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Volume 7: Shaping Global Islamic Discourses : The Role of al-Azhar, al-Medina and al-Mustafa

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Shaping Global Islamic Discourses

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Introduction

Masooda Bano and Keiko Sakurai

Claims abound of Saudi oil money fuelling Salafi Islam across cultural and geographical terrains as far removed as the remote village hamlets of the Swat valley in Pakistan and sprawling megacities such as Jakarta.[1] Assumptions that the Iranian state is fighting proxy wars with Sunni Arab states in foreign lands similarly tend to be promoted to the status of fact.[2] In fact, however, there are few empirically grounded studies that explore how those with hegemonic aspirations embed their ideologies in locales to which that thought and its accompanying practices are very foreign. Questions about how ideas are transported from an assumed core to societies viewed to be on the periphery, and how these ideas are embedded, if at all, within the complex socio-economic and political milieus of their new host societies, are more often answered through the creation of hypothetical scenarios than by marshalling scholarly evidence. We still lack academically sound responses to certain critical questions, such as: what enables a particular brand of Islam to gain centrality among competing positions?; to what extent do national governments play an active part in promoting a global Islamic discourse?; and in what ways do the Islamic discourses that acquire global attention challenge local beliefs and practices? This volume is designed to address this gap. It represents a rare attempt to map the complex processes of engagement between an assumed core and the peripheries. The volume illustrates how this engagement at times dramatically transforms the host societies, while in other cases the absorption of new ideas remains partial – the success of foreign ideas in transforming local contexts remaining contingent on their suitability for the socio-economic and political realities of their host societies.

In order to unravel the complex processes that underpin the global transmission of Islamic discourses, this volume focuses on the working of the three

most influential international centres of Islamic learning in contemporary times: al-Azhar University in Egypt; the Islamic University of Medina (IUM) in Saudi Arabia; and al-Mustafa International University in Iran. These three universities, located in the politically influential countries in the Middle East and Gulf region, attract students from across the globe. Their graduates carry the ideas acquired during their education back to their home communities, and some also bring with them a reformatory zeal. These Islamic universities are the modern form of Islamic seminaries, which train ʿulama of various ranks, including *mujtahid*, scholars entitled to issue legal opinions on matters not explicitly addressed in the Qurʾan.[3] The significance of these universities is in their hybrid nature; they produce ʿulama through their curriculum, as inherited from the seminary tradition, while claiming a "modern" space by adapting the formal structures of the Western university. To some this model of mixing features of traditional and modern education systems might have much in common with Fethullah Gülen's effort to globalise an Islamically conscious modern schooling system in Turkey; however, the Gülen schools fall into a different category, since they offer pre-tertiary education and do not aim to produce ʿulama. This volume argues that we should recognise the distinct potential of these universities in globalising specific Islamic discourses for the precise reason that these institutions are state supported, and thus that studying them enables us to examine the complex interplay between states' desires to exercise global legitimacy and the emergence of global Islamic discourses.[4]

Al-Medina and al-Mustafa have, in particular, come to act as the central locations for the promotion of Wahhabi-infused Salafism and Iranian-styled Shiʿism, respectively: the former particularly associated with encroachment on alternative religious spaces and erosion of the localised Islam of Sufi veneration and folk religion; the latter associated with transmitting a particularly Iranian brand of Shiʿism, which leads to a close overlap of religious and political authority in the spirit of Ayatollah Khomeini's concept of *vilāyat-i faqīh* (guardianship of the jurist).[5] It might at first appear puzzling to situate al-Azhar alongside two universities that are associated with two globally dominant, but exclusionary, Islamic worldviews, given its much more complex history and rejection of *taqlīd* (lit. to follow, to imitate; strict adherence to a specific Islamic school of thought). However, its ability to command an international presence as the "moderate voice of Islam", whereby sound understanding of Islamic principles is matched with a willingness to adapt texts to changing times,[6] makes it an illuminating case for comparative analysis. These three universities are unique in the sense that they all have direct or indirect links with their governments and their student base comes from across the globe. These characteristics distinguish them from another global centre of Islamic learning, namely, Dar ul-Ulum Deoband in India. The Deobandi madrasa network runs completely independently of the

government, and its following though large is primarily concentrated within the South Asian Muslim communities.[7] By looking at the workings of these three global centres of Islamic learning, and tracing the activities of their graduates and their influence on their home communities, this volume seeks to develop a more nuanced understanding than is available in the literature on globalisation of Islamic discourses, on how ideas are transmitted from one locale to another, and how the ultimate outcomes of this process are rarely fully under the control of one single actor or state.

Three reasons make this comparative undertaking a particularly useful lens through which to study the working of global and local linkages in the transmission of global Islamic discourses. First, before setting out to study the processes that help a given discourse acquire global standing, it is important to establish that the selected discourse does indeed deserve that label. These three universities easily meet this prerequisite. The influence of these three universities in shaping Islamic discourse and practice in contemporary Muslim societies is visible across North Africa, the Middle East and Asia, and in diaspora communities in North America and Europe. It is reflected in the diversity of their international student populations, with all three universities attracting students from across the globe. As analysed in the chapters presented in Part One, the senior leadership within all three universities is very conscious of their influence in shaping the Islamic discourse for Muslims around the globe, and takes it to be their religious obligation to provide global leadership due to their recognised status as a prominent seat of Islamic learning.

Secondly, a comparative analysis of these three universities presents a rare opportunity to compare the global working of the three dominant strands of contemporary Islam that rival each other for supremacy in the international political and religious arena: Wahhabi-styled Salafism, Iranian-inspired Shiᶜism and the voice of "moderate" Islam. Academic scholarship on global Islamic networks, as well as Western policy discourse, remains centred on understanding the ways in which these three major strands of Islam shape Muslim societies and how they determine their relationships with the West. What is meant by these terms is contested, however, given that any scholarly attempt to define such labels as "liberal", "moderate" or "orthodox" Islam remains open to critique depending on what is viewed to be the most important criterion in defining such terms. As a general norm, Salafism has come to be associated with the puritanical and rigid interpretation of Islamic texts often associated with Saudi-styled Wahhabism. However, as we see repeatedly in this volume, the term "Salafism" becomes complicated in the Egyptian context,[8] where modernists such as Muhammad ᶜAbduh (1849–1935) and his student Rashid Rida (1865–1935), who were in fact arguing for very modernist interpretations of the Islamic texts, also defined themselves as Salafis, and are indeed referred to as such by

many scholars. They rejected taqlīd, or blind following of the four schools of law (madhāhib, sing. madhhab), and argued for direct and constant engagement with the Qurʾan and hadith in order to interpret them directly,[9] as do the Salafis in Saudi Arabia. However, in practice their Salafism has had very different theological and societal implications to those of Wahhabi Salafism, where the latter also argues for going back to the original sources, but instead of reinterpreting those texts in the light of modern needs seeks doctrinal purification often resulting in the total rejection of Western influence. Thus, the papers looking at al-Azhar and al-Medina both refer to the influence of these universities in terms of spreading Salafi ideology, but these are two very different conceptions of Salafism.[10] Although the common denominator is the willingness of both groups to go back to the original texts, they take very different approaches on how to engage with those texts.

Defining "moderate" Islam is an equally challenging task given the variations within the organisations that claim a modernist outlook. But, as in the case of the term "Salafism", certain features have come to be recognised as important in defining moderate Islam. The two most popular criteria used here are a willingness to adopt more context-bound, as opposed to literal, interpretations of the text, and to allow for a pluralistic outlook in terms of following several madhāhib rather than taqlīd of one school. Defining the Iranian brand of Shiʿi Islam is similarly complex, but its underlying feature is its close association with Khomeini's political doctrine of vilāyat-i faqīh, which leads to a much closer merger of religious and political authority than was associated with the Najafi seminaries that traditionally led the Shiʿi Islamic discourse.

The cases selected for this volume present these three distinct conceptions of Islam. Thus, al-Medina has been selected because it is today recognised as representing the popular conception of Salafism, which is seen as being conservative and associated with Saudi Islam; few ordinary Muslims, and not just in the West, are aware of the modernist style Salafism of ʿAbduh. Al-Azhar is today viewed globally as a leading example of moderate Islam due to its emphasis on teaching of all four Sunni madhāhib and its willingness to support both the Egyptian and Western states in their decisions to adapt Islamic injunctions to suit the changes induced by modern lifestyles. Al-Mustafa is the obvious case for studying the workings of Iranian Shiʿism, since it is the primary institution in Iran providing religious education to international students. Thus, in this volume, the selection of the three cases is based on their ability to present the three dominant strands of Islam today, as defined in the popular discourse. Individual chapters do, however, show quite clearly that many of these terms are complex, and that they can be applied to opposing organisations. The reason for starting from these broader categories, however, is that they do help to capture the dominant positions within Islam, even though there are variations within each position.

Given that these three conceptions of Islam can lead to quite varying outcomes for the shaping of Muslim societies and their relationships with modernity and Western societies, much of the global policy discourse is aimed at curtailing the influence of Saudi-style Salafism and the Iranian brand of Shiʿism, and instead galvanising support for the spread of a more tolerant Islam.[11] Looking at these three major centres of Islamic learning – where each is clearly aligned with one of the three influential Islamic discourses in the international arena – thus presents a unique opportunity to study the micro-level working of discourses that have acquired global hegemony and the factors that contribute to their rise. Such a comparative approach also affords an opportunity to inquire whether the underlying mechanisms of engagement between the core and the assumed peripheries are the same across the three influential discourses, or whether the nature of the discourse (taqlīd versus a pluralist outlook) itself ends up impacting the nature of the engagements between the two sides – taqlīd arguably demanding a one-way transmission of ideas if the purpose is to promote adherence to specific ideals.

Notwithstanding the growing scholarly debate on the fracturing of Islamic authority due to the rise of alternative platforms, the power of those who control the teaching of Islamic texts remains paramount with regard to shaping global Islamic discourse. There is indeed a mushrooming of online imams, and some have come to command a reasonable level of authority among ordinary Muslims; but more often than not, in order to gain that attention, they still need a stamp of higher approval, in the form of a degree certificate from one of the orthodox centres of learning. This continued importance of the knowledge of the written texts in staking a claim to religious authority makes these universities, with their focus on the teaching of Islamic texts, central to the training of serious Islamic scholars who will continue to speak on behalf of Islam in coming decades.[12] Thus, while multiple platforms can be used to promote certain religious ideas globally, centres of Islamic learning that train the ʿulama or scholars in their ability to interpret the text remain central to advancing any globalising Islamic mission.[13] Looking at the universities that have emerged due to the direct or indirect support of the theocratic state[14] – especially al-Medina and al-Mustafa – thus enables us to decipher how certain institutions can cultivate allegiance to very narrow interpretations of the Islamic texts while discrediting other equally influential sources. The case of al-Azhar, on the other hand, helps to elaborate how the same texts can be used to promote a pluralistic outlook where critical engagement with multiple sources is prioritised over the taqlīd of a particular madhhab.

By looking at the working of these three global centres of Islamic learning, and tracing the activities and influence of their graduates on their home communities, this volume thus argues for a nuanced understanding of how ideas are

transmitted from one locale to another, and how the process of transmission results in making adjustments to those very ideas in the process of winning followers. By showing that the hegemonic discourses have to be flexible in engaging with counter-discourses if they are to win a following beyond their original set of adherents, the volume counters simplistic assumptions about the mechanisms that shape the global transmission of ideas and also checks the exaggerated claims sometimes made about the power of theocratic states. What becomes very clear in the volume is that while the Saudi or Iranian states might invest heavily in the promotion of their religious ideology, the extent to which they succeed in this mission is contingent on a number of factors at the receiving end, most importantly the local political context, historical patterns of religious affiliation, and the existing cultural and aesthetic sensibilities of the recipient community. When studying the processes of the global transmission of ideas, it is thus not only important to map the "attempts at influence", but equally important to examine the "adaptations for influence". As we will see throughout this volume, this adaptation is essential both to winning students over to a particular ideology, and equally important for preparing the students to meet the counter-arguments of other madhāhib or sects. The chapters in this volume show that in the cases of al-Medina, al-Mustafa and al-Azhar, there is always a dialectical engagement between those who want to influence and those being influenced, with both sides having an impact on the other.

More importantly, the volume also illustrates that there is a natural limit to which religious adherence can be cultivated by design – despite concerted efforts, not all students enrolled in the three universities absorb the ideas and attitudes associated with these institutions. Rather, many students use their education at these universities to advance material rather than religious interests. What becomes clear is that the appeal of the extreme puritanical practices associated with Saudi-styled Salafism or Iranian Shiʿism can never totally crowd out the appeal of alternative or more pluralistic platforms, as many individuals are inherently more inclined towards one approach over the other. Despite all efforts at expanding its following, Saudi-styled Salafism cannot totally eradicate the appeal of the more moderate voices of Islam as represented by al-Azhar, just as the Iranian brand of Shiʿi Islam cannot eliminate the influence of the seminaries in Najaf, which to date have had limited enthusiasm for Khomeini's conception of vilāyat-i faqīh. Thus, one of the important correctives offered by the volume is to put the concerns about the hegemonic tendencies of any discourse, religious or secular, in perspective – and to note that while financial commitments do indeed help to cultivate religious allegiance, the ultimate appeal of a religious worldview is shaped equally by the inherent appeal of the ideals associated with it and its relevance to the historical practices, as well as the everyday realities of the believers, and their individual dispositions.

The volume maps out the details of how the centres of learning act as the basis for three critical interactions that eventually shape these apparently hegemonic global Islamic discourses: (1) between the teachers and the students at the university; (2) between the state and the management of the university; and (3) between the students and their communities on their return home. The chapters in this volume show that students gain appreciation for an idea if the teacher is able to convince them, and the teacher in turn will be more effective in spreading an idea if he is himself convinced of it. A state wanting to promote a specific agenda thus has either to appoint the teachers and select the students using very narrow parameters to assess their prior affinity to the given religious outlook, or show sufficient flexibility such that the teachers as well as the students can gradually develop ownership of those ideals. To illustrate these complex dynamics, the volume presents eight chapters organised in three parts.

The chapters in Part One highlight the strategies adopted by the three universities to advance their influence. It takes the reader inside these universities and provides an account of their evolution, the extent of recognition of their authority globally, their teaching methodologies, and, most importantly, the nature of their association with the state. Part Two presents three original case studies illustrating how ideas flow from these global centres of learning to communities across the globe via their graduating students. Most importantly, the section illustrates how the relevance of these ideas to local political developments and traditional practices has direct bearing on how extensively these ideas reshape the local context. Part Three then spells out more vividly how the spread of the ideals within the home communities depends not just on the effectiveness or zeal of the messenger, but even more importantly on the specific characteristics of the community, such as the relationship between the state and religion, the nature of existing religious elites, and contemporaneous political developments. The importance of context is addressed in all the chapters, however it is in Part Three that the most explicit evidence is presented. The analysis presented in this section of the overwhelming influence of al-Azhar in Malaysia and Indonesia during the twentieth century illustrates how a complex set of factors have to come together to enable the large-scale diffusion of foreign ideals in a new context. It is therefore understandable why in most cases the diffusion remains limited to isolated pockets.

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITIES WITHIN THE STRUCTURE OF ISLAMIC AUTHORITY

The scholarship on Muslim societies has long acknowledged the societal importance of the orthodox centres of Islamic authority, namely, the mosque and the madrasa, since the ʿulama within them define what it means to be a good

Muslim. While in theory Islam has no clergy, those who are able to interpret Islamic texts come to command great influence in shaping Muslim societies. Much of this religious authority was traditionally transferred through an informal system of knowledge accreditation in form of an *ijāza* (a traditional method of authorisation for a student to start independent teaching) rather than the issuance of formal degree certificates. The colonial encounter led to the emergence of the first major fracturing of the traditional structures of authority, whereby graduates from Western-style universities started to speak on behalf of Islam, thereby establishing significant followings.[15] The changed profile of those exercising Islamic authority had major implications for the socio-political processes within these societies: the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaʿat-i-Islami, the two most influential political reform movements in the Middle East and South Asia, respectively, were established by such Islamic modernists.[16]

What is less studied in terms of the changing structures of Islamic authority, however, is the shift towards the establishment of international Islamic universities as an alternative to mosque- and madrasa-based centres of learning. While al-Medina was established as a state-sponsored university from the beginning, al-Mustafa gradually emerged as a university, albeit a private one. Officially, al-Mustafa is a private university drawing its budget mainly from the profits of the factories it owns, as well as from investments, religious endowments and government funding. However, as Chapter 2 illustrates, the post-revolutionary Iranian state has played an active role in the gradual emergence of al-Mustafa as the leading platform for the global dissemination of Iranian-style Shiʿism. Al-Azhar, whose origin goes all the way back to 970 and was historically more independent, similarly underwent a major administrative transformation when it was nationalised in 1961 by the Nasser regime. This conscious preference by these modern states to invest in Islamic universities, whether by bringing them under state control or indirectly supporting them, partly reflects their aspiration to modernise the traditional Islamic education system. Rather than drawing on the informal personalised method of teaching,[17] where the scholars normally studied a major book at a pace that was tailored to the capabilities of the individual student, the shift towards the establishment of universities led to the introduction of a standardised system of education, whereby a standard syllabus, a pre-planned and standardised examination process, and state-accredited degree certificates replaced the personalised teaching model, informal assessment methods and issuance of an ijāza that marked the madrasa system.

The move towards supporting universities, however, has equally been shaped by the states' desire to have greater control over the teaching of Islamic texts. The most explicit difference between these universities and the traditional structures of Islamic authority revolves around the nature of the relationship they have with the state, as compared with the madrasa system. The latter experienced a

much higher level of autonomy than is available to a modern university because of the greater degree of financial autonomy it enjoyed. Historically, the Muslim empires patronised madrasas in order to gain religious legitimacy, which also remains the primary motive for the modern states to engage with the international Islamic universities. However, state patronage for the bigger madrasas or mosques normally took the form of *waqf* endowments, which provided an independent income to the ᶜulama even in cases where the state might also have provided for the salaries of teachers. This gave the ᶜulama within the madrasas a certain degree of autonomy from the state – this, for instance, was the case for al-Azhar, which until nationalisation was supported through waqf income. The nationalisation of al-Azhar resulted in the confiscation of its waqf properties, making the ᶜulama directly dependent on salaries from the state. This greatly curtailed their authority. Similarly, a number of changes in the post-revolution Iranian context decreased the ability of independent *marjaᶜ-i taqlīd* (see Chapter 2) to collect *khums* (religious tax), making most leading seminaries in Qom highly dependent on the state to provide stipends to instructors and students. Al-Medina university, on the other hand, was founded with a university charter whereby the scholars appointed to university positions directly draw government salaries and thus are bound by the university regulations. These universities are thus part of the modern educational network, which is much more tightly regulated by the state in terms of what is taught, and also how it is taught and examined, than the prestigious centres of Islamic learning historically were.

What is interesting to note, however, is that being influenced by a theocratic as opposed to a non-theocratic state does have different implications for the level of religious independence that these international Islamic universities can exercise. As we see in Chapter 3, the nature and extent of manipulation by a non-theocratic state is different to that by a theocratic state, because the latter comes to realise that it is important to allow the religious institution some autonomy if it is to retain the public legitimacy needed to be useful for the state. The Mubarak regime in Egypt thus realised early on that al-Azhar's religious endorsement would be effective for gaining popular legitimacy only if al-Azhar continued to command popular respect as an independent mediator on Islamic matters: the Egyptian state has thus tolerated the existence of dissenting ᶜulama[18] within al-Azhar to counter the damage caused to al-Azhar's reputation when the Shaykh al-Azhar has been obliged to issue controversial fatwas in support of the state. The religious state, on the other hand, has a different basis of engagement with places of religious education. A theocratic state is less dependent on institutions such as Islamic universities to gain legitimacy for its actions; rather, it needs them to propagate its specific religious worldview. In this case, it is the state's religious legitimacy that is extended to the universities rather than the other way around. Thus, in the case of al-Azhar, the state used the Islamic

status of the university to seek popular legitimacy for its actions, while in the case of the other two universities the states had clear religious identities which the universities were courted to advance.

These international Islamic universities thus represent a very complex case of religious authority. In order to advance their worldview globally they must have some following and legitimacy in the eyes of Muslims, yet their heavy reliance on the state instead of independent sources of survival makes them suspect in the eyes of more critical followers, who start to see these universities as an extension of the state apparatus. Unpacking the complex processes that help these universities to balance the complex demands of retaining legitimacy in the eyes of their followers while also meeting the needs of the states that support them is thus at the heart of the analytical puzzle addressed in this volume. In order to resolve this puzzle, it is useful to begin by asking what makes certain places and institutions acquire the status of the core, and what shapes the interaction of this core with the alleged peripheries?

Becoming the "Core"

Looking at the three universities it is clear that whether they were deliberately established by the state, indirectly supported or gradually taken over, the idea of these universities being core centres of Islamic learning is central to their capacity to advance a certain viewpoint at the global level. What, however, defines this core? The chapters in this volume show that while the three universities might have made conscious efforts to exert their identity as the core locations for the exercise of Islamic authority, there has also been a corresponding willingness on the part of the so-called peripheries, lands geographically at a distance from these central locations, to recognise the superior status of the core. As Chapter 7 illustrates in detail, going to the Middle East to pursue higher learning has historically been important in the view of Muslim scholars located in other lands. There is a recognition that because of their sacred location or otherwise geographical importance, a certain location comes to have a confluence of scholarship that leads to establishing its right to speak on behalf of Islam. Thus, the modern Egyptian, Iranian and Saudi states have made conscious efforts to exert their influence globally, and the locations they are using to exercise this authority have a pre-modern legacy or global following.

Not surprisingly, hosting the sacred spaces is one of the key credentials for acquiring the status of the core. In the view of many Muslims, by virtue of being the guardian of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, the Saudi state has a natural right to guide Muslims across the world. The sites themselves, however, are not the only claim to authority; rather, the formation of authority is more complex. These sacred sites traditionally attracted scholars from all corners of

the Muslim world. Eventually, the confluence of a large number of prominent scholars at a sacred site leads to the emergence of that location as a core centre for Islamic learning. Often this confluence is directly linked to the existence of a sacred site, but in other cases it is also simply a result of geographical location. This was the case for Cairo, which, due to its central location within the Muslim lands during the tenth to the thirteenth centuries, became host to many prominent scholars on their way to Mecca for the holy pilgrimage, or a place of refuge for reputed Muslim scholars escaping persecution in lands where Muslim power was on the decline. These natural credentials of certain geographical locations thus lend them a level of legitimacy that attracts state attention. Provision of state resources does in fact help to increase the outreach of these places that come to acquire the status of the core, but, as indicated above, this association with the state also poses serious questions with regard to their authority by those who believe that religious authority should stay independent of state authority.

These complex dynamics shaping the relationship of these universities with their multiple constituencies, including the state and their students, form the focus of analysis in Part One of this volume. The chapters in this part take the reader inside the three universities and provide an account of their evolution, their global standing, their conception of their role in shaping global Islamic discourses, and, most importantly, their relationship with the state. Chapter 1 presents a thoughtful analysis of how the IUM was from its very inception meant to function as a Saudi-state-backed Salafi missionary project with global reach. Eighty-five per cent of the places among its entirely male student body were reserved for non-Saudis, and within decades the university had disbursed tens of thousands of scholarships to applicants from all over the world under a generous funding programme covering everything from transport, to tuition, living expenses and the cost of books. The goal was for students to return to their home countries or to travel on elsewhere after graduation for *duʿa*, or as missionaries, to promote spiritual commitment and "correct" religious knowledge and practice. As the university president and future Grand Mufti ʿAbd al-ʿAziz bin Baz wrote in a prospectus published in 1971, emphasising the sacred geography of Medina and suggesting a parallel between this Saudi-backed project and the Prophet's own mission, the university was to operate as "a source of modern Islamic propagation from the source of the first Islamic propagation". In addition to the diverse student body, for much of the early period of its existence a majority of the university's faculty also came from beyond the kingdom – particularly from Egypt, but also from locations as distant as Morocco and Pakistan. The chapter sketches key aspects of the IUM's genesis and evolution over the course of half a century. Unpacking this history serves to underscore the extent to which the university and its morally conservative missionary project, far from reflecting a timeless "Wahhabi" anachronism isolated from the sweep of twentieth-century

history, were in fact deeply involved in far-reaching contemporary dynamics of religious revival and reform, globalisation and geopolitical rivalry.

Chapter 2 presents an insight into the rise of al-Mustafa International University, including its two preceding institutions and its globalisation agenda. Tracing the evolution of the university, it shows how the emergence of al-Mustafa was a result of the rivalry among the marāji^c-i taqlīd, the highest-ranking Shi^{c}i authorities, in post-revolutionary Iran. It also elaborates the attributes and strategies of al-Mustafa that helped this institution to establish itself as the key international platform for Shi^{c}i scholarship and to differentiate itself from its Shi^{c}i rivals in Najaf and their Sunni counterparts. This university is a product of the complex internal political battles within Iran as well as the state's global agenda known as "the export of revolution", whose mission is to propagate the Iranian version of Shi^{c}ism which places special value on Khomeini's concept of vilāyat-i faqīh. Owing to the direct patronage of the current supreme leader, this university has been able to update its curriculum and education system to meet the expectations of foreign students, including females. However, this very attempt to adjust the curriculum to the level of the majority of the foreign students discourages them from studying up to the level of mujtahid, which perpetuates Iranians' monopoly on the position of mujtahids and leaves non-Iranians as their followers (*muqallid*) in the Shi^{c}i religious hierarchy. The uniqueness of al-Mustafa is its strategies to reach out to youth in other countries through its numerous overseas branches, aiming to counter the spread of anti-Shi^{c}i "Wahhabism" and ensuring its uncontested dominance over its rivals, especially the seminaries in Najaf. Although the "Iranised" and "politicised" form of teaching remains controversial among Shi^{c}a outside Iran, the al-Mustafa graduates are maximising the functional as well as symbolic benefits of their degrees and adapting the knowledge obtained in al-Mustafa to meet the needs of their local communities.

Chapter 3 shows how al-Azhar, established by the Shi^{c}i Fatimid empire in 970, was eventually to become one of the most respected centres for Sunni Islamic learning around the globe. Today, more than 30,000 foreign students are enrolled in the Islamic Studies and other related faculties of al-Azhar at any given time. The chapter shows how the emphasis on a "middle way", as reflected in al-Azhar's emphasis on teaching all four Sunni madhāhib, has been central to the rise of al-Azhar as a global centre of learning. The chapter notes that a number of factors led to the rise of the university to this prominent leadership position within Sunni Islam, including its location in Cairo, the exodus of scholars from places such as Andalusia due to political instability and their settlement in Cairo, the university's ability to harbour multiple discourses, and the controversial state-led reforms enacted since the 1960s. The chapter analyses the challenges al-Azhar has faced in retaining legitimacy in the eyes of believers

at home and abroad since Nasser's decision to nationalise it, and what has ena-bled it to survive these challenges. The chapter further shows how, post-Arab Spring, al-Azhar acquired a new zeal to play a prominent role as the moderate voice of Islam both within Egypt as well as globally. It shows how these ambi-tions are bound to be checked by the return of political authority to the hands of the military – a move which ironically had the active support of the Shaykh al-Azhar.

Cultivating the Local: Agency of the Students

As in the case of the universities, we see that the dual process involving strate-gies of influence and adaptation for influence is equally applicable to the gradu-ates of these universities when they return to their home communities. At least some of the graduating students do indeed absorb the ideas they are exposed to during their time at university. However, the spread of these ideas within local communities is heavily dependent on their skills and ability to adapt the ideas to the local context. Part Two looks at these issues and presents three original case studies illustrating how ideas flow out from these three global platforms to communities across the globe via their graduates. Most importantly, the sec-tion illustrates how the relevance of these ideas to the local context, political developments and traditional practices has direct bearing on their success in changing the local context.

   Chapter 4 profiles a network of prominent preachers, the "Ahlussunnah" (People of the tradition of the Prophet) of contemporary Kano, northern Nigeria. Of these preachers, roughly half are graduates of the IUM. By looking at leading figures within the network, the chapter shows how exposure to new thinkers and texts at the university, as well as physical distance from the bitter struggles in northern Nigeria, launched a process of reflection that culminated in the Medina graduates' decision to break with the anti-Sufi movement Izala (Jamaᶜat Izalat al Bidᶜa wa Iqamat al Sunnah; The Society for the Removal of Heresy and the Instatement of the Prophetic Model), to which they had been affiliated before leaving for Medina. Izala, the students felt, had become too rigid in its approach and was excluding non-members. Upon their return, the graduates established themselves as independent, though still anti-Sufi, preachers. Study in Medina, the chapter argues, increased these preachers' intellectual self-confidence and led them to seek models of leadership based more on individual reputation than on the backing of hierarchical organisations. Next, the chapter examines how, in their preaching at home, the Medina graduates relate events in Nigeria to struggles in Muslim communities at other times and in other places. The chapter argues that study in Medina helped to shape the doctrinal positions, intellectual interests and rhetorical strategies of these preachers, and notes that lasting ties

to Saudi Arabia provided them with material support. However, the chapter concludes that the popularity of these preachers among different sections of Kano society, especially youth, is owed largely to their mastery of new media, particularly recorded sermons, and their ability to present sectarian identities and allegiances in ways that address local quotidian concerns. These preachers, finally, were drawn deeply into local electoral politics and into struggles with the Sufi brotherhoods and traditional Muslim authorities of Kano, and thus local issues loomed large in spreading the Ahlussunnah network.

Chapter 5 explains how returnees from al-Mustafa International University, including those from the International Centre for Islamic Studies, its preceding institution, have played a significant role in the development of the Shiʿi community in Sunni-dominated Indonesia. Pursuing Islamic education at Qom is a post-1979 phenomenon made popular by al-Habsyi, an Indonesian scholar of Arab descent, who gained the trust of religious leaders in the Islamic Republic of Iran. To date, there are more than 200 Qom alumni in Indonesia. Following a detailed account of the educational background of Indonesian students who went to Qom, the chapter illustrates the activities of the graduates in their home towns, such as their creation of the Association of al-Mustafa International University Alumni, missionary activities through various Shiʿi institutions, and educational activities in religious schools, including the Islamic College Jakarta, a branch of the university. Emphasising the contribution of Qom alumni in making the Shiʿa a dominant force in Indonesian Islamic movements, the chapter also sheds light on the commitment of Qom alumni to connect Indonesian Shiʿi to the world's centre of Shiʿi orthodoxy in Iran, and on the competition and conflict that arose within the Shiʿi community in Indonesia as a result of their endeavours.

Taking a historical approach, Chapter 6 discusses the impact of al-Azhar University on the Moroccan nationalist movement and specifically its independence leader Allal al-Fasi, whose ten-year exile in Egypt exposed him to the ideas of Muhammad ʿAbduh and influenced the ideological position of the Moroccan independence party, *Istiqlal*. The chapter emphasises the impact that ʿAbduh's ideas had on the educational policies of the independence party and their continued importance in Moroccan educational politics throughout the twentieth century. Graduates of the university in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including Abdullah ibn Idris al-Sanusi and Abu Shuʿayb al-Dukkali, brought ideas of Islamic modernism back to Morocco. These ideas were shared with Moroccan religious students through lectures at the Qarawiyyin University in Fez and flourished into a movement for religious reform. The emphasis shifted from religious to political reform after the Berber *Dahir* crisis of 1930, which provided Berbers with different courts from those for Arabs. An outcry among the community of religious scholars over the weakening of Islamic law and the

attempt to divide the Muslim *umma* led to demonstrations across the Arab world. Al-Azhar University again became a centre for Moroccan dissidents and exiles to meet and find support as they protested this decree. After returning to Morocco, al-Fasi led the country as prime minister and ʿAbduh's ideas formed the basis of his party's educational platform. Those ideas continue to have significant influence on Moroccan educational politics of the twenty-first century. The chapter thus traces the relationship between Islamic modernism and the Moroccan nationalist movement, highlighting the role of al-Azhar as the institutional link between these two groups. It concludes by discussing the continuing legacy of the relationship between Islamic modernism and the Moroccan nationalists in terms of educational policy in twentieth-century Morocco.

Transforming the Local: The Significance of the Context

While the above chapters help to illustrate the multiple ways through which students carry the influence of these universities back to their home communities and the challenges they face, the chapters in Part Three illustrate how in a few cases the transformation of the local context in response to the foreign ideas can be quite extensive, as has been the case with the Azharisation of Islam in Malaysia and Indonesia. The chapters show how such widespread influence occurs only when, by a rare coincidence, the independent consensus of the religious scholars in that community converges with the strategic interests of the state, forging a wide-ranging support base for the adoption of that external ideology.

Chapter 7 draws on rich historical evidence to demonstrate how exposure to al-Azhar, starting in the early twentieth century, led over time to the complete transformation of the methodology adopted by independent ʿulama and state religious platforms to issue fatwas in Southeast Asia. It examines the mainstreaming of Salafi methodology – inspired by the work of Muhammad ʿAbduh – in place of the taqlīd of the traditional Shafiʿi School in Southeast Asia for the issuing of fatwas. Until the middle of the twentieth century, a majority of influential ʿulama in Southeast Asia studied in Mecca and were followers of the Shafiʿi School. From the end of the nineteenth century, a number of factors, including the establishment of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia, led to a shift to al-Azhar as opposed to Mecca being the base for Southeast Asian Muslim scholars. By comparing Southeast Asia fatwas of the early twentieth century against those issued in the 1970s, the chapter shows how the transition from Mecca to Cairo – and especially towards al-Azhar – led to the mainstreaming of Salafi methodology.

Chapter 8 discusses the relationship between al-Azhar and the government policy of ʿulama training in Malaysia. The chapter traces how, during

the twentieth century, a number of factors led to al-Azhar becoming one of the most popular choices for Malaysian students wanting to major in Islamic Studies. The chapter shows that, initially, ᶜulama adopted al-Azhar's reformed curriculum by choice, as the mixed curriculum introduced by al-Azhar, starting with Muhammad ᶜAbduh's modernisation project, helped the religious schools in Malaysia to compete with the state-run modern schools. However, with time, to demonstrate its commitment to Islam, the Malaysian state also started to invest in al-Azhar education. Under a series of policies intended to emphasise Islam, religious education and religious administration expanded rapidly, thus providing increased job opportunities for al-Azhar graduates. In the 1990s, the state religious governments began to directly import al-Azhar's curriculum and examination system, and the federal government introduced a secondary school Islamic education certification system that is accepted by al-Azhar. The Islamic education system in Malaysia today is thus heavily inspired by al-Azhar. This standardisation of the Islamic curriculum has in turn helped to legitimise government control over ᶜulama training. In the name of following the al-Azhar system, the religious schools were modernised and transformed, thus becoming a part of the national education system. Thus, a host of local social and political dynamics, and not any proactive globalising agenda of the Egyptian state, has led to the wide-reaching absorption of Azhari Islam in the Malaysian context.

Despite the breakdown of authority and the rise of individual imams in this age of online fatwas, it is very clear that these centres of authority will remain important. The reason for this is that the concentration of scholars in these institutions gives them a mark of authority and quality. Under the conditions of modernity, with competing time pressures on the daily lives of believers, the search costs for a valid interpretation of the Islamic texts are best minimised by looking for quick markers of quality and identity. Thus, the online imams that become popular often need to get these markers of identity first, and these centres will always control those markers. Thus, in all likelihood these centres will indeed become *more* rather than less important with time. However, as the volume shows, it is also important to be clear about the limits to which these centres can promote their agendas and inculcate a global following through finance alone. Winning committed converts is a much more complex process than is often acknowledged in the literature on the globalising mission of certain Islamic discourses.

Notes

1. Natana J. DeLong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Olivier Roy, *Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006); Juan Cole,

Engaging the Muslim World (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009); Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (London: Hurst, 2009), pp. 33–57.

2. Nasr Vali, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts Within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006); Khaled Ahmed, *Sectarian War: Pakistan's Sunni–Shia Violence and its links to the Middle East* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2011).

3. Regarding the nature of the "Islamic university" as a modern form of Islamic seminary, see Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Epilogue: Competing Conceptions of Religious Education", in Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (eds), *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

4. Bekin Agai, "Islam and Education in Secular Turkey: State Policies and the Emergence of the Fethullah Gülen Group", in Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (eds), *Schooling Islam*.

5. Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*; Sabrina Marbin (ed.), *The Shiᶜa Worlds and Iran* (London: Saqi, 2010).

6. Nathan Brown, *Post-Revolutionary al-Azhar* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment, 2011).

7. According to Reetz, between 1866 and 1994, 94 per cent of Dar ul ᶜulum Deoband students were from India, Bangladesh and Pakistan. With few exceptions, those from outside the subcontinent were also descendants of South Asian migrants. Dietrich Reetz, "The Deoband Universe: What Makes a Transcultural and Transnational Educational Movement of Islam?", *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, 27(1) (2007): 145.

8. It must be acknowledged that there are variations even within Saudi-inspired Salafism. Quintan Wiktorowicz, for instance, identifies three major Salafi factions: purists, politicos and jihadis. See Quintan Wiktorowicz, "Anatomy of the Salafi Movement", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 29 (2006): 207–39. Here, however, the emphasis is on highlighting the difference between the Saudi- and Egyptian-inspired Salafism of the early twentieth century.

9. Roel Meijer, "Salafism: Doctrine, Diversity and Practice", in Khaled Hroub (ed.), *Political Islam: Context versus Ideology* (London: Saqi, 2010).

10. Bernard Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action", in Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, pp. 33–57; Stéphane Lacroix, *Awakening Islam: The Politics of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

11. See Malika Zeghal's analysis of how President Sarkozy sought legitimacy for the French policy to ban Islamic headscarves by lobbying the Shaykh al-Azhar. Malika Zeghal, "The 'Recentering' of Religious Knowledge and Discourse: The Case of al-Azhar in Twentieth-century Egypt", in Hefner and Zaman (eds), *Schooling Islam*, pp. 107–30.

12. Scholarship on the emergence of female preachers similarly notes the paramount importance of textual knowledge in establishing religious authority. See Masooda Bano and Hilary Kalmbach (eds), *Women, Leadership and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

13. The fact that these universities also make effective use of satellite media and online

technology to promote their teachings further helps them to compete effectively against the emergence of new rivals in the form of online global muftis and imams. See Bettina Gräf and Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen (eds), *Global Mufti: The Phenomenon of Yusuf al-Qaradawi* (London: Hurst, 2009).

14. The legitimacy of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia rests on an alliance between the Saudi royal family and the religious establishment. In Iran, the constitution prescribes that the Supreme Leader of the state must be a *faqih*. In spite of these differences, in both Iran and Saudi Arabia shariᶜa is the official basis for state laws, and the rulers of both countries proclaim themselves and their polities to be Islamic. For further comparison of Iran and Saudi Arabia, see Mohammed Ayoob, *The Many Faces of Political Islam: Religion and Politics in the Muslim World* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2009), pp. 42–63.

15. Dale F. Eickelman, "Mass Higher Education and the Religious Imagination in Contemporary Arab Societies", *American Ethnologist*, 19(4) (1992): 643–55.

16. Eickelman, "Mass Higher Education"; Vali Nasr, *Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama'at-i Islami of Pakistan* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994); Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism and Political Change in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

17. Jonathan Berkey, *The Transmission of Knowledge in Medieval Cairo: A Social History of Islamic Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992).

18. Zeghal refers to them as "periphery ᶜulama". Zeghal, "The 'Recentering' of Religious Knowledge and Discourse", in Hefner and Zaman (eds), *Schooling Islam*, p. 109.

PART ONE

Making of the Global:
Inside the Three Universities

The Islamic University of Medina since 1961: The Politics of Religious Mission and the Making of a Modern Salafi Pedagogy[1]

Mike Farquhar

Since its founding in 1961 as a project backed by the Saudi state, the Islamic University of Medina (IUM) has offered fully funded, residential religious training to mostly non-Saudi male students in order that they might then return to their countries of origin or travel on elsewhere as missionaries. Their task has been to preach to non-Muslims, but also (and especially) to preach to Muslim communities around the world that are seen as having strayed from the true creed. For many decades after it was established, a large proportion of the IUM's staff also hailed from outside Saudi Arabia, including from the wider Middle East and beyond. The IUM thus represents one key node in a lattice of global connections and processes that have intertwined with efforts by Saudi political and religious actors to extend their influence far beyond the kingdom's borders. Yet despite its importance as a centre of migration and as a hub of global Salafi proselytising, the IUM has to date been almost entirely neglected in the literature on modern Islamic education.

Given the dearth of research on the history of this influential university, the first part of this chapter aims to sketch key aspects of the IUM's genesis and evolution over half a century, and maps this institutional history onto developments in the realms of national, regional and global politics over the same period. Through an overview of such basic issues as staffing, student recruitment and budgets, I seek to show how the IUM and its missionary project were imbricated in far-reaching dynamics of religious revival and reform, political economy, domestic manoeuvring and geopolitical rivalry.

The remainder of the chapter shifts away from this macro-level concern with overarching institutional frameworks to offer a more microscopic analysis of some aspects of teaching. Against a common tendency to view Wahhabism as

a hermetically sealed and rigid tradition, I argue that the pedagogy that came together at this university was in fact partly shaped by a dynamic of unequal reciprocity between the Wahhabi institution, on the one hand, and the staff and students from all over the world, on the other. This was a process of give and take which saw staff and students influencing the university at the same time as they were influenced by it.[2]

I seek to show how this dynamic related to a politics of religious mission – a set of struggles for dominance between an array of actors within this sphere of cultural production and pious practice. I argue that the processes of unequal reciprocity that played out between the university and its non-Saudi staff and students were bound up with power relations in two ways. First, they were unequal insofar as they occurred within the context of institutional and social relations that placed foreign staff and students in a subordinate position relative to the Wahhabi establishment and the Saudi state. Secondly, these processes of reciprocity themselves had a role to play in *forging* power relations insofar as they were part and parcel of the construction of the IUM's missionary enterprise as a hegemonic project. I suggest that the IUM's capacity to undergo transformations in this way, whilst maintaining core elements of its Wahhabi identity, created the space for efforts to develop a kind of moral and intellectual leadership capable of articulating with the dispositions and ambitions of a wide array of actors, thereby securing their consent for – and channelling their energies into – its missionary project.

