

The Salafi canon took shape in the Middle East and the Indian subcontinent, and it exists primarily in Arabic. Yet it radiates beyond the Arab world, including to Africa, where there is widespread Arabic literacy among Muslim scholars. From Senegal to Sudan,<sup>1</sup> the canon informs debates about the nature of Islamic authority, sometimes from the margins of the debate and sometimes at its center.

In some Muslim communities, the lack of a broad and indigenous Islamic written tradition facilitates the spread of Salafism,<sup>2</sup> but in much of Africa, well-developed Islamic textual traditions hold sway. In northwest Africa, a Mālikī-Sufi canon remains dominant. Where the Salafi canon has made some headway, its dissemination owed much to the institutional and intellectual backing it received, both locally and from abroad. This chapter argues that the spread of the canon to Africa was enabled by two developments: the increasing sophistication of Saudi Arabia's institutional outreach to Africa starting in the 1960s (enabled partly by the contributions of Africans resident in the Kingdom), and the emergence of local African partners who, over time, built networks from which Saudi Arabia could recruit potential Salafis. As these developments intersected, material and intellectual forces reinforced one another.

Salafism should not be seen as a crude Middle Eastern “export” to Africa. Recent studies have examined the localization of Salafism in Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Ethiopia, calling attention to ways in which preachers shaped their discourses to address the concerns of local audiences and ways in which Salafism became implicated in local struggles.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> For a Senegalese example, see Muḥammad Aḥmad Lo, *Taqdīs al-Ashkhāṣ fī al-Fīkr al-Ṣūfī*, new edition (Al-Dammām: Dār Ibn al-Qayyim li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 2002; Cairo: Dār Ibn ʿAffān, 2002). See also John Hunwick, compiler and editor, *Arabic Literature of Africa, Volume 4: The Writings of Western Sudanic Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 489–90; for a Sudanese example, see ʿUthmān ʿAbd Allāh Ḥabūb, *Al-Imāma al-ʿUzmā: Wājībāt wa-Ḥuqūq* (Al-Riyād: Maktabat al-Ruṣhd, 2012). Both texts begin with the Sermon of Necessity, reference al-Albānī and/or Shākīr's “authentication” of Prophetic traditions, and contain other markers of the Salafi canon.

<sup>2</sup> Terje Østebø, *Localising Salafism: Religious Change among Oromo Muslims in Bale, Ethiopia* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), xx.

<sup>3</sup> Ousman Kobo, *Unveiling Modernity in West African Islamic Reforms, 1950–2000* (Leiden: Brill, 2012); Abdulai Iddrisu, *Contesting Islam in Africa: Homegrown Wahhabism and*

Building on these studies, I emphasize not just localization, but also dialogical exchanges between localities. Compared with previous studies of Salafism in Africa, however, I pay greater attention to the internal dynamics of Saudi Arabia and the wider Middle East.

Saudi Arabia, in popular discourse, is often seen as a quasi-medieval kingdom that uses its oil wealth to disseminate an unchanging “Wahhābism.” Yet as Stéphane Lacroix has argued, “It is necessary to effect a kind of Copernican revolution in the accepted approach: although Saudi Arabia is often considered solely as a power that exports Islam, it also has to be seen as the recipient of influences emanating from most currents of nineteenth- and twentieth-century revivalism.”<sup>4</sup> In a similar vein, Chanfi Ahmed has examined the role of West African scholars in contributing to the development of Salafism inside Saudi Arabia – a trend that affected some communities back in Africa.<sup>5</sup> The Islamic University of Medina itself, as Mike Farquhar has shown, was “shaped by an unequal reciprocity between the Wahhabi institution, on the one hand, and the staff and students from all over the world, on the other.”<sup>6</sup> These works point to the need to assess ongoing interactions between localities, and the power relations that shape those interactions. If neither Saudi Arabia nor Africa is static, then African Salafism is constantly reshaped through recurring encounters.

Saudi Arabia’s material resources have allowed it to finance mosques, schools, and organizations across Africa. Analysts’ focus on material forces, however, has occluded the role of intellectual forces in spreading Salafism in Africa. Some analysts wrongly assume that the intellectual materials of contemporary Salafism are static and simplistic – that Salafism, intellectually, consists of a few texts by Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, grafted onto a one-dimensional understanding of the Qur’an and the Sunna. On closer examination, it becomes clear that the breadth of the Salafi canon offers rich intellectual resources that help preachers win audiences. By examining the texts and ideas that Saudi Arabia incorporates into its outreach to Africa, we can increase our

*Muslim Identity in Northern Ghana, 1920–2010* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2013); and Østebø, *Localising Salafism*. Even in Saudi Arabia’s neighbor Yemen, localization obtains: see Laurent Bonnefoy, *Salafism in Yemen: Transnationalism and Religious Identity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

<sup>4</sup> Stéphane Lacroix, *Awakening Islam: The Politics of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia*, translated by George Holloch (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 1.

<sup>5</sup> Chanfi Ahmed, *West African ‘ulamā’ and Salafism in Mecca and Medina: Jawāb al-Ifriqī – The Response of the African* (Leiden: Brill, 2015).

<sup>6</sup> Mike Farquhar, “The Islamic University of Medina since 1961: The Politics of Religious Mission and the Making of a Modern Salafi Pedagogy” in *Shaping Global Islamic Discourses: The Role of al-Azhar, al-Medina, and al-Mustafa*, edited by Masooda Bano and Keiko Sakurai, 21–40 (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 22.

understanding of Saudi Arabia's role in shaping the trajectory of Islamic discourses around the world.

In northern Nigeria, Saudi Arabian institutions found local partners and began offering resources quickly in the early 1960s. During this period, three major developments helped strengthen Saudi-Northern Nigerian ties: Nigeria achieved its independence, Northern Nigeria was still a formal administrative unit (as it had been in colonial times), and the Islamic University of Medina was founded. Yet Saudi Arabia's initial outreach was not enough to spread Salafism or its canon, at least not at first. Confounding the expectations of both sympathetic northern Nigerian officials and Saudi elites, the Islamic University alienated most members of the first cohort of northern Nigerian students sent to attend it. Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia's local northern Nigerian partners – the regional Premier Ahmadu Bello (1910–66) and his religious advisor Shaykh Abubakar Gumi (1924–92) – were only partly conversant with the Salafi canon, which was still taking shape in the 1960s. In short, although Saudi Arabia patronized anti-Sufi activities in northern Nigeria starting in the 1960s, it was not necessarily spreading what might be called “full” Salafism until significantly later.

Existing works on Salafism in Africa sometimes present a static picture of Salafism overly based on examples from the 1930s to the 1990s. That picture can give an outdated version of how structures of authority work within contemporary Salafism. If we take figures like Gumi as the ideal type of the African Salafi, we risk missing major trends that have occurred since the early postcolonial decades, when the careers of Gumi's generation of scholars flourished. Gumi's generation was not committed to rejecting the Sunni legal schools or to systematically purging Sunni Islam of “weak” *aḥādīth*, maneuvers that have become hallmarks of contemporary Salafism; Gumi was, in core ways, not fully Salafi in his legal outlook or his textual methodologies. Gumi's somewhat parochial intellectual outlook, and his lack of deep engagement with the canon, are important for understanding the conflicts that occurred between his successors and the graduates of Medina in the 1990s. The Medina graduates, born in the 1960s and 1970s, also sought to make more far-reaching changes in their audiences' understandings of Islam. With greater command of a more unified canon, the Medina graduates had intellectual resources that Gumi lacked.

The trajectory of Saudi outreach to Nigeria has importance for understanding the broader relationship of Saudi Arabia to the non-Arab Muslim world in the second half of the twentieth century. From the 1960s to the 1980s, Saudi Arabia's outreach to Africa generally and Nigeria specifically became more sophisticated in both intellectual and logistical terms. Chanfi Ahmed has analyzed early stages in this process, showing how African Salafis in Saudi Arabia helped build new institutions of learning

inside the Kingdom. Here I highlight another role these African Salafis had: they not only participated in Saudi Arabian outreach to Africa, they also helped to theorize how to tailor the Kingdom's approach to *da'wa* to the context of Africa. Localization of the Salafi message occurred not just on the African terrain, but also inside Saudi Arabia itself.

Two core elements of this outreach were an effort to delegitimize Sufi orders and a project of co-opting African Islamic history. These elements aligned with the aims and worldviews of certain African Muslim elites whose contact with colonial education predisposed them to embrace anti-Sufism. Logistically, Saudi Arabia intensified its outreach to Africa by sending teams of scholars – including prominent African Salafis – to conduct educational and recruiting tours in Africa. In Nigeria, these intellectual and logistical efforts helped to produce a cadre of students who were well positioned to immerse themselves in the Salafi canon in Medina and to find it not alienating but religiously and intellectually transformative. Nigeria eventually became one of the Islamic University's most prominent recruiting sites.

