *Ahl al-Sunnah* which stands against two extremes as proclaimed by two groups i.e *Al-Jabariyyah* and *Al-Qadariyyah*. The first group claimed that man has no ability and choice not even his own will or real action, and that he is just like a feather in the wind. *Al-Qadariyyah*, on the other hand, totally denied *al-qadar* and claimed that man creates his own actions by his ability and will. In explaining the *aqidah* of *Ahl al-Sunnah*, he cited from Muhammad Khalīl Al-Harrās in his book *Sharḥ al-^cAqīdah Al-Wasatiyyah* (1993, pp:228-9) that the belief of *Ahl al-Sunnah* is that: "The Muslim prays, fasts, does good, may do bad deeds, etc. Indeed, he is the doer of these deeds because he acted by his will. That is what Allah and His Messenger confirmed. Nevertheless, if you want to know how the Muslim's deeds are part of *Al-Qadar* and the *Mashee'ah* of Allah, then ask the question: what made them do these deeds? The answer: By their ability and will. That is why they deserve either reward for the good deeds, or punishment for the evil ones. Everyone agrees to this. The next question is: Who is the Creator of their ability and will? Certainly, Allah. Consequently their deeds are the creation of Allah. Remember that Allah brought to existence their deeds as well as all the means that made these deeds manifested." (As-Ṣāleḥ, Ṣāleḥ S., 1995, *Fate in Islam: The Salaf's Guide to the Understanding of Al-Qaḍā' wa al-*

misunderstood the true meaning of both concepts. The belief in *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar* should therefore be understood as a source of strength that God has given to every human being his own capacity and ability to work and act, and this is the basic rights of freedom and at the same time a responsibility, for he can choose the course of his life whether it is good or bad and thus, will be judged through his actions (*ʿamal*) and intentions (*niyyah*). This is the justice of God.

At this point, we could raise a question as to what then is the stand of human beings in dealing with *al-qadar*? As-Sāleh's explanation in this matter would shed light in understanding how human being should act and react when dealing with this situation.

The slave's stand towards *Al-Qadar* has two levels: (1) Before the *taqdīr* takes place: he should seek the help from God, depend upon Him, and supplicate Him. (2) After the *taqdīr* takes place: If the *taqdīr* is different from what he had worked for (lawful and good), he should be patient and accept the *taqdīr*. If the *taqdīr* is a favor that conforms to what he had set up and worked for, then he should be grateful to God and should praise for it. If he commits a sinful deed, he should ask God's forgiveness and repent. The slave's stand towards the Commands of God has two levels: (1) Before execution: a determination to fulfill the command and to seek God's help for its execution. (2) After execution: Seeking God's forgiveness due to any shortcomings in the execution, and praising God for all of His favors: "So be patient (O Muḥammad). Verily, God's promise is true, and seek forgiveness for your fault."⁴¹²

From the abovementioned statement, we can understand that man has to initiate his own action before and after his *qadar* takes place. This is the essential part of his power and ability that has been given by God – he is not a robot that has neither

Qadar, Madīnah: Dār al-Bukhārī, pp:71-3).

⁴¹² Sūrah 40:55; As-Şāleh, Şāleh S, 1995, *Fate in Islam: The Salaf's Guide to the*

will nor power – he is after all free to choose his own action, but he must submit his action to God, for he is His creation – his power is subject to God’s Will and Power. His free will and initiative is the most important part of his action and this is actually the most distinctive different between man and other God’s creatures. Therefore, according to As-Şāleh, if man do not take any action “...to go and search for his provisions but instead waits for the *al-qadar*, does not comprehend the *taqdīr* of God to His servants: ‘So walk in the path thereof (on earth) and eat from His provisions.’”⁴¹³ Also, if God had ordained to give a person a child, this means that He had intended for him a consummated marriage for the child does not come without a cause, as also other things in this world do not happen without a cause.⁴¹⁴ Understanding in this light, a Muslim must act to create his *qadar* before it takes place – which definitely exists in the future time – for that is the only time he could make any difference for himself or his society.

4.4 THE PRACTICE OF THE PROPHETS (PEACE BE UPON THEM) AND THE ŞAHĀBAH IN IMPLEMENTING FUTURES THINKING

In attempting to examine the *Sunnah* of the Prophets (p.b.u.t) in the implementation of futures thinking throughout their prophetic mission especially the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muḥammad (p.b.u.h), we will refer to the Islamic primary sources that is the Qur’ān and the *hādīth* to discern how they dealt with the challenges in the early period of Islam successfully as a guidance for us to follow. This is very

Understanding of Al-Qadā’ wa al-Qadar, Madīnah: Dār al-Bukhārī, pp: 74-5.

⁴¹³ Ibid, p: 78; Sūrah 76:15.

crucial as some think that pessimistic attitude towards life has chiefly resulted from the Qur'ānic statements and *hadīth* sayings. Despite this misunderstanding, the Qur'ān clearly tells us the stories and allegories of the previous prophets such as the story of Prophet Yūsuf and the King of Egypt (Pharaoh).

In the *Sūrah* named after the Prophet Yūsuf⁴¹⁵ we read:

“(He said): “O Yūsuf (Joseph), the man of truth! Explain to us (the dream of seven fat cows whom seven lean ones were devouring, and of seven green ears of corn, and (seven) others dry, that I may return to the people, and that they may know.”

[Yūsuf (Joseph)] said: “For seven consecutive years, you shall sow as usual and that (the harvest) which you reap you shall leave it in the ears, (all) except a little of it you may eat.

“Then will come after that, seven hard (years), which will devour what you have laid by in advance for them, (all) except a little of that which you have guarded (stored).

“Then thereafter will come a year in which people will have abundant rain and in which they will press (wine and oil).”

Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā in his *Tafsīr Al-Manār*⁴¹⁶ emphasizes that Yūsuf's interpretation of the Egyptian king's dream on making preparations to face calamity caused by famine shows the spirit of forward looking outlook. In a similar vein, Al-Qardāwi views that these verses are great examples that religious thought is clearly future-oriented and signifies the importance of planning and strategy when the Prophet Yūsuf (p.b.u.h) has imposed an economic plan for 15 years in dealing with the scarcity of food supply in the future. His plan had been accepted by the King and Yūsuf had been appointed to the highest post in managing the country's financial and

⁴¹⁴ As-Ṣāleh, Ṣāleh S, 1995, *Fate in Islam: The Salaf's Guide to the Understanding of Al-Qaḍā' wa al-Qadar*, Madīnah: Dār al-Bukhārī, p: 78.

⁴¹⁵ Al-Qur'ān, Sūrah 12:46-49.

⁴¹⁶ Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, 1954, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Maktabah, p: 319.

economic policy, including the execution of the 15-year economic plan.⁴¹⁷

In recounting the story of the Romans defeat over the Persians as found in Sūrah Ar-Rūm, God had promised the believers (*Mu'minīn*) that they will be granted victory over the non-believers (*Mushrikīn*) of Mecca in the battle of Badr that will happen right after the victory of the Romans over the Persians. The verses explain:

“Alif, Lām, Mīm

The Romans have been defeated.

In the nearest land (Syria, Iraq, Jordan and Palestine), and they, after their defeat, will be victorious.

Within three to nine years. The decision of the matter, before and after (these events) is only with God, (before the defeat of the Romans by the Persians, and after the defeat of the Persians by the Romans). And on that Day, the believers (i.e Muslims) will rejoice (at the victory given by God to the Romans against the Persians) - With the help of God.

He helps whom He wills, and He is the All-Mighty, the Most Merciful.”⁴¹⁸

Sayyid Qutb in his *Tafsīr fī Zilāl al-Qur'ān* elaborates that these verses are based on the story of the Persians' defeat over the Romans in a few states in the Arabian Peninsular which were under their colony. This event coincidentally happened at the same time of a heated debate that took place between the first Muslim generation in Mecca (before Hijrah) and the *Mushrikīn* regarding the theological question of *‘aqīdah*. Because the Romans at that time were categorized as the People of the Book (*Ahl al-Kitāb*), whereas the Persians were the *Mushrikīn* of the Manichean era, the *Mushrikīn* of Mecca regarded the event as an opportunity to uplift the *shirk* belief as compared to the *tauḥīdic ‘aqīdah* as well as showing the victory of the non-believers over the believers. However, these verses had delivered delightful

⁴¹⁷ Al-Qardāwī, 1996a, *Islamic Culture between Tradition and Modernity* (trans. Ahmad Nuryadi Asmawi), Selangor (Malaysia): Thinker's Library, p: 137.

news to the Muslims and the People of the Book that they will experience victory over their enemies within a few years.⁴¹⁹ Clearly, this had bring confidence to the Muslims in their *‘aqīdah* and gave them comfort and strength to face the tribulations from the Meccan *Mushrikīn*.

Sayyid Qutb’s interpretation of these verses agrees with Al-Qurtūbī’s interpretation in his *al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān*.⁴²⁰ According to Al-Qurtūbī, this event can be regarded as a comparison or *ta’wil* of the Muslims’ triumph over the *Mushrikīn* of Quraysh in the battle of Badr, and also delightful news of the victory of the *Muslimīn* in the years to come. He also indicates that this event marked as a preparatory point in relating the *Muslimīn* with other events that happened in the period of the Prophet (p.b.u.h), thus enhancing the mind of the *Ṣaḥābah* regarding to *Sunnatullah* that promised the triumph of *‘aqīdah samawiyah* over polytheism.⁴²¹ He concludes that the context of this *sūrah* and its explanation depicts the close relationship between mankind and their existence within time - past, present and future - with the universal law and order, in which all are interconnected and dominated by only one systematic law implemented by God, the *Sunnatullah*.

Al-Qardāwī in commenting the Romans victory over the Persians, viewed that there are two major significance of these verses; firstly, it increased the awareness and alertness of the early Muslim *Ummah* about the crisis and conflict happened at the international arena, despite their weak conditions and small in number; and secondly,

⁴¹⁸ Al-Qur’ān, Sūrah 30:1-5.

⁴¹⁹ Sayyid Qutb, 2001, *Tafsīr Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān* (trans.Yusoff Zaky Yacob), Kelantan (Malaysia): Pustaka Aman Press, p: 436-7.

⁴²⁰ Al-Qurtūbī, 1967, *al-Jāmi‘ li-Aḥkām al-Qur’ān (Juz 14)*, al-Qāhirah: Dār al-Kātib al-‘Arabi li al-Tibā-‘ah wa al-Nashr Dār al-Hadīth, p:1.

the Qur'ānic statement of this significant event regarded as a guidance for the Muslims in reflecting and studying the elements and factors that would cause changes and conflicts in the world order from time to time.⁴²² In other words, it invites the Muslims to study the socio-historical movements of human history in a wider perspective.

We view that God's promise of the Muslim's triumph after the Persians' defeat to the Romans was indeed a mind preparation for them to plan and construct effective strategies in order to counter the *Mushrikīn's* aggression and hostility. The triumph of the Romans, though depicting the accomplishment of a principled struggle based on faith, was indisputably not a mere coincidence. It was a struggle based on strategic plans and actions. Thus, these verses guide the Muslims not to just sit and wait for something to happen without making any effort to find ways to deliver them to the attainment of God's promise. The wisdom from these two stories is evidently significant in discussing futures thinking and the question of future. Apparently, God calls attention to the import of futures thinking in Muslims' mind and urges them to plan their future with full awareness and responsibility, for planning and strategizing as well as continuous struggle are prerequisites of any course of action towards achieving success and excellence in life.

In the case of Roman's victory, it is not based on the result of human forecast but the event was in the knowledge of God and He foreclose such information to the Muslims and the believers as a kind of motivation and assurance of His promise and

⁴²¹ Sayyid Qutb, 2001, op.cit., pp: 437-8.

in order to bring the attention of the believers to learn the processes that brought the Roman's victory to the effect. This also means that in order to achieve the same victory, the believers should not only put their trust blindly to God but to work out for its realization by following God's law that permeates in the order of nature throughout the historical movement of human civilization in all ages – through planning, preparation of strategic actions and execution.

Similar to the Qur'ān, there were also the Prophet's (p.b.u.h) traditions (*ḥadīth*) and his life journey (*sīrah*) which guided us to the question of future. According to Al-Qardāwī, most of the *ḥadīth* related to the future can be categorized under topical classifications such as: *Bāb al-Mulāhim* (chapter regarding wars and battles attended by the Prophet (p.b.u.h), *Bāb al-Fitan* (chapter regarding conflicts - *fitnah*) and *Bāb Ashārat al-Sā'ah* (signs of the apocalypse). In his further evaluation, there are some ordinary people who see these *aḥadīth* as bringing about bad news and causing pessimism for future. This pessimistic view is erroneous and against the truth as thorough research in the life (*sīrah*) of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) shows that he never forgets to prepare for the future in all his effort.⁴²³

One of the *aḥadīth* is regarding the ruling towards the distribution of land acquired through wars (*al-fai'*) among the Muslim soldiers during the battle of Khaybar. Reported from Zaid ibn Aslam from his father, 'Umar was said, "But for the future of Muslim generations, I will divide the conquered land among the soldiers as the Prophet has divided the land of Khaybar". In commenting on the *ḥadīth*, Al-

⁴²² Al-Qardāwī, 1996a, *Islamic Culture between Tradition and Modernity* (trans. Ahmad Nuryadi Asmawi), Selangor (Malaysia): Thinker's Library p: 150.

Qardāwi explains that during the life of the Prophet (p.b.u.h), the lands which were acquired through the battle of Khaybar had been distributed among the Muslim soldiers who joined him in the battle. However, this practice has been suspended during the reign of the second Caliph, ʿUmar Ibn Khaṭṭāb after the Muslims’ conquest over Iraq. The Caliph decided to renounce the practice based on his understanding of the Qur’ānic statement in Sūrah Al-Anfāl verse 41: “And know that whatever of war-booty that you may gain, verily one-fifth (1/5th) of it is assigned to God, and to the Messenger, and to the near relatives (of Muḥammad), (and also) the orphans, *Al-Masākin* (the poor) and the wayfarer, if you have believed in God and in that which We sent down to Our slave (Muḥammad) on the Day of criterion (between right and wrong), the Day when the two forces met (the battle of Badr); and God is able to do all things.”⁴²⁴

According to Al-Qardāwi, the action taken by ʿUmar Ibn Khaṭṭāb contradicted the practice of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) whereby he gave the landlords their rights in possessing the lands with the condition that they will have to pay half of their profit to the state treasury (*Bait al-Māl*) for public interest. The basis of his action was: firstly, to preserve the interest of the future generation for he believe that if all the lands and whatever acquired through wars/battles were distributed and controlled by the soldiers, they will be a waste of resources. He also argued that the methodology of distribution of wealth acquired through wars should take other consideration as mentioned in Sūrah Al-Hashr verse 10 as follows: “And those who came after them say: ‘Our Lord! Forgive us and our brethren who have preceded us in Faith, and put

⁴²³ Ibid, p: 152.

⁴²⁴ Ibid, pp: 155-6.

not in our hearts any hatred against those who have believed. Our Lord! You are indeed full of kindness, Most Merciful””; and secondly, to generate sources of expenses for the Muslims soldiers who work in the country’s borderlines; if the lands were given to the soldiers and they are not around to make use of them, that will be a total loss and unbeneficial to the Muslim *Ummah*.⁴²⁵

This method of leaving the lands under the control of their landlords, according to Al-Qardāwi, will eventually ensure that the lands and its revenue will benefit both the government and the landlords themselves, as well as the soldiers indirectly. It also signifies that the Muslim *Ummah* is but one *Ummah*, regardless of their particular existence in the period of history and they complement each other all round the world and in every generation. Therefore, the earlier generation should not exploit or consume all the provisions of the future generations.⁴²⁶ This practice clearly shows that the Prophet’s companion has invented a new practice which is totally different from the practice of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) because of the new and different challenges and necessities of life based on the principle of the purpose of the law (*siyāsah al-shar‘iyyah*), in order to gain the goodness (*maṣlahāt*) and to avoid the badness (*mafsadāt*) in accordance with the basics of Islamic methodologies in *Sharī‘ah*.

A study of the life journey of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and his *Sunnah* evidently reveals that he had always submitted his actions to strategic planning. Al-Qardāwi when commenting about the Prophet’s strategic thinking, asserts that the Prophet’s

⁴²⁵ Ibid, pp: 156-7.

⁴²⁶ Ibid, p: 157.

command for his companions to migrate to Ethiopia – after the Muslims suffering increased due to the elevation of the *Mushrikīn* hostility – was decided after thorough research and investigation, and proper planning that considered the political map and the religion of the Ethiopian people. Geographically, Ethiopia was a suitable place whereby its people believe in Christianity, and regarded themselves as the People of the Book, which is very close to the Muslims belief. Furthermore, he argues that from a political perspective, the Ethiopian king was famous with his generosity and justice, hence the Prophet (p.b.u.h) said to his companions: “Verily in that country there is a king whom I believe will neither let you to be abused nor victimized.” Again, Al-Qardāwi emphasizes that this fact clearly depicts the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and his companions’ awareness on the development and crisis of the world of their age, despite severe problems in transportation and communication systems.⁴²⁷

During the Meccan period, Al-Qardāwi argues that although the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and his companions were still weak and small in number, he continued to struggle and attentively made a proper and thorough planning for the future of Islam. This, in Al-Qardāwi’s view, had been done based on two convictions that, firstly, the reality of life at that time will change because of his strong faith to God as the last messenger, and that God will grant him victory in his prophetic mission. Therefore, Al-Qardāwi indicates that Muslims were obliged to continue working, struggling and calling for Islam by following God’s injunction on the virtuous effort, the *jihād*, and also the Prophet’s (p.b.u.h) *Sunnah*, his patience and struggle, and not to anxiously try to pick the fruit before it is ripen. Secondly, he argues that success and victory will

⁴²⁷ Al-Qardāwi, 1996a, *Islamic Culture between Tradition and Modernity* (trans. Ahmad Nuryadi Asmawi), Selangor (Malaysia): Thinker's Library, p: 140.

only be achieved in the future if Muslims follow God's law of order (*Sunnatullah*) through planning and hardworking, perseverance in facing obstacles and without frustrations. After the planning and hardwork, Muslims must believe that matters that beyond human capacities and predictions must be left to the will of God for He is the All-Knower and All-Powerful. ⁴²⁸

In our view, the precedent examples of futures perspective in the Qur'ān and *Sunnah* embody the vast allegories and reminders from God regarding the significance and importance of futures thinking. The accomplishment of the Prophet's (p.b.u.h) mission and also his companions' triumph and achievement, including the Muslim generations after them in developing an excellent and magnificent civilization were chiefly rest upon their characteristics and their tower over their enemies and competitors, in form that suits the demand of their age, whether in knowledge, military strategies or technological advancement. The quality and characteristics of the Prophet's (p.b.u.h) companions, for instance, had caused the advancement of Islam within one hundred years. In this connection, Al-Qardāwi stresses that the attitude of the Prophet's (p.b.u.h) companions, the *Ṣaḥābah*, who obeyed and followed the Prophet's (p.b.u.h) footsteps in every single aspect of his life and his endeavor, had never prevented them from inventing new things that were required in their life and age, albeit they were of worldly necessities or religious interests. We can find many of the instances such as in the innovative work of ʿUthmān in collecting the Qur'ān and compiling it in book form (*muṣḥaf*), writing it in one standard and authentic form of writing from seven different ways of recitation (*qira'āt*), or the brilliance of ʿUmar in establishing new offices in dealing with public matters, or new form of management

⁴²⁸ Ibid, pp: 152-3.

and administration as well as erecting new cities which have never existed in the period of the Prophet (p.b.u.h).⁴²⁹

In addition to these, the most explicit example of the application of futures thinking among the *Ṣaḥābah* could be recognized through their own views regarding the question of future. Hassan Langgulung while discussing the underpinning basis in educational strategies toward the unity and development of the Muslim *Ummah*, has quoted ‘Ali’s r.a words about the value of providing the right education that complies with the requirements of the future generations, that says: “Teach your children different knowledge from what you have been taught as they were created for an age that is different from yours.”⁴³⁰

In commenting on the meaning of the same words but attributed to ‘Umar r.a, Faisal Othman expresses that this view was highly futuristic and depicts the ruler’s understanding of the spirit of dynamism in society and knowledge. Hence, he argues that the process of modernization of life is something acceptable – in fact inevitable – in Islam, whereby Islamic practices should not be portrayed in a rigid form by emphasizing on the aspects of the do’s and don’ts based on sectarian fanaticism and the culture of any particular group without any prioritization.⁴³¹

The most important message of the words in relation with the context of futures discussion can be understood from two different perspectives, firstly regarding

⁴²⁹ Ibid, p: 172.

⁴³⁰ Hassan Langgulung, 1990, a speech presented in conjunction with his Premier Lecture of Professorship at the National University of Malaysia entitled *In Facing the 21st Century*.

the nature of change in the cycle of human life which must be understood by the Muslims *Ummah*, especially in assisting them in planning their actions; and secondly regarding the importance of futures thinking and forward looking in Muslims mind in defining what is needed by their younger generations and henceforth in delivering the adequate and appropriate kind of education for their children spring from the demands of their age, not for the needs of the age of their older generation.

This means that if the demands of the 21st century are pertinent knowledge and relevant skills in science and technology, especially information technology, then the curriculum in every level of the education systems whether it is at the primary schools or the higher education institutions should be therefore reassessed and re-evaluated. The traditional system which does not subscribe to technological advancement should be rejuvenated and improved. This does not imply that the traditional knowledge such as Islamic theology, *tafsīr*, *ḥadīth* or *Shari'ah* must be altered immeasurably – though certain aspects of these knowledge are desperately in need of fresh understanding in the light of the new demands of the 21st century and hence must be open to new *ijtihād* - but rather in terms of their methodologies and approaches. Such renewal attempts have been consciously done by the effort of a number of Muslim intellectuals, but the impact of these attempts, particularly in the field of science and technology is far from satisfying, except for the crucial development in the field of economics through the introduction of vast products of Islamic banking and commerce. Yet, the majority of Muslim *Ummah* still live in backwardness, poverty and ignorance. Consequently, the Muslim *Ummah* will still remain under the influence

⁴³¹ Faisal Othman, 'Islam and the Problem of Modern Age' in Siti Fatimah Abdul Rahman & Hamiza Ibrahim (eds), 1994, *Islam: Penyelesaian Masalah Modern* (Islam: The Solution of

and power of the Western countries under their new brand of colonialism – globalization.

This future dimension in thought and action is gradually fading away from contemporary Muslims mind. When the perception of the magnificent age of Islam means reverting to the age of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) in all its original form persisted in the subconscious mind of many Muslims, then the elements of dynamism which underpinning the very essential part of the Islamic teachings and understandings through the process of *ijtihād* and *tajdīd* (continuous renewal process) have not become significant in Muslims life. Nonetheless, the true spirit of the Islamic injunctions practised by the *Ṣaḥābah* should be restored and the Muslim *Ummah* should open their mind and concern about contemporary advancement, and not remained living in the past.

In this regard, views that perceive futures thinking and systematic study of the future as trivial and irrelevant to the Muslim *Ummah* are grossly untenable and spurious and eventually leave them in the cycle of misfortune, frailty and ignorance in every aspect of their life and hence susceptible to any form of imperialism. In the era of globalization and postmodernity whereby accomplishment is marked by efficiency in management, skill and knowledge of human resources and the capability in manipulating the universe through information and communication technology, the yardstick of success of a particular nation or race is measured by their competitive qualities. These qualities might be based on expertise, the level of knowledge advancement, positive and innovative attitude towards new ideas, and the controlling

power in science and technology as well as efficacy in management and planning strategy. Therefore, the Muslim *Ummah* should take part, make preparation and plan their rich resources wisely. The process is a painful undertaking if the Muslim *Ummah* does not have the right combination of futures thinking and strategic actions.

In a wider perspective, the guidance and models which have been demonstrated by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) and his companions act as a guiding light and should not be treated as historical facts as such.⁴³² God's promise that Muslims will become His vicegerent (*khalīfah*) in the earth should inspire and motivate them to change from their present predicament to a better condition as long as they are willing to strive and work hard to fulfill the requirements and *Sunnatullah* in order to achieve the promise. God says in Sūrah al-Nūr : "God has promised those among you who believe and do righteous good deeds, that He will certainly grant them succession to (the present rulers) in the land, as He granted it to those before them, and that He will grant them the authority to practice their religion which He has chosen for them (i.e Islam). And He will surely give them in exchange a safe security after their fear (provided) they (believers) worship Me and do not associate anything (in worship) with Me. But whoever disbelieves after this, they are the *Fāsiqūn* (rebellious, disobedient to God)."⁴³³

⁴³² Al-Qardāwī, 1996a, *Islamic Culture between Tradition and Modernity* (trans. Ahmad Nuryadi Asmawi), Selangor (Malaysia): Thinker's Library, p: 172.

⁴³³ Sūrah 24:55.

4.5 THE EMERGENCE OF FUTURES STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THOUGHT

Although early Muslim discussions on problems and concepts of the future has not been dealt in a specific discipline, the application of futures thinking has been implemented invariably in every aspect of Muslims' life, including in politics and law. As we have demonstrated earlier, the discussions on future have implicitly influenced the classical debates on predestination and human free will, as well as in the philosophical responses on the Aristotelian conception of time. The intellectual debate of modern time regarding to the discourse on those issues were also discussed in order to signify the continuous debate on the problem of future. In this section, the emergence of futures thinking in contemporary Islamic thought is not only discussed based on written materials but also as intellectual movement, in the form of organizations as well as its implementation in the governmental systems.

As we have mentioned briefly in the first chapter, future-oriented writings within contemporary Islamic thought can be traced back to as early as 1882 in the work of Wilfrid Scawen Blunt, a friend of Jamāluddīn Al-Afghāni, who wrote a book entitled *The Future of Islam*.⁴³⁴ In modern Islam, there are at least three categories of Islamic writings related to futures thinking: the first is prophecy; the second is research and finally, reconstruction. The criteria of these writings, according to Sardar, are fundamentally different: the prophetic writings are more concern with the Qur'ānic and *Hadīth* prophecies on life after death and somehow encouraged fatalistic

⁴³⁴ Ziauddin Sardar, 1985, *Islamic Futures and the Shape of Ideas to Come*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., p: 21.

view of life. The second type of the category is the research sort that can be found, for instance, in the journal *The Muslim World and the Future Economic Order* published by the Islamic Council of Europe in July 1977.⁴³⁵ The journal has contributed in initiating serious discourse on the future of Islam, albeit its conspicuous pitfalls in the apologetic nature of many of its articles. The third category, the reconstruction type, attempts at systematic study on the future within the Islamic framework. Books by Muhammad Iqbal, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam* (1936), M. Rafi-Ud-Din, *Ideology of the Future* (1946) and Ziauddin Sardar, *The Future of Muslim Civilization* were among constructive writings pertaining to the future of Islam. Another work considered within the category was the report written by Kalim Siddiqui for the Institute of Islamic Research and Planning, London in 1974. The report, later published as a book, *Towards a New Destiny*, took the responsibility in propagating futuristic ideas and thoughts and initiated the reconstructive project of the Islamic civilization.⁴³⁶

The work by individual scholars in the early stage of modern Islamic writings concerning future eventually shifted to an intellectual movement pioneered by a group of Muslim scholars such as Ziauddin Sardar, Parvez Manzoor, Gulzar Haidar, Munawar Ahmad Anees, Ibraheem Sulaiman, Meryll Wyn Davies and Asaria who called themselves the *Ijmāli*. This new intellectual movement combined intellectual tradition with activism. The group and its publication, the *Inquiry* journal, had become a distinct phenomenon within the Islamic intellectual circle in 1980s. This movement has succeeded in bridging the previous intellectual gap that based in the academia to

⁴³⁵ Ibid, pp: 25-44.