Institutional History: A Brief Overview

In accounting for the establishment of the IUM in 1961, commentators have noted that this new missionary university, with a majority of student places earmarked for non-Saudis, stood to serve an important foreign policy purpose for the Saudi regime.[3] Insofar as it would promote conservative religious thinking amongst Muslim communities abroad, it could arguably help to ameliorate a threatening regional environment in which Nasserist and other brands of radical republicanism were gaining ground. It has also been noted that the Wahhabi establishment was at that time calling for the founding of an Islamic higher education institution partly as compensation for the establishment of the University of Riyadh in 1957, which was to be geared towards instruction in non-religious subjects. From this latter perspective, the founding of the IUM can be seen in the context of efforts by the monarchical regime to negotiate patronage relations with clerical elites who were prepared to support its quest for domestic political legitimacy partly in return for status and resources. The university was further tied up with the Saudi royals' quest for legitimacy insofar as it served to embody dynastic and national narratives of royal beneficence and reformist religious mission.

At the time of the IUM's establishment, Saudi Arabia was headed by King Saᶜud. However, Faisal, who would step in after Saᶜud was deposed in 1964, had been engaged in a power struggle with his brother since 1958, and had wielded extensive powers as prime minister for much of the intervening period leading up to the opening of the new university. Against this turbulent background, it is difficult to say which – if either – of the two monarchs was the driving force behind the new missionary project.[4]

When it first opened its doors, the IUM consisted only of a secondary school-level department and a university-level department. Students who enrolled in the former were usually to spend three years there, while the study programme in the latter extended over four years. Besides Arabic language, the subjects taught included *tawḥīd*, Islamic sects (*al-firaq al-islāmīyya*), jurisprudence (*fiqh*), legal methodology (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), hadith studies, inheritance law, Islamic history and Qurʾanic exegesis (*tafsīr*) and recitation (*tajwīd*).[5] In 1963, the higher studies department was renamed the College of Shariᶜa, and the following years saw the founding of a range of additional colleges: a College of Daᶜwa and the Principles of Religion in 1966; a College of the Qurʾan and Islamic Studies in 1974; a College of Arabic Language in 1975; and a College of Hadith and Islamic Studies in 1976.[6] The university also acquired a Department of Higher Studies in 1975,[7] which would go on to offer training at master's and doctorate levels. In 1964, it absorbed a pre-existing educational institution in Medina known as Dar al-Hadith, and in 1971 it absorbed another institution of the same name in Mecca.[8] Pre-university-level training came to be divided between a secondary institute, an intermediate institute and a stand-alone department offering Arabic language instruction to non-native speakers.[9]

While plans to greatly expand the university had been in place since at least the late 1960s, its growth must also be understood in relation to the 1973 oil embargo, which led to a sharp rise in oil prices and an enormous boost to the Saudi economy. Having risen only gradually since 1961, in the wake of the spike in oil profits the IUM budget suddenly increased nearly fivefold in the space of just two years; from not much more than 40 million Saudi Riyals (SR) in 1394/5 H (c. 1975) to over 196 million SR in 1396/7 H (c. 1976). Following a slight drop, the university budget shot up again from a little over 180 million SR in 1399/1400 H (c. 1979) to a peak of over 381 million SR in 1402/3 H (c. 1982).[10] This second massive boost coincided with another spike in oil prices which came in the wake of the revolution in Iran in 1979. It also came in the context of a renewed emphasis on religious discourse in the political sphere and increased spending on religious projects across the board in Saudi Arabia around this time. These latter moves were intended to burnish the image of the regime and shore up its foundations in the face of new threats posed by revolutionary Iran, protests amongst Saudi Arabia's own Shiᶜi population, and particularly the

occupation of the Haram Mosque in Mecca by a militant dissident group led by Juhayman al-ʿUtaybi, who charged the Al Saʿud family with corruption and impiety. Juhayman had in fact previously attended classes at the IUM-affiliated Dar al-Hadith and, prior to embarking on a militant trajectory, had started his activist career in a pietist proselytising and vigilante movement known as the Jamaʿa Salafiyya Muhtasiba (Salafi Group that Commands Right and Forbids Wrong), which had ties to major IUM scholars including ʿAbd al-ʿAziz bin Baz and the Algerian-born Abu Bakr al-Jazaʾiri.[11]

After this peak, the university's budget dropped sharply over a period corresponding with the recession that hit Saudi Arabia from 1982, before broadly levelling out in the mid-1980s, around the same time that the most dramatic phase of the economic crisis came to an end.

From the start, the IUM was firmly under the control of the Saudi religious and political establishments and, even in periods when the teaching faculty has been dominated by foreigners, it has at all times been headed by a Saudi. Initially, it was formally presided over by the kingdom's Grand Mufti Muhammad bin Ibrahim Al al-Shaykh. However, it was the future Grand Mufti Bin Baz, in his role as Bin Ibrahim's deputy resident in Medina, who is generally considered to have been in de facto charge of the IUM in those early years. Bin Baz formally took over the university presidency after Bin Ibrahim's death in 1969[12] and remained in the post until 1975.[13] Following Bin Baz's departure, de facto control of the university was handed to ʿAbd al-Muhsin al-ʿAbbad, a graduate of the College of Shariʿa in Riyadh who had taught at the IUM since it first opened, and then from the late 1970s to ʿAbdullah al-Zayid. In the early 1980s, the university presidency was formally handed to ʿAbdullah bin Salih al-ʿUbayd, who held a PhD from Oklahoma State University and had worked in various Saudi state posts in fields including female education, military instruction and the administration of the holy sites in Mecca and Medina.[14] He was succeeded from the mid-1990s by Salih bin ʿAbdullah al-ʿAbbud, who had a doctorate from the IUM and had held teaching and administrative posts there for many years.[15]

Beyond these top echelons, for the first decades of its existence a large proportion of the IUM's teaching staff came from outside Saudi Arabia. In the early 1980s, for example, just 149 of 376 faculty members were identified in staff lists as being Saudi citizens – and they included individuals who had been born elsewhere, but had settled in the kingdom and taken citizenship. Well over half of the non-Saudi staff at that stage were Egyptian, with large numbers also from Sudan and others from the wider Middle East, North and West Africa, South Asia and even Australia.[16] Non-Saudis who taught at the IUM included members of movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, the Egyptian Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyya and the South Asian Ahl-i Hadith. Figures associated with

such movements also took up positions on the university's Advisory Council. The latter, which functioned as a kind of board of directors, allowed the IUM to draw on the ideas and the reputations of high-profile ʿulama, intellectuals and activists from around the world. Those who attended its first session in 1962, for example, included such weighty figures as the Indian revivalists Abul Aʿla Mawdudi and Abul Hasan ʿAli al-Nadvi, the Salafi scholar Muhammad Salim al-Bayhani from Aden, the Albanian-born hadith specialist Nasir al-Din al-Albani, and the top Iraqi Muslim Brother Muhammad Mahmud al-Sawwaf.

For all the cosmopolitanism of its faculty in the early decades, the IUM was subsequently affected by the efforts of the Saudi regime to take a firmer grip on the kingdom's education system in the wake of the Gulf War and the increase in Islamist political activism which occurred in the kingdom in the early 1990s. This included moves to replace figures seen as sympathetic to politically activist thinking and practices inspired in part by the Muslim Brotherhood, with supporters of the politically quietist tradition embodied in the figure of the IUM scholar Rabiʿ bin Hadi al-Madkhali.[17] In a shift that may also have been partly linked to efforts to minimise the scope for politically activist foreigners to catalyse dissent in the kingdom, by the early 1990s the IUM faculty was heavily dominated by Saudi nationals and their presence as a proportion of the total number of staff continued to increase throughout the decade.[18]

At the time of writing, the IUM is preparing for the launch of new colleges specialising in computer studies, medicine, applied sciences, engineering and pharmacy.[19] These new moves come in the context of what has been celebrated in some sections of the Saudi press as an "opening up" (*infitāḥ*) in recent years of a university that had previously been seen as an enclave of exclusivism.[20] The IUM is also reported to have received approval to accept female students, to be planning to implement distance-learning programmes amid efforts to expand student numbers, and even to be preparing to employ non-Muslim staff at new sites outside the Medina *ḥaram* boundary.[21] This shift is often connected with the person of Muhammad ʿAli al-ʿAqla, an education administrator who was appointed director of the IUM in 2007 and whose tenure was extended by a further four years in early 2011.[22] In the wake of the attacks in the United States in September 2001, the wave of religiously framed militancy that hit Saudi Arabia from 2003, and the kingdom's growing role in the production of a "reformed Islam" in the context of the US-led "War on Terror",[23] the university has also hosted conferences on topics such as "extremism" and "the combatting of terrorism".[24]

By around 2002 (1422/3 H) the IUM had offered over 28,000 scholarships to young men from all over the world.[25] Such scholarships included not only free tuition, but also material support covering such things as transport from students' countries of origin to Medina and visits home each year, accommodation,

books and money towards clothes, and stipends to cover daily costs.[26] However, factors such as declined offers and substantial drop-out rates meant that the total number of graduates in the same period was probably significantly lower. Other figures published by the university suggest that the number of individuals who had actually secured undergraduate-level qualifications by around 1417/8 H (c. 1997) totalled 11,781, with the annual crop having increased from a first wave of 43 graduates in 1384/5 H (c. 1965) to 609 in 1417/8 H (c. 1997).[27] In 2010, al-ʿAqla told a journalist that the university had over 30,000 graduates.[28] A list of the countries from which the first group of forty-three graduates were drawn is almost entirely made up of states with Muslim-majority populations, particularly in the Middle East and Arabic-speaking parts of Africa.[29] The fact that the countries of origin of these first students overlap significantly with the countries of origin of the members of the university's founding Advisory Council suggests that recruitment at that early stage may have been conducted partly through these and other IUM scholars' own networks. A list of students' countries of origin from the late 1960s points to efforts to expand the geographical reach of recruitment, including in the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, and Africa.[30] The geographical breadth of recruitment – measured in terms of the numbers of countries from which students were drawn – continued to increase in the decades that followed, and the university also eventually began to make significant inroads into minority Muslim communities in Europe and North America.[31] As of February 2011, the IUM was reported to have 13,000 students from 160 countries.[32]

Over time, a great many IUM graduates would go on to achieve prominence as high-profile scholars, activists and public figures both within and outside circles which are commonly labelled Salafi. Within Salafi circles, its alumni are to be found all around the world and situated across the spectrum of viewpoints on key issues, including the permissibility of political activism and the legitimacy of using violent means to achieve political change under current conditions. For example, Saudi IUM graduates range from Safar al-Hawali, a key figure in the wave of politically activist Islamism known as the Sahwa, which peaked in the kingdom in the 1990s, to Rabiʿ bin Hadi al-Madkhali, who also went on to teach at the IUM and whose name became synonymous with the neo-Ahl al-Hadith tradition whose staunchly quietist stance set up a fierce rivalry with the Sahwa. Just a few examples of the diverse range of Salafi figures beyond the kingdom who are IUM alumni include Muqbil bin Hadi al-Wadiʿi, the father figure of contemporary Salafism in Yemen who negotiated an ambivalent path between pietist mission and strident positions on key political issues; Jaʿfar Mahmud Adam and Muhammad Sani ʿUmar, who became prominent in new forms of anti-Sufi activism in northern Nigeria after their return to their country of origin;[33] the Egypt-born ʿAbd al-Rahman ʿAbd al-Khaliq, who subsequently

based himself in Kuwait and has been a key representative of efforts to bring together elements of Salafi piety and the Muslim Brotherhood's style of thinking and political practice; and Bilal Phillips, a Jamaica-born convert who is now a prominent preacher. Others with looser links to the IUM include the Jordan-based Palestinian jihadi scholar Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi, who never enrolled at the university, but was informally granted use of its facilities as a young man;[34] and Juhayman al-ʿUtaybi, the leader of the 1979 Haram Mosque siege who, as mentioned previously, had taken classes at the affiliated Dar al-Hadith.

Some IUM graduates have been employed by the Saudi state agency Dar al-Iftaʾ to undertake missionary work outside Saudi Arabia. Others have played leading roles in more autonomous transnational missionary initiatives, examples including Bangladesh-born Tawfique Chowdhury of Al Kauthar Institute, and Canada-born Muhammad Alshareef and US-born Yasir Qadhi of Al Maghrib Institute. Many others do not particularly engage in coordinated preaching activities, focusing instead on workaday employment in their countries of origin or elsewhere in order to support themselves and their families.

Transnational Exchange, Hegemony and the Making of a Salafi Pedagogy

The remainder of this chapter deals primarily with the content and methods of teaching at the IUM, with a particular focus on two key subject areas: ʿaqīda (creed) and fiqh (jurisprudence). Through this exploration of pedagogy, I seek to draw out certain broader dynamics which may help to explain the achievement of the IUM in attracting large numbers of students and winning them over to its missionary project. The university's success, measured in these terms, in itself presents something of an empirical puzzle. Previous attempts at Wahhabi outreach beyond the Arabian peninsula had faced a great deal of resistance from the eighteenth century right up until the twentieth century.[35] The Saudi religious establishment, moreover, remained relatively exclusivist and inward-looking for much of the first half of the twentieth century. The newly appointed Grand Mufti Muhammad bin Ibrahim chaired the first formal high-level summit with Muslim leaders from outside the kingdom as late as 1954, just a few years before the IUM opened its doors.[36] It was thus by no means obvious at the time of the founding of the IUM that a missionary educational institution controlled by Najdi religious actors, who until recently had in many ways been isolated and marginal on the global stage, stood much chance of success.

Various factors have already been touched upon that may help to account for the IUM's ability to attract and forge bonds with large numbers of students from diverse backgrounds, including a very generous scholarship programme and

evidence to suggest a strategy of initial recruitment through existing networks. In the discussion that follows, I identify various further factors, but pay particular attention to the role played by a certain dynamic of unequal reciprocity. As explained in the introduction to this chapter, I use the latter term to refer to a capacity on the part of the university itself to undergo transformations in the process of dialogical engagement with actors from around the world, while retaining core elements of its Wahhabi identity. I will suggest that such a dynamic had a part to play in efforts to construct a missionary project capable of articulating with the dispositions and ambitions of a wide range of actors.

To argue that the IUM was shaped through processes of dialogical exchange is not to suggest that it was moulded through open debate and consensus between a range of Saudi and non-Saudi actors who were on an equal footing. It is clear that from the start there was an imbalance of power in the relationship between the university and its students, especially insofar as those behind the IUM had access to vast reserves of symbolic capital deriving from the fact that the religious training they offered was to take place in the city of the Prophet. Students were able to spend their evenings studying and socialising in the Prophet's Mosque, and there is no question that the lure of this sacred geography is very strong.

The relationship between the university and its students was also characterised by a vast imbalance in the distribution of material capital. The ability of those behind the IUM to offer fully funded, degree-level religious training with a very generous package of additional support, including monthly stipends, played a major part in setting the terms of a superordinate–subordinate relationship. The real value of this support varied over time. However, at least at some stages in the university's history the financial support available was generous enough that students from developing countries were able to save a proportion of their maintenance payments towards the cost of projects such as building a home. Others used this money and the availability of free flights during the summer vacations to go on gap-year-style adventures and see the world.[37]

To emphasise the part played by these reserves of material capital in shaping power relations between the university and its students is not to claim that the university simply "bought" its students. In fact, at least some students secure access to this capital in a quite self-conscious way, aware of what they stand to gain from an IUM training, the costs and risks that attend this process, and the scope that exists for negotiating desired outcomes. One South African-born graduate, for example, recalled that he had been oriented towards Sufi Islam before taking up a place at the IUM in the 1980s. Studying in this Salafi-oriented environment thus brought many challenges. However, he steeled himself in order that he could enjoy the benefits associated with an IUM education, including not only advanced Arabic-language training, but also residence in

Medina and free flights during university vacations, which he was able to use to travel the world. He emerged at the end of the process with qualifications and skills that then allowed him to transition to a prestigious master's course and then a PhD programme in Europe.[38]

The superordinate–subordinate relationship between the university and its students was not only defined by a differential distribution of material and symbolic capital. The processes of dialogical engagement that are the focus of this section also occurred against the backdrop of the uneven power relations inherent in any modern, disciplinary educational set-up. Over time, the university came increasingly to employ disciplinary educational techniques with genealogies that ran through Europe: a campus set-up marking off space that was to be dedicated exclusively to the purposes of education, and internal partitioning of this space into individual dormitories, colleges and classrooms; syllabuses delineating in detail the knowledge that was to be transmitted in class; timetables dividing up the days, weeks and years into blocks of time reserved for particular tasks; written examinations producing quantitative scores upon which depended progression through a series of seamless, consecutive levels of schooling; detailed regulations governing student behaviour and graded punishments for infringements; a system of social supervision, including discussion seminars and monitoring of conduct on campus; a university magazine facilitating debate beyond the classroom of scholarly matters and issues of contemporary personal, social and political concern; and so on. Through the use of such pedagogical techniques, students' bodies were ordered in space and time, confined and exposed such that their behaviour and performance could be systematically observed, examined, ranked, corrected, recorded, rewarded and punished.

Apart from the imbalance in power between the university and its students, there was also a corresponding imbalance of power between the Saudi actors responsible for the university and those they brought in from beyond the peninsula to help staff it. The control over the university alluded to earlier by actors within the Saudi religious and political establishments was bolstered by a rationalised, hierarchical institutional set-up, enshrined in founding documents that mapped out in detail the specific prerogatives and responsibilities of the range of actors involved. For example, King Saʿud was named personally as not only its founder and benefactor, but also as its supreme president,[39] with substantial oversight powers such as the right to review recommendations issued by the Advisory Council before communicating them to the working president.[40]

It was within the terms of these unequal relationships – defined by differential distribution of material and symbolic capital, the implementation of disciplinary technologies, and bureaucratic mapping of powers and responsibilities – that certain dynamics of dialogical engagement were to play out: between the university and those who were brought in from outside as staff, and also between

the university and its students. Such dynamics can be explored in particularly rich detail through analysis of the syllabuses in use at the IUM at different times. These serve to underline that any description of the university as a Wahhabi institution must be considerably qualified.

One area where the label "Wahhabi" might perhaps be usefully employed, if very cautiously, is in relation to instruction in ʿaqīda. The question of creed, and the issue of tawḥīd in particular, had been the keystone of Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab's reformist mission and remained a paramount concern for his Najdi inheritors when the new university opened its doors some two centuries later. It was their particular conception of tawḥīd that grounded the opposition of the reformist Najdi ʿulama to traditional religious practices, like seeking the intercession of saints, which they saw as amounting to *shirk*, or polytheism. It was thus to be expected that this aspect of teaching at the IUM would be subject to a special degree of control.

According to the syllabus that was in place when the university opened its doors,[41] the course on tawḥīd at the secondary level was to involve memorisation of text from *Kitab al-Tawhid*, Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab's own key manifesto on the topic, as well as study of a famous commentary on the same text titled *Fath al-Majid* by his grandson, the leading nineteenth-century Najdi scholar ʿAbd al-Rahman bin Hasan Al al-Shaykh. In the third year, students were to study *al-ʿAqida al-Wasitiyya* by Ibn Taymiyya, a scholar who had been a key influence on Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab.[42] The content of teaching here thus reflects a firm situatedness in the Saudi context. The equivalent course at the higher studies level was to last three years, with this entire period devoted to the study of a commentary by the fourteenth-century scholar Ibn Abi al-ʿIzz on Abu Jaʿfar al-Tahawi's *al-ʿAqida al-Tahawiyya*.[43]

Syllabuses in use for tawḥīd courses in the early 1990s show continuities with this earlier set-up, though with signs of some further opening up to influences beyond the narrow confines of the Wahhabi tradition. In the intermediate institute, the subject was again to be taught with reference to Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab's *Kitab al-Tawhid*, as well as an introduction to *Risalat ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani*.[44] Al-Qayrawani was a tenth-century North African Maliki scholar who wrote in opposition to the perceived excesses of mysticism and claims of miracle-working, concerns which were of course later also prominent in the Wahhabi tradition.[45] At the secondary level, students were again to study the whole of ʿAbd al-Rahman Al al-Shaykh's *Fath al-Majid* and what seems to be a commentary on Ibn Taymiyya's *al-ʿAqida al-Wasitiyya* written by Muhammad Khalil Harras, a contemporary Egyptian Azhari with links to the Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyya Salafi movement.[46] At the university level, the main texts taught on tawḥīd were a series of works by Ibn Taymiyya: *Shafaʾ al-ʿAlil* by Ibn al-Qayyim, a student of Ibn Taymiyya who had long been a strong influence within the Wahhabi

tradition; the same commentary by Ibn Abi al-ᶜIzz on *al-ᶜAqida al-Tahawiyya*; and *Taysir al-ᶜAziz al-Hamid* by Shaykh Suliman bin ᶜAbdullah bin Muhammad bin ᶜAbd al-Wahhab, another grandson of the figurehead of Wahhabism.[47] At this level, these main texts were backed up by a list of additional resources to be used as further reference points for study, including works by the South Asian forebear of the Ahl-i Hadith, Muhammad Siddiq Hasan and the early twentieth-century Cairo-based Syrian reformer Muhammad Rashid Rida.

While the presence of these latter texts in particular points to some degree of transnational exchange in the teaching of ᶜaqīda and an opening up beyond the relatively narrow confines of the Wahhabi tradition,[48] other parts of the syllabus are even more clearly suggestive of such dynamics. The teaching of fiqh offers a particularly neat example and is the focus of the remainder of this section.

It is well known that there has long been a tension within the Wahhabi tradition as regards deriving legal rulings. On the one hand, there was a commitment in principle to the rejection of straightforward *taqlīd*, the practice of simply imitating the substantive legal rulings laid down by any one of the major schools of Islamic law (*madhāhib*, sing. *madhhab*). Instead, Wahhabi scholars have advocated what Frank Vogel has referred to as "*dalīl* theory" – the idea that any person, particularly a judge or a mufti, "is obliged to examine the proof for legal views to the extent of his capability, and to adopt that view for which the proof seems stronger".[49] This proof, or dalīl in Arabic, is to be found in the Qurᵓan, the sunna and the *ijmāᶜ* (consensus) of the first generations of Muslims. However, in practice Wahhabi scholarship has been very closely associated with the Hanbali school of law. As one top Saudi judge put it to Vogel, the kingdom's judges are Hanbalis; however, their commitment to that madhhab amounts to *ittibāᶜ* (acknowledgement of leadership) rather than blind taqlīd, since they reserve the right to go against the rulings of that school where they find a dalīl which points to an alternative ruling.[50]

At the time of the founding of the IUM in 1961, the original syllabus provided for fiqh to be taught from texts by the twelfth-century Hanbali scholar Muwaffiq al-Din ibn Qudama (1146–1223). In the secondary-level department, the text used was Ibn Qudama's *al-ᶜUmda*, and at the higher level it was his *al-Muqniᶜ*. This use of Hanbali legal manuals as a basis for instruction makes it clear that at this very early point in the university's history the arrangements for teaching substantive law closely reflected the Hanbali leanings that had historically been very strongly characteristic of Wahhabi legal practice. Works of fiqh by Ibn Qudama, including his *al-ᶜUmda* and *al-Muqniᶜ*, had long been a staple of Wahhabi scholarship in this field.[51] It is worth noting that in the earliest days of the IUM, separate courses on legal methodology (uṣūl al-fiqh) were to be taught at the secondary level from a book authored by staff from the Colleges of Arabic

Language and Shariʿa in Riyadh, and at the advanced level from Ibn Qudama's *Rawdat al-Nazir*.

In a contemporary description of the teaching of fiqh at the IUM at this early stage, Bin Baz sought to downplay the Hanbali leanings in the syllabus. In practice, he insisted, teaching staff took a comparative approach to this subject that went beyond just this one madhhab. "Teaching of the subject of fiqh in the university . . . is not restricted to explaining the matter of that madhhab the teaching of which is stipulated [on the syllabus]. Rather, the teacher expands as if he is teaching [multiple] madhāhib, not one madhhab, and he acquaints the student with the best interpretation according to evidence from the Book and the sunna, or from one of them."[52] That there was at least a limited comparative component in the teaching of fiqh at this very early stage in the university's history is also evidenced by an explanatory note in the original syllabus, which stipulates that – where possible – instruction in this subject should include exploration of cases where there is disagreement between the madhāhib and declaration of the preponderant position (*tarjīḥ*) on the basis of proof.

However that may be, changes were soon made to the university's syllabuses which took things much more clearly in the direction of an opening up beyond Hanbali jurisprudence. An IUM alumnus who was among the first group of students from Pakistan to enrol at the university in 1962 recalled that his cohort at the advanced level had studied fiqh partly from Ibn Qudama's *al-Muqniʿ*, as set out in the original syllabus. However, they had also studied another work altogether, *Bidayat al-Mujtahid wa Nihayat al-Muqtasid* by the Maliki scholar Ibn Rushd.[53] This text, which would subsequently become the key reference point for the teaching of this subject at the IUM, is strongly comparative in its approach and includes critical discussion of the positions of each of the various law schools on any given matter.[54]

Syllabuses in use in the early 1990s show that by that time, fiqh was still being taught in the intermediate institute from Ibn Qudama's ʿUmdat al-Fiqh.[55] In the secondary institute, students were to study fiqh from a commentary on this text titled *al-ʿIdda Sharh al-ʿUmda* and authored by Bahaʾ al-Din ʿAbd al-Rahman bin Ibrahim al-Maqdisi. At this level, they were to study uṣūl al-fiqh from a work authored by a number of scholars, including the IUM's own ʿAtiyya Muhammad Salim, titled *Tashil al-Wusul ila ʿIlm al-Usul*.[56] However, at the university level, fiqh was to be taught from Ibn Rushd's *Bidayat al-Mujtahid*. What is more, this text was to be studied alongside the most important works from each of the four madhāhib (*ummahāt kutub al-fiqh fī kull madhhab min al-madhāhib al-arbiʿa*).[57] Uṣūl al-fiqh was to be taught primarily from Ibn Qudama's *Rawdat al-Nazir*, along with a commentary on this text titled *Nuzhat al-Khatir al-ʿAtir* by Ibn Badran.

It is thus clear that Hanbali texts remained important in the teaching of legal methodology at the IUM well into the 1990s, and that Hanbali manuals were also in use at this time for the teaching of substantive law at the less advanced levels. Some graduates suggest that an implicit Hanbali bias also persists in practice in the teaching of fiqh even at the higher levels. However, even allowing for any such residual Hanbali bias and even allowing for Bin Baz's insistence that fiqh teaching at the IUM in its earliest days included a comparative component, the introduction of *Bidayat al-Mujtahid* as the primary text for the teaching of fiqh at the university level soon after the university's founding nonetheless reflected a significant, concrete shift at that very early stage towards a much more explicitly comparative approach than had been reflected in the original syllabuses. This shift is in keeping with a broader trend in legal practice in Saudi Arabia in the twentieth century, which saw judges and scholars becoming somewhat less constrained by Hanbali norms.[58] Other Saudi institutions founded in this period also came to teach fiqh as a matter of comparison between the various madhāhib.[59] Nonetheless, the decision at the IUM to switch from using Hanbali legal manuals to a comparative work by a Maliki scholar merits further exploration, as a very specific transition occurring in a particular time and context.

This transition might be partly explained in terms of a dynamic of dialogical engagement with those who arrived from outside the kingdom to teach and otherwise staff the IUM. As was mentioned above, Wahhabi scholars had long been committed to the rejection of taqlīd in principle, even if in practice they had tended to operate firmly within the framework of the Hanbali school of law. This rejection of taqlīd was further encouraged by influences arriving at the university from beyond the peninsula. For example, the Albanian-born Nasir al-Din al-Albani, a formidable figure who arrived to teach at the IUM very early on and was a member of its founding Advisory Council, held a profound commitment to the rejection of taqlīd that may well have contributed to pulling the university away from its early Hanbali leanings.[60] Another possible influence is the Egyptian Ansar al-Sunna movement, members of which studied and taught at the IUM. The former president of Ansar al-Sunna ʿAbd al-Razzaq ʿAfifi sat on the IUM's founding Advisory Council and was apparently involved in drawing up syllabuses. As far back as 1949, following a visit to Saudi Arabia, the Egyptian scholar and Ansar al-Sunna affiliate Ahmad Muhammad Shakir had written to King ʿAbd al-ʿAziz with recommendations for how to organise the country's judicial and education systems. In that report, he had insisted on the importance of *Bidayat al-Mujtahid* and its treatment of the differences between the madhāhib, noting that this crucial work had first been published in Egypt in the early 1920s in an edition edited by his own father, the scholar Muhammad Shakir.[61] All this points to ways in which a certain dynamic of dialogical engagement between the university and those who were brought

from beyond the kingdom to staff it might have contributed to shaping modes of teaching there.

Quite apart from this dialogical engagement with staff brought from beyond the kingdom, the shift in approaches to teaching fiqh also appears to have been tied to a certain dynamic of unequal reciprocity between the university and its students. In the earliest days of the university's existence, various voices coming both from within and from outside the IUM were critical of what was perceived to be the teaching of Hanbali fiqh at the university at that time and called for more serious engagement with all four madhāhib. These calls appealed to the ideal of rejecting taqlīd. However, they also explicitly emphasised the need for the university to adapt to the attitudes and expectations of its students – and the need to do this specifically in order to secure their consent to, and their active participation in, its missionary project.

An example of this kind of argument is found in an article published in the newspaper *al-Madina al-Munawwara* in December 1961 by the Hijazi intellectual Ahmad ʿAbdullah al-Fasi, who had been a vocal public advocate of the founding of an Islamic university in Medina in the years immediately prior to its establishment. Urging that the university should teach all four madhāhib rather than just one, al-Fasi argued that none of the law schools contradicts the Qurʾan and the sunna. He also raised practical considerations stemming from the need to appeal to a diversity of actors. He reminded his readers that "the students who come to the university have studied from madhāhib other than that which is taught to them in the university – and that is what they aspire to".[62] Later in the article, he added:

> In addition, the penetration of these madhāhib in the Islamic regions makes it difficult for graduates of this university to guide the public there. It is hard, as we know, for a person to be able to convince the public to change their madhhab. This is something that is admitted and it must not escape our consideration, especially given that our guiding principle is offering religious guidance to Muslims and providing them with that which illuminates for them the way and clears for them the path towards knowledge of their madhāhib, as well as their ability to explain to the people in their homes the issues of their religion.

Bin Baz took this critique seriously enough to produce a lengthy response, which was published in the same newspaper the following month. In it, he insisted that "All of us realise what profound benefit and great utility there is in teaching fiqh according to the four madhāhib, as long as they are taught according to a correct procedure and as long as the teacher possesses penetrating vision with regard to the horizons of the shariʿa and the ability to dive into its beloved depths."[63] It

was in this context that he offered the description of the teaching of fiqh at the university quoted earlier in this chapter, in which he insisted that IUM staff did in practice include a comparative element.

Bin Baz gave assurances that the issue would be examined by the university council and that a decision would be made according to the common interest. He concluded with a critique of what he saw as an unhelpful generalisation in al-Fasi's remark that none of the madhāhib contradicts the Qurʾan or the sunna, and that all of them proceed according to the guidance offered by these two sources. If al-Fasi meant that the four imams all strove to base their work upon these sources, then, of course, that is true. However, if al-Fasi meant that all of the madhāhib are free from anything that contradicts Revelation, then that is obviously incorrect, "for in matters of disagreement there is one truth and that is what accords with the Book and the sunna".

This lengthy, very public response from Bin Baz did not put the matter to rest. As long as the texts on the syllabus remained Hanbali fiqh manuals, the dissenters do not appear to have been satisfied with his claim that teachers went beyond these core works to offer a wider perspective. In a memorandum presented to the first session of the IUM's Advisory Council in May 1962, council member Abul Hasan ʿAli al-Nadvi – a high-profile revivalist scholar associated with the Indian Nadwatul Ulama – again urged that all four madhāhib should be taught at the university. He asserted his own support as a matter of principle for a programme of study free of the practice of taqlīd. However, he also made the separate argument that "if the student graduates from this university ignorant of his [own] madhhab, or of the madhhab of the society in which he will live and in which environment he will undertake his daʿwa, the performance of the burdens of daʿwa will not be fitting and there will not be a connection between him and his environment that will make it possible to exert influence within it and to win trust".[64]

What is particularly significant in these debates in the context of the current discussion is that they clearly reflect an explicit recognition on the part of actors who moved in the IUM's orbit that adapting to the needs and attitudes of students and those to whom they were intended to preach was important if it was to be hoped that these people would invest themselves in the university's religious mission. It was only in this way that the missionary project underlying the university could secure their consent. Such considerations thus appear to have been one of a range of factors at play in the subtle, but significant, shift in the teaching of fiqh that occurred at the IUM soon after it opened its doors.

Conclusion

The institutional structures and pedagogical practices that took shape and evolved at the IUM from the early 1960s were far from being a straightforward

instantiation of an ossified, timeless set of texts, practices and ideals. Rather, they were very much a product of a particular historical conjuncture and a particular array of contingent political, social and pragmatic as well as theological considerations.

In the course of this chapter, I have paid particular attention to the ways in which this important missionary university was situated within, and shaped by, dynamics of nation and state-building, political economy, geopolitical rivalry and domestic protest. I also sought to highlight another kind of politics altogether, involving relations of power and resistance that operated more subtly at the level of cultural production and pious practice. At this level, the construction of the IUM's missionary project and the kind of modern Salafi pedagogy that supported it were about more than just the organic evolution of intellectual and spiritual discursive traditions. They also involved struggles for influence and dominance between individuals, social movements and state actors, which appear to have played out through dynamics including the construction of consent to a project of moral and intellectual leadership, within a framework of unequal relations defined by disciplinary technologies, bureaucratic structures and unequal distribution of material and symbolic capital.

In the past there has often been a tendency to depict Wahhabism as something unitary and self-propelling. In fact, discursive structures including religious traditions are surely always porous and prone to continuous evolution through the absorption and re-articulation of external influences. In the particular context explored in this chapter, this permeability and dynamism were in fact arguably further catalysed by efforts to *expand* Wahhabi influence and to hegemonise non-Wahhabi Muslims far beyond the borders of Saudi Arabia.

Notes

2. I use the term "Wahhabi" throughout this chapter advisedly, conscious that it is an exonym considered derogatory by those to whom it is applied. Use of this term is, of course, not meant to imply devotion to the figure of Muhammad bin ʿAbd al-Wahhab, but rather a location within a heterogeneous and dynamic religious tradition, the genealogy of which happens contingently to trace back in part to his thinking and practices. I use the term for want of a satisfactory alternative: "Salafi", for example, fails to account for the specificities of the particular modes of Salafi religiosity that emerged and evolved in Najd and other areas that now fall within the borders of Saudi Arabia; "Najdi Salafi" and other such geographically limited terms fail to acknowledge the globe-spanning connections within which Wahhabism was situated right from the start; and so on.

3. Henri Lauziere, "The Evolution of the Salafiyya in the Twentieth Century Through the Life and Thought of Taqi al-Din al-Hilali", PhD dissertation, Georgetown University, 2008), pp. 334–5; David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), p. 126.

4. It is worth noting in this regard that Faisal visited the IUM a year after it was founded, well before he became king. Ahmad bin ʿAtiyya al-Ghamidi (ed.), *al-Kitab al-Wathaʾiqi ʿan al-Jamiʿa al-Islamiyya bi-l-Madina al-Munawwara* (Medina: al-Jamiʿa al-Islamiyya bi-l-Madina al-Munawwara, 1998), p. 90.

5. "Al-Nizam al-Asasi li-l-Jamiʿa al-Islamiyya bi-l-Madina al-Munawwara", 9 Rabīʿ al-Akhir 1381 H (19 September 1961), reproduced in al-Ghamidi (ed.), *al-Kitab*, pp. 52–8.

6. Al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, pp. 290, 301, 312, 323, 336. The dates given here accord with the issuing of royal decrees giving the go-ahead for the various colleges, which may in fact have begun work slightly later.

7. Al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, p. 282.

8. Al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, pp. 363, 370.

9. Al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, pp. 347–60.

10. Al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, p. 281.

11. For this and more on the Haram Mosque siege, see Thomas Hegghammer and Stéphane Lacroix, "Rejectionist Islamism in Saudi Arabia: The Story of Juhayman al-ʿUtaybi Revisited", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 39 (2007): 103–22. On the subsequent increase in spending on religious projects, see, e.g., Toby Jones, *Desert Kingdom: How Oil and Water Forged Modern Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), pp. 217–27. In the wake of the Haram Mosque siege, the IUM journal ran an article by Bin Baz rejecting the eventual militant actions and ideology of Juhayman and his comrades. See Bin Baz, "Hadith al-Masjid al-Haram wa-Amr al-Mahdi al-Muntazar", *Majallat al-Jamiʿa al-Islamiyya*, 45.

12. Muhammad bin Ibrahim died in late 1969, but Bin Baz was not appointed to the presidency until late 1970. Al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, pp. 214, 216.

13. At that time, Bin Baz left in order to take charge of the Presidency for Scholastic Research, the Issuing of Fatwas, Islamic Call and Guidance. Al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, p. 217.

14. Al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, pp. 222–3.

15. Al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, pp. 224–5.

16. *Dalil Aᶜda Hayʾat al-Tadris wa-l-Muhadirin wa-l-Muᶜidin* (Medina: Jamiᶜa al-Islami-yya bi-l-Madina al-Munawwara, 1401–2 н), p. 15.

17. For a fuller discussion of the regime's drive to take a firmer grip on the kingdom's universities, including the IUM, see Stéphane Lacroix, *Awakening Islam: The Politics of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia*, trans. George Holoch (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

18. Al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, p. 277.

19. Al-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya bi-l-Madina al-Munawwara, see at: http://www.iu.edu.sa/Pages/default.aspx, accessed 26 June 2012.

20. For example, Mustafa al-Ansari, "al-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya Taᶜud ila 'al-Waraʾ al-Dhahabi'", *Jaridat al-Hayat*, 17 December 2010; and ᶜAbdullah bin Ibrahim al-ᶜAskar, "Iᶜadat Milad al-Jamiᶜa", *al-Riyad*, available at: http://www.alriyadh.com/2011/01/05/article591885.html, accessed 13 August 2012.

21. Falih al-Dhibyani, "Islamic University to Admit Women", *Saudi Gazette*, 7 February 2011; Huda al-Salih, "Mudir al-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya: sa-nastaᶜin bi-ghayr al-mus-limin kharij hudud al-haram", *Jaridat al-Sharq al-Awsat*, 10 April 2010, available at: http://www.aawsat.com/details.asp?section=43&article=564559&issueno=11456, accessed 13 August 2012.

22. Al-Dhibyani, "Islamic University to Admit Women". For a biography of al-ᶜAqla, see "Muᶜali al-Duktur Muhammad ᶜAli al-ᶜAqla: al-Sira al-Dhatiyya", *al-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya bi-l-Madina al-Munawwara*, available at: http://www.iu.edu.sa/AboutIU/Heads/Pages/Heads-05.aspx, accessed 26 June 2012.

23. Salwa Ismail, "Producing 'Reformed Islam': A Saudi Contribution to the US Projects of Global Governance", in Madawi al-Rasheed (ed.), *Kingdom without Borders: Saudi Arabia's Political, Religious and Media Frontiers* (London: Hurst, 2008), pp. 113–34.

24. "Muʾtamar al-Irhab Bayn Tatarruf al-Fikr wa Fikr al-Tatarruf", *al-Jamiᶜa al-Islam-iyya bi-l-Madina al-Munawwara*, available at: http://www.iu.edu.sa/Conferences/erhaabcon/Pages/default.aspx; and "al-Muʾtamar al-Duwali al-Thani li-Mukafahat al-Irhab", *al-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya bi-l-Madina al-Munawwara*, available at: http://www.iu.edu.sa/Conferences/erhab/Pages/default.aspx, accessed 26 June 2012.

25. "Juhud Khadim al-Haramayn al-Sharifayn fi Taᶜlim Abnaʾ al-Muslimin min Khilal al-Minah al-Dirasiyya ilati Tuqim-ha al-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya", *Majallat al-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya*, 118 (1423 н, AD 2002/2003).

26. ᶜAbdullah bin Salih bin ᶜAbdullah al-ᶜAbbud, *Juhud al-Mamlaka al-ᶜArabiyya al-Suᶜudiyya fi-l-Daᶜwa ila Allah Taᶜala fi al-Kharij min Khilal al-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya*, 2 vols (Medina: al-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya, 2004), vol. 1, pp. 390–401. In 1397–8 н (*c.* 1977), for example, the standard monthly stipend for undergraduate-level students was 525 SR.

27. Al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, p. 387.

28. Al-Salih, "Mudir al- Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya".

29. The countries listed are Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Palestine, Yemen, Tunisia, Algeria, Sudan, Somalia, Mali, Indonesia, India and "Turkistan". *Dalil al-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya fi al-Madina al-Munawwara* (1971), p. 59.