### **The Islamic University of Medina and Its Global Outreach**

The previous chapter discussed the Ethiopia-born Dr. Muḥammad Amān al-Jāmī, whose influence was strongly felt at the Islamic University of Medina during the 1980s and 1990s, when major Nigerian Salafis were studying there. I showed how al-Jāmī's essay "The Islamic Creed and Its History" presented the core Salafi canon as it was embedded in his telling of Islamic history. Notably, his essay closed by affirming the bright prospects he saw for Salafism's spread in the late twentieth century. He emphasized the role of Saudi Arabian universities in disseminating Salafism in the contemporary world:

The Islamic University in the Prophet's City and Muḥammad ibn Sa'ūd Islamic University in Riyāḍ have a distinguished position, virtuous work, and praiseworthy activity in the spread of the Salafi creed (*'aqīda*) . . . That is represented in the students coming from those countries to these two universities, graduating from them every year in different numbers, to return to their countries, warn their peoples, and spread to them the pure Salafi creed.<sup>7</sup>

Al-Jāmī's mention of these universities points to the changing structure of Salafi thought and outreach in the second half of the twentieth century. By the 1920s, a trend toward the institutionalization of Salafism had begun in the Arab world with the founding of new Islamic associations such as Egypt's Jamā'at Anṣār al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya and new

<sup>7</sup> Muḥammad Amān al-Jāmī, *Majmū' Rasā'il al-Jāmī fī al-'Aqīda wa-l-Sunna* (Medina: Dār Ibn Rajab, 1993), 81–2.

schools inside Saudi Arabia. Several decades later, Salafism became even more institutionalized through structures like the Islamic University of Medina and the Muslim World League, both founded in Saudi Arabia in the early 1960s. These structures allowed Salafis in Saudi Arabia to systematically cultivate relationships with sympathetic Muslims from outside the Kingdom. By sending people and resources abroad, these new institutions helped to develop Salafi infrastructures elsewhere, especially mosques and schools, and to extend Salafi networks. The new institutions also drew in representatives of the wider Muslim world, allowing non-Saudi Muslims to serve on committees or to teach and study at the Islamic University of Medina.

The Islamic University was founded by King Sa‘ūd’s royal decree in 1961. It joined a cohort of other young educational institutions. Saudi Arabia had established a Directorate of Education in 1925, which began to set up schools throughout the country.<sup>8</sup> Various tertiary institutions emerged beginning in the 1950s, such as the Riyāḍ Educational Institute, the College of *Shari‘a*, and the University of Riyāḍ. But the Islamic University of Medina was distinctive in its global focus. It conceived of the entire Muslim umma, “in the eastern portions of the world and its western ones,” as its target audience.<sup>9</sup> King Sa‘ūd, at the university’s founding, said, “This University will contain students from all the corners of the world . . . from our African and Asian brothers who yearn to know Islam from its fountainheads.”<sup>10</sup>

Saudi Arabia invested in new global Muslim institutions as a tool for advancing the Kingdom’s perceived foreign policy interests, especially amid competition with Egypt. With the end of the Second World War, Saudi Arabia’s global prominence increased, symbolized by the meeting of U.S. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz in February 1945. As the Kingdom’s role changed in a decolonizing Middle East, Saudi leaders felt threatened by the rise of newly independent, revolutionary Arab regimes, particularly that of Gamal ‘Abd-Nāṣir in Egypt. An “Arab Cold War,” which included a Saudi-Egyptian proxy war in North Yemen from 1962 to 1967,<sup>11</sup> coincided with a generational transition in the Kingdom. Power passed from King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz to his sons, with Prince (later King) Fayṣal (1906–75) playing a prominent role. Prince Fayṣal had considerable international experience – he began

<sup>8</sup> “Nash’at al-Wizāra,” Saudi Arabian Ministry of Education and Instruction, 16 April 2014. Available at: [www.moe.gov.sa/Arabic/Ministry/Pages/MinistryStart.aspx](http://www.moe.gov.sa/Arabic/Ministry/Pages/MinistryStart.aspx); accessed November 2014.

<sup>9</sup> King Sa‘ūd, decree 11, 3/25/1381 hijri. Available at: [www.kingsaud.net/art/inside/light\\_green/index.html](http://www.kingsaud.net/art/inside/light_green/index.html); accessed August 2014.

<sup>10</sup> “Al-Jāmi‘a al-Islāmiyya bi-l-Madīna – Ahdāf al-Jāmi‘a,” King Saud memorial website, undated. Available at: [www.kingsaud.net/art/inside/light\\_green/index1.html](http://www.kingsaud.net/art/inside/light_green/index1.html); accessed August 2014.

<sup>11</sup> North Yemen’s civil war lasted from 1962 to 1970, but Egyptian forces withdrew in 1967.

representing his father overseas beginning in the 1920s, and served as the Kingdom's first foreign minister from 1930 until his death.<sup>12</sup> Fayṣal's grasp of geopolitics played a role in his backing for new global Muslim institutions: the Islamic University of Medina was meant, in large part, to counter the influence of Egypt's Al-Azhar University, which 'Abd al-Nāṣir brought under greater state control in 1961. 'Abd al-Nāṣir made sub-Saharan Africa a zone of strategic outreach, giving support to African revolutionary and liberation movements. Al-Azhar sent delegations of teachers to other African countries and helped to establish Islamic cultural centers and schools throughout the continent, including in Nigeria. Such moves ensured that Saudi-Egyptian rivalry would involve competing claims to Islamic leadership.

Following Egypt's defeat by Israel in 1967, Saudi Arabia increased its efforts to project leadership in Arab and Muslim lands. The Kingdom became the major backer of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, founded at an international conference in Rabat, Morocco, in 1969. From the start, the organization favored Africa; its first secretary-general was President Sekou Touré of Guinea. Saudi leaders also reached out directly to African countries with large Muslim communities. In 1972, King Fayṣal traveled to Uganda, Chad, Niger, Senegal, and Mauritania, all of which broke relations with Israel in 1972–3, as did many other African countries. The 1973 Arab-Israeli war and rising oil wealth provided impetus and means for Saudi Arabia and other Arab states to expand their outreach to Africa throughout the 1970s. This outreach took diverse forms, including diplomatic engagement, cultural exchange, and humanitarian aid. In the 1970s, as Saudi Arabia's oil revenues rose and as the monarchy sought to deepen its Islamic image to meet both Iranian and domestic religious challenges, the university received major boosts in funding – although funding would later fall in the 1980s amid recession.<sup>13</sup>

Saudi religious and political authorities made developing the Islamic University a priority. Senior religious authorities ran the university: its first president was the Grand Mufti Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm Āl al-Shaykh. The university's first vice president was Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Bāz. He later served as its president from 1970 to 1975, until he became chairman of the Permanent Commission for Research and Issuing Legal Rulings, a senior religious position. The head of the university has always been a Saudi national.<sup>14</sup>

The younger scholars who taught at Medina in its early days reflected the growing rationalization of education in Saudi Arabia, as well as the integration of African scholars into Salafi circles. For example, one of

<sup>12</sup> With the exception of one brief interlude.

<sup>13</sup> Farquhar, "The Islamic University," 23–4.

<sup>14</sup> Farquhar, "The Islamic University," 24.

the university's first teachers was the Saudi Arabian Shaykh 'Abd al-Muhsin al-'Abbād (b. 1934). Later, he taught several major Nigerian Salafi preachers who studied at the university between the 1980s and 2000s and also supervised several of their theses. Al-'Abbād attended the Educational Institute in Riyāḍ, studying there with Ibn Bāz as well as with two of the African Salafis discussed later. Al-'Abbād graduated from the institute shortly before the Islamic University's founding and was selected by Muḥammad ibn Ibrāhīm to teach there.<sup>15</sup> This trend – of Medina's faculty emerging from schools established earlier in the Kingdom's short history – would appear in the careers of African Salafi teachers at Medina as well.

Many of the scholars who taught at the Islamic University had a life-long association with the university and with Medina. Al-'Abbād served as the university's vice president from 1973 to 1979, and continued teaching there afterward. Beginning in 1985, he taught classical *ḥadīth* collections at the Prophet's Mosque in Medina. Some Nigerian students attended his lessons there. The long tenures of some faculty meant that the university had intellectual continuity over time. By the 1980s, faculty and administrators could draw on substantial experience as they taught international students.

The Islamic University cultivated a global Muslim leadership. Its Advisory Council (*al-majlis al-istishārī*), which met for the first time in 1962, drew from the Arab world, the Indian subcontinent, and sub-Saharan Africa. The council included major Salafi thinkers such as Ibn Bāz and al-Albānī, and younger thinkers like al-'Abbād. The council also included two members from sub-Saharan Africa: the Mauritanian-born Shaykh Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī (1907–73) and Shaykh Abubakar Gumi of Nigeria.<sup>16</sup> The council included figures who were not theologically Salafi,<sup>17</sup> reflecting an opening toward the wider Muslim world that Wāhhābī scholars had begun in the 1950s.<sup>18</sup>

The Islamic University cultivated a global pool of teachers, many of them non-Wāhhābī Salafis. As the previous chapter discussed, al-Albānī taught at the university from 1961–3. Even though he was dismissed, he was replaced by another non-Saudi, a Pakistani from the *ahl-e ḥadīth* movement.<sup>19</sup> This international cadre of teachers meant that students at

<sup>15</sup> For his full biography, see 'Abd al-Muhsin al-'Abbād, *Kutub wa-Rasā'il 'Abd al-Muhsin ibn Ḥamad al-'Abbād al-Badr* (al-Riyāḍ: Dār al-Tawḥīd li-l-Nashr, 2006).

<sup>16</sup> Aḥmad ibn 'Aṭīyya al-Ghāmīdī, *Al-Kitāb al-Wathā'iqī 'an al-Jāmi'a al-Islāmiyya bi-l-Madīna al-Munawwara* (Medina: al-Mamlaka al-'Arabīyya al-Sa'ūdīyya, Wizārat al-Ta'līm al-'Ālī, al-Jāmi'a al-Islāmiyya bi-l-Madīna al-Munawwara, 1998).

<sup>17</sup> Al-Ghāmīdī, *Al-Kitāb al-Wathā'iqī*.

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Hegghammer, *Jihad in Saudi Arabia: Violence and Pan-Islamism since 1979* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 18.

<sup>19</sup> Mariam Abou Zahab, "Salafism in Pakistan: The Ahl-e Hadith Movement" in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, edited by Roel Meijer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), 126–42.