⁴³⁶ Ibid, pp: 25-44.

an intellectual activism. The journal was the main mechanism in disseminating the group's idea on reconstruction program of the Islamic civilization. It aims at synthesizing aesthetical framework which characterized by axiomatic, ethical and conceptual analyses within the *umrān* (civilizational) framework and interdisciplinary inquiry based upon futuristic perspective. Thus, the ethical analysis and the Qur'ānic concepts have played vital role in the *Ijmāli* thought.⁴³⁷ However, the group had dissolved, but the idealism of providing constructive discourse on future within Islamic thought remained in a renewed individual efforts sought by Ziauddin Sardar and Merryl Wyn Davies, the former member of the group. Apart from them, independent efforts in studying future also made by our scholar Mahdi Elmandjra, former President of World Futures Studies Federation (1977-1981) and Futuribles International, Paris (1981-1990). His contributions are not only proved through both designations, but also as the founder and president of the Moroccan Association of Futures Studies. His works are mainly related to science and technology, politics and culture and were largely written in Arabic and French.⁴³⁸

Other considerably significant effort taken by individual scholars is such of Yūsuf al-Qarḍāwī, who is renowned for his extensive contemporaneous writings in integrating the original spirit of *Sharī'ah* with the demand of modernity. As a religious scholar who received his education in religious studies and memorized the Qur'ān since childhood, he never refrain himself from contemporary knowledge advancement, including the development of Futures Studies which is considered as foreign and nearly remain unfamiliar among the present Muslims. Among his books

⁴³⁷ Ziauddin Sardar (ed), 1989, *An Early Crescent: The Future of Knowledge and Environment in Islam*. London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., p: 18.

which clearly discuss future questions include *Islam: The Civilization of Tomorrow* (*Al-Islam: Hadārah al-Ghad*, 1999), *The Islamic Culture between Tradition and Modernity* (*Al-Thaqāfah Al-ʿArabiyyah Al-Islāmiyyah bayna Al-Asālah wa Al-Muʿāsirah*, 1996) and *An Islamic Ummah: Reality Not Fantasy* (*Al-Ummah Al-Islāmiyyah: Haqīqah la Wahm*, 1996). In these three works, Al-Qardāwī attempts to prove that Islam is compatible with modern advancement. With its distinctive and unique characteristics, Islam is capable to regain its historical position as a dominant civilization in the future. In his book *The Islamic Culture between Tradition and Modernity*, he asserts that futures thinking is not contradicted to the Islamic notions, in fact it is highly encouraged by the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth*. It is worth to note that besides his traditional background, Al-Qardāwī shows his interest in a so-called “secular” discipline which made him distinct from other traditional scholars.

In commenting al-Dujānī’s analysis regarding the development of Futures Studies, Al-Qardāwī asserts that the study of future was a Western product on the ground of its relationship with scientific and technological revolution whereas the main bodies that were firstly interested to explore this field were the military institutions and multinational companies. This hence denotes their political and economical underlying purposes, as well as its strong connection with tactical and strategic studies. Despite the evidently fact, Al-Qardāwī avers that futures thinking has its own ground and significance in Islam, as vastly shown in the Qurʾān and *ḥadīth* and the *Sunnah* of the Prophets (p.b.u.t). His firm assertion on the centrality of futures thinking in Islam attempts to open the mind of the Muslim *Ummah* that has long trapped in their nostalgic and apologetic state and urges them to realize

⁴³⁸ <http://www.elmandjra.org/summary.htm.10/01/09>.

contemporary realities particularly the advancement of Western knowledge and their economic achievement. He also asserts that the dynamic understanding of the Islamic teachings as propagated by the Prophet (p.b.u.h) has enabled the *Ṣaḥābah* to build a remarkable human civilization compatible with the needs and demands of their age within fifty years. This fresh and correct understanding of the true message of Islam as has been developed throughout twenty three years of living and witnessing the words and pious life of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) has given them extraordinary qualities to become the source of inspiration for the later Muslims generations. However, he argues that the renunciation of dynamic interpretation and implementation of the Islamic ideals among contemporary Muslims particularly relating to the question of future has caused degeneration in Muslim societies all over the world. He says:

There are Muslims who do not have the opportunity to study and learn about Islam thoroughly and yet assume that this religion did not accept futures theories which present the study of future possibilities, ways and strategies to deal with them efficiently. They also presume that religion is only about organizing people in the past and their old heritage which regarded as 'sacred' and 'pure' from any fault and mistakes. This kind of belief has imprisoned them in their own 'golden cage' of old heritage and consequently prevented them from any movement and change. According to them, the question of the future must be fully submitted to God for it is unknown to human beings and they have no power over it. Human being could not do anything to accept or reject future upcoming events, but only submitting their fate to *al-qaḍā'* and *al-qadar (taqdīr)*, and they have no capabilities to reject or choose.⁴³⁹

We agree that the degeneration of the Muslim *Ummah* is mainly caused by reductionist attitude in understanding the core and essence of the Islamic teachings. This narrow- and rigid-minded thinking has prevented the Muslim *Ummah* from perceiving the principal and contextual values in the vast Islamic corpus of knowledge

and history. Hence, it has limited Islam to a set of ritual practice and eventually lost its significant and magnificent contributions which have produced the most excellent thoughts and civilizations in human history. The phenomenon of reductionist thinking, narrow-mindedness and blind acceptance (*taqlīd*) has finally resulted in rigidity and stagnation in ideas and actions. The issues of Muslims predicament have been widely debated by many Muslims scholars. In this regard Al-Qardāwī⁴⁴⁰ urges the Muslim *Ummah* to choose the middle way and learn from the past to live in the present and without fail to prepare themselves to face the upcoming future and to shrink neither in the past nor in the future stream extremely for both attitudes do not bring any benefit to them as Islam advocates the notion of equilibrium in all aspects of human endeavour.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁹ Al-Qardāwī, 1996a, *Islamic Culture between Tradition and Modernity* (trans. Ahmad Nuryadi Asmawi), Selangor (Malaysia): Thinker's Library, pp: 147-8.

⁴⁴⁰ Ibid, pp: 162-5.

⁴⁴¹ After elaborating the significance of futures thinking and its planning and strategic factors, Al-Qardāwī goes further by proposing the unity of the *Ummah*. In his book *An Islamic Ummah: Reality Not Fantasy*, Al-Qardāwī envisions the establishment of a confederation of Muslim countries. He argues that the existence of such confederation is extremely significant and relevant when considering the present Muslims conditions in facing multiple threats and challenges. More importantly, the unity of the *Ummah* through the confederation will be the basis of continuous effort in re-establishing the Islamic caliphate system after the dismemberment of the last caliphate, the Ottoman Caliphate in the year 1924. This is not impossible if considering the efforts that have been taken by the European countries in establishing a new world 'empire' – the European Union. According to him, the Muslim *Ummah* could be united through three ways: the unity of the Muslim countries, the unity of the highest source of law and finally the unity of central leadership. In elaborating the methods in further detail, Al-Qardāwī explains that the unity of the Muslim countries should be grounded on the concept of brotherhood in Islam (*al-ukhuwwah al-Islāmiyyah*) despite the differences in race, language and territories, because they are all enveloped in one nation - *Dār al-Islām*. Therefore, he believes that the Muslims are obliged to give protection and defend this large nation from any invasion ((Al-Qardāwī, 1996b, *Al-Ummah Al-Islāmiyyah: Haqīqah la Wahm* (An Islamic Ummah: Reality Not Fantasy) (trans. Ahmad Nuryadi Asmawi). Selangor (Malaysia): Thinker's Library pp: 40-2.))

As far as the unity of the highest source of law is concerned, he asserts that it should be taken from the two main sources of the Islamic guidance, the Qu'rān and the *Sunnah* and also the *ijtihād* paralleled with the demands of modernity in which the *ahādīth* of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) will have to be correlated with the principles of *fiqh* and the *fiqh* injunctions therefore must be synchronized with contemporary realities. Al-Qardāwī's mechanism in realizing the vision of uniting the *Ummah* through the unity of the source of law is fairly clear and practical in which he proposed the establishment of a council of *Mujtahidīn* (*Majlis al-Mujtahidīn*) at the

The emergence of Futures Studies in the Middle Eastern countries are marked by the work of a group of Arab futurists who are interested in redressing the problems of the Arab world through the application of methods of futures thinking since the late 1970s. This special interest in Futures Studies and its methodology, according to Muhsin Khādir, is chiefly evident by the implementation of a number of futuristic projects undertaken by research centers and government agencies, such as the *Arab Education Development Strategy* (1977) with the purpose to systematize the Arab culture, knowledge and education; the *Project of Looking into the Future of Arab Nations* organized by the *Centre of Arab Unity Study* in Beirut (1988) and the *Arab Future Alternative* which is considered the earliest research project in implementing methods of Futures Studies in looking into the Arab future, including the government research projects such as the *Egypt 2020* and *Jordan 2020*.⁴⁴²

Compared to their Western counterparts, the development of Futures Studies at the institutional level is relatively much slower, as far as the Muslim countries are concerned. Apart from the *Moroccan Association of Futures Studies* which has been established by Elmandjra and the *Centre of Arab Unity Studies* in Beirut, there are no

international level that consists of Muslim scholars from various disciplines to study the essence of the past *ijtihād* from various sects (*madhhab*) and to learn and find solutions for contemporary problems in accordance with the *Sharī'ah* law. He also indicates that the methodology of evaluating the past *ijtihād* should rely on the nature of the *ijtihād* – whether it is *ijtihād tarjīhī* (reasoning through choosing the opinions of the past *Mujtahidīn* based on the strength and reliability of their argument (*hujjah*) and evidence (*dalīl*)) or *ijtihād inshāi'* (reasoning through inventing new law (*hukm*) which does not exist before) in situations where freedom of thinking based on the guidance of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* are highly appreciated and without any inclination or vain to any particular view from any group (Ibid, pp: 43-4). The third methodology proposed by Al-Qardāwi towards the unity of the *Ummah* is the unity of the central leadership under a caliph or *imām* whose role is to continue the Prophet's leadership in advocating religious teachings and managing worldly affairs. In this regard, he emphasizes that the implementation in uniting the *Ummah* politically could be established through various form whether it is in the form of federation, corporatization or other suitable forms (ibid, p: 35).

other organizations which specialized in studying the future. As such, the only university that offers Futures Studies course in Masters degree is the University in Morocco. With regard to the journal publication, the only journal which specifically discusses issues from the futures perspective is *The Future of Arab* journal (*Al-Mustaqbal al-ʿArabi*) published by *The Centre of Arab Unity Studies* since 1978.⁴⁴³

In terms of the application of futures thinking in the governmental systems, the implementation of Vision 2020 by the Malaysian government since 1991 is one of the most significant models. The vision has been inspired by the former Malaysian Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad in which he has outlined nine (9) challenges in achieving the vision of Malaysia becoming a developed country in the year 2020.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴² Muhsin Khādir, 1999, 'Kaifa Nastashrif al-Mustaqbal al-ʿArabi', *al-ʿArabi* (489), pp: 133.

⁴⁴³ <http://www.caus.org.lb/subscriptionsjo.htm.m>.

⁴⁴⁴ <http://www.wawasan2020.com/vision/p2.html>, 10/01/09. The definition of the Vision 2020 and details of the challenges are as follow:

By the year 2020, Malaysia can be a united nation, with a confident Malaysian society, infused by strong moral and ethical values, living in a society that is democratic, liberal and tolerant, caring, economically just and equitable, progressive and prosperous, and in full possession of an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient. There can be no fully developed Malaysia until we have finally overcome the nine central strategic challenges that have confronted us from the moment of our birth as an independent nation.

- The first of these is the challenges of establishing a united Malaysian nation with a sense of common and shared destiny. This must be a nation at peace with itself, territorially and ethnically integrated, living in harmony and full and fair partnership, made up of one 'Bangsa Malaysia' with political loyalty and dedication to the nation.
- The second is the challenge of creating a psychologically liberated, secure, and developed Malaysian Society with faith and confidence in itself, justifiably proud of what it is, of what it has accomplished, robust enough to face all manner of adversity. This Malaysian Society must be distinguished by the pursuit of excellence, fully aware of all its potentials, psychologically subservient to none, and respected by the peoples of other nations.
- The third challenge we have always faced is that of fostering and developing a mature democratic society, practising a form of mature consensual, community-oriented Malaysian democracy that can be a model for many developing countries.
- The fourth is the challenge of establishing a fully moral and ethical society, whose citizens are strong in religious and spiritual values and imbued with the highest of ethical standards.

This effort in developing and constructing the nation as part of a comprehensive attempt in reconstructing the Muslim civilization in the future, is fully enforced and implemented by the Malaysian government.

In conjunction with this Vision 2020, the Malaysian government had also introduced the concept of “Islam *Hadhāri*” or “Civilizational Islam” in propagating the dynamic concepts of the Islamic ideals and practices in defining the national developmental processes⁴⁴⁵. Although Futures Studies is not yet being offered in any of the universities in Malaysia, early effort in introducing this subject as a transdisciplinary curriculum in the History subject for secondary schools’s curricula has been consciously made by the Ministry of Education since the year 2001.⁴⁴⁶ This

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- The fifth challenge that we have always faced is the challenge of establishing a matured, liberal and tolerant society in which Malaysians of all colours and creeds are free to practise and profess their customs, cultures and religious beliefs and yet feeling that they belong to one nation.
 - The sixth is the challenge of establishing a scientific and progressive society, a society that is innovative and forward-looking, one that is not only a consumer of technology but also a contributor to the scientific and technological civilization of the future.
 - The seventh challenge is the challenge of establishing a fully caring society and a caring culture, a social system in which society will come before self, in which the welfare of the people will revolve not around the state or the individual but around a strong and resilient family system.
 - The eighth is the challenge of ensuring an economically just society. This is a society in which there is a fair and equitable distribution of the wealth of the nation, in which there is full partnership in economic progress. Such a society cannot be in place so long as there is the identification of race with economic function, and the identification of economic backwardness with race.
 - The ninth challenge is the challenge of establishing a prosperous society, with an economy that is fully competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient.

⁴⁴⁵ See Syed Ali Tawfik Al-Attas & Ng Tieh Chuan, 2005, *Abdullah Ahmad Badawi: Revivalist of an Intellectual Tradition*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications.

⁴⁴⁶ See Nor Salleh Ngatimin, 2001, *Sejarah Untuk Tingkatan Empat* (History for Form Four). Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia. Interesting discussions on the difference between interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary occurred in *Futures* journal special issue in which Philip Balsiger explains that “...the word interdisciplinary has been used consistently to

attempt is of vital significance in creating awareness of the future among the younger generations and this awareness hopefully will be possibly directed in regenerating capable human resources in the civilizational project of reconstructing the Islamic civilization in the future. However, much are still need to be done in engaging as many individual Muslim scholars and Muslim governments as possible in incorporating futures thinking within their respective fields and countries.

denote scientific research that involves a number of disciplines. In contrast, the word transdisciplinary has not been restricted to scientific research, because it has been used since the 1970s in debates about teaching and professional practice” (Balsiger, Philip W. 2004. Supradisciplinary Research Practices: History, Objectives and Rationale. *Futures* 36(4). p: 407.

In another article, Ann Bruce and her co-authors assert that, in multidisciplinary research, each discipline works in a self-contained manner and that in interdisciplinary research, an issue is approached from a range of disciplinary perspectives integrated to provide a systematic outcome. In transdisciplinary research, however, they affirm that the focus is on the organization of knowledge around complex heterogeneous domains rather than the disciplines and subjects into which knowledge is commonly organized. (See Ann Bruce, et.al. 2004, Interdisciplinary Integration in Europe: The Case of the Fifth Framework Programme, *Futures* 36(4), pp: 457-470).

In this connection, Lawrence differentiates between the two; the interdisciplinary approaches to a “mixing of disciplines”, while transdisciplinary ones would have more to do with a “fusion of disciplines”. (Roderick J. Lawrence, Housing and Health: From Interdisciplinary Principles to Transdisciplinary Research and Practice, *Futures* 36(4), Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd. p: 487).

In the same manner, Ramadier argues that transdisciplinarity entails an articulation among disciplines, while multidisciplinary or interdisciplinarity simply implies the articulation of different types of knowledge. He proposes the expression “knowledge coherence” for the outcome of transdisciplinary research rather than “knowledge unity” which he associates with interdisciplinary research. He argues that transdisciplinarity should not simplify reality by only dealing with parts of it that are compatible at the crossing of multiple disciplinary perspectives, as is often the case with interdisciplinary research. Interestingly, he introduces the argument that transdisciplinarity is at once between disciplines, across disciplines and beyond any discipline, thus combining all the processes of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity. (Thierry Ramadier, 2004, Transdisciplinarity and Its Challenges: The Case of Urban Studies, *Futures* 36(4). pp: 423-439). These brief overviews on transdisciplinarity/multidisciplinary or interdisciplinarity depict the nature of Futures Studies that aims at an holistic understanding of the world problems. This is relevant to our discussion that the field offers a fresh outlook that break off the traditional approach within Western knowledge tradition. From the Islamic perspective, this attempt on holistic approach resembles the *tawhidic* paradigm that constitutes the Islamic worldview.

4.8 CONCLUSION

The Islamic view on future is therefore can not be understood separately from the concept of *fitrah* (human nature) and *qadar* (predestination) as it both relates three main components of human actions, that are human himself as the agent, human's free will as human potential to effect actions resulted from the manifestation of *qadar* and finally the taking place of the actions within time, that is the future time (as understood as continuously present).

In conclusion, it is evident that futures thinking is not obscure from the Islamic spirit. In fact, Islam is a future-oriented way of life. Its future conception encompasses both life – in this world and the hereafter. Therefore, from the aspect of its purposes and aims, Futures Studies could not be regarded or considered as a contradiction to Islam. Its significance in shifting the *Ummah* paradigm in attitude and actions towards achieving the Islamic vision and mission as the alternative way of life and civilization should be realized and directed effectively and strategically.

In general, we assert that the significance of Futures Studies is not widely recognized by the Muslim intellectuals, let alone the public, particularly in the Muslim world. Despite its vital role in restoring the Islamic civilization in a more systematic way, study about the future has been taken for granted. This intellectual movement pioneered by the *Ijmāli*, Sardar argues, has distinctive characteristic which differentiates them from other Muslim groups – the '*ulamā*' or the modernist scholars. They were concerned about Islam and appreciate the history and Islamic tradition and

at the same time, valued the Western ideas with critical evaluation. They looked forward to accept goodness in any systems of thought and action, and assimilate the ideas within the Islamic worldview. Their main focus was to establish the Islamic system in thought and integrated actions in which it could be the sole alternative for the present dominant system.⁴⁴⁷

The spirit that has been directed by the group, albeit in a relatively short period, is very much alive in the growing interests of independent scholars such as Tariq Ramadan. Further attempts in exploring and developing Futures Studies in the context of contemporary Islamic thought should be developed systematically, and received with open mind. The momentum of awareness regarding the fate of the *Ummah* in the future, particularly after the increasing threat unto the Muslim societies and their lands signifies the importance of this glint of intellectual movement.

Despite the zealous appeal of Islamic resurgence especially among the younger Muslim generations, the development of new intellectual discourse as an alternative approach to resolve Muslims' problems in a more directive way within the postmodern context must be taken seriously by the Muslim scholars and intellectual. Apparently, the Muslim scholars have a huge and challenging responsibility for this means that they have to work based on the foundation and paradigm guided by the early Muslim generations through the renewal process of *ijtihad* and *jihad*.

⁴⁴⁷ Ziauddin Sardar (ed), 1989, *An Early Crescent: The Future of Knowledge and Environment in Islam*. London: Mansell Publishing Limited, p: 111.

CHAPTER V

FUTURES STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THOUGHT: ZIAUDDIN SARDAR AND MAHDI ELMANDJRA

5.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, we attempt to analyze the thoughts of two Muslim scholars of our time, Ziauddin Sardar and Mahdi Elmandjra, whose works in the field of Futures Studies have been internationally recognized. The fact that there are not so many Muslim futurists today depicts on one hand, the truth of how far Muslims have been left behind by other societies, particularly Western societies and on the other, one of the very reasons of their present and continuous predicament.⁴⁴⁸

This chapter will firstly discuss the life and works of the scholars as to understand the general development and the context of their thoughts. The discussion on their life and works is presented as the set up of their intellectual frameworks which affect the whole of the scholars' thoughts. Consequently, both Sardar and Elmandjra's thoughts will be studied based upon thematical aspects of their futuristic thinking pertaining to significant issues within contemporary Islamic discussions. These issues have been selected consciously for their conspicuous visibility throughout the scholars'

⁴⁴⁸ According to Sardar, there are only three Muslim futurists actively involved in the study of the future – himself, Sohail Inayatullah and Elmandjra (an interview with Sardar on 26th June 2005 at his house, 1 Orchard Road, London). By Muslim futurists, he means those who study the future in a specific way with a specific exposure to its methodologies, techniques and discussions.

writings and also their utmost significance to the understanding of the present problems facing contemporary Muslim societies.

However, due to our constrictions, we would investigate all those thematical aspects of their works substantially under three different headlines which sought to answer a set of significant questions such as, what is the scholars futures' idealism; what are their responses to contemporary challenges; and what are their views on science and technology. In terms of structure, this chapter will firstly look at the scholars' background and context and followed by their major thoughts – this will be carried out separately between both scholars; firstly by discussing Sardar, and consequently by Elmandjra.

Having mentioned the purpose, methodology and structure of this chapter, it is crucial to emphasize here that both scholars' views and ideas will be scrutinised based upon their own terms and categories, and will be analysed and criticized comparatively. This comparison is crucial to understand the similarities and differences between these two scholars and seek to find their substantive contributions to the contemporary Islamic thought in particular and contemporary thought in general.

5.2 ZIAUDDIN SARDAR: BACKGROUND AND THOUGHTS

5.2.1 SARDAR: LIFE AND WORKS

Ziauddin Sardar was born on 31 October 1951 in Dipalpur, Northern Pakistan. As a young boy, he migrated to London, Britain, following his father who had established a foothold there a few years before. He says:

I grew up questioning most things – an appropriate by-product, you might say, of my birth and times. I was born in shifting circumstances in the rural backwater of the Punjab. The village of my birth was, at the time, a contested area. Forceful efforts were being made to determine where a new frontier should be drawn to separate parts of my heritage that had previously been a complex whole....Partition of India was a cause that involved me in a complex history of contentious identities long before I was born. Partition was about attempts to distil what I should regard as my heritage into some new singular and potent essence. But no sooner had the international frontier across the subcontinent been settled and new identities begun to assert themselves than my family relocated. My village was confirmed as part of Pakistan, which was defined by Muslim identity and engaged in nation-building. But meanwhile my father was recruited to help rebuild the very nation whose parting gift as the Empire retreated was the fracturing of the subcontinent. He left my mother and his three children back home in Pakistan while he joined the ranks of workers invited to help reconstruct Britain's war-ravaged economy. He established himself in his job at a car factory and found a small flat in a ramshackle terraced street before summoning the family to join him. We had to begin the process of defining our identity all over again.⁴⁴⁹

This was the socio-political context which influenced and shaped his identity. As a child, his new environment put him in constant struggle to adapt to all kinds of roles faced by the immigrant families of his time – the whole tedious process of settling down

⁴⁴⁹ Ziauddin Sardar, 2004, *Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of a Sceptical Muslim*, Granta Books, London, pp: 21-22.

and setting up “the infrastructure of continuity and belonging”⁴⁵⁰. As he said, “Being and becoming a Muslim, shaping an identity, was a contested arena wherever I lived, in London or in a divided India ‘back home.’”⁴⁵¹ He quickly learned “to master the rules of the new game plan of survival”. His family still has this *mushaira* (poetry recitals gathering) at their house and thus provides a literature-loving surrounding. All these mixed up in his personality – a kind of amalgamator of different cultures⁴⁵² – of being British by geography and environment on one hand, and of being Asian/Pakistani/Muslim by origin, culture, tradition and belief on the other. It could be said that the idea of future always in his mind because of his own experience where struggling is part of his life.⁴⁵³

During his adolescence period, he established an Islamic Society at his school, the Brook House Secondary Modern School in Clapton Road which brought him into contact with FOSIS – the Federation of Students Islamic Society in the United Kingdom and Eire⁴⁵⁴ - and hence developed his activism towards important issues and events related to the Muslim, therefore exposed him with strong awareness about the Muslim malaise. This is the crucial formative period of his intellectualism and activism which tremendously surrounded by various events happening in the Muslim world – 1970s were the era where some transformations staggering the Muslim societies after gaining independence from colonization and the consequent development programs introduced by the governments which turned out to be a chain of failures.

⁴⁵⁰ Ibid, p:22. What he meant here is the set up of *halāl* meat shops and convenient stores that sells spices and other products of Muslim food.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² Ibid, p:23.

⁴⁵³ Interview with Sardar (23rd June 2005, 1 Orchard Road, Edgware, London)

⁴⁵⁴ Ziauddin Sardar, 2004, *Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of a Sceptical Muslim*, Granta Books, London, pp: 23-24.

He studied physics and information science at the City University in London. Although receiving most of his formal education in so-called ‘secular’ disciplines, he was a thirsty seeker of truth of his religion, and that has brought him to various experimental journeys within Islamic movements, including the Sufi’s spiritual path, and also, most notably, his ‘accidental and brief’ involvement in Jamaat Tablighi. He also read classical disciplines for several years through an informal group discussion (*usrah*) with Jaffar Sheikh Idris and according to him, this experience has immensely exposed him to classical Islamic knowledge.⁴⁵⁵ All these have deeply influenced the inculcation of a compassionate Muslim character in his personality. For Sardar, tradition is dynamic, and not a static or obsolete outlook. Hence, he consummately demur those who always look at the past in an apologetic way. He asserts that:

....I am not like most Muslims. I do not see Islam as a set of rituals, a list of do’s and dont’s, a code of rigid, unchanging regulations and laws. For me Islam is not just a religion; it is a worldview based on a matrix of values and concepts. These values provide a framework within which I seek answers to some questions that constantly agitate my existence...And this is what I do: I invariably strive in all my futures work for both theoretical and practical answers to these questions.⁴⁵⁶

As information scientist, he had experience working at the Hajj Research Centre of King Abdul Aziz University, where he, with a group of other scholars developed a simulation model for the performance of the pilgrimage to Mecca. He simultaneously wrote books and worked on evenings as a journalist. After leaving Saudi Arabia, he worked for scientific periodicals such as *Nature* and *New Scientist*, before joining television as a reporter. After this, he became the consulting editor of *Inquiry*, a Muslim

⁴⁵⁵ Ziauddin Sardar, 2004, *Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of a Sceptical Muslim*, Granta Books, London, pp:1-19; then pp:40-84.

⁴⁵⁶ Ziauddin Sardar, 1996, Natural Born Futurist, *Futures* 28(6), pp. 665.

magazine. He set up the “Centre for Future Studies at the East-West University” in Chicago. Between 1994 and 1998, he was a Visiting Professor of science and technology policy at the Middlesex University.⁴⁵⁷

As an internationally renowned futurist, Sardar is considered to be an expert on Islamic science and a pioneering thinker and writer on the future of Islam in contemporary era. He has published more than 40 books, and over 200 learned papers, articles, essays, and reviews, and has been described as “one of the finest intellectuals on the planet”.⁴⁵⁸ His books include *The Future of Muslim Civilization; Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to Come; Information and the Muslim World; Explorations in Islamic Science; The Touch of Midas: Science, Values and the Environment in Islam and the West; The Revenge of Athena: Science, Exploitation and the Third World; Distorted Imagination: Lessons from the Rushdie Affair; Barbaric Other: A Manifesto on Western Racism; Cyberfutures; Postmodernism and the Other*, and *Orientalism*. He has also published a number of popular, illustrated, and ‘beginners’ text including *Introducing Muhammad, Introducing Cultural Studies, Introducing Chaos* and *Introducing Mathematics*.⁴⁵⁹

He was also profiled by the CNN programme, “*Future Watch*”, and was on the editorial board of several journals, including *Third Text* and *Social Epistemology*. His articles and reviews have appeared in *The Independent, The Times, The Herald* (Glasgow), *Washington Post, Geographical Magazines, New Statesman* and numerous

⁴⁵⁷ www.ziauddinsardar.com/10/01/09.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid.

other periodicals. He has written and presented a number of television programmes including “*Eastern Eye*” and “*Islamic Conversations*” for Channel 4 and “*Encounters with Islam*” for the BBC. Currently, he is the editor of *Futures*, the prestigious monthly journal of policy, planning and futures studies. He also writes a regular column on science for the British political weekly, *New Statesman*.⁴⁶⁰

Throughout his intellectual and professional life, he has been designated to various academic and non-academic appointments for his outstanding scholarship, such as fellowships for the World Future Studies Federation, the World Academy of Art and Science, the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies and The Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacturing and Commerce (RSA)⁴⁶¹ and also memberships in the New York Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Information Scientist, the National Union of Journalists, the Producers Alliance for Cinema and Television (PACT), the Association of Cinematographers and Allied Technicians (ACTT) and the Association of British Science Writers.⁴⁶²

⁴⁶⁰ www.ziauddinsardar.com/10/01/09.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid.