30. Ninety graduates in 1388/9 н included individuals from nearly all of the same countries (except Tunisia and "Turkistan"), and also from Lebanon, Morocco, the Federation of South Arabia (*al-Junūb al-ᶜArabī*), Qatar, Iran, Pakistan, Malaysia,

Burma, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Mauritania, Eritrea, Cameroon, Mozambique and Zanzibar. *Dalil al-Jamiᶜa* (1971), p. 61.

31. Lists from around 1993 (1413/14 H) show, for example, that only seven British students and thirteen from the United States had graduated from the IUM's colleges by that time. By around 2002, the IUM had offered 251 scholarships to students from Britain and 285 to students from the United States. Even allowing for declined places and drop-outs, this suggests a marked increase in recruitment from these countries. These figures do not take into account IUM alumni who were born elsewhere, but settled in countries such as Britain after graduation. "Juhud Khadim al-Haramayn al-Sharifayn fi Taᶜlim Abnaʾ al-Muslimin min Khilal al-Minah al-Dirasiyya ilati Tuqim-ha al-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya", *Majallat al-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya* 118 (1423 H, AD 2002/3); al-ᶜAbbud, *Juhud al-Mamlaka*, pp. 718–24. For details of the numbers of countries from which students were recruited each year, see al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, p. 385.

32. Al-Dhibyani, "Islamic University".

33. See Chapter 4 in this volume.

34. Joas Wagemakers, "A Quietist Jihadi-Salafi: The Ideology and Influence of Abu Muhammad al-Maqdisi", PhD dissertation, University of Nijmegen, 2010, p. 38.

35. Hamadi al-Redissi, "The Refutation of Wahhabism in Arabic Sources, 1745–1932", in al-Rasheed (ed.), *Kingdom without Borders*, pp. 157–82.

36. Lacroix, *Awakening Islam*, p. 14.

37. Telephone interview with an IUM graduate born in South Africa, November 2010.

38. Telephone interview with a South African IUM graduate, November 2010.

39. "Al-Nizam al-Asasi li-l-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya bi-l-Madina al-Munawwara", 9 Rabīᶜ al-Akhir 1381 H (19 September 1961), reproduced in al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, pp. 52–8.

40. "Nizam al-Majlis al-Istishari al-Aᶜla li-l-Jamiᶜa al-Islamiyya bi-l-Madina al-Munawwara", reproduced in al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, pp. 146–8.

41. Included in "al-Nizam al-Asasi", 9 Rabīᶜ al-Akhir 1381 H (19 September 1961), reproduced in al-Ghamidi, *al-Kitab*, pp. 52–8.

42. According to Abdulaziz Fahad, at least one text on ᶜaqīda penned by Ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhab – a letter to the populace of al-Qasim – was basically a paraphrased version of Ibn Taymiyya's *al-ʿAqida al-Wasitiyya*. Abdulaziz H. Fahad, "From Exclusivism to Accommodation: Doctrinal and Legal Evolution of Wahhabism", *New York University Law Review*, 79(2) (2004): n. 12.

43. The syllabus names the text to be taught as *Sharh al-Tahawiyya*, without specifying the author. However, graduates who studied at the IUM in this early period confirm that the text in question was the famous commentary by Ibn Abi al-ᶜIzz. Interview with India-born IUM graduate Suhaib Hasan, London, January 2013.

44. Al-ᶜAbbud, *Juhud al-Mamlaka*, vol. 1, pp. 427–8.

45. The syllabus is unclear, but appears to suggest that the introduction to this text was itself actually penned by one Ahmad bin Mushrif al-Maliki al-Ahsaʾi, whose name intriguingly implies origins in the Maliki community in the al-Ahsa region of what is now Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province. I am grateful to Stéphane Lacroix for drawing my attention to this issue. On al-Qayrawani, see *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vol. 3, s.v. "al-Qayrawani" (Leiden: Brill, 1960), p. 695.

46. Al-ᶜAbbud, *Juhud al-Mamlaka*, vol. 1, p. 442. Confusingly, the syllabus as reproduced here lists "*al-ᶜAqida al-Wasitiyya* by Shaykh al-Islam ibn Taymiyya" among the texts to be studied, but includes a footnote attributing authorship of this text to Muhammad Khalil Harras. Since Muhammad Khalil Harras's published works include a commentary on *al-ᶜAqida al-Wasitiyya*, it seems safe to assume that this is the text being referred to here.

47. Al-ᶜAbbud, *Juhud al-Mamlaka*, vol. 1, p. 525.

48. Though further research is required, it is also by no means clear that *Sharh al-Tahawiyya* by Ibn Abi al-ᶜIzz, included as a key text for advanced courses in tawḥīd in both the earlier and the later syllabuses, has deep roots in the Wahhabi tradition. I am grateful to Saud al-Sarhan for discussions on this issue.

49. Frank Vogel, "Islamic Law and Legal System: Studies of Saudi Arabia", PhD dissertation, Harvard University, 1993, p. 170.

50. Vogel, "Islamic Law", p. 175.

51. Guido Steinberg, "Ecology, Knowledge, and Trade in Central Arabia (*Najd*) during the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries", in Madawi al-Rasheed and Robert Vitalis (eds), *Counter-narratives: History, Contemporary Society, and Politics in Saudi Arabia and Yemen* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p. 90.

52. *Al-Madina al-Munawwara*, No. 1030, 16 January 1962.

53. Interview with IUM graduate Suhaib Hasan, London, January 2013.

54. For an English translation of this work, see Imran Ahsan Khan Nyazee (trans.), *The Distinguished Jurist's Primer: A Translation of Bidayat al-Mujtahid* (Reading: Garnet Publishing, 1994).

55. This text had replaced *Zad al-Mustaqniᶜ* by the Hanbali scholar al-Hujawi for teaching at this level in 1982. Al-ᶜAbbud, *Juhud al-Mamlaka*, vol. 1, p. 429.

56. Al-ᶜAbbud, *Juhud al-Mamlaka*, vol. 1, p. 443.

57. Al-ᶜAbbud, *Juhud al-Mamlaka*, vol. 1, p. 565.

58. Frank Vogel, *Islamic Law and Legal System: Studies of Saudi Arabia* (Leiden: Brill, 2000), pp. 77–81.

59. Vogel, *Islamic Law and Legal System*, p. 79.

60. On al-Albani's approach to fiqh, see Stéphane Lacroix, "Between Revolution and Apoliticism: Nasir al-Din al-Albani and his Impact on the Shaping of Contemporary Salafism", in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

61. Ahmad Muhammad Shakir, *Taqrir ᶜan Shuʾun al-Taᶜlim wa-l Qada: Taqrir Muqaddam li-Jalalat al-Malik ᶜAbd al-ᶜAziz Al Suᶜud Sanna 1949 M.* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Imam al-Bukhari li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawziʾ). For a biography of Ahmad Muhammad Shakir, detailing his links with Ansar al-Sunna, see Ahmad Muhammad al-Tahir, *Jamaᶜat Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyya: Nashʾatuha, Ahdafuha, Manhajuha, Juhuduha* (Cairo: Jamaᶜat Ansar al-Sunna al-Muhammadiyya, 2006), pp. 202–14.

62. *Al-Madina al-Munawwara*, No. 1020, 12 December 1961.

63. *Al-Madina al-Munawwara*, No. 1030, 16 January 1962.

64. Memo to the Advisory Council reproduced in Abul Hasan ᶜAli al-Nadvi, *Nahw al-Tarbiyya al-Islamiyya al-Hurra fi-l-Hukumat wa-l-Bilad al-Islamiyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Irshad, 1969), pp. 93–4.

Making Qom a Centre of Shiʿi Scholarship: Al-Mustafa International University

KEIKO SAKURAI

INTRODUCTION

Qom, in the Islamic Republic of Iran, is the world's largest centre for Shiʿi scholarship, and is also a popular site for pilgrimage.[1] The city as a whole has a resident contingent of about 50,000 Iranian seminary students, including women,[2] as well about 12,000 students from outside Iran.[3] Most of the foreign students are studying at one of the seminaries belonging to al-Mustafa International University (MIU) (in Persian, Danishgah-i Bainul-milali-yi al-Mustafa; in Arabic, Jamiʿat al-Mustafa al-Alamiyya), an umbrella organisation that coordinates seminaries, schools and educational centres exclusively for non-Iranians, operating both inside and outside Iran. The growth of non-Iranian students studying at Iranian seminaries is a post-revolutionary phenomenon facilitated by the clerical leaders of the Islamic Republic, who were eager to promote their ideology overseas.

Though MIU itself was only recently founded, it has more than two decades' previous history under the name of the International Centre for Islamic Studies (ICIS) (Markaz-i Jahani-yi ʿUlum-i Islami) and the Organisation for Overseas Seminaries and Schools (OOSS) (Sazman-i Hawza va Madaris-i ʿIlmiyya-yi Kharij az Khishvar). The former was established in 1986 as a supervisory organisation for non-Iranian students admitted to Iranian seminaries, and the latter was founded in 1991–2 to supervise the schools and seminaries established outside Iran for non-Iranian students.[4] According to the MIU's official prospectus of 2009, it had about 18,000 non-Iranian students, 10,000 of whom were studying in Iran while the remaining 8,000 were housed in affiliated institutions across the world.[5]

Despite the MIU's growing investment in the education of non-Iranians, its activities have not yet been the subject of scholarly examination. Although Iranian seminaries in the revolutionary period, including their management styles and curricula, have been the subjects of some outstanding studies by Western academics,[6] and certain books in Persian have described the changes that took place in post-revolutionary domestic seminaries,[7] recent works on the development of transnational Shiʿi networks have not yet paid attention to the activities of MIU, including ICIS and OOSS.[8] This chapter aims to fill this gap, and thereby to gain a better understanding of how clerical leaders of the Islamic Republic of Iran have tried to make the Qom seminaries the world centre of Shiʿi scholarship.

This chapter draws on observations of the activities of MIU and its forerunners (ICIS and OOSS), as well as documents issued by MIU and related organisations, secondary sources, and interviews with professors, administrators and graduates of ICIS and MIU in Iran, Pakistan, Thailand, Indonesia and elsewhere. It presents an examination of MIU, including ICIS and OOSS, which focuses on the following aspects: first, the internal and external factors that allowed MIU (including ICIS and OOSS) to become a powerful institution in post-revolutionary Iran; secondly, the organisational features of ICIS and MIU and the attempts that have been made to develop a new model of seminary education for non-Iranian students; thirdly, MIU's strategy for reaching out to the rest of the world through its various branches and affiliated institutions; fourthly, the way graduates of ICIS and MIU utilise their education in local communities; and, fifthly, the implications of the increasing prominence of MIU within Muslim societies, especially in the Shiʿi world.

The central argument of this chapter is that MIU's model of education, like that of ICIS, has diverged from that of traditional seminaries: first, in emphasising the training of propagators of religion, rather than *mujtahids* (experts who can issue authoritative opinions on Islamic law); secondly, in the provision of a segregated space for non-Iranians; thirdly, in the adoption of a highly centralised and bureaucratic form of management; fourthly, in providing special curricula and university degrees for non-Iranians; and, finally, in globalising a new form of denominational education under the patronage of the Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Shiʿi Scholarship before the 1979 Islamic Revolution

In order to clarify the contextual factors that shaped the emergence of MIU, I begin by giving a brief account of the nature of Shiʿi scholarship and its relation to the *marjaʿ-i taqlīd* (pl. *marājiʿ-i taqlīd*), the highest authority in Islamic law prior to the 1979 Islamic revolution. The Shiʿi branch of Islam is distinguished

from the Sunni by its "informal" religious hierarchy under the leadership of the marjaʿ-i taqlīd.[9] The institution of marjaʿ-i taqlīd emerged in the mid-nineteenth century in the Iraqi shrine city of Najaf, where in 1846 Hasan Najafi (d. 1850) was recognised as "the source for emulation in the Shiʿi community".[10] From the time of Najafi till the late 1940s, Najaf was the seat of the marājiʿ-i taqlīd, with some exceptions.[11]

One characteristic of the Shiʿi hierarchy is the lack of an institutionalised procedure for identifying who is the most learned. A marjaʿ-i taqlīd cannot be identified either by election or by appointment, let alone screening. The "tacit agreement" of the community of experts composed of seminary students, instructors and scholars is crucial in allowing a scholar to "emerge" as a marjaʿ-i taqlīd.[12] The lack of an official procedure for identifying the marjaʿ-i taqlīd contributes to the unique character of the Shiʿi hierarchy, because it allows for the existence of multiple marājiʿ-i taqlīd when the community fails to identify a single individual to fill that role.[13]

It is worth noting that Najaf was located on the periphery of the Sunni Ottoman Empire. Being a minority religion lacking state support, Shiʿism developed its own religious hierarchy while depending on the religious endowments of its lay community. The most important financial source was a religious tax called *khums* (meaning "one-fifth"), paid to a marjaʿ-i taqlīd by faithful laypeople. Half of the khums goes to support poor *sayyids* (descendants of the Prophet), and the other half, called the *sahm-i imām*, or the share of the imam, is for clerical institutions.[14]

The disciples of a marjaʿ-i taqlīd normally serve as his representatives in their communities and collect khums on his behalf. The ability of a marjaʿ-i taqlīd to collect revenue therefore greatly depends on the number of his reliable disciples, as well as on his popularity among laypeople. The collection of khums is important for seminaries because both these institutions and their students are financially supported by the sahm-i imām along with the revenues from endowments and income from legal and clerical duties.[15]

This financial independence has allowed seminaries to remain outside state control, even while having been marginalised in the process of the expansion of state-controlled schooling both in Iraq and in Iran. The minimal state intervention allowed seminaries to retain their own management and teaching style, which is characterised by the absence of a defined curriculum or standardised examination and evaluation systems. In addition, there are no age restrictions on admission into the seminaries, nor any limitation on the duration of study.[16] It is worthy of note that financial independence from the state and financial dependence on laypeople are two sides of the same coin: seminaries have to meet the expectations of khums payers, who tend to be conservative about social change and oppose reform.[17]

Before the spread of universal primary education, boys who completed their basic studies at local Qurʾanic schools could enter the seminaries in Najaf or Qom at around 12–14 years of age. The first level of study in these seminaries is called *muqaddamāt* (preliminaries), comprising the study of grammar, rhetoric and logic. The middle level of study is called *suṭūḥ* (texts), in which students learn theology, law and jurisprudence based on textbooks. Only a limited number of students are able to proceed to the third and most advanced level of education, called *dars-i khārij* (studies beyond textbooks), wherein they receive training to become a mujtahid. When a mentor is satisfied that his student has acquired the ability to issue a competent legal opinion, he grants a certificate authorising the student to be a mujtahid in his own name.[18] In other words, it is not an institution, but an individual who certifies the transmission of knowledge, and this "personalistic nature" has clear links with the system of patron–client relationships.[19]

Iraq's shrine city of Najaf had long been regarded as the most prestigious centre of Shiʿi learning. In the early twentieth century there were about twenty seminaries in Najaf [20] and around 8,000 students studying therein. In addition to Arab students from Iraq, Lebanon and the Persian Gulf, there were many non-Arab students such as Iranians, Turks and Indians.

The early 1920s was a turning point for Shiʿi scholarship. ʿAbd al-Karim Haʾiri-Yazdi (d. 1937), regarded as one of the marājiʿ-i taqlīd, arrived in Qom to restore the historical Faydiyya seminary. Haʾiri-Yazdi's success in revitalising that institution facilitated the transfer of seminary scholars and students from Iraq to Iran,[21] and this marked the beginning of the rise of Qom as a new centre of learning in the Shiʿi world. The rise of Qom and the decline of Najaf became decisive when Qom resident Ayatollah Burujirdi (d. 1962) was singled out as the sole marjaʿ-i taqlīd of the Shiʿi religious hierarchy in the late 1940s, after the death of Ayatollah Isfahani (d. 1946). Interestingly, both Isfahani and Burujirdi were Iranians, but Isfahani resided in Najaf, while Burujirdi was in Qom. Burujirdi's presence enhanced the prestige of Qom as a seat of Shiʿi scholarship.[22]

After the death of Burujirdi, the Shiʿi community reverted to the position of having plural marājiʿ-i taqlīd: in 1975, Khomeini (d. 1989) and Khuʾi (d. 1992) were in Najaf; Gulpayigani (d. 1993), Shariʿatmadari (d. 1986) and Marʿashi-Najafi (d. 1991) in Qom; and Khunsari (d. 1985) in Tehran.[23] Among them, Khuʾi[24] was known as an opponent of Khomeini's principle of *vilāyat-i faqīh* (the government of the jurist), and he remained in Najaf until his death. In Qom, Azeri-born Shariʿatmadari[25] was the main challenger to Khomeini's principle, and he, like Khuʾi, found a significant following outside Iran by offering education to non-Iranian students. It is little wonder, then, that Khomeini wished to weaken the overseas influence of his rivals by bringing non-Iranian student affairs under his control.

According to Fischer, there were over 6,500 seminary students in Qom in 1975, and although the percentage of foreign students was small, they represented diverse ethnicities. As well as the Turkish-speaking Azerbaijanis, Iraqi Shi'a exiled by the Ba'th regime had a considerable presence in Iranian seminaries.[26] Others were from Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Lebanon, Tanzania, Turkey, Nigeria, Kashmir and Indonesia. Foreign students came to Qom through the personal connections between local clerics and high-ranking mujtahid in Qom. It is worth noting that marāji'-i taqlīd in Iran were competing over their reputations outside the country. Ayatollah Shari'atmadari, who found many followers outside Iran, enhanced his profile abroad by hosting foreign students at his own seminary, named Dar al-Tabligh (House of Islamic Propagation), as well as by distributing Shi'i literature throughout the world.[27] Dar al-Tabligh was established in the mid-1960s, and, unlike traditional seminaries, it offered a five-year programme using a credit system with course examinations. Its curriculum included secular subjects such as psychology, philosophy, mathematics and English, and the language of instruction was Arabic. According to Fischer, Shari'atmadari accepted visitors from as far away as Lucknow and Karachi in the east, and from Cairo and Fez in the west.[28] Ayatollah Gulpayigani launched overseas activities in the 1970s, including the distribution of monthly stipends to students in India and the purchase of land for a madrasa in Kashmir.[29]

Concurrent with the rise of Qom has been a decline in the number of seminary students in Najaf. The decrease in the number of students during the 1950s continued in subsequent years due to the Iraqi Ba'th government's pressure on the Shi'i population, especially Iranian nationals living in the Iraqi shrine cities known as the 'atabāt.[30] Among those deported to Iran were clerics and seminary students.[31] Accordingly, the total number of students and teachers in Najaf decreased to less than 150 in the mid-1980s.[32]

Restructuring the Seminaries for the "Export of the Revolution"

The Islamic revolution brought fundamental changes to the traditional religious hierarchy in which the marja'-i taqlīd enjoyed autonomy from the state. Returning to Iran after fifteen years in exile, Khomeini, who had distinguished himself as a political leader through the anti-monarchist movement, launched his project of establishing a regime based on his principle of vilāyat-i faqīh through two referenda: the first, held in March 1979, on the creation of an Islamic republic; and the second, in December 1979, on the approval of the constitution of the Islamic Republic. Both were approved, and Khomeini succeeded in creating a state based on his principle, under which he was bestowed absolute political and religious authority, and the major government posts were occupied by fellow clerics. Though Khomeini seemed to be in an incontestable

position, Shariʿatmadari nevertheless questioned the referenda on the ground that the concept of vilāyat-i faqīh was not indisputably established in Shiʿi jurisprudence. His opposition to Khomeini heightened the tension between his supporters, mostly living in Azerbaijan, and those of Khomeini. Khomeini ended Shariʿatmadari's challenge by stripping him of his rank as marjaʿ-i taqlīd in April 1982. Backed by state power, Khomeini pressured the other competing marājiʿ-i taqlīd not to publicise religious interpretations that were at odds with vilāyat-i faqīh, and thus give it an unchallenged status.[33]

In this context, the clerical leaders of the Islamic Republic established the Management Council of the Qom Seminaries (Shura-yi Mudiriyat-i Hawza-yi ʿIlmiyya-yi Qom) in 1980 in order to extend control over the existing seminaries. The council formulated various proposals for restructuring the management style and curricula of seminaries, but it failed to effect substantive changes due to resistance from the seminary heads, who were circumspect about accepting grants from the state treasury due to the possible consequences for their autonomy.[34] Facing resistance from the seminary heads, the clerical leaders of the Islamic Republic started their project of asserting control over seminary affairs and reforming the curricula, especially through the management of the affairs of non-Iranian students. It was in this context that Shariʿatmadari's Dar al-Tabligh was confiscated by the regime and became a base for the Islamic Propagation Office of the Qom Seminaries (Daftar-i Tablighat-i Islami-i Hawza-yi ʿIlmiyya-yi Qom) in charge of the training of Iranian preachers of both genders.[35]

Although the number of non-Iranian students studying at Qom on the eve of the Islamic revolution was relatively small, the clerical leaders of the Islamic Republic expected them to act as ambassadors who would disseminate the revolutionary message, believing Iran's Islamic revolution to be a universal model for the emancipation of the oppressed from despotic rule.[36] Iran's foreign policy in the 1980s was known as "the export of the Revolution", this being the political manifestation of the underpinning belief. Iran tried to pursue this goal by its own example, by supporting liberation movements and through propagation.[37] Acceptance of non-Iranian students into Iranian seminaries fell under the first and third methods for the export of the revolution, and the clerical leaders prioritised seminary education for non-Iranians both inside and outside the country.[38]

To fulfil this agenda, Hujjatiyya Seminary, established by Ayatollah Hujjat Khukamari[39] in the early 1940s, was transformed into an international seminary for non-Iranian students by Ayatollah Muntaziri (d. 2009), a disciple of Khomeini. Hujjatiyya Seminary served as a major host of non-Iranian male students in the 1980s and taught five schools of Sunni and Shiʿi jurisprudence, though it laid great emphasis on the Shiʿi Jafari school of jurisprudence.[40]

In conjunction with the creation of a seminary exclusively for non-Iranian students, the clerical leaders of the Islamic Republic established the Council for Supervising Non-Iranian Seminary Students (Shura-yi Sarparasti-yi Tullab-i Ghayr-i Irani) in 1979, aiming to monopolise the recruitment of non-Iranian students. This council operated until it was reorganised into the ICIS in 1986.[41]

INSTITUTIONALISATION OF THE EDUCATION OF NON-IRANIAN STUDENTS

The establishment of ICIS strengthened the unified management of non-Iranian students' affairs and facilitated the systematic recruitment of non-Iranian students, especially Shiʿi youth from regions such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Gulf countries, where Shiʿa were marginalised by Sunni-dominated governments. The Shiʿi youth in these regions were also emboldened by the success of the Iranian revolution and were eager to come to Qom. Non-Iranian students were offered a different programme, which emphasised the Islamic ideology.[42]

Politics was not the only factor that attracted non-Iranian Shiʿa. The flood of Pakistani and Afghan youths, whose opportunities for higher education in their communities were limited due to political instability and economic difficulties, demonstrated that seminary education was seen as an alternative form of higher education. In my interviews with Pakistani and Afghan Shiʿi youths in Quetta in the late 1990s, I found that going to Qom was the most realistic way of getting into higher education, even though it had become rather competitive by the 1990s. Since Qom's seminaries experienced an over-representation of Pakistani and Afghani youth in the 1980s, ICIS gradually had to tighten the criteria for acceptance for both countries in order to diversify nationalities.[43] MIU adopted the ICIS policy by emphasising the admission of students from countries from where MIU did not have students.[44]

A new chapter in the history of ICIS began when Ayatollah Khameneʾi took over the post of Supreme Leader of the Islamic Republic upon the death of Khomeini. Khameneʾi was one of Khomeini's disciples and served as president of the Islamic Republic of Iran from 1981 to 1989. He was elected as the new Supreme Leader by the Assembly of Experts on 4 June 1989. His appointment was controversial because, at that time, his theological qualifications fell short of mujtahid or *ayatollah*.[45] This lack of theological qualifications hampered his claim to be a legitimate successor because the constitution required the Supreme Leader to be a marjaʿ-i taqlīd. To solve this problem, the constitutional requirement of being a marjaʿ-i taqlīd was replaced by "being an expert on Islamic jurisprudence", and being in possession of "appropriate political and managerial skills" was added as a new qualification for being Supreme Leader. This constitutional amendment made it possible for Khameneʾi to be Khomeini's

successor, although his legitimacy continued to be questioned by many leading marāji‘-i taqlīd of the time. The appointment of a Supreme Leader who did not hold the highest rank in the religious hierarchy ended the theocratic regime in which the Supreme Leader embodied both religious and political authority. To compensate for this weakness, two major steps were taken: the reinforcement of the Supreme Leader's political power via constitutional amendment; and the introduction of Ayatollah Araki[46] (1894–1994) as a marja‘-i taqlīd, so that lay-people could follow Khamenei’i on political issues and Araki on religious issues. After the death of Araki, several clerics, including Khamenei’i, were nominated for marāji‘-i taqlīd by the clerical supporters of the regime.[47] Meanwhile, Khamenei’i, suffering from his lack of religious credentials, hastened to expand his influence outside Iran.[48] This led to the office of the Supreme Leader gaining direct control of ICIS, so enabling Khamenei’i to apply centralised management[49] to non-Iranian student affairs.[50]

Another of Khamenei’i's projects was the modernisation of seminary education. The ICIS constitution stressed that its mission was to train non-Iranian preachers, trainers, teachers, researchers, interpreters, mujtahids and administrators, who are refined, aware of the important issues of the day, able to run scientific and cultural magazines, and learned in Islamic sciences, humanities and Ahul al-Bait studies.[51]

This statement implies an extension of the scope of education beyond beliefs, rituals and personal affairs to the realm of public affairs; that is, to teach Islamic sciences and humanities to prepare students for various roles in the public sphere. The implications of this mission become more apparent when we consider the student admission criteria. The applicants must be Muslim, and have to pledge allegiance to the Islamic Republic of Iran. They have to have at least a secondary school certificate, be aged between 18 and 22, and be single. They are also required to pass entrance examinations and attend interviews. It was important for ICIS to seek capable students from all over the world in order to diversify the student body in terms of nationality.[52]

To locate students who satisfied the above-mentioned criteria, ICIS adopted three methods of recruitment. First, it sent out recruitment missions in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; these missions were empowered to administer both written and oral examinations, as well as interviews. Secondly, candidates living in a country where ICIS does not send out recruitment missions could be accepted through direct correspondence, by way of emails or upon the request of a foreign representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, in case they could meet the standards set by ICIS. Thirdly, candidates living in Iran could make contact with ICIS directly.[53] ICIS was distinct from traditional seminaries in that it set clear admission criteria and administered examinations. Those accepted were entitled to receive various services, including an education

subsidy allowance, a housing subsidy allowance, medical services and travel expenses.[54] Although ICIS retained its basic identity as a seminary, its certificates were confirmed by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology, which benefited the graduates when they returned home. Khamenei'i's efforts to apply central management to the seminary also extended to the seminaries for Iranian students, both male and female.[55]

ICIS as a Predecessor of MIU: Its Educational Courses and Affiliated Colleges

ICIS was a forerunner of MIU, and the concepts and structures underpinning the latter institution took shape as a result of the experiences of the former. ICIS adopted the academic system of the modern university, based on credits and semesters, and provided five levels of courses equivalent to university degrees: Level 1 (Associate of Arts); Level 2 (Bachelor of Arts); Level 3 (Master of Arts); Level 4 (PhD); and Level 5 (*ijtihād*). Currently, non-Iranian students have to undertake a preparation course before starting Level 1, in which they receive intensive Persian and Arabic lessons along with the basic Islamic sciences. Level 2 is composed of two majors: Islamic Sciences and Humanities. Level 3 is also divided into two, Islamic Sciences and Humanities, along with the obligatory presentation of a thesis. Those who wish to continue their studies can sit the examination for Level 4. Level 4 is a five-year course in which students study Islamic jurisprudence and the principles of jurisprudence along with their own major for three years, with the last two years being devoted to writing a thesis. The final course is for the training of mujtahid.[56]

ICIS is the central organisation for controlling non-Iranian students' affairs, and education takes place in institutions and learning centres under its umbrella. Among them, the most important institution for males is the Imam Khomeini School for Higher Education (Madrasa-yi 'Ali-yi Imam Khomeini), founded in 1992 by order of Khamenei'i. It offers courses from Levels 1 to 4. Hujjatiyya Seminary was renamed the Islamic Law and Knowledge School (Madrasa-yi 'Ali-yi Fiqh va Ma'arif-i Islami) in 2002 and offers courses from Levels 1 to 4. The Specialty School of Islamic Law and Islamic Jurisprudence (Madrasa-yi Takhassusi-yi Fiqh va Usul) started its activities within the structure of Mar'ashi Seminary in 2004 as an institution specialising in Islamic jurisprudence with four educational courses: Islamic law and jurisprudence; Islamic judicial law; law; and Islamic economic law.[57] Rasul al-Akram College is a higher education institute for the adherents of four schools of law, namely, Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki and Hanbali. It was established in 1996–7 in the city of Gorgan in Golistan province, facing the Caspian Sea. In the beginning it accepted students from Central Asia and Russia for a five-year course, but in 2005–6 it opened its doors

to students from all over the world, with a new education programme recognised by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology.

Bint al-Huda School for Higher Education (Madrasa-yi ʿAli-yi Bint al-Huda) is a seminary exclusively for non-Iranian female students established by a group of clerics under the leadership of Ayatollah Muhammad Mahdi Asifi in 1982. Originally it offered Arabic-medium courses, mainly for students from Iraq and the Gulf region. In 2000, it was placed under the supervision of ICIS and introduced courses in the Persian language to facilitate the acceptance of students from all over the world; by 2008, 550 students from twenty-five countries were engaged in study there.[58] The Centre for Language and Islamic Education (Markaz-i Amuzish-i Zaban va Maʿarif-i Islami) has been engaged in Persian-language education for non-Iranian students since its establishment in 1982–3. The Persian language course lasts six months and teaches non-native students without intermediate languages or translation. Those who finish this course can proceed to the 6–8-month basic Islamic study course. The Institute for Humanities (Muʿassasa-yi ʿUlum-i Insani) started its activities in 2005–6 in order to teach the humanities to seminary students. In addition to these institutions, for the promotion of distance learning for overseas residents, the Imam Khomeini International Islamic Virtual University (Danishstan-i Imam-i Khomeini) began activity in 2001. The Centre for Short-Term Education and Research Opportunities (Muʿassasa-yi Amuzish-ha-yi Kutah Muddat va Fursat-ha-yi Mutalaʿati) provides short-term education for clerics in order to enhance their knowledge, and provides research opportunities for scholars on sabbatical.[59]

ICIS has offices in Mashhad and Isfahan which directly supervise a number of seminaries. The Mashhad Office supervises non-Iranian students, both male and female, studying at seminaries in Mashhad – such as the Madrasa-yi ʿAli-yi Baradaran (Higher Institute for Brothers), the Markaz-i Amuzish-i Khaharan (Education Centre for Sisters), Madrasa-i ʿIlmiyya-yi Baqiya al-Allah (Baqiya al-Allah Seminary), Madrasa-yi ʿIlmiyya-yi Ahl al-Bait (Ahl al-Bait Seminary) and the Maktab-i Narjis (Narjes Seminary for Women). The Isfahan office was opened in order to raise the educational level of non-Iranian students who had been instructed in traditional methods at seminaries in Isfahan.[60]

Beside educational institutions, ICIS comprises a research centre; ICIS Press; the Centre for Family Affairs and Housing Complex, which provides education and religious services for the spouses and children of non-Iranian students; and the Centre for Student Counselling and Guidance, which gives students guidance on both personal and educational issues.[61]

The basic objective of ICIS is to bring under its control the seminaries that already accept non-Iranian students, while also adding new institutions to create a vast, modern education complex exclusively for non-Iranians.[62] One of

the striking features of ICIS is that it educates non-Iranian students separately from Iranian students under a curriculum designed especially for them. One male former student commented that the provision of separate classes is a protective measure for non-Iranian students, stemming primarily out of consideration for the handicaps that non-Iranian students face at their time of entrance: studying in Persian is a challenge for non-Persian-speaking students, and if they are also weak in Arabic this will be an additional burden. In addition, Iranian students – particularly humanities majors – already have considerable knowledge of religious sciences before coming to the seminaries, due to the Iranian high school curricula, whereas the majority of non-Iranian students come to Iran with minimal knowledge of religious sciences.[63]

To what extent are non-Iranians separated from Iranians? According to the testimony of the same student, non-Iranian male students are encouraged to join in with the discussions among students and scholars taking place in the holy shrine of Fatima Ma'suma. In addition, many of the instructors teaching introductory classes are in fact senior Iranian students with whom non-Iranian students have friendly relations, and it is not accurate to say that non-Iranians are forced to remain isolated.[64] Indonesian scholars who have studied in Qom provide testimony that the non-Iranian students who were enrolled at Hujjatiyya Seminary in the 1980s and in the early 1990s enjoyed freedom due to the fact that the Hujjatiyya Seminary had not yet converted to the credit system. They were encouraged to participate in classes and seminars held outside Hujjatiyya, and were able to study with Iranian students. However, transformation to the credit system in the mid-1990s made it difficult for non-Iranian students to take classes outside the seminary, which limited their opportunity to mingle with Iranian students.[65] In the case of the female non-Iranian students with whom I had conversations, they indicated that they are not as free as male students and that their association with Iranian students is much more limited.[66]

The Establishment of MIU

Al-Mustafa International University was established in 2008 to strengthen the overseas propagation of Iranian-style Shi'ism by integrating ICIS and OOSS. The domestic activities of MIU were adapted from ICIS by placing ICIS's nine schools and centres under its direct supervision, with some restructuring and renaming.[67] Like ICIS, MIU is categorised as a private university, drawing its budget mainly from the profits from factories that it owns, as well as from investments, religious endowments[68] and government funding.[69]

The change of name from ICIS to MIU was strategic. First, "al-Mustafa" is an epithet of the Prophet Muhammad, which means "the Chosen One" in Arabic, the lingua franca of all Muslims. The use of Arabic and the non-sectarian

name increases the appeal of MIU in the Muslim world. A similar tactic can be observed at work in the university's official prospectus, which states that one of the five main policies of MIU is "to respect Islamic sects on the basis of Islamic unity policies".[70]

Secondly, the change from "centre" to "university" signifies al-Mustafa's determination to create a new model of Islamic teaching in which humanities subjects are taught from an Islamic perspective, along with Islamic sciences. It also aims to improve the social status and work opportunities of graduates by providing them with a university degree.

MIU is a "mission-oriented"[71] institution that aims to train preachers who can take on the task of "disseminating Islamic viewpoints and divine teachings and expanding Islamic culture as well as moral and spiritual traits".[72] The prioritisation of training for Islamic propagation distinguishes MIU from the traditional Shiʿi seminaries, whose ultimate goal is to train mujtahids who are entitled to issue legal opinions – although advancement to the status of mujtahid is open to MIU students. According to the president of MIU, Alireza Aʿrafi (1959–),[73] ten to twenty students are currently studying to be mujtahid at Level 5.[74]

President Aʿrafi has identified three core characteristics of an MIU education: (1) rational, philosophical and analytical observation (nigāh-i ʿaqlānī va falsafī va taḥlīlī); (2) comparative studies (muṭāliʿāt-i taṭbīqī) and dialogue between religions (ādyān) and branches of Islam (madhhab); and (3) interest in humanities and social sciences (tavajju-yi ʿulūm-i insānī va ijtimāʿī). It is these, he claims, that distinguish MIU from al-Medina and Umm al-Qura in Saudi Arabia, al-Azhar in Egypt and the International Islamic University in Pakistan.[75]

The MIU's emphasis on philosophy can be traced back to ʿAllama Tabatabaʾi (1903–81), who began teaching Islamic philosophy in Qom in 1946. He was an Islamic philosopher in the tradition of Ibn Sina (known as Avicenna, 980–1037) and Mulla Sadra (1572–1640), and came to Qom to fight against Western materialism, which was popular among intellectuals at that time.[76] Though his teaching of philosophy was contested by jurists including Burujirdi, the sole marjaʿ-i taqlīd at that time, he developed a large following, many of whom – such as Ayatollah Mutahhari (1919–79) – would later become the leading figures of the Islamic revolution.[77] Khomeini's attachment to philosophy and mysticism helped to integrate their study into the curriculum of the Qom seminaries, in which Tabatabaʾi's works are used as textbooks. It is remarkable that Tabatabaʾi and his students consider metaphysics to be the foundation for the study of the totality of knowledge.[78] It is also worthy of note that in the 1960s Tabatabaʾi expounded the Platonic idea of government by philosopher-kings, a decade before Ayatollah Khomeini made public his theory of vilāyat-i faqīh, said to have been inspired in part by Plato's *Republic*.[79] This linkage of philosophy and

vilāyat-i faqīh is essential to Qom's model of seminary education, which MIU has embodied. Additionally, Tabatabaʾi's Islamic ontology provided the philosophical basis of post-revolutionary Iran's endeavour to overcome the sense of self-alienation engendered by the shah's Westernisation policy and the establishment of the Islamic Republic based on the slogan of "Neither West nor East".[80]

The emphasis on comparative study and the dialogue between religions and sects can also be traced back to Tabatabaʾi, who studied various doctrines of Western philosophy in order to refute them – especially Marxism, which had become popular among Muslim youth.[81] Although Marxism is no longer the main concern of Iranian seminarians, the protection of Islam from Western cultural influence (especially secularism and materialism) through the teaching of Islamic philosophy, and the provision of answers for all manner of questions, is still of vital importance for the Qom seminaries.[82] MIU's emphasis on a comparative perspective can thus be seen as a continuation of this effort.

This is not to imply that MIU totally rejects Western culture and scholarship, however. MIU asserts that shedding light on the "congruity between the Islamic sciences and the humanities"[83] is one of its missions. President Aʿrafi has stated that MIU never prohibits its students from learning about Western culture and sciences, but that it does encourage them to examine them critically. In other words, his position towards the humanities is neither total rejection nor uncritical acceptance. What is important for students is to know that their "religion has to have its view in every realm".[84]

The other characteristic of MIU's curriculum is its introduction of new fields of Islamic jurisprudence, such as Islamic jurisprudence in medicine, environmental science, international affairs, management, education and economics, especially at MA level.[85] As one of the frontrunners in the new field of Islamic jurisprudence, President Aʿrafi asserts that the provision of legal answers to emerging problems is a duty of the Islamic jurist, and in order to provide the relevant answers the Islamic jurist must have sufficient knowledge of contemporary issues.[86] MIU inherited its basic curriculum from ICIS, and currently offers a BA programme with two majors: Islamic Studies, with ten programmes, and Humanities, with thirteen programmes.[87] Subjects taught in each programme are divided into "seminary", "general", "common with other programmes/core" and "specialised". Seminary studies (durūs-i ḥawzavī) includes Arabic morphology and syntax, logic, Islamic philosophy, commentary, Qurʾanic studies, Nahj al-Balagha (Peak of Eloquence),[88] reading comprehensions and Islamic law, though a number of units differ from course to course.[89] General Studies must be taught in every programme, and includes Islamic thought, the analytical history of early Islam, Khomeini's socio-political viewpoints, Persian literature, physical education, Islamic ethics, thematic commentary on the Qurʾan, family

management and foreign languages. MIU has introduced a number of more practical classes, such as foreign languages or IT, which enable non-Iranian students to engage effectively in propagation activities in their home communities after graduation, especially "in the fields of the media, academic dialogues, and the artistic arena".[90]

Teaching a wide range of humanities alongside seminary education is of vital importance for MIU to meet the criteria for being a "university", despite the fact that MIU claims to be the inheritor of a 1,000-year history of seminary education.[91] The design of MIU's curriculum enables its students to compete with other university graduates and prevents them from being out of touch with international academia.[92] Iran's fusion of religious studies, humanities and the social sciences is at the heart of the project known as "Seminary and University" (ḥawza va dānishgāh), in which the Islamisation of the social sciences and humanities is pursued alongside the updating of religious science to meet contemporary needs. The adaptation of the university system and its curricula in seminaries is also part of this project.[93] These changes in the system and curricula enable ICIS and MIU graduates to expand the scope of their activities from traditional face-to-face teaching and preaching in their home communities to indirect methods including "virtual propagation" through television, video and enriched web pages. Furthermore, the diversification of educational content and the provision of university degrees have allowed the graduates to branch out into various fields, and this facilitates their active involvement at the forefront of their communities.

Although MIU's hybrid form of education is attractive to the majority of students who come to Qom, it remains disadvantageous for those students who wish to advance to the highest level in order to attain the status of mujtahid. In Shiʿism, no matter how much one studies, if one does not attain the position of mujtahid one must remain a muquallid, one who follows (taqlīd) the guidance of a mujtahid. Over the last three decades there has been a tremendous increase in the number of non-Iranian students studying at Qom; but they have seldom attained the status of mujtahid. This allows Iranian mujtahid to maintain their dominance within the Shiʿi clerical hierarchy both within and outside Iran.

Another important aspect of education in MIU – as it was in ICIS – is that the majority of professors and instructors are Iranians, and Persian is the language of instruction. Non-Iranian students are first required to undergo intensive Persian-language training, because important texts are in Persian, including the writings of Khomeini and other Islamic revolutionary ideologues – ICIS defined Persian as "the language of the revolution", while Arabic is "the language of the Qurʾan".[94]

Teaching in Persian has inevitably enhanced the position of that language in the Qom seminaries (and elsewhere) and has promoted the "Persianisation" of

Shiʿi language.[95] Thus, students' success in their studies greatly depends on their level of proficiency in Persian. Conversely, MIU's ability to transmit the Iranian version of Shiʿism and the revolutionary message depends on how well it can teach Persian to non-Iranian students.