Medina – including some of its most famous graduates – often worked with non-Saudi teachers. The Yemeni Shaykh Muqbil al-Wādi'ī (1933–2001), who would go on to become the preeminent Salafi in Yemen, wrote one paper under the supervision of an African Salafi and the aforementioned Pakistani scholar.<sup>20</sup>

As with the council, the university's faculty included non-Salafis, especially members of the Muslim Brotherhood who had fled regime crackdowns in Egypt.<sup>21</sup> However, Brothers teaching at Saudi universities tended to congregate in departments covering Islamic culture and contemporary thought, whereas Salafis dominated the teaching of creed.<sup>22</sup> When Brotherhood-linked dissent rose inside the Kingdom during the 1980s and early 1990s, the monarchy steadily increased the proportion of Saudis teaching at the Islamic University.<sup>23</sup> The Brotherhood has held little appeal, as a model, for Nigerian graduates of Medina. Nigerians would inevitably have come into contact with Brotherhood-linked teachers there, but they are mistrustful of formalized associations, and they view the Brotherhood's methods as a distraction from the core task of purifying Muslims' creeds and practices.

Activities in Medina accelerated the formation and institutionalization of a Salafi canon. The Islamic University did not, on its own, initiate the revival of works by authors like Ibn Taymiyya or Muḥammad al-Shawkānī – Egyptian presses were printing the latter's works in the 1950s, for example.<sup>24</sup> Yet Saudi Arabian schools and libraries made a profound impact by employing canonizers,<sup>25</sup> publishing books, and collecting manuscripts. As the theses and books produced at the university accumulated, it became a major force not just in spreading the canon but creating it. The teaching curriculum at the university, meanwhile, came to include books not just by Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb, but also by Ṣiddīq Ḥasan Khān and Rashīd Riḍā. In the field of law, the university – under pressure from foreign teachers, scholars, and members of the advisory council – moved from an initial reliance on the Ḥanbalī school to a greater emphasis on teaching comparative jurisprudence.<sup>26</sup> In other words, by the 1980s the University looked more like a global Salafi institution than a narrowly Wahhābī-Ḥanbalī one. Nigerian students who

<sup>20</sup> Usama Hasan, "Sheikh Muqbil Examined by Sheikh Abdul Ghaffar Hasan," Unity, 28 July 2012. Available at: <http://unity1.wordpress.com/2012/07/28/sheikh-muqbil-examined-by-sheikh-abdul-ghaffar-hasan/>; accessed October 2014.

<sup>21</sup> Lacroix, *Awakening Islam*, 43.

<sup>22</sup> Lacroix, *Awakening Islam*, 48.

<sup>23</sup> Farquhar, "The Islamic University," 25.

<sup>24</sup> Muḥammad ibn 'Alī al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-Awṭār* (Egypt: Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-ḥalabī, 1952).

<sup>25</sup> The Yemeni canoniser 'Abd al-Raḥmān Yaḥyā al-Mu'allimī (1896–1966) worked in the library of the Great Mosque in Mecca, and edited and published works such as al-Shawkānī's *Al-Fawā'id al-Majmū'a fi al-Aḥādīth al-Mawḍū'a* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Sunna al-Muḥammadiyya, 1960).

<sup>26</sup> Farquhar, "The Islamic University," 32–5.



arrived during the 1980s encountered a less parochial curriculum than their antecedents in the 1960s experienced.

Other Saudi institutions with global reach were important counterparts to the Islamic University. The Muslim World League, founded 1962, constructed mosques and schools around the world and distributed works by Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb.<sup>27</sup> The Organization of the Islamic Conference (later the Organization of Islamic Cooperation) provided a framework for states with Muslim majorities (or substantial Muslim minorities) to cooperate in domains such as education. Nigeria would, amid domestic controversy, join it in 1986. The World Assembly of Muslim Youth, founded in 1972, promoted educational and scouting activities for Muslim children. Not all of these institutions were Salafi in terms of their leadership and activities, but their efforts helped provide the financial and logistical support for Salafi outreach to Africa and elsewhere.

### African Salafis in Saudi Arabia

Chanfi Ahmed has shown that West African Salafis in Saudi Arabia played a powerful role in shaping contemporary Salafism and its institutions, including the Islamic University. These West Africans included Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Ifriqī (1908–57), Ḥammād al-Anṣārī (1925–97), and ‘Umar Fallāta (1926–98).<sup>28</sup> East African Salafis were important as well, as the influence of the Ethiopia-born al-Jāmī demonstrates. The history of Africans’ contributions to Salafism challenges narratives that depict Africans as passive recipients of Saudi influences.

African Salafi scholars such as al-Shinqīṭī, of present-day Mauritania, worked in the new institutions of Salafi learning as teachers and administrators. At the Educational Institute in Riyāḍ and the Islamic University of Medina, African Salafis taught future Salafi luminaries, including Shaykh Muḥammad ibn al-‘Uthaymīn.<sup>29</sup> At the Islamic University, African Salafis influenced a younger generation of Saudi Salafis. Al-Shinqīṭī’s pupils included Dr. Rabī‘ al-Madkhalī (b. 1931), an important defender of al-Albānī’s legacy inside Saudi Arabia and an influential teacher in Medina at the time that Nigerian Salafis were studying there

<sup>27</sup> Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, translated by Anthony F. Roberts (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 52; and Reinhard Schulze, *Islamischer Internationalismus im 20. Jahrhundert: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte der Islamischen Weltliga* (Leiden: Brill, 1990).

<sup>28</sup> Ahmed, *West African ‘ulamā’ and Salafism*.

<sup>29</sup> “‘An al-Shaykh,” Mu’assasat al-Shaykh Muḥammad ibn Sālih al-‘Uthaymīn al-Khayriyya, 2004. Available at: [www.ibnothaimen.com/all/Shaykh.shtml](http://www.ibnothaimen.com/all/Shaykh.shtml); accessed September 2014.

in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>30</sup> In 1998, the university's director wrote that al-Shinqīṭī was

one of those who contributed to the founding of the Islamic University, and one of those who made praiseworthy efforts in emphasizing the basic goal for the sake of which this blessed University was founded. And that [goal] is establishing the creed of the pious predecessors, purging it of defects, and spreading it among Muslims.<sup>31</sup>

Together with scholars from the Indian subcontinent, African Salafis helped shape prominent Salafi institutions and taught an influential cohort of global Salafi authorities – helping to make the university, over time, a truly global space.

Figures like al-Shinqīṭī were unquestionably Salafi. They broke with West African Islamic intellectual traditions and became immersed in the Salafi canon. One biographer of al-Shinqīṭī writes that he “had a Salafi creed before he came to the Kingdom,”<sup>32</sup> and goes on to speculate that he “did not study the creed of the *salaf* with anyone, but rather obtained it on his own.” Al-Shinqīṭī arrived in the Kingdom with questions about the integrity of Wahhābism, given Wahhābism's poor reputation in the Muslim world at the time, but these concerns were allayed during his early contacts with Wahhābī scholars.<sup>33</sup> Meanwhile, he engaged the Salafi canon in ways that went beyond just Wahhābī texts, using works such as al-Shawkānī's *Nayl al-Awṭār* in his teaching.<sup>34</sup> He abandoned the Mālikī school: in his *Aḍwā' al-Bayān fī Tafṣīr al-Qur'ān bi-l-Qur'ān* (The Lights of Explanation in Performing Exegesis of the Qur'an by Means of the Qur'an), al-Shinqīṭī stated that emulation (*taqlīd*) of a specific scholar was “among the heresies (*bidi'*) of the fourth [Islamic] century,” and therefore unknown among the early Muslim community.<sup>35</sup> African arrivals, in other words, were adopting a posture that looked more like global Salafism than parochial Wahhābism. With local partners in Africa, however, Salafis would initially find a lower common denominator than

<sup>30</sup> Roel Meijer, “Politicizing *al-jarh wa-l-ta'dil*: Rabi b. Hadi al-Madkhali and the transnational battle for religious authority” in *The Transmission and Dynamics of the Textual Sources of Islam: Essays in Honour of Harald Motzki*, edited by Nicolet Boekhoff-van der Voort, Kees Versteegh, and Joas Wagemakers, 375–99 (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Abd al-'Azīz ibn Sāliḥ ibn Ibrāhīm al-Ṭawīyān, *Juhūd al-Shaykh Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī fī Taqrīr 'Aqīdat al-Salaf* (Medina: The Islamic University, 1998), i–ii.

<sup>32</sup> Al-Ṭawīyān, *Juhūd al-Shaykh*, 64. Al-Shinqīṭī was trained in the Mālikī school and does not seem to have moved beyond Mālikism until he came to Saudi Arabia.

<sup>33</sup> Al-Ṭawīyān, *Juhūd al-Shaykh*, 66.

<sup>34</sup> 'Aṭīyya Sālim, “Introduction” in Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī, *Riḥlat al-Ḥajj ilā Bayt Allāh al-Ḥarām* (Cairo: Dār Ibn Taymiyya, undated).

<sup>35</sup> Muḥammad al-Amīn al-Shinqīṭī, *Al-Qawl al-Sadīd fī Kashf Haqīqa al-Taqlīd* (Benares: Idārat al-Buḥūth al-Islāmiyya wa-l-Da'wa wa-l-Iftā', 1983), 9.

Salafism – namely, anti-Sufism and a shared willingness to retell Islamic Africa’s history.

### Theorizing Salafi Outreach in Africa

African Salafis in Saudi Arabia did not just affect the course of Salafism’s institutionalization inside the Kingdom. They also played leading roles in outreach to Africa. Ahmed has shown that African Salafis were important participants in a logistical sense, joining and leading outreach missions from the Islamic University to Africa. Here I show that African Salafis were also important participants in an intellectual sense; figures like al-Jāmī theorized and elaborated the intellectual basis and core arguments of Salafi outreach to Africa.