⁴⁶² Ibid. In analyzing Sardar’s unique and significant contribution to contemporary Islamic Thought, Sohail Inayatullah and Gail Boxwell acknowledge that “...he is the first to create an alternative future for Islam, and also to explore the role and impact of modern science and technology in the Muslim world; the first to discuss the importance of information and communication technologies for Muslim societies; the first – and so far the only one – to produce a modern classification for Islam; amongst the first to respond to the problem of postmodernism and also to warn that the future is rapidly being colonised. In addition, he also contributed to initiate a number of new discourses in Islamic thought, such as the discourses of Islamic futures and Islamic science and a spirited critic of the discourse of ‘Islamization of knowledge’. All of these endeavours are part of the same project of rescuing Muslim civilization from its long decline and subjugation by, and assimilation into, the West.” (Sohail Inayatullah & Gail Boxwell (eds), 2003, *Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures: A Ziauddin Sardar Reader*, London: Pluto Press, pp: 2-3). This view however, is the view of the authors and not the present researcher as can be seen for instance in page 134.

According to Parvez Manzoor, Sardar's project has two main components, which he mentions both as:

The main contribution of his thought has been the contemporisation of the Muslim predicament in terms of intellectual approach. Islam is not merely a religious culture, Sardar's reasoning implies, it is also a scientific one. Modern Muslims need not, as has been their wont, discuss their plight in medieval, scholastic terminology concentrating only on the moral and metaphysical malaise of modern civilisation. No, Sardar shows, Muslim concerns for more immediate and concrete issues that stem from the encroachment of their culture by the two most potent instruments of change, contemporary science and technology, require...Muslim intellectuals to produce an Islamically motivated critique of contemporary thought. Since Islam, for a Muslim is the ultimate arbiter of right and wrong – in terms of thought as well as action – modernism is amenable to Islamic thought as an indigenous intellectual and moral problem. Rather than harmonising Islamic thought with Western norms and values, Sardar reverses the normal perspective and scrutinises all modern scientific culture through the discriminatory eye of a Muslim. The result is not only a powerful criticism of the epistemology of modern science, but an almost total absence of apology – the bane of westernised Muslim intellectual. There is no trace of naïve and even pathetic acceptance of alien norms and institutions by justifying them as 'Islamic', but the ultimate Islamic imperative of *Amr bi'l-Ma'ruf wa al-Nahy al-Munkar*, constructed here as the acceptance of everything good and rejection of everything evil, comes to the fore.⁴⁶³

Sardar's project of the contemporisation of Muslims predicament as identified by Manzoor is done by offering a rather scientific analysis on change and its two most important instruments - science and technology. This is done within futuristic paradigm that views Islam as the basis of his critique on contemporary thought. The main themes of his thoughts is discussed in the next part of our study.

⁴⁶³ S.Parvez Manzoor, 'Science and technology', *Muslim World Book Review*, 3(2), pp.49-52, 1983, quoted in Sohail Inayatullah and Gail Boxwell (ed.), 2003, *Islam, Postmodernism and Other Futures: A Ziauddin Sardar Reader*, London: Pluto Press, p: 3.

5.2.2 MAIN THEMES IN SARDAR'S THOUGHTS

According to Inayatullah, Sardar's focus of discussion on future can be categorized into three crucial themes, namely the future of Muslim or Islamic civilization, Islamic science and the relation between Islam and postmodernism. In general, Sardar perceives the question of the future of Islamic civilization from a civilizational approach, whereby its reconstruction and restoration processes should be through a future-oriented outlook and methodologies. The issue of Islamic science on the other hand, is perceived from the perspective of developing a distinct Islamic science or Islamic science as its own entity based upon its own paradigms and worldview, whereas the question of postmodernism, which he regards - and partly true to its literal connotation - as an extension of modernism, is perceived through dichotomic method in which the Islamic worldview is posed vis-à-vis the Western worldview.⁴⁶⁴

5.2.2.1 Futures' Idealism - The Reconstruction of Muslim Civilization

In his book, *The Future Of Muslim Civilization*, Sardar indicated that Muslim civilization would remain "...like a stagnant lake – full only of potential resources – unless the Muslim concern about their own future and strive to grasp it."⁴⁶⁵ He stressed that Muslims have two choices of future – they could have an extended future which basically a linear extension of their present backward and colonized situation (*aimless*

⁴⁶⁴Sohail Inayatullah, 1998, 'Exploring the Futures of the Ummah: A Review of Simulation Models and Approaches to the Study of Alternative Futures', *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences* 15(1): 1-30.

⁴⁶⁵Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, p: 11.

future); or, they could have a brighter future, if not a vibrant one, provided that they “plan constructively and act with foresight” (*planned future*).⁴⁶⁶

In this regard, Muslims must change their attitude towards their own religion and start planning and work very hard to change the course of their *qadar*. If they choose the first, their very own survival will become crucial for nothing will change their present condition unless they themselves change it; but if they choose the second, they need to plan and think ahead – and they must start planning from now. Following the second choice, the only appropriate way is then to start the process of restoring their civilizational values, and this responsibility must be shouldered by every individual Muslim, especially the Muslim intellectuals as the *Ummah*'s guardian.

According to Sardar, this new Islamic Alternative Futures must emerge from the worldview and cultural milieu of the Muslim civilization itself. In response to this need for alternative futures for Islamic civilization, he therefore proposed the ‘**Project ‘Umrān,**’ a master plan that outlined the strategies toward achieving the regeneration of the Islamic civilization. He asserts that the term *‘umrān* was used by Ibn Khaldun to explain “a dynamic, thriving and operational civilization.”⁴⁶⁷ Figure 5.1 shows the graphic outline of the project:

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid, p:3.

⁴⁶⁷ Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, p: 127.

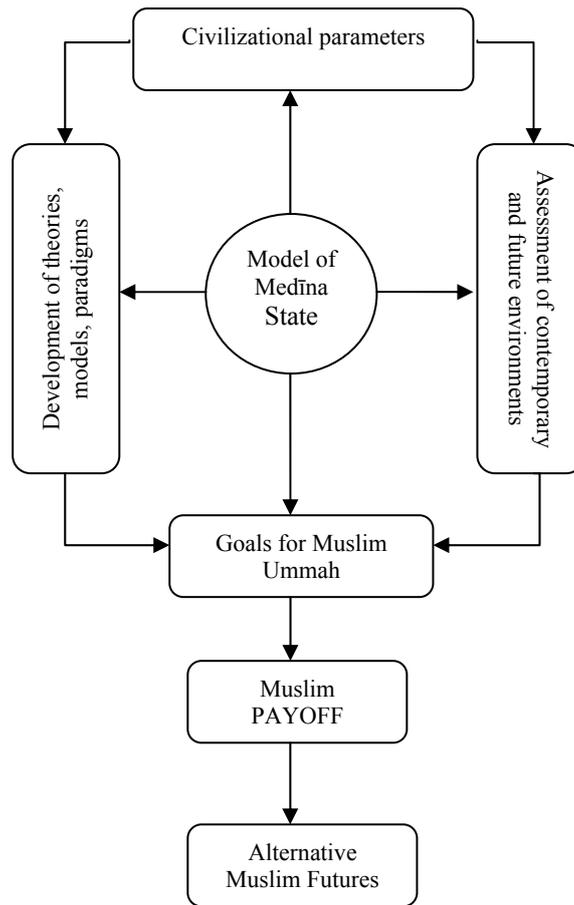


Figure 5.1 Project 'Umrān
Source: *The Future of Muslim Civilization*⁴⁶⁸

In summarising the main components of the Project 'Umrān as outlined in Figure 5.1, Sardar explains the processes as follow:

- (1) The articulation of the Model of the Medīna State;
- (2) The articulation of civilizational parameters of Islam;
- (3) The generation of theories, models and paradigms based on (1) and (2) above;
- (4) A realistic assessment of contemporary environment and estimation of possible future environment;
- (5) The articulation of goals from the Muslim *Ummah*;

⁴⁶⁸Ibid, p: 134.

- (6) The development of Muslim PAYOFF – Plans and Assessment to Yield Options for the Future; and
- (7) Continuous reappraisal of alternative Muslim futures derived from (1)-(6) above.⁴⁶⁹

Through this civilizational project, which specifically aims to “redevelop the sense of self-determined destiny, to enable us to make better decisions and to set up standards of performance vis-à-vis the Medīna State model,”⁴⁷⁰ Sardar attempts to direct the reconstruction process of the Muslim civilization in the framework of what he called as “the *Ummah* state” based on the model of the Medīnan society established by the Prophet (p.b.u.h).⁴⁷¹ However, he stresses that this project is not conclusive in its means and methods – instead, it provides a “...conceptual maps and operational plans for alternative Muslim futures.”⁴⁷² As he mentioned it clearly: “...planning is about preparing blue prints, but it is not to be rigid; they could be evolved continuously and modified and updated.”⁴⁷³ Therefore **Project ‘Umrān** is a conceptual schema on the processes of planning and creating alternative future for Muslims. It is not an ideal concept of a particular future society as discussed by Toffler or Bell in our previous chapter. Thus, the concept of ideal society that is based upon the Prophet’s Medīna is

⁴⁶⁹Ibid, pp: 133-134.

⁴⁷⁰Ibid, p: 134.

⁴⁷¹Ziauddin Sardar, 1985, *Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to Come*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., pp: 52-3. In discussing the concept of *Ummah*, Fuller asserts that Islam from the outset forwarded a bold and progressive idea: “...that tribalism and blood ties did not constitute a healthy basis for establishment of states, governance, or policy. Islam sought to transcend ethnicity in the name of a universal ideal of equality within a body of faith. Many would argue today that Islam is still fighting remnants of the tribal mentality that so hinder good governance in most of the Muslim world today. The umma is the vision. Thus the umma as an ideal totally transcends the nation state: its spiritual unity is a constant goal, even if never to be fully attained in political form. The umma is blessed by God; the nation-state is not”(Graham E. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, 2004, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, p:19).

⁴⁷²Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, p:135.

⁴⁷³Ibid, p:142.

ambiguous as the description of its characteristics is left unanswered, although he briefly described the concept of the *Ummah* state which will be discussed later in this chapter.

The modus operandi of such a programmatic approach outlined in the **Project** *‘Umrān* evolved from the combination process of forward looking and careful planning, and Sardar in this regard, suggests that it could be carried out through different approaches: the first approach is the development of research and methodological system which he called as the **Warrd System**.⁴⁷⁴ This system would aim to enhance the process of reasoning (*ijtihād*) in knowledge and thought and regenerate the function of *Shari‘ah* as a **problem solving methodology**. It would also commission an intellectual tool and mechanism to produce *ijtihād*. The whole process from the articulation of the Medīnan model to the assessment of contemporary and possible future environment (step 1-4 of the project) could only be implemented through a concerted effort by a research body or institution (as Sardar coined it as *institutionalized ijtihād* where traditional *‘ulamā’* and modern Muslim scholars can work together for the benefit of the *Ummah*).⁴⁷⁵ Figure 5.2 demonstrates the **Warrd System**:

⁴⁷⁴ Sardar used this term as an analogy of a rose-cycle which is the main component of the system [*warrd* is an Arabic word for rose or petal]. As Sardar explained it: “...The Warrd system is a holistic model of research and depend on detailed conceptual studies, relying on *qiyas* for operation and on *ijma* for acceptance of its results. At the centre of the system is the Absolute Reference Frame (ARF) [that is the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah*]...” (Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, p:169).

⁴⁷⁵ Ibid, pp:177-8. For Sardar, the *Warrd System* is a participatory system of research requiring an interdisciplinary team of Muslim scholars and intellectuals of whom he called as “the modern” and “the traditional” ones; this proposal is also propounded by Tariq Ramadan when he stresses that the critical effort of *ijtihād* could not be the work only of the *‘ulamā’* or those who specialised in law and jurisprudence. He therefore suggested that the promotion of councils that would bring together the experts from various fields, including the *‘ulamā’* is crucial to formulate legal positions in step with our time. On the level of political involvement, he further emphasizes, it is for the Muslim communities in each country to open up an internal

vision for the Muslim system. This vision should consist of long-range and medium-range visions as well as its short-range missions. The third approach of the project is through the planning process for Muslim system. Likewise, it should consist of long-range, medium-range and short-range planning.⁴⁷⁸ All the approaches discussed in great detail by Sardar are attempts to effecting desirable changes within the Muslim societies in the process of their movement towards a better future.⁴⁷⁹

That future idealism is not uniquely Sardar's intellectual characteristic should be fairly recognized: in fact, the notion of Islam's 'social utopia' of reclaiming the glory of the Islamic empire has begun since the dismemberment of the last Muslim ruling

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- (e) A dynamic description of the mix;
 - (f) Step 1: generation of patterns and paradigms by analogy with the Absolute Reference Frame (ARF). This is achieved by drawing historical parallels.
Step 2: development of a terminology which must evolve from the ARF; and description of paradigms derived in Step 1 using this terminology.
Step 3: development of a symbolic language, if necessary.
Step 4: manipulation of concept fields to construct coherent models; filtration of implausible segments of the model;
 - (g) Refinement of the model;
 - (h) A description of the existing physical and social setting into which the model has to be introduced, including evaluation of available human, intellectual, physical, natural, financial, informational and organizational resources;
 - (i) Formulation of strategies and programmes by which the model is to be introduced into the available framework;
 - (j) Representation of the results – models and the programmes to Muslim scholars for ijma;
 - (k) If the results are accepted, operational systems are set up and detailed plans are made for implementation of the programme;
 - (l) If the results were rejected, the concept study must be reformulated for another attempt (Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, p:177).

⁴⁷⁸Detailed discussions pertaining to formation of visions and planning processes have been done meticulously in Sardar's *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, 1988, pp:138-161 and pp:238-255.

⁴⁷⁹ An interesting study on socio-historical changes of the human societies and civilizations including the Muslim societies can be found in the works of Mālek Bennabi, the late Algerian scholar. According to Bennabi, change is a natural cause that can be found in every nature system. Hence the survival of the species, including human species depend on their ability and capability to adapt and adjust themselves to changes. Civilization, as a natural consequences of human advancement in thinking and doing, also must experience some kind of changes throughout its various phases of development (Mālek Bennabi, 1998b, *On the Origins of Human Society* (trans. Mohamed Tāhir El-Mesāwi), Kuala Lumpur: The Open Press, p: 5).

dynasty, the Ottoman Empire.⁴⁸⁰ Efforts to regain the solidarity of the Muslim *Ummah* – which has been preserved for more than 1,300 years (though not always in its perfect condition) through the feudal and royal system – have been continuously carried out by Muslim leaders and intellectuals for long time until recently. Such efforts – like Afghāni’s Pan Islamism movement; the establishment of two Islamic state, Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran – both represent the *Sunni* and *Shī‘i* models of modern interpretation of the Medīna state; and also, most importantly at the *Ummah* level, the formation and establishment of the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) which ideally the “reincarnation” of of the Islamic empire of the past – all these have evidently demonstrated that genuine concern about the future of Islam and its *Ummah* had never ceased in Muslim mind for any reason, despite their continuous failures and setbacks in a few, if not most, of the precedent experimentations.

Notwithstanding, Sardar’s future idealism could be appreciated for its explicit combination of theoretical and practical approach – which aims largely to assisting the policy making process. The theoretical aspect of his future idealism can be found in his discussion on the conceptual model of the style and fact of the Medīnan society, whereas its practical aspects are found in the programmatic proposal through **Project ‘Umrān**, the **Warrd System** and planning processes. This methodology in combining both theoretical and practical approaches of studying the Muslim futures is his unique

⁴⁸⁰ According to Reinhard Schulze in the Introduction to his book *A Modern History of the Islamic World* (2002), the fights for attaining a ‘social utopia’ by the Islamic movement groups such as the Muslim Brothers and the Algerian FIS were conspicuous during 1970s and 1980s, and Khomeini’s revolution in Iran was one of the best typified achievement. However, Schulze argues that the drafting of such social utopias went out of fashion by the end of the 1980s, and new requirement of dealing with globalization has brought ethical conservatism among classical Islamism, and also increasing concern towards culture and civilization as term of identity, thus vanquishing all ideological utopias. (Reinhard Schulze, London: I.B Tauris Publishers, pp:xii-xiv).

contribution to the general discourse within contemporary Islam, and also to the study of future in general.

Despite the glaring benefit of his programmatic proposal in resolving the *Ummah*'s problems, Sardar claims that it hardly received any desirable attention from the *Ummah*, particularly its leaders and scholars. In fact, he argued that there were not so many improvements in terms of future awareness, let alone in the field of Futures Studies within the Islamic circle. He claimed that *The Future of Muslim Civilization* remained the first and the only systematic study regarding the Islamic futures. However, he acknowledged that there are positive developments elsewhere such as Malaysia's Vision 2020 and also the introduction of future awareness in its secondary schools for the younger generation; the Islamic Development Bank's usage of future techniques; and also the efforts of the Progressive Muslims and Islam21.⁴⁸¹ In his other observation,

⁴⁸¹ In the interview with Ziauddin Sardar, 23rd June 2005 (at his house 1 Orchard Road, Edgware, London). The Progressive Muslims and Islam21 are the proponent of liberal ideas in Islam. According to Bu'lent Aras, Liberal Islam shows strong inclination towards liberal reforms and seek for a freer society. In further detail, he explicates that: "...Liberal Islam pays special attention to keeping religion separate from politics, promoting democracy and multi-party politics, providing religious and cultural tolerance, preserving women's rights, freedom of thought and expression, internalizing human rights and enhancing political participation." (Bu'lent Aras, 'The Future of Liberal Islam: Turkish Islam's Moderate Face', *Futures* 36 (2004), Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd., p:1035). Although Aras indicates that the liberal group is a marginal group within Muslim societies, he believes that it will become at the mainstream development within the Islamic world in the near future, probably, one of the main movements within Islam. Liberal Islam is, he asserts, a constitution of an evolutionary process of "...a number of different factors that combined in a specific context and these factors, among others, are the socio-cultural structure of the regional societies, interpretation of Islamic teachings and daily practices of religious faith." (Ibid, p: 1039-40). In addition, he argues that "...a number of recent developments also contributed to this trend, such as the rise of secular education, the increasing use of international communication and travel opportunities, and the failure of dogmatic interpretations of Islam."(Ibid, p: 1041). Although Sardar seems to acknowledge the liberal movement such as the Progressive Muslims and Islam21, he clearly differentiates himself in terms of his recognition on the authority of the Qur'an and the *Sunnah* as the Absolute Reference Framework (ARF), whereas Liberal Islam accepts the superiority of reason and human freedom as such. (See Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*,

he wrote⁴⁸² about the interesting developments that he claimed are taking place in the Muslim world including the **Project Islam *Hadhāri***⁴⁸³ which has been introduced by the Malaysian government. He believes that in one way, the **Project Islam *Hadhāri*** depicts

Kuala Lumpur:Pelanduk Publications on the authority of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* as the Absolute Reference Framework (ARF), p: 177).

⁴⁸² Ziauddin Sardar, *Can Islam Change?* New Statesman, 13th September 2004.

⁴⁸³ In an article entitled 'Islam Hadhari: Concept and Prospect', Mohamed Sharif Bashir writes: "According to Badawi [the Malaysian Prime Minister], Islam *Hadhāri*, or civilizational and comprehensive Islam, is not an inclusive concept as it also emphasizes the importance of progress—with an Islamic perspective—in the economic, social, and political fields. It emphasizes the need for balanced development, which covers both physical and spiritual development. Hence, Badawi proposes a holistic development approach for Malaysia. This means a shift in development approach from a "secular paradigm" to a "*tawheed* paradigm," which emphasizes developing a thinking society, social harmony, and economic progress." (<http://www.islamonline.net/english/Contemporary/2005/03/article01.shtml>, 13/01/09). He further writes that: "...Islam Hadhari is an effort to bring the Ummah back to basics, back to the fundamentals, as prescribed in the Qur'an and the Hadith, that form the foundation of Islamic civilization. Badawi explains that Islam Hadhari is merely an approach to foster an Islamic civilization built upon the noble values and ideals of Islam. This approach is also inspired by the Malaysian Muslims' firm belief that the tide of radicalism and extremism can be checked and reversed with good governance, healthy democratic practices, and employment of the citizenry through education, as well as equitable sharing of the benefits of economic growth. These principles have been formulated to ensure that the implementation and approach does not cause anxiety among any group in this multiracial and multi-religious country. These principles have been devised to empower Muslims to face the global challenges of today. Islam Hadhari is complete and comprehensive, with an emphasis on the development of an economy and civilization capable of building the Muslim Ummah's competitiveness." (Ibid).

Bashir then describes the main objectives of Project Islam Hadhāri in his own words as follow: "(1) Restoring moderation and embracing the mainstream, which will help strengthen both the people and the state. (2) Valuing good character, which should be central to the society in order to help it become a role model for both the Ummah and humanity as a whole. (3) Adopting seriousness and accountability in dealing with society's main undertakings. (4) Building all social relations upon trust and good morals. (5) Respecting law and order. (6) Cherishing unity, cooperation, and solidarity. (7) Implementing genuine Islamic teachings and realizing the objectives of the Shari'ah. (8) Empowering the state to be in a leading position, not feeble and weak-willed." (Ibid). Moreover, Islam Hadhari aims to achieve ten main principles:

1. Faith and piety in Allah
2. A just and trustworthy government
3. A free and independent People
4. Mastery of knowledge
5. Balanced and comprehensive economic development
6. A good quality of life
7. Protection of the rights of minority groups and women
8. Cultural and moral integrity
9. Safeguarding the environment
10. Strong defenses (<http://www.pmo.gov.my/islamhadhari/index.php>, 13/01/09)

his **Project ‘Umrān** – the terms *‘umrān* and *hadhāri* were introduced and used by Ibn Khaldūn in his *Muqaddimah*. Assessing both projects, he perceived **Project Islam Haḍāri** as a top-down approach which might not be possible to implement in other Muslim countries such as Indonesia (which he said should be bottom-up) – thus, the implementation of the ideational project must depend on the nature of the country. Other example of a top-down approach is Morocco. Nevertheless, this **Project Islam Haḍāri** serves as a model in developing a systematic and futuristic approach in the regeneration process of Muslim civilization. However he regards **Project ‘Umrān** as much broader than **Project Islam Haḍāri** in a way it urges Muslims to rethink Islam – finding new meaning of *Sharī‘ah* and free it from its historical baggage. He is positive that if the current developments continue, then significant changes and improvements in the Muslim world will hopefully occur within 4-5 years.⁴⁸⁴

Consequently, for Sardar, the underlying force in effecting changes is to rethinking Islam - which is what he aims through his **Project ‘Umrān**. Following this robust assertion to rethinking Islam, Sardar has paid special attention to *Sharī‘ah* and its role in the Muslim societies. It is obvious that his concern about *Sharī‘ah* has been a natural consequence of his own agitation towards the *Ummah* within which the rule of the *Sharī‘ah* should be established. However, he found that there is something in *Sharī‘ah* that disturbed him such as “...its oppressive treatment of women and minorities, its emphasis on extreme punishments, and its fixation with ossified jurisprudence.” He also believes that Muslims have regarded *Sharī‘ah* as an equation for Islam, hence the notion that “...Islam is the *Sharī‘ah* and the *Sharī‘ah* is Islam” reigns

⁴⁸⁴ Interview with Ziauddin Sardar, 23rd June 2005.

in many, if not all Muslims.⁴⁸⁵ This, Sardar maintains, is a false and illusory equation that caused damage to both Islam and *Shari'ah*. He argues that:

Most Muslims consider the *Shari'ah* to be divine. But there is nothing divine about the *Shari'ah*...The only thing that can legitimately be described as divine in Islam is the Qur'ān. The *Shari'ah* is a human construction; an attempt to understand the divine will in a particular context – and that context happens to be eighth-century Muslim society. We need to understand the *Shari'ah* in our own context; and reconstruct it from the first principles⁴⁸⁶.

The very reason for this problem, according to Sardar, lies in the way Muslims understand (or misunderstood) the *Sunnah* as an operational aspect of the Divine Will. He considers that the sacralization of the *Sunnah* disregard the fact that it was the product of the Prophet's time. Therefore he explains that:

...many things in the Prophet did were a product of his times. I do not regard them as an essential part of the *Sunnah*. I think the *Sunnah* is largely located in the spirit he promoted. His spirit of generosity, love and tolerance, his insistence on forgiving those who had persecuted and oppressed him, the respect and devotion he showed to the elderly, the children and marginalized in the society, his dedication to inquiry, knowledge and criticism – that is the tradition we ought to be following.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁵ Ziauddin Sardar, 2004, *Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of A Sceptical Muslim*. London: Granta Books, p: 217.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid, p:238.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid, p:224.

Sardar views that the divination⁴⁸⁸ and sacralization of *Shari'ah* and *Sunnah* have reduced the great legacy of Islamic thought and learning to a fetish with the Prophet's physical appearance. Consequently, the symbolization of Islam becomes the norm where Islam is simply associated with certain codes of practice. This rigid interpretation of Islam, according to Sardar, signifies "an exclusivist notion of purity" and produces "...not men of education and learning, but narrow-minded bigots absolutely certain about their way was the only right way."⁴⁸⁹ The absolute certainties about what defines Islam and Muslim have tremendous effect onto the *Ummah* – as Sardar bluntly asserts:

...the method of the *Shari'ah* does not encourage bold, innovative and speculative thought. Its preoccupation with existentially concrete 'dos' and 'don'ts' stifles creative imagination, and as consequence, makes *Shari'ah*-minded individuals and cultures conservative and backward-looking in their general outlook on life. Far from being an enterprise of liberation, it had become a tool of oppression.⁴⁹⁰

The present treatment of *Shari'ah* in which Sardar views as having become "a tool of oppression" needs to be changed. He firmly concludes that Muslims are in dire need of reforming the *Shari'ah*, which actually amounts to reformulating Islam itself, in order to attain a humane earthly paradise. He genuinely believes that the journey towards paradise required socially constructed *Shari'ah* to be rethought and reframed. This means that Muslim individuals and communities have to claim their right to

⁴⁸⁸ In connection to this, Arkoun argues that: "The scholarly impact of these disciplines [usūl al-dīn and usūl al-fiqh] on religious perceptions of what is called the Divine Law (shari'ah), has been confused with the regulations collected in the form of bodies of law (*majmu'āt fihiyya*), resulting in the present fundamentalist discourse coupled with the political activism of the so-called fundamentalist movements, not only in Islam but in several political movements, religious and secular" (Mohammed Arkoun, 2002, *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought*, London: Saqi Books & the Institute of Ismaili Studies, p:31).

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid, p: 224.

⁴⁹⁰ Ibid, p: 246.

reinterpret their religious texts according to their own time and context. For him, in reality, the *Shari'ah* is nothing more than a set of principles, a framework of values that provides Muslims societies with guidance, but these are not a static or indeed *a priori* given, but are dynamically derived within changing contexts. In other words, *Shari'ah* must become and treated as a dynamic problem-solving tool or methodology, not just 'law'. He also urges that the duty to reinterpret the basic sources of Islam belongs to each individual Muslim – thus acknowledging every Muslim as his own interpreter who exert himself constantly and continuously to gain a fresh understanding of Islam.⁴⁹¹

Muslim must now grasp the nettle and reformulate the *Shari'ah*. As the central core of Islam, no reform is possible without changing the *Shari'ah*. The evidence that Islam is now undergoing serious reform comes from the fact that the very idea that the *Shari'ah* is immutable and cannot be changed is now being widely challenged.⁴⁹²

While we acknowledge very dearly about the urgent need for an Islamic reform from contemporary perspective, we found that this call can be hazardous and ensnared in the deconstructionist trap. Sardar constantly emphasizes that Islam and *Shari'ah* must be rebuilt brick by brick, or epoch by epoch from the first principles and this raised assumptions of rebranding or rebuilding a new 'Islam' and hence, opens to the question of to what extent religion, particularly Islam, should be intervened by human's hand? This is the underlying dilemma of the issue of 'deconstruction'⁴⁹³ or 'reconstruction' of Islam and hence, its operational implementation, *Shari'ah*. And this is exactly the

⁴⁹¹ Ziauddin Sardar, 2004, *Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of A Sceptical Muslim*. London: Granta Books, p: 248; also look in *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, 1988, Preface and *Islamic Futures: The Shape of Ideas to Come*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd.