<div align="center">OVERSEAS OUTREACH</div>

The other important project for MIU is the integration of the overseas activities of OOSS, which was established to promote overseas propagation and proselytisation by opening educational institutions locally for non-Iranians. It is estimated that the organisation supervised more than 150 schools in sixty countries in its first decade, hosting about 10,000 students.[96] Due to a lack of available documentation, however, I was not able to determine the details of its activity. One of the reasons for the difficulty in ascertaining the overall scope of OOSS seems to be the ambiguity of its understanding of "supervision". Based on my observations, it seems that the religious schools opened by Qom returnees did have contact with OOSS, but this did not mean that these schools were fully supervised by OOSS. For example, in 1997 I was visiting a religious school for girls in Quetta whose principal was a female Qom returnee; and it transpired that an Iranian woman who claimed to have a religious education was also visiting the town at that time, along with her husband who was a religious expert. The principal asked me to come to the school in the afternoon so as to avoid meeting the Iranian visitors, explaining that it might put her in a difficult situation. When we eventually visited the school, the principal explained that OOSS sometimes sent a mission on their own initiative to "supervise" them, even though OOSS had no official connection with the school. Based on my visit to schools in Lahore in 2006, it seems that the relationship between OOSS and the Shiʿi schools opened by Qom returnees varied from school to school. Some claimed to have contact with OOSS, whereas others claimed to be relatively independent.

The president of MIU states that "Organising international branches is one of our priorities that we should pay attention to."[97] MIU's website lists twenty-four schools and colleges as affiliated institutions,[98] although it seems there are even more institutions that have direct or indirect connections to MIU. For instance, the 2009 pamphlet states that MIU "has representation in over 50 countries", and has branches in "Lebanon, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria, India, Thailand, Tanzania, Sri Lanka and other countries". The same pamphlet also introduces schools in Bangladesh and Russia with images of their buildings.[99] An introductory booklet published in October 2010 refers to the "Islamic University Ghana, Islamic College London, Teacher Training Centre Burkina Faso, Islamic College Indonesia", as well as to "branches in Lebanon, Afghanistan, Syria, Pakistan,

India, Thailand, Tanzania and Sri Lanka".[100] Compiling the information about branches or affiliated institutions mentioned in MIU's official documents and on its website, the number of branches in Africa is conspicuous: there are three in Ghana and one each in Burkina Faso, Benin, Congo, Cameroon, Madagascar, Malawi and Tanzania. By contrast, there are only two branches in the Middle East, in Lebanon and Syria. Both countries have close diplomatic relations with the Iranian government. In Eastern Europe, there are two in Albania and one in Bosnia-Herzegovina. In Western Europe, branches can be found in Denmark, the United Kingdom, Norway and Sweden. There are two in South America, in Argentina and Brazil. Others are located in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Philippines.[101] These branches vary in size, academic level and in the subjects they teach. Some schools, such as those in Benin and Bosnia, are boarding schools. The courses and the type of education offered also vary in the schools, ranging from high school to graduate degree courses. Some focus mostly on religious training, whereas others also provide secular courses. Some institutions provide only part-time non-degree schooling. It seems that many of them have Iranian directors, but in many cases the relationship between MIU and the institution is not clear.

One of the most active institutions in Western Europe is the Islamic College for Advanced Studies in London. Founded in 1998 by an Iranian doctoral scholar who had studied at a seminary in Qom as well as at a university in the United Kingdom,[102] it promotes Islamic studies in the West by providing an "insider's perspective" on Islam, and trains Muslim scholars for the West. In 2002, the college established a partnership with Middlesex University to offer an accredited BA (Hons)[103] in three courses: Islamic Studies, Muslim Cultures and Civilizations, and Hawza Studies. The Hawza Studies course aims "to train students as ministers of religion, religious teachers, or academics by providing its students with classical Islamic education and spiritual training". In 2007, MA courses in Islamic Studies, Islam and the West, and Islamic Law were launched, and in 2008 the college was renamed the Islamic College.[104]

The London branch is one of the most important of MIU's branches[105] outside Iran, because London is where rival marājiᶜ-i taqlīd to Khomeini and Khameneiʾi have their offices. Khuʾi, for instance, established the al-Khoei Benevolent Foundation in 1989 and opened a London branch, as well as the al-Sadiq and al-Zahra Schools in London.[106] Ayatollah Sistani (1930–), the great disciple of Khuʾi and currently the most popular marjaᶜ-i taqlīd in Najaf, also has his office in London, the Imam Ali Foundation.[107] Given the rivalry between marājiᶜ-i taqlīd, having a branch in London is important for elevating the prestige of MIU.

MIU has also found its way to Southeast Asia. The population of Indonesia is predominantly Sunni, but it does have some Shiᶜa, mostly of Arab descent. In

the 1970s, some of them went to Qom to study at Dar al-Tabligh. A few years after the Islamic revolution, Iran's clerical representatives arrived in Indonesia where they met Husein al-Habsyi (1921–94), one of the prominent Shiʿi clerics from Bangil, East Java. Since their meeting, Indonesian students have been sent to Qom through him, and many have become leaders of the Indonesian Shiʿa. After his death, ICIS representatives came to Indonesia to conduct an examination to select students for study in Iran; this increased the number of students who went to Qom, and so further diversified the composition of the student body there.[108] These developments only emerged, however, after the collapse of the Suharto regime in 1998.

In conjunction with the increase in the number of Indonesians studying at Qom, the Iranian presence in Indonesia has also increased. In 2003, the Islamic College for Advanced Studies in London opened a branch in Jakarta, which was renamed the Islamic College Jakarta in 2009. Similar to the Islamic College, London, the Jakarta branch is headed by an Iranian doctoral scholar. The college aims to promote religious values through Islamic philosophy and mysticism, offering MA programmes in Islamic philosophy and Islamic mysticism.[109]

In 2003, an institution called the Islamic Cultural Centre, Jakarta, was established by five Iranians. The centre conducts Persian-language courses and has been facilitating Indonesian students who wish to study in Iran. Both institutions have worked closely with, and have been run predominantly by, Iranians or Indonesians of Arab descent who studied at Qom.[110]

Unlike their Indonesian counterparts, Malaysians who have studied in Qom might be compelled to practise *taqīyya* (dissimulation), due to the Malaysian government's anti-Shiʿi policy.[111] Another important centre for propagation in southern Asia can be found in Thailand, where there are a small number of Shiʿa,[112] mostly descendants from Persians who migrated to the region during the Ayutthaya dynasty (1350–1767).[113] They had been isolated from the rest of the Shiʿi world until they were "discovered" by a Shiʿi cleric visiting the Thonburi district of Bangkok after the Iranian revolution. In Thonburi there is a small Shiʿi community descended from Qom and Lucknow, and there the cleric established a centre where classes in religion, including the teachings of Khomeini as well as in the Persian language, were given to both children and adults. Some of those who studied there have gone on to Qom for further study.[114] Though neither ICIS nor MIU has opened a branch in Thonburi, a considerable number of Thai youth were sent to Qom.[115]

MIU's presence in Eastern Europe, specifically in Albania and Bosnia-Herzegovina, is a relatively new phenomenon. Iran started its cultural activities in Bosnia in 1995, as soon as the Bosnian War ended.[116] The Cultural Centre attached to the embassy offers free Persian-language courses. The Mulla Sadra Foundation promotes Islamic teaching and Shiʿi publications translated into the

local language.[117] The Ibn Sina Institute, established in 1996, has four sections: the Centre for Philosophy and Gnosis, the Centre for Culture and Civilization, the Centre for Persian Language and Literature, and the Centre for Balkan Studies.[118] Kewser is a Shiʿi-inclined women's organisation in Bosnia that issues its own magazine and runs its own TV and radio stations.[119] These institutions have direct or indirect relations with the Iranian regime and encourage the creation of a Shiʿi- and Iran-friendly environment in Bosnia. This strategy by the Iranian regime was reinforced by the establishment of the Persian-Bosnian College in 1999 in Ljesevo near Sarajevo as one of the branches of MIU. The college is a secondary school with boarding facilities, and its curriculum is equivalent to that of other schools in Sarajevo except that it offers Persian-language studies and Shiʿi-oriented extracurricular activities, such as a com-memoration of the martyrdom of Imam Husayn and a field trip to Iran.[120] Iran's active involvement in cultural and educational activities in Bosnia indicates that Bosnia is one of its important centres for propagation.

Albania has also been identified as a target for propagation in the region. Organisations such as the Saadi Shirazi Cultural Foundation, a female high school named Saadi College, and the Kuran Foundation are active in Albania.[121] In 2007, the Rumi Foundation was established as an MIU branch for the promo-tion of education, research and comparative religion. The first Persian–Albanian dictionary was published in 2010, and more than ten books have been published in Albanian, including the works of Sayyed Hossein Nasr, William Chittick and ʿAllama Tabatabaʾi.[122]

South Asian non-Muslim countries seem to be the new frontier for MIU. The MIU Indian Branch has recently opened in New Delhi, aiming to promote higher education with an emphasis on seminary education.[123] In October 2012, a new branch of MIU was opened in Colombo,[124] and MIU is planning to open another branch in Hyderabad offering courses in Humanities, Islamic Studies and Persian language.[125] East Asia and the Pacific region are another frontier for MIU: a Tokyo office was opened in May 2013, and I was informed that MIU is planning to open offices in Canada, the United States and Australia.[126]

The African continent seems to be the top priority for MIU's propagation work.[127] The Islamic University College, Ghana,[128] started activity in 1988 under the name of Ahul al-Bait Islamic School, as a training institute for Islamic theology. It was accredited in 2002 by the University of Ghana. Other MIU branches on the African continent vary in size and in the level of education they provide. The oldest seems to be the Imam Sadiq School in Madagascar,[129] established in 1986. It offers post-high school education in Islamic teachings in Arabic. A school in Malawi was established in 1994, offering post-high school education in Islamic teachings, also in Arabic, while Dar al-Mahdi in Tanzania was established in 2006, offering post-high school education in Islamic

teaching in Swahili. The date of the establishment of the schools in Cameroon and Benin are, respectively, 2001–2 and 2002–3. Most of the schools have an Iranian director. The African countries where MIU has opened its branches are mostly Muslim-minority countries with a significant shortage of education. In addition, most of the Muslims in these countries have few links with Shiʿism, except for certain countries where Shiʿi immigrants from India and Lebanon can be found. Dr Hakim Elahi, the vice president of MIU, served in Africa for twelve years, establishing the Islamic University College in Ghana and serving as director of the Centre for Islamic Studies in Mali. In an interview, he emphasised that the number of Africans attracted by Shiʿism has grown and that anti-Shiʿi propaganda by Wahhabis has been unsuccessful.[130] The distribution of MIU branches in non-Muslim African countries as well as in Eastern Europe indicates that MIU is trying to counter the growing influence of anti-Shiʿi Wahhabism in these countries by creating a sympathetic atmosphere through cultural and educational activities. MIU's investment in education activities is closely related to the Iranian government's endeavours to strengthen diplomatic and economic ties with these countries, though MIU claims to be independent from government. The benefits derived from an education at an MIU branch vary from student to student, but the most important thing for them is having the opportunity to get a post-secondary education.

MIU does not have branches in Sunni-dominated countries such as Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, where, historically, local Shiʿa have had strong ties with the Najaf seminaries. In these countries, the returnees from Najaf have a strong influence on Islamic education and many of them run religious schools and classes to disseminate Shiʿism under their own initiative. Even though the success of the Islamic revolution in Iran has changed the destination of choice for many advanced students from Najaf to Qom, and although the younger generation has been more exposed to Iranian influence, Najaf scholarship still remains an attractive option. The possible reasons for the absence of MIU branches in these areas are, first, the presence in these countries of a sufficient number of Qom returnees who are already influencing their community, and, secondly, MIU's decision to avoid aggravating political tensions between Iran and countries that may tend to see MIU branches as political rather than as educational entities. However, it is worth noting that while MIU may not have branches in these countries, it does maintain representatives.

RETURNEES FROM MIU: THEIR PERSPECTIVES

ICIS and MIU have had a complex impact on home communities via returnees from the Qom seminaries. The role of the returnees in their communities must be understood in the context of their location. My visits to the Shiʿi madrasas

in Karachi, Quetta, Islamabad and Lahore[131] verified that studying at Qom has been beneficial for Shiʿi youth in terms of improving their education and future career prospects, but does not necessarily entail their subordination to Qom. The majority of students studying at local madrasas are from less privileged backgrounds, including Afghans, mostly Hazaras, who settled in Pakistan after the Soviet invasion. The madrasas are essentially free and allow students to continue their studies with no financial burden. Students who are able to continue on to advanced study at Qom have more promising futures, because Qom returnees are highly respected in Shiʿi communities.

The opportunity to study in Qom is particularly precious for women, whose education and career options are much more limited than for men. Many of the female returnees said that they would never have been allowed to study, were it not for the seminaries in Qom.

The existence of a strong belief that secular education makes women less religious and that a seminary education is religiously rewarded has encouraged families to send their daughters to Qom. After returning home, many of the female returnees engage in teaching at a girls' madrasa or preaching at women's religious gatherings, and through these activities they gain social respect and financial independence, which helps them to develop a good reputation and higher status in their family. Many women I have interviewed said that, as a result of their experiences in Qom, they learned how women can be active in society without challenging the existing male-dominated social order, for females there are active in teaching, preaching and even administering religious schools, organisations and circles for women. Though still few in number, some female returnees, especially the daughters or wives of clergymen, can serve as principals in girls' madrasas. It is worthy of note that the support of a man is indispensable to running a madrasa, because the public religious sphere in Pakistan is dominated by men, and women have limited scope to collect religious endowments from lay followers and so secure financial support for a madrasa.[132]

Unlike female returnees, whose activities are mostly confined to a gender-segregated space, male returnees are more likely to be involved in politics. Since the late 1970s, Pakistani Shiʿa have faced increasing pressure from the Sunni Islamisation initiated under the government of Zia ul Haq. The success of the Islamic revolution led by Khomeini emboldened Pakistani Shiʿi to negotiate with the Zia government over a new law on the compulsory deduction of zakat. In rivalry with the Shiʿi movements, Sunni groups, especially those influenced by Wahhabism, initiated an anti-Shiʿi campaign that aggravated sectarian conflict.[133] In such circumstances, being a returnee from Qom can be a double-edged sword. Returnees are respected for having acquired advanced knowledge about religious science and for having absorbed the revolutionary spirit, but they might also be seen as advocates of vilāyat-i faqīh, and even as

agents of Iran who follow Khomeini or Khamenei'i not as a religious leader, but as a representative of the Iranian government.

Returnees might support the idea of vilāyat-i faqīh as an ideal, but most of the interviewees I spoke with said that such an ideal was inapplicable in a Pakistani context, where Shi'a are the minority.[134] A Pakistani clergyman who had studied for twelve years in Qom and now runs a female madrasa in which his wife teaches, said that he had received permission from Sistani and other marāji'-i taqlīd to use zakat and khums to run the madrasa so as to provide free education. He also said that he had studied under Ayatollah Makarim Shirazi and Ayatollah Lankarani in Qom, and that he looks to Khamenei'i in Qom on political matters, but follows Sistani in Najaf with regard to religion. Despite his profession of compartmentalised allegiances, portraits of both Khomeini and Khamenei'i were on display in his office, showing his special attachment to Qom. Not all clergy who have studied at Qom reveal their direct attachment to that place, let alone display portraits of Khomeini and Khamenei'i. Another Pakistani cleric with seven years' study experience in Iran cautiously avoided mentioning the name of any marja'-i taqlīd, stressing in fluent Persian that his mission was to facilitate dialogue among different religious groups, including different branches of Islam. This shows how sensitive Pakistani returnees are about relations with Qom.

It is worth noting that the older generations of Pakistani scholars were mostly educated in Najaf and that, historically, Pakistanis have followed Ayatollah Khu'i in Najaf and, after his death, Sistani in Najaf. Because of this tradition, many of those who followed Khomeini after the 1979 revolution returned to Khu'i after the death of Khomeini. In addition, we may note that the idea of "following marja'-i taqlīd" is itself somewhat equivocal, with many interviewees saying that the idea that khums should be paid to the marja'-i taqlīd had been popularised by Qom returnees and was relatively new to lay Shi'a in Pakistan.

The other factor that has enhanced the value of studying at Qom is the aggravation of sectarian violence against Shi'a. More and more Shi'a feel that it is necessary to arm themselves with theoretical arguments to defend their denomination in the face of growing attacks from Wahhabi-influenced Sunni groups.

In the case of Thailand, where Shi'a are few in number, returnees face different challenges. Unlike Pakistan's Shi'a, whose population is somewhere between 17 and 34 million, Shi'a in Thailand are estimated to number fewer than 50,000,[135] and seem to be in economically moderate circumstances. The absence of a larger Shi'i community seems to be the main obstacle to returnees in establishing a career as a religious teacher or preacher. In such an environment, the Cultural Centre attached to the Iranian embassy, where Persian-language

skills are required, has become an important provider of work for returnees and also runs support seminars and publication activities.[136] Golam Ali Abazar, who has established his career as a leader of the Thai Shiʿa, is no exception and has maintained ties with Iran.[137] Abazar is a nephew of the imam of Masjid al-Huda, located in Taling Chan in the southern part of Bangkok. He left Thailand in the mid-1970s to undertake religious study in Pakistan. After spending a few years there, he moved first to Kuwait and then to Hujjatiyya Seminary in Qom for advanced studies. He returned to Thailand at the age of twenty-five with *ijāza*s – in particular from Sistani – authorising him to collect khums as one of Sistani's representatives. He also holds an ijāza issued by the Friday prayer steering committee and signed by Khameneiʾi, stating that he had been appointed a leader of the Friday congregational prayer, based on a request from the Shiʿi people in Thailand and the recommendation of the clergy. It also requires him to promote understanding of the Islamic revolution and unity among Muslims.[138] Thanks to the support of the Qom returnees, the Cultural Centre of the Islamic Republic of Iran[139] in Bangkok functions as an active centre for Islamic propagation in Southeast Asia. The examples of Pakistan and Thailand show that the relationship between returnees and MIU and Iranian representatives depends on the circumstances of Shiʿa in their particular locality.

CONCLUSION: GLOBALISING "IRANISED" SHIʿISM?

The Shiʿi seminaries known as *ḥawza-i ʿilmiyya* have long been a meeting place for students and scholars of various origins. A perfect example of this was nineteenth-century Najaf, which attracted Persians, Turks, Arabs and Indians – although ethnic division did exist in housing, classes and among scholars.[140] Twentieth-century Qom is distinguished from nineteenth-century Najaf by the emergence of "national consciousness", which engenders a clear distinction between Iranians and non-Iranians. ICIS's, and MIU's provision of separate educational spaces and curricula for non-Iranians is intended for the benefit of the majority of the non-Iranian students; however, as discussed, this measure discourages non-Iranians from studying to the level of mujtahid, and this perpetuates Iranians' monopoly over that elevated position, while non-Iranians remain muqallid in the Shiʿi religious hierarchy.

MIU has ensured Qom's incontestable dominance over Najaf,[141] especially in terms of financial stability and human resources, and this has convinced some Iranians that Qom has become the "Vatican"[142] of the Shiʿi hierarchy. In spite of its achievements, though, the Shiʿi world is in fact far from monopolised by the seminaries of Qom; and at the same time there are signs of the restoration of Najaf seminaries in today's Iraq as an alternative centre for learning, especially for Arab Shiʿa who are uncomfortable with the "over-politicised"

and "Iranised" forms of teaching.[143] Questions about Qom's strong inclination towards philosophy and rationalism have also been voiced by scholars, especially in Najaf and Mashhad, who belong to *maktab-i tahkīk*,[144] although it is this very inclination that has attracted the younger generation of Shiʿa in Lebanon and elsewhere.[145]

Even those who see vilāyat-i faqīh as an ideal are well aware that the Iranian model of Shiʿism developed within a country where the overwhelming majority of Muslims are Shiʿi – a fact that is neither applicable nor relevant to the rest of the world. The graduates of MIU are struggling to reshape and reinterpret what they have been taught in the light of their local needs and realities.

In addition, the language of instruction is also a matter of great concern, especially for Arabs, and this has created a new opportunity for seminaries outside Iran. For instance, a new Shiʿi seminary has emerged in Damascus, where the Zainab Shrine is located, a popular site of Shiʿi pilgrimage. Since the mid-1970s, students expelled from seminaries in Najaf by the Iraqi authorities have been finding refuge at the shrine and numbers have grown rapidly. Zainabiyya Seminary was established in order to accommodate these students, and has now expanded to house 250–300 students from some twenty to twenty-five nationalities, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria, Iran and countries in Africa. This seminary has differentiated itself by making Arabic the sole language of instruction.[146]

President Aʿrafi is aware of the criticism of MIU's educational strategies, and has emphasised that "Shiʿism is a matter which transcends nationality". At the same time, however, he also averred that there is an important proximity between Iranian culture and Shiʿism as concerns their rational, philosophical and mystical proclivities. It is precisely this tendency to identify Iranian culture with Shiʿism that is troubling for Shiʿa outside Iran, and is at the root of non-Iranians' hesitation to see Qom as the sole reference point in religious sciences.[147]

Additionally, unlike those extremists who believe that Islam and nationalism are incompatible, President Aʿrafi maintains that people can maintain their national identity while still regarding themselves as belonging under the broad umbrella of Islam. Again, the problem here is whether people from different nationalities can have a shared image of what that umbrella really is, if Iranians equate aspects of Islam with Iranian culture.

MIU provides us with an example of an attempt to globalise a denominational form of education blended with a national agenda, and reveals its complex effects on various localities. The expansion of MIU has spurred competition and contestation among Shiʿa and between Shiʿa and Sunnis; and it seems likely to continue to spur such rivalry in the future, rather than bringing them closer.

Notes

1. The shrine of Fatima Maᶜsuma, sister of the Eighth Imam, ᶜAli al-Rida.

2. Tabnak, 25 Khurdad 1391 (14 June 2012), see at: www.tabnak.ir/fa/print/251293, accessed 12 December 2012.

3. IRNA, 25 Aban 1391 (15 November 2012), see at: www.irna.ir/fa/News/80373116/parseek/parseek, accessed 12 December 2012.

4. Gholam Reza Ghiyasi, *Taᶜlim va Tarbiyat dar Islam va Hawza-i ᶜIlmiyya* (Iran: Intisharat-i Bayan al-Haqq, 1383/2004–5), pp. 179–81.

5. International and Public Relations Office, al-Mustafa International University, *An Introduction to al-Mustafa International University* (Qom: MIU, 2009).

6. Michael M. J. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980); Roy P. Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet: Religion and Politics in Iran* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1985); Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shiᶜi Islam* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985); Shahrough Akhavi, *Religion and Politics in Contemporary Iran: Clergy–State Relations in the Pahlavi Period* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1980).

7. ᶜAli Shirkhani and ᶜAbbas Zariᶜ, *Tahavvullat-i Hawza-yi ᶜIlmiyya-yi Qom* (Tehran: Markaz-i Asnad-i Inqilab-i Islami, 1384/2005); Ghiyasi, *Taᶜlim va Tarbiyat*.

8. Sabrina Mervin (ed.), "Transnational Intellectual Debates", in *The Shiᶜa Worlds and Iran* (London: Saqi, 2010), pp. 321–46; Laurence Louër, *Transnational Shia Politics: Religious and Political Networks in the Gulf* (London: Hurst, 2008); Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr, *Shiᶜite Lebanon: Transnational Religion and the Making of National Identities* (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2008); Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr, "Imaging Shiᶜite Iran: Transnationalism and Religious Authenticity in the Muslim World", *Iranian Studies*, 40(1) (2010): 17–35; Muhammad Qasim Zaman, "Epilogue: Competing Conceptions of Religious Education", in Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (eds), *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), pp. 242–68.

9. Ahmad Kazemi Moussavi, *Religious Authority in Shiᶜite Islam: From the Office of Mufti to the Institution of Marjaᶜ* (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1996), pp. 35, 185.

10. Moussavi, *Religious Authority in Shiᶜite Islam*, pp. 187–8.

11. Faleh A. Jabr, *The Shiᶜite Movement in Iraq* (London: Saqi, 2003), pp. 169–79; Moussavi, *Religious Authority in Shiᶜite Islam*, p. 206. There were a few marājiᶜ-i taqlīd who spent time in Samarra or Karbala in Iraq (Jabr, *The Shiᶜite Movement*, pp. 173–4).

12. Fischer, *Iran*, p. 88; Jabr, *The Shiᶜite Movement*, pp. 171–2.

13. Moussavi, *Religious Authority in Shiᶜite Islam*, pp. 197–206. Although Najafi, Ansari and Shirazi were recognised as sole marjaᶜ-i taqlīd, they never "enjoyed absolutely undisputed authority and each had rivals who challenged their supremacy". Meir Litvak, *Shiᶜi Scholars of Nineteenth-Century Iraq: The 'Ulama' of Najaf and Karbara'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 64.

14. Litvak, *Shiᶜi Scholars*, p. 35.

15. Abdulaziz Abdulhussein Sachedina, *The Just Ruler in Shiᶜite Islam: The Comprehensive*

Authority of the Jurist in Imamite Jurisprudence (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 244–55; Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, p. 125; Fischer, *Iran*, p. 42; Litvak, *Shiʿi Scholars*, p. 37.

16. Khalid Sindawi, "The Zaynabiyya Ḥawza in Damascus and its role in Shīʿite Religious Instruction", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 45(6) (2009): 842; Fischer, *Iran*, pp. 61–3.

17. Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), pp. 168–73.

18. Mottahedeh, *The Mantle of the Prophet*, pp. 451–2; Litvak, *Shiʿi Scholars*, p. 39; Yitzhak Nakash, *The Shiʿis of Iraq* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press 1994), pp. 243–5; Sindawi, "The Zaynabiyya Ḥawza", pp. 839–45.

19. Meir Litvak, "Madrasa and Learning in Nineteenth-century Najaf and Karbalā", in Rainer Brunner and Werner Ende (eds), *The Twelver Shia in Modern Times: Religious Culture and Political History* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 60.

20. Nakash, *The Shiʿis of Iraq*, pp. 241–2, 254.

21. Fischer, *Iran*, pp. 111–12; Nakash, *The Shiʿis of Iraq*, p. 258.

22. Devin J. Stewart, "The Portrayal of an Academic Rivalry: Najaf and Qom in the Writings and Speeches of Khomeini, 1964–78", in Linda S. Walbridge (ed.), *The Most Learned of the Shiʿa: The Institution of the Marjaʿ Taqlid* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 218–19; Momen, *An Introduction*, pp. 247–8.

23. Fischer, *Iran*, p. 88.

24. Khuʾi became marjaʿ-i taqlīd of Iraq after the death of Ayatollah Hakim in 1970. Khuʾi has a large following, especially in India, Pakistan and East Africa. Momen, *An Introduction*, p. 315.

25. Shariʿatmadari had followers in Iran, as well as (and especially) in Azerbaijan, Pakistan, India, Lebanon, Kuwait and the Gulf (Momen, *An Introduction*, p. 320).

26. Nakash, *The Shiʿis of Iraq*, p. 259; Fischer, *Iran*, p. 78; Graham E. Fuller and Rend Rahim Francke, *The Arab Shiʿa: The Forgotten Muslims* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1999), pp. 101–2.

27. Dar al-Tabligh "published a series of anti-Christian tracts, as well as monographs on Christianity and Islam" in order to "immunise" Muslims from Christian propaganda. Isabel Stümpel-Hatami, "Christianity as Described by Persian Muslims", in Jacques Waardenburg (ed.), *Muslim Perceptions of Other Religions: A Historical Survey* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 228.

28. Fischer, *Iran*, pp. 84, 91, 250.

29. Fischer, *Iran*, pp. 77–9, 84, 91–3.

30. The ʿatābāt are located in Najaf, Karbala, Kazamayn and Samarra, and contain the tombs of six of the Shiʿi imams.

31. Akhavi, *Religion and Politics*, p. 131; Ali Babakhan, "The Deportation of Shiʿis during the Iran–Iraq War: Causes and Consequences", in Faleh Abdul-Jabar (ed.), *Ayatullahs, Sufis and Ideologues: State, Religion and Social Movements in Iraq* (London: Saqi, 2002), pp. 195ff.

32. Nakash, *The Shiʿis of Iraq*, p. 259.

33. Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 140, 156–7; Menashri, *Iran*, pp. 129–30.

34. Shirkhani and Zariᶜ, *Tahavvullat-i Hawza-yi ᶜIlmiyya-yi Qom*, p. 58; Keiko Sakurai, "Women's Empowerment and Iranian-style Seminaries in Iran and Pakistan", in Keiko Sakurai and Fariba Adelkhah (eds), *The Moral Economy of the Madrasa: Islam and Education Today* (London: Routledge, 2011), p. 37.

35. Mehdi Khalaji, "The Iranian Clergy's Silence", *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology*, 10 (2010): 48–9.

36. Farhang Rajaee, "Iranian Ideology and Worldview: The Cultural Export of Revolution", in John L. Esposito (ed.), *The Iranian Revolution: Its Global Impact* (Miami, FL: Florida International University Press, 1990), pp. 66–9; Fred Halliday, "Iranian Foreign Policy since 1979: Internationalism and Nationalism in the Islamic Republic", in Juan R. I. Cole and Nikki R. Keddie (eds), *Shi'ism and Social Protest* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 101–2.

37. R. K. Ramazani, "Iran's Export of the Revolution: Politics, Ends, and Means", in Esposito (ed.), *The Iranian Revolution*, p. 54.

38. Mehdi Khalaji, *Nizam-i Novin-i Ruhaniyat dar Iran* (USA: H&S Media, 2011), p. 47.

39. For further information, see at: hojatiyeh.com/toliat.html, accessed 11 March 2012.

40. Rajaee, "Iranian Ideology", pp. 75, 77.

41. Markaz-i Jahani-yi ᶜUlum-i Islami (International Centre for Islamic Studies (ICIS)), *Shinasan* (Qom: Markaz-i Jahani-yi ᶜUlum-i Islami, 2007), p. 29.

42. Mehdi Khalaji, *The Last Marja: Sistani and the End of Traditional Religious Authority in Shiism* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2006), p. 27.

43. Author's interview with Qom graduates, Lahore, September 2006.

44. MIU website at: en.miu.ac.ir/index.aspx?siteid=4&pageid=1312, accessed 10 August 2012.

45. Wilfried Buchta, *Who Rules Iran?: The Structure of Power in the Islamic Republic* (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2000), p. 53.

46. Muhammad ᶜAli Araki was favoured by the regime due to his political indifference. For details, see Khalaji, *The Last Marja*, pp. 22–3; David Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics in Iran: Religion, Society and Power* (London: Frank Cass, 2001), pp. 15, 17.

47. For instance, the Militant Clergy Association presented three names, including Khameneiʾi, and the Association of Teachers of the Theological College in Qom presented seven names, including Khameneiʾi, on the list of candidates for the office of marjāᶜ-i taqlīd. Interestingly, none of the highest-ranking clerics outside Iran was on the list. Saskia Gieling, "The Marja'iya in Iran and the Nomination of Khamanei in December 1994", *Middle Eastern Studies*, 33(4) (2006): 780–1. For further details, see Khalaji, *The Last Marja*, pp. 22–3; Said Amir Arjomand, *After Khomeini: Iran Under His Successors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 36–42, 175–6; Menashri, *Post-Revolutionary Politics*, pp. 17–21.

48. Facing criticism, Khameneiʾi withdrew his claim to be marjāᶜ-i taqlīd among Shiᶜa in Iran, but not outside Iran. Gieling, "The Marja'iya in Iran", p. 782; Buchta, *Who Rules Iran?*, p. 55.

49. ICIS was managed in a decentralised and traditional way until 1993, when the

new president appointed by Khamenei^ɔi introduced the bureaucratic management system (ICIS, *Shinasan*, p. 30).

50. ICIS, *Shinasan*, p. 30.
51. ICIS, *Shinasan*, p. 31. Ahul al-Bait refers to descendants of the Prophet through his cousin, Ali, the first imam of Shi^ca.
52. ICIS, *Shinasan*, pp. 66, 423.
53. ICIS, *Shinasan*, pp. 66–7.
54. ICIS, *Shinasan*, p. 408.
55. Sakurai, "Women's Empowerment", p. 37. For further details, see at: www.shora-yeaali.com/pages/page-view.aspx?id=18, accessed 7 October 2012.
56. ICIS, *Shinasan*, pp. 76–94.
57. ICIS, *Shinasan*, p. 245.
58. Sakurai, "Women's Empowerment", p. 41.
59. ICIS, *Shinasan*, pp. 220–87.
60. ICIS, *Shinasan*, pp. 293–301.
61. ICIS, *Shinasan*, p. 336.
62. However, some institutions have remained outside the control of ICIS and MIU – such as Jami^cat al-Zahra, the largest seminary for women, which has accommodated many non-Iranian students.
63. Author's telephone interview with a graduate of ICIS, December 2012.
64. Author's telephone interview with a graduate of ICIS, December 2012.
65. Author's interview with three graduates of Hujjatiyya Seminary and Imam Khomeini College for Advanced Studies in Jakarta, September 2013.
66. The lives of the female seminary students are more restricted than those of male students, and they are not allowed to leave their dormitories freely, as the male students can (author's visit to Jami^cat al-Zahra and Maktab-i Narjis).
67. The institutions under the supervision of MIU include: the Centre for Education of Persian Language and Islamic Studies, the College for Advanced Studies of Islamic Jurisprudence, Imam Khomeini College for Advanced Studies, Bint al-Huda School of Higher Education for Females, the Institute for Short-Term Education and Research Opportunities, al-Mustafa Virtual University, the Higher Education Institute for Humanities, the Centre for Students' and their Families' Affairs, the Specialised Centre for Languages and Cultural Studies, al-Mustafa International Centre for Research, and MIU Branches in Tehran, Isfahan, Gorgan and Mashhad. International and Public Relations Office MIU, *An Introduction*, p. 4.
68. *Sunday Trust*, 27 February 2010, see at: sundaytrust.com.ng, accessed 5 August 2012.
69. According to Mehdi Khalaji, MIU received $118,426,800 from government funds in 2011. Mehdi Khalaji, "Inside the Authoritarian State: Iran's Regime of Religion", *Journal of International Affairs*, 65(1) (2011): 138.
70. International and Public Relations Office MIU, *An Introduction*, p. 2. Bearing in mind that the Shi^ci sect is a minority in the Islamic world, this phrase can be read in two ways: we respect Sunni sects, and Sunnis must respect Shi^ca.
71. President A^crafi stated: "Al-Mustafa University is a mission-oriented institute with old traditions." See MIU website at: en.miu.ac.ir/index.aspx?siteid=4&page-id=1312&newsview=19262, accessed 1 July 2012.

72. From a speech by the president of MIU, see at: en.miu.ac.ir/index.aspx-?siteid=4&pageid=2957, accessed 1 July 2012.

73. Aᶜrafi was appointed president of ICIS in August 2001 by a decree of Khameneiʾi, and took office as president of MIU in 2008; see at: www.qomicis.com/english/about/history.aspx, accessed 25 April 2007.

74. Interview with the author at his office, June 2011.

75. Interview with the author at his office, June 2011.

76. Hamid Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent: The Ideological Foundations of the Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: New York University Press, 1993), pp. 238–84.

77. Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent*, pp. 281–4.

78. Sajjad H. Rizvi, "'Only the Imam Knows Best': The Maktab-e Tafkik's Attack on the Legitimacy of Philosophy in Iran", *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 22(3/4) (2012): 490; Mervin, "Transnational Intellectual Debates", p. 326.

79. Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent*, pp. 321, 413; Rizvi, "Only the Imam Knows Best", p. 490.

80. Akiro Matsumoto, "ᶜAllamah Tabatabaʾi no 'tetsugaku nyumon' ni tsuite: Islam kakumei to sonzai ron" ("Revolution and Ontology: A Study of the Beginning of Philosophy by ᶜAllamah Tabatabaʾi"), *Kokusai Daigaku Chuto Kenkyujyo Kiyo* (*Bulletin of the Institute of Middle Eastern Studies, International University of Japan*), 1 (1985): 29, 46–7.

81. Dabashi, *Theology of Discontent*, pp. 274–5.

82. Anti-Westernism was expressed strongly by Khomeini: "Rid yourselves of the 'isms' of the East and the West; stand on your own feet and stop relying on foreigners. The students of the religious sciences as well as the university students must take care that their studies are entirely based on Islamic foundations." Imam Khomeini, *Islam and Revolution: Writings and Declarations (1941–1980)*, trans. Hamid Algar (London: Mizan Press, 1985), p. 292.

83. International and Public Relations Office MIU, *An Introduction*, p. 1.

84. Interview with the author at his office, 6 June 2011.

85. International and Public Relations Office MIU, *An Introduction*, p. 6.

86. Aᶜrafi is known as the scholar who developed Educational Jurisprudence (*fiqh-i tarbiyatī*) as a new field of Islamic jurisprudence. In a lecture at the University of Tokyo on 15 May 2013 he asserted that the introduction of the new field of Islamic jurisprudence was indispensable for solving new problems that people faced in the modern world.

87. Programmes in the Islamic Studies major include: Religions and Sects, History of Islam, Quran and Hadith Studies, Islamic Law and Principles of Jurisprudence, Islamic Philosophy and Mysticism, Islamic Education, Islamic Theology, Shiᶜi Studies, Dissemination and Communication, Islamic Law, and Islamic Education. Programmes in the Humanities major include: Arabic Language and Grammar, Management, Law, Economics, Social Studies, Politics, Psychology, Russian Language and Culture, Pedagogical Studies, Islamic Teaching and Cultural Geography, Farsi Language and Literature, French Language and Literature, French Language and Culture, and Arabic Language and Literature. See MIU website at: en.miu.ac.ir/index.aspx?siteid=4&siteid=4&pageid=1292, accessed 21 September 2012.

88. The collection of sermons, letters and sayings attributed to ʿAli, the first Shiʿi Imam.

89. For instance, to complete a BA in the Islamic Studies, Islamic Law and Principles of Jurisprudence programme, students have to take 54 credits out of 189 credits from seminary studies. However, seminary studies is not included in the BA in Humanities – for instance, in the Russian Language and Culture programme. See MIU website at: en.miu.ac.ir/index.aspx?siteid=4&pageid=1345, accessed 15 July 2012.

90. Speech by Ayatollah Aʿrafi, President of MIU. See MIU website at: en.miu.ac.ir/index.aspx?siteid=4&pageid=2957, accessed 15 July 2012.

91. Though humanities and language studies have also been introduced in many seminaries for Iranians, the importance of these subjects is relatively small compared with their prevalence at MIU.

92. International and Public Relations Office MIU, *An Introduction*, p. 8.

93. Shirkhani and Zariʿ, *Tahavvullat-i Hawza-yi ʿIlmiyya-yi Qom*, pp. 171–5.

94. ICIS, *Shinasan*, p. 61. The following line is printed on the back cover of all the Persian-language study textbooks for non-Iranian students issued by ICIS: "The Persian language is the most effective medium for conveying the message of revolutionary Islam. The diffusion of the Persian language does not imply Iranian nationalism at all."

95. MIU's strong attachment to the Persian language has been expressed by the president of al-Mustafa Open University (one of MIU's affiliated institutions, which offers education by correspondence course). He has stated that the international promotion of the Persian language and introduction of Iranian culture is one of the two goals of al-Mustafa Open University: see MIU website at: en.miu.ac.ir/index.aspx?siteid=4&pageid=1312&newsview=22151, accessed 28 March 2013.

96. Ghiyasi, *Taʿlim va Tarbiyat*, pp. 179–80.

97. For details, see MIU website at: en.miu.ac.ir/index.aspx?siteid=4&pageid=1312&newsview=19262, accessed 21 October 2012.

98. For details, see MIU website at: en.miu.ac.ir/index.aspx?siteid=4&siteid=4&siteid=4&pageid=1295, accessed 21 October 2012.

99. International and Public Relations Office MIU, *An Introduction*, p. 4.

100. Introduction to al-Mustafa University (Muʿarrafi-yi Jamiʿat al-Mustafa al-Alamiyya), available at: ca.iqna.ir/Rayehe/86/pages/2.pdf, accessed 21 March 2013.

101. For more information about branches, see the college's website at: www.islamic-college.ac.uk/about, accessed 15 September 2012.

102. Dr Elmi, the founder of the Islamic College, served as its principal from 1998 to 2007, and from 2011 to the present. He completed his PhD at the University of Birmingham and also studied at a Qom seminary. See at: www.islamic-college.ac.uk, accessed 17 February 2013.

103. The duration of study is three years for full-time students and five years for part-time students. To enter this college, English proficiency is required for non-native students. See at: www.islamic-college.ac.uk, accessed 17 February 2013.

104. For details see the college's website at: www.islamic-college.ac.uk/about, accessed 21 October 2012.

105. MIU's administrative staff and instructors were proud of the London branch and they were delighted to introduce it to me.

106. Elvire Corboz, "The al-Khoei Foundation and the Transnational Institutionalization of Ayatollah al-Khuʾi's marjaiʿyya", in Lloyd Ridgeon (ed.), *Shiʿi islam and Identity: Religion, Politics and Change in the Global Muslim Community* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), pp. 93, 100.

107. Imam Ali Foundation website, see at: www.najaf.org/?lang=persian.

108. Zulkifli, "The Struggle of the Shiʿis in Indonesia", PhD dissertation, Leiden University, 2009, pp. 30–3, available at: http://hdl.handle.net/1887/14017.

109. For details, see the college's website at: icas.ac.id/en/ic. The majority of students studying at this college are Sunni and remain so, and classes are taught in English, Arabic and Indonesian. Students are encouraged to write their thesis in English, but they may write in Indonesian on condition that they provide an English summary. Author's interview in Jakarta, September 2013.