Amid Saudi-Egyptian competition for Islamic leadership in the 1960s, Africa stood out to Saudi Arabia as a promising zone for outreach, including because the Saudi Arabian religious establishment hoped to “‘save’ the African Muslims from the influence of Sufism.”<sup>36</sup> Early in the Islamic University’s history, senior staff such as General Secretary Shaykh Muḥammad al-‘Ubūdī (b. 1930) identified Africa as a target for outreach. He understood that Africa was internally heterogeneous and that simplistic outreach strategies could fail. In a talk on Africa in the late 1960s, he noted, “Africa is a wide and vast continent. . . . Conditions in its countries are widely diverse, and the circumstances that obtain in its regions are different.” Yet he also averred that the present time was particularly suitable for “a wide Islamic campaign for outreach (*da‘wa*) and guidance (*irshād*)” because “the Christian religion, which is the principal competitor, has been linked in the minds of many Africans with European colonialism.”<sup>37</sup> In the 1960s, Salafis at Medina were beginning to study both the religious landscape and the political character of African societies to facilitate effective outreach.

History was one tool in devising more sophisticated strategies in Africa. African Salafis like al-Jāmī produced narratives of African history that fit the Salafi worldview and informed Salafi outreach. In al-Jāmī’s essay, “The Course of the Islamic *Da‘wa* in Africa across History” (*Sīrat al-Da‘wa al-Islāmiyya fī Ifrīqiyyā ‘abr al-Tārīkh*), he depicted three periods of Islam’s spread in Africa. First, a group of Companions sought refuge in Abyssinia while the Prophet was being persecuted in Mecca. Second, he said, there was a period when Islam was spread by people who, in his eyes, did not understand the faith. Those who spread Islam were, according to him, unschooled Muslim traders and devious Sufis. The

<sup>36</sup> Ahmed, *West African ‘ulamā’*, 142.

<sup>37</sup> Muḥammad al-‘Ubūdī, “Dhikrayātū fī Ifrīqiyyā,” *Journal of the Islamic University of Medina* 1 (1966).

latter, al-Jāmī stated, “called [people] to everything except Islam in its correct conception.”<sup>38</sup> Sufis’ goals included “subjugating the masses and using them for their private interests,” “arousing in the people a dislike of the *‘ulamā’* of *sharī‘a* and students of knowledge of the Book and the Sunna,” and spreading teachings such as Ibn ‘Arabi’s “monism of being (*wahdat al-wujūd*),”<sup>39</sup> an idea Salafis detest. Al-Jāmī argued against the viewpoint that Sufis deserve credit for the Islamization of Africa. He concluded that Sufis merely “called people to worship their shaykhs.”<sup>40</sup> Al-Jāmī’s version of Islamic Africa’s history systematically maligned African Sufis while strategically omitting the vast tradition of scholarship and erudition among African Muslim scholars who had been trained in the classical system of Islamic education – many of whom were Sufis.<sup>41</sup>

After presenting this Salafized version of Africa’s Islamic history, al-Jāmī turned to the present – what for him constituted the third phase, the “period of correction” (*dawr al-tashīh*). He saw an opportunity for preachers to spread the correct creed in Africa. Yet he compared the current state of Salafi outreach unfavorably with Christian missionary work in Africa, writing critically of “the chaos (*al-fawḍā*) and aimlessness (*al-takhabbut*) that reign over the ranks of those who belong to the Islamic *da‘wa* and the lack of seriousness in their work.”<sup>42</sup> This negative assessment underscores the contrast between Salafis’ optimism about their prospects in Africa and their awareness that their strategies were unsophisticated. In contrast to the conventional wisdom of a well-organized and shadowy Saudi foreign policy that targeted a vulnerable and impoverished Africa, we see here how initial Salafi outreach faltered, even from the perspective of its proponents.

Al-Jāmī did speak positively of Saudi institutions. These organizations could prepare knowledgeable preachers who would spread the creed. He assigned a major role to Salafi institutions like the Islamic University in “correcting” African Muslims’ beliefs and practices. He wrote,

The Islamic universities, and at their head this university of ours, have begun to graduate a large number of the continent’s sons at a time that is considered – truly – the best time, and the most auspicious, the most blessed, the most suitable for the Islamic project (*al-‘amal al-islāmī*) on the continent. It is the time in which

<sup>38</sup> Al-Jāmī, *Majmū‘ Rasā’il*, 316.

<sup>39</sup> Al-Jāmī, *Majmū‘ Rasā’il*, 317–18.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Jāmī, *Majmū‘ Rasā’il*, 318.

<sup>41</sup> Examples could be multiplied of Muslim scholars in precolonial sub-Saharan Africa who dedicated their lives to pursuing and disseminating various forms of Islamic knowledge, including Sufism. In West Africa, notable figures include Shaykh Aḥmad Baba of Timbuktu (1556–1627), as well as the famous trio of scholars from present-day northern Nigeria: Shaykh ‘Uthmān dan Fodio (1754–1817), his brother ‘Abd Allāh (1766–1828), and his son Muḥammad Bello (1781–1837).

<sup>42</sup> Al-Jāmī, *Majmū‘ Rasā’il*, 327.

the peoples of the continent are trying to free themselves of the vestiges of both Western and Eastern colonialism.<sup>43</sup>

Al-Jāmī went on to describe the potential for brotherhood among African, Arab, and other Muslim peoples. African graduates of Medina could actualize this brotherhood by teaching their peoples orthodoxy. He urged them to seize the opportunity.

Salafis in Medina did more than theorize – they also helped project the university’s influence into Africa. This was part of a global effort, but Africa received special attention. University leaders advocated concrete steps for strengthening outreach in Africa, including funding African Muslim organizations, providing study grants to African students, conducting charity, and distributing books.<sup>44</sup>

From 1964 on, as Saudi Arabia sought information about the conditions of African Muslims and worked to build partnerships with local Muslims, the Islamic University and the Muslim World League sent delegations to Africa. Many delegations contained prominent African Salafis. The first delegation comprised al-‘Ubūdī and two African members. They traveled to Africa in 1964 to “get in touch with Muslims’ leaders and ‘*ulamā*’,” “deliver religious lectures and speeches,” “organize statistical charts of Muslim populations in each country,” and identify promising local individuals, schools, and organizations. The delegation’s nearly four-month journey took them to nine countries in East and Central Africa.<sup>45</sup> This and other delegations were empowered to distribute considerable amounts of money and assign scholarships to the Islamic University.<sup>46</sup>

As more delegations were dispatched, African Salafis like al-Shinqīī sometimes headed them. A biographer writes:

There was an idea to send delegations to the Islamic countries and especially Africa. He – may Allah have mercy on him – was at the head of a delegation of the University to ten African countries that began with Sudan and ended with Mauritania, the home country of the Shaykh, may Allah have mercy on him.<sup>47</sup>

For his part, al-Jāmī traveled to Africa as part of university delegations in 1965/6, 1966/7, and 1975. He visited at least fifteen countries in West and Central Africa, including Nigeria. He characterized these trips positively, writing that he noticed progress over time. He credits several groups with this success: African students and pilgrims, preachers

<sup>43</sup> Al-Jāmī, *Majmū‘ Rasā’il*, 331.

<sup>44</sup> Al-‘Ubūdī, “*Dhikrayātī fī Ifrīqīyā*.”

<sup>45</sup> Muḥammad al-‘Ubūdī, “*Fī Ifrīqīyā al-Khaḍrā*,” *Journal of the Islamic University of Medina* 2 (1967).

<sup>46</sup> Ahmed, *West African ‘ulamā’*, 146–51.

<sup>47</sup> Sālim, “Introduction,” 25.

sent by the Directorate for Scholarly Researches (*Idārat al-Buḥūth al-ʿIlmiyya*), eminent Saudi religious personages, and delegations from Medina.<sup>48</sup>

In addition to delegations, global Salafi institutions produced literature that targeted African Muslim audiences, especially by criticizing African Sufi orders. In this way, theory and practice came together, as Salafis sought to renarrate African history and attack Sufism. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Islamic University and the Muslim World League published several major polemics against the Tijaniyya Sufi order written by African Salafis and reformist African Muslims. For example, Abubakar Gumi's participation in the League facilitated his contact with a Lebanese associate who published his 1972 *Al-ʿAqīda al-Saḥīḥa bi-Muwāfaqat al-Sharīʿa* (The Correct Creed Is in Accordance with the Law).<sup>49</sup> In 1981, on Gumi's recommendation, the Islamic University sponsored the publication in Beirut of *Al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās al-Sinighālī: Ḥayātuḥu wa-Ārāʾuḥu wa-Taʿlīmuhu* (Shaykh Ibrahim Niase the Senegalese: His Life, His Views, and His Teaching), written by a Nigerian who had left the Tijaniyya. Gumi wrote the book's foreword.<sup>50</sup> Another anti-Tijani polemic was authored by a Ghanaian and titled *Risāla al-Dāʿī ilā al-Sunna wa-l-Zājir ʿan al-Bidʿa* (The Epistle of the One Who Calls People to the Sunna and Rebukes Heresy). The University published it in 1982 with a preface by Ibn Bāz.<sup>51</sup> Such criticisms of the Tijaniyya, including by Africans like the earlier-mentioned al-Ifrīqī,<sup>52</sup> were not new. But by supporting these works, the University directly challenged Sufis, its major competitors for the allegiance of African Muslims. The university and the Kingdom's authorities could give these works a stamp of canonical approval.

Despite global institutions' efforts and the work of individual African and Saudi Salafis, outreach between the 1960s and the 1980s hit a number of roadblocks. Students recruited to Medina did not necessarily have the experience their recruiters hoped. These problems occurred with Nigeria, whose trajectory illustrates the increasing sophistication of Salafi outreach from Saudi Arabia, and how Salafi institutions were able to achieve greater successes by the 1980s.