⁴⁹² Ziauddin Sardar, 2006, *What Do Muslims Believe*, London: Granta Books, p:105.

⁴⁹³ The school of deconstruction was originated by Jacques Derrida, a French philosopher who attempts a strategy of analysis that focuses on language. This method has been applied to literature, linguistics, philosophy, law and architecture (Encarta Encyclopaedia, <http://www.encyarta.msn.com>, 21/12/08).

problem that need to be tackled cautiously when dealing with any call to reform *Shari'ah* or Islam.

There is a huge difference between *Shari'ah* as divine law and *fiqh* as human understanding which is subject to change and rereading. As Kamali clearly demonstrates:

Islamic law originates in two major sources: divine revelation (*wahy*) and human reason (*aql*). This dual identity of Islamic law is reflected in its two Arabic designations, *Shari'ah* and *fiqh*. *Shari'ah* bears a stronger affinity with revelation, whereas *fiqh* is mainly the product of human reason. *Shari'ah* literally means “the right path” or “guide”, whereas *fiqh* refers to human understanding and knowledge. The divine *Shari'ah* thus indicates the path to righteousness; reason discovers the *Shari'ah* and relates its general directives to the quest for finding solutions to particular or unprecedented issues. Because *Shari'ah* is mainly contained in divine revelation (that is, the Qur’ān and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad of the *Sunna*), it is an integral part of the dogma of Islam. *Fiqh* is a rational endeavor and largely a product of speculative reasoning, which does not command the same authority as *Shari'ah*. The specific rules of the Qur’ān and the *Sunna* – collectively known as the *nusūs*, which are relatively small in number – represent the core of the *Shari'ah*. *Shari'ah* is a wider concept than *fiqh*, however; it comprises the totality of guidance that God has revealed to the Prophet Muhammad relating to the dogma of Islam: its moral values and its practical legal rules. *Shari'ah* thus comprises in its scope not only law but also theology and moral teaching.⁴⁹⁴

Furthermore, Kamali explains that “...*fiqh* is concerned with practical legal rules that relate to an individual’s conduct. *Fiqh* is thus “positive” law, and although much of it is in common with the *Shari'ah*, it does not include general guidelines on morality and dogma that are not legally enforceable. Yet jurists agree about the primacy of morality and dogma in the determination of basic values. By comparison, *fiqh* is described as a

⁴⁹⁴ Muhammad Hāshim Kamālī, 1999, ‘Law and Society: The Interplay of Revelation and Reason in The *Shari'ah*’ in *The Oxford History of Islam*, John L. Esposito (ed), Oxford: Oxford University Press, p:107-11.

mere superstructure and a practical manifestation of commitment to those values.”⁴⁹⁵ Therefore, Kamali concludes that “...the Islamic legal history is in a sense the history of *fiqh*, rather than of the *Shari‘ah*. The *Shari‘ah* had a short history, as its development began and ended in just over two decades during the Prophet’s mission in Mecca and Medina.”⁴⁹⁶

By differentiating between what is *Shari‘ah* and what is *fiqh*, it is obvious that Sardar has mistakenly understood *fiqh* for *Shari‘ah* as *fiqh* is the human construction of the Islamic law whereas *Shari‘ah* is revealed by God and therefore divine. As the way of life (*al-dīn*) revealed by God through His prophet, Islam is not subject to human construction or historical evolution as found in Western study of human belief in the psychology or anthropology of religion as such. However, the notion that Islam and therefore *Shari‘ah* as divine does not verify the rigid and narrow understanding that resulted in the current predicament of contemporary Islam and Muslims. If Islam and *Shari‘ah* are rigid and narrow, then Islam and *Shari‘ah* will not be accepted and practised by many Muslim generations until our contemporary time for it is the dynamism within the worldview and practice of Islam through *Shari‘ah* that allows flexibility and adaptability throughout ages. The notion of the immutability of *Shari‘ah*, and moreover *fiqh*, should therefore be understood clearly. As Kamali put it rightly:

It is often said that Islamic law is immutable because it is divinely ordained. Yet, in its philosophy and outlook, divine law itself integrates a certain amount of adaptability and change. Some of the basic principles of the *Shari‘ah*, such as justice, equality, public interest, consultation,

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibid.

enjoining good and forbidding evil, are inherently dynamic. They are therefore immutable in principle, but they remain open to adaptation and adjustment on the level of implementation. The fundamentals of faith and the practical pillars on which those fundamentals stand – the basic moral values of Islam and its clear injunctions – are on the whole permanent and unchangeable. But in many other areas of the law, the *Shari‘ah* only provides general guidelines, the details of which may be adjusted and modified through the exercise of human reasoning.⁴⁹⁷

The adaptability of Islam and *Shari‘ah* therefore lies in the principles as mentioned by Kamali. These principles – inherently dynamic - become the guiding values in Muslims life in different contexts and continents. The dynamic understanding of Islam and *Shari‘ah* can only be achieved through the exercise of human reasoning as “...the overriding objectives of *Shari‘ah* are the promotion of human dignity, justice, and equality; the establishment of a consultative government; the realization of the lawful benefits of the people; the prevention of harm (*darār*); the removal of hardship (*haraj*); and the education of the individual by inculcating in him or her a sense of punctuality, self-discipline, and restraint. In their broad scope these objectives are permanent and unchangeable. When the Qur’ān and the *Sunna* identify a certain objective to be of overriding importance, then all measures that can be taken toward its realization are automatically protected by the *Shari‘ah*, provided that they are clear of distortion and abuse. In other words, the means toward attaining those ends are of as much value as the ends themselves.”⁴⁹⁸

The dynamic application of Islam through *Shari‘ah* has been the occupation of the previous Muslim generations. Many efforts have been carried out by the ‘*ulamā*’

⁴⁹⁷ Muhammad Hāshim Kamāli, 1999, ‘Law and Society: The Interplay of Revelation and Reason in The *Shari‘ah*’ in *The Oxford History of Islam*, John L. Esposito (ed), Oxford: Oxford University Press, p: 135.

⁴⁹⁸ Ibid, p:135-36.

and the jurists of the past at different levels – through various intellectual mechanisms as found in the classical discipline of *usūl al-fiqh* by the application of various methodologies (*maqāsid Sharīʿah*, *siyāsah sharʿiyyah*, *masālih al-mursalāh* and so on) – and continues until recent time to developing new *fiqh* such as *fiqh al-awlāwiyyat* (*fiqh* of priorities), *fiqh al-aqaliyyāt* (*fiqh* of minorities), and the lists go on. Generally, the generation of Muslim scholars in overall had contributed in generating new ideas and mechanisms at implementing Islam and *Sharīʿah*. The contemporary problems experienced by the Muslim societies are, in our view, probably more about the problem of reasoning, understanding and correlating their specific contextual experience with the eternal message of the text in a more creative and dynamic way.

Thus, as many scholars have debated and underlined the need to understand the text and context, the application of contextualization⁴⁹⁹ therefore becomes crucial. Only, the question of separation of which part of *Sharīʿah* that must be contextualized and which part would remain intact, and to what extent the method of contextualization could be implemented when dealing with *Sharīʿah* should not be neglected. Applying contextualization in particular setting signifies the use of deconstructionist methods in

⁴⁹⁹ Analysing the application of this method within Islamic discussion, Tariq Ramadan writes: “...there are special way to approach the Text according to different type of its verses; there is no need for contextualization to the verses related to stories to deduce the universal ethical principles underlying them; faith in the Only One, the shared origin and destiny of humanity, the demand for truth and justice, essential diversity and its consequent necessary respect and so on and so forth, including the verses pertaining to Muslim rites and and practice such as prayer, fasting, and so on. But there are verses that are quite different in nature, particularly those pertaining to social matters (*muʿamalat*). In this area, the Text almost never allows itself, alone, to lay down a universal principle: it is the human mind that derives both absolute and relative principles, as appropriate, from the text and from the reality of the context in which it was revealed. In setting out the specificity of these verses, we understand better the importance of remembering that the Revelation was elaborated in time and space, over twenty-three years, in certain context, expressed in pronouncements affected by circumstance, open to evolution, accesible to reason in a historical setting.”(Tariq Ramadan, 2004, *Western Muslims and The Future of Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, p:21).

understanding the text and the context at hand. However, one should be perceptive in assessing the danger of deconstructionist idea that resides in the relativity and cynical nihilism which implies the corresponding postmodern principle of “anything goes.”⁵⁰⁰

As far as Christianity is concerned, the impact of deconstructionist idea has tremendously altered a few of its ethical teachings such as found in the issue of homosexuality, to the extent of splitting the Church into separate directions and consequently the threat of disunification. The Anglican Church of England for instance, goes as far as recognizing gay vicars and even, gay church.⁵⁰¹ The relativity of individual reasoning and judgment, adjoined with the application of contextualization of the biblical text pertaining the prohibition of homosexuality engendered chaotic discourses of how religion could tolerate and accommodate human freedom and the reality of time.⁵⁰² Of course, one could argue that Islam is different from Christianity in which its universal principles and values are seen to remain intact and should be the ultimate guidance in implementing the concept of contextualization in different setting. But, when it comes to dealing with secular ideas such as deconstructionism, we need to

⁵⁰⁰ Merold Westphal, ‘Blind Spots: Christianity and Postmodern Philosophy’, *Christian Century*, 14th June 2003, Fordham University.

⁵⁰¹ Stephen Bates writes: “...The date for the break-up of this great Communion is more problematic. In years to come it may be traced to 2 November 2003, when the consecration of an openly homosexual bishop in the arena of an ice hockey stadium in a small New England college town has divided parts of the Communion and brought to severe split” (Stephen Bates, 2004, *A Church At War: Anglicans and Homosexuality*, London: I.B.Tauris, p:1).

⁵⁰² Bates further writes on this as follow: “...The Church of England’s position on homosexuality is inconsistent and confused. It derives from a committee-compiled document called Issues in Human Sexuality, published as a discussion paper in 1991 but has since adopted by some of the church’s Evangelical constituency, whenever convenient, as settled doctrine and beyond debate. It says that while under certain circumstances the church should accept lay couples in same-sex relationship, such behaviour is unacceptable for ordained ministers. This is reinforced, strengthened and partially contradicted by the resolution adopted at the 1998 Lambeth Conference of all bishops of the worldwide Communion that all homosexual practice was incompatible with Scripture. ...It is into these ambiguities of doctrine, teaching and discipline that dissent has crept like freezing water breaking open a rock.”(Ibid, p:5).

learn it from the experience of Christianity – by setting borders, boundaries and limits to what is for God and what is for human being.

By putting this into perspective, the implementation of *Shari'ah* in its comprehensive and holistic application within the Muslim societies should not become a controversial issue. The concept of *Shari'ah* as “the way which leads to the source”⁵⁰³ must be perceived through two-way relation, that is firstly, the relation between *Shari'ah* as the Divine Will to human being in order to attain good life on the earth and in the hereafter, and secondly, the response of human being as God’s vicegerence and servant to the Divine Will according to their particular and specific condition and context at a particular and specific time. Understanding in this perspective, the first point of the relationship would mean that *Shari'ah* becomes the standard of reference – in any given societies at any time and context – that should affect positive changes socially, culturally, economically and politically.

On the other realm of the relationship, which is the part of human response towards *Shari'ah*, it means continuous reassessing and readjusting their individual and

⁵⁰³ Tariq Ramadan’s analysis on the meaning and concept of *Shari'ah* goes as follow: “...Al-Shari’a is an Arabic term which literally means ‘the way’ and more precisely ‘the way which leads to a source’. We understand from this notion, in the domain of juridical reflection, all the prescriptions of worship and social injunctions which are derived from the Qur’ān and the Sunna. On the level of acts of worship, the said prescriptions are more often than not precise, and the rules of practice codified and fixed. The domain of “social affairs”, however, is more vast and we find in the two sources a certain number of principles and orientations which the jurists (*fuqaha*) must respect when they formulate laws which are in tune with their time and place. It is indeed *ijtihad*, the third nominal source of Islamic law, which provides a link between the absoluteness of the points of reference and the relativity of history and location...Their efforts, respectable as they are, remain however only human attempts which cannot be convenient for all stages of history. In fact, each epoch must bring forth its own “comprehension” and make use of the intelligence of the scholars then extant.”(Tariq Ramadan, 2004, *Islam, The West and the Challenges of Modernity*, (trans. Said Amghar), Leicester: The Islamic Foundation, p: 48).

societal milieu to conform with the *Shari'ah* that gives meaning to their individual, societal and cultural identity. This two-way process should therefore become as 'mechanism for purification' – through the process of eliminating the negative/destructive elements of the individual and society, and inculcating the positive/constructive ones. This signifies the vital interaction between the two which – as historically proven - could lead to the regeneration of the Islamic civilizations.

Thus, the regeneration of the Islamic civilizations, as Sardar inspires it, should originated from the dynamic understanding and relationship between Muslims and *Shari'ah*. It could not deviate from this path. The dynamism of Islam and *Shari'ah* therefore should be the fruit of Muslims realization, appreciation and contemplation of the future as Sardar himself says,

...prepare yourself for the re-emergence of a dynamic, thriving civilization for Islam. It will not emerge in the near future. It will take several decades, even half a century. It will be deeply rooted in history and tradition, but it will be a totally different entity...In developing new interpretations of Islam, and attempting to reform the Shariah, they seek to develop an ethically disciplined vision of the future. It is only through the wise contemplation of the future that Muslims will realize their deepest aspirations – and return, once again, to the enlightened social vision and humane spirit of Islam.⁵⁰⁴

5.2.2.2 Contemporary and Future Challenges: Knowledge, Change and Technology

Over the past few decades, we have seen a tremendous alteration in the relationship between change and the idea of future. Both concepts are inextricably intertwined – if

⁵⁰⁴ Ziauddin Sardar, 2006, *What Do Muslims Believe*, London: Granta Books, pp:109-111.

we do not understand our changing environment, we could not influence our future. Likewise, the notion of future is also changing constantly – to be able to deal with it is to study it and prepare for it. Sardar relates the study of future with the concept of permanence and change in Islam and regards that both concepts are crucial to better understand the way to deal with the civilizational challenge of our contemporary time as well as the future. He asserts that: “...A civilization must, of necessity, pass through various phases of change and a process of assimilation and diversification. Its strength and weaknesses will be judged by its ability or inability to adjust to a changing environment, yet preserve its original identity and parameters”⁵⁰⁵

Sardar’s analysis on the concept of change can be found in his observation on the practice of fasting during the holy month of Ramadān when the Muslim *Ummah* focuses their attention to the changes of moon that marks the beginning of the fasting. This brings radical changes in Muslims’ behaviour as demonstrated in their commitment to highly spiritual activities through the acts of fasting, prayer and contemplation.⁵⁰⁶ This, to Sardar, is a sheer evidence of Islam’s call for affecting constructive changes through physical and spiritual purifications in self-development processes.

In relating the practice of fasting and prayer during the month of Ramadān as part of a bigger application of the process of spiritual purification, Sardar asserts that change must also be seen as part of a bigger transformational process of civilization.

⁵⁰⁵ Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, p:35.

⁵⁰⁶ Ziauddin Sardar (ed.), 1989, *An Early Crescent: The Future of Knowledge and Environment in Islam*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., p:1.

Comparatively, the success of the previous Muslim generations in dealing with changes throughout their various experiences of acquaintance with other civilizations has led not to deterioration but instead, they became stronger and learned from others' knowledge, literature and systems of administration. In other words, this creative engagement has led to a positive and constructive synthesis which resulted in the dynamic and thriving civilization of Islam. Sardar in this regard maintains that: "...at each contact Islamic civilization was able to filter the concepts and values of these civilizations, accepting and assimilating that which agreed with its fundamental characteristics and principles and rejecting that which was contradictory to its values and norms. It was thus able to derive benefits from these contacts and prosper."⁵⁰⁷ The adaptability and flexibility of Islam with other values from other civilizations are the distinct hallmark of the Islamic civilizations in history, and this is due to its openness towards changes.

Therefore in Sardar's view, "...change must be studied with reverence and humility and ushered in a planned, systematic way, with imagination and with total participation and complete consensus of the community"⁵⁰⁸ This way of studying change will enable the Muslim *Ummah* to overcome their problems and difficulties.⁵⁰⁹ Following his urge to study change, Sardar directs his effort towards creating awareness among Muslims in understanding world changes and its future challenges and ceaselessly insists them to make proper preparation and planning for effective actions. The Muslim *Ummah*, he further stresses, should evaluate the Islamic principles of permanence and change and differentiate between the eternal and categorical principles

⁵⁰⁷ Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, p:35.

⁵⁰⁸ Ziauddin Sardar (ed.), 1989, *An Early Crescent: The Future of Knowledge and Environment in Islam*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., p: 2.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid, p:2.

of Islam and the Muslims' understanding of their particular and temporal context [or to use Sardar's terminology - *space-time operationalization*].⁵¹⁰

Without this understanding, Muslims will fail to “..transform the theoretical framework of Islam into an operational form...”⁵¹¹ and this is the cause of “...the immobility of Islam during the last 500 years...”⁵¹² and still endure until our contemporary time. In brief, Sardar emphasizes that in order to deal with changes and future challenges, the Muslim *Ummah* must work through three levels of actions:

(1) to develop a system of awareness and hence effecting inner changes encompassing all the Muslim individuals, communities and *Ummah* through the process of self-purification (*tazkiyyah*), community development and co-operation among the *Ummah*.⁵¹³

(2) to study changes which are taking place around the world and their implications and also to plan for the future strategically;⁵¹⁴ and

(3) to adjust and accomodate changes through the process of filtration of the negative/destructive aspects of other civilizations as well as acceptance of the positive/constructive ones. This process of filtration is the main component of the

⁵¹⁰ Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, p:37.

⁵¹¹ Ibid, p: 36)

⁵¹² Muhammad Iqbal, 1971, *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, Lahore: SH Muhammad Ashraf Publishers, pp:147.

⁵¹³ Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, pp:207-235.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid, pp:35-50; Ziauddin Sardar (ed.), 1989, *An Early Crescent: The Future of Knowledge and Environment in Islam*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., pp:1-2.

Warrd System which meant to serve as a catalyst in affecting desirable changes within the *Ummah*.⁵¹⁵

By emphasizing on the importance of studying changes in affecting desirable transformations within the Muslim societies, Sardar pursues his intellectual struggle by focusing on the corpus of the Islamic knowledge that has been neglected for long time that is Islamic science. Sardar has given serious attention to science and its role to the Muslim *Ummah*. Like Toffler and Bell who see scientific and theoretical knowledge as the criterion of their super-industrial and post-industrial society, Sardar stresses that science is the basic tool to solve problems in any civilization.⁵¹⁶ But unlike Toffler and Bell, Sardar views science or scientific knowledge as value-laden, and not value-free. Science is the substratum of any civilization that helps to preserve its social and political structure and even to fulfil the basic needs of its people and culture. As an external manifestation of any epistemology, Sardar insists that science forms physical, intellectual and cultural environment and encourages selective economic methodologies for production. In short, science is a tool that shape civilization – it is its physical statement of its worldview.⁵¹⁷ Therefore Muslims must avoid the “unmindful transfer of technology”⁵¹⁸ and be more critical and selective in accepting Western science and technology.

⁵¹⁵ Ziauddin Sardar, 1988, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, Kuala Lumpur: Pelanduk Publications, pp:169-177.

⁵¹⁶Ziauddin Sardar, 1986, ‘Redirecting Science Towards Islam: An Examination of Islamic Science and Western Approaches to Knowledge and Values’, *Hamdard Islamicus* Vol.IX No.1, p: 23.

⁵¹⁷ Ibid, p: 24.

⁵¹⁸ Munawar Ahmad Anees and Merryl Wyn Davies in Ziauddin Sardar (ed), *The Revenge of Athena: Science, Exploitation and the Third World*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd, p: 253.

Based on the abovementioned premise, he reached a thesis whereby the Muslim *Ummah* needs its own science which represents its own worldview and original values. He stresses that the need for Islamic science is an urgent task for contemporary Muslims. The basis of Sardar's argumentation of Islamic science has been discussed in-length in his book *Explorations in Islamic Science* (1989), and could be summarised as follow:

- (a) Different civilization produces different science.⁵¹⁹
- (b) Islamic science has its own identity and unique characteristics as found in its rich history.⁵²⁰
- (c) Western science inherits a destructive nature and could threaten humanity.⁵²¹
- (d) Western science could not fulfil the physical, cultural and spiritual needs of the Muslim societies.⁵²²

Hence, Islamic science is not a replication of Western science – its purposes, ideals and values are totally different. This, to Sardar, and as much to Seyyed Hossein Nasr, is due to the basis of Western science that considers the natural world as a separate reality from the Creator and the higher levels of being. In fact, the idea that the running of the world and its sustenance by a higher Being is not accepted by the modern scientific worldview. This world, as understood and treated by the Western science is governed by natural laws. Therefore, there are in fact very profound differences

⁵¹⁹ Ziauddin Sardar, 1989, *Explorations in Islamic Science*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., pp: 69-81.

⁵²⁰ Ibid, pp: 81-97.

⁵²¹ Ibid, pp: 97-104.

⁵²² Ibid, pp: 104-107.

between the worldview of Western science and that of Islamic science - both in their epistemological foundations and the relationship with revelation.⁵²³

Therefore, Islamic science must derive from the Islamic principles and “fundamental values and the many demands of contemporary situations...[and therefore] is neither a re-orientation of Western science nor its unmindful imitator.”⁵²⁴

In other words, “Islamic science is an entity by its own, not defined in comparison with and amendment of an already existing science” and it also “an integral part of Islam as a complete way of life.”⁵²⁵ In this regard, Sardar’s view on the need for an Islamic science is in total agreement with Seyyed Hossein Nasr as he firmly emphasizes that “...Islamic science is related profoundly to the Islamic worldview. It is rooted deeply in knowledge based upon the unity of Allah or *al-tawhīd* and a view of the universe in which Allah’s Wisdom and Will rule and in which all things are interrelated reflecting unity on the cosmic level.”⁵²⁶ As such, Sardar’s discussion on the significance of science and scientific knowledge within the civilizational dynamism of the Muslim societies in contemporary and future times attempts at looking to these epistemological issues and at the same time rectifying the existing dilemma resulted from the application of Western science and technology in most of the Muslim countries. Both Toffler and Bell in this regard, do not consider the epistemological problems faced by other societies and cultures in their theories of future societies as the term of reference that

⁵²³ See Ziauddin Sardar, 1989, *Explorations in Islamic Science*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., pp: 97-104 and Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1993, *A Young Muslim’s Guide to the Modern World*, Cambridge: The Islamic Text Society, p:182.

⁵²⁴ Munawar Ahmad Anees and Merryl Wyn Davies in Ziauddin Sardar (ed), *The Revenge of Athena: Science, Exploitation and the Third World*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd, p: 253.

⁵²⁵ Ibid.

⁵²⁶ Seyyed Hossein Nasr, 1993, *A Young Muslim’s Guide to the Modern World*, Cambridge: The Islamic Text Society, p:182.

governs that future societies – at least in their point of view - operates within the Western worldview.

In general, the most imperative aspect of Sardar's effort to construct an Islamic science is to translate the conceptual matrix of the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* in the context of, and compatible with the many demands of contemporary environments. Such concept for instance, is the concept of *halāl* that could be understood as all constructive and positive matters whereas the concept of *harām* could be understood as all destructive and negative ones. This enhancement of understanding of the Islamic principles and conceptual matrix can be used in the policy making process which can then be implemented in defining the acceptable and unacceptable implementation of science and technology in the Muslim societies. In commenting Sardar's proposal for an Islamic science as an entity, Anees and Davies states that:

...what makes Islamic science different are the different institutional arrangements required to determine and operate its science policy in society, where science and the society it serves are sub-species of Islam so that the epistemology and methodology of both is an expression and activation of the same value-framework. Islamic science requires the scientist to understand his or her role, as well as the doing of science, differently. From the difference of goals characteristic of Islamic science and society must come the devising of different means. Islamic scientists are not called upon some uniform methodology in abstraction but to participate actively in the determination of social priorities for the formation of science policies. These science policies will require both basic and problem solving research, the nature of the questions will call for originality in activating Islamic science methodology through a series of available and potential techniques: in this process of devising and doing Islamic science will bear its distinctive fruits.⁵²⁷

⁵²⁷ Munawar Ahmad Anees and Merryl Wyn Davies in Ziauddin Sardar (ed), *The Revenge of Athena: Science, Exploitation and the Third World*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., p:258.

The fact that Islamic science and the technology it produces is still at its infancy stage that needs formulation of models, concepts, schemes and frameworks cannot be overrated. The application of what to be called an Islamic science and technology in its operational form is yet to be conceived. Comparatively, Islamic economics has greatly achieved a significant level although both fields have obtained serious attention among Muslim scholars as early as 1970s.⁵²⁸ The hampering factors in forming Islamic science as a distinct entity, according to Sardar, are:

- (a) The complex nature of scientific disciplines. Overall, science can be categorised into natural science, technical science and information science, but these general categorization of science can be compartmentalized into hundreds of other specializations and fields with their own specific and different methodologies and frameworks. The fragmentation and atomization of modern science derives from the Western worldview which perceives the separation between the physical, mental and spiritual spheres of nature. Therefore, the task of Muslim scientists is not only to identify and work within this mould of methodologies and frameworks, but more importantly to propose new classifications of the knowledge itself.
- (b) Lack of expertise/human resources. This issue related to policies in science and technology in education systems in the Islamic countries, from primary to tertiary levels. The prolonged negligence of science and technology in education curricula in many Islamic countries has amounted the problem. Hence, the continuous dependence upon Western science and technology.

⁵²⁸ Ziauddin Sardar, 1989, *Explorations in Islamic Science*, , London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., pp:69-81.

- (c) Lack of research and development institutions in science and technology. This demonstrates the negligence of scientific tradition as the medium in enhancing knowledge, hence Muslims now remain a consumer society, compared to their predecessors who were the great innovators. Therefore, more focus should be given to developing theories and practices of the Islamic science according to their priorities.⁵²⁹

From the above discussions, it is obvious that Sardar believes that Islamic science is one of main tools to regenerating the Islamic civilizations. However, unlike Islamic economics, the challenges to develop an Islamic science are far more greater for some reasons, as discussed by Sardar. The first reason is the epistemological challenge that requires conceptual examinations of the Islamic corpus of knowledge as found in the Qur'ān and the Sunnah. On this, Sardar did mention some concepts that need to be analyzed within the Islamic worldview and their dynamic operationalization and implementation within contemporary contexts. But the current efforts on such comprehensive a study are not enough and the lack of institutional supports in conducting research and development within this framework has become a great hindrance. Unless the epistemological issues are taken care, the Muslims dependent on Western science will prolong and the hope for a different future for Muslims is deemed to be gloomy for the current application of Western science and technology implies continuous oppression of the Muslim cultures and systems. The second reason has to do with the lack of scientific culture and tradition in the Muslim societies. This can be relates to the stigma associated with science and scientific knowledge since Muslims

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

experience civilizational degeneration. But civilizational degeneration is the result of the deterioration in reasoning capacity as well as the reigning of blind imitation or *taqlīd*. Scientific knowledge and innovations, as demonstrated by the Muslim geniuses of the past, sprung from creative engagement with the book of God (the Text, the Qur'ān) and the book of nature (the context, the universe). Without changes in Muslims mindset, efforts to regenerate their civilizations will become futile.