110. Chiara Formichi, "'Tradition' and 'Authenticity': Husayni Compassion in Indonesia (Jakarta, Bandung, and Bengkulu)", City University of Hong Kong, Liberal Arts and Social Sciences, Southeast Asia Research Centre, Working Paper Series, No. 126, February 2012, pp. 4, 7. Though the college is an Iranian institution, Indonesian scholars teaching there have striven to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the Sunni-dominated Indonesian environment. Author's interview with Indonesian scholars in Jakarta, September 2013.

111. Christoph Marcinkowski, *Shiʿite Identities: Community and Culture in Changing Social Context* (Zurich: LIT, 2010), p. 190.

112. According to Chularatana, there are around 6,000–7,000 Shiʿi Muslims in the Bangkok area. Julispong Chularatana, "The Shiʿi Muslims in Thailand from Ayutthaya Period to the Present", *MANUSYA: Journal of Humanities* (Special Issue), 16 (2008): 54.

113. Plubplung Kongchana, "The Historical Development of the Persian Community in Ayutthaya", in *Sheikh Ahmad Qomi and the History of Siam: Collection of Speeches, Lectures and Articles from the Academic Seminar on May 15, 1994* (Bangkok: Institute of Islamic Studies, 1995), pp. 254–9.

114. This information was provided to me when I visited this community in August 1997. The name of the centre "DARU AHL-E-L BAIT" was written on its doorplate. People had conflicting information concerning the background of the cleric who opened the centre. Some said he was Iranian, some that he was Iraqi. He arrived at Thonburi in the early 1980s and visited the community repeatedly for about five years until he disappeared completely. Keiko Sakurai, "Shia-ha kyoiku Network: Thai Thon Buri no jirei kara" ("Shiʿi Educational Network: The Case of Thon Buri, Thailand"), *Islam Sekai* (*The World of Islam*), 51 (1998): 75–89.

115. A Shiʿi religious boarding school for boys aged between about 14 and 21 was opened by the al-Khoei Foundation of Khuʾi in Thonburi in the late 1980s. This school served as a channel to Qom for a while, but is no longer as active as it used to be. Most of the students studying in the late 1990s were from south Thailand, a Sunni-dominated area of Thailand.

116. Karčić notes that "Iran was among the first countries to send humanitarian, financial, and military aid to the besieged Bosniaks" when the Bosnian War started in 1992. "Iran also sent military instructors and intelligence officers to Bosnia"; however, due to US government pressure, Iran has latterly switched to cultural and

educational assistance. Harun Karčić, "Islamic Revival in post-Socialist Bosnia and Herzegovina: International Actors and Activities", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 30(4) (2010): 529.

117. Khameneiʾi's picture appears on the front page of the website of the Mulla Sadra foundation, see at: www.mullasadra.ba, accessed 20 September 2012.

118. See website of the Ibn Sina Institute at: www.ibn-sina.net.

119. Karčić, "Islamic Revival", pp. 529–30.

120. For detailed information regarding the school, see at: www.pbk.edu.ba/pbk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1&Itemid=39&lang=en, accessed 20 September 2012.

121. Ioannis Michaletos, "Iran's Soft Power Reach in the Balkans", *Serbianna*, 27 October 2010, see at: serbianna.com/analysis/archives/732, accessed 28 March 2013.

122. The Persian name of the foundation is "Bunyad-i Amuzish va Parvarish-i Rumi-yi Tirna". For detailed information regarding the Rumi Foundation, see their website at: www.fondacionirumi.com, accessed 20 September 2012.

123. See website of MIU Indian branch at: miuindia.in/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=112&Itemid=53, accessed 9 March 2013.

124. Iran Radio Islam, 21 October 2012, see at: english.irib.ir/radioislam/news/islam-in-asia/item/84308-al-mustafa-int%E2%80%99l-university-to-open-new-branch-in-sri-lanka, accessed 9 March 2013.

125. *News Wala*, the Hyderabad Deccan English Daily, 20 January 2012, available at: www.newswala.com/Hyderabad-News/Sri-Mahmood-Safari-Consulate-General-of-Islamic-Repbulic-of-Iran-Met-Mohammed-Ahmedullah-and-discussed-on-Pilgrimage-to-Holy-shrines-in-Iran-8487.html, accessed 9 March 2013.

126. This information was provided by a representative of the MIU office in Tokyo in June 2013.

127. Iran is eager to strengthen its economic and diplomatic links with sub-Saharan African countries in order to gain more support for the development of its nuclear programme. For more information, see *The Economist*, 4 February 2010, available at: www.economist.com/node/15453225, accessed 20 September 2012.

128. See the official site of the university at: www.ghanayp.com/company/11833/Islamic_University_College/website.

129. Madagascar has a Shiʿi population, including both Ismailis and Twelver Khojas, most of whom migrated from India. Mitsuharu Aizawa, "Madagascar ni okeru Islam-kyo 12 imam Shia-ha Khoja no kako to genzai" ("The Past and Present of Khoja Shia Ithana-Asheri in Madagascar"), *Ryukoku Daigaku Keizaigaku Ronsyu (Ryukoku Journal of Economic Studies)*, 47(4) (2008): 45–60.

130. Ahlul Bayt News Agency (ABNA), 17 November 2009, see at: www.abna.ir/data.asp?lang=3&Id=172336, accessed 20 September 2012.

131. I visited the Shiʿi madrasas in Pakistan in 1997, 2003, 2005 and 2006. The level of education offered in these schools varies from secondary to post-graduate level.

132. Sakurai, "Women's Empowerment", pp. 45–9.

133. S. V. R. Nasr, "Islam, the State and the Rise of Sectarian Militancy in Pakistan", in Christophe Jaffrelot (ed.), *Pakistan: Nationalism without a Nation* (Dehli: Zed Books, 2002), pp. 87–8; Khaled Ahmed, *Sectarian War: Pakistan's Sunni–Shia Violence and its Links to the Middle East* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 29–32.

134. Afghans who have studied at Qom also expressed that vilāyat-i faqīh does not fit their context. For details, see Fariba Adelkhah, "Religious Dependency in Afghanistan: Shia Madrasas as a Religious Mode of Social Assertion?", in Keiko Sakurai and Fariba Adelkhah (eds), *The Moral Economy of the Madrasa*, p. 121.

135. The approximate percentage of the Muslim population that is Shiʿi is less than 1 per cent. For further details, see at: www.ahl-ul-bayt.org/en.php/page,4414A4786.html?PHPSESSID=9926c8c28665d62f7331af82340f151b, accessed 20 March 2013.

136. Marcinkowski, *Shiʿite Identities*, pp. 199–201.

137. For his recent information, see at: imamalmahdi.com/main/eng/news.php?extend.207, accessed 5 October 2012.

138. Sakurai, "Shia-ha kyoiku Network", p. 84.

139. For details, see its website at: bangkok.icro.ir/index.aspx?siteid=222&pageid=8057, accessed 26 October 2012.

140. "The majority of senior mujtahids had students from all groups, and it would be wrong to speak of total separation in social life" (Litvak, *Shiʿi Scholars*, p. 34; see also p. 31).

141. According to Mehdi Khalaji, "Iraq's seminaries today have only a few thousand clerics, whereas there are nearly three hundred thousand in Iran's seminaries", and he believes that Iraq's clerics cannot afford to have a confrontation with the Islamic Republic. Khalaji, "The Iranian Clergy's Silence", p. 53.

142. The former Iranian cultural attaché to Beirut expressed such a self-image by using the word "Vatican". For further details, see Roschanack Shaery-Eisenlohr, *Shiʿite Lebanon: Transnational Religion and the Making of National Identities* (Chichester: Columbia University Press, 2008), p. 191.

143. There are indications that Najaf may be recovering as a centre of learning, especially for Arab Shiʿa. According to Norton, there were about 5,000 students in Najaf in 2009, and the proportion of Arab students has increased. Augustus Richard Norton, "al-Najaf: Its Resurgence as a Religious and University Center", *Middle East Policy*, 18(1) (2011): 143.

144. Known as "the school of the teachings of the Ahl al-Bayt" (Rizvi, "Only the Imam knows Best", p. 492).

145. Rizvi, "Only the Imam knows Best", pp. 491ff.; Mervin, "Transnational Intellectual Debates", p. 338.

146. Sindawi, "The Zaynabiyya Ḥawza", pp. 868–70, 876; Edith Szanto, "Sayyida Zaynab in the State of Exception: Shiʿi Sainthood as 'qualified life' in Contemporary Syria", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 44 (2012): 290.

147. Mervin, "Transnational Intellectual Debates", p. 343.

Protector of the "al-Wasatiyya" Islam: Cairo's al-Azhar University

MASOODA BANO

INTRODUCTION

It was in the tenth century that the Ismaili Shiᶜi Fatimid dynasty laid the foundation of the al-Azhar Mosque; its endowment, shortly afterwards, with a number of teaching positions[1] marked the birth of the centre of Islamic learning that was to become al-Azhar University. Few people, and certainly not its founding dynasty, would have envisioned that this institution would one day become the leading authority in the world of Sunni Islam.[2] This mixed origin, along with a range of other factors – such as Egypt's strong tradition of cultural pluralism; the geopolitical developments that led to Cairo becoming the geographical centre for convergence of Muslim scholars between the ninth and the eleventh centuries; and the controversial, but decisive, twentieth-century state-led reforms of al-Azhar – have all played important roles in the rise of al-Azhar's "al-Wasatiyya" Islam. This "middle-way" Islam is central to al-Azhar's positioning within the spectrum of Muslim institutions speaking on behalf of Islam today. The university's current leadership[3] is very conscious of its international stature as a "tolerant voice of Islam",[4] providing Sunni Muslims across the globe, and increasingly even within Egypt, with an alternative to the exclusionary tendencies and the rigidity associated with Wahhabi-inspired Salafism, as well as the orthodoxy and armed militancy at times associated with movements representing political Islam, such as the Muslim Brotherhood.[5]

Every year, al-Azhar attracts over 30,000 students[6] from around one hundred countries, many sponsored by their national governments. The university's fatwas draw the attention of Muslim scholars and ordinary believers alike from all over the world;[7] it is approached by Western heads of states to galvanise

support for their policies vis-à-vis Muslim communities at home; and its curriculum has been adopted by Islamic institutions – and in the case of Malaysia by the state (see Chapter 8) – in many countries. This chapter documents how the pursuit of al-Wasatiyya Islam has been important in shaping al-Azhar's global following, and tries to explain what has enabled al-Azhar to stay steadfast in this pursuit. First, the chapter defines what al-Wasatiyya Islam means to scholars inside al-Azhar, as well as to its wider following. Such analysis will help us to understand the basis of al-Azhar's global influence, while also showing that it is al-Azhar's organic process of evolution over the centuries that has enabled it to maintain a more complex relationship with the state and society at home and abroad than is possible for either al-Medina and al-Mustafa (discussed in Chapters 1 and 2, respectively).

Al-Azhar's Domestic and International Stature

Although it retained its autonomy as a *waqf*-supported centre of Islamic learning for over nine centuries,[8] al-Azhar University today is a national university regulated by the Egyptian state, and the Shaykh al-Azhar, the most senior position in the university, holds office as a minister. A series of reformist measures introduced by successive governments starting from the mid-nineteenth century[9] culminated in the nationalisation of al-Azhar in 1961. Under the reign of King Faud I, an ordinance issued in 1930 divided al-Azhar's teaching role into three distinct departments: Arabic Language, Shariᶜa and Theology. Meanwhile, the ideas of reformist scholars such as Muhammad ᶜAbduh[10] also began to influence the curriculum, notably through the influence of two of his students – al-Maraghi and al-Zawahiri[11] – who held senior positions at al-Azhar from 1928. The most dramatic transformation, however, followed the Egyptian Revolution of 1952, when Nasser introduced the 1961 Ordinance, nationalising al-Azhar, thus giving it the formal status of a national university, while also bringing it under the direct control of the state.[12]

Under this ordinance, the religious education faculties became subject to state regulation, and at the same time al-Azhar had to expand its teaching faculties to incorporate modern subjects, opening colleges of medicine, engineering, economics, etc. This move towards the provision of modern education did not, however, change al-Azhar's primary identity as the seat of Islamic learning. For the Egyptian government, al-Azhar remained the most important institution that it could use to secure religious legitimacy in the eyes of the public. Similarly, with regard to popular perceptions, it is the three faculties of Islamic Studies that continue to attract the best students in the field,[13] and the fact that the international students at al-Azhar are also concentrated in those faculties demonstrates the global demand for its teaching in this area. At any given time al-Azhar hosts close to 30,000

international students. These students come for four-year undergraduate degree courses, and many also pursue the two-year master's degree. Few, however, stay on to take the PhD, since the requirements for continuing at that level are viewed as quite demanding. A few international students also join al-Azhar's primary and secondary institutes, thereby gaining entry into the system at a very young age.

While the total number of international students shows the level of global demand for Azhari education, a breakdown of student data by country helps to better understand the reach of al-Azhar across the globe. In the 2012–13 academic cycle, international students came from 103 countries. Although the majority of students at al-Azhar come from Muslim majority countries, certain regions and countries show a much higher concentration of students. The 2012–13 international student data gives the following breakdown of the 29,263 students enrolled in that academic year: 5,189 from Arab states, 4,154 from Africa, 13,321 from Asia, 2,902 from Europe, 2,773 from Russia and neighbouring states, and 924 from the Americas. Southeast Asia is particularly noticeable in terms of student numbers: in 2012–13, 5,624 students came from Malaysia, 2,830 from Indonesia and another 2,260 from Thailand. The chapters in Part Three of this volume show how a complex set of factors made Azhari Islam so influential in this region. In Africa, Nigeria stands out as one of the most prominent student-sending countries, with 2,169 students enrolled at al-Azhar during the 2012–13 academic cycle. Senegal, Ghana and Kenya are some of the other African countries which are well represented within the Azhari student body, with student numbers ranging between 100 and 300. Equally importantly, the data shows that an increasing number of students are coming from Europe and the United States. During the 2012–13 academic cycle, there were 410 students from France, 234 from Holland, 400 from the United Kingdom, 443 from the United States, and 390 from Canada. This growth in the number of students from the West shows al-Azhar's popularity among second- and third-generation Muslims there, as well as among converts. With 873 students, Turkey was also well represented during this academic cycle; and there were also 1,093 students specifically from Russia.

Gender-disaggregated international student data shows that al-Azhar is an equally popular destination for female students. As noted in recent studies, there is rapid growth in the demand for textual learning among Muslim women, some of whom pursue formal Islamic education and become prominent preachers in their own right.[14] This demand for Islamic education among Muslim females is also reflected in the size of the female population within al-Azhar's international student body. In the 2012–13 academic cycle, between 30 and 35 per cent of the international students were female, and this ratio remains fairly constant across the different levels of education imparted at al-Azhar.

Although important, the presence of international students is not the

sole barometer of al-Azhar's global influence. One other important vector of al-Azhar's influence overseas takes the form of the appointment of al-Azhar faculty members to teaching positions in universities in other countries. These overseas appointments, which are awarded for a few years at a time, are relatively competitive. The Shaykh al-Azhar personally takes an active role in the selection of candidates for these overseas appointments, which are made in consultation with the Egyptian embassies in those countries. The selection process for these appointments is stringent, because those so appointed also come to act as ambassadors not only for al-Azhar, but for the Egyptian state and society more generally. The International Islamic University in Islamabad, Pakistan, is one of the institutions that has benefited from the expertise of Azhari scholars through such appointments.

As with any Islamic institution, the most stringent test of al-Azhar's religious authority rests in the demand for its fatwas. It is in this domain that al-Azhar's influence is most clear. Individuals from around the globe seek al-Azhar's fatwas on a diverse set of questions, as do the Egyptian government and the governments of other Muslim-majority and Western countries. In recent years, al-Azhar has introduced a telephone hotline in a number of European languages to provide fatwas for a diverse range of followers based in different parts of the world. This service manifests the increasing demand for al-Azhar's fatwas among second- and third-generation Muslims in European countries, the United Kingdom and the United States.

In addition, al-Azhar's ideas are also widely disseminated through its two major publications: *Al-Azhar Magazine*, which is produced monthly, is now eighty-four years old; while *Saut al-Azhar* (*Voice of al-Azhar*) is a weekly publication that covers important news events from al-Azhar's perspective. Efforts are currently afoot to make past issues of the monthly magazine available online for at least the last ten years and to make it more accessible to Muslims worldwide. The World Association of al-Azhar Graduates is similarly a widely diffused but effective network for the spread of Azhari Islam.

Meanwhile, Azhari shaykhs have a growing presence on the ever-increasing independent Islamic TV and radio channels. Though the shaykhs appear on these channels in a personal capacity rather than as spokesmen for al-Azhar, the plurality of positions they adopt and the extent of textual knowledge of Islam they demonstrate also helps to boost the image of al-Azhar as the most prestigious place for higher learning in Sunni Islam. Many of these channels are now available on regional or international cable TV networks and the Internet. Thus, the very platforms which some have argued are fracturing Islamic authority[15] by allowing a new class of independent scholars to develop large followings, are also providing opportunities for scholars from the historically influential institutions to advance their message further.

If the above considerations were not enough to establish the global reach of al-Azhar, the great emphasis placed by al-Azhar's current leadership on its role as the promoter of moderate Islam on the international stage should remove any remaining doubts. When asked if al-Azhar's audience is primarily domestic or international, its senior scholars are very clear: "Just like the Kaʿba is the Qibla for the prayers, al-Azhar is the Qibla for Muslims for the study of Islamic Sciences."[16] Such reference to al-Azhar as the "Qibla" for the study of higher Islamic sciences arose frequently in all the interviews conducted at al-Azhar for this chapter. This overwhelming confidence as expressed by the Azhari shaykhs in their ability to lead the Muslims across the globe arises from the reverence the institution has enjoyed for centuries from Muslims worldwide.

Last but not least, one of the most important signs of al-Azhar's global following among Muslims, both at home and abroad, rests in the Egyptian state's decision to nationalise it, and in Western governments' attempts in recent decades to gain legitimacy for policies that are proving to be controversial with their Muslim constituencies at home. Zeghal presents an insightful analysis of the way President Nicolas Sarkozy tried to enlist al-Azhar's support for the banning of Islamic headscarves in public places in France by seeking a fatwa on the issue from the Shaykh al-Azhar.[17] Most recently, General Abdul al-Sisi's decision to have the Shaykh al-Azhar, along with senior Christian leaders, by his side[18] when announcing the decision to remove President Morsi's government, shows how al-Azhar is seen as commanding enough religious legitimacy within Egypt to continue to be a useful tool for the Egyptian state.

Basis of Demand: Engineered or Organic?

In nationalising al-Azhar, Nasser revealed a preference for reforming the structure of Islamic authority in Egypt rather than eroding it – the latter being the fate meted out to the two other influential seats of Islamic learning in North Africa, al-Zaytuna in Tunisia and al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco.[19] As noted by other scholars,[20] Nasser's decision was motivated by a number of domestic and regional considerations. At home, al-Azhar was seen as an effective counterweight to the growing appeal of the Muslim Brotherhood. Within the Arab world and among Muslims in general, hosting al-Azhar was seen as boosting Egypt's image as the leader of the pan-Arab movement and so earned the Egyptian leadership respect from Muslims across the globe. Similar considerations have shaped the Egyptian state's engagement with al-Azhar to date, whereby al-Azhar is used for securing legitimacy for controversial decisions at home, while achieving a prominent position within the international Muslim discourse. This outlook has led the Egyptian state to invest in increasing the international outreach of al-Azhar by offering scholarships for international students and assisting with

the posting of al-Azhar scholars overseas. It also funds international conferences. However, when compared with the extensive state investments in al-Medina and al-Mustafa (see Chapters 1 and 2), where the majority of international students receive quite a generous scholarship, Egypt's investment in this area seems rather limited: al-Azhar offers a total of only 1,200 scholarships per annum, whereas its cohort of international students numbers around 30,000. This means that only 4 per cent of its international students are on al-Azhar scholarships, with the remaining 96 per cent either funded by their home governments or mobilising personal or family resources. This financial investment by foreign governments or by individuals and their families in securing an Islamic education at al-Azhar again shows the demand for its brand of Islam. It also demonstrates that despite the compromises it has had to strike since 1961 – its close association with the Egyptian state, and the requirement that it lend its authority to certain controversial state decisions – al-Azhar has managed to retain a reasonable level of legitimacy in the eyes of many Muslims worldwide.

The relatively limited investment by the Egyptian state in enhancing the international outreach of al-Azhar, as compared with the two other universities discussed in this volume, can be understood in terms of the limited religious agenda of the Egyptian state, which claims a modernist outlook in contrast to theocracies such as Saudi Arabia or Iran. The political legitimacy of a theocratic state is directly dependent on its control over the religious sphere. Given the relatively secular outlook of the Egyptian state, successive regimes have attempted to use al-Azhar's authority to legitimise their policies, but have not adopted the more extensive ambition of promoting a particular brand of Islam via the Azhari platform. Rather, the Egyptian state has used al-Azhar to defend its modernist ambitions and to help to present itself globally as the guardian of "moderate" and "tolerant" Islam. Thus, for the Egyptian state the global agenda has not been to promote an Islam of a particular kind, but rather to make selected use of the religious legitimacy enjoyed by al-Azhar to protect the state against critique by Islamists at home and to claim a prominent standing among Muslim countries. This has placed limits on the kind of control the state has exerted on al-Azhar, especially during the Mubarak era, since successive Egyptian governments have realised that some appearance of autonomy within al-Azhar is important if it is to retain its legitimacy as an authentic platform for Islamic learning. As a result, the investment made by the Egyptian state in promoting al-Azhar's international outreach has been strategic, but relatively limited.

The basis of demand for Azhari education thus remains very organic: the prestigious status acquired by al-Azhar over the centuries naturally draws students to it from across the globe. However, it must also be acknowledged that the shaykhs within al-Azhar play an active role in promoting Azhari teaching globally. They see their role as being to provide guidance to Muslims across the

globe, and they take this role seriously. It is widely believed within Islamic circles that Islam assigns ᶜulama a high status because they are the guardians of Islam, and thus are taking forward the tradition of the Prophet. In turn, the ᶜulama hold themselves responsible for spreading Islamic learning. This understanding of the importance and responsibility of the role of ᶜulama in promoting Islamic learning is prevalent across the different schools of thought and throughout the world's Islamic intellectual strongholds, and the scholars at al-Azhar are no exception. The ᶜulama of al-Azhar are conscious that they reside in a seat of global Islamic learning and feel it their responsibility to ensure that the wider Muslim community, and not just Egyptians, benefit from it. As noted by one of the senior scholars at the al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy:

> There is no question within al-Azhar, we think of it as a global and not an Egyptian institution. As scholars of Islamic sciences it is our responsibility to make efforts to ensure that the learning we have benefits the Muslim community as a whole. We therefore patronise a long chain of international engagements. For example, our former students recommend their students to us. There are linkages and alumni associations of al-Azhar graduates internationally who try to link more students to al-Azhar.

Thus, while the Egyptian state might make some investment in amplifying the international clout of al-Azhar through providing scholarships to international students, making provision for international conferences at al-Azhar, and funding appointments of faculty members to universities overseas, the real basis of demand for Azhari education emerges from a fluid and organic network of student associations and informal religious networks, with a history that extends back through the centuries. The question that then naturally arises is: what is so distinctive about the experience of learning at al-Azhar that makes it such a popular destination for international students?

Defining "al-Wasatiyya" Islam

Although they may describe al-Azhar's "centrist approach" in different words, the ᶜulama as well as the students interviewed for this volume identified al-Azhar's "al-Wasatiyya" Islam as its defining feature and saw it as the basis of its global following. This image of al-Azhar was defended by the Sorbonne-trained former spokesperson for the Shaykh al-Azhar in simple but forceful terms: "Centrism, this you can say is the first label of al-Azhar." This assertion was repeated in the interviews with all the senior Azhari ᶜulama conducted for this chapter, as well as those with faculty members in the social sciences. Equally importantly, discussions with students also raised this as the primary basis of

al-Azhar's appeal. During interviews, the students mentioned how they had first learned about al-Azhar via different routes. Some had heard of it because the institution at which they originally studied had links with al-Azhar, others through religious scholars in their communities or via the publications of Azhari scholars. However, what was common across the responses was a heavy emphasis on the appeal of its centrism. As one Indonesian student noted: "I had read work of some of the senior scholars of al-Azhar in Aceh; I wanted to come and study with those scholars. And I love it here, it is a moderate place." Similarly, a female student from Singapore commented: "I love it here. There are so many reminders of Islam in everyday life when you are studying at al-Azhar. At the same time it is a very free place allowing the students to pursue Islam without enforcing rigidity of behaviour." A Pakistani student similarly emphasised the importance of moderation and pluralism as being central to his decision to come to al-Azhar, averring that "the only person who can go to Medina is a Salafi, and one who has the signature of support from those who are known in the Salafi circles. However, al-Azhar is not like that. It admits students from diverse backgrounds." He remarked that there are many Salafi-oriented students at al-Azhar:

> They come mainly to get the stamp of al-Azhar and do not attend the classes seriously as they are not open to the pluralistic approach promoted here. However, al-Azhar does not close its door on them. We have many Salafi-oriented scholars within al-Azhar too, but they teach alongside scholars who belong to different positions as well as those who have a Sufi orientation. It is this ability to harness multiple discourses and positions within al-Azhar that to me makes it a most important international institution for Islamic learning.

Moving beyond the scholars and students within al-Azhar, and turning instead to specific cases in which foreign governments have actively drawn on Azhari Islam, also helps to demonstrate how those seeking a more pluralistic interpretation of Islam tend to gather around this institution. The Malaysian case, which is examined in detail in Chapter 8, illustrates how the modernising Malay state found within the al-Azhar curriculum an ideal balance between retaining an Islamic identity while developing the ability to embrace change and move with modern times. Similarly, as noted above, President Sarkozy's decision to reach out to al-Azhar to seek support for the controversial policy of banning Islamic headscarves in France shows that al-Azhar is seen by Muslim states as well as Western governments as one of the most influential platforms for generating a pluralistic discourse within Islam.

But what does this "al-Wasatiyya" Islam – whether referred to as "centrism", "moderation" or "pluralism" – really consist in? An appeal to terms such as

"moderate", "liberal" or "orthodox" is always contentious. One standard way to locate an Islamic institution along the liberal–orthodox continuum is to classify it on the basis of the emphasis it places on critical hermeneutic interpretations, as opposed to adopting more literal interpretations of Islamic texts.[21] Another proposal is that al-Wasatiyya be seen as:

> an approach that assumes that divine instructions were given to human beings in their own interest; the correct interpretations of Islamic teachings and texts will therefore be beneficial to believers. This is an approach that might be contrasted with the extreme textualism of many Salafi figures . . . it is effectively a modernist approach that stresses being reasonable, moderate, friendly to the public interest.[22]

An equally important route to understanding the appeal of al-Wasatiyya Islam would be to shift the focus away from the particular position or interpretation that al-Azhar takes on a given issue, and concentrate instead on the more fundamental matter of the actual process through which al-Azhar sustains this plurality of discourses within a single space. The defining feature of al-Azhar's al-Wasatiyya Islam is the equal representation of the four Sunni schools of Islam within its curriculum. As we have seen in the two preceding chapters, even universities based around very rigid doctrinal beliefs do allow some level of flexibility and engage with positions from opposing schools of thought in order to retain some appeal for students from different backgrounds. In the case of al-Azhar, its emphasis on covering the four key Sunni *madhāhib*[23] makes it appealing to moderate Muslims who are against the rigidity and exclusionary tendencies of strictly Wahhabi interpretations. The biggest appeal of al-Azhar thus rests in its ability to capture the plurality and richness of debates within different Islamic positions instead of the *taqlīd* (strict adherence) to one school of thought; it is this that forms the basis of its "al-Wasatiyya" Islam.

Crucial to al-Azhar's centrism is thus the issue of tolerance and the importance of debate. It starts from having the space to study the major four Sunni madhāhib, but it does not end there. It also requires having the tolerance to engage with Shiʿi scholars, even though Shiʿi teachings are not covered in al-Azhar's curriculum; and it further requires allowing space to explore Sufism, while at the same time giving space to Salafi scholars and those with affinities to the Muslim Brotherhood. Equally importantly, it requires embracing religious differences and retaining the willingness to coexist with other religious communities such as Egypt's Coptic Christians. As one Azhari scholar noted:

> First of all the most important issue is that al-Azhar has avoided extremism [*tashaddud*] of thought, unlike in other countries. It has harboured the

four Sunni madhāhib, as well as the Sufi tradition. Al-Azhar also at times approaches Shiʿi scholars for consultation on an issue of Islamic *fiqh*. At times governments from other countries who send their students overseas to study Islam find that they have become very rigid after that education, they then send those very students to al-Azhar to gain a more moderate education.

Similarly, a senior official in the office of Shaykh al-Azhar Ahmed al-Tayeb noted:

> Al-Azhar has always kept a neutral approach. Scholars of al-Azhar never became extreme. It is always good to have different points of view on a given issue. Al-Azhar fights extremism. Many people want al-Azhar to play this role. The Coptic Christians in Egypt seek al-Azhar's help in protecting them against extremists, as do the Islamic institutions around the world which are threatened by extremist tendencies, while governments of Muslim countries and those in the West also want al-Azhar to provide and to lead the discourse on moderate Islam. The governments of these countries are behind al-Azhar.

A typical Azhari graduate would normally thus learn to appreciate this plurality of thought when engaging with Islamic texts, as is demonstrated by the following comment from a former student who is now a faculty member in one of al-Azhar's social science departments:

> I studied at one of the secondary-level institutes run by al-Azhar and then moved on to the university level. To me, al-Azhar presents the perfect model of Islam. It defends tolerance and dialogue among Muslims as well as with members of other religious communities. It defends the teaching of the major Sunni madhāhib. It stands for moderate Islam but it also has space for Salafi scholars. We need to learn to develop a distinction between scientific Salafis and those who start to focus on the outer expressions of Salafism. Al-Azhar is not opposed to engaging with Salafi discourse as it is one of the expressions of Islam. But, at the same time it also nurtures Sufism.

Elaborating on the presence of Salafi scholars within al-Azhar, he continued:

> Mohammad Hassan, Syed Ali Raza and Safari Hajazi are some of the very prominent Salafi scholars who teach at al-Azhar. Most Egyptians love Mohammad Hassan. There are degrees of Salafism. We are all Salafi, we all go back to the Qurʾan and the Sunna but there are variations in how it is applied. These Salafis from al-Azhar speak on many TV channels, such as *al-Rahman* and *al-Hafiz*. Similarly, many shaykhs at al-Azhar have an affinity

with the Muslim Brotherhood even though al-Azhar stays away from the
Muslim Brotherhood's politics.

As Zeghal has noted in her influential work on al-Azhar, by harbouring these
multiple discourses within it, al-Azhar is able to provide a buffer zone between
radical and political Islam, on the one hand, and state-defined Islam, on the
other.[24]

Another interesting route through which to study al-Azhar's centrism is to
reflect on the al-Azhar Document,[25] wherein Shaykh al-Tayeb outlined a set
of principles for post-Arab Spring reforms in Egypt. The document outlined
a framework wherein Islam remained the main reference point for setting the
overall goals, but the day-to-day decisions were left to the will of the people to
be harnessed through a democratic process. Presenting the document to the
Egyptian public on national television, Shaykh al-Tayeb expressed his support
for a "democratic and constitutional" state. The al-Azhar Document contained
eleven main articles, and was meant to serve as a foundation for a new social
arrangement in post-Mubarak Egypt. Shaykh al-Tayeb laid out his support for a
democratic and constitutional state. The document emphasised that:

> Freedom of opinion is the mother of all freedoms, and it is most manifest in
> the free expression of opinion by all different means, including writing, ora-
> tory, artistic production and digital communication. Indeed, it is the mani-
> festation of social freedoms, which goes beyond individuals to include, among
> other things, the formation of parties and civil society institutions, the free-
> dom of the press and the media, whether in audio, visual or digital form, and
> the freedom to access the information needed for expression of opinion. This
> freedom should be guaranteed by constitutional provision so as to transcend
> ordinary laws, which are subject to change.

Freedom of religion was also emphasised, as were the rights of women and chil-
dren. Shaykh al-Tayeb further argued for greater autonomy of al-Azhar from
the state; it was proposed that the Supreme Clerical Committee of al-Azhar
should be given the right to appoint the Shaykh al-Azhar, as was the practice
before its nationalisation. The document also argued strongly against religious
intolerance:

> Also, based on the respect for the freedom of belief is the rejection of trends
> that exclude others, condemn their beliefs and label them as disbelievers
> amid attempts to examine the inner thoughts of those who hold those beliefs.
> . . . the freedom of opinion and expression is the true manifestation of democ-
> racy, and they call for educating the new generations about the culture

of freedom, the right to difference, and to show respect for others. . . . To achieve this, we have to recall the classical civilizations and traditions of Islamic thought, whose great imams would say, "I hold that my opinion is right, yet may be wrong, and that the opinion of others is wrong, yet may be right."

Having attempted to define what is unique about al-Azhar's al-Wasatiyya Islam, it is worthwhile exploring how al-Azhar came to adopt this pluralistic outlook to the teaching of Islam, which sets it in contrast to most other Islamic discourses which manifest more exclusionary tendencies. Just as the emergence of Wahhabism and Iranian Shiᶜism can be connected to certain contexts and linked to certain personalities, so the emergence of al-Azhar's centrism can be traced to a combination of specific factors and individuals. What, then, led to the emergence of al-Azhar's notion of al-Wasatiyya Islam? The answer, which will not surprise many social scientists, has a great deal to do with the context in which Islam developed in Egypt.

The Ability to Stay in the Centre:
Domestic and International Factors

A combination of historical factors, strategic interventions and external overarching factors such as geography have contributed to the emergence of the centrism that has come to define al-Azhar. Two factors often identified by Azhari scholars as crucial for the rise of al-Wasatiyya Islam are the location, and the culture, of Egypt. Location was critical to the early emergence of al-Azhar and its attaining prominence over rival institutions. As one of the senior historians at al-Azhar has argued, it is the location and culture of Cairo that have helped to maintain centrist Islam at the university:

> People stopped here on the way to Mecca and many scholars ended up staying in Cairo for some period of time. This had a great influence in generating a vibrant intellectual tradition at al-Azhar. Further, the culture of Egyptian society is also more tolerant and that culture has kept Azhari shaykhs rooted to a more centrist Islam which is more acceptable within the community.

The tenth–twelfth centuries are thought to represent the Golden Age of al-Azhar: it was during these centuries that Cairo became the centre of Islamic learning, and this was chiefly due to its location. The political instability in Baghdad and Andalusia led to an exodus of Muslim scholars from both the Mashriq and the Maghrib, and Cairo was their natural point of convergence. The increasing number of prominent scholars at al-Azhar brought yet more

scholars there, and this critical mass in turn started to attract students from throughout the Muslim territories.

Al-Azhar's organisational structure, which allows for a number of prominent positions within the institution and thus engenders a degree of division of authority, has also helped to retain the plurality in discourse. No one has ever been fully successful in enforcing change within al-Azhar from the top down. Muhammad ʿAbduh, the reformist thinker, met with serious resistance to his proposed reforms, even when he held the senior position of the Mufti of al-Azhar. Even the current Shaykh al-Azhar has to carry along other scholars with him, such as the *mudīr* (editor) of the al-Azhar publications, the senior ʿulama who lead the al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy, and individually influential ʿulama who have a public profile due to their publications or media presence. The existence of these multiple platforms has been critical to retaining the centrist tendencies within al-Azhar since its nationalisation in 1961. Al-Azhar's ability to resist the state's edicts thus reveals the dynamism of the Azhari shaykhs; yet it also shows recognition on the part of the Egyptian state that a certain level of autonomy must be allowed if al-Azhar is to retain its religious authority, and thus on occasion be useful to the state in advancing its political ends.

Here it has to be acknowledged that the relationship with the modern state since nationalisation, while compromising al-Azhar's legitimacy in the eyes of many, has also helped to consolidate its hold through increasing the level of resources available to it, and, more importantly, by cementing al-Azhar's position as the main religious institution in the country. Al-Azhar's primary and secondary network has expanded rapidly since its nationalisation, and at the same time al-Azhar has been very effective in retaining active links with the informal religious networks, including independent mosques and Sufi *halaqat* which has further helped to consolidate its authority.[26]

It is this ability to maintain a delicate balance between being dependent on the state while keeping a certain level of autonomy that has enabled al-Azhar to retain its global following. In addition, as seen in the widely different level of respect enjoyed by Shaykh al-Tayeb as compared with his predecessor, the personality and knowledge of the individual appointed as the Shaykh al-Azhar also plays an important role in shaping public perceptions of the legitimacy of al-Azhar.

The Future: Al-Azhar and the Arab Spring

Al-Azhar was cautious during the events of 25 January that forced Mubarak to resign, but it stepped forward to claim a prominent place within the ensuing discourses on the future of Egypt. Since the revolution challenged the authority of existing state institutions in a context where no alternative institution was

in a position to assert its authority, al-Azhar found itself an important player in shaping public discourse. Al-Azhar credits itself with having played an important role in bridging differences among rival groups in the post-revolutionary context. Its desire to influence the future is evident in the production of the al-Azhar Document, discussed above. As noted by a senior shaykh in an interview conducted in March 2013:

> al-Azhar is becoming stronger and stronger, beginning with the revolution of 25 January up to now. It has played a very important role in gathering people across the divide on a single platform and reducing conflict between different groups. This has been a very important role. The Shaykh al-Azhar is not a political position but al-Azhar plays this role for the sake of the people.

The irony, however, is that, as in the past,[27] it is precisely the presence of other competing Islamic groups, namely, the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafist parties such as al-Nour, that made al-Azhar such an important player in this period. The presence of these other Islamic platforms induced the secularists, closely followed by the Christians, to throw their weight behind al-Azhar, which was seen as the moderate voice of Islam. Al-Azhar's leadership clearly took this opportunity seriously and, at the time of the fieldwork conducted for this volume, was clear about its responsibility to respond to public expectations that it play a dominant role in advancing the "middle-way Islam" both at home and abroad. Al-Azhar's leadership was also confident in its ability to continue to bring opposing groups together and to play a reconciliatory role in the post-revolutionary context.

What gave al-Azhar's leadership particular confidence at the time of the interviews was the recent legislative decision to give al-Azhar the ultimate status to interpret Islamic doctrine, along with a clause that restored to al-Azhar the old practice of the ʿulama selecting the Shaykh al-Azhar, rather than him being appointed by the state.[28] However, it was also argued that the Muslim Brotherhood had not granted this prominence to al-Azhar by choice; rather it had been forced to concede on these reforms by the five Azhari scholars represented on the national constitution committee, who had the backing of the secularist members. "We were not given this independence, we asked for it", asserted a senior official from the office of the Shaykh al-Azhar. Al-Azhar's positioning as a counter force to other streams of Islam, which were viewed as more rigid, was also repeatedly expressed by respondents outside al-Azhar. As one journalist at *al-Ahram* newspaper said:

> It is in times like this that when one is seeing the failure of Muslim Brotherhood and the rise of Salafis that one says thank God for al-Azhar.

> Al-Azhar is gaining increased importance and increased respect in the public eye in the post-Arab Spring context, as it is being seen as a neutral force to keep the extremist interpretations within the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafis at bay.

The relationship between the Shaykh al-Azhar and President Morsi remained difficult, with the shaykh making many public expressions of his dissatisfaction with the Morsi government. In March 2012, al-Azhar and its Islamic Research Academy announced the withdrawal of their representative, the former Grand Mufti of Egypt Shaykh Nasr Farid Wassel, from the constituent assembly, thus joining a growing list of parties and figures resigning from the newly elected constituent assembly, claiming it had been marginalised. This followed the rejection of al-Azhar's proposed eleven-article statement of general constitutional principles. The most explicit expression of al-Azhar's disenchantment with the Muslim Brotherhood, however, came when the Shaykh al-Azhar demonstrated its support for the removal of President Morsi's government by standing alongside General al-Sisi.

President Morsi's relationship with al-Azhar, however, seemed to be shaped more by his difficulty in dealing with Shaykh al-Tayeb as a person than with al-Azhar as an institution. The Muslim Brotherhood has never been against granting al-Azhar an authoritative voice, but critics worried that, once in power, the Brotherhood would want al-Azhar to promote its own brand of Islam. This made many scholars doubt that al-Azhar would retain any influence on the Morsi government: "It is not essential that they will have an ear for us", a senior shaykh at al-Azhar had noted. But if al-Azhar was worried about encroachment from the Muslim Brotherhood, it was equally wary of the rise of Salafis after the election. In the view of many Azhari scholars, the growth of the Salafis happened through the unregulated mosques; some being of the view that in the post-Mubarak period there is going to be even less surveillance of these mosques. It is thus ironic that at one level it seems that it was more difficult for al-Azhar to accept an Islamic government than to work with a secular state, since it was expected that the Brotherhood would come up with its own interpretation of Islam and desire to impose it on other religious spheres.