<sup>48</sup> Al-Jāmī, *Majmūʿ Rasāʾil*, 328–30.

<sup>49</sup> Abubakar Gumi with Ismaila Tsiga, *Where I Stand* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 1992), 140.

<sup>50</sup> Muḥammad Dahiru Maigari *Al-Shaykh Ibrāhīm Inyās al-Sinighālī: Ḥayātuḥu wa-Ārāʾuḥu wa-Taʿlīmuhu* (Beirut: Dār al-ʿArabiyya, 1981); see also John O. Hunwick and R. S. O'Fahey, eds., *Arabic Literature of Africa, Volume 2: Writings of Central Sudanic Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 555–6.

<sup>51</sup> Kobo, *Unveiling Modernity*, 225.

<sup>52</sup> ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Ifrīqī, *Al-Anwār al-Raḥmāniyya li-Hidāyat al-Firqa al-Tijāniyya*, 1937.

### Nigeria as a Zone of Salafi Outreach

For Salafi leaders in the mid-twentieth century, Nigeria represented an appealing zone for outreach. Northern and western Nigeria had some of the largest Muslim communities in sub-Saharan Africa, and leaders in both regions were receptive to outreach from foreign Muslims. Nigeria's importance to Saudi Arabia would only grow over time, as Nigeria became a mid-sized player in the global oil market, joining the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries in 1971. Nigerian pilgrims came to Saudi Arabia in ever-increasing numbers through the 1970s, reaching a peak of more than 100,000 in 1977, from a mere 2,500 in 1956.<sup>53</sup> Because of its economic, political, and cultural importance, Nigeria presented major incentives for Salafi outreach. Nigeria was valuable not only for its own sake, but also, along with Mauritania and Sudan, as countries Saudi Arabia perceived as "a springboard to enter sub-Saharan Africa."<sup>54</sup>

In the 1960s, Saudi outreach to northern Nigeria focused on elite cooperation. As Nigeria headed toward independence in 1960, an almost exclusively Muslim elite ruled its Northern Region. Northern Nigeria's elected leaders came partly from the region's hereditary Muslim ruling families. Ahmadu Bello, premier of the Northern Region from 1954 to 1966, was a member of the royal family of Sokoto. Yet Northern elites of Bello's generation had also been educated in colonial schools and, often, in England or the Arab world as well. These elites were often willing to challenge hereditary rulers and classical scholars, and their international experiences helped them to cultivate broad ties, especially within the Arab world. In the Western Region, dominated by the Yoruba, there were large Muslim associations such as the Ansar-Ud-Deen Society, and many Yoruba Muslims were beginning to study at al-Azhar and elsewhere in the Arab world.<sup>55</sup>

Ahmadu Bello was a particularly appealing partner for Saudi Arabia, more because of his internationally minded outlook than for his theological views. Bello was not a Salafi, nor was he a scholar. He remained immersed in many of the traditions of his Qadiriyya-affiliated royal lineage, and his efforts to reform Islamic practice and authority in northern Nigeria drew on Sufi styles. He branded his platform for unifying Northern Muslims "Usmaniyya," after his ancestor Shaykh 'Uthmān dan Fodio, the Qadiri scholar who led an early nineteenth-century jihad

<sup>53</sup> A. Y. Aliyu et al., *Hajj Research Project Nigeria*, Volumes 1–4 (Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University, 1983).

<sup>54</sup> Ahmed, *West African 'ulamā'*, 149.

<sup>55</sup> For examples, see John O. Hunwick and R. S. O'Fahey, eds., *Arabic Literature of Africa, Volume 2: Writings of Central Sudanic Africa* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

and remained, for many Nigerians, a potent symbol of righteousness throughout the twentieth century.

Bello was keenly interested in strengthening ties with the Muslim and Arab world. He cultivated relationships in Saudi Arabia and also with Egypt's 'Abd al-Nāṣir. Bello became the founding vice president of the Muslim World League, with Gumi as his representative.<sup>56</sup> In 1963, when Bello reopened the Sultan Bello Mosque (named for one of his ancestors), he invited the chief imam of Medina, Shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn Ṣāliḥ, to give remarks at the ceremony.<sup>57</sup> Donations from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait helped Bello pursue some of his projects, such as *Jamā'at Naṣr al-Islam* (The Society for the Victory of Islam), an organization designed to foster Northern Nigerian Muslim unity.<sup>58</sup> Bello's conversion campaigns, in which he proselytized to non-Muslims in Northern Nigeria, won Salafi approval; al-Jāmī and a delegation from the Islamic University attended one of Bello's conversion tours in 1965.<sup>59</sup>

Nigeria's precolonial past held precedents that African Salafi theorists like al-Jāmī found appealing. In his essay "The Course of the Islamic *Da'wa* in Africa across History," al-Jāmī praised several "local preachers (*du'āt maḥallīyyīn*)" for upholding true Islam in the past. The first figure al-Jāmī mentioned was dan Fodio. Al-Jāmī wrote that dan Fodio "called people to the true Islam (*da'ā al-nās ilā al-Islām al-ṣāḥīḥ*)."<sup>60</sup>

It is not difficult to see why dan Fodio excited theorists like al-Jāmī. On the surface, dan Fodio's message sounded similar to Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's opposition to perceived heresy. In the most famous work memorializing the jihad, dan Fodio's son, heir, and biographer wrote:

There existed in this country different types of unbelief, deviation, and disobedience, shocking matters and repulsive conditions. They covered this country and filled it, such that in this country one could hardly find those whose faith was strong and who devoted themselves to God, except the rare few. . . . Among them were unbelievers who worshipped stones and *jinn*, and made clear that they were unbelievers, neither praying nor fasting nor giving alms. . . . Among them were people averring monotheism, praying, fasting, and giving alms without fulfilling (necessary) conditions . . . while they mixed these practices with the practices of the unbelief that they inherited from their fathers and forefathers. . . . And when [dan Fodio] began calling people to Allah, and advising them to worship Him according to the religion of Allah, destroying the customs of apostasy, eradicating Satanic innovations, and reviving the Sunna of the Prophet Muḥammad . . . the

<sup>56</sup> Gumi, *Where I Stand*, 103–5.

<sup>57</sup> "Speeches Delivered at the Historic Opening Ceremony of the Rebuilt £ 100,000 Sultan Bello Mosque on Friday, 5th July 1963 at Sokoto" (Zaria, Nigeria: Gaskiya Corporation, 1963).

<sup>58</sup> Gumi, *Where I Stand*, 106–7.

<sup>59</sup> Al-Jāmī, *Majmū' Rasā'il*, 324.

<sup>60</sup> Al-Jāmī, *Majmū' Rasā'il*, 323–4.



fortunate ones rushed to his side, and the happy, rightly guided ones went to him, and people began to enter the religion of Allah in crowds [a reference to Qur'an 110:2].<sup>61</sup>

This passage resembles sympathetic accounts of the Wāhhābī movement in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Arabia. Dan Fodio and Ibn 'Abd al-Wāhhāb both denounced what they saw as paganism and called for strict adherence to scripture. Yet the two men had fundamental theological and intellectual differences. Dan Fodio and many of his followers belonged to the Qādirīyya Sufi order and lived in a world imbued with Sufi notions of esoteric knowledge and experience, while Ibn 'Abd al-Wāhhāb excoriated what he saw as Sufi excesses. Dan Fodio was an adherent of the Mālikī school of law, while Ibn 'Abd al-Wāhhāb followed the Ḥanbalī school. The intellectual tradition from which dan Fodio drew was substantially different from the tradition on which Ibn 'Abd al-Wāhhāb relied: the two men cited different authorities, placing them in different and sometimes opposed intellectual camps.<sup>62</sup>

Dan Fodio had enough in common with other scripture-centered agendas of reform, however, that Salafis worked to fold him into their projects. For al-Jāmī to reconcile his vision of Islam's African history with his championing of dan Fodio's legacy, he had to Salafize dan Fodio, effacing his Sufi allegiances and removing him from the webs of intellectual exchange in which he had existed. Such efforts to rewrite Nigeria's Islamic past did not immediately resonate with northern Nigerians, however.

Initial attempts to send Northern Nigerian students to Medina proved unsuccessful. In 1962, the Saudi Arabian government awarded scholarships to eighteen Northerners. At the Islamic University, many students rejected both the methods and the content of their instruction. Ultimately, all but two of the eighteen students dropped out of the program.<sup>63</sup> In one letter to the Northern Nigerian Regional government, students complained,

<sup>61</sup> Muḥammad Bello, *Infāq al-Maysūr fī Tārīkh Bilād al-Takrūr* (Cairo: Egyptian Ministry of Endowments, 1964 [1812/3]), 58–60.

<sup>62</sup> For a debate on whether dan Fodio, Ibn 'Abd al-Wāhhāb, Shāh Wālī Allāh, and al-Shawkānī form part of a broader, global eighteenth-century Islamic revival, see John Voll, "Linking Groups in the Networks of Eighteenth-Century Scholars" in *Eighteenth-Century Revival and Reform in Islam*, edited by Nehemiah Levtzion and John Voll (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1987), 69–92; Ahmad Dallal, "The Origins and Objectives of Islamic Revivalist Thought, 1750–1850," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113:3 (July–September 1993), 341–59; and Bernard Haykel, *Revival and Reform in Islam: The Legacy of Muhammad Al-Shawkani* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

<sup>63</sup> S. A. S. Galadanci, *Ḥarakat al-Lughā al-'Arabīyya wa-Ādābuhā fī Nayjīriyā*, second edition (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif, 1993), 214.