In this regard, Sardar has made an important contributions in posing provocative questions that go beyond ordinary Muslims conscience and the implications on their future. Such provocations tend to create controversials and against the mainstreams - therefore his thoughts may somehow become marginalized in mainstream Muslim societies, even in mainstream Muslim intellectuals. This brings us to the next discussions on the other Muslim scholar, Mahdi Elmandjra, who, besides residing in a predominantly Muslim society, shares the same kind of intellectual defiance.

5.3 MAHDI ELMANDJRA: BACKGROUND AND THOUGHTS

5.3.1 ELMANDJRA: LIFE AND WORKS

Mahdi Elmandjra graduated from Cornell University and obtained his doctorate from the London School of Economics. He teaches international relations at the University of Rabat since 1958. He was the Director General of the Moroccan Broadcasting Service and Counselor of the Moroccan Mission to the United Nation. Between 1961 to 1981, he occupied various functions in the United Nation System

including the Assistant Director General of UNESCO for Social Sciences, Human Sciences and Culture and the Coordinator of the Conference on Technical Cooperation between Developing Countries (UNDP).⁵³⁰

He was the President of the World Future Studies Federation and of *Futuribles* International of Paris as well as the Founding President of the Moroccan Association of Futures Studies and the Moroccan Organization of Human Rights. He is a member of the African Academy of Sciences and of the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco. He has been a Visiting Professor to Tokyo University (1998) and a Visiting Scholar of the Japanese Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) at the Tokyo Keizai University (1999).⁵³¹

Elmandjra has published over 400 articles in the fields of the human and social sciences. He is a co-author of “*No Limits to Learning*” (Report to the Club of Rome, 1979) and the author of several books including *The United Nations System, Maghreb et Francophonie, Premiere Guerre Civilisationnelle, Retrospective des Futurs, Nord-Sud, Prelude a l’Ere Postcoloniale, Cultural Diversity Key to Survival, Dialogue about Communication, Decolonisation Culturelle:Defi majeur du 21e Siele, Al-Quds Al-Arabi, Path of a Mind, Reglobalization of Globalization, and Intifadate*.⁵³²

He received the Prix de la Vie Economique 1981 (France), the Grand Medal of the French Academy of Architecture (1984), the distinctions of Officer of the Order of

⁵³⁰ <http://www.elmandjra.org/summary.htm>, 07/01/09.

⁵³¹ Ibid.

⁵³² Ibid.

Arts and Letters (France, 1985) and the Order of The Rising Sun (Japan, 1986). He also received the Peace Medal of the Albert Einstein International Academy and the Award of the World Futures Studies Federation (WFSF) in 1995.⁵³³

Throughout his intellectual and professional life, he has been designated to various important positions for his outstanding scholarship, such as the President of the World Future Studies Federation (WFSF) (1977-1981), the President of the *Futuribles* International (1981-1990), and the President of the Club of Rome (resignation in 1988). He was also members for various institutions such as the Academy of the Kingdom of Morocco, the World Academy of Art and Science, the World Academy of Social Prospective, the Moroccan Association of Economists, the Moroccan Association of Philosophy, and the Moroccan Association of Historians. He was also the Founding President of the Moroccan Association of Futures Studies, the Moroccan Organization for Human Rights and the Founding Member and the Vice President of the Morocco-Japan Association. He was also the Executive Committee of the African Academy of Sciences and the Pugwash Movement and Council for the Society for International Development between 1982 to 1988 and its Executive Committee between 1985 to 1988. With all these significant contributions to the world society, he was chosen by the International Biographical Center as one of the “2000 Outstanding Scholars of the 20th Century”.⁵³⁴

⁵³³ <http://www.elmandjra.org/summary.htm>, 07/01/09.

⁵³⁴ Ibid.

5.3.2 MAIN THEMES IN ELMANDJRA'S THOUGHTS

5.3.2.1 Futures' Idealism: The Future of the Muslim World

The source of Elmandjra's futures thinking is clearly derived from the Islamic sources when he refers to the Qur'ānic verses⁵³⁵ and conception of future in claiming the importance of Futures Studies. He emphasizes that in Islamic discussion of future, there are a few concepts that should be understood correctly. Such concepts, as he discusses them briefly, is the concept of "*al-ghayb*" (unknown) which he believes within the realm of God and "*mustaqbal*" (future) which for him implies the anticipation of developments arising from people's action or inaction. He also asserts the difference between the concept of "*bid'aa*" (heresy) and "*ibda'a*" (innovation) in which, "...the first is an opinion or attitude which is in violation of the basic tenets of Islam...", whereas "...the second is, on the contrary, an invitation to introduce changes and innovations in order to stimulate the community's development and vitality."⁵³⁶

⁵³⁵ "Oh ye who believe! Observe your duty to Allah. And let every soul look to that which it sent on before for the morrow."(*Sūrah* 59:18); "Have they not seen how We have appointed the night that they may rest therein, and the day sight-giving? Lo! Therein verily are portents for a people who believe. And (remind them of) the Day when the Trumpet will be blown, and all who are in the heavens and the earth, will start in fear, save him who Allah wills. And all come unto Him, humbled. And you will see the hills you deemed solid flying with the flight of clouds: the doing of Allah who perfected all things. Lo! He is informed of what ye do"(*Sūrah* 27: 86-88); "And let every soul look to tht which it sent on before for the morrow"(*Sūrah* 59: 18); "Send him with us tomorrow that he may enjoy himself and play. And Lo! We shall taje good care of him"(*Sūrah* 12:12); "And say not of anything:Lo! I shall do that tomorrow," (*Sūrah* 18: 23); "No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow, and no soul knows in what land it will die" (*Sūrah* 32: 34); "Tomorrow they will know who is the rash liar"(*Sūrah* 54: 26) – quoted by Elmandjra in 'The Future of the Islamic World', A paper presented in the Symposium on "*The Future of the Islamic World*", Algiers, 4-7 May 1990, pp:1-2.

⁵³⁶ Ibid, p:3.

The other concept, which is in fact the most obvious and significant one, is the Islamic vision of life on earth and also in the hereafter for it calls on human being "...to seek command of his own fate and to adopt, for this purpose, a dynamic approach in his political, economic, social and cultural initiatives". In relation to this, is the concept of change, in which Elmandjra regards as an essential ingredient for a better future.⁵³⁷ Furthermore, Elmandjra stresses that the Prophet's actions demonstrated his forward looking attitude towards life and his prophetic mission. He concludes thereby that:

All these verses from the Qur'an call us to make the best possible use of the present and to carefully and intelligently prepare for the future; the future meaning the rest of our life on earth and the hereafter...[the Qur'an] recommend[s] that we make projections and work out different options in order to enhance our ability to cope with the requirements of the future and to improve our well-being. Therefore the future should be approached in a pluralistic manner (futures) thus leaving open a wide range of options...Islam is a faith and a way of life. It is also an exploratory vision of life on earth and in the hereafter. It is our outlooks that determine our deeds for which we are answerable to ourselves, to society and to God. In Islam Man, whatever he does, is mindful of the impact of his action on the rest of his life as well as on his fate in the Last Judgment.⁵³⁸

Elmandjra's futures' idealism can be perceived from two different perspectives. As an Islamist and pluralist himself, most of his futures-related endeavours are mainly concerning to the future of the Islam/Muslim world and also the future of humanity as a whole. This duality of purpose – as also found in Sardar – demonstrates how Islamic worldview influence the scholar's ideas and ideals.

⁵³⁷ Ibid, and quoted the verse "Lo! Allah changeth not the condition of a folk until they (first) change that which is in their hearts"(*Sūrah* 13:11).

⁵³⁸ Ibid, pp: 2-3.

Elmandjra believes that Islam is a powerful factor of change and innovation, hence play a vital role in the evolution of the Muslim society. He argues that "...the future of the Arab-Islamic world depends on the revival of Islam in its innovative acception, not Islam of blind imitation which led to the fall of a once brilliant civilization."⁵³⁹ In fact, he reasons that "...if the Prophet Muhammad and his companions had failed to imagine and visualize the future, there would probably not be as many as 1,200 million Muslims in the world today."⁵⁴⁰

However, despite the very fact that Islam has greatly changed the Arab *Jāhili* world of 1,300 years ago, it seems extremely incomprehensible to think of how once a powerful force could not affect and offer the same remedy to the present Arab - and similiarly to the rest of the Muslim world today, unless, using the case of the doctor and patient analogy, the problem underlies in the patient's own demur. This is what happen in the Arab, and the Muslim world today. Upon coming to this conclusion and as far as Elmandjra's futures' idealism is concerned, his analysis pertaining to the future of Islam is approached from three different circumferences: (1) the problems and the future of the Arab world (2) the problem and the future of Islam in Europe and (3) the problem and the future of the Muslim world.

⁵³⁹Ibid, p: 4.

⁵⁴⁰Ibid.

³¹³ Mahdi Elmandjra, 'How Will the Arab World be Able to Master its Own Independent Developments?' Article published in *Kyodo News*, 25th September 2004.
http://www.transnational.org/forum/meet/2004/Elmandjra_ArabWorld.html 11/01/09.

In analyzing the future of the Arab world, Elmandjra stresses explicitly that “...the Arab world is not presently master of its own destiny.”⁵⁴¹ He argues that this fact is true because of many reasons, one of which is the result of its past and still affecting the present and conditioning its future. The most salient feature of the Arab world today, as Elmandjra figures it, is the nature of atomization of its states that has remained one of the primal conundrum facing the region, whereby “...eighty percent of the total Arab population is concentrated in 7 countries whereas 7 other countries barely reach 2 percent of that total.”⁵⁴² He says:

This geo-political fragmentation is the consequence of a harmonized colonial Anglo-French plan, after the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire, including the Sykes-Picot Agreement (1916), the Balfour Declaration concerning Palestine (1917) and the Armistice Treaty (1918) which has transformed the region into a mosaic of artificial kinglets and mini-territories well endowed with oil. A balkanization which is reflected today in an unequal distribution of income in the region - from less than \$ 500 dollars (Somalia, Yemen, Mauritania) to over \$ 20.0000 dollars (United Arab Emirates and Kuwait). The image people have about the richness of the Arab world needs to be relativized. The total GDP of the Arab countries (\$ 500 billion dollars) is not even equal to the GDP of Spain and represents only one fourth of the GDP of Germany.⁵⁴³

Following the abovementioned argument, Elmandjra concedes that the major cause of the Arab problem is oil, for it arouses among major international politico-economic interests as well as the implementation of what he calls “...an exogenous model of development with an exaggerated reliance on external sources and models which stifles creativity and innovation.”⁵⁴⁴ He argues that this type of development

³¹⁴ Ibid, p:2.

⁵⁴³ Mahdi Elmandjra, ‘How Will the Arab World be Able to Master its Own Independent Developments?’ Article published in *Kyodo News*, 25th September 2004.

http://www.transnational.org/forum/meet/2004/Elmandjra_ArabWorld.html 11/01/09 Ibid, p: 3.

⁵⁴⁴ ibid, p:3

hindered the countries to become self-reliant, hence, the need for an independent Arab oil management. Furthermore, as Elmandjra points out briefly, there are other major problems that need urgent attention such as "...poverty, illiteracy, the absence of truly democratic institutions including effective mechanisms for the protection of human rights, the lack of investment in research and development and very inadequate educational and cultural policies."⁵⁴⁵

Under those circumstances, Elmandjra proposes three different scenarios of the future. The first scenario is the 'continuity and stability scenario', which implies the continuation of the present status quo of the Arab regimes and the implementation of the 'stability' idea from the American/Western perspective. This means that the Arab-Islamic world will continue to be subjugated under Western power, which is, in other words, a linear projection of a 'colonised future.' The second scenario is the 'reformist scenario' where minimum stability prevails and an introduction of basic reforms emerges in response to the people's genuine needs and inspirations, but this must be enforced swiftly. The main issues that should be confronted in priority are the problems of poverty, illiteracy, economic disparity and democracy. Therefore, the intellectuals or the educated elites play a significant role and their alienation from their own cultural milieu must be rectified. The third alternative is the 'transformation scenario' in which all the three processes/scenarios are combined and bring real change whereby economic prosperity, social justice and democracy could be achieved.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴⁵ Ibid, p:4

⁵⁴⁶ Mahdi Elmandjra, 'The Future of the Arab World: Three Scenarios', *Al-c Alam*, Rabat, 2nd January 1991, pp: 2-4.

Therefore, in order to rectify the problems and eventually to reconstruct the Arab world in the future, Elmandjra emphasizes on the significant establishment of true democratic institutions which inspired from the people's own vision and power, not from the one exported with a "fast-food" franchise.⁵⁴⁷ He also stresses the need for indigenous development which derives from the people's values, aspirations, needs and visions of the future, and this should come through democratic participatory process and involves a huge amount of work, from "...those of democratization and social justice to the most basic objectives such as food self-sufficiency, water management, fundamental education and health care."⁵⁴⁸

However, in the context of the Arab world, Elmandjra believes that the future will be different only through fundamental change when the supremacy of the present mega-imperial power ends and China and India become the new super powers.⁵⁴⁹ As he says:

The real problem is one of mental structure and the algorithms which we must yet design and develop in order to cater for our own survival. The real challenges lie in our mode of thinking and in the way we set objectives and priorities, develop prospective strategies and secure political support to turn them into tangible efforts.⁵⁵⁰

The second and third approaches of Elmandjra's analysis evolve in function of at least two determinants: the future of Islam world wide, on one hand, and the future of Europe on the other. He believes that with respect to the Muslim community living in

⁵⁴⁷Mahdi Elmandjra, 'How Will the Arab World be Able to Master Its Own Independent Developments?' Article published in *Kyodo News*, 25th September 2004.

⁵⁴⁸Ibid.

⁵⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁵⁰Mahdi Elmandjra, 'The Future of the Arab World: Three Scenarios', *Al-^cAlam*, Rabat, 2nd January 1991, p:4.

European countries one is as important as the other, without necessarily falling into what he recognizes as a fashionable trend of “*European Islam*” or “*Western Islam*”⁵⁵¹ discourses because the main purpose of Islam is for unity through diversity, as represented by the concept of the “*Ummah*” whereby its boundaries are rather spiritual and socio-cultural than geographical.⁵⁵²

Looking from demographic perspective, Elmandjra asserts that the present and the future of Islam are both in Asia, based upon factual evidence:

The total fertility rate of the Muslim world is slightly above 3 children per woman and 30 percent of its population is under 15 years of age. By way of comparison, Western Europe has a fertility rate of 1.6, which is below replacement, and only 17 percent of its population is under 15. Hence the problem is not only quantitative but also qualitative when comparing the age pyramids. This is why according to the United Nations, Europe will need 16 million immigrants between 2000 and 2025.⁵⁵³

Noting this huge demand for ‘young, energetic and industrious labours and workers’ to maintain the present linear projection of Western economic-scientific-power achievements, Elmandjra reasons that there is no qualms that they will come from the Muslim populations of those European countries, in which consist of 7.0% of France population; 3.9% of Sweden; 3.4% of Germany; 3.4% of Belgium; 2.7% of the United

⁵⁵¹The proponent of this discourse is no other than Tariq Ramadan through many of his books such as *Western Muslim and the Future of Islam* (2004) and *To be a European Muslim* (1999). This idea demands a synthesis of Islam and positive aspects of European/Western values and culture and as a result, a distinct symbiosis of both worldviews and cultures. For further details of the concept of Western Muslims or European Muslims, see Tariq Ramadan, 2004, *Western Muslims and the Future of Islam*, Oxford: Oxford University Press and Tariq Ramadan, 1999, *To Be A European Muslim: A Study of Islamic Sources in the European Context*, Leicester: The Islamic Foundation.

⁵⁵²Mahdi Elmandjra, ‘What Future for Islam in Europe?’ A paper presented in a conference organised by the Valencia Chapter of the Club of Rome and the Islamic Cultural Center of Valencia, 15th September 2005, p:5.

⁵⁵³ Ibid.

Kingdom; 2.0% of the Netherlands; 2.0% of Denmark; 1.6% of Norway; 1.4% of Italy, and 1.1% of Spain.⁵⁵⁴ Even more significantly, as Elmandjra continues, there are a few areas of the European lands where Muslims will outnumbered their native counterparts before the year 2018.⁵⁵⁵ Hence, he believes that “the future of Muslims in Europe is affected by this new trend which will hopefully evolve to a greater understanding and tolerance in the future so as to ensure a minimal human dignity. This will take time ... much time.”⁵⁵⁶ Thus for Elmandjra, the problem is not that of the future of Islam which he believes will continue to thrive as indicated throughout its history and confirmed by all demographic indicators, but more importantly is “the future of Muslims in Europe”, in which depends largely within their own hands through their own deeds in respecting the laws of the host countries and their patience and perseverance to mend the tarnished image of Islam.⁵⁵⁷

Apart from these three regional/global dimensions of the Islamic futures, the other significant contribution of Elmandjra’s thought is pertaining to the role of women in society’s affairs. He firmly emphasizes that “...there is no future for Islam without effective involvement of women.”⁵⁵⁸ In his further argument for women’s emancipation, he believes that part of the main reasons of why the Muslim societies is lagging behind any other societies is because of the confinement of their women into a

⁵⁵⁴ Mahdi Elmandjra, quoted from “*The Economist*”, London, 3rd April 2003 in ‘What Future for Islam in Europe?’ A paper presented in a conference organised by the Valencia Chapter of the Club of Rome and the Islamic Cultural Center of Valencia, 15th September 2005, p: 6.

⁵⁵⁵ Mahdi Elmandjra, quoted an article entitled ‘La pression de Nuestro Islam’, in a Spanish Daily “ABC”, dated 12th September 2005, which referred to a secret report indicating that Muslims will represent a majority of the population in the enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla in *ibid*, pp:6-7.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid*, pp:10-11.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid*, p:18.

⁵⁵⁸ Mahdi Elmandjra, ‘The Future of the Islamic World’, A paper presented in the Symposium on “*The Future of the Islamic World*”, Algiers, 4-7th May 1990, p:9.

marginal role, despite the fact that Muslim women amount half of the Muslims population.⁵⁵⁹ He argues that this need to be redressed through “...serious social surveys and analyses, and requires a great deal of self-criticism as as the rehabilitation of *ijtihād* resources. We must take a fresh look at the original sources of our culture, and read again and more carefully, in the light of modern developments, the teaching of the Qur’ān.”⁵⁶⁰

In analyzing Elmandjra’s overall discussions on the future of Islam, we found that there are at least three main concerns in his thoughts: (1) the condition of the present backwardness of the Muslim world as a result of their attitude and outdated mode of thinking, (2) the need for a fresh outlook and understanding of the original sources of their culture – the Qur’ān – and the urge for a rereading of the text in accordance to the modern development, (3) the lack of vision in the Muslim societies, especially pertaining to the concept of democratic institutionalization, and the participation of women in society and development – a waste of half of its human capital. The fact that all the problems and questions that he raised and posed are important and crucial, his lack of systematical plan of how to rectify the problems and indeed, to propose alternative solutions is somewhat disappointing, considering his vast experience working in many international organizations such as the United Nations,⁵⁶¹ and the Club of Rome.

⁵⁵⁹ Ibid, p:8.

⁵⁶⁰ Ibid, p: 9.

⁵⁶¹ See Mahdi Elmandjra, 1973, *The United Nations System: An Analysis*, London: Faber and Faber.

However, an indirect proposal for solution might probably mentioned here, where through a collective work for the Club of Rome, he discusses the significance of learning in bridging the human gap that currently experienced in modern development. The human gap, in this sense, is what Elmandjra and his co-authors termed for the ‘missing human element’, and “...the distance between growing complexity and our complexity to cope with it.”⁵⁶² Therefore, in order to bridge the gap, the authors argues the need for innovative learning that can bring change, renewal, restructuring and problem reformulation that differs from the traditional type of learning, the maintenance/conventional learning.

This type of innovative learning, they assert, emphasizes more on value-creating, rather than value-conserving, and thus prepare the individual and society in facing the challenge of new situations. It therefore encourages anticipation, in contrast to adaptation.⁵⁶³ Anticipatory learning, in their view, implies “...an orientation that prepares for possible contingencies and considers long-range future alternatives...The essence of anticipation lies in selecting desirable events and working toward them...and in creating new alternatives.”⁵⁶⁴

5.3.2.2 Contemporary and Future Challenge - War of civilizations

⁵⁶² J.W Botkin, Mahdi Elmandjra, and Mircea Malitza (eds), 1979, *No Limits to Learning: Bridging the Human Gap*, Oxford: Pergamon Press, p:6.

⁵⁶³ Ibid, pp:10-13.

⁵⁶⁴ Ibid, p: 12-13.

In analyzing contemporary world problematique and its future challenges, Elmandjra proposes the notion of what he coined as ‘war of civilizations.’⁵⁶⁵ According to him, the nature of power which reigns our present world “...does not stem from the term ‘terrorism’ but from the fear that reigns in that climax of suspicion, in a world where decisions are taken arbitrarily without any information, any valuable knowledge and following the ‘you are on my side or on the opposite one’ philosophy.”⁵⁶⁶ He argues that the first war of civilizations was about dealing with a post-imperialist dictatorship, whereas the second stage (which he meant the current period) could be regarded as “...a sort of neo-fascism, an international fascist alliance exploited by the governments and state leaders of the Third World who oppress their own People.”⁵⁶⁷

This is the new era of politics which he called “the era of phobiocracy” in which fear becomes the reigning factor.⁵⁶⁸ What is obvious from both wars is the bankruptcy of Western power and ideas of democracy and its supporters on one hand, and the emergence of global resentment over the West on the other. This has significantly turned into a new form of resistance at unprecedented level all around the world. As Elmandjra explains it explicitly, he marked the August 1990 date of birth of the era of ‘post-colonialism’, whereby “...the populations of the South have become fully aware

⁵⁶⁵ He asserts that his concept of ‘war of civilizations’ contradicts with Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilisations” (he was in fact the first to come up with the concept of “first war of civilization”. This concept was firstly published under the title “the First Civilizational War” in 1991 referring to the Gulf war and the new “post-colonial” situation created after the end of the Cold War. During the Gulf War, Elmandjra gave a seminal interview to the German newspaper Der Spiegel (allusively quoted in Huntington’s book) where he introduced his own theory of the war of civilizations. In this interview, Elmandjra essentially stigmatized the Western fear of Islam, population growth in the South, and the growing importance of Confucianist societies. <http://www.wcc-coe.org/wcc/behindthe news 11/01/09>.

⁵⁶⁶ Mahdi Elmandjra, ‘We Have Entered the Era of the Second War of Civilizations’, http://www.transnational.org/forum/meet/2003/Elmandjra_Civilisation_11/01/09.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁶⁸ Ibid.

of the deceitful process of ‘decolonization’ – a development which greatly worries the North in view of the radical changes which it will entail.”⁵⁶⁹

The relationship between the wars of civilizations with post-colonialism is thus the defining factor in postmodern time, whether politically, economically or culturally. Looking from the perspective of world system, Elmandjra perceives this clash of relationship from the North-South perspective, avoiding the West-Islam dichotomic outlook. His approach, in terms of dealing with the civilizational war, is rather one of forecast or prevention. He believes that the only way to avoid the clash is through dialogue between the North and South.⁵⁷⁰ His message is that unless something is done about cultural communication, there will be more wars to follow. Hence, he argues that Huntington’s ‘clash of civilization’ is the antithesis of his war of civilizations, which privileges cultural communication and inter-civilizational dialogue.⁵⁷¹

⁵⁶⁹ Elmandjra urges the researchers in the Third World to urgently investigate and probe this new material for understanding future trends and developments in North-South relations. He concedes that “...The events going on in the Middle East are not the concern of Arabs only. They are the expression of a longstanding defense strategy designed to oppose any attempt to modify the status quo. There should be no doubt in one’s mind, that the Arabs are but the first guinea pigs for an experiment designed to perpetuate the military, political and economic domination of the Western world as well as the hegemony of its Judeo-Christian values.” (Mahdi Elmandjra, ‘The Future of the Islamic World’, A paper presented in the Symposium on “*The Future of the Islamic World*”, Algiers, 4-7 May 1990, p:3).

⁵⁷⁰ Ibid, p:5.

⁵⁷¹ In his argument on Huntington’s thesis, he says that it was a result from “...a most defensive attitude with respect to Western civilization and fears about its future especially from the non Judeo-Christian world.” (Ibid). He refers this to Huntington’s statement on his anticipation on civilizational conflicts/clashes as he writes: “... a central focus of conflict for the immediate future will be between the West and several Islamic-Confucian states...In the short term it is clearly in the interest of the West to ... incorporate into the West societies in Eastern Europe and Latin America whose cultures are close to those of the West ...to exploit differences and conflicts among Confucian and Islamic states ... to support in other civilizations groups sympathetic to Western values and interests”(Samuel P. Huntington, 1997, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York: Touchstone, p:67-70).

In matters pertaining to civilizational dialogue, Elmandjra has always emphasized that cultural values are essential ingredients for development in determining its form and content and condition the search for peace. He believes that the important part of dialogue is cultural humility as it enhances the capacity to mutual understanding. He also stresses the key role of value systems to combat violence and conflicts within and between countries:

The emphasis on value systems is needed to bring out the fact that the present North-South crisis is not merely one which will be overcome with partial adjustments here and there. It is a crisis of the present system as a whole. Any solution must envisage a redefinition of objectives, functions and structures, and a redistribution of power and resources according to values other than those which are the cause of the crisis and the breakdown of the existing system.⁵⁷²

Elmandjra believes that the present imbalance of North-South relations that refrains further development, the state of post-imperialism, and the war of civilizations – all these signify “...the end of an era and the beginning of a new one which cannot last for very long because it is a self-defeating situation.”⁵⁷³ Hence, he emphasized that the solution for such problematique lies in appreciating and enhancing the notion of cultural diversity as the way and key for human survival. The monoculture solution which rampant in current world systems through the process of globalization will eventually diminish human being creativity and identity.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁷²Mahdi Elmandjra, ‘Dialogue, Not Clash of Civilizations’, A paper presented in the 18th General IPRA Conference *Challenges for Peace in the 21st Century: A Dialogue of Civilizations*, Tampere, Finland 5-9th August 2000, p:6-7.

⁵⁷³ Ibid, p: 8.

⁵⁷⁴ Mahdi Elmandjra, 1999, ‘Cultural Diversity, Our Key to Survival in the Future’, CD-ROM In: Richard A. Slaughter & Sohail Inayatullah, (eds). *Knowledge Base of Futures Studies*, Vol. 3, Part 2. Indooroopilly (Australia): The Futures Study Centre.

5.4 DISCUSSIONS

In comparison with their Western counterparts, Elmandjra and Sardar show a rich blend of both their religious affiliation and their understanding of Western system and worldview in their outlook on future, particularly the future of Muslim societies and civilizations. Both Elmandjra and Sardar draw their thoughts from the Islamic sources – the Qur’ān and *hadīth* – in supporting their argumentations on the significance of futures thinking as a methodological effort in dealing with the contemporary problems within the Muslim societies, and also, in the case of Sardar, in supporting his **Project ‘Umrān** as a civilizational project in regenerating the *Ummah* based on the Prophet’s model of the Madīnan society. Both Sardar and Elmandjra clearly do not embark on the evolutionist approach of socio-historical analysis prevalent in the mind of our two Western scholars, but rather focus their examination on the present predicament facing the Muslim *Ummah* and how to resolve the problems in the future through futures thinking, although this is done differently by Sardar and Elmandjra.

Both Sardar and Elmandjra’s concern on the significance of futures thinking in renewing the Muslims way of dealing with their present stagnancy is regarded as timely but further in-depth study on the socio-historical process of human society, particularly the Muslim society should be extended. Unlike Toffler and Bell, who sought their sociological analysis on somewhat social predictions on the type of future society along with the tradition of the Western paradigm, Sardar in particular, offers an alternative view – not based on predictions but captivatingly on system, values and model within the Islamic framework specifically in his **Project ‘Umrān**.

Sardar's analysis therefore is not aiming at providing a linear extension of the Western image of future society but a fresh model of a civilizational approach on future – or, to use his term, a transmodern future. Elmandjra's analysis on the type of futures for Muslims as general scenarios – the continuity, the reformist and the transformation – is somewhat crude because it does not offer any methodological analysis on the whole system, Muslim and Western alike, as in the case of Sardar. As many of Elmandjra's works are written in essays, this lack of methodological analysis is much expected.