However, the recent developments in Egypt, where power has again reverted to the armed forces after the toppling of the Morsi government, have for now put an end to al-Azhar's ambitions to play a prominent role in future social and political reform. Given the constitutional protections afforded to al-Azhar under the Morsi government, and despite the tension between the university and the Brotherhood, Morsi's rule had made Islam important to the national discourse and thus enabled al-Azhar to claim a bigger role for itself as the arbiter of what is considered moderate Islam. This was a natural outcome of a period of extreme

political change, within which all social and political institutions had scope to try to reconfigure their positions within society. With the reversal of this democratic process, and concentration of power back in military hands, al-Azhar, like other civil institutions, will have limited space to do things differently. Thus, the optimism about al-Azhar's ability to gain independence from the Egyptian state, which seemed plausible in the post-revolutionary context, now seems ill-founded. Given the use of brutal force by General al-Sisi to crush the protests staged by the Muslim Brotherhood, Shaykh al-Tayeb will have to show great skill in balancing his support for this new military regime and retaining the respect of Islamists, at home and abroad, who are likely to question his support for the toppling of the Morsi government. However, as in the past, al-Azhar's domestic or international following will not be shaped by the individual actions of the Shaykh al-Azhar, but by the diverse set of responses that generally emerge from within al-Azhar at such moments of crisis. It is this plurality of thought within al-Azhar that has always been, and will remain, its biggest strength.

Notes

1. Al-Azhar Mosque was established between 970 and 972. In 989, thirty-five teaching positions were approved in order to establish the mosque as the leading platform for the transmission of Ismaili doctrines.

2. Al-Azhar suffered neglect when the Sunni Ayyubid dynasty replaced the Fatimids' hold over Cairo in 1171; but the Mamluks, who followed the Ayyubids, took an active interest in al-Azhar and started to invest in stipends for students and teachers, as well as contributing to the upkeep of the mosque building. One reason for this was that by 1266 – the date when the Mamluks began actively to patronise al-Azhar – the university had already shed its association with the Fatimids and Ismaili doctrine.

3. At the time of fieldwork in March 2013, the current Shaykh al-Azhar, Ahmed al-Tayeb, who was appointed in 2010 by the Mubarak regime, was seen as a reformist who advocated a pluralistic and tolerant approach to Islam, in contrast to his predecessor, Mohammed Sayyid Tantawi (who held the position of Shaykh al-Azhar in the period 1996–2010), who was criticised for endorsing controversial governmental rulings. Despite his Sorbonne education and modernist views, Ahmed al-Tayeb had been able to retain respect within traditional religious circles because of his more balanced yet assertive demeanour. Recent reports of ongoing student protests within al-Azhar suggest, however, that his reputation might have suffered after his decision to side with the al-Sisi government against the Muslim Brotherhood.

4. Interview with a senior scholar at the al-Azhar Islamic Research Academy, Cairo, March 2013.

5. Al-Azhar has historically kept its distance from the Muslim Brotherhood. It has refrained from direct engagement in politics and has been critical of the militant tactics sometimes employed by the Muslim Brotherhood. See Steve Barraclough, "Al-Azhar: Between the Government and the Islamists", *Middle East Journal*, 52(2)

(1998): 236–49; Meir Hatina, "Historical Legacy and the Challenge of Modernity in the Middle East: The Case of al-Azhar in Egypt", *The Muslim World*, 93 (2003): 51–68.

6. Official data from al-Azhar University, March 2013.

7. As will be discussed later, the nationalisation of al-Azhar did result in a questioning of the authority of the fatwas issued from the seat of the Shaykh al-Azhar, who holds a ministerial position and constantly has to juggle the pressure to endorse government positions while retaining popular respect. However, the multiplicity of voices within al-Azhar – which Zeghal credits to "periphery ʿulama" – has helped al-Azhar to retain its authority despite the pressure to support the official position on many issues. Muslims across the world continue to seek al-Azhar's fatwas on critical religious issues. See Malika Zeghal, "The 'Recentering' of Religious Knowledge and Discourse: The Case of al-Azhar in Twentieth-century Egypt", in Robert W. Hefner and Muhammad Qasim Zaman (eds), *Schooling Islam: The Culture and Politics of Modern Muslim Education* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

8. Until its nationalisation in 1961, Azhari ʿulama exercised relative financial autonomy from the state, since much of al-Azhar's income came through waqf properties. The ʿulama lost control over these resources when al-Azhar was nationalised, thereby seriously curtailing their institutional autonomy. Scott Hibbard argues that the nationalisation of waqf properties also allowed the government to distribute waqf resources in such a way as to reward those who followed it and punish those who did not. See Scott Hibbard, *Religious Politics and Secular States: Egypt, India and the United States* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010).

9. The encounter with the colonial powers made successive Egyptian regimes appreciate Western learning and scientific techniques, leading to attempts to reform the traditional structures of Islamic learning. Given al-Azhar's prominent position in the sphere of Islamic learning and the active role played by al-Azhari ʿulama in resisting French rule, al-Azhar became a target for reform under both the colonial and post-colonial regimes.

10. On Muhammad ʿAbduh's reformist ideas and how his students influenced al-Azhar, see Indira Falk Gesink, *Islamic Reform and Conservatism: Al-Azhar and the Evolution of Modern Sunni Islam* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010).

11. However, as Gesink notes, many apparently orthodox ʿulama within al-Azhar who were viewed as being opposed to ʿAbduh's reformist ideals also actively took part in supporting the educational reforms during the twentieth century because of their own convictions about educational advancement. Gesink, *Islamic Reform*.

12. For details of subsequent reforms introduced by different governments, see Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen's entry in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, vol. 3, s.v. "al-Azhar, Modern Period" (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

13. While for Egyptians al-Azhar remains the most prestigious university for securing Islamic learning, its modern faculties are arguably second-best compared to other Egyptian universities such as the University of Cairo. Al-Azhar's strength is seen as its being a specialist in Islamic sciences, not modern subjects.

14. Masooda Bano and Hilary Kalmbach (eds), *Women, Leadership and Mosques: Changes in Contemporary Islamic Authority* (Leiden: Brill, 2011).

15. These new platforms have been associated with the breakdown of religious authority,

but more often than not such spaces are occupied by those who have the endorsement of the established structures, including al-Azhar. Thus, it is yet to be seen whether these spaces are really leading to a genuine breakdown of the authority of traditional institutions, such that their endorsement would no longer be seen to be important in shaping the legitimacy of a scholar who preaches online or on cable TV channels.

16. Interview with one of the senior shaykhs at al-Azhar.

17. Zeghal, "The 'Recentering' of Religious Knowledge".

18. Al-Azhar Grand Shaykh Ahmed al-Tayeb spoke immediately after General al-Sisi's televised speech, followed by a representative for the Coptic Christians and then Mohamed El Baradei, the latter representing the anti-Morsi opposition (National Salvation Front). All three stressed the need for national unity and reconciliation.

19. These two were major centres of Islamic learning in North Africa, but were consciously marginalised by the modern states in both these countries. On comparison of state-led reform of al-Azhar and Zaytuna, see Malika Zeghal, "Public Institutions of Religious Education in Egypt and Tunisia: Contrasting the Post-colonial Reforms of al-Azhar and the Zaytuna", in Osama Abi-Mershed (ed.), *Trajectories of Education in the Arab World: Legacies and Challenges* (New York: Routledge, 2010), pp. 111–24.

20. Zeghal, "The 'Recentering' of Religious Knowledge"; Nathan Brown, *Post-Revolutionary al-Azhar* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2011).

21. Zeghal, "The 'Recentering' of Religious Knowledge".

22. Brown, *Post-Revolutionary al-Azhar*, p. 11.

23. Shafiᶜi, Maliki, Hanbali and Hanafi.

24. Zeghal, "The 'Recentering' of Religious Knowledge"; Brown, *Post-Revolutionary al-Azhar*.

25. For an analysis of the actors who were involved in the production of major statements and documents that came out of al-Azhar after the January 2011 uprising, see Gianluca P. Parolin, "Al-Azhar (?) on Fundamental Freedoms", *Islamochristiana*, 38 (2012): 117–27.

26. Zeghal, "The 'Recentering' of Religious Knowledge"; Brown, *Post-Revolutionary al-Azhar*.

27. See Barraclough, "Al-Azhar"; Hatina, *Historical Legacy*.

28. The new committee that was to select the Shaykh al-Azhar was to consist of forty-five scholars, who had to be Egyptians and have sound knowledge of Islamic principles, as well as being prominent personalities with significant publications.

Part Two

Returning Graduates in Negotiation with the Local

Ahlussunnah:
A Preaching Network from Kano to
Medina and Back

ALEX THURSTON[1]

How and when do Nigerian graduates of the Islamic University of Medina (IUM) refer to their studies in Saudi Arabia? In what contexts do these graduates invoke the authority of prominent contemporary Saudi and Middle Eastern religious thinkers? This chapter discusses a network of Salafi leaders in Kano, northern Nigeria, many of whom graduated from IUM. They are not the only graduates of IUM in Kano, and not all Nigerian graduates of IUM are Salafis. But this network is notable for its wide youth following, strong media presence, and its ability to provoke religious and political controversy. The members of this network refer to themselves as "Ahl al-Sunna wa-al-Jamaʿa" (Arabic: The People of the Prophetic Model and the Muslim Community, hereafter "Ahlussunnah").[2] Non-Salafi Sunni Muslims, including Sufis with whom Salafis have sometimes debated, also use this phrase to describe their religious affiliations. For many Salafis in Kano, however, the label "Ahlussunnah" carries a specific connotation. It stresses what they see as the universal applicability and necessity, across time and space, of the Salafi view of what it means to be Muslim.

The word "Salafism" derives from the Arabic *salaf*, or "pious ancestors": the companions of the Prophet Muhammad and the next two generations of Muslims. Following Thomas Hegghammer, I treat Salafism as a "theological, not a political category".[3] Salafi theology, as elucidated by Bernard Haykel, includes a conviction that the Qurʾan and sunna (the model of conduct established by the Prophet, as articulated through hadith reports) provide a universal model of orthopraxis and an emphasis on the notion of *tawḥīd*, or the unicity of God.[4] Salafis oppose Shiʿism and denounce certain esoteric beliefs and ritual practices, including some associated with Sufi orders.

As Hegghammer points out, there is an identifiable "Salafi intellectual posture" and "a set of Salafi intellectual traditions".[5] The Salafi intellectual posture includes a set of methodologies for distinguishing strong versus weak hadiths and for elevating strong hadiths above other sources of legal thought, even the established rulings of traditional Sunni legal schools. The intellectual tradition that constitutes Salafism includes figures from different eras: hadith collectors and critics from the formative period of Islamic law (such as Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal, 780–855); the late classical polymath Shaykh ibn Taymiyya (1263–1328) and his students; the early modern Arabian reformer Shaykh Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab (1703–92); twentieth-century scholars such as the Albanian hadith master Shaykh Nasir al-Din al-Albani (1914–99); and senior clerics within the official Saudi religious establishment, such as Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʿAziz bin Baz (1910–99) and Shaykh Muhammad ibn ʿUthaymin (1926–2001). Treating Salafism as a tradition, rather than as a decontextualised literalist movement, calls attention to the particularities of Salafi expression in discourse, dress, preaching and other domains. Examining Salafis' sense of belonging to a tradition helps to clarify why Kano's Salafis have stressed the symbolic connection between their own position as a minority within Kano's Muslim community and their perceived predecessors' positions as minorities within their communities.

Across different contexts in which they speak, Ahlussunnah leaders in Kano consistently stress the Salafi themes noted above. As Ahlussunnah leaders convey these core messages in different formats and to different audiences, however, they highlight different aspects of the Salafi intellectual canon. In messages aimed at popular audiences, they draw frequently on scripture and on what I refer to here as the "classical Salafi canon", that is, the set of thinkers that spans the period from Imam Hanbal to Shaykh ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab. Ahlussunnah leaders invoke Shaykh ibn Taymiyya with particular consistency. Ahlussunnah leaders have criticised certain Nigerian politicians and lamented extra-local conflicts involving Muslims, such as the 2003–10 war in Iraq. Yet within the contemporary Salafi canon, which includes thinkers with diverse attitudes towards political activism, Ahlussunnah leaders' intellectual allegiances have been to Saudi and Middle Eastern scholars often described in secondary literature as politically quietist, rather than to the Sahwa (Arabic: Awakening) movement identified with Saudi Salafi scholars influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood, such as Dr Safar al-Hawali (b. 1950) and Dr Salman al-ʿAwda (b. 1955/6).[6]

In contrast to their efforts to acquaint the public and their students with classical Salafi thinkers, Ahlussunnah leaders most frequently invoke what I refer to as the "contemporary Salafi canon" – which includes al-Albani, Bin Baz and ʿUthaymin – in technical discussions concerning the contours of Islamic orthopraxis and the validity of specific legal rulings. These technical discussions

include a broader version of the classical Salafi canon, and also make reference to nineteenth-century thinkers such as the Yemeni scholar Shaykh Muhammad bin ʿAli al-Shawkani (d. 1834). Technical discussions have occurred in several contexts, notably in Ahlussunnah leaders' debates with rival Salafis. In those debates, Ahlussunnah leaders have evoked their learning at IUM, and the authority of Salafi thinkers from the last two centuries, to undermine rival Salafis' religious claims and credentials.

Ahlussunnah's preaching and literary production present a valuable case through which to examine how graduates of institutions such as IUM use and reconfigure their overseas learning after they return home. This chapter focuses on the lives, statements and teachings of three Ahlussunnah leaders: Shaykh Jaʿfar Mahmud Adam (1961/2–2007, hereafter "Shaykh Jaʿfar"), his associate and biographer Dr Muhammad Sani Umar Rijiyar Lemo (b. 1970, hereafter "Dr Sani"), and his companion Shaykh Abdulwahhab Abdullah (b. 1953, hereafter "Shaykh Abdulwahhab"). I do not claim that IUM exercises hegemonic influence over its graduates. In terms of their educational formation, Kano's Ahlussunnah leaders are products of multiple institutions, including traditional educational settings in northern Nigeria. Graduates of IUM in Kano's Ahlussunnah do not, furthermore, represent a deculturised Salafism. Rather, they mediate between local particularities and phenomena that they portray as universal. They use Salafi traditions, historical narratives and Islamic scriptures to read Nigeria's experiences into the history of Salafism and a global geography of perceived assaults against Islam. Saudi Arabia is a powerful reference point in Ahlussunnah discourses, but it remains only one of several.

After tracing the educational trajectories of several Ahlussunnah leaders, this chapter examines debates between Ahlussunnah leaders and other Salafis. These rivals include members of the mass-based organisation Jamaʿa Izala al-Bidʿa wa-Iqama al-Sunna (Arabic: The Society for the Removal of Heresy and the Instatement of the Prophetic Model, hereafter Izala). Another rival was Muhammad Yusuf (1970–2009), founder of the violent sect known as Boko Haram (Hausa: Western Education/Culture is Forbidden; in Arabic: Jamaʿat Ahl al-Sunna li-al-Daʿwa wa al-Jihad, The Society of Salafis for Preaching and Jihad). Relations between Kano's Ahlussunnah and these other Salafi movements have been complex, including both cooperation and conflict. Shaykh Jaʿfar and Dr Sani belonged to Izala in the 1980s and 1990s, and continued to partner with Izala leaders – including graduates of IUM – during the 2000s. Yet Ahlussunnah leaders rejected doctrinal positions that certain Izala preachers took, and distanced themselves from the organisation while emphasising a broader Salafi identity. Yusuf, meanwhile, was a student of Shaykh Jaʿfar until the mid-2000s, at which point the shaykh publicly denounced his teachings, particularly his assertions that Muslims should not seek government

employment or "Western-style" education. Ahlussunnah leaders, in debates with former associates and theological colleagues, emphasised their intellectual connections to Saudi Arabia and their mastery of Salafi traditions and methodologies. This move helped them to claim that they represented sober, well-credentialed scholarly authority in contrast to opponents they cast as rhetorically irresponsible and poorly trained. The chapter closes with an examination of how Ahlussunnah leaders shift intellectual registers as they write and speak to different audiences.

Ahlussunnah Leaders' Paths to Medina and Back[7]

Since its founding in 1961, IUM has been a Salafi intellectual centre and a site for training missionaries meant to carry Salafism back to their home communities (see Chapter 2 on IUM in this volume). Though not all Nigerians who attend IUM are Salafis, many Nigerians have been influenced by Salafi thought before, during and after their stay. For example, Dr Sani writes of Shaykh Jaᶜfar's devotion to the works of Shaykh al-Albani, who taught at IUM briefly during the 1960s, and whose student and follower Dr Rabiᶜ al-Madkhali (b. 1931) exercised substantial influence at the university when he taught there during the 1980s and 1990s. "Hardly would a new book by Shaykh Nasir al-Din al-Albani come out than [Shaykh Jaᶜfar] would rush to look for it, purchase it, and study it."[8] Yet Ahlussunnah preachers, once they returned to Kano, were not mere conduits for Saudi Arabian interests or ideologies. They participated in local culture and politics, both as agents seeking to translate religious ideals into social realities and as participants, sometimes unwillingly, in political struggles.

Of the eleven men who were the most prominent Salafi preachers in Kano as of 2012,[9] at least six graduated from IUM.[10] This section focuses on five graduates of IUM: Shaykh Jaᶜfar, Dr Sani, Shaykh Abdulwahhab, Dr Bashir Aliyu Umar (b. 1961) and Dr Abdullahi Salih Pakistan. As discussed below, by the 2000s the first four men no longer identified themselves primarily as members of Izala, while Dr Pakistan remained a senior Izala leader. Since his assassination on 13 April 2007 by unknown gunmen, Shaykh Jaᶜfar's fame and influence have continued to grow. He was the most prominent public face (often literally, on CD and DVD covers) of Salafism in Kano as of 2011–12.

Graduates of IUM have come from different social backgrounds. For example, Dr Bashir's grandfather and other male ancestors held the Imamate of Kano, while Shaykh Jaᶜfar came from more humble origins. Some, like Dr Sani and Dr Bashir, are Kano men. Others, like Shaykh Jaᶜfar and Dr Pakistan (of Daura in Katsina State) and Shaykh Abdulwahhab (of the Republic of Togo) immigrated to Kano. The Salafi community is politically diverse. Salafi leaders took different stances towards Kano's governor Ibrahim Shekarau, who held

office for the period 2003–11. Shaykh Abdulwahhab served as a member of the Zakat Committee, the Shariᶜa Commission, and the Shura Committee under Shekarau, while Shaykh Jaᶜfar openly opposed Shekarau by 2007. Finally, the preachers' educational backgrounds differ, though all of them had experience of different educational tracks, both formal and informal, and blended them in their teachings. Some, like Shaykh Abdulwahhab and Shaykh Jaᶜfar, studied extensively inside the traditional system. Others initially had greater exposure to Western-style schools and universities. Dr Bashir says that his "first contact with deep Islamic education" came only in his twenties.

The paths these men took to Saudi Arabia varied, although the tightly networked nature of the group means that some went at the suggestion of their friends. The first to go were Dr Pakistan and Shaykh Abdulwahhab, who in 1981 went, respectively, to Medina and Mecca. Saudi Arabia began its *Dawra* (Arabic: "tour", i.e., educational programmes aimed at recruiting students) in northern Nigeria in that year. Shaykh Pakistan, who held a secondary certificate from the Arabic Teachers' College in Gwale, completed a BA in Qurᵓanic Studies at IUM in 1985. From 1986 to 1991, he lived in Pakistan. He completed an MA at the Islamic University in Islamabad in 1989 and, from 1989 to 1991, supervised schools run by the Muslim World League. Shaykh Abdulwahhab attended primary and secondary school in Mecca before proceeding to IUM, where he obtained his BA in 1991.

Dr Bashir enrolled in Electrical Engineering at Ahmadu Bello University in Zaria in 1978. He joined Nigeria's Muslim Students' Society, many of whose members became politically inspired by the Iranian revolution of 1979. After helping his peers destroy the alcohol at the faculty club, Dr Bashir was expelled. Back in Kano, he worked as a water engineer, but continued to study Islamic subjects and give religious lectures. He participated in the dawra in 1981, but declined a scholarship to Saudi Arabia, partly out of fear that abandoning his career might produce family conflict. After a period of soul-searching, he gave up his post to pursue the path of Islamic learning. When he made hajj in 1986, Shaykh Abdulwahhab convinced him to apply to IUM; he joined the Faculty of Hadith in 1988. He obtained his BA, MA and PhD from IUM, completing the latter in 2004.

Shaykh Jaᶜfar took a different route to Medina. While a youth, he memorised the Qurᵓan as an itinerant student. He then studied with traditional scholars in Kano, learning Maliki legal manuals like the *Mukhtaṣar* of Khalil, but also reading works like Shayh Muhammad ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhab's *Kitab al-Tawhid* (*Book of the Unicity of God*). The early 1980s was a pivotal time for Shaykh Jaᶜfar. He studied at an evening literacy programme. At the Egyptian Cultural Centre, an instructor taught him the recitation of the Qurᵓan (*tajwīd*). Undoubtedly this training played a role in Shaykh Jaᶜfar's victory in a 1987 Qurᵓan competition,

another turning point in his life. After winning the Nigerian competition, Shaykh Jaᶜfar was placed fifth in the international competition in Saudi Arabia. This accomplishment solidified his status as a rising reformist preacher and paved the way for his scholarship to IUM. In 1987, Shaykh Jaᶜfar obtained a secondary diploma at the Arabic Teachers' College of Gwale;[11] in 1989, he obtained a scholarship to IUM, where he joined the Qurʾan College. Dr Sani, who attended primary and secondary schools in Kano, completed a higher secondary certificate at the Arabic Teachers' College in 1989 and joined Shaykh Jaᶜfar at IUM the following year. Despite the diverse paths these men took to Medina, significant commonalities emerge, including exposure to traditional northern Nigerian Islamic educational curricula and, in almost all cases, some attendance at Nigerian secondary schools and/or universities.

The Nigerian students found IUM academically challenging and intellectually enriching. In addition to their classroom learning, the Nigerians studied extensively with scholars in mosques. Dr Bashir said the atmosphere was lively in Medina during his undergraduate days: "Everything was new to me." He had classes from morning until the *asr* (mid-afternoon) prayer, then he would read at home. At *maghrib* (evening prayer), he came to the mosque for lessons. During his first two years at IUM, a former vice chancellor of the university and an associate of Shaykh bin Baz, Shaykh ᶜAbd al-Muhsin al-Abbad (b. 1934), taught *Sahih al-Bukhari*, the most famous hadith collection in the Muslim world.[12] This kind of study enhanced the young preachers' command of scripture and their ability to cite textual evidence in lectures and debates back home in Nigeria.

Life in Medina and the Nigerians' relations with Arabs were not free of problems and racial discrimination. Dr Bashir mentioned several incidents of racism to me, including harassment by Saudi Arabian traffic police. Once, he related, he was with his son in the library of the Prophet's Mosque. His son sneezed. An attendant brought a tissue, but another attendant said he should not bring children to the mosque, citing a hadith. When Dr Bashir told him this hadith was weak, the attendant asked who he was, an African, to challenge him on a hadith. Some Saudis, Dr Bashir said, think Africans have "no background knowledge of Islam".

In interviews, Ahlussunnah leaders characterised the religious landscape in the kingdom both positively and negatively. Shaykh Muhammad Nazifi Inuwa (b. 1970) mentioned that Saudi Arabian society was more closed to new ideas than either Sudan (where he also studied) or Nigeria, but he said that this atmosphere did not make his time there unpleasant.[13] Dr Pakistan said that Saudi Arabia funds charity and social welfare much more lavishly than Nigeria does, but he added that Nigerian society is more pious. Another difference Dr Pakistan mentioned is that in Saudi Arabia, the government pays and supervises preachers and imams. "Therefore", he said approvingly, "unrest seldom occurs

there." In Nigeria, Dr Pakistan continued, people say whatever they want. They live by what they can get from their supporters, which leads to *kadhib* (lying) and *dajl* (trickery) – a reference to Salafis' feeling that many Sufi shaykhs are charlatans who exploit their followers.[14] Order in the kingdom did not, however, stifle debate among the students themselves.

Salafi leaders maintained ties to Nigeria throughout their time in Medina, visiting Nigeria periodically and remaining abreast of developments there through correspondence. They returned permanently to Nigeria at different times: Shaykh Abdulwahhab in 1991; Shaykh Jaᶜfar in 1993; and Drs Bashir and Sani, who obtained PhDs in Medina, in 2004 and 2005, respectively.

Following his return from Medina, Shaykh Jaᶜfar returned to the teaching and lecturing circuits to which he had belonged before leaving for the university. He also created new institutions. He became director of the Uthman bin Affan group, a mosque and school complex established in the Gadon Kaya neighbourhood of Kano's old city by one of his local patrons. Shaykh Abdulwahhab worked closely with him there.[15] The mosque in Gadon Kaya has remained a central institution for the movement. As of 2012, Dr Sani and Shaykh Abdulwahhab still offered lessons there. Dr Bashir began his preaching there after his return from Saudi Arabia, before the al-Furqan Mosque, where he became imam, opened in 2007.[16] Graduates of IUM have maintained connections to Saudi Arabia through pilgrimages and visits; in 2011, for example, Dr Bashir was a royal guest on the hajj.

In a further demonstration of educational hybridity, IUM was often not the endpoint of the Kano Salafis' educational trajectories. Shaykh Jaᶜfar, after completing his BA in Medina, later entered (and subsequently left) an MA programme in Islamic Studies at Bayero University, Kano. He completed an MA at the Africa International University in Khartoum and enrolled (before his death) in a PhD programme at Usman Danfodiyo University in Sokoto (where Dr Pakistan obtained his PhD in 2006). The paths that led to Medina often led back to Nigeria or to other destinations in Africa and/or the Arab world.

Advanced educational credentials placed these graduates in a tiny minority of Nigerians and helped them to reach diverse audiences. Despite their own relative youth within a scholarly gerontocracy, Shaykh Jaᶜfar and other preachers earned a strong following among Kano youth who have seen them not only as credible scholars, but also as down-to-earth speakers who address issues like marriage, sex, family, politics, community conflicts and creed without euphemism or obfuscation. While audiences at study circles have often been primarily male, Ahlussunnah preachers have reached women through radio, recordings and co-educational lectures in mosques. Their advanced educational credentials have earned Ahlussunnah some following among politicians, civil servants and professionals. The relationships between graduates of IUM and these different

groups show how Ahlussunnah preachers have partially targeted their lectures to local audiences' concerns.

Shaykh Jaᶜfar's popularity and influence began to soar by the end of the 1990s. In 2000, as the Kano State government was moving to re-implement shariᶜa, he served on a ten-man review committee for the draft shariᶜa code, indicating his position as a representative of a major religious constituency.[17] By 1999, Shaykh Jaᶜfar's followers had begun to systematically record his lectures, dozens of which still circulated in Kano as of 2012. By the mid-2000s, after Dr Sani and Dr Bashir returned home, the Ahlussunnah network had representatives in some of the city's most prominent institutions, including BUK (Dr Bashir) and the Shekarau administration (Shaykh Abdulwahhab, Dr Bashir). Over three decades, this network of young activists became a major force in the religious and political life of one of Nigeria's largest cities.

The Invocation of IUM and the Salafi Canon in Debates between Ahlussunnah and Izala

Ahlussunnah leaders have sometimes broken with other Nigerian Salafis over Islamic legal issues. In the 1990s, Ahlussunnah leaders partly distanced themselves from the mass reformist movement Izala, to which many of them had belonged in their youth, due to disagreements with Izala hardliners over ritual issues connected to Salafis' interactions with Sufis. In the mid-2000s Shaykh Jaᶜfar denounced his former student Muhammad Yusuf, who founded the group Boko Haram, over disagreements concerning the permissibility of Muslims seeking Western-style education and working for secular governments (see next section). Some of the most prominent examples of Ahlussunnah leaders invoking their learning at Medina, their mastery of Salafi canons and methodologies, and their respect for thinkers in the global Salafi arena have occurred during debates with other Salafis.

The course of the relationship between Shaykh Jaᶜfar, Dr Sani, and other young preachers, on the one hand, and Izala, on the other, illustrates processes of de-localisation and re-localisation, processes discussed at greater length below. In terms of de-localisation, Ahlussunnah has at times downplayed its connections to Izala in favour of asserting an allegedly universal identity as Salafis. Yet Ahlussunnah has then re-inscribed this universal identity in the local environment by means of connecting local struggles to broader histories and geographies. An ability to shift between addressing local concerns and claiming transcendent identities has lain at the heart of Ahlussunnah's rhetorical power.

In the late 1970s and 1980s, new Islamic tendencies flourished in northern Nigeria. These tendencies offered alternatives to the Sufi orders that had previously dominated much religious activity in the region. One new movement

was Izala, which Shaykh Jaᶜfar and Dr Sani joined in the 1980s. Izala was founded in 1978 in Jos under the leadership of Shaykh Ismail Idris (1936–2000), with Shaykh Abubakar Gumi (1924–92), former Grand Qadi (judge) of the defunct regional government of Northern Nigeria, as the movement's spiritual mentor. 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 Shaykh Jaᶜfar partly grew up.[18] Izala's young preachers, like Shaykh Jaᶜfar, taught children and adults how to read, recite and interpret the Qurʾan, and offered lessons in hadith and *fiqh* (jurisprudence).[19]

In Kano, Izala spread Salafism by assembling a coalition of young preachers and older 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 with the emir, who ultimately allowed Izala some freedom.[20] Izala's re-inscription of urban space was paralleled by an inversion of older relationships between clerics and businessmen, a process that has occurred within other Salafi movements elsewhere in Africa.[21] Rather than wealthy Sufi clerics "overshadowing" businessmen, businessmen began recruiting and supporting Izala's young preachers. In this pattern, "unlike the Sufi Shaykh, the cleric is not supposed to have any extraordinary powers. So, spiritually, he is assumed to be the equal of the businessman."[22] Studies of Izala have sometimes asserted that funding from Saudi Arabia and Shaykh Gumi's personal connections to the kingdom played decisive roles in the spread of the movement. But during the 1980s, many of the movement's preachers were trained within northern Nigeria, and much of its funding came from local business people. It is especially noteworthy that Shaykh Jaᶜfar, one of the most famous Izala preachers to have studied in the Arab world after Shaykh Gumi himself (who attended Bakht er Ruda Teachers' College in Sudan in 1954–5), would eventually reassess his relationship with Izala.

Shortly after its founding, politics and theological disputes began dividing Izala. In Kano, Ousmane Kane writes, "One patron tried to turn the preachers into an institutional channel for the negotiation of relations with the state", side-lining and alienating some activists.[23] The society became divided over the question of whether Sufis should be regarded as Muslims.[24] By the mid-1980s, the preachers who would later make up the Ahlussunnah network began to distance themselves from some elements of Izala. Dr Sani writes: "I had some heated situations with some of the extremists [*mutaṭarrifīn*] in [Izala], for I leaned more toward reviving correct knowledge and spreading it than toward

establishing preaching assemblies."[25] These disagreements grew into Shaykh Jaʿfar's and Dr Sani's decision to break with Izala during their time in Medina.

At IUM, the Nigerian students formed tight bonds with each other and with other African students. Dr Sani relates that he, Shaykh Jaʿfar and Dr Ibrahim Jallo of Taraba State formed an extracurricular study circle dedicated to reading works by Shaykh ibn Taymiyya. "One doctrinal affiliation brought us together, and that was affiliation to [Izala], as *duʿāt* [preachers] in it. We were comrades before the university, and we became more connected at the university."[26] At the same time that membership in Izala linked them, however, the Nigerian students found new opportunities for reflection and debate. At IUM, the young preachers cultivated the spirit of intra-Muslim pluralism that they felt Izala lacked. Shaykh Jaʿfar later said: "We would gather books and read, or we would open a chapter in a book. [Dr Sani] would read or I would read and we would comment on it to each other. Sometimes we would agree, sometimes we would differ, and so forth."[27]

During their time at IUM, the circle around Shaykh Jaʿfar came to feel that they had textual evidence to support their stances against the Izala hardliners – a significant asset in a tradition that prizes textual evidence as the decisive criterion for settling disputes. Dr Sani writes that study and debate in Medina took on a wider scope than discussions inside Izala circles at home. "When we met together at the campus of the Islamic University, we would re-examine many of the preaching issues (*al-qaḍāya al-daʿwiyya*) that [Izala] had adopted", such as "the issue of prayer behind the heretic (*mubtadiʿ*), or the one whose status [as a believer or unbeliever] is unknown (*al-mastūr*), and the issue of eating something sacrificed by Sufis."[28] On the latter issue, Dr Sani mentions that he read works by Shaykh Muhammad Siddiq Hasan al Qinnawji (d. 1890), a thinker from the Indian subcontinent who belonged to the Ahl-e Hadith movement, which influenced later Salafi thinkers. Dr Sani also read texts by Shaykh Muhammad bin ʿAli al-Shawkani (d. 1834), a scholar from Yemen widely cited by Salafis. Both these authors "increased my conviction [*qanāʿati*] in my stance".[29]

Dr Sani's invocation of these figures has at least two salient contexts. First, he mentions them while recalling a legal debate with Izala hardliners in the 1990s; canonical Salafis become intellectual authorities supporting his stances. Secondly, he mentions these figures in a book attempting to define Shaykh Jaʿfar's legacy – and the identity of his successors in the Ahlussunnah network – after the shaykh's death. By invoking canonical Salafis, Dr Sani suggests that time in Medina expanded his and Shaykh Jaʿfar's command of the canon to a degree that the Izala hardliners could not match. It is worth reiterating that Dr Sani's biography of Shaykh Jaʿfar was written in Arabic, not Hausa. Given the large number of Nigerian figures and places Dr Sani mentions in the book, often without providing much contextual information, the general Arabic-reading

global public might find the book difficult to follow at times, suggesting Dr Sani may have intended Nigerian Arabophone scholars as his primary audience. It is also worth noting that in his oral, Hausa-language intellectual autobiography "Tarihin Rayuwata a Ilmi" ("The History of My Intellectual Life"), Shaykh Jaʿfar mentions IUM only briefly, and includes little discussion of the Salafi intellectual canon. In "Tarihin Rayuwata" and another lecture, "Gwagwarmaya tsaka-nin Gaskiya da Karya" (Hausa: "The Struggle between Truth and Falsehood"), Shaykh Jaʿfar glossed over his circle's split with Izala, referring to his period of Izala membership in the 1980s without rancour and, simultaneously, identifying Izala – even in the 1980s – as part of Ahlussunnah.[30] In different contexts, Ahlussunnah leaders have presented different framings of their relationship with Izala, as well as of the significance of their time in Medina with regard to that relationship.

In 1991, while Shaykh Jaʿfar and Dr Sani were at IUM, Izala split into two camps, based, respectively, in Jos and Kaduna. The sympathies of Shaykh Jaʿfar and Dr Sani lay with the latter, which they perceived as more moderate and less authoritarian. The Jos camp, Dr Sani writes, went too far in "excommunicating without any thinking" ("*takfīr bilā ʿadna tafkīr*").[31] Significantly, in Kano, where Izala also split, the leader of those aligned with Kaduna was Dr Pakistan, an alumnus of IUM. Despite their sympathies for Kaduna, the students around Shaykh Jaʿfar and Dr Sani at IUM remained neutral. Dr Sani writes: "When this split occurred, we decided to meet with all the students in the university belonging to [Izala], and take one stance characterised by neutrality (*al-ḥiyādīya*) and justice (*al-ʿadāla*), and not support a side against the other side." They authored a "letter of advice" (*risāla naṣīḥa*) to the two sides and delegated Shaykh Jaʿfar to deliver it.[32] Dr Sani describes this episode as a formative experience in Shaykh Jaʿfar's career as a preacher:

> There is no doubt that this stance that the students took then is what formed for the brother [Shaykh Jaʿfar], may Allah have mercy on him, an intellectual basis for launching his preaching after his return to Nigeria. It created for the Salafi *daʿwa* a special air, and gave it a distinguished dimension in Nigerian society. After some of the students had been fettered by the decisions [Izala] issued, they became free in their *daʿwa* and free in their approach, not compelled to follow a certain person who would impose his views on them.[33]

In the 1990s, as Shaykh Jaʿfar and his circle began to present Ahlussunnah as a category that transcended the boundaries of Izala as an organisation, their preaching became accessible to new constituencies, especially professionals and civil servants. Dr Sani writes:

There had been among them some who evaded sunna because of the harshness [*ghilza*] in social interaction, cruelty in expression, and excess in *takfir* and driving people out [*tanfir*] which characterised some individuals of the Society. Then when they saw a form of daʿwa unaligned with a sect, not fanatic toward a group, and at the same time one whose leaders were endowed with the spirit of good treatment toward the one who is different, they appreciated sunna. [Shaykh Jaʿfar], may Allah have mercy on him, was a pioneer and a leader in this direction.[34]

The graduates of IUM placed a premium on the ability to demonstrate textual knowledge. In recruiting teachers for lessons at the mosque, Shaykh Jaʿfar emphasised scholarly credentials, for he "saw the majority of those who undertook daʿwa and instruction as weak in knowledge and poor in understanding".[35] Graduates of IUM were attempting to enforce a new standard for intellectual accomplishment among reformist preachers, and to shift the tone and focus of their preaching.

For Shaykh Jaʿfar and his circle, shifting the emphasis from identifying themselves as members of Izala to describing themselves as representatives of Ahlussunnah was a way of universalising their identity. As one Nigerian Salafi graduate of IUM, Shaykh Abdullahi Garangamawa, explained, Izala is, from the perspective of Ahlussunnah, "only an organisation", one with a specific history and context. Ahlussunnah, on the other hand, is "an approach, dating from the time of the Messenger of God", distinguished by adherence to the Qurʾan and the sunna. "Everyone you see inside [Izala] is Ahlussunnah, but it is not necessary for everyone who is Ahlussunnah to be inside [Izala]." Some Ahlussunnah members preferred not to label themselves as Izala, Shaykh Garangamawa added, "Because in the past, there was foolishness . . . and excommunications and some things that had no basis."[36]

At IUM, Shaykh Jaʿfar and Dr Sani underwent at least two intellectual shifts. First, deepening their disagreements with Izala hardliners, they adopted somewhat greater tolerance for certain interactions with Sufis. Secondly, they began preaching outside the context of a formalised, hierarchical organisation. IUM has remained a potent reference point in Dr Sani's presentation of his circle's break with Izala.

Not all Nigerian Salafis had the same experience at IUM. Some members of Izala found confirmation for their theological stances and remained within the Izala fold. Still others promoted reform within Izala. Dr Pakistan, who rose to leadership within Kano Izala after 1991, told me that he moved the society's emphasis from *takfir* (excommunication) to *taʿlim* (education).[37] It is important also not to exaggerate the extent of the split between Shaykh Jaʿfar's circle and Izala. Ahlussunnah continued to work with the movement, especially with

reformers like Dr Pakistan. Ahlussunnah and Izala leaders are interconnected through friendship, marriage and kinship. In conflicts with hereditary Muslim rulers and other adversaries, Izala and Ahlussunnah have often presented a united front. As illustrated in earlier chapters, the different initial dispositions of various Nigerian students (as for other nationalities, see Chapter 2) at IUM have been an important variable in shaping the specific intellectual influences they absorb while at IUM. Platforms such as IUM can transmit specific Salafi ideas and traditions globally, but such transmission is not hegemonic and has inherent limits.

The Invocation of IUM and the Salafi Canon in Debates between Ahlussunnah and Boko Haram

The emergence of Boko Haram around 2002 in northeastern Nigeria extended the ongoing fragmentation of Salafism in Nigeria. This sect was originally centred on its founder Muhammad Yusuf, who built a following through personal charisma, strident rhetoric and, possibly, connections to wealthy and politically powerful patrons. The sect clashed with authorities in 2003–4 and again in a massive uprising in 2009, during which Yusuf died in police custody. Since 2010, under the formal leadership of Abubakar Shekau, Boko Haram has conducted assassinations, bombings and raids directed at Nigerian security forces, Christians, businesses accused of collaborating with the state, and other targets.

Boko Haram presents itself as a Salafi group. The group's formal name, Ahl al-Sunna li-al-Daʿwa wa-al-Jihad, translates as "The People of the Prophetic Model Who Conduct Preaching and Jihad". The label "Ahl al-Sunna", as with the circle around Shaykh Jaʿfar, evokes Salafi self-presentations as the custodians of the Prophet's legacy. In further Salafi symbolism, Muhammad Yusuf's mosque in Maiduguri was named after Shaykh ibn Taymiyya.

Yusuf was at one time a prominent student of Shaykh Jaʿfar. The latter had a presence in Maiduguri, where he often conducted *tafsīr* (exegesis) sessions during Ramadan. Boko Haram's political stances, however, placed it outside the scope of mainstream Salafism in northern Nigeria. After Yusuf came to reject the permissibility of Muslims working for secular governments and the validity of Western education, Shaykh Jaʿfar broke with him. Boko Haram's use of the "Ahlussunnah" label may represent an effort to lay claim to the Salafi daʿwa in northern Nigeria, in rivalry with Shaykh Jaʿfar's successors.

The extended public debate between Shaykh Jaʿfar and Muhammad Yusuf has been analysed in depth by the anonymous author of an article on Boko Haram. As the author writes, Yusuf, who "was largely self-educated, without the benefit of formal schooling", took a "shortcut to prominence by articulating a new discourse that stridently emphasised Salafi doctrines on a host of issues

. . . His followers were attracted by his ultra-Salafi doctrines, his heavy reliance on Ibn Taymiyya . . . and his incredible ability to solidly marshal Salafi arguments in support of his seemingly preposterous positions."[38] Yusuf made several pilgrimages to Saudi Arabia,[39] and took refuge in the kingdom after clashes between his followers and the authorities in 2003–4,[40] but no publicly available source has asserted that Yusuf attended any Saudi university.