This University does not suit us. Since we came here we don't learn anything new. We are still learning the Arabic alphabets [sic] which we already knew. The only knew [sic] thing we learn in our class is, how to call people to their new Islamic Mission. We even prefer going back to Nigeria and continuing with our home study better to [sic] this University if we can't get any transfer. We cannot live here and waste our time for nothing.<sup>64</sup>

Others, asking for a transfer, wrote,

We are requesting that our place of study be changed to somewhere appropriate, and that we study without being separated from our creed, respecting our rulers and religious leaders, without our good traditional customs, which Islam does not forbid, being attacked.<sup>65</sup>

Students felt strong enough in their own base of Islamic knowledge to challenge, at least privately, the claims to religious authenticity that they heard from teachers in Saudi Arabia. Northerners with a background in Sufism and the classical northwest African canon felt deeply uncomfortable in Medina. Northern leaders recognized the problem: when Abubakar Gumi visited Medina in 1964, he said that any student at the university must be “keen to improve his standard of education no matter how difficult the conditions under which he may have to live,” and “should also be aware of the Saudi attitude towards ‘Tariqqah’ [Sufi orders].”<sup>66</sup>

This quotation calls attention to Gumi's particular role in the trajectory of Salafism in Nigeria. He merits special examination as a case of Saudi Arabia's efforts to partner with African Muslims during the early phase of its outreach. Ahmadu Bello was killed in Nigeria's first coup of 1966, but Gumi lived until 1992. He remained an influential religious and political figure in northern Nigeria, retaining region-wide appeal even after the breakup of the Northern Region into separate states. The following section argues that Gumi was critical to the development of Salafism in Nigeria – but that he himself was not fully Salafi, especially because of his lack of immersion in the Salafi canon. Gumi's case reflects larger patterns in the early phase of Saudi outreach to Africa. The Kingdom's institutions could promote anti-Sufism, but it took longer to promote the full Salafi identity as encapsulated within and symbolized by the canon.

### **From Colonial Education to Anti-Sufi Reformism: Shaykh Abubakar Gumi**

Abubakar Gumi, the son of an Islamic scholar and judge, was born in present-day Zamfara State, Nigeria. He studied in colonial schools from

<sup>64</sup> National Archives Kaduna (NAK) GENS 425, “Saudi Arabian Study Grants,” 111.

<sup>65</sup> “Saudi Arabian Study Grants,” 166.

<sup>66</sup> “Saudi Arabian Study Grants,” 198.

an early age, first in the Middle School in Sokoto and subsequently at the Northern Provinces Law School in Kano, later renamed the School for Arabic Studies. At the school, Muslim elites read a condensed version of the classical Mālikī curriculum in a setting that encouraged a level of discussion and debate that would have been unusual in classical study circles. After he graduated, Gumi recalled,

I did not welcome to study with the leading scholars around, because I had now become used to an approach quite different from theirs. Most of my former teachers had background in both the European and traditional Islamic schools and that made them to be different. . . . The city scholars had a less flexible background.<sup>67</sup>

Gumi reproached classical scholars for practices that deviated from what he had read in Mālikī texts at the School for Arabic Studies. Posted to the town of Maru in 1949 as a court scribe, Gumi came into conflict with the imam of the central mosque there due to the latter's (in Gumi's telling) preference for conducting ablutions with sand instead of water. When the imam rejected Gumi's textual citations, Gumi and his students refused to allow the imam to lead them in prayer.<sup>68</sup> Colonial schooling had shaped a reformist and critical outlook in Gumi, but his core textual references remained Islamic scriptures and Mālikī jurisprudence. At this time, he had little or no exposure to the Salafī canon, especially in its Yemeni, Indian, or late-nineteenth-century revivalist manifestations. This was largely due to timing – Middle Eastern presses had only begun to systematically produce Salafī canonical literature in the early twentieth century, and most of those texts had not reached Nigeria in large numbers, if at all.

The role of Gumi's colonial schooling in his anti-Sufism points to important dynamics in Muslim anti-Sufi reformist movements, of which Salafī movements are merely one subset. Significantly, Gumi's account of his early career suggests that he developed notions of textually inspired reform before he left Nigeria. These notions reflected his experiences in elite colonial schools and his mobility as an employee of the colonial administration, rather than Saudi Arabian influence. Scholars of West Africa have called attention to the influence of colonial pedagogies, epistemologies, and notions of modernity on Muslim reformist movements, particularly those that emerged between the 1930s and the 1980s.<sup>69</sup> Colonial education shaped not only the scholars who led reformist movements, but also the Western-educated lay elites who became important constituents within those organizations. Drawing on evidence from

<sup>67</sup> Gumi, *Where I Stand*, 64.

<sup>68</sup> Gumi, *Where I Stand*.

<sup>69</sup> Rudolph Ware, *The Walking Qur'an: Islamic Education, Embodied Knowledge, and History in West Africa* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

Ghana and Burkina Faso, Ousman Kobo has shown that “colonial education . . . nurtured new elites who ambivalently shared the colonialists’ negative attitude toward African traditions and local Islamic practices, even as they claimed to resist European cultural assimilation and wanted to be seen as defenders of indigenous traditions.”<sup>70</sup> Some of these elites made ideal partners for Saudi Arabia.

Gumi became an open opponent of Sufism in stages. Between the late 1940s and the late 1960s, Gumi challenged practices associated with Sufis and classical scholars but did not publicize his anti-Sufi views. Around the late 1940s, he reportedly came into contact with Sa’id ibn Hayatu, a descendant of dan Fodio and a leader in the “Mahdiyya,” a set of millenarian anticolonial movements; Gumi married one of Hayatu’s daughters and, under the family’s influence, renounced his affiliation to the Qadiriyya order.<sup>71</sup> In the 1960s, Gumi became a key religious adviser to Ahmadu Bello as well as Grand Qadi (Judge) of the Northern Region. Gumi’s rise within the judiciary was “a watershed in the development of anti-Sufism in Nigeria.”<sup>72</sup> As Grand Qadi, he had opportunities to publicly question Sufi teachings. In 1964, he wrote to the Senegalese Sufi Shaykh Ibrāhīm Niase (1900–75), the foremost leader of the Tijaniyya in West Africa, and asked for a *fatwā* (legal opinion). Gumi was concerned by reports that Sufi disciples who reached advanced spiritual states in retreats (*khalawāt*) were describing themselves and other entities as manifestations of Allah. Gumi asked Niase to address the legal status of this act. Although Gumi addressed Niase in polite language, Gumi made the high stakes of the question clear:

If [this process] is legally correct, what is the interpretation of the meaning of “Lord of the Worlds” [*rabb al-‘ālamīn*, a name for Allah, that appears for example in Qur’an 1:2] for the one who arrives at this extent [*ḥadd*], and what is the difference between it and incarnation [*ḥulūl*], or the saying of the Christians, “the Trinity.” Issue a ruling for us, may Allah have mercy on you, and support the judgment with Qur’anic proofs and sound Prophetic *aḥādīth*.<sup>73</sup>

Core assumptions of a textualist attitude appeared here: Gumi, who had perceived a discrepancy between what he read in texts and what he saw in practice, arrogated to himself the right to question a prominent Sufi authority. Although structured by his reading of Mālikī texts, this attitude

<sup>70</sup> Kobo, *Unveiling Modernity*, 13.

<sup>71</sup> Loimeier, *Islamic Reform*, 150.

<sup>72</sup> Muhammad Sani Umar, “Changing Islamic Identity in Nigeria from the 1960s to the 1980s: From Sufism to Anti-Sufism,” in *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, edited by Louis Brenner, 154–78 (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1993), 160.

<sup>73</sup> Quoted in Ibrahim Niase, *Ijābat al-Fatwā fī Tahāfut al-Ṣūfiyya* (Kano: Northern Maktabat Printing Press, 1964), Northwestern University Library Paden Collection 286, 1.

indicated a kind of proto-Salafism: an anti-esotericism and an insistence that in theological debates, any argument other than textual proof was inadmissible.

Following the fall of the First Republic in the first coup of 1966, Gumi became more outspoken about his anti-Sufi views, possibly because the death of Bello obviated the necessity for Gumi to maintain political correctness on religious matters. He aired his anti-Sufism through his Ramadan *tafsīr* (Qur'anic exegesis) sessions, which were broadcast on the radio starting in 1967. In his memoir *Where I Stand* (dictated to an associate circa 1992, the year of his death), Gumi depicts the process of airing these views as the slow unfolding of a strategy. He first primed his audience for anti-Sufism by laying "the necessary intellectual foundations" and then introduced potentially controversial statements. Around 1971, Gumi recalls, "I improved on my previous comments, disagreeing openly with the popular scholars, where I could sufficiently explain the disagreements to my audiences for their easy comprehension."<sup>74</sup> It appears that the altered political landscape after the fall of Bello's government in 1966 allowed northern intellectuals to articulate their positions more strongly than before, when professional and political imperatives encouraged strategic silence on points that might have undermined Bello's efforts at Northern unity.

Gumi had lifelong connections to Saudi Arabia. From at least 1965 to 1974, he served on the Islamic University of Medina's Advisory Council, and from at least 1978 to 1987, he served on the university's Highest Council (*al-majlis al-a'lā*).<sup>75</sup> The Muslim World League, with which Gumi was affiliated from its founding in 1962, sponsored his 1979 Hausa translation of the Qur'an. In 1989, Gumi won the King Faisal Award for service to Islam. Yet Gumi's writings show little engagement with the Salafi canon, especially its contemporary components. This posture contrasts markedly with the discourses of the graduates of Medina who returned home in the 1990s and 2000s.