But in general, we view that the overall methodology of the scholars, both Westerns and Muslims alike – demonstrate what Krishan Kumar called as 'short-sighted historical perspective'.⁵⁷⁵ Although Bell's theory of the post-industrial society attributes the present developments as the result of the culmination of trends that can be traced deep in the past, Kumar maintains that "what seem to them novel and current can be shown to have been in the making for the past hundred years"⁵⁷⁶ as found for instance, in the work of James Beniger.⁵⁷⁷

Modern historical analysis conducted on the Muslim society can be found in enlightening works by Abdallah Laroui,⁵⁷⁸ a Moroccan historian, Muhammad

⁵⁷⁵ Krishan Kumar, 2001, *From Post-Industrial to Post-Modern Society: New Theories of the Contemporary World*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, p: 17.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid, p: 18.

⁵⁷⁷ See James Beniger, 1986, *The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

⁵⁷⁸ Abdallah Laroui, a contemporary writer on problems of social philosophy and cultural orientation. He is also an independent nationalist inclined toward modified Marxism. (See Abdallah Laroui, 1976, *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism* (trans. Diarmid Cammell), Berkeley: Los Angeles: London: University of California Press). He was born in Morocco in 1933, and studied in Paris and Cairo. He was a Visiting Professor at the

Arkoun,⁵⁷⁹ an Algerian philosopher-sociologist and Mālek Bennabi,⁵⁸⁰ the late Algerian thinker. Both Laroui and Arkoun draw on historicist and deconstructionist methods in their analysis on the history of Muslim society and both are very much influenced by the post-structuralist⁵⁸¹ and historicist⁵⁸² alike, in which history is treated as narration or, more significantly, interpretation of past events.⁵⁸³ In his analysis on the modern

University of California, and later becoming Professor of History at Muhammad V University in Rabat. (See also, Banipal: Magazine of Modern Arab Literature, <http://www.banipal.co.uk/contributors/contributor.php?conid=429,12/01/09>).

⁵⁷⁹ Mohammed Arkoun, born in February 1, 1928 in Taourirt-Mimoun, Algeria, is one of the most influential and internationally renowned scholars of Islamic thought. He was professor emeritus of Islamic thought at the Sorbonne. (Mohammed Arkoun, 1994, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, (translated and edited by Robert D.Lee), Boulder: Westview Press).

⁵⁸⁰ See Fawzia Bariun, 1993, *Mālek Bennabi: His Life and Theory of Civilization*. Kuala Lumpur: Muslim Youth Movement of Malaysia; also, Mālek Bennabi, 1991, *Islam in History and Society* (trans. Asma Rashid), Kuala Lumpur: Berita Publishing.

⁵⁸¹ Alan D. Schrift describes poststructuralist as follow: "...[it] is a term used to denote the period that follows the dominance of the structuralist paradigm in American critical theory, which extends roughly from 1966 through the end of the twentieth century. Similarly, the labels "poststructuralist," "deconstructionist," and "postmodernist" are often used interchangeably to group together Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze, Jean-Francois Lyotard." (Alan D. Schrift, 2006, *Twentieth -century French philosophy: Key Themes and Thinkers*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, p: 54). According to Poster, the term poststructuralist derives from certain vicissitudes of intercontinental intellectual history in the past two decades and were influenced by and reacted against the formalism of structuralist linguistics and against the figure of the epistemological subject implied or explicitly defended by its theorists. (Mark Poster, 1989, *Critical Theory of Poststructuralism: in Search of a Context*, New York: Cornell University Press, p: 4).

⁵⁸² The historicist method implemented here is a different variant from the aforementioned one. Sheila G. Davaney explains this method quite explicitly: "It has had numerous forms and influenced various issues from epistemology to the nature of tradition to the character of the universe, and originated from the intellectual movement took shape in the late 18th century and flourished especially in the 19th century and early 20th centuries that especially challenged traditional theology and engendered historicist modes of theological reflection. The historicists recognize humans live in and out of history and are dependent upon the resources of place and time to gain meaning and direction in life. The notion of particularity, historical specificity and cultural locatedness have shaped revisionist theologies, post liberalism and pragmatic historicism, liberationist." (Sheila G. Davaney, 2006, *Historicism: The Once and Future Challenge for Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, p: ix). She also asserts that historicists repudiate the notion of universalism and absoluteness, and instead, recognize the conditioned, located, particular and relative character of all human thought and experience (Ibid, p: 63). Hence historicism (and also its twin, deconstructionism) came into the picture - as a tool to critically analyze the context and history.

⁵⁸³ Abdallah Laroui, 1976, *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism* (trans. Diarmid Cammell), Berkeley: Los Angeles: London: University of California Press, p: 13). The past or history, according to Laroui, has been customarily refers to two quite separate

Arab society, he argues that their misconception of history is probably the main reason for their predicament, as he says:

...modern Arab society remains, on the whole, faithful to the vision of history inherited from the past; rather, it finds itself face to face with another society possessing a different vision - a vision to which it is being forced to succumb. The problem, therefore, for Arab society is that it can no longer seek refuge in isolation, that it can no longer remain satisfied with its own vision, still less impose this vision upon others. It is not the intrinsic value at this vision that is at issue, but whether it is adequate to the real relationships obtaining in the world today.⁵⁸⁴ ...to remain faithful, as do the majority of Arabs, to the ancestral vision, and to hope in spite of everything to change the meaning and weight of past events, is to indulge in fatuously wishful thinking.⁵⁸⁵

For him, any attempt for finding resolution for the current state of the Arabs, and hence the Muslims, would indeed be superficial and simplistic, if they refuse to obtain the right understanding of their historical process and to discover their true vision of history. Moreover, he stresses that "...to understand the historical process is to understand both oneself and others in a temporal perspective; it is to conceive of tested and effective courses of action."⁵⁸⁶ As a post-structuralist,⁵⁸⁷ he views the authoritative interpretation of texts and history as deterring the creative engagement between the Arab Muslim with their changing context and the evolutionary development in their

concepts: "to history as it is made up of a succession of past events - the objective sum of accomplished facts - and at the same time to the manner of studying those facts and narrating them; that is to say, to the narration itself."(Ibid).

⁵⁸⁴ Ibid, p: 26.

⁵⁸⁵ Ibid, p: 29.

⁵⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁸⁷ Post-structuralist idea pertaining to the type of historicist method applied by Laroui can be found mainly in Derrida. Jim Powell explains that Derrida "...criticizes the linguistic theory of Ferdinand de Saussure and the structuralist theory of Claude Lévi-Strass for promoting logocentrism. "Logocentrism" is the attitude that *logos* (the Greek term for speech, thought, law, or reason) is the central principle of language and philosophy." (Jim Powell, 1997, *Derrida for Beginners*, New York: Writers and Readers Publishing, p: 33). See also Jacques Derrida, 1974, *Of Grammatology*, (trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak), Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, p: 49.

linguistic, grammar and rhetoric because it has long been regarded as “...the guarantee of its logico-metaphysical truth in the structure of its language...in such an unvarying and conscious manner.”⁵⁸⁸

Laroui’s argument on the Muslim confusion between tradition considered as a social fact and tradition as a system of values agrees with Sardar’s view on the same subject matter, on the ground that it is precisely the latter that characterizes a traditional society. Sardar through his **Project ‘Umrān and Warrd System**, urges for redefining the matrix of tradition to determine the focal point for a policy change, as also stressed by Laroui.⁵⁸⁹ Elmandjra on the other hand, stresses the importance of innovative engagement with tradition when he discusses the principle of *ibda‘a* in comparison with the notion of *bid‘ah* which he regards as being misunderstood by Muslims and therefore becomes the main hindrance to social innovation in Muslim societies. Laroui however, implemented this historicist method as a model on systematic socio-historical analysis on the history of Muslim society and civilization under the influence of the works of Jacques Derrida within the paradigm of Western scholarship.

⁵⁸⁸ Abdallah Laroui, 1976, *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism* (trans. Diarmid Cammell), Berkeley: Los Angeles: London: University of California Press, p: 5.

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid, p:33. In Laroui’s analysis, “...the search for the fundamental aspiration, or matrix, of Islam, is necessarily the description of a classicism and a tradition: the three notions amount to the same thing. At the beginning of the process the matrix is postulated as a simple possibility of reorganization of the range of meanings available to a given culture - a possibility that is realized only in time. The integration and exclusion of ideas, institutions, and objects so that a system of values shall be achieved does not happen automatically but is the work of men organized into groups. The matrix does not emerge as an objective reality until it is firmly settled in a group’s mentality, at which point a tradition is formed; it is not an objective structure present at all times but an achievement of the men who manifest it in the full light of actual history. Thus the notion of an unconscious classicism is, from this point of view, useless, even unthinkable; classicism is said really to exist only when it is reconstructed by a tradition in the pattern of a presumed past - an attempt that follows an awakening to the reality of decadence”(Ibid, pp:58-59).

In so far as Sardar and Elmandjra are concerned, Laroui's analysis on the meaning of tradition and its social matrix could be applied in Sardar's discussion on homeostasis and Elmandjra's culture. The elements of cultural framework that evolve through time and the parameters that bind the cultural determinations within the society from generation to generation are some of the crucial factors that require futurical orientation in sociological study of the Muslim and human society.

In fact, to some extent, Sardar's insistence on rethinking Islam is in line with Arkoun. In Arkoun's argument, the recognition of Madīna as a definite model of perfect historical action for mankind, and the strive of many *islāhī* movements⁵⁹⁰ to go back to this model in order to achieve the spirit and the perfection shown by the Prophet, his companions, and the first generation of Muslims called the pious ancestors (*as-salaf al-ṣālih*)⁵⁹¹ was as a response to two major needs. In his own words: “ (1) the particular need of Muslim societies to think, for the first time, about their own problems which had been made unthinkable by the triumph of orthodox scholastic thought; and (2) the need of contemporary thought in general to open new fields and discover new horizons

⁵⁹⁰ This break up from the classical and *islāhī* way of thinking for him is one of the way forward to answer his questions regarding the conflict with Islamic thought in dealing with contemporary challenges to modern problems posed by its encounter with modernity and postmodernity in one hand, and the claim of the universality of Western idealism and thought on the other. It is itself, as a matter of fact, and to some degree, a conflict of an old/long standing question - between revelation and reason. Arkoun uses this mode of thinking from the deconstructive approach as never attempted before in the Islamic thought. He did this by bringing the unthinkable (because of the triumph of the orthodox/scholastic thought) to the thinkable - to open the horizons and to look beyond the existing methodology of thinking - which might be useful in the past in dealing with their problems but might not applicable for understanding and dealing with our new challenging environment and contexts. (Mohammad Arkoun, 1994, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, p: 6).

⁵⁹¹ Ibid, p: 7.

of knowledge, through a systematic cross cultural approach to the fundamental problems of human existence.”⁵⁹²

As clearly shown in his work, Arkoun stresses that this attempt in thinking Islam cannot, for instance, “...accept the concept of secularization as it has been historically elaborated and used in Western societies [because] there is a political and social dimension of this concept represented by the struggle for power and the tools of legitimization between the Church and the bourgeoisie.”⁵⁹³ In this connection, he obviously demands a different kind of ‘secularism/secularization’ in order to separate education, learning and research from any control. And similarly, he also admits that “...we cannot interpret religion merely as positivist historicism and secularism did in the 19th century, [in which] [r]eligion is addressed not only to miserable, uncultivated, primitive people who have not yet received the light of rational knowledge.”⁵⁹⁴

Thus his project of thinking Islam as he himself acknowledges it, is a deconstructive one - with the realization of the limits within contemporary Islamic thought that has been greatly influenced by the *islāhī* thought on one hand, and the limits within modern secular Western thought on the other. Weighing both limits within their boundaries together, he stepped to his own method of thinking in proposing a new mode of thinking within the discourse in contemporary Islamic thought in order to generate new solutions. Arkoun’s most important contribution in the case of rethinking

⁵⁹² Ibid, p:13.

⁵⁹³ Mohammad Arkoun, 1994, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, p: 12.

⁵⁹⁴ Ibid, pp:12-13. He argues that since 1950-1960, human and social sciences, have changed the ways of thinking and knowing by introducing a pluralist changing concept of rationality [he meant by the deconstructionist movement] according to which religion is interpreted in a wider perspective of knowledge and existence (ibid).

Islam is in his approach in combining historical, sociological and anthropological methods in Islamic thought, that has long been dominated by theological, philosophical and judicial methods. But as he points it, this does not deny "...the important of the theological and philosophical, but to enrich them by the inclusion of the concrete historical and social conditions in which Islam always has been practised" - this is done through the method of deconstruction - "by looking back at the mental-historical process which led to each *weltanschauung*."⁵⁹⁵

The challenge of modern secular ideas in looking at human development or progress through its socio-historical process posed another way of understanding human progression as a universal phenomenon.⁵⁹⁶ This demand a set of criteria to define religion as a universal phenomenon within human experience and existence - using the parameters set by the secular ideas. As Arkoun argues it, "...this means, in the case of Islam, [the] rewriting of the whole history of Islam as a revealed religion and as an active force, among others, in the historical evolution of societies."⁵⁹⁷ He acknowledges the contribution of the Orientalist scholars in their inquiry "into the social and cultural conditions of the *Jāhiliyya* period in which Islam emerged" - as this historicist approach has put some light on the importance of understanding the historical settings of the society of particular period, but Arkoun's main concern is to "the epistemological problems implicit in this historicist approach."⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁵Mohammad Arkoun, 1994, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, p: 3.

⁵⁹⁶ Here, the concept of historicism as opposed by Popper earlier is applicable. Vide: pp: 216-217.

⁵⁹⁷Mohammad Arkoun, 1994, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, p: 14.

⁵⁹⁸ Ibid.

Accordingly, the implicit significance of historicism and hence deconstructionism according to Arkoun, lies in its epistemological realm. The challenge, he believes, is "...to create an intellectual and cultural framework in which all historical, sociological, anthropological, and psychological presentations of revealed religions can be integrated into a system of thought and evolving knowledge."⁵⁹⁹

The problem with the method of deconstruction lies in the point to begin the deconstructive process - where to begin or start? Society, as we know it, does not exist in vacuum - it did not develop from scratch, but instead evolves through time (but this is different from the positivist social evolutionism that we have discussed before). Any divine revelations - did not neglect the context of each society in its specificity of space and time. This is true in all the prophets' message, considering the need and the challenge faced by the society at its given time.

The message of Islam in particular, with the graduality of the revelation demonstrates how God's message should be implemented, considering the context of *Jāhiliyya* and the concept of *asbāb an-Nuzūl* (the occasions of Revelation) - the prophetic message last for 23 years to complete. The contradiction between the deconstructionist methods with the historicist exposes its problematic aspect (this can be compared with how Christianity deals with this). This raises the problem of criteria in guiding the decision making when dealing with subjective issues and problems.

⁵⁹⁹Ibid, p: 4.

All in all, the various attempt made by Muslim scholars such as Sardar, Arkoun, and Laroui who come from different background but agree in the need for new method of dealing with methodological aspects of Islam thought has created new route of discourse - different from the conventional acceptable mode of thinking in contemporary Islamic thought. They remain at the periphery - but emerging as a new force to be appreciated in searching different and new way of dealing with the increasing incompetence of the existing method in dealing with contemporary problems, let alone the future.

The methodological debate on studying the socio-history of Muslim society in modern Islam is thus still enduring. The dispute on its methodology affects the way we look into the future, as it is how we understand our history that will affect the way we perceive the future. The question of whether or not to accept the historicist-deconstructionist method divides the Muslim intellectual circles into different views and schools of thought. It is naïve to assume that we can accept or reject the whole questions posed by Laroui and Arkoun, who are regarded as representing liberal interpretations in their analysis.

As much as the history of Islam is concerned, the spirit of filtration and openness should be appreciated within the framework of the worldview of Islam. However, the problem with the historicist and deconstructionist method should be treated with cautious in order to preserve the Islamic tradition of the Qur'ānic exegetical methodology while at the same time, taking into consideration the weaknesses of the traditional exegetical method that has been raised by Arkoun, which is the neglection or

lack of sociological, anthropological and psychological analysis. Sardar in this case, indicates some affinity to the deconstructionist methodology when he says that “...Islam has to be rearticulated, understood afresh, from epoch to epoch, according to the needs and requirements, the specific demands of geographical location and the circumstances of the time. What changes is our understanding of the constants. And as our understanding develops, Islam of one particular epoch may not bear much resemblance - except in devotional matters - to Islam of another epoch.”⁶⁰⁰

Though not in the same sense, Elmandjra’s stance on this method is rather ambiguous. He urges the Muslims to attempt for a fresh outlook on their religion, and appreciate *ibda’* (innovation) within the Muslims society in order to introduce changes and to stimulate development and vitality in the Muslims community. The concept of *ibda’* is a constructionist or reformist approach, rather than deconstructionist.

Unlike Laroui and Arkoun whose analyses on the Muslim society under the influence of historicist and deconstructionist methodologies, Bennabi set out a division with the liberalists view by studying the core of human nature – the religious nature – of

⁶⁰⁰ Ziauddin Sardar, 2004, *Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journeys of A Sceptical Muslim*, London: Granta Books, p: 55. In relating this argument to Wahhabism, Sardar concluded, that Wahhabism had been employed to introduce “...two metaphysical catastrophes in Islam. First, by closing the interpretations of our “absolute frame of reference” - the Koran and the life of the Prophet Muhammad - it had removed agency from believers. One could have only an interpretative relationship with a living, eternal text. Without that relationship of constant struggling to understand the text and find new meanings, Muslim societies were doomed to exist in suspended animation. If everything was an *a priori* given, nothing new could really be accommodated. The intellect, human intelligence, became an irrelevant encumbrance, given that everything could be reduced to a simple comply/not comply formula derived from the thoughts of dead, bearded men. Second, by assuming that ethics and morality reached their apex, indeed an end point, with the companions of the Prophet, Wahhabism, which became the basis of what later came to be known as “Islamism”, negated the very idea of evolution in human thought and morality. Indeed, it set Muslim civilisation on a fixed course to perpetual decline.” (Ibid, p: 71).

which human is defined as *homo religiosus*.⁶⁰¹ In *The Qur'ānic Phenomenon*, he attempts to develop an analytical method in examining the Qur'ānic phenomenon as the final revelation through creative examination in the spirit and method of classical Qur'ānic exegesis. This offers a fresh perspective on the methodological analysis on human history, afar from the dilemma faced by the historicist-deconstructionist method proposed and used extensively by Laroui and Arkoun.

In his examination, Bennabi recognizes at least two main factors that need special attention; the first is the historical nature of the Muslim world pertaining to its cultural development, and the other is the understanding and conceptualization of the issue of the 'miraculous nature' (*i'jāz*) of the Qur'ān. This study on the concept of *i'jāz* negates the Orientalist and liberalist Muslims' methodology in studying the Qur'ān as merely an historical text, which, he argues, as threatening for the Muslims in determining their historical orientation. For him, the problem of Qur'ānic exegesis, specifically the problem of *i'jāz*, is an utmost point in the Muslim's faith for it is on this very principle of religious authority that all Muslims depend on.⁶⁰²

The *i'jāz* of the Qur'ān signifies that it is the Word of God and the message is from Him, the All Knower. It also indicates the permanent chain of message that had been revealed to the entire prophet since Adam until Muhammad (p.b.u.t). The real challenge is therefore, as Bennabi strongly emphasized, concerning the understanding and conceptualization on the factor of the historical nature of the cultural development

⁶⁰¹ Bennabi views various manifestations of religiosity throughout human history as a substantiation for human's need to religion or "...the inherent religiosity of human nature" (Mālek Bennabi, 2004, *The Qur'anic Phenomenon: An Essay of a Theory on the Qur'an* (trans. Mohamed El-Tāhir El-Mesāwi), Kuala Lumpur: Islamic Book Trust, p:xviii).

⁶⁰² Ibid, pp: 1-5.

of the Muslim world that must be thoroughly investigated from a socio-anthropological perspective.⁶⁰³ This, we believe, are the normative aspects in history and culture that demand comprehensive understanding of the concept of *Sharī'ah*'s flexibility and adaptability within, and across its time-space relationship as understood by the eminent classical scholars such as Abū Hanīfah, Shāfi'i and Ibn Khaldūn. It requires reinvigorating the conceptual framework of the Islamic thought. The conceptual framework must be enhanced with profound understanding in four time realities: (1) eternal time; (2) past time; (3) present time and (4) future time. Within this framework, the concept of Islamic relativism is thus, not an absolute relativism as purported by many post-modernist scholars, but relativism, or flexibility (*murūnah*) guided by the principle of *tawhīd* or the *tawhīdic* paradigm.

Bennabi's assertion on this permanent element of Islam agrees with Al-Attas' elaborations on the nature of knowledge and the Islamic worldview that are based on authority. He says:

There can be no relativism in the historical interpretation of Islam, so that knowledge about it is either right or wrong, or true or false, where wrong and false means contradiction with the already established and clear truth, and right and true means conformity with it. Confusion about such truth means simply ignorance of it, and this is due not to any inherent vagueness or ambiguity on the part of that truth. The interpretation and clarification of knowledge about Islam and the Islamic worldview is accomplished by authority, and legitimate authority recognizes and acknowledges a hierarchy of authorities culminating in the Holy Prophet, upon whom be Peace! It is incumbent upon us to have proper attitude towards legitimate authority, and that is reverence, love, respect, humility and intelligent trust in the veracity of the knowledge interpreted and clarified by such authority. Reverence, love, respect, humility and intelligent trust can only be realized in one when one

⁶⁰³ Ibid, pp: 4-5.

recognizes and acknowledges the fact that there is a hierarchy in point of intelligence, spiritual knowledge and virtue.⁶⁰⁴

The historicist argument/perception about human experience, whether it is universal or particular or the claim for universality/particularity in a black and white perspective is delusional. As human being - there is universal experience - of love, suffer, pain, happiness - but the particularity of that kind of experiences differs according to a specific cultural, and individual experience. Both cultural and individual experiences are valid, as well as the common universal experience as human being. The universality and particularity exist together, not separately - as could be understood from the famous *hadīth* that every child is born in *fiṭrah*. *Fiṭrah* is the universal and basic element of humanity, and it is the environment that made him a cultural individual and therefore the specific experience.

We cannot understand Islam's history using the historical or sociological methodology of Western sciences - the source, the problems, the questions, the issues are different. The Western sciences deal with their specific tradition and worldview will misled our understanding of our own historical experience. Even when Sardar argues for Islam's own specificity of its sciences - such as his effort with the Islamic Science - he betrayed his own initial principle by using deconstructionist methodology, especially regarding the issue of woman leading prayer. The argument of Muslim feminism is a case of deconstructionist movement in the West - in comparison with feminist theology

⁶⁰⁴ Syed Muhammad Naquib Al-Attas, 1985, *Islam, Secularism and the Philosophy of the Future*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd, pp: 100-1.

resulted from a specific Western experience/interpretation of women's position or nature as prescribed in the Bible.

As we can see, the relationship between the Qur'ānic text and the context in the Arab *Jāhiliyya* setting has always been appreciated and considered by the *‘ulamā’* and the religious scholars in their understanding of *Sharī‘ah* and their dealings with the demands of their age. There is no doubt about this fact as in the case of the science of *usūl al-fiqh* - the Islamic jurisprudence - which not only specifically describing the general principles of Islam in matter of law and order but it is an encompassing framework for organizing all life including both attitude and behaviour. It is through *usūl al-fiqh*, with its various conceptual matrices that help the previous generations to understand and apply *Sharī‘ah* dynamically within their specific environment, and thus *Sharī‘ah* became a “living” one. In other words, *Sharī‘ah* is always a contextual endeavour binded within the parameters defined by the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah*.

The argument put forward by deconstructionists and historicists proponents centred to the importance of contextualization⁶⁰⁵ that lies in two areas:

⁶⁰⁵ According to Lacapra, contextualization is “...the cliché that something can be understood only in context has long been the historian’s daily bread. The attempt to return a thinker to his own times or to place his texts squarely in the past has often served as a mode of abstract categorization that drastically oversimplifies the problem of historical understanding. Indeed, the rhetoric of contextualization has often encouraged narrowly documentary readings in which the text becomes little more than a sign of the times or a straightforward expression of one larger phenomenon or another. At the limit, this indiscriminate approach to reading and interpretation becomes a detour around texts and an excuse for not really reading them at all. It simultaneously avoids the claims texts make on us as readers – claims that impress themselves upon us both at naïve and at theoretically sophisticated levels of understanding” (Dominick Lacapra, 1983, *Rethinking Intellectual History: Texts, Contexts, Language*, London: Cornell University Press Ltd., p: 14). He goes on saying, “...the rethinking of intellectual history by way of the text-context problem raises the issue of language, which is the leitmotif of this book. Language is a signifying practice that is connected, from its emphatic use to its studied

1. The importance of power that sought to hold together both its coercive aspect and also "...the ongoing capacity of human beings to be historical agents, productive of new meanings and values."⁶⁰⁶
2. The interconnectedness of the world in which "...what occurs in one place or one time reverberates across time and space."⁶⁰⁷ In other words, historicism implies, "...a kind of global system of economics, politics, cultural exchange, and environmental independence whereby particularity and interconnection go hand in hand."⁶⁰⁸

It is crucial to remember that historicism and deconstructionism is a Western phenomenon, a product of the Western specific understanding and experience of history in its dealing with first, the biological and social evolutionism in which the universe and human evolve gradually from one stage of development to another; and with the evolutionary development comes the relativity and specificity of each developmental stage that requires the second, the constant interpretative relations with its history in a deconstructive manner, in which the Christian hermeneutics tradition⁶⁰⁹ regarding to the

avoidance, with other signifying practices in human life. It undercuts the dichotomy between text and context and underscores their sometimes ambivalent interaction. If intellectual history is anything, it is a history of the situated uses of language constitutive of significant texts" (ibid, pp: 18-9).

⁶⁰⁶Sheila Greeve Davaney, 2006, *Historicism: The Once and Future Challenge for Theology*, Minneapolis: Fortress Press, pp:145-6.

⁶⁰⁷Ibid, p: 146.

⁶⁰⁸Ibid.

⁶⁰⁹ Paul Hamilton in *Historicism* argues that hermeneutics, "...is the traditional means of negotiating this historicist dialectic." (Hamilton, *Historicism*, 2002, p: 17). He further asserts that "...[t]his hermeneutic appears vulnerable to accusations of relativism." Hence, he agrees that "some stability and degree of internal generalization must be established by our interpretations and to possess a general competence in order to use the contextual and cultural language of the past in understanding and interpreting new social phenomena" (ibid). His assertion on the significance of historicism rests upon the fact that historicism is unavoidable in any interpretative inquiry. As he further the argument for historicism: "Even in historical stylistics, historical difference creeps in as the distinction between tenor and vehicle, or a word's meaning and the new use to which it is put. And the historicist dialectic is refigured here as the interaction by which the new use sheds more light on the old use that makes it possible... There

biblical text had influences through the phenomenological study of Hegel and Husserl, and the hermeneutical study of Heidegger and Gadamer.

To assess and study Islam's history and to understand it in light of Western historicist methodology is misleading for the historical development of the Muslim societies is totally different. In Islam, historical criticism is an essential element for the examination of authenticity of testimonials in which the verification of a credible historical participant plays a significant role.⁶¹⁰ But if the historicist methodology or historicism is to be used, not as a prerequisite for Muslim intellectual achievement, but to assist in the framing of certain questions that seem to be important, then the purpose can be justified, as it can be part of the process of historical criticism - a method to understand the history of modern Muslim in order to find remedies for their predicament based upon the premise that the current situation is perhaps a consequence of the Muslims failure to understand their history.

are no laws against using one period of the past as a metaphor with which to understand another; and the substitution will change our view of both." (ibid, pp: 24-5). Hermeneutics, according to Hamilton, is the science of interpretation. It stresses the individuality of each human expression and against scientific generalizations and claims for several meanings of any utterance in the light of its special circumstances (ibid, p: 44). He explains that hermeneutics is historically implemented for the interpretation of religious texts in order to make divine revelation become comprehensible to human understanding. It is to serve the needs of the interpretative community, which in this case, the Christians. He also argues that hermeneutics requires us to reinterpret the very notions of tradition and continuity on which it is based (ibid, pp: 44-5). He concluded that the need for an alternative history in order to imagine an alternative society. And this, according to him, become the main source of postmodern discontent - its disaffection with continuity, tradition and accredited form of transmitting the past (ibid, p: 189).