As the anonymous analyst points out, Shaykh Ja῾far not only disagreed with Yusuf on technical grounds, he attacked Yusuf's scholarly credentials and moral character. It is here that Shaykh Ja῾far seemed to brandish his education in Medina and his mastery of the Salafi canon. After quoting a passage in which Shaykh Ja῾far castigated Yusuf for his ignorance of the history of Muslims' struggles across time and space, the anonymous author writes:

> By questioning Yusuf's knowledge, [Shaykh Ja῾far Mahmud] Adam highlights the resentment of his cadre, who seem to think they are the only ones entitled to speak for Islam due to their advanced degrees from prestigious Islamic universities. By questioning the length of time Yusuf has spent preaching, Adam alludes to the important issue of generating followers by carefully building a reputation of vast learning and piety over many years of toil in teaching, preaching, and organizing . . . By quickly generating a mass following with what Adam considers half-baked knowledge of Islam, Yusuf is in effect an interloper who does not deserve the perquisites that come from mass followers.[41]

In this context, Shaykh Ja῾far invoked the authority of the contemporary Salafi canon. In one lecture, Shaykh Jaf῾ar denigrated Yusuf by comparing him both with scholars in Maiduguri, where the shaykh said many people surpassed Yusuf in "knowledge", "piety" and "humility", and with intellectual authorities on the global Salafi stage:

> He thinks that major scholars in whom the scholarly world trusts, such as Shaykh bin Baz, Shaykh Nasir al-Din al-Albani, Shaykh Salih ibn ῾Uthaymin, and other major scholars, either in Saudi Arabia or Egypt or other places, he thinks that all of them are ignorant. What they have studied is not learning. His own is learning.

Shaykh Ja῾far, referring to the works of Shaykh al-Albani, attacked the validity of the hadith reports that Yusuf had used in fatwas against government employment and Western education.[42] Through assaults on Yusuf's knowledge and character, one of the most prominent exponents of Salafism in northern Nigeria worked to exclude him from the mainstream Salafi fold. Key to this

effort was Shaykh Jaᶜfar's ability to invoke intellectual giants of the contemporary Salafi canon to support his own position, and to apply Salafi methodologies of hadith criticism to undermine the textual support Yusuf claimed for his arguments.

<div align="center">

Shifting Registers:
Popular Messages, Salafi Texts and Technical Manuals
</div>

That Ahlussunnah referred explicitly to IUM and Saudi Arabia in their debates with Izala hardliners and with Yusuf underscores the relative lack of such references in other contexts. If invoking IUM is sometimes a powerful tool for asserting intellectual superiority, at other times Ahlussunnah leaders have left their credentials and connections to Saudi Arabia in the background. One reason for Ahlussunnah's success in growing their followership in Kano from the 1990s to the present, then, has been their ability to present core ideas through different media and in different registers.

Ahlussunnah leaders have created various intellectual products, including simple manuals of advice, courses structured around classical Salafi works, manuals on technical worship requirements, translations of Arabic texts, and advanced original compositions (in Arabic and Hausa) engaging with a particular thinker or issue. Shifting between registers has allowed Ahlussunnah leaders to offer the general public specifically Salafi solutions to everyday problems in Kano. Operating in a popular register has helped to localise Ahlussunnah's message, but it has also universalised local issues, connecting them to Salafi conceptions of history and daᶜwa.

One example of the popular works that Ahlussunnah leaders have produced in Kano is their lectures on marital problems. Widespread concern exists in Kano, among Salafis as well as other Muslims, over what is perceived to be a high incidence of divorce, as well as increasing difficulty in making successful matches and avoiding marital conflict. This sense of crisis helps to explain why one of Shaykh Jaᶜfar's only lectures to be transcribed and published as a book – and one that remained widely available, in audio and text forms, as of 2012 – is entitled *Matakan Mallakar Miji* (Hausa: *Steps for Controlling a Husband*). Delivered as a lecture at Uthman bin Affan Mosque in 1999 and published in 2000, the text uses Qurᵓanic verses and hadiths to explain how women can achieve marital harmony. Shaykh Jaᶜfar presented these suggestions as an Islamic (and Salafi) alternative to local practices, which included women's visits to people whom Shaykh Jaᶜfar called "boka" (Hausa: "spiritual healer") or "malamin tsibbo" (Hausa: "charm maker"). In his introduction, Shaykh Jaᶜfar wrote that the Islamic alternative he offered had generated substantial popular interest:

Then we said, if Islam forbids going to [spiritual healers and charm makers] . . . there are prayers that one can do, that do not clash with shariᶜa . . . This cassette spread, and I got no rest due to the amount of calls from different programmes in the north of this country [asking] about these prayers for controlling a husband, and where could one find them?[43]

This work delegitimised certain local practices while offering an accessible version of Salafi practice as a viable alternative. But it did not attempt to offer a comprehensive account of Salafi views on marriage or of Salafi scriptural methodologies. Aside from occasional references to the thought of canonical figures like the hadith collector Imam Bukhari and Imam ibn Taymiyya, *Matakan Mallakar Miji* presented Salafi thought almost entirely through scripture.

Other writings and lectures by Ahlussunnah leaders have referred more extensively to Salafi thinkers and methodologies. Yet even in more advanced discussions, Ahlussunnah leaders have frequently concentrated on improving students' knowledge of major classical Salafi texts and figures rather than on introducing them to the contemporary, global Salafi intellectual landscape. For example, Ahlussunnah leaders have taught individual texts to their students, translating and explaining texts in mosques and recording these commentaries for further distribution. Some of these courses featured core hadith collections from the classical period. Shaykh Jaᶜfar, for example, taught *al-Arbaᶜun Hadith* (*The Forty Hadiths*) and *Riyad al Salihin* (*Garden of the Righteous*) by Shaykh Yahya al-Nawawi (1234–78), *Bulugh al-Marum min Adilla al-Ahkam* (*Attainment of the Objective According to Evidences of the Rules*) by Shaykh ibn Hajar al-Asqalani (1372–1448), and other collections. Ahlussunnah leaders have also taught well-known works by classical Salafi thinkers. Shaykh Jaᶜfar taught Shaykh ibn ᶜAbd al-Wahhab's *Kashf al-Shubuhat* (*The Clearing of Doubts*) and *Kitab al-Tawhid*.[44]

When introducing courses on such works, Shaykh Jaᶜfar and Dr Sani often assumed little contextual knowledge on the part of their audiences. In 2008, Dr Sani taught Imam ibn Taymiyya's *al Tuhfa al ᶜIraqiyya fi al Aᶜmal al Qalbiyya* (*The Iraqi Masterpiece on Actions of the Heart*) in Katsina. His first lecture introduced Shaykh ibn Taymiyya's life and works. This was necessary, Dr Sani explained, because "there is no doubt, few know who Ibn Taymiyya is" ("Babu shakka, kadan ne suka san wanene Ibn Taymiyya"). If Ahlussunnah leaders could not assume that their own students were deeply familiar with major classical Salafis, then it is little surprise that contemporary Salafi thinkers are not major subjects in courses and popular works.

Ahlussunnah leaders' references to contemporary, extra-local Salafi thinkers like Shaykh al-Albani or Shaykh bin Baz have primarily occurred within technical discussions on specific legal rulings. Examples of this pattern come from Shaykh Abdulwahhab's books *Ramadan a kan Koyarwar Alkurᵓani da Sunnah bisa*

Fahimtar Magabata na Kwarai (Hausa: *Ramadan According to the Teaching of the Qurʾan and the Sunna According to the Understanding of the Pious Forefathers*) and *Fatawoyin Aikin Hajji da Umrah da Ziyara a kan Koyarwar Alkurʾani da Sunnah da Fahimtar Magabata na Kwarai* (*Rulings on Hajj, Umra* [the lesser pilgrimage], *and Ziyara* [visiting] *According to the Teaching of the Qurʾan, the Sunna, and the Understanding of the Pious Forefathers*).[45] In these books, Shaykh Abdulwahhab not only cited scripture to support his positions, he provided precise references within canonical hadith collections, such as those of Imams Bukhari, Muslim, Abu Dawud and others. He discussed the status of each hadith according to Salafi methodologies of hadith criticism. In this context, approving mentions of Shaykh al-Albani as an arbiter of a hadith's strength or weakness became ubiquitous. Debates with rival Salafis, then, are a particularly contested subset of the technical legal discussions in which Ahlussunnah leaders have mostly strongly invoked the authority of contemporary Salafi intellectuals.

Local Daʿwa in the Context of Universal History

The tendency of Ahlussunnah leaders to shift registers and move between local concerns and allegedly universal identities has implications for an understanding of the relationship between Salafism as a global trend and a set of locally contextualised communities. Identifiably Salafi postures and traditions are shared across different localities; yet Terje Østebø and Laurent Bonnefoy have argued persuasively that the rhetorical and organisational strategies and behaviours of Salafi movements in, respectively, Ethiopia and Yemen, are shaped by their interactions with local contexts, even as Salafis attempt to undermine local competitors. In Bale, Ethiopia, Østebø writes, Salafis' efforts to de-localise Sufi practices did not represent a move from the local to an "abstract" global sphere. Rather, one locality influenced another: "A particular variant of Islam, stemming from Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab and evolving in the socio-political and cultural environment of the Arabian Peninsula, was introduced to and expanded in Bale."[46] Haykel suggests that the appeal of Salafism in diverse contexts originates not in its allegedly "de-territorialised" quality, but in its willingness to discount traditional authorities in the name of scriptural authority.[47] This appeal grows in contexts where Salafis effectively connect the Salafi tradition with local struggles over practice and authority.

The localisation of Salafism can occur through education and media. In Kano, where many adult men of diverse theological orientations attend evening prayer and study sessions called *majalisai* (Hausa, sing. *majalisa*, from the Arabic *majlis*, "council"), Salafis have organised their own sessions for studying hadith collections, Qurʾanic recitation and other Islamic sciences. Media interventions and translation constitute other avenues for localisation. The Salafi Shaykh

Muhammad Nazifi Inuwa, a graduate of IUM, conducted what some informants called the most popular radio programme in Kano as of early 2012. In weekly appearances, he translated the *Khuṭba* (Friday sermon) in Mecca from Arabic into Hausa, and then commented on it in Hausa. Giving lectures on topics of widespread local concern, such as marital conflict and divorce, has allowed Salafis to relate their theological and legal worldviews to the daily lives of local audiences.

Localisation also occurs through the financial and political infrastructures that Salafis construct. The financial patronage of local businessmen has allowed Salafi preachers to build mosques and schools. While Shaykh Jaᶜfar's circle received some support from international Muslim charities like al-Muntada al-Islami, local financial support strongly aided their rise to prominence. Ahlussunnah leaders have also participated in Kano politics in diverse ways. They have held bureaucratic positions relating to the administration of Islamic law, publicly criticised elected officials and hereditary Muslim rulers, and contested control of mosques and media.

At the same time that education, media, funding and other processes have localised Salafism in Kano, Ahlussunnah leaders have urged their followers to view themselves as part of a broader community of adherents to the allegedly correct understanding of monotheism. Ahlussunnah leaders narrate local events in ways that attempt to transcend local chronologies and geographies. The community to which Ahlussunnah leaders link their local community's experiences includes the Qurʾanic prophets before Muhammad, but its historical centre is the Prophet and his companions. The community extends forward in time from the Prophet to any Muslim, in any place, considered to follow his sunna. Ahlussunnah leaders have presented their struggles in Kano as part of an ongoing struggle wherein true Muslims, surrounded by hostile communities and/or faithless Muslims, are a permanent vanguard and a vulnerable minority. For Ahlussunnah, a sense of triumphalism – that the true Muslims will overcome persecution and spread their message – has coexisted with a sense that the Muslim community is doomed to decline.

Ahlussunnah leaders' use of hadiths that foretell the future – such as "Islam began as a stranger and it will return a stranger as it began" – has reinforced a core theme: that the trajectory of Islam in Nigeria parallels the trajectory of Islam elsewhere and fits within a larger, foreordained historical arc. In a 2003 lecture titled "Siyasa a Nigeria" ("Politics in Nigeria"), Shaykh Jaᶜfar cited a hadith that predicts a time when, despite the large size of the Muslim community, no nation would fear Muslims because they would have succumbed to "love of the world and fear of death". He commented:

> Any observant person will notice how the Muslim umma is growing in the world. We are not shrinking. Here at home in Nigeria before you find one

person who has apostasised you will find a hundred people who have pronounced the *shahāda* and entered Islam . . . But at the exact same time, [Islam's] problems are increasing, and weakness and humiliation are increasing in the umma.[48]

As history drives towards its eschatological conclusion – and a sense that that conclusion may be near at hand permeated some of Shaykh Jaʿfar's lectures – textually based creedal purity remains of paramount importance. Through historical analogy and assertions that prophecies are being fulfilled, Ahlussunnah preachers have merged past and present, accenting the idea that true Muslims are under attack. Enemies of the sunna, despite appearing in different garbs, promote similar messages of heresy and disunity in different times and places.

For Ahlussunnah, history is not only a template in which they are embedded, but a process that they can study and use. Dr Sani, comparing the Mongol invasion of Shaykh ibn Taymiyya's time to the Iraq War, elucidated Ahlussunnah's view of history in one lecture:

> As Allah says, "Such days we cause to follow by turns among men" [Q 3:140]. History is only a cycle of periods, a cycle of time. As they say, history is "*aḥdāth*" [Arabic: events] and "*asbāb*" [Arabic: causes] that combine. Things that are done and the reasons for their occurrence combine to produce history. Therefore what happened yesterday – if the reason for its occurrence yesterday reoccurs – will happen again. That is history . . . We study history so that we may draw some lessons [from it].[49]

History, for Ahlussunnah, provides a framework for making sense of the present in religious terms, and a template for religious action: the creation of a ritually and theologically pure Muslim community that will rebuke heretics and point Muslims towards the sole path to salvation.

Religious action, for Ahlussunnah, centres on daʿwa, a category that is intended to be at once an embodiment of an allegedly universal Islamic mission and a locally situated practice. The Arabic word daʿwa can be translated as the "call" or "appeal" to Islam. Those who practise daʿwa are duʿāt (sing. *dāʿiya*). Dr Sani's memoir of Shaykh Jaʿfar bears the Arabic subtitle *Daʿiya al-Jil wa Mufassir al-Tanzil* (*The Daʿwist of the Generation and the Exegete of the Revelation*). These epithets stress two core aspects of Ahlussunnah identity: an activist stance towards Islamic reform and a mastery of scripture. Ahlussunnah leaders enjoined followers in Kano to be activists too. In one 2006 lecture, Shaykh Jaʿfar told the crowd: "Understanding sunna does not mean 'registering' with some 'registration card' such that if you enter your name, that's it, you become a member

. . . The creed of Ahlussunnah wa-al-Jamaᶜa does not mean . . . daᶜwa with the mouth alone without any work that makes it real on a daily basis."[50]

Daᶜwa, in Salafi discourses worldwide, is not limited to converting non-Muslims to Islam; it includes calling other Muslims to become better Muslims. The dāᶜiya is, for Salafi thinkers in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, a universal category. An article published in the journal of the Saudi Arabia-based Muslim World League in 1990, by which time Shaykh Jaᶜfar was at IUM, outlined how the dāᶜiya needed to possess certain timeless qualities to succeed, including "imitation of the traces of the Messenger". The article presents the dāᶜiya's struggle as basically unchanging:

> For if our pious ancestors [salafuna al ṣāliḥ] were fought by ignorant classes (ṭabaqāt jāhila), failed leaderships (riʾāsāt fāshila), obscure tribes, and belligerent, combative peoples, we today are fought by classes who claim they are cultured. Indeed we are fought by unbelieving governments who have jointly decided and jointly stated that they will fight Islam and unite together to block its daᶜwa and to judge its men.[51]

Ahlussunnah leaders' conception of daᶜwa is similar to this view. Just as Ahlussunnah leaders have viewed their historical circumstances as fundamentally similar to those of other Salafis, so too have they viewed their core mission as identical to that of other Salafi figures, past and present.

Daᶜwa, however, occurs in a context. African graduates of Saudi Arabian universities have noted that local contexts shape the challenges each dāᶜiya faces. In 2001, at a conference the Saudi Arabian government held in Kano for African graduates of Saudi Islamic universities, a Malian scholar outlined five challenges for the African dāᶜiya: converting non-Muslims; purifying Islamic practices; fighting "Christianisation" (al-tanṣīr) and Westernisation; opposing Sufism; and confronting "waves of Shiᶜism". In West Africa, the scholar continued, fighting polytheistic beliefs and opposing Sufism were the most salient challenges, due to the historical linkages between Sufism and Islamisation in the region.[52] Anti-Sufism has frequently been a defining trait of West African Salafism, including in works such as the 1972 polemical text *al-ᶜAqida al-Sahiha bi Muwafaqa al-Shariᶜa* (Arabic: *The Correct Creed in Accordance with the Shariᶜa*) by Shaykh Abubakar Gumi, the spiritual patron of Izala.

Localisation also occurs within Africa. The priorities of African Salafis vary from context to context, or even over the course of individuals' lifetimes, in response to external impetuses and strategic concerns. Robert Launay, for example, describes how one prominent Salafi (Launay uses the term "Wahhabi") in Côte d'Ivoire transitioned from outspoken anti-Sufism to accommodation with Sufism as he became a local elder and took on a range of social roles "that

flagrantly contradicted his Wahhabi ideas".[53] The appearance or escalation of new perceived threats to Salafi creed may also affect Salafis' priorities; for example, the outspokenness of some Shiʿi leaders in northern Nigeria, and Sunni–Shiʿa conflict in Iraq after 2003, have contributed to Ahlussunnah leaders' strongly anti-Shiʿi views. The imperative of adapting daʿwa to local concerns and circumstances helps to explain why and how Ahlussunnah leaders have shifted intellectual registers in their messages to audiences.

Conclusion

Graduates of the Islamic University of Medina within the "Ahlussunnah" network in Kano have made use of their learning at IUM, and of different aspects of the classical and contemporary Salafi canons, in varied and complex ways. Ahlussunnah leaders have built a wide audience, including youth, but also married women and certain social and political elites, partly through their ability to shift intellectual registers. While Ahlussunnah's popular messages often emphasised scripture in an accessible way, in other intellectual settings Ahlussunnah leaders demonstrated their mastery of Salafi methodologies of hadith criticism and engaged a variety of Salafi thinkers. Mastery of Salafi methodologies and canons proved to be particularly useful to Ahlussunnah leaders in technical debates with rival Nigerian Salafis, such as "hardliners" from the Izala movement and the radical preacher Muhammad Yusuf. Ahlussunnah leaders invoked their learning at IUM and the authority of contemporary Saudi Salafi thinkers in such debates in order to discredit rivals and present them as intellectually deficient. These intellectual attacks on their rivals reinforced the self-presentations of Ahlussunnah leaders as highly credentialed, sober representatives of Islamic daʿwa.

Notes

1. The research for this chapter was made possible by the Social Science Research Council's International Dissertation Research Fellowship and the Wenner-Gren Foundation's Dissertation Fieldwork Grant. I gratefully acknowledge their support.
2. The term "Ahl al-Sunna wa-al-Jamaʿa" appears in classical Sunni scholarship, and even in reports of the statements of companions of the Prophet such as Shaykh Abd Allah ibn Abbas, to refer to what Sunni scholars defined as the correct creedal position.
3. Thomas Hegghammer, "Jihadi-Salafis or Revolutionaries? On Religion and Politics in the Study of Militant Islamism", in Roel Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009), p. 250.
4. Bernard Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action", in Meijer (ed.), *Global Salafism*, pp. 38–9.

5. Hegghammer, "Jihadi-Salafis", p. 250.

6. For more on the Sahwa, see Stéphane Lacroix, *Awakening Islam: The Politics of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia*, trans. George Holoch (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011).

7. This section is based on interviews with Dr Bashir Aliyu Umar, Kano, 2 October 2011; Shaykh Abdulwahhab Abdallah, Kano, 5 October 2011; Shaykh Muhammad Nazifi Inuwa, 12 October 2011; Dr Abdullahi Saleh Pakistan, Kano, 22 October 2011; on several informal conversations with Shaykh Abdulwahhab and Shaykh Nazifi; and on field notes from visits to Kano in July–August 2010 and September 2011–January 2012.

8. Muhammad Sani Umar Musa, *Ayyami maᶜa Daᶜiya al-Jil wa Mufassir al-Tanzil* (Kano: Dar al-Hikma li al-Kitab al-Islami, 2011), p. 57.

9. These men are: Dr Ahmad Bamba, Dr Muhammad Sani Umar Rijiyar Lemo, Shaykh Abdulwahhab Abdullahi, Dr Bashir Aliyu Umar, Dr Abdullahi Saleh Pakistan, Shaykh Aminu Daurawa, Shaykh Muhammad bin Uthman, Shaykh Abubakar Kandahar, Shaykh Abdullahi Ishaq Garangamawa, Shaykh Nazifi Inuwa and Shaykh Kabiru Gombe.

10. Dr Sani, Shaykh Abdulwahhab, Dr Bashir, Dr Pakistan, Shaykh Garangamawa and Shaykh Nazifi. The movement's leadership includes women: Shaykha Halima Shitu, who is married to Shaykh Abdulwahhab, has gained renown for the religious lessons she offers to women in their homes and for her work as a Hisba Commissioner under Governor Shekarau. She is a graduate of Umm al-Qura University in Mecca.

11. Musa, *Ayyami*, pp. 30–1.

12. Interview with Dr Bashir, Kano, 2 October 2011.

13. Interview with Shaykh Nazifi, Kano, 12 October 2011.

14. Interview with Dr Pakistan, Kano, 22 October 2011.

15. Musa, *Ayyami*, p. 46.

16. Interview with Dr Bashir, Kano, 2 October 2011.

17. Ibrahim Sada, "The Making of the Zamfara and Kano State Sharia Penal Codes", in Philip Ostien (ed.), *Shari'a Implementation in Northern Nigeria, 1999–2006* (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2007), p. 29.

18. Ousmane Kane, *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition* (Boston, MA: Brill, 2003).

19. Shaykh Jaᶜfar, "Tarihin Rayuwata a Ilmi" (recorded lecture, n.d.).

20. Kane, *Muslim Modernity*, p. 90.

21. See Terje Østebø, *Localising Salafism: Religious Change among Oromo Muslims in Bale, Ethiopia* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), on this tendency in Ethiopia, and Ousman Kobo, *Unveiling Modernity in Twentieth-Century West African Islamic Reforms* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), on Ghana and Burkina Faso.

22. Kane, *Muslim Modernity*, p. 92.

23. Kane, *Muslim Modernity*, p. 217.

24. Muhammad Sani Umar, "Education and Islamic Trends in Northern Nigeria: 1970–1990s", *Africa Today*, 48(2) (2001): 136. Professor Muhammad Sani Umar of Northwestern University, author of this article, is not the same person as Dr Muhammad Sani Umar of Kano's Ahlussunnah.

25. Musa, *Ayyami*, p. 14.

26. Musa, *Ayyami*, p. 23.
27. Shaykh Jaᶜfar, "Tarihin Rayuwata".
28. Musa, *Ayyami*, p. 25.
29. Musa, *Ayyami*, p. 26.
30. In the latter lecture, for example, when discussing Sufi attempts to shut down a Salafi mosque in the mid-1980s, Shaykh Jaᶜfar says: "The number of Kano's Ahlussunnah at that time did not reach a tenth of Kano's Ahlussunnah now."
31. Musa, *Ayyami*, pp. 29–30.
32. Musa, *Ayyami*, p. 32.
33. Musa, *Ayyami*, p. 33.
34. Musa, *Ayyami*, p. 33.
35. Musa, *Ayyami*, p. 48.
36. Interview with Shaykh Abdullahi Garangamawa, Kano.
37. Interview with Dr Pakistan, Kano, 22 October 2011.
38. Anonymous, "The Popular Discourses of Salafi Radicalism and Salafi Counter-radicalism in Nigeria: A Case Study of Boko Haram", *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 42 (2012): 122.
39. Andrew Walker, *What Is Boko Haram?*, United States Institute of Peace Special Report 308, June 2012, p. 3, available at: http://www.usip.org/files/resources/SR308.pdf, accessed January 2013.
40. Human Rights Watch, *Spiraling Violence: Boko Haram Attacks and Security Force Abuses in Nigeria*, 31 October 2012, available at: http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/nigeria1012webwcover.pdf, accessed January 2013.
41. Anonymous, "Popular Discourses", p. 136.
42. Shaykh Jaᶜfar Mahmud Adam, "Me Ya Sa Suke Cewa Boko Haram Ne?" (undated audio recording), available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkNDOoe2Jf8, accessed November 2012.
43. *Matakan Mallakar Miji*, p. 12.
44. Al-Imam Yahaya An-Nawawi, *al-Arbaᶜuna Hadithan*, translated to Hausa by Shaykh Jaᶜfar Mahmoud Adam, 2nd edn (Kano: Shaykh Jaᶜafar Islamic Documentation Center, 2011), p. xii.
45. Shaykh Abdulwahab bin Abdallah, *Ramadan a kan Koyarwar Alkurʾani da Sunnah bisa Fahimtar Magabata na Kwarai* (Kano: Kumurya Prints U/Uku, 2009); *Fatawoyin Aikin Hajji da Umrah da Ziyara a kan Koyarwar Alkurʾani da Sunnah da Fahimtar Magabata na Kwarai*, 2nd edn (Kano: Supreme Council for Shariᶜa in Nigeria; Garewa Press, 2004).
46. Østebø, *Localising Salafism*, p. 323.
47. Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought", p. 36.
48. Shaykh Jaᶜfar Mahmud Adam, recorded lecture, "Siyasa a Nigeria", Kano, 2003.
49. Dr Muhammad Sani Umar Rijiyar Lemo, recorded lecture, "Musulunci a Jiya da Yau", Kano(?), September 2008
50. Shaykh Jaᶜfar Mahmud Adam, untitled lecture, Kano, mid-2000s.
51. Al-Shaykh Muhammad Mahmud al-Sawwab, "Shaykhsiya al-Daᶜiya Hiya al-Amil al-Asasi fi Najahihi", *al-Rabita*, 29(34) (May 1990), p. 21.
52. Dr Muhammad al-Bashir Dakuri, "al-Daᶜwa wa-al-Duᶜa fi Ifriqiya: al-Waqi wa-al-Tatalluᶜat", *Buhuth Multaqa Khadim al-Haramayn al-Sharifayn li-Khirriji*

al-Jamiʿat al-Saʿudiyah min Afriqiya, al-Awwal: al-Muqam bi-Nayjiriya, Kanu tahta Ishraf al-Jamiʿah al-Islamiyah bi-al-Madinah al-Munawwarah (Medina: al-Jamiʿa al-Islamiyya bi-al-Madina al-Munawwarah, 2003), p. 539.

53. Robert Launay, *Beyond the Stream: Islam and Society in a West African Town* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), p. 90.

Qom Alumni in Indonesia:
Their Role in the Shiʿi Community

ZULKIFLI

INTRODUCTION

This chapter explains the role of Qom alumni in the development of the Shiʿi community in Indonesia. The phrase "Qom alumni" refers to those who have completed courses in Islamic education in the Hawza ʿIlmiyya (College of Learning) of Qom, which is at present the most important centre of Shiʿi Islamic education in the world. Today there are more than 200 Qom alumni in Indonesia, even excluding those who travelled to Qom to attend short-term courses. The growth in the number of Qom graduates has made a marked contribution to the formation and development of the Shiʿi community in Indonesia; indeed, the majority of renowned Shiʿi ustadz (religious teachers, from the Arabic ustadh, teacher) are graduates of the Hawza ʿIlmiyya. As a consequence, Shiʿi ustadz are frequently identified with the Qom alumni, even though a number of ustadz were in fact educated in Egypt or Saudi Arabia. For example, Umar Shahab and his younger brother Husein Shahab, two Shiʿi ustadz who are connected with prominent Shiʿi foundations in Indonesia where important pengajian (religious gatherings) are held, are among the most popular Shiʿi figures engaged in educational and daʿwa activities in Jakarta. Another prominent Qom returnee is Abdurrahman Bima, former director of the Madinatul Ilmi College for Islamic Studies, a tertiary educational institution located in Depok, Southern Jakarta, and currently a member of parliament for the leading Democratic Party, led by current president Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono. In Pekalongan, Central Java, Ahmad Baragbah leads a famous Shiʿi pesantren (traditional Islamic educational institution) called al-Hadi.

Frequently, Shiʿi ustadz who are graduates from Islamic schools in other

Middle Eastern countries, as well as intellectuals from secular universities, also come to Qom to take short-term training programmes in order to gain Islamic knowledge and establish connections with Shiʿi leaders and the ʿulama of Qom. Hasan Dalil, for example, having finished his undergraduate programme in Riyadh, took a three-month training programme in Qom. Even the renowned Indonesian Shiʿi intellectual Jalaluddin Rakhmat and his family stayed in Qom for a year, during which time he attended learning circles and lectures carried out by ayatollahs. This illustrates the great importance attached to Islamic education in Qom by the Shiʿia of Indonesia.

The first section of this chapter describes the history and development of the practice of Indonesian students pursuing their education in Qom; it then explains the educational system and schooling structure which is prevalent there. The next section explains the workings of the Qom alumni association. Finally, the chapter attempts to account for the significant role played by Qom alumni in the field of Islamic daʿwa and education in Indonesia.

The Proliferation of Indonesian Students in Qom

It is unclear exactly when Indonesian students began to pursue Islamic education in Qom. Efforts had indeed been made to send students to Qom by Indonesian Shiʿi leaders such as Muhammad Asad Shahab, who met and established contact with prominent Iranian Shiʿi ʿulama in the 1950s; however, reliable reports suggest that students began travelling to Qom for Islamic learning only a few years before the Iranian revolution, which began in 1978. These students were the descendants of Arabs, and lived in various locations on the Indonesian archipelago. Ali Ridho al-Habsyi, son of Muhammad al-Habsyi and grandson of Habib Ali Kwitang of Jakarta, studied in Qom in 1974. Six graduates of the Pesantren al-Khairat of Palu, Central Sulawesi, followed over the next two years, and in September 1976, Umar Shahab, an Arab descendant from Palembang, South Sumatra, and today a famous Shiʿi ustadz, came to Qom to study alongside seven other Indonesian students. In fieldwork conducted in 1975, Fischer also noted the presence of Indonesian students in Qom; among the foreign students, including cohorts from Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Lebanon, Tanzania, Turkey, Nigeria and Kashmir, Indonesians were the least numerous.[1]

After the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979, interaction intensified between its government and Indonesian Shiʿi ʿulama. The victory of the ayatollahs inspired Indonesian intellectuals and ʿulama to study the ideological foundation of the Iranian revolution, namely, Shiʿism; and at the same time, there was an Iranian policy of "exporting" the revolution, with Iranian politico-religious leaders aiming to spread Shiʿism in Indonesia and to attract

Indonesian students to study in Iran. In 1982, the Iranian government sent its representatives Ayatollah Ibrahim Amini, Ayatollah Masduqi and Hujjat al-Islam Mahmudi to Indonesia. Among their activities was a visit to Yayasan Pesantren Islam (YAPI; the Foundation of Islamic Pesantren) in Bangil, East Java, where they met with its leader, Husein al-Habsyi; the latter would become the most important confidant of Iranian leaders and ʿulama in Indonesia. At the time, Husein al-Habsyi was probably one of the most prominent Shiʿi ʿulama in Indonesia and he played a major role in the development of Islamic daʿwa and education. As a result of the meeting, Qom's Hawza ʿIlmiyya agreed to accept ten Indonesian students selected by Husein al-Habsyi. From then until his death in 1994, Husein al-Habsyi was responsible for selecting candidates for study at Hawza ʿIlmiyya in Qom and in other cities in Iran.

As a result, graduates of YAPI numbered among the Indonesian students who came to Qom in 1982, alongside the alumni of other educational institutions. They have become renowned Shiʿi ustadz in Indonesia: of the ten students referred to in the agreement, nearly all of whom are Arab descendants, six are alumni of YAPI. The YAPI alumni include Muhsin Labib (Husein al-Habsyi's stepson) and Rusdi al-Aydrus, who have become Shiʿi ustadz in Indonesia, and Husein al-Habsyi's son, Ibrahim al-Habsyi, who has pursued his studies in Qom up until the present day. From outside YAPI, Ahmad Baragbah and Hasan Abu Ammar have also become Shiʿi ustadz in Indonesia. In the years that followed, graduates of YAPI and/or those recommended by Husein al-Habsyi were still predominant among the Indonesian students who went to Qom. Between 1985 and 1989, al-Habsyi sent ten students to Qom, and today most of them have established or are affiliated with notable Shiʿi foundations in Indonesia and have been recognised as important Shiʿi ustadz. These include Musyayya Baʿabud, Zahir Yahya (the leader of al-Kautsar Foundation, Malang, East Java, and formerly the head of YAPI), Miqdad (the head of Pesantren Darut Taqrib, Jepara, Central Java), Fathoni Hadi (the founder of al-Hujjah Foundation, Jember, East Java, and currently on the administrative staff of the Islamic College Jakarta), Muhammad Amin Sufyan (the head of Samudera Foundation, Surabaya), Abdurrahman Bima (former director of Madinatul Ilmi College for Islamic Studies, STAIMI, Depok, Southern Jakarta), Husein al-Kaff (an adviser at al-Jawad Foundation, Bandung), Herman al-Munthahar (the head of Amirul Mukminin Foundation, Pontianak, West Kalimantan), Muhammad al-Jufri, and Abdul Aziz al-Hinduan.

In the 1990s, in addition to the alumni of YAPI, graduates of other Islamic educational institutions, such as the Mutahhari Foundation and al-Hadi, were selected to continue their education in Qom. This development corresponds with the growing influence of the Shiʿi intellectuals Jalaluddin Rakhmat and Haidar Bagir, whose recommendations were taken note of in Iran. Over time,

the educational background of the Indonesian students studying in Qom has become more varied. From the outset, most of the students who went there had completed their secondary education; but more recently a number of graduates of tertiary schools have also gone there to pursue higher levels of study – among them are a few alumni of Madinatul Ilmi College for Islamic Studies (STAIMI), Depok, and we can also find graduates of "secular" universities, such as the University of Indonesia, Jakarta, and the University of Padjadjaran, Bandung, studying religious knowledge in Qom. Their educational backgrounds are varied and include the humanities, social sciences, and even science and technology. Mujtahid Hashem, for instance, is a graduate of the technical faculty at the University of Indonesia. Instead of expanding his knowledge in technology, Mujtahid Hashem came to Qom in 2001 to engage in religious study. While there, he was selected as the general secretary of the Association of Indonesian Students (Himpunan Pelajar Indonesia), which was founded in Iran in August 2000.[2]

In addition to the growing interest on the part of Indonesian students with regard to studying in Iran, the Iranian government, through the International Centre for Islamic Studies (ICIS; Markaz-i Jahani-yi ʿUlum-i Islami), has stepped up efforts to attract international students. Until 1993, the management of the centre was traditional in that ḥawza was unstructured; but since 1994, ICIS has been under the supervision of the office of the Leader of the Islamic Revolution headed by Grand Ayatollah ʿAli Khameneʾi, who also has the authority to appoint its director. Thus, Ali Khameneʾi succeeded in transforming "the previously amorphous and unstructured seminary into a manageable center".[3] With regard to its effort to attract Indonesian students, an ICIS representative conducts an annual selection process at Islamic institutions, such as the Islamic Cultural Centre of Jakarta and the Mutahhari Foundation, Bandung. In addition to academic achievement, Arabic is a prerequisite in the selection process, since this is an international language for Islamic learning and also the sole language of instruction at certain madrasas in Qom. Upon arrival in Iran, students are also required to follow a six-month training programme in Persian, which is the language of instruction at most of Qom's Islamic educational institutions.

The number of Indonesian students studying in Qom has increased significantly. By 1990, fifty Indonesian students had reportedly completed their studies or were still studying in Qom; ten years later, the number of Qom graduates in Indonesia was reportedly over a hundred. In 2001, fifty Indonesian students were chosen to continue their studies in Qom,[4] and in 2004, ninety additional students were selected. Currently, there are about 250 Indonesian students in Iran, most of them pursuing Islamic studies in Qom.

The Education System in Qom

Generally speaking there are two education systems operative at the Hawza ʿIlmiyya in Qom: the traditional system, which is the most famous and influential; and the modern system. The traditional system's curriculum includes both transmitted and intellectual religious sciences: *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *usūl al-fiqh* (principles of jurisprudence), *ʿulūm al-Qurʾan* (sciences of the Qurʾan), *ʿulūm al-hadith* (sciences of hadith), *naḥw* (Arabic syntax), *ṣarf* (Arabic morphology), *balāgha* (rhetoric), *mantiq* (logic), *ḥikma* (philosophy), *kalām* (theology), *taṣaw-wuf* (Sufism) and *ʿirfān* (gnosis, mystic knowledge). Each subject has its own standard texts,[5] which are studied in *halaqat* (study circles) under an instructor's supervision.

At the *muqaddamāt* (preliminary) level, which lasts from three to five years, the emphasis is on providing students with various skills in Arabic that are at the core of its educational programme. The main subjects taught at the preliminary level include naḥw, ṣarf, balāgha and mantiq. In addition, there are certain optional subjects, including literature, mathematics, astronomy, and introductory fiqh, taken from one of the *risāla ʿamālīyya* (tracts on practice) of a contemporary *marjaʿ-i tāqlīd* (pl. *marājiʿ-i tāqlīd*; an authoritative source on matters of Islamic law). The learning process at this level involves groups of students gathering together around a teacher who goes through the texts with them. Students are free to choose the teacher who will become their instructor. Usually, teachers at this level are senior students or assistants of marājiʿ-i tāqlīd.[6]

At the *suṭūḥ* level, which usually lasts from three to six years, students are introduced to the substance of deductive fiqh and usūl al-fiqh, on which their progress to the next and ultimate level depends. The optional subjects provided at this level are *tafsīr* (Qurʾanic exegesis), hadith (traditions), kalām, philosophy, ʿirfān, history and ethics. Generally, courses are organised according to the instructional technique employed and based on the main texts of the two main subjects, and students are free to select which lectures to attend. The students may also attend lectures in the optional subjects. Teachers at this level are usually *mujtahid* who have just achieved the status of *ijtihād* and are establishing their reputations.[7]

Although the subjects at the ultimate level (*dar-i khārij*) are also fiqh and usūl al-fiqh, the method of learning employed is different from that of the two prior levels. The teaching is done by prominent mujtahid, who deliver lectures of varying length. Usually they post their own schedules and locations for their lectures, and students are free to choose whose they will attend. The lectures delivered by the most prominent mujtahids may well be attended by hundreds of people, including other mujtahids. A dialectical method is generally employed in these classes: students are free to discuss and are encouraged to argue points

with the teacher. At this stage, most students are accomplished in the skill of abstract discursive argumentation and are trained to have self-confidence. The culmination of the learning process is the attainment of an *ijāza* (licence, certification) from one or many recognised mujtahid. It is common for the student at this level to write a treatise on fiqh or usūl al-fiqh, and present it to a mujtahid who then considers the student and their work. Based on their evaluation, the mujtahid may issue the ijāza, which authorises the student to exercise *ijtihād*.[8] Thus, students build up their careers based on their relationships with certain mujtahid-teachers.

When a student receives the ijāza, making him a mujtahid, the honorific title ayatollah ("*ayat Allah*", "sign of God") is normally bestowed upon him. An ayatollah recognised as a marjaᶜ-i tāqlīd usually receives the title *ayatollah al-ᶜuzma* ("grand ayatollah"). The common title of an aspiring mujtahid is *hujjat al-Islam* (proof of Islam). The structure of the Shiᶜi ᶜulama is pyramidal: those at the highest level, the marāji̇ᶜ-i tāqlīd, are the fewest in number. The traditional system of education is extremely important in Shiᶜi society, given the major role of marjaᶜ-i tāqlīd throughout history.

The modern madrasa system is a transformation of the classical system, adopting the modern regime of education conceived in terms of gradation, curriculum, classroom learning and rules. Non-traditional madrasas "are set up to serve needs not supplied by the traditional system".[9] The curriculum consists of religious and secular sciences presented through a slightly simplified version of traditional study courses. Unlike the traditional system, this modern madrasa system is not intended to train students to become mujtahids, but rather to become Islamic scholars and missionaries. This innovative type of education has provided an alternative for students who, for whatever reason, cannot follow the traditional system of the Hawza ᶜIlmiyya. International students, including Indonesians, are generally enrolled in this modern type of programme.

The Islamic Republic of Iran has made educational innovations in Qom's Hawza ᶜIlmiyya through ICIS, which coordinates programmes for foreign students, assigns students to madrasas, and monitors their needs within the wider framework for the global dissemination of Islamic knowledge and teachings. ICIS has organised new programmes for international students based on the modern madrasa system. The Imam Khomeini College for Higher Education, for example, offers programmes based on grade systems that include undergraduate and graduate levels equivalent to the tertiary education level of the modern educational system: this innovation brings Hawza ᶜIlmiyya a step closer to becoming a leading international centre of Islamic learning. Its importance as a centre of Islamic learning is not only based on the traditional madrasa, but also on the emancipation of ḥawza in the form of new institutions and universities.[10]

Both education systems have been attended by Indonesian students. The first

Indonesian students to come to Iran were enrolled at Dar al-Tabligh al-Islami, a modern Shi'i institution founded in 1965 by Ayatollah Muhammad Kazim Shari'atmadari (1904–86). As an institution of Islamic learning, Dar al-Tabligh was known for its large numbers of foreign students and for the efforts it was willing to make in arranging their visas and residence permits. It operated a five-year programme with a credit system, and its curriculum included both religious knowledge and secular sciences such as psychology, philosophy, sociology, mathematics and English. The language of instruction was Arabic. The educational system of Dar al-Tabligh was therefore modern: although it was strongly entrenched in the traditional ḥawza system, it did not follow the traditional system of learning. Accordingly, the first group of Indonesian students in Qom followed the formal modern system of education, although they could also attend classes or lectures as provided through the traditional Hawza 'Ilmiyya system.