"What I teach is simple," Gumi said in *Where I Stand*. "Let us go back to what the books say."<sup>76</sup> But which books? In his anti-Sufi tract *Al-'Aqīda al-Ṣaḥīḥa bi-Muwāfaqat al-Sharī'a*, Gumi referred frequently to scripture, and occasionally to classical Arab exegetes such as Ibn Kathīr (1301–73), a figure in the classical Salafi canon. Yet Gumi did not refer to any twentieth-century Muslim thinkers in *Al-'Aqīda*, nor did he grapple extensively with evaluating the soundness of *aḥādīth*, a hallmark of contemporary Salafi methodology. It is almost certain that Gumi was familiar with Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhāb's *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd* (The Book of the

<sup>74</sup> Gumi, *Where I Stand*, 132.

<sup>75</sup> Al-Ghāmīdī, *Al-Kitāb al-Wathā'iq*, 149–85.

<sup>76</sup> Gumi, *Where I Stand*, 200.

Unity of God), a core text in the Salafi canon. However, familiarity did not mean engagement: neither *Al-‘Aqīda* nor *Where I Stand* cites Ibn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb, or any other Salafi canonical figure from the last three centuries. His written *tafsīr*, *Radd al-Adhhān ilā Ma‘ānī al-Qur‘ān* (Bringing Minds Back to the Meanings of the Qur‘an), “seems to be a mere reproduction of the *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn*,” the most widespread *tafsīr* in West Africa. Gumi “purged” that text of passages friendly to Sufis and of “purported Biblical material (*isrā‘iliyyāt*),” a genre of extra-Qur‘anic stories that Salafis reject. Meanwhile, Gumi added thematic passages from Sayyid Quṭb’s *Fī Zīlāl al-Qur‘ān* (In the Shade of the Qur‘an),<sup>77</sup> a text that many Salafis have held at arm’s length, preferring the exegesis of, above all, Ibn Kathīr. Gumi’s use of *Tafsīr al-Jalālayn* reinforces the sense that the textual basis of his worldview remained the classical texts of northwest Islamic Africa, rather than the Salafi canon then taking definitive shape in the Middle East. For Gumi, certain broad themes of the Salafi worldview – anti-Sufism, and a claim to be returning to an authentic and anti-esoteric early Islam – overlaid an intellectual training that was still largely West African in character.

Other core elements of Salafism were missing from Gumi’s thought, especially anti-*madhhabism*, or rejection of legal schools. Gumi remained anchored in the Mālikī world of northwest Africa to a greater extent than his Nigerian Salafi successors. In *Where I Stand*, Gumi listed four authors whom he admired “more than anyone else on the African continent.” Three of them were major figures in Mālikī jurisprudence: Ibn Abī Zayd al-Qayrawānī (d. 996), Qadī ‘Iyāḍ (1083–1149), and Khalīl ibn Ishāq al-Jundī (d. ca. 1365). The fourth was ‘Uthmān dan Fodio.

Like al-Jāmī, Nigeria’s Abubakar Gumi was keen to retell the history of dan Fodio’s career. Gumi cast dan Fodio as a reformer: in the Sokoto Caliphate, Gumi wrote, “There was . . . a good attempt by the early leaders to put into practice the correct ideals of the religion.”<sup>78</sup> Gumi dismissed dan Fodio’s adherence to the Qadiriyya, asserting that dan Fodio “withdrew from [Sufism] when he realized its futility as an acceptable philosophy in Islam. Sufism advocates withdrawal from the society and as such, one could not possibly adopt it to build an Islamic State.”<sup>79</sup> Tellingly, while Gumi recast dan Fodio as a reformed Sufi, he did not recast him as a reformed Mālikī. It is unclear whether or not Gumi abandoned his formal adherence to the Mālikī school, but he definitely did not abandon his immersion in the intellectual world of Mālikism.

<sup>77</sup> Andrea Brigaglia, “*Tafsīr* and the Intellectual History of Islam in West Africa: The Nigerian Case” in *Tafsīr and Intellectual History*, 379–415; 384.

<sup>78</sup> Gumi, *Where I Stand*, 3.

<sup>79</sup> Gumi, *Where I Stand*, 36.

Within politics, Gumi was a partisan of northern Nigeria, which he regarded as a cultural, religious, and political unit even after its administrative breakup.<sup>80</sup> Despite his participation in Saudi-backed global Muslim institutions, this perspective on the north often oriented Gumi's concerns to the local rather than the global level. Gumi paired his anti-Sufism with an anticolonialism, and discussed both concerns primarily as they figured in the Nigerian arena. In *Al-'Aqīda*, Gumi described a stunted postcolonialism, where colonialism and Sufism were mutually reinforcing causes of Nigeria's troubles. He wrote,

The enemies of Islam first used as a basis the writing of books to destroy the sunna, in the name of illumination and "sainthood" (*wilāya*), and smuggled them into the Islamic umma by means of the sectarian shaykhs who glorify them and give them absolute power, and replaced knowledge with ignorance, and reason with arbitrary personal opinions, and guidance with error, and the truth with distortions. Then, second, they built schools to teach the destructive culture of the West, and they began by teaching the children of pagan rejecters whose fathers used to walk naked in the land . . . and put them in sensitive governmental positions; and they began to control the Muslims whose minds were sleeping.<sup>81</sup>

These passages, although compatible with Salafism, also mark Gumi as one of the many African graduates of colonial schools who felt ambivalent about the colonial encounter even as his schooling continued to shape his textualism and rejection of local religious authority. Finally, in another reflection of his local orientation, Gumi embraced political stances – such as his statement on the eve of the 1983 election that it was more important for women to vote than to pray – that might have horrified some Salafis. In light of his continued *madhhab* allegiance, his open endorsement of politics over piety, and his lack of engagement with the Salafi canon, we can say that Gumi was not fully Salafi. Rather, he was a bridge between local anti-Sufism and global Salafism. The Izala organization, which he helped to found, also epitomizes this process.

### Izala

In the late 1970s and 1980s, new Islamic tendencies flourished in northern Nigeria. One new movement was the mass anti-Sufi movement *Jamā'at Izālat al-Bid'a wa-Iqāmat al-Sunna* (The Society for Removing Heretical Innovation and Establishing the Sunna), which Ja'far Ādam and other future Salafi preachers joined in the 1980s. Izala was founded in 1978 in Jos under the leadership of Shaykh Ismail Idris (1937–2000),

<sup>80</sup> Allan Christelow, "Three Islamic Voices in Contemporary Nigeria" in *Islam and the Political Economy of Meaning*, edited by William Roff (London: Croon Helm, 1987), 226–53.

<sup>81</sup> Abubakar Gumi, *Al-'Aqīda al-Ṣaḥīḥa bi-Muwāfaqat al-Sharī'a* (Beirut: Dār al-'Arabīyya, 1972), 78–9.

who graduated from the School of Arabic Studies in 1967 and served as an imam in the Nigerian army before creating Izala. Idris became a follower of Gumi, teaching his *Al-'Aqīda* in Kaduna soon after its publication. Idris had also received education in Mālikī jurisprudence. As an army imam, Idris was drawn into theological debates with Sufis in towns he was stationed in, controversies that helped inspire the decision to found Izala.<sup>82</sup> Like Gumi, Idris seems to have had little exposure to the Salafi canon.

Gumi's heirs in Izala also sought to speak for dan Fodio. Izala took its name from dan Fodio's *Ihyā' al-Sunna wa-Ikhlāḥ al-Bid'a* (Reviving the Sunna and Destroying Heresy). Izala references dan Fodio in diverse ways, and anchors its genealogy in local currents of reform.<sup>83</sup>

After its establishment in Jos, Izala established branches in other northern cities, including Kano. Izala's preachers encountered opposition from Sufis inside Kano's old city, but had greater success preaching in areas like Fagge, where Ādam partly grew up.<sup>84</sup> Izala's young preachers, like Ādam, taught children and adults how to read, recite, and interpret the Qur'an, and offered lessons in *ḥadīth* and *fiqh* (jurisprudence).<sup>85</sup> This kind of generic education for adults and children is one method still used by Nigerian graduates of Medina.

In Kano, Izala spread by assembling a coalition of young preachers and adult businessmen who fought micro-political battles to create alternative religious spaces to the Sufi-dominated mosques. Kano's Emirate Council controlled the establishment of mosques, especially Friday mosques, of which there were only five in Kano by the early 1980s. Izala's activists established worship spaces in private homes and broadcast their sermons through loudspeakers. These tactics brought conflict with Sufis and the emir, who ultimately allowed Izala some freedom.<sup>86</sup> Izala's reinscription of urban space was paralleled by an inversion of older relationships between clerics and businessmen, a process that has occurred within other reformist movements elsewhere in Africa.<sup>87</sup> Rather than wealthy Sufi clerics "overshadowing" businessmen, businessmen began recruiting and supporting Izala's young preachers. In this pattern, "unlike the

<sup>82</sup> Ramzi Ben Amara, "Shaykh Ismaila Idris (1937–2000), the Founder of the Izala movement in Nigeria," *Annual Review on Islam in Africa* 11 (2012): 74–8.

<sup>83</sup> Abdoulaye Sounaye, "Les héritiers du cheikh: Izala et ses appropriations d'Usman Dan Fodio au Niger," *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 206/207 (2012): 427–47.

<sup>84</sup> Ousmane Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition* (Boston: Brill, 2003), 90; Rijiyar Lemo, *Ayyāmī*, 8.

<sup>85</sup> Ja'far Maḥmūd Ādam, "Tarihin Rayuwata a Ilmi" (recorded lecture, no date).

<sup>86</sup> Kane, *Muslim Modernity*, 90.

<sup>87</sup> See Østebø, *Localising Salafism: Religious Change among Oromo Muslims in Bale, Ethiopia* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2012) on this tendency in Ethiopia; and Kobo, *Unveiling Modernity*, on Ghana and Burkina Faso.