⁶¹⁰ Ibid, p:15-6.

As far as the theory of future society is concerned, the grand theory of human development as found in our two Western futurists has not been the concern of their Muslim counterparts, both in Sardar and Elmandjra when they analyze the present state of Muslim conditions. Although Elmandjra had offered quite a similar civilizational approach as of Toffler – the War of Civilizations – his term refers to the type of challenges that facing the Muslim societies. Sardar’s civilizational project, on the other hand, was a conceptual model for the regeneration of Muslim civilization. It is not a closed model for his approach was not in the description on the type of Muslim future society as such, but an invitation to study the Madīnan state of the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.,u.h) as a value-oriented model to find civilizational parameters in accordance to the needs of the Muslim *Ummah*.

On this ground, the process of rationalization of knowledge and system is not studied by both scholars as the way Toffler and Bell perceived in their Third Wave civilization and post-industrial society theories. Instead, both Sardar and Elmandjra problematize knowledge and system of the contemporary Muslim explicitly throughout their works in which must be resolved through the *ijtihād* method. In fact, it is fairly sufficient to say that their whole works are on this *ijtihād* paradigm. Underlying this *ijtihād* paradigm, as we perceive, is the rationalization of religious knowledge and system that both Sardar and Elmandjra believe, are currently in its stagnant state. They see tradition as the source of inspiration not of stagnance. The Muslim systems have been in stagnancy for more than at least 500 years since the dawn of colonialism. The need and the capacity of regeneration is the question at hand – and both tend to sought in *ijtihād* endeavor – a term we use to encapsulate both the spirit of *jihād* as struggle

and *ijtihād*, the reasoning process to produce constructive thoughts within the Islamic framework and worldviews. *Ijtihād* in our understanding is not merely the delivery of *fatwā*, but most importantly the whole intellectual endeavor in attaining wisdom from both the tradition, as well as the environment in which one live.

They seem to implicitly agree on this core problem – that the rationalization process of Muslim knowledge and system must undergo a reconstructing process – as in Sardar’s case – a rethinking of Islam. Although both did not mention any kind of “Muslim reformation” but the general tone is to go towards that direction – a new interpretation of Islam that appreciates the tradition, but at the same time taking into account the challenge of postmodernity. This will be attended later in our next chapter. But overall, in order for Islam to renew itself, the rationalization process of Islamic knowledge and its system seems to be inevitable, at least in Sardar and Elmandjra’s views.

In comparison to the two Western futurists, Sardar especially places a great emphasis on the role of science and technology in the Muslim societies. His attempt on developing an authentic Islamic science is found in his book, *Explorations in Islamic Science*,⁶¹¹ which has been one of the referred texts on the subject. As we have discussed elsewhere, Sardar’s treatment on science and technology is based on his assertion that Islamic science is “an integral part of Islam as a complete way of life.”⁶¹² Thus, he attempt to distinguishes its conceptual matrix from the Western worldview that

⁶¹¹ See Ziauddin Sardar, 1989, *Explorations in Islamic Science*, London: Mansell Publishing Ltd.

⁶¹² *Ibid*, p: 253.

very much prevalent in the implementation of science and technology in the current Muslim societies.

The construction of a unique and authentic Islamic science, until now, is far from reality. The paradox of this situation is very much related to the fact that scientific and technological development can only be conceived and freely exercised in a condition where a society had transformed itself from the state of basic necessities of the *badawa* to the state of *hadāra*, to use Ibn Khaldun's conception, in which scientific knowledge and endeavor becomes the culture of the advanced society. This, of course, is hardly true if we study the reality of the current Muslim society. The Muslim society has to go through many difficult stages in order to fully realize the potentials and resources that have been bestowed on them.

Elmandjra in contemplating this situation signifies the dire need for the Muslim society to embark on futures thinking as a mode of thought to develop awareness on the impact of science and technology. This is to emphasize that as far as the impact of the current practice and products of science and technology on the future of Muslim societies is concerned, science and technology must be dealt with selective measurement based on the Islamic criteria.

As part of the construction of Muslim society, science and technology should be regarded as of high importance in its development programs, and this we believe, goes back to the rationalization process that should be encouraged and cultivated within the society, aside with the exercise of justice in every single aspect of Muslim community.

On the Muslim futurists' responses to change, science and technology, both Sardar and Elmandjra consider technology as a significant part of the whole society that gives the society tools for operation, at the same time establishes mechanism for regenerating process within the society. Put simply, in Western perspective, technology becomes the master, whereas in Muslims perspective, technology is the servant to serve greater goal. The problem with the master is of two manifolds – one is regarding to power, in which technology has been given too much power, and the other is regarding to dependency and enslavement, in which human becomes the slave to his own creation, the machine and the system that provides the functionality of the machine. Thus, excessive technology does not beget freedom but denies it. The problem with the servant on the other hand, is of the capacity and type of technology that suits the real need of the Muslim people. The servant now is in a great need to be updated, and not simply imitation of the technology of the developed world. In Muslim context, this servant needs massive surgical operations in order to function appropriately.

5.5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is obvious that both Sardar and Elmandjra derive their thought from Islamic sources, the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (p.b.u.h). The basis of their claim for Islamic futures thinking lies in these two main sources – which stand from the basic tenet of the Islamic beliefs. Thus, there is no doubt that this unison of source of their thoughts could have a great influence in related discussions pertaining to their ideas, as these two sources become the catalyst of their intellectual endeavour with regards to futures thinking. At the same time, the impact of Islamic worldview would

tremendously shaped the way they approach the issues at hand. This could be found in the whole analysis of their focus of concern, the approach and methodology they use, their perspective towards the West and the Other, the contents of their discourse, and finally their outlook of the future. Naturally, this source is the bedrock of their worldview.

With regard to the focus of their concern, it is clear that both Sardar and Elmandjra connect themselves with the present condition of the Muslim *Ummah* and its future on one hand, and the current situation and the future of humanity on the other. This fact is inevitable as both issues – that of the Muslim *Ummah* and humanity – are inter-related and indeed, part of the essence of the Islamic teachings. It could be said that both approach the humanitarian issues in religio-culture-power perspective, in which these three elements correlate with each other.

In observing the approach and methodology of their intellectual endeavours, it is apparently the kind of civilizational approach in which Islam is reckoned as a civilization, rather than just a religion or culture. This could be found in both scholars' assertion about the significance of Islam not only as a religion, but as a worldview and a societal project. They also emphasize the dynamic aspect of Islam, which could be operationalized through refunctioning the intellectual creativity of *ijtihad* as an operational tool of the Islamic values and principles. This means that in their understanding, Islam is a sturdy force, with the power of changing and innovating new ideas, values and identity. Both are public intellectuals who – apart from their academic position at the academia – reach wider audiences outside the academic blocks. In this

regard, Sardar's audience is concentrated within English-speaking circle, whereas Elmandjra concentrated in Franco-Arabic milieu. Both posit their own credentials within those different circles and contexts. Both were educated in the West, understood, and mastered the knowledge of the West and use its methods in conveying their ideas and idealism. In terms of their contribution to futures thinking, Sardar is the editor of *Futures Journal*, whereas Elmandjra is an active contributor for *Futuribles Journal* (French). These contributions enable their ideas to be more accessible and disseminated, hence their influence are more presence in effecting the desirable changes that would eventually shape the future of the *Ummah* and humanity.

Of all the similarities and differences that have been discussed, the most significance aspect is their ideas of future society which are whether systematic (with specific outline/masterplan) or general. Assessing both scholars' futures idealism from the perspective of their proposal of specific and systematic master plan or projection for the future society, we found a great difference between them. The main distinction of Sardar's futures thinking, as could be seen in his **Project 'Umrān** and **Warrd System** is basically programmatic. This could be influenced by his educational background as an information scientist who, as he defines it "...someone who handles, processes, stores and retrieves information"⁶¹³ – the kind of person who values systematic thinking. His exposure to organisational activities during his years with FOSIS as its General Secretary could also be a strong element which contributes to the development of his

⁶¹³Ziauddin Sardar, 2004, *Desperately Seeking Paradise: Journey of A Sceptical Muslim*, London: Granta Books, p:172.

intellectual attitude, besides his working experience dealing with futures planning in the Hajj Research Centre for several years.⁶¹⁴

Thus, in comparison to Elmandjra, the impact of Sardar's programmatic approach can be seen indirectly in the implementation of **Project Islam Haḍāri** by the Malaysian government in 2004 and recently, the launching of **Project Vision 1440H** by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) in March 2006.⁶¹⁵ Table 5.3 demonstrates the comparison between these three projects:

⁶¹⁴Ibid, pp:122-135. Note his interesting evaluation of how the Saudis have abolished the cultural heritage of Mecca in his own words as follow: "The Saudis approached technology as though it was theology. And in both, complexity and plurality was shunned. God is one, the Prophet is one, the ummah – the international Muslim community - is one. Just as plurality of opinions within Islam had led to discord and weakened the ummah, so different perspectives on Mecca, and diverse solutions to different problems of the Hajj, would complicate matters and lead to disasters. All problems of Hajj had a single solution: modern technology...Moreover, if Truth is monolithic, then the holy areas should reflect the monolithic nature of Truth. So, everything had to be at the same level. There was no place in Mecca for history or tradition or culture, the human wellsprings of diversity, even if these are, according to the Qur'an, Divinely created, purposeful endowments of human nature and human society". (Ibid, p:132).

⁶¹⁵ See the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Report on the Project in : www.isdb.org/irj/go/km/docs/documents/IDBDevelopments/Internet/.../IDB%201440H%20Vision/ECO_Regional_Workshop_Report.11/01/09. See also: <http://www.isdb.org/irj/go/km/docs/documents/IDBDevelopments/Internet/English/IDB/CM/About%20IDB/IDB%201440H%20Vision/Introduction.html.11/01/09>.

Title	Project <i>‘Umrān</i>	Project Islam <i>Hadhāri</i>	Project Vision 1440H
CONCEPTS	<p>Project <i>‘Umrān</i> is a conceptual map for Muslim societies to reconstruct the Islamic civilizations based upon the <i>Madīnan</i> model.</p>	<p>Islam <i>Hadhāri</i> is an approach that emphasizes development, consistent with the tenets of Islam and focused on enhancing the quality of life. It aims to achieve this via the mastery of knowledge and the development of the individual and the nation; the implementation of a dynamic economic, trading and financial system; an integrated and balanced development that creates a knowledgeable and pious people who hold to noble values and are honest, trustworthy, and prepared to take on global challengers.</p>	<p>Vision 1440H is an initiative to promote comprehensive human development, with a focus on the priority areas of alleviating poverty, improving health, improving governance and prospering the people. The vision is aimed at transforming IDB into a premier and proactive development bank with wide knowledge and competencies in all its core areas and responsive to the diverse needs of the people in member countries and Muslim communities in non-member countries</p>
STRATEGIES/ MODUS OPERANDI	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Articulation of the Model of the <i>Madīna</i> State. 2. Articulation of civilizational parameters of Islam. 3. Generation of theories, models and paradigms based on 1 and 2 above. 4. A realistic assessment of contemporary environment and estimation of possible future environment. 5. Articulation of goals from the Muslim ummah. 6. Development of Muslim PAYOFF – Plans and Assessment to Yield Options for the Future. 7. Continuous reappraisal of alternative Muslim futures derived from 1-6 above. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Restoring moderation and embracing the mainstream, which will help strengthen both the people and the state. 2. Valuing good character, which should be central to the society in order to help it become a role model for both the Ummah and humanity as a whole. 3. Adopting seriousness and accountability in dealing with society’s main undertakings. 4. Building all social relations upon trust and good morals. 5. Respecting law and order. 6. Cherishing unity, cooperation, and solidarity. 7. Implementing genuine Islamic teachings and realizing the objectives of the <i>Sharī‘ah</i>. 8. Empowering the state to be in a leading position, not feeble and weak-willed. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reforming IDB. 2. Alleviating poverty problem within the Islamic countries. 3. Promoting health . 4. Universalising education. 5. Prospering the people. 6. Empowering women of Islam. 7. Expanding the Islamic financial industry. 8. Facilitating the integration of IDB’s Member Country economies among themselves and with the world. 9. Improving the image of the Muslim world.

GOALS	<p>The Project ‘Umrān aims at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reconstructing the Islamic/Muslim civilizations • Establishing an <i>Ummah</i> state • Creating an alternative futures for Muslim 	<p>The Project Islam Hadhāri aims at achieving the following objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith and piety in Allah • A just and trustworthy government • A free and independent people • Mastery of knowledge • Balanced and comprehensive economic development • A good quality of life • Protection of the rights of minority groups and women • Cultural and moral integrity • Safeguarding the environment • Strong defenses 	<p>The Vision 1440H project is aimed at giving impetus to the level of economic growth to make the <i>Ummah</i> self-reliant and affluent.</p>
LEVEL OF IMPLEMENTATION	The <i>Ummah</i> and the Muslim world	Malaysia	<i>The Ummah</i> and the Muslim countries

Table 5.3: Comparisons between Sardar’s Project ‘Umrān, Malaysia’s Project Islam Hadhāri and the IDB’s Project 1440H

Finally, we found that both scholars are concern on the lack of methodological and systematical features of the Muslim thinking, which, obviously becomes the crucial hindrance to their backwardness. The synthesis and symbiosis of culture that should be resulted from their rich tradition with the present challenge – be they in the name of postmodernism, or wars of civilizations – has not become reality for the complacent mode of existence that is very much prevalent in certain Muslim societies in one hand, and the amount of assault and hostility in the other. Such disparity and rampant gap need urgent, in fact, drastic solution, yet the solution should be internalized and thereafter, materialized in a systematic plan of action as strongly proposed by the scholars through anticipatory and participatory processes.

The challenge to the Muslim scholars at least on two capacities; firstly, the capacity to understand the text and this requires specific qualities and training. Second, the capacity to understand the context in which the contemporary world is being westernized and Western ideas and culture are the dominant cultural determinators. These scholars who are trained in Western disciplines but with an Islamic awareness to face this problem - sometimes tend to incorporate certain Western ideas and theories in understanding Islam - are the case of Sardar and Elmandjra. But as Sardar himself tries to derive his works on the worldview of Islam - as could be found in his model of **Warrd System**, and his experiment in initiating epistemological discourse on Islamic Science in particular - his somewhat deconstructionist approach raised suspicions among a more traditional audiences. Further, his cynical approach on certain issues raised doubt on his understanding of Islamic tradition and its special applications. As for Elmandjra, the lack of writings in English medium influences the acceptance of his discourse on future in general Muslim world, whereas his civilizational approach has not been widely accepted by the Arab audiences except for a relatively confined intellectual discourse among a number of Arab-Muslim futurists as mentioned in the work of Muhsin Khadir in Chapter IV.

Futures Studies, as many other modern disciplines and studies, is the product of Western history and thought. Therefore, blind acceptance or in that matter, blind rejection, is not a realistic approach or method in dealing with its implications on contemporary Islamic thought. The rejectionist approach which ceases any analytical and critical investigation on the problem at hand will not solve the mounting problems that currently facing the Muslim *Ummah*. Creating and appreciating alternative

discourse is what the Muslim intellectuals should engage in at the moment so as to provide relevant solutions that direly needed by the *Ummah*. The dichotomic or vis-à-vis approach, in which Islam and the West is put into continuous confrontation physically, mentally and spiritually, will not lead to fruitful engagement that engendered peaceful coexistence through mutual learning and understanding.

We firmly believe that the current situation requires is a change in outlook. As Muhammad Asad put it rightly; "...we need not 'reform' Islam as some Muslims think, because it is already perfect in itself. What we must reform is our attitude towards religion, our laziness, our self conceit, our shortsightedness – in short, our defects, and not some supposed defects of Islam...A change there must be: but it should be a change from within ourselves – and it should go in the direction of Islam, and not away from it."⁶¹⁶

Furthermore, the scholars' concerns on the need for a fresh outlook and understanding of the Muslims' culture and also their religion should not be taken for granted. As far as the Muslims future is concerned, the only way for survival is to question and reflect on their non-existence position in today's world development, and to find answer in the source of their strength – inner and outer – in the Qur'ān and the *Sunnah*.

⁶¹⁶Muhammad Asad, 1934, *Islam at The Crossroads*, Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, p:101.

However, as we have tried to demonstrate in our preceding discussions on the lack of socio-historical analyses on both scholars' discourse on the future of Islam in particular and the future of humanity in general, we humbly attempt at proposing an Islamic futurical investigations that study the human society within the framework of a socio-historical analysis which looks at human nature or *fiṭrah* as the centre of its study. Our proposal on such investigation or study will be discussed in the context of postmodern time and beyond, as we view that the placement of such significant an investigation or study should appreciate the challenge posed by postmodernity and the idea beyond it.

CHAPTER VI

A PROPOSAL FOR AN ISLAMIC FUTURICAL INVESTIGATION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

Our discussion on the significance of an Islamic perspective on futurical investigation attempts at finding an alternative discourse within the study of human and its future society. Therefore this study has, by and large, discussed Futures Studies within Western worldview and paradigm in order to firstly understand the discipline from its origin and then to evaluate it from a critical point of view. It also looks the study within the framework of a socio-historical analysis that investigates human society in its civilisational processes. This is done in a spirit of searching how and how far Futures Studies and socio-historical methods are appropriate to the study of the future of Islam.

The search for a universal theory of human society and civilization as proposed by Ibn Khaldūn through the cyclical theory of human civilizations had influenced many of today's sociological study of human society, Western and Muslim alike. Modern analysis of the same kind can be found in the work of Mālek Bennabi entitled "*The Question of Ideas in the Muslim World*."⁶¹⁷ This framework of a cyclical view of history and civilization, along with the linear view of historical progression of human society which had long dominated the mainstream of Western sociological

⁶¹⁷ See Mālek Bennabi, 2003, *The Question of Ideas in the Muslim World* (trans. Mohamed

thinking, aims at unveiling the fundamental dynamics and laws governing human history and civilization, hence discovering a rigorous theory of society capable of providing both schematic and non-schematic structural analysis and an adequate theory of action.

Based on this general framework, we put forward our argument on the foundation that the absence of a comprehensive understanding of human nature as the central component of human behavior affects the whole discussion of our scholars' analyses on the future of human society, particularly with regard to Toffler and Bell, who dismiss the most important criterion that define the historical movements in human society – the human nature.

Conversely, we argue that futures thinking is part and parcel of human nature - and Islam, as the religion of *fiṭrah*, offers a unique understanding of human history in which human is an active agent, placed at the centre of history (a humanistic value shared with the Western tradition since the Enlightenment), and equipped with full capacities and specific characteristics that become their nature. And this nature, the *fiṭrah*, is the central core in human's physical, emotional, mental and spiritual setups. This Islamic worldview therefore engenders a different approach in looking to future, hence a distinctively unique idealism of human society as compared to the Western worldview on an ideal human society in the future.

Following this argument, we firmly believe that the Islamic notion of human nature, the *fiṭrah*, should be understood and studied in accordance to its dynamism in

the history of humankind, manifested throughout their civilizations in all its aspects and facets - spiritual, intellectual, physical and social, as well as political. In our analysis, we attempt to look at this dynamic concept of *fiṭrah* with freedom and future, in which we propose, the basis of an Islamic approach to study future, or in that sense, an Islamic Futures Studies. The methodological proposal of an Islamic Futures Studies, if there is to be one, will be another topic for further research.

6.2 A PROPOSAL FOR AN ISLAMIC FUTURICAL INVESTIGATION

As we have mentioned earlier, serious attempts in studying the socio-historical process of human society from the Muslim perspective had been largely inspired by the great work of Ibn Khaldūn, the father of modern sociology and its pioneer. His analytical study on the development of human society through his investigation on the *badawa*, the primitive state of a society, and the *hadhāra*, its civilized state, discloses the cyclical theory of human progression towards social perfection. The theory of cyclical pattern of human development begins with the study of human nature, the *fiṭrah*, in which he regards as the fundamental element of any study on human in their personal and social behaviour. We will return to this point on *fiṭrah* later in the discussion.

Although Ibn Khaldūn uses history as his conceptual framework on studying human in social phenomena, he did not turn to history to find his standards and goal, or to see how the idea progressively realizes itself and learn its future course in a

deterministic mode.⁶¹⁸ In his study on the human society through *‘ilm al-‘umrān*, a term he introduced to define his socio-historical analysis, Muhsin Mahdi asserts that Ibn Khaldūn uses the word *‘ibra*, both as negative admonition, and positive guidance and direction for future action. In his analysis on Ibn Khaldūn’s usage of *‘ibra*, he found that *‘ibra* is meant to warn the community against certain patterns of action, and urged it to learn from the good deeds of the past and to imitate them. Ibn Khaldūn’s convention of *‘ibra*, according to Mahdi, is in connection with history that “...indicated essentially the activity of looking for the unity of the plan underlying the multiplicity of events, of grasping the permanence pervading their ever-changing and destructible character, and using the results of such reflections in the management of practical affairs.”⁶¹⁹

In Ibn Khaldun’s usage, Mahdi concedes that the position of *‘ibra* is “...a movement from the externals of history to its internal nature.”⁶²⁰ He explicitly identifies this effort with scientific or philosophic investigation, and calls it a part of wisdom (*hikma, sophia*). *‘Ibra*, therefore, “...is not only the link between history and wisdom, but also the process through which history is contemplated with the aim of understanding its nature and of utilizing the knowledge thus gained in action.”⁶²¹

⁶¹⁸ Muhsin Mahdi, 2006, *Ibn Khaldun’s Philosophy of History: A Study in the Philosophic Foundation of the Science of Culture*, Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, 2006, p: 296. In fact, Mahdi claims, Ibn Khaldūn believes that future action cannot be determined by any science. The future, in Ibn Khaldun’s view as observed by Muhsin Mahdi, “...continues to be the product of an art which requires the knowledge of the end of man and society, and the knowledge of the actual circumstances supplied by history, but which must be perfected through experience. Having equipped himself with such knowledge, it remains the responsibility of the wise man to decide what is best under particular circumstances. He is not relieved of the task of making right choices. History, even when ascertained and explained in the light of the new science of culture, may help the wise man to make a better choice, but it does not and cannot choose for him.” (Ibid).

⁶¹⁹ Ibid, p: 68.

⁶²⁰ Ibid.

⁶²¹ Muhsin Mahdi, 2006, *Ibn Khaldun’s Philosophy of History: A Study in the Philosophic*

Thus, the historical dimension of time is then connected with the present and future by understanding God's law of nature (*sunnatullah*) which guides and rules the universe and its systems.

The notion of *'ibra*, in modern sense, should constitute critical and analytical investigation on the history of humankind and their future for the significance of history is to offer an understanding of the past and to assist in taking preferable action in the future. This is where Futures Studies comes into picture, in which the past and present decisions are studied and analyzed with the intent to guide future actions. Thus, the application of *'ibra* as a general approach is followed by methods to study how human can influence, in fact take control of his action in his future endeavors. In this sense, in order for Muslims to appreciate the contribution of Futures Studies in a constructive way, the methods should be evaluated to distinguish their appropriateness to the specific needs and demands of the Muslim societies.

Ibn Khaldūn's brilliant effort had been widely recognized both in the West and Muslims context, except that the West develop and incorporate his sociological methodology into their own worldview whereas Muslims ended with mere contentment of its theoretical supremacy without realizing its methodological worth and constructive value in understanding the social and historical process.

Our position in analyzing the methodology used by the scholars in their future analysis tend to see in a constructive engagement on the part of the both the Western and Islamic viewpoints. We have weighed the weaknesses on the Western

methodological analysis in its evolutionist-historicist approach as presented in Toffler and Bell's theories of future society, and we also aware of the room for improvement for an in-depth Islamic socio-historical analysis that stems from its own worldviews, values and system as we believe that without this appreciation to the Islamic unique identity, Muslims society and civilization of the future can only be an extension of the Western future. In so doing, we perceive that there are three components that need to be studied in Islamic futurical investigation, that are *fitrah*, freedom and future.

Fitrah, as had been discussed by Ibn Khaldūn and Bennabi, is the most vital component in understanding human society – this permanent characteristic of human nature is a dynamic concept, not a static one. Ibn Khaldun in discussing the characteristics of the *badwi* (primitive peoples), asserts that they are closer to the original state of human nature (*fitra*) and “more prone to lead a virtuous life when it is preached to them.”⁶²² This pure characteristic of the *badwi*, according to Ibn Khaldun, is not like the city dwellers who have gone far in practising vice deeds. It is dynamic in the sense that *fitrah* does not stand alone – in fact the concept of *fitrah* is very much related to human behaviour. The dynamism of *fitrah* therefore lies in this dynamic relationship with human behaviour that changes according to the changing environment and contexts. It should be the core of our futurical analysis in order not to be carried away with many theories of human society in the future as the theories often concern more on the external factors of human development, particularly scientific and technological development, which overlook the real problem – the human who made the choice and decision on whether or not to be influenced by those external factors.

⁶²² Muhsin Mahdi, 2006, p: 195.

This brings us to our second component – freedom - that is the capacity to choose, to act, to plan, and to execute. This capacity should be enhanced to positive and constructive directions; otherwise human being will be directed to destructive modes, which, in this case, no futuristic theories can help out human in the future. In this way, our third component, future, is the orientation of life, in which purposive actions – or borrowing Husserl’s term, ‘intentionality’⁶²³ - carried out through the execution of freedom that can be implemented and directed into positive and constructive future for Muslims and also mankind. The notion of future, in the Islamic sense, should be understood within the Islamic conception of time – therefore the attainment of *hasanah fī ad-dunyā* (excellence in the world) and *hasanah fī al-ākhirah* (excellence in the hereafter) must be realized throughout the investigation. The relation between these three components can be summarised as in this equation:

$$\textit{Fitrah} + \textit{Freedom} = \textit{Future}$$

⁶²³ See Diane Collinson’s description on Husserl as follow: “Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938) was a philosopher, known as the father of phenomenology. His work was a break with the purely positivist orientation and understanding of the science and philosophy of his day, giving weight to the notion that experience is the source of all knowledge, at the same time marked an *epistemological threshold*, in transition away from the dominant mindset derived from Greco-European deductive logic, linear cause-and-effect and hierarchical social order as well as the modern worldview that subscribes to a unidimensionally rankable universe, competition, conquest, techno-centricism and unicultural assimilation” (Diane Collinson (ed), 1997, *Fifty Major Philosophers: A Reference Guide*, London: Routledge, pp: 128-130). In *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, Husserl defines phenomenology as a descriptive analysis of the essence of pure consciousness. For Husserl, the realm of pure consciousness is distinct from the realm of real experience: it is a theory of pure phenomena, and not of actual experiences (Edmund Husserl, 1931, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. by W.R. Boyce Gibson, London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., p: 133). Intentionality, according to Husserl, is originated from consciousness. This means every act of consciousness is directed at some object or other purpose (Edmund Husserl, 1970, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, Evanston: Northwestern University Press, p: 134).

The interconnection and interrelation between these three components is the conceptual aspect of an Islamic futurical investigation. This investigation, as we intent and suppose, is not a new discipline as Futures Studies because the nature and the environment in which Futures Studies evolves, as we have mentioned elsewhere quite persistently, is totally alien to the nature and the environment of the Muslim societies as well as their needs and requirements. We seek to consign the conceptual components – *fitrah*, freedom and future – within Ibn Khaldūn’s comprehensive study on human society, *‘ilm al-‘umrān*. In other words, an Islamic futurical analysis should not be done in separate disciplines – sociology, anthropology, psychology, politics, and economics – as this can be contradictory to the Islamic concept of *tawhīd*, the paradigm that illuminates the Muslim life and their thoughts. In this conceptual realm, the matrices, in which *fitrah* and freedom are the indispensable conditions, should be internalized at the individual and societal level in every single Muslim community through the process of education.

The internalization of these two elements is therefore directed to the individual and societal purposive actions towards the future; the future in this sense, the eternal time, has to become the orientation of life. Throughout the internalization process, the principle of *‘ibra* and *tajriba* should be exercised rigorously because the whole process of human living is a dynamic process that correlates the realizations of human *fitrah* through the faculty of reasoning or *fikr* (*‘ibra*) with the capacity of freedom that human has in manifesting purposive actions throughout the course of human experience (*tajriba*) which gives him power and full accountability in future. This process is where the methodological aspect of an Islamic future analysis comes into picture.

In Futures Studies, the methods applied within the discipline are mainly consist of two categories; first, the qualitative method relating to the socio-historical analysis using the evolutionist and historicist methodology, and the second is the quantitative methods, rigorously applied using statistical and mathematical techniques such as the Delphi technique, simulation, scenario writings, and trend extrapolation. The first method is being regarded as the art of futures thinking, whereas the second is the scientific realm of the study. Alternative method in analyzing future has been currently implemented by alternative accents within the field.

The macrohistorical analysis is one of the crucial shifts in understanding the history of social systems, although this type of analysis is not original. In our reading on the method, we find its close affinity with the methodological aspect of Islamic future analysis in the work of Ibn Khaldūn. According to Inayatullah, macrohistory is “...the study of the histories of social systems, along separate trajectories, through space and time in search of patterns, even laws of social change.”⁶²⁴ Macrohistory, as discussed by Inayatullah in connection with Future Studies, focuses more on overall patterns and stages.

By examining history and theories of history, he asserts that macrohistory seeks to understand “...(1) the relationship between agency, structure and the transcendental; (2) whether history is cyclical or linear or some combined version (spiral or having aspects of both); the metaphysics of time, the metaphorical basis for grand theory; what the future is likely to look like; and the relationship between

⁶²⁴ www.metafuture.org/Articles/Macrohistoryandthefuture.htm#_edn111/01/09.

leadership and historical structure.”⁶²⁵ While giving us insights into the human condition, macrohistory also intends to explain past, present and future.

In ‘Macrohistory And Macrohistorians: Perspectives on Individual, Social and Civilizational Change’, Johan Galtung and Sohail Inayatullah argue that “...a complete macrohistory is one that has linear, cyclical and transcendental dimensions. A complete macrohistory theorizes and describes why and how collectivities move through space and time.”⁶²⁶ The real use of macrohistory, they further assert, “...is to not only find meaning in the past so as to create new possibilities of meaning for the future, but to reduce suffering - macrohistory is essentially about understanding and changing the human condition.”⁶²⁷ In other words, they emphasize convincingly that “...the best or most complete macrohistory or history of the future must be able to negotiate the many types of time: seasonal, rise and fall, dramatic, mythological, expansion/contraction, cosmic, linear, social-cyclical as well as the intervention of the timeless in the world of time. Each type of time could be used as a starting point for the creation of alternative scenarios of the future.”⁶²⁸ Macrohistory thus, can be regarded as an alternative method within socio-historical analysis on future in the grand theory of human society on the basis that it does not focus itself on predicting the future but instead, as Inayatullah claims, to understand the stages of history in order to understand the stages of the future.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁵ Ibid.

⁶²⁶ <http://www.metafuture.org/Books/MacrohistoryandMacrohistorians.htm.11/01/09>.

⁶²⁷ Ibid.

⁶²⁸ <http://www.metafuture.org/Articles/MacrohistoryandtheFuture.htm.11/01/09>.

⁶²⁹ Ibid.

Although this sounds somewhat promising, and as Inayatullah himself relates this macrohistorical method with Ibn Khaldūn's methodology on studying human history, he misses the core component that we have mentioned earlier – the human *fitrah*. As we have argued, the relationship between *fitrah* – the human nature – with their behaviour is dynamic, and we humbly assume that it is this dynamism that should be observed and scrutinized by our Muslim futurists as this is the unique characteristic of Islamic analysis in its futurical investigation that distinguishes it from the present methods applied within the discipline.

Macrohistory, as we can see – is still works from the outer perspective – changes without, not from within – whereas the study should focus on human and their behavior, not in a behaviorist sense, as criticized by Husserl on the psychologism of human experience, but the essence of the experience produced by human behaviour guided by *fitrah*, hence the term *tajriba* – the experience. Unless we study the core problem, then we will tend to be distracted and blinded by many theories that satisfactorily claim to understand the future but surprisingly ignorant of the very agent that transform the future – the human.

As Ibn Khaldūn says it correctly, it is the wise man that can contemplate on events (by exercising *‘ibar*) and choose the right actions.⁶³⁰ In philosophical analysis, wisdom will produce ethics as found in Aristotle's *Ethics*.⁶³¹ This study however, does not attempt to embark upon the details of the methodological tools, variants, so

⁶³⁰ Mahdi, Muhsin. 2006. *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History: A Study in the Philosophic Foundation of the Science of Culture*. Kuala Lumpur: The Other Press, p: 25.

⁶³¹ See Aristotle, 1985, *Nicomachean Ethics* (trans. Terence Irwin), Indianapolis: Hackett.

on and so forth but to initiate alternative discourse for further research on the subject matter.

6.3 CONCLUSION

Throughout the study, we affirm that the Islamic methodology as currently applied in contemporary Islamic thought need to be reevaluated in order to face the challenge of time. We also insist that the present methodologies should integrate futures thinking as the way forward in changing the Muslims conditions. We argue that, taking into account the problematic aspects in the worldviews and methods of Futures Studies, it remains a viable alternative methodology in the process of regenerating the *ijtihād* function in the Muslims society at large, and in the end, and most importantly, to reform and revive the Muslim *Ummah* in the future.

In searching for an Islamic approach for studying future, we argue that it is not presumed as a deterministic venture of the futurists, but rather a value-guided system of thought and action. It involves methods, purposes, contents and sources - the texts. As we can see from our previous discussion in Chapter IV, the Qur'ānic verses demonstrate at least two important points in futurical investigation: the first is the act of conjecture – that is regarded as a result of wishful thinking, and is therefore blameworthy. The second is the aspect of planning – as found in Prophet Yūsuf's economic plan for the Egyptian society. Planning, even in modern time, is an important part of human life. From an Islamic perspective, it is part of human's *ikhtiyār* (effort) to work for his *taqdīr* (providence). Therefore, as we argue previously, freedom is to act according to one's true nature, or *fitrah* demands. It is

through understanding this true relationship between *fitrah* and freedom that Muslims can choose and act on their future.

Therefore, these three crucial aspects – the *fitrah*, freedom and future - will constitute a distinctively Islamic futurical investigation. The paradigm, worldview and the methodology of an Islamic futurical investigation are expected to direct our concern on understanding the parameters that becomes the products of such paradigm and worldview, which, consequently hoped to facilitate our future research on the methodological construction of a comprehensive Islamic study on human society, appreciating the elements of past, present and future in their holistic mode.

Our intention in this research is therefore to understand and open up a critical analysis within Muslim societies on their future, their present methods of thinking, acting and most importantly, their understanding of their own religion. We wish to situate this discourse within the Islamic tradition, not a break with it. We believe – as the Muslim scholars also believe - that the intellectual challenge of our time is between reclaiming the past as the source of our identity, and at the same time, the challenge of present realities and the future in which we are being paralyzed due to our own incapacities.

A credible response to the challenge of modernity and secularism is the urgent task that needs to be pursued by today's Muslim scholars in order to offer alternative discourse on the meaning of modernity and secularity, and to fill in the intellectual vacuum in conceptualization and reconceptualization of many significant issues, not only within Muslim societies, but also pertaining to humanity and to finding ethical

and moral guidelines for alternatives future. Such creative and constructive engagement is what the world needs urgently. Our proposal for an Islamic futurical investigation within the general study of human society named by Ibn Khaldūn as *ilm al-umrān* as discussed above is hoped to offer an alternative discourse on such important subject.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

7.1 SUMMARY

Every journey must have its end, and so does this intellectual journey on the works of the four futurists of our time, namely Mahdi Elmandjra, Ziauddin Sardar, Alvin Toffler and Daniel Bell. At first, it began as a mere curiosity of the researcher whenever she contemplates on the future of Muslim in postmodern time, this research then turned out seeking to understand the nature of futures thinking through studying the thoughts of the two Muslim futurists, and their Western counterparts.

7.2 SUGGESTIONS

The whole examination in this study was primarily instigated from the premise that the process of regenerating the Muslim civilization in the future requires renewal effort in thought and action through the *ijtihād-jihād* relations of the contemporary Muslims. This effort demands new methods compatible with the real needs of the *Ummah* in their present time as well as in the future. Thus, futures thinking in general and Futures Studies in particular, are regarded as one of alternative methodologies based upon our preceding discussions in the previous chapters.

The significance of Futures Studies – as an open discipline capable of riveting different worldviews than the standard Western worldview – transcends any

disciplinary boundaries that generally bind it only for academic purposes and to quench its intellectual curiosity. It is, in fact, an activist discipline in which many of its underlying assumptions and questions are founded on moral and ethical quest for a more sustainable future. However, as we have demonstrated in our discussions, Futures Studies is a Western product. Therefore an Islamic alternative for futurist investigation should appreciate its own source as found in the tradition of Islamic scholarship. Hence we propose the study of human society within the perspective of futures thinking in a discipline coined by Ibn Khaldūn as *ilm al-ʿumrān*. This multi-disciplinary study is hoped to invigorate the old living wisdom - the *ijtihād* - at individual and institutional level. As a consequence, the significance of futures thinking and rejuvenating the Islamic thought through *ijtihād* should be founded on civilizational framework.

Conclusively, we assert that there are a few fundamental elements in regenerating the Muslim civilization such as:

(1) The rigorous application of *ijtihād* as a tool and basis for action in restoring the Islamic Thought

We believe that the calls and ongoing discussions on rethinking religion and its meaning in contemporary world could be read in the light of reevaluating *ijtihād* as both conceptual and working tool. As a conceptual tool, *ijtihād* should employ the right understanding of both the texts and the contexts. This understanding of text-context relations must be derived from the principle of *shūra* (mutual consultation). The implementation of *shūra* as been practiced by the great scholars of Islam concerns with the general goodwill for God, the Prophet and the *Ummah*. Abū Hanīfah, for instance, made his school of legal thought a school of *shūra* such that he never

monopolized the process of *ijtihād* to the exclusion of others.

It was reported that the associates of Abū Hanīfah, those who put *fiqh* down in writing with him, numbered forty and among them were the greatest scholars such as Yahyā ibn Zakariya ibn Abu Za'idah who acted as their scribe for thirty years. In our postmodern time, Abū Hanīfah's method of delivering *ijtihād* through the processes of questioning, listening to different views and then giving his opinion and debating the issues back and forth until they reach to final decision should be appreciated and practiced in our time.⁶³²

In so doing, the reconstruction of the concept of *ijtihād* itself should be reassessed so as to become an open methodological tool capable of responding to the challenges and problems of our time and future generations. Writing on this matter, Al-Alwāni proposes that in the process of reconstructing *ijtihād*, there are a few dimensions that need to be identified. The first is the need to review the limitation of exercising *ijtihād* to a group of capable scholars which had deterred the production of adequate *ijtihād*. The call for review is long due, owing to the unprecedented and ongoing explosion of knowledge and communication in which the exercise of a limited sphere of *ijtihād* only to its *fiqhi* dimension and to an individual *mujtahid* is impossible. There is also the need to both acknowledging the significance of social sciences in understanding world affairs and events to facilitate the formulation of relevant ethical questions and to connecting it with *fiqh* as the proprietor of moral value and meaning⁶³³.

⁶³²Shaykh Tāhā Jābir Al-Alwāni, 2005, *Issues in Contemporary Islamic Thought*, London: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, pp: 124-5.

The second dimension, according to Al-Alwāni, is the adoption of “...the principle of collective or institutional *ijtihād* based on diverse disciplines and specialists outside the framework of current *fatwā* committees or *fiqh* councils, despite their continuing importance.”⁶³⁴ *Ijtihād*, he asserts, should be undertaken within the framework of establishing qualified research institutions featuring dedicated scholars from all *fiqhī* and *usūlī* schools, law, *ḥadīth*, and *tafsīr*, as well as social scientists, linguists, and community leaders.⁶³⁵ The practice of *ijtihād* could not be fully realized without a proper understanding of the categories of which the Qur’ān and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet (p.b.u.h) should be understood. The Qur’ān discusses the general and the specific, the absolute and the limited, and its verses have locked and flexible meanings, abrogation and the abrogated, and other topics. Without a proper understanding on this particular subject, especially on the occasions of the revelation that deals with the contextuality of certain experience, we are most likely incline, as we are now, to follow the obsolete juristic rules made by the previous scholars without realizing the true demands of our time.

Despite all these calls and suggestions to renew the *ijtihād* functions from many Muslim scholars since Ibn Taimiyyah, including our scholars Elmandjra and Sardar, the poignant fact is that the Muslim *Ummah* is still struggling with many problems – backwardness, inflexibility and they become victims of neo-colonization and global violence and terrorism. Not much had improved in the state of the *Ummah*’s thought, attitude and action. More ironically, after all the suggestions made by Muslim scholars and ‘*ulamā*’, there is still no single body or institution established to carry out this responsibility whether at individual Muslim states, even more at the

⁶³³ Ibid, pp:132-3.

⁶³⁴ Ibid.

level of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC). The absence of such important institution or research centre for renewing the *ijtihād* function depicts the lack of systematic plan and courage to put the idea into practice.

(2) Futures thinking as an approach and basis for action in regenerating Islam as civilizational force.

As we have seen in the previous discussions, futures thinking and specifically Futures Studies and its significance as a method in understanding new problems and finding new modes and approaches to enable society to move for better future. Efforts to bring in this field to the discussions in the mainstream Islamic thought as done by Sardar and Elmandjra are therefore of high importance and valuable. In practice, the course of creating this awareness on future and the impact of systematic planning in bringing about preferable future whether at individual, communal or societal level should be extensively promoted. Moreover, the application of methods in Futures Studies as a tool in reconstructing civilization as proposed by Sardar should be studied and implemented at higher level under the research centers sponsored by the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC).

The existence of national blue prints for the future of the nations and their societies such as that of the Malaysian, Egyptians, and Jordanian governments are positive indicators of the increase awareness among the leaders of these few Muslim countries but this awareness should be disseminated widely and at best to be implemented at the *Ummah* level through consultation and assistance from the OIC as in the launching of Project Vision 1440 Hijrah by the Islamic Development Bank

⁶³⁵ Ibid, p: 133.

(IDB) which is a subsidiary under the OIC.

Thinking and planning for the future are, in actual, not a privilege for intellectuals or specifically for the futurists with the aim of merely academic purposes and confined for the intellectuals and the academics without the understanding of the reality of their own people and the *Ummah* as Toffler put it rightly: “Asking the very largest of question about our future is not merely a matter of intellectual curiosity. It is a matter of survival.”⁶³⁶

The future of Islam then is not an isolated vision. It should be viewed as part of the universal future of humanity. Seeking the universal future of humanity however, does not imply the totalitarian imposition of any claims for a universal ideology. As Islam claims to be a universal religion, so do the other world religions such as Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism. The bases of these religions are their universal values on justice, human rights and freedom and eternal salvation.

The universal future of humanity therefore should at least agree on these bases. And as far as secularism is concerned, the same universal values are honored. What is most important however is a workable interpretation of these concepts among these religious and non-religious forces and how to efficiently implant and cultivate the concepts within their wisdom and tradition in order to create better future for all. This search of a common workable interpretation could begin from the individual religion or ideology in the form of reevaluating the contents of its epistemological framework as well as the meaning of its matrix.

⁶³⁶ Alvin Toffler, 1980, *The Third Wave*, New York: Bantam Books, p:6

7.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study is a result of the researcher's attempt in comprehending futures thinking in general, and Futures Studies in particular with the general aim to search for alternative discourse within Islam in its process for regeneration. A comparative approach is applied to appreciate the systematic and creative discourse done by the Western scholars in the purpose of renewed understanding of modernity and its reinvention as a unique Western phenomenon.

Further researches on the future of Islam and humanity should focus more on comparative analyses of the many systems exist in the present world and how they will change and transform in the future. Another area that should also be considered is studying alternatives future for Muslims in various societal and cultural settings and new methods to operationalize *ijtihad* in Muslim societies. More significantly are researches in reviewing the contents of Islamic Studies in various religious institutions of higher learning by incorporating dynamic and futuristic view of religious knowledge; increasing the number of research and development on future and encouraging scholars and young researchers to investigate more issues in Futures Studies from Muslim and Islamic perspectives by offering them more funding and scholarships.

We also believe that our rudimentary proposal on three aspects of an Islamic futurical investigation – *fitrah*, freedom and future – should be taken into further critical analysis as the bases for an Islamic paradigm in its futurical methodology. An

Islamic approach and methods on future should be done at a post-doctoral level, considering the level of analysis required to study such an important topic. We would suggest that the study should employ a comparative method, in which the methodologies of the Western Futures Studies are evaluated, analyzed and weighed according to seek for their strengths and weaknesses. We humbly believe that such comparative method that we attempt in present study is crucial in building constructive engagement between Islam and the West in order to produce mutual learning and mutual understanding. This should be done in the spirit and the love for humanity.

7.4 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, we hope this study will serve its purpose in presenting the significance of futures thinking in contemporary Islamic thought so as to find new method in facing the challenge of our postmodern time. We also hope the comparative approach that we employ extensively in this research will encourage such approach in studying Islam and the West as a process to learn and understand each other and for the benefit to the Muslim *Ummah* in particular, and the world in general. We believe that only true honest and constructive engagement can humankind live in harmony and peaceful in the present, and hopefully in the future.

Appendix 1

The Madīna Document

With the name of God, the Most Merciful, the All-Merciful.

1. This book is a prescript (*kitāb*) of Muhammad the Prophet [the Messenger of God¹] to operate among the Faithful Believers (*mu'minīn*) and the Submissive to God (*muslimīn*) from among the Quraish and [the people of²] Yathrib and those who may be under them and join them,³ and take part in wars in their company.
2. Verily they constitute a political unit (*ummah*) as distinct from all the people (of the world).
3. The Emigrants from among the Quraish shall be (responsible) for their ward (rab'ah); and shall pay⁴ their blood-money in mutual collaboration, and shall secure release of their prisoners by paying their ransom themselves, so that the mutual dealings between the Believers⁵ be in accordance with the principles of recognised goodness (ma'ruf) and justice.
4. And the Banū 'Awf shall be responsible for their ward, and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration as heretofore; and every group⁶ shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying their ransom themselves, so that the dealings between the Believers be in accordance with the principles of recognised goodness and justice .
5. And the Banū'l-Hārith⁷ shall be responsible for their ward, and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration as heretofore; and every group⁸ shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying ransom themselves, so that the dealings between the Believers be in accordance with the principles of recognised goodness and justice.
6. And the Banū Sā'idah shall be responsible for their ward, and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration as heretofore; and every group⁹ shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying ransom themselves, so that the dealings between the Believers be in accordance with the principles of recognised goodness and justice.
7. And the Banu Jusham shall be responsible for their ward, and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration as heretofore; and every group¹⁰ shall secure the

1. & 2. Added from Abū 'Ubaid.

³ 'Under them', tabi'a, may also be rendered as "follow them." Instead of join, Abū 'Ubaid's version is: "settle among".

⁴ Abū 'Ubaid adds: "as heretofore". But that is the mistake of the copyist.

⁵ Abū 'Ubaid adds: "and the Submissive".

⁶ Abū 'Ubaid adds: "of them".

⁷ Abū 'Ubaid adds: of the Khazrajites".

⁸ Abū 'Ubaid adds: "of them".

⁹⁻¹¹ Abū 'Ubaid adds: "of them".

- release of its own prisoners by paying ransom themselves, so that the dealings between the Believers be in accordance with the principles of recognised goodness and justice.
8. And the Banū'n-Najjār shall be responsible for their ward, and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration as heretofore; and every group¹¹ shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying ransom themselves, so that the dealings between the Believers be in accordance with the principles of recognised goodness and justice.
 9. And the Banū 'Amr ibn 'Awf shall be responsible for their ward, and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration as heretofore; and every group¹² shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying ransom themselves, so that the dealings between the Believers be in accordance with the principles of recognised goodness and justice.
 10. And the Banu'n-Nabīt shall be responsible for their ward, and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration as heretofore; and every group¹³ shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying ransom themselves, so that the dealings between the Believers be in accordance with the principles of recognised goodness and justice.
 11. And the Banu'l-Aws shall be responsible for their ward, and shall pay their blood-money in mutual collaboration as heretofore; and every group¹⁴ shall secure the release of its own prisoners by paying ransom themselves, so that the dealings between the Believers be in accordance with the principles of recognised goodness and justice.
 - 12/a And verily the Believers shall not leave anyone hard pressed with debts, without helping¹⁵ him in recognised goodness with regard to ransom or blood-money.
 - 12/b And no Believer shall oppose the client of another Believer against him (i.e the latter).¹⁶
 13. And verily the [hands of ¹⁷] pious Believers shall be raised against [every ¹⁸] such person as rises in rebellion or ¹⁹ attempts to acquire anything by force, or is guilty of any violation of pledge or excess or attempts to spread mischief among the Believers; and verily their hands shall rise all together against such a person, even if he be son of anyone of them.

¹²⁻¹⁴ Abū 'Ubaid adds: "of them".

¹⁵ So according to Abū 'Ubaid; in Ibn Hishām: "giving" (i.e. the requisite).

¹⁶ So according to Ibn Hishām: missing in Abū 'Ubaid. The following isolated report of Ibn Hanbal (iii: 342) may be a variant of the same clause: Jābir says: the Messenger of God prescribed for each clan its blood-money, and then wrote: Verily it is not permitted that a contract of clientage of a Muslim individual should be entered into without the permission of his patron (wali)" May be the *yukhālifu* (oppose) by Ibn Hishām is to read *yuhālifu* (enter into contract).

¹⁷ Abū 'Ubaid adds this.

¹⁸ Abū 'Ubaid adds this.

¹⁹In Ibn Hishām: "or"; and in Abū 'Ubaid: "and".

14. And²⁰ no Believer kills (*yaqtulu*) another Believer in retaliation for an unbeliever (*kāfir*), no helps (*yansuru*) an unbeliever against a Believer.
15. And verily the protection (*dhimmah*) of God is one; the humblest (*adnā*) of them (i.e. of the Believers) can, by extending his protection to anyone, put the obligation on all of them; and verily the Believers are brethren to one another (*mawālī*) as against all the people (of the world).
16. And verily those who will obey us from among the Jews will have help and equality; neither shall they be oppressed nor shall any help be given against them.

17. And verily peace of the Believers shall be one; [and] if there be any war in the path of God, no Believer shall make any peace (with the enemy) apart from other Believers, unless it (i.e. this peace) be the same and equally binding on all.
18. And verily every detachment that will fight on our side will be relieved by turns.
19. And verily the Believers as a body shall take vengeance for each of the bloodshed in the path of God.
- 20/a And undoubtedly the pious Believers are the followers of the best and the straightest guidance.
- 20/b And no Polytheist (*mushrik* Arab subject) gives any protection to property and to life of any Quraishite, nor he comes in the way of any Believer in this matter.
21. And verily if anyone intentionally murders a Believer and it is proved, he shall be killed in retaliation, unless the heirs of the murdered person agree [to blood-money]; and verily all the Believers shall actually stand for this, and nothing else shall be lawful for them to do.
22. And verily it is not be lawful for any Believer, who has accepted the contents of this document (*sahīfah*) and has faith in God and in the Last Day, to give or protection to any murderer (*muhdith*); and verily whoever gives help or protection to such person, God's curse and wrath shall be on him on the Day of Resurrection, and no expense or compensation will be accepted from him (i.e. from the protector of the murderer to exonerate him).
23. And whenever ye differ about anything, its reference shall be to God and to Muhammad.
24. And verily the Jews bear (their) expenditure along with the Believers so long as they fight in conjunction.
25. And verily the Jews of the Banū'Awf shall be considered as a community (*ummah*) along with the Believers, for the Jews being their religion and for the Muslims their religion, be one client or original member of the tribe; but whosoever shall be guilty of oppression or violation (of treaty), shall put to trouble none but his own person and the members of his house (*ahl-bait*).
26. And verily the Jews of Banu'n-Najjar shall have the same rights as the Jews of the Banu 'Awf.
27. And verily the Jews of Banu'l-Harith shall have the same rights as the Jews of

²⁰ Abū 'Ubaid omits the word "and".

- the Banu 'Awf.
28. And verily the Jews of Banu Sa'ida shall have the same rights as the Jews of the Banu 'Awf.
 29. And verily the Jews of Banu Jusham shall have the same rights as the Jews of the Banu 'Awf.
 30. And verily the Jews of Banu'l-Aws shall have the same rights as the Jews of the Banu 'Awf.
 31. And verily the Jews of Banu Tha'labah shall have the same rights as the Jews of the Banu 'Awf; but whosoever is guilty of oppression and violation of treaty puts trouble none but his own person and the members of his house.
 32. And verily the Jafnah is a branch of the (tribe of) Tha'labah, even like them.
 33. And verily the Banu'sh-Shutaibah shall have the same rights as the Jews of the Banu 'Awf; and verily there shall be fulfillment and not violation.
 34. And verily the client of the Tha'labah shall have the same rights as the original members.
 35. And verily the sub-branches (*bitanah*) of the Jews shall have the same rights as the principal members.
 - 36/a And verily none of them goes out (on military expedition) except with the permission of Muhammad.
 - 36/b And verily no obstruction shall be placed in the way of (anyone's) retaliation of a wound; and whosoever sheds blood shall be personally responsible for it together with the members of his house, or else (i.e. to do otherwise) it will be injustice; and verily God is along with those who observe this most scrupulously.
 - 37/a And verily the Jews shall bear their expenses (of war) and the Muslims shall bear their expenses; and verily there shall be aid between them as against those who fight the parties (*ahl*) to this document (*sahifah*), and there shall be sincere counsel and well-wishing between them; and there shall be fulfillment (of pledge) and not violation.
 - 37/b And verily no one violates the pledge of his ally (*halif*); and verily help shall be given in favour of the oppressed.
 38. And verily the Jews bear (their) expenditure along with the Believers so long as they fight in conjunction.
 39. And verily the valley (*jawf*) of Yathrib shall constitute an inviolable territory for the parties to this document (*sahifah*).
 40. And verily the protected person (*jār*) shall be considered just like the original member (i.e. who has given protection); neither shall he (the protected person) be harmed, nor shall he himself violate the pledge.
 41. And verily no refuge will be given (i.e. by the protected person to others) without the permission of the original people of the place.
 42. And verily if any murder (hadath) or quarrel takes place between the parties to this document (sahifah), from which any trouble may be feared, it shall be referred to God and to Muhammad, Messenger of God, may God incline to him and protect, and verily God is the guarantee of the most faithful scrupulous observance of the contents of this document.
 43. And verily the Quraish shall be given no protection nor those who help them.

44. And verily there shall be aid between them (i.e. the Muslims and the Jews) against those who invade Yathrib.
- 45/a. And if they (i.e. the Jews) are invited to a peace to participate in and adhere to it; and verily if they invite likewise, the same shall be incumbent upon the Believers in their favour, excepting one who fights for the cause of religion.
- 45/b. On every group shall rest the responsibility for the part [of the city?] faces them.
46. And the Jews of al-Aws, clients as original members, shall have the same rights as the parties to this document (sahifah), with the purest fulfilment with regard to the parties to this document; and verily there shall be fulfilment and not violation; no evil-doers earns anything except against his own self; and verily God is the guarantee of the most truthful and most scrupulous observance of the contents of this document.
48. And verily this prescript (kitab) shall not protect any oppressor or violator of pledge; and verily whosoever goes out (on a military expedition) shall have security, except one who commits oppression and violation of the pledge; and verily God is the protector of those who fulfil and observe the pledge scrupulously, even as Muhammad, Messenger of God – may God incline to and protect him – is (i.e. the protector).

Source: Professor Muhammad Hamidullah, (1975), *The first written constitution in the world: An important document of the time of the Holy Prophet.*

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