Sufi Shaykh, the cleric is not supposed to have any extraordinary powers. So, spiritually, he is assumed to be the equal of the businessman.”<sup>88</sup> Funding from Saudi Arabia and Gumi’s personal connections to the Kingdom played a role in Izala’s spread. But during the 1980s, many of the movement’s preachers were trained within northern Nigeria, and much of its funding came from local businesspersons.

Ādam would eventually reassess his relationship with Izala, most of whose senior leaders continue to be locally educated. Izala did, however, provide an entry point for preachers like Ādam into the worldviews and networks that would ultimately connect him and his peers to global Salafism. The next chapter discusses the young preachers’ trajectories in greater detail, but here it is relevant to note that it was through Izala that Ādam came into contact with books like *Kitāb al-Tawhīd* and with the circles most likely to be the object of outreach from the Islamic University of Medina.

### Changes in Saudi Arabian Outreach to Africa

Saudi Arabia’s outreach to Nigeria gradually overcame its initial difficulties. Over time, Salafi proselytizers established a broader network of contacts in Africa. They communicated seriously with those partners about the lay of the land, rather than assuming, as they had in the early 1960s, that they could bring African Sufis to Medina and remold them in a straightforward and heavy-handed manner.

The new Salafi institutions also provided vehicles for intellectuals to describe, for a global audience, the conditions in African countries. In the June 1978 *Journal of the Muslim World League*, the Nigeria-based Indian Professor A. R. I. Doi, then director of the Centre for Islamic Legal Studies at Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, contributed an article titled “Education in Nigeria: Teaching of Islamic Studies as an Academic Subject.” Doi discussed the history of Islamic education during precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial times. Doi’s article did not reflect a Salafi creed. However, Salafis would likely have appreciated the informational content of the article, as well as Doi’s emphasis on eliminating “syncretic superstitions” and his skepticism concerning Qur’anic education methods that deemphasized the acquisition of Arabic fluency.<sup>89</sup>

Saudi Arabia also had success at recruiting students from southwestern Nigeria, who reinforced the Kingdom’s network of partners once they returned home. Iysa Ade Bello (b. 1949) obtained an LL.B. in Islamic Law from the Islamic University in 1976; he later earned a Ph.D. from

<sup>88</sup> Kane, *Muslim Modernity*, 92.

<sup>89</sup> A. R. I. Doi, “Education in Nigeria: Teaching of Islamic Studies as an Academic Subject,” *Journal of the Muslim World League* (June 1978): 33–8; 37.

the University of Toronto in 1986.<sup>90</sup> Bello's writings suggest someone who is not Salafi – his dissertation at Toronto, for example, focused on the intellectual and philosophical debates between al-Ghazali and Ibn Rushd, two figures sometimes excluded from the Salafi canon (especially al-Ghazali), just as the discipline of philosophy is itself considered heretical by Salafis. Yet Bello did help edit a 1973 Yoruba translation of the meanings of the Qur'an, which was published by the Muslim World League, making him another local partner for Saudi Arabia of the type represented by Ahmadu Bello – a non-Salafi who found areas of overlapping interest with the Kingdom, including the project of making Islam's foundational texts more accessible to lay, literate Muslims.

Another influential southwestern graduate is Abdurraheed Hadiyyatullah, who entered the University in the 1960s. He wrote an article for the *Journal of the Islamic University in Medina* in 1969 entitled "Facts about Nigeria,"<sup>91</sup> providing the Islamic University with yet another snapshot of Muslim life in Nigeria. Hadiyyatullah has remained a key partner for the Kingdom. In 1988, he founded the Sharia College of Nigeria in Iwo, Osun State. The college was renamed Sheikh Abdul-Azeez bin Abdullahi bin Baaz Sharia College in 1999 "because of [Ibn Bāz's] immense scholarly contributions to the upliftment of Islamic Institutions and most especially his financially and morally support for the College."<sup>92</sup> Hadiyyatullah remains close to the Islamic University, attending a conference there in May 2015 on the theme of "historical relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Africa and ways of strengthening it [sic]." He spoke on the topic "Ways of strengthening the Afro-Saudi relations through the Islamic advocacy support to the African continent."<sup>93</sup>

In the north, it was not until the 1980s that the Islamic University began to have sustained success in recruiting Nigerian students who would respond positively to its curriculum and goals. This success was connected to the university's new and systematic global outreach through its *dawrāt* (tours). On these tours, university staff taught and tested potential students. Official figures show that the university conducted 296 *dawrāt* in eighteen countries between 1982 and 1997, involving 1,362 teachers and 29,725 students. Of all these countries, which ranged from Senegal to Britain to Sri Lanka, Nigeria had the highest participation, involving 245 teachers and 8,146 students.<sup>94</sup> Several major Salafi preachers in Nigeria were recruited through these study tours.

<sup>90</sup> Iyasa Ade Bello Curriculum Vitae, circa 2004.

<sup>91</sup> 'Abd al-Rashīd Hadiyyat Allāh, "Ḥaqā'iq 'an Nayjīriyā," *Majallat al-Jāmi'a al-Islāmiyya bi-l-Madīna* 6 (December 1969): 126–34.

<sup>92</sup> Sharia College of Nigeria website, www.shariahcollege.com; accessed September 2015.

<sup>93</sup> Islamic University of Medina, "Islamic University Organizes a Seminar on the Historical Relations between Saudi Arabia and Africa," 3 May 2015. Available at: www.iu.edu.sa/en/News/Pages/2009111.aspx, accessed September 2015.

<sup>94</sup> Al-Ghāmidī, *Al-Kitāb al-wathā'iq*, 230.

Nigeria became one of the largest sources of students for the Islamic University. Between the time of its first graduating class in 1965 and 2001, the latest date for which I found figures, 856 Nigerians graduated from the university, including 389 who obtained a B.A., nine who obtained an M.A., and two who obtained Ph.D.s. In the number of its nationals who graduated from the Islamic University during this period, Nigeria outranked most countries, save Yemen (1,634 graduates), Pakistan (1,560), Indonesia (1,238), India (952), and Eritrea (915).<sup>95</sup> The university's attention to Nigeria was a major factor in generating a strong Salafi movement there.

### Conclusion

The establishment of the Islamic University of Medina marked a new phase in the institutionalization of Salafism. This institutionalization enhanced Salafis' abilities to project their creed into new regions of the Muslim world.

Africa emerged as a special zone for Salafi outreach. Salafis perceived the continent as a dynamic space, full of possibility and ripe for instruction as it emerged out of colonialism. Initial efforts at outreach to African Muslims sometimes faltered, including when the first Nigerian students at Medina found the environment there shocking. Yet African Salafis resident in Saudi Arabia helped to theorize and implement forms of Salafi outreach that took account of particularities of African countries' religious environments, including the strong presence of Sufi orders.

The Islamic University and the Kingdom's African Salafis also cultivated local partners in Africa who, although not always fully Salafi themselves, were receptive to the ideals of international Muslim organizations and ready to accept financial and moral assistance to pursue their own projects. Two of the Kingdom's foremost partners were northern Nigeria's ruler Ahmadu Bello and his religious advisor Abubakar Gumi. Bello's efforts to unify northern Muslims and convert non-Muslims to Islam won him admiration from Salafis in the Kingdom. Gumi emerged as a figure with Salafi leanings who was eager to denounce Sufism.

Outreach from Medina and the Muslim World League to Africa became more sophisticated through the 1980s. It incorporated mechanisms like the study tours that the university organized. The stage was set for African Muslim students to be recruited in ways that ensured they

<sup>95</sup> *Buhūth Multaqā Khādīm al-haramayn al-Sharīfayn li-Khirrijī al-Jāmi'āt al-Sa'ūdīyya: Min Ifriqiyyā, al-Awwal: Al-muqām bi-Nayjīriyā, Kānū tahta Ishrāf al-Jāmi'a al-Islāmiyya bi-l-Madīna al-Munawwara, 9–11/10/1422 H, 25–27/12/2002 M* (Medina: al-Mamlaka al-'Arabiyya al-Sa'ūdīyya, Wizārat al-Ta'līm al-'ālī, al-Jāmi'a al-Islāmiyya bi-l-Madīna al-Munawwara, 'Imādāt al-Baḥṭh al-'Ilmī, 2003), 1056–65, with figures for Nigeria on page 1064.

would know better what to expect at the university. This process helps to explain why the Nigerian students who attended the university in the 1980s and 1990s had different experiences than their predecessors in the 1960s, and why the later group returned to Nigeria with the intellectual resources – including a mastery of the Salafi canon – that helped them popularize not just anti-Sufism but a detailed understanding of the Salafi creed.

Tracing the movement from anti-Sufism to Salafism is about more than just splitting hairs over definitions of Salafism. At stake are key questions about the incorporation of diverse local movements into a unified Salafi identity; this process, which unfolded over decades, needs to be historicized and contextualized with reference to both generational change in recipient countries and institutional change in Saudi Arabia. In Nigeria, the transmission of the canon, and of stances like anti-*madhhabism*, has transformed and widened the intellectual horizons of preachers who emerged from the Izala fold. The difference between Gumi and the Medina graduates is not just one of style. The difference concerns the role that each played in mediating transnational encounters. Gumi was a local partner to Saudi Arabia whose interests resonated with the Kingdom's when it came to the question of anti-Sufism; figures like Ādam, in contrast, had available to them a fully formed intellectual system that they sought not to lay over northwest Africa's textual universe but to install in place of it. This difference does not mean that the Medina graduates are "transnational" or "global" figures disconnected from local realities; indeed, the Salafi canon constitutes a powerful intellectual resource useful for localizing and recontextualizing Salafi discourses. This resource gives the Medina graduates tools that were unavailable to Gumi – the canon allows them to make a more expansive case that struggles in Nigeria are not just an effort to reassert the early Muslim community's alleged values but also a part of a global struggle occurring around the world at the present time.