After the dissolution of Dar al-Tabligh in 1981 – owing to its leader's opposition to the concept of *vilāyat-i faqīh* (mandate of the jurist) implemented by Khomeini – Madrasa Hujjatiyya began to provide the same programme for foreign students. Since 1982, nearly all Indonesian students who came to Iran have attended Madrasa Hujjatiyya, including the prominent Shi'i ustadz Husein Shahab, who was transferred to this madrasa after studying at Dar al-Tabligh for two years. This madrasa was founded in 1946 by Ayatollah Muhammad Hujjat Kuhkamari (1892–1963), a student of 'Abd al-Karim Ha'iri (d. 1936), the reformer of Hawza 'Ilmiyya.[11] Unlike Dar al-Tabligh, Hujjatiyya School follows the traditional system of education generally employed in Hawza 'Ilmiyya. The majority of Indonesian students who become Shi'i ustadz in Indonesia have completed only the preliminary level and lack a formal diploma.

Although most Indonesian students were registered at Madrasa Hujjatiyya, a few pursued their learning at Madrasa Mu'miniyya, which also provided a programme for foreign students. This madrasa was founded in 1701 during the reign of Sultan Husayn of the Safavid dynasty, and was rebuilt by the Grand Ayatollah Shihab al-Din Mar'ashi-Najafi (d. 1991), known for his role in the establishment in Qom of a large library, filled with a magnificent collection of published books and manuscripts. This madrasa formulated its own education system and curriculum, and provided its own learning materials rather than utilising recognised textbooks. The Mu'miniyya School also differed from the Hujjatiyya School in that the former prohibited its students from attending religious lectures and study circles in the traditional ḥawza system.[12]

As educational reform has progressed in Qom, a large number of Indonesian students have registered at the Imam Khomeini College for Higher Education. Since 1996, this madrasa has been striving to position itself as the principal education centre for international students. The madrasa, which was established

after the death of Ayatollah Khomeini, uses the modern system of education in terms of programmes and curricula, in spite of its entrenchment in the traditional ḥawza system. It runs both undergraduate and graduate programmes in various fields of specialisation within the realm of religious sciences.[13]

Changes in the education system for foreign students have been designed, in part, to expand the primacy of Qom as a world centre for Islamic learning. One such change is the adoption of the credit system and a modern taxonomy of study programmes – namely, bachelors, master's and doctorates, as implemented by Western universities – along with diplomas and formal systems of accreditation. This is meant to provide for the demands of students from all over the world, and it is also in accord with Qom's goal to produce Islamic scholars and preachers with a global appeal. In 2008, the Iranian government transformed the International Centre for Islamic Studies into al-Mustafa International University to provide education for all foreign students, including Indonesians. It now supervises a number of universities such as Imam Khomeini College for Higher Education and Madrasa Bint al-Huda School for Higher Education. Indonesian students have thus experienced a variety of changes in the education system: unlike their predecessors, they study in undergraduate or graduate programmes in particular fields of specialisation with recognised diplomas and titles; while some do BA degrees, others take master's programmes, and a few others seek doctorates. While most male students study at Imam Khomeini College for Higher Education, female students attend either Bint al-Huda or Jamiᶜat al-Zahra, another institute for religious learning in Qom that offers bachelors or master's degrees.

Qom's transformation of Islamic education into a modern system includes the use of information technologies in the dissemination of knowledge. In this regard, Rasiah suggests:

> In Qum, the ḥawza has not been immune to these developments, and the new technology of the so-called "digital revolution" has brought innovations to the way traditional Islamic knowledge is transmitted . . . Today, digital means of communication and storage, the form of internet web pages, video and audio podcasts, email, compact disks, DVDs, CD-ROM software and the like, are transforming the possibilities of disseminating Islamic knowledge. With regard to the ḥawza the digitization of knowledge has included three major interrelated developments: the digital library, the online correspondence course, and the translation of original texts.[14]

Indonesian students benefit from the transformation of Islamic education in Qom through their use of the various forms of information technology, and this has rendered them more progressive than their predecessors. Certainly,

connections between both generations are more easily made by means of information technology, and this in turn is contributing to the development of Islamic education in Indonesia.

The Qom Alumni Association

Along with the growing number of Hawza 'Ilmiyya alumni in Indonesia and the concomitant demand for ways to establish close relationships between them and so intensify their missionary efforts upon returning home, the Indonesian alumni of Hawza 'Ilmiyya and of al-Mustafa International University (MIU) established an association called Ikatan Alumni Jamiah al-Mustafa (IKMAL; Association of al-Mustafa University Alumni). The association, which was launched on 7 February 2009, brings together all those who have studied in Hawza 'Ilmiyya. It is currently (2011–13) chaired by Miqdad Turkan (the chairman of Pesantren Darut Taqrib, Jepara, Central Java), assisted by Husein al-Kaff (al-Jawad Foundation, Bandung) as vice-chairman and Kholid al-Walid as secretary. The structure of the association incorporates such divisions as education and da'wa, welfare and advocacy, media and public relations, and women, each headed by renowned Qom alumni of the older generation.

According to its statute, the goals of IKMAL are to develop and advance Islamic propagation as both an individual and a collective obligation; to protect its members; to increase the quality, competence and prosperity of its members; to increase the religious knowledge of the Islamic community, particularly the Indonesian *ahl al-bayt* community; and to establish harmonious and productive relationships with alumni of related institutions. To achieve these goals, the association intends to carry out activities by: (i) improving the performance of its members through education, research and applications; (ii) promoting and developing the existence of the Association of al-Mustafa Alumni; (iii) promoting and preserving the interests and positions of members; (iv) improving communication and cooperation among members; (v) establishing communication and cooperation with institutions, agencies and other organisations, both within and outside the country; (vi) improving coaching, mentoring and supervision of members in carrying out missionary and scientific activities; (vii) carrying out efforts for the welfare of members by coordinating the activities of the alumni and allocating social assistance; (viii) performing community service; and (xi) providing information and helping to solve religious problems faced by communities.

Since its foundation, the association has carried out a range of activities, including training, workshops, seminars, publications and community service. One notable activity was the workshop on da'wa methods and ahl al-bayt syllabi in Indonesia, which took place in March 2012 with around a hundred participants,

both members of IKMAL and other Shiᶜi activists and propagators. Among the facilitators were Sayyid Ahmad Fazeli (director of the Islamic College Jakarta, a branch of al-Mustafa International University), Sayyid Morteza Musawi (director of the Islamic Cultural Centre), and Haidar Bagir (Mizan Publishing House). The workshop was inspired by the negative responses to Shiᶜism in Indonesia and the sectarian violence that had occurred in several places in Java, including the burning down of Pesantren al-Hadi in Batang Pekalongan, Central Java in 2000, and of Pesantren Misbah al-Huda in Sampang, December 2011. The chairman of IKMAL, Miqdad Turkan, saw these actions as resulting from the inappropriate implementation of daᶜwa by Shiᶜi propagators. Misunderstanding and miscommunication seem to have coloured the implementation of daᶜwa within Shiᶜi teaching in Indonesia. In the workshop, for example, Ahmad Fazeli warned the participants that the correct daᶜwa contents would nevertheless engender misunderstanding if they were communicated to the wrong people by incorrect methods.

In the field of religious culture, IKMAL has attempted to disseminate the writings of its members. It publishes an e-journal called *Hauzah* in which writings on Shiᶜi doctrines, jurisprudence, Qurᵓanic exegesis, history, traditions and other topics are provided. In this journal, the alumni express their religious thoughts, which are strongly based on Shiᶜi ideology; scrutiny of its contents may lead one to conclude that the journal is ideological rather than truly scientific in nature. Qom alumni also continue to produce writings in the form of books and articles, both translations and original compositions, independently from IKMAL. Similarly, their involvement in the field of daᶜwa and education is not entirely dependent on their association with IKMAL, and much is carried out independently.

The Social Structures of Qom Alumni

Most Qom alumni have achieved the status of ustadz, or religious teacher. Early alumni, such as Umar Shahab, Husein Shahab and Ahmad Baragbah, have become very prominent Shiᶜi figures. In Indonesia, the term ustadz commonly denotes religious teachers in traditional institutions of Islamic learning (pesantren), formal Islamic schools (madrasas), or in religious gatherings (pengajian). To the Muslims in the country, particularly those of traditional institutions of Islamic learning, the term ustadz usually refers to the teachers who have not achieved the status of ᶜālim (meaning a man of religious learning and prestige)[15] or *kyai* ("learned man", or the leader of pesantren). Therefore, within the leadership structure of pesantren, the position of ustadz is ranked below that of kyai. Among the Shiᶜa in Indonesia, however, the term ustadz denotes both leaders of Shiᶜi institutions and religious teachers, and this term is increasingly being used

among certain Indonesian Muslim groups to refer to 'ulama and Muslim leaders in general. In the context of Muslim society in Indonesia, some Shi'i ustadz, such as Husein al-Habsyi, have achieved the status of 'ālim.

It is entirely possible that the growing tendency to use the term ustadz is due to the influence of the Arab descendants within the religious, educational and cultural fields of the Shi'i community. This tendency is also evident in the so-called scripturalist segment of the Indonesian Muslim community, which is undergoing a process of "Arabisation". This group prefers to use the term ustadz according its original meaning in Arabic, rather than using the local term kyai for 'ulama. In addition, from the perspective of the international Shi'i intellectual tradition, this may indicate that the education of Indonesian Shi'i leaders and scholars has not reached the standard of the fully qualified scholars. It is evident that their position does not correspond to that of mujtahid or marja'-i tāqlīd. Thus, in the field of jurisprudence, the word ustadz in Indonesia comes to refer to the *muqallid* (followers) of certain marja'-i tāqlīd in Iran or Iraq. Nevertheless, the ustadz still enjoys prestige within the Shi'i community.

There are at least two general characteristics of the Shi'i ustadz. First, the educational background of an ustadz generally involves a period at one of the institutions of Islamic learning where they acquired the various branches of Islamic knowledge. This means that the person is considered to have gained basic Islamic knowledge. Several Shi'i ustadz in Indonesia studied at pesantren in Indonesia and then pursued further learning in the Middle East, particularly at Hawza 'Ilmiyya. Since their education in Qom only reached the muqaddamāt level, few Shi'i ustadz have pursued their learning at other tertiary institutions in Indonesia or abroad – only the most prominent among them can lay claim to this achievement. A number of ustadz entered Islamic universities in Indonesia: as mentioned previously, four of them – Umar Shahab, Abdurrahman Bima, Muhsin Labib and Kholid al-Walid – completed doctoral programmes at this university. We should emphasise that the field of specialisation generally taken by the Shi'i ustadz is "Islamic studies" in the classical meaning of the term. This is understandable, since they are engaged in the field of Islamic da'wa and education, which requires a broad understanding of Islam in order to gain or maintain a prestigious position within the community. In a nutshell, further education in the field of religious knowledge contributes to establishing and increasing the prominence of the Shi'i ustadz.

Secondly, the ustadz devote themselves to the field of da'wa and educational activities at the Shi'i institutions of learning. Many have established their own institutions and become leaders within them. Some are affiliated with Islamic institutions, and their main profession is as a religious teacher or even spiritual guide for the *jama'a* (congregation) of those institutions. They impart religious knowledge, give guidance and lead religious rituals; with the exception of heads

of institutions, however, they do not receive a regular salary from these institutions, but instead receive payments for each section of the daʿwa activities they teach. Most of them rely for their living on endowments or payments from the institutions and their jamaʿa. This intensive religious instruction and guidance contributes to the close relationship an ustadz enjoys with the jamaʿa, who follow his instructions and guidance and pay their respects to him. "Many ustadz are living comfortably in Jakarta, which has become a center of attraction for many of them."[16]

Although all Qom alumni are members of IKMAL and most of them are ustadz, the social structure in which they are embedded is complex, and can be properly understood only through examining a number of its aspects. We may distinguish the "older" or senior generation from the "younger" or junior generation based on the education system they followed in Qom. The older generation consists of those who followed the pre-university system of education, which mainly emphasised the mastery of books or texts in certain fields of Islamic knowledge – this group comprises those who studied at the Dar al-Tabligh, Hujjatiyya and Muʿminiyya schools. The younger generation studied in Qom in or after 1996, via the Imam Khomeini College for Higher Education, which was the main centre for international students and followed the modern system of having both undergraduate and graduate programmes. While the first group of alumni mainly graduated from the muqaddamāt level without diploma and title, the other group holds the title "licence" (or bachelor) for the undergraduate level, and a master's degree or even a doctorate for the graduate level – similar to alumni from other universities in the Middle East and the West. Consequently, as noted by Muhsin Labib, a Qom alumnus from the first group, there is a gap between the two groups in terms of methodological and communication capabilities, due to the different education systems and facilities: the junior group is more intelligent, critical and communicative than the senior. Muhsin Labib expresses his experience and concerns as follows:

As a member of the first wave into ḥawza in 1982, I can feel the luck of students of the 2000 era. Without intending to tell the sorrow of a "guinea pig", the situation that I experienced when I first set foot in the city of Qom really made me, at the time fifteen years of age, shake my head. There was no reasonable preparation, let alone for the upper group. The madrasa building we entered was full of dust. Those days the Iranians were busy with military mobilisation to confront the aggression of Saddam. Here and there was an audible thump of bombs fired by MIGs 2000 and Mirages at the city. The residents of Qom seemed busy lining up to receive cooking oil and food. Classes were often closed suddenly because there were funerals of dozens of heroes who had died in the battlefield. The curriculum was always changing.

Apparently, the officials of *Shura-ye Sarparasti Tolab-e Ghaire Irani* were confused by the task of finding an educational format that suited foreign students with different competencies, from Indonesia, non-Shiʿi Arab countries, Africa, and even Europe. Regarding the facilities, do not ask because it will restore the bad memories. Armed with a chaotic and "confusing" educational system, the alumni born of the situation should be accepted and appreciated. Moreover, with their underprivileged education and facilities (non-diploma again!), they still have to start really heavy duties, clearing the forest and introducing the ahl al-bayt denominations, with all the risks, especially the political risks of the New Order which suspected Iran to be exporting the revolution.[17]

Despite these sentiments, it is clear from their educational accomplishments that some among the senior generation had pursued their study at tertiary institutions in Indonesia or abroad, unlike others from the older group who relied solely on their education in Qom. Some members of the senior group had received a diploma from a tertiary education institution in another country, such as Punjab University in Pakistan, while others had enrolled in undergraduate programmes at the institutes for Islamic studies, whether state or private, which are scattered in the cities and towns of Indonesia. Many – such as Ikhlas Budiman, Musa Kazim and Husein al-Kaff – had master's degrees in Islamic studies as well as in other fields. At least four of them – Umar Shahab, Abdurrahman Bima, Muhsin Labib and Kholid al-Walid – had completed doctoral programmes in Islamic studies at Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta. For example, upon completion of his study in Qom in 1980, Umar Shahab continued his undergraduate programme at the Faculty of Islamic Theology, Raden Fatah State Institute for Islamic studies, Palembang, completing it in 1984. He graduated with a master's degree and a doctorate in Islamic studies from Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University in 1991 and 2007, respectively. Similarly, Kholid al-Walid already held a bachelor's degree in Islamic theology before spending about seven years studying in Qom. Upon his return home from Qom, he entered master's and doctoral programmes at Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung, and Syarif Hidayatullah State Islamic University, Jakarta, respectively. By contrast, Abdurrahman Bima and Muhsin Labib were able to pursue their doctoral programmes at the State Islamic University, Jakarta, directly after the completion of their study in Qom thanks to the diplomas they had received from other institutions.

Due to their educational achievements, the above four figures enjoy cultural and social capital, which can be transformed easily into economic and symbolic capital. They have become prominent ustadz and lecturers at several universities and colleges in Jakarta. Furthermore, they were involved in founding, managing

and lecturing at Islamic universities, including STAIMI in Depok and Sadra College for Islamic Philosophy (STFI Sadra) in Jakarta.

Further education is not, however, a dominating factor that guarantees the success of a Qom alumni as an ustadz. Yet, in spite of the fact that they have not continued studying at a higher level, alumni have been successful in establishing, managing and teaching at Islamic institutions that attract students or individuals from the Shiʿi community. Take, for example, Ahmad Baragbah, who relies on his experience at the Hujjatiyya School, and who has succeeded in leading a pesantren in his hometown. Together with his Qom alumni colleagues, Baragbah, who spent five years studying Islamic knowledge in Qom, founded al-Hadi in 1989. Baragbah, an Indonesian non-Sayyid Arab, forged strong connections with the late Husein al-Habsyi, who recommended him for Islamic education in Qom and supported him in the establishment of the pesantren. Although Baragbah never studied at YAPI, his relationship with Husein al-Habsyi may be considered as a student–teacher relationship. Like him, other Qom graduates have also enjoyed several types of capital: cultural, social, economic and symbolic.

Other alumni have become renowned ustadz without being permanently affiliated with specific institutions. Husein Shahab's case is a notable example. His career as an ustadz progressed even though he never completed his master's degree at ISTAC Kuala Lumpur. After 1999, he chose to live in Jakarta where the largest numbers of Shiʿa reside. With his cultural capital (that is, his religious education in Qom and Kuala Lumpur), Husein Shahab began to establish his career by becoming involved in a number of daʿwa and educational activities in the capital. His good performance in daʿwa activities attracted an audience, including the organisers, or "leaders", of Islamic institutions. He then became a preacher and lecturer at several Islamic institutions, both Sunni and Shiʿi, such as Paramadina, STAIMI, IIMaN Centre for Positive Sufism, Taqwa Nanjar Foundation, al-Batul and al-Husainy. In addition, he has become involved in the religious programmes of several national television and radio stations, and is a very popular ustadz. As a prominent ustadz, Husein Shahab is hardly ever absent from national Shiʿi activities in Indonesia: in a single month he might teach and preach at more than twenty Islamic institutions. Given this large number of daʿwa activities, he too may become one of those ustadz who can live comfortably in Jakarta.[18]

Setting aside the economically and socially successful ustadz, however, it must be noted that good fortune has not graced all the Qom alumni who are active in serving the Shiʿi community. This has created envy of the popular ustadz who are considered to be inactive in guiding the Shiʿi community. There are yet other Qom alumni who refrain from the main duties of ustadz, but who instead become involved in business activities.

The social structure in which Qom graduates are located is notably complex with respect to the development of Shiʿi organisations in Indonesia. Although Indonesia is home to only a very small number of Shiʿa as compared with the vast Sunni majority, there are two national Shiʿi organisations. The first is Ikatan Jamaah Ahlulbait Indonesia (IJABI; the All-Indonesian Assembly of Ahlulbayt Associations), established 1 July 2000 and created by Jalaluddin Rakhmat. The second is Ahlul Bait Indonesia (ABI), established in July 2011. In the early stages of the process, nearly all the Qom alumni supported the necessity of establishing a national Shiʿi organisation in Indonesia. Even such prominent ustadz as Umar Shahab, Husein Shahab and Ahmad Baragbah were involved in a series of meetings with Jalaluddin Rakhmat intended to formulate the characteristics and structures of the organisations. However, the general lack of involvement and support from the wider community, and the later development of IJABI, has created discord within the Shiʿi community, which can in fact now be classified into the IJABI group and the non-IJABI group – the latter also known as the Qom group. Qom alumni such as Kholid al-Walid and Ikhlas Budiman, who had been active in managing IJABI for several years, later left it; now only a very small number of them are involved.

As I have noted elsewhere,[19] there is a range of other related matters that lead the ustadz to reject IJABI. As Ahmad Baragbah has noted, three issues are particularly prominent. The first concerns the organisation's name, which in this case is intimately related to the identity of the wider community. The critics of IJABI had proposed that the appropriate name for the organisation would be Ahlulbait (ahl al-bayt), because it is short and easy to remember, and frequently used by Shiʿa in general. The second, and more important, issue is the position of vilāyat-i faqīh, the political concept familiar from the Islamic Republic of Iran that assigns the *faqīh* (jurist) the highest authority over other segments of society. One widely adopted interpretation of this concept is that the leaders in Iran hold the highest leadership within the Shiʿi community worldwide, and not simply in Iran. The Shiʿa in Indonesia should therefore recognise this leadership. Thus, for these critics, the concept of vilāyat-i faqīh ought to be explicitly mentioned in the organisation's statutes, thus manifesting its recognition of the authority of Iran's Supreme Leader. In fact, the term does not appear in the IJABI statute, and the ustadz therefore regard IJABI as an opponent of vilāyat-i faqīh. The third issue also concerns authority. According to the IJABI's statutes the highest authority is vested in the national congress. The opposing group argues, however, that the highest authority, such as the power to appoint the chair of the executive council, should rest with the advisory council (*dewan syuro*), and not be based on elections at the national congress, since the latter would not reliably produce excellent results – indeed, it is a fact that the first national congress was not well organised, as has been admitted by Jalaluddin Rakhmat.[20]

While rejecting IJABI, nearly all the Qom alumni have supported and been involved in establishing ABI. Since mid-2010, a "friendship forum" called Forum Silaturahmi Nasional Ahlul Bait, consisting of representatives from Shiʿi pesantren and foundations from all over Indonesia, has been calling for the creation of a mass organisational alternative to IJABI, and this, the ABI, launched on 15 June 2011. The members of the ABI advisory council are senior Qom alumni; its chairman is Umar Shahab, while its executive chief is Hasan Dalil Alaydrus. Since its establishment, ABI has been active in promoting the mass organisation, seeking friendship and cooperation with existing Sunni organisations such as Nahdlatul Ulama (NU) and Muhammadiyah, and carrying out dialogues with Sunnis. One of its notable programmes is the promotion of the moderate face of Shiʿism through the publication of the so-called *Buku Putih Mazhab Syiah* (*The White Book of Shiʿism*) in 2012.[21] Nevertheless, it faces obstacles, as Formichi has noted: "It is of utmost interest . . . that ABI is struggling to obtain formal recognition from the government as they are unable to show a substantial difference with IJABI and thus demonstrate the need for a new organisation. Meaning that still now IJABI is the only public face of Indonesian Shiʿism."[22]

Qom Alumni and Daʿwa

Graduates of the Qom seminaries have travelled all over the world in order to propagate Islam.[23] Qom returnees in Indonesia have also contributed to the development of Islamic daʿwa. Daʿwa literally means "a call" or "an invitation"; in Indonesia, however, as in other countries, daʿwa has become a more complex term which includes the specific meaning of *tablīgh* (preaching) and a broader sense of "the propagation of Islam not only by preaching and publications, but also by deeds and activities in all areas of social life . . . [or] a comprehensive Islamization of society".[24] The major role of the Qom graduates in the field of Islamic daʿwa is in accord with the educational goal of Hawza ʿIlmiyya, namely, to train students to become missionaries and scholars.

Daʿwa carried out by Qom graduates has become widespread throughout Shiʿi institutions and organisations. The increasing number of Qom alumni returning to Indonesia corresponds with the growing number of Shiʿi foundations in the country. Although the establishment of these foundations is not a direct result of the ustadz or the Qom alumni, it is clear that a large number of Qom alumni have established their own Shiʿi foundations. To name but a few, Fathoni Hadi established the al-Hujjah Foundation, Jember, in 1987; Ahmad Baragbah established al-Hadi in 1989; Abdullah Assegaf founded the al-Wahdah Foundation, Solo, in 1994; and Rusdi al-Aydrus established the Ath-Thohir Foundation, Surabaya, in 2000. Furthermore, most of the Qom alumni have

become leaders or ustadz at the existing Shiʿi foundations: these include Zahir Yahya at al-Kautsar Foundation, Malang, East Java; Husein al-Kaf at al-Jawad Foundation, Bandung; Abdullah Assegaf at IPABI, Bogor; Muhammad Syuaib at al-Mujtaba Foundation, Purwakarta, West Java; and Herman al-Muntha-har at Amirul Mukminin Foundation, Pontianak, West Kalimantan. It seems that their missionary zeal has motivated these Qom alumni to establish Shiʿi institutions so that daʿwa activities are institutionalised and organised.

The better-established foundations usually have one or more permanent ustadz whose main duty is to give religious instruction and guidance to the jamaʿa. In this regard, the ustadz becomes a *muballigh* (preacher) or *dāʿī* (prop-agandist, evangelist) in the broad meaning of the term. As mentioned before, in some cases an ustadz may be a co-founder or owner of an institution; in other cases, the ustadz occupies a high position within the organisational structure of the institution. This is in accord with the fact that the ustadz have a prestigious status in the Shiʿi community. In this regard, the term *pembina* (adviser) is sometimes used to indicate a position that is higher than its head. The position is rather similar to that of the kyai within the pesantren tradition. Like the kyai in the pesantren, the ustadz is influential in the development of the institution. In many cases, the ustadz, particularly the prominent ones such as Umar Shahab and Husein Shahab, are not affiliated with a certain institution, but are hired by several different institutions at once. As mentioned earlier, a large number of Qom alumni become ustadz, and many of them occupy high positions in the Shiʿi institutions throughout the country.

The position of ustadz is crucial for the existence and development of Shiʿi institutions. The ustadz are influential in planning and realising programmes within each institution, as well as in establishing connections with other insti-tutions. The main duties of an ustadz can be described as follows: to give reli-gious instruction and guidance, to preach, to lead rituals and ceremonies, and to give advice regarding the direction of the institution. For these duties, the qualifications required of the ustadz include a thorough knowledge of religion, and good skills in preaching and in leading religious rituals and ceremonies. It is not surprising that the positions of ustadz in most Shiʿi institutions are occupied by Qom graduates. As a person who is considered to have deep religious knowl-edge, an ustadz is often seen by his jamaʿa as a figure whose guidance and advice is to be followed.

The position and role of Qom returnees cannot be dissociated from the establishment and management of the Islamic Cultural Centre (ICC), Jakarta, formerly ICC al-Huda, which was founded by five Iranians living in Jakarta in 2000. Its establishment involved the collaboration of several prominent Shiʿi figures in Indonesia with Iran, with the intention of fostering cultural under-standing between Iran and Indonesia. The founding council includes Jalaluddin

Rakhmat, Haidar Bagir and Umar Shahab. Its current director is Seyed Murteza Mousavi (an Iranian), who succeeded Muhsen Hakimollah. Beneath the director is a manager, who has always been a Qom alumnus. The present manager is Abdullah Beik, a graduate of the master's programme at Imam Khomeini College for Higher Education. To run its activities, this – the biggest Shiʿi foundation in Indonesia – employs about thirty staff, some of whom, though not all, are Qom alumni. The organisation of the centre depends crucially on the character of the director, not only with regard to authority and responsibility, but also due to its financial dependence on Iran. Since its establishment, the ICC has organised celebrations for national Islamic festivals and holy days such as ʿAshuraʾ (the commemoration of the death of Imam Husayn), *arabʿīn* (the commemoration of the fortieth day after Husayn's death) and *mawlid* (the Prophet Muhammad's birthday), as well as various missionary activities. It also facilitates Indonesian students who wish to study in Qom and other cities. Additionally, ICC has been active in publishing books, journals and magazines, and provides regular courses in Persian and Arabic, and on the sciences of the Qurʾan and Islamic traditions. Another apparent function is that of mediating among the existing Shiʿi institutions and between Iran and the Shiʿi community in Indonesia – a function that used to be fulfilled by the Iranian Embassy in Jakarta. As Formichi notes, however, the "ICC had been rejecting co-optation attempts by the Iranian Embassy for several years, however a recent change in the centre's directorship would suggest the beginning of a different relationship."[25]

It is through ICC, the Islamic College and the Iranian Embassy in Jakarta that missionary activities in the form of discussions, seminars, dialogues and workshops are carried out in cities and towns throughout the regions of Indonesia. Cooperation agreements and friendships have been established with Muslim organisations such as NU and Muhammadiyah, as well as with well-known universities. An important form of cooperation that is instrumental in promoting Iranian culture and Shiʿism is the establishment of the so-called "Iran Corner" at about twelve renowned universities in Indonesia, including UIN Jakarta, UIN Yogyakarta, UIN Makasar and Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta. The Qom alumni play a key role in facilitating such cooperation efforts.

Qom graduates have been active in varied types of daʿwa, which I have summarised elsewhere as follows:

Since the concept of daʿwa is commonly understood in its widest sense that includes all missionary activities aimed at realising Islamic society, daʿwa activities provided by the institutions are quite varied. The varied daʿwa activities can be classified into three types: *tabligh* (preaching), *taʿlim* (teaching, training or course) and social daʿwa. All these types are frequently interconnected. They may be directed towards either internal or external orientation.

> The realisation of the three types of da'wa by the existing institutions may be formulated in the form of either regular or incidental programmes.[26]

Their missionary activities have, however, generated negative responses from some segments of Indonesian society, even though some prominent Muslim leaders have displayed a moderate attitude towards Shi'ism and the Shi'a. Tension, conflict and even sectarian violence have marred Sunni–Shi'i relations in Indonesia, and one of the important factors in these conflicts is fear of the "Shi'itisation" of Sunnis. As a result, the practice of da'wa, including its syllabi and methods, has become an important topic of discussion among Shi'i figures, as in the workshop carried out by IKMAL mentioned previously. Several da'wa training sessions have also been carried out in order to promote effective and successful da'wa programmes.

QOM ALUMNI AND ISLAMIC EDUCATION

In the field of education, the role of the Qom alumni is enormous. This role can be classified into three aspects: first, they become teachers at existing educational institutions such as pesantren, madrasas and schools that may or may not be characteristically Shi'i (it should be noted that the existing system of Islamic education in Indonesia comprises three institutions: the pesantren, the madrasa and the school). Secondly, they establish and manage their own educational institutions. Thirdly, they teach at the newly founded educational institutions.

The new educational institutions usually follow the ḥawza model. Pesantren al-Hadi, which was founded by Ahmad Baragbah in Pekalongan, Central Java, is a noted example. Since its establishment, al-Hadi has provided students only with religious education that primarily follows the Shi'i educational system of Hawza 'Ilmiyya in Qom, where its founders and teachers had been trained – particularly in terms of subject matter and instructional materials. The educational programme is organised into six levels with a variety of subjects and drawing on a range of sources. The subjects offered include Arabic, 'aqīda, fiqh, tafsīr, hadith and Islamic history. All instructional materials are standard texts used in the institutions of Islamic learning in Qom. The basic teachings of Shi'ism, especially its doctrines and jurisprudence, are taught to the students of the first level, who are expected, if not required, to practice them in their daily life. As rituals and ceremonies practised in the pesantren are all Shi'i, guidance and training regarding daily obligatory rituals are also provided. All the instruction, training and guidance of the Shi'i teachings in al-Hadi are attempts to realise its main goal: to provide its students with the basic knowledge and skills to comprise a cadre of Shi'i teachers throughout the country. Furthermore, with the

knowledge they gain at the institution, its graduates can pursue higher Islamic education at the institutions of Islamic learning in Qom.

Pesantren al-Hadi and its top leader Ahmad Baragbah have connections with Iran, with both the office of the Supreme Leader and some individual ᶜulama. This pesantren, following an educational tradition similar to that in Qom, was said to send regular reports to Iran via its representatives or, at present, the ICC in Jakarta – the latter keeps the pesantren under constant observation, attending to their development, including the execution of curricula and the activities of students and teachers. Important events that occur in the pesantren are all reported to the office of the Supreme Leader. The pesantren also receive financial assistance from Iran, as well as educational equipment, particularly books and periodicals.[27] The interrelationship between them is also evidenced by the fact that a number of al-Hadi graduates go on to continue their Islamic education in Qom. Some of them have finished their studies and have returned to Indonesia: Muhammad in Purwakarta, Ali al-Aydrus in Bandung and Salman Daruddin in Jakarta, to name a few. All have been involved in the field of Islamic education and propagation. In addition, representatives of Iran's Supreme Leader and individual Shiᶜi learned men frequently take the opportunity to visit the pesantren during their visits to Indonesia. On the other hand, with the Islamic knowledge he gained in Qom, Ahmad Baragbah has been recognised by Iran as an important Shiᶜi figure in Indonesia, who is expected to play a major role in the spread of Shiᶜism. Alongside other prominent figures such as Jalaluddin Rakhmat and Zahir Yahya, he was appointed a representative of the Supreme Leader in the accumulation and distribution of *khums* (tax) in the country. Together with other influential figures like Jalaluddin Rakhmat, Zahir Yahya and Umar Shahab, he was also expected to prepare for the establishment of other Shiᶜi organisations in Indonesia.

Indonesia is also home to other Islamic education institutions that take the title ḥawza. One is called Hawzah Ilmiah Khatamun Nabiyyin, which was founded in Jakarta on 1 January 2000. Under the guidance of Grand Ayatollah Shaykh Husayn Wahid Khurasani in Qom, the ḥawza runs a two-year academic programme in Islamic studies, providing subjects like Arabic, mantiq, tafsīr, hadith, fiqh, usūl al-fiqh, kalām and history, as well as secular subjects like sociology, philosophy and research techniques. The students are then expected to pursue their learning at the ḥawza in Qom or Najaf.

The famous YAPI of Bangil, known as Hawzah Ilmiah Imam Ash-Shodiq and headed by Ali Umar al-Habsyi, has also adopted the ḥawza institutional model. It was established on 23 July 2008, with an initial intake of forty students. It tutors its students in all fields of religious studies, such as kalām, fiqh, tafsīr, Arabic and history. They are also expected to continue their study in Qom or in another ḥawza in Iran.

Additionally, the IPABI Foundation led by Abdullah Som has set up the so-called Hauzah Ilmiah Amirul Mukminin for male students and the Hauzah Ilmiah Az-Zahra for females. These are situated in an area in Puncak, Bogor, West Java. As a three-semester programme for senior high-school graduates, both ḥawza are designed to produce students with good reasoning skills and a good understanding of scientific practice, and also to prepare them for community service. Guided by a cohort of teachers that includes Qom alumni, students are taught Arabic, English, mantiq, mathematics, kalām and fiqh. In addition, they are enrolled in a programme of character-building, and are even trained in skills like martial arts, computer science, journalism, public speaking and event organising.

The Qom alumni also take part in the establishment and organisation of Islamic higher educational institutions, including Madinatul Ilmi College for Islamic Studies (STAIMI) and the Sadra College for Islamic Philosophy (STFI Sadra). Founded on 23 May 1997, STAIMI has already produced more than 500 alumni. It offers two subjects at undergraduate level: Islamic education and Islamic communication and information. Although its present rector is Mahdi Alaydrus, the STAIMI Foundation is headed by a Qom alumnus, Abdurrahman Bima. Recently, besides the regular system, STAIMI has implemented a boarding system for its students, who are provided with a number of learning and training activities such as Qurʾan memorisation, leadership training and martial arts. This was inspired by the model of Hawza ʿIlmiyya. It should be noted that STAIMI openly declares its identity as a Shiʿi university, which is designed to promote and implement the teachings of Shiʿism. As stated on its website, the STAIMI curriculum integrates the subjects outlined for universities by the Ministry of Religious Affairs with local content based on the spiritual excellence and character of ahl al-bayt, as well as promoting competency in English, Arabic and Persian. Furthermore, in addition to the formal curriculum, STAIMI strives to emphasise science and technology in religion and to create a religious atmosphere in campus daily life with the nuance of the ahl al-bayt tradition. A number of Qom alumni take part in teaching and guiding students in Islamic philosophy and Shiʿi rituals and tradition.

STFI Sadra differs from STAIMI in that it is reluctant to declare its Shiʿi identity. A number of Qom alumni are engaged in either management or teaching roles at this institution, which is presently headed by the renowned Qom alumnus Umar Shahab. This is a newly founded institution, launched on 12 July 2012, a date that was marked by an international seminar with a keynote speech by Professor Nasaruddin Umar, the Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs. With two undergraduate departments, that of Islamic Philosophy and of Qurʾan and Hadith Studies, it commenced classes in the academic year 2012. It is little wonder that an institution with this intellectual bent should have been founded,

as Qom graduates have a strong predilection for philosophy – a fact that is also closely related to Hawza ʿIlmiyya's reputation as a world centre for Muslim philosophers.[28] Umar Shahab and three other doctoral graduates of UIN Jakarta majored in Islamic philosophy, as is evidenced especially from their dissertation subjects – Umar Shahab having studied Khomeini's thought; Kholid al-Walid having investigated Mulla Sadra's eschatological views; Muhsin Labib having looked at Muhammad Taqi Misbah Yazdi's philosophy; and Abdurrahman Bima having scrutinised the influence of philosophy on Khomeini's political thought.

In addition, the role of Qom alumni in the field of Islamic education in Indonesia can be seen in their involvement in the development of the Islamic College Jakarta, which is sponsored by an Iranian charity. This was previously called the Islamic College for Advanced Studies (ICAS), set up in London in 1998, and the Jakarta branch was founded in 2003. Ali Movahhedi, the representative of ICAS London, as well as Professor Nurcholish Madjid (1939–2005), the outstanding Indonesian Muslim intellectual who was then rector of the University of Paramadina, signed the Memorandum of Understanding on 29 July 2002. The memorandum to run the Islamic Studies programme was then legalised by the Directorate General of Islamic Institutional Establishment (now the Directorate General of Islamic Education), the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, and later confirmed by the State Secretary of the Republic of Indonesia. In 2009, along with the establishment of al-Mustafa International University in Qom, it changed to its present name, the Islamic College Jakarta.

As stated in the web pages of al-Mustafa International University, the Islamic College Jakarta is one of the twenty-four colleges of al-Mustafa International University that are scattered around the world, including in Albania, Argentina, Denmark, Germany, India, the United Kingdom and Sweden. As a branch of the college, MIU issues diplomas for graduates of the Islamic College. Further, its director, Seyyed Ahmad Fazeli, is Iranian (the former director was Mohsen Mirri). The director is assisted by deputies in the areas of administration and research, in addition to being aided by staff from Iran especially with regard to financial affairs, and from Indonesia with regard to academic protocol. The Indonesians on the staff are usually Qom alumni, and these alumni also play a role as lecturers at the Islamic College. Thus, the important role of Qom alumni in the organisation and development of the Islamic College branch of MIU is very clear.

As for the academic programmes, the Islamic College relies on a raft of agreements with other higher education institutions, all of which have been established in view of the legal status that the programme is perceived to have in the eyes of Indonesian students and wider society. Since 2003–4 it has had a master's programme in the field of Islamic philosophy and Islamic mysticism based

on the abovementioned memorandum with the University of Paramadina. On 23 October 2010, the University of Paramadina received legal permission from the Directorate General of Islamic Institution, the Ministry of Religious Affairs, to organise a master's programme in Islamic studies. This was a renewal of the letter of 29 June 2001 from the Directorate of Islamic Institutional Establishment regarding cooperation, with the aim of establishing a dual programme and pooling human resources between the University of Paramadina and the Islamic College for Advanced Studies, London.

Cooperation agreements were extended to other universities in Indonesia, such as Sunan Gunung Djati State Islamic University, Bandung; Alauddin State Islamic University, Makasar; and Muhammadiyah University of Yogyakarta. The Islamic College also cooperates with UIN Bandung in running a BA in Islamic studies, and cooperates with Alauddin State Islamic University in Makassar in running a doctoral programme in Islamic philosophy. While the licence for the doctorate programme is under the authority of UIN Alauddin, the Islamic College is responsible for budgeting and financing the programme. It is important to note that one of the doctoral students, Jalaluddin Rakhmat, is the most prominent Shiʿi intellectual in Indonesia, and worth noting also that his admission as a doctoral student at UIN Alauddin Makasar met with a harsh response from leaders in Indonesia who are anti-Shiʿi. In a meeting in Bandung held on 22 April 2012, the so-called Forum of Indonesian ʿUlama and Community (FUUI), led by Athian Ali Dai, proposed that the university should reconsider Jalaluddin Rakhmat's status as a doctoral student because he is a known Shiʿi figure. The university dismissed the idea.

Thus, the role of Qom alumni in the field of Islamic education includes teaching at, establishing and managing Islamic educational institutions at elementary, secondary and tertiary levels. Their educational experience in the Hawza ʿIlmiyya of Qom certainly influences their roles in these capacities, which include the transmission of knowledge, the adoption of the ḥawza model, and management and lecturing at the Indonesian branch of al-Mustafa International University.

Conclusion

The complex role of Qom alumni in Indonesia can be summarised as follows: in relations between Iran and Indonesia, particularly within the Shiʿi community, Qom alumni occupy the position of mediator in the broadest sense. Geertz sees the kyai as cultural brokers engaged in filtering the appropriate information to the Shiʿi community;[29] however, due the massive access to information technologies that characterise the national and international relationships canvassed in this chapter, Geertz's view is not appropriate for understanding the role of Qom alumni in the Shiʿi community. Those alumni connect the

world's centre of Shi°i orthodoxy in Iran to the Shi°i community in Indonesia either directly or via Iranian institutions in Indonesia: specifically, the Islamic Cultural Centre, Jakarta, and the Islamic College Jakarta. It should be noted, however, that Shi°ism has become a field in which competition and conflict have coloured the relations between the Qom alumni and others, and indeed among the Qom alumni themselves. Further, all this is happening in the context of the strong competition that the Shi°i groups face from the rival Sunni groups in Indonesia.

Notes

1. M. Fischer, *Iran: From Religious Dispute to Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1980), p. 78.
2. *Syi'ar*, Muharam 1425/2004, pp. 31–2.
3. Mehdi Khalaji, *The Last Marja: Sistani and the End of Traditional Religious Authority in Shiism*, Policy Focus 59 (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2006), p. 30.
4. Ali Syamsuri, "Alumni Hawzah Ilmiyah Qum: Pewacanaan Intelektualitas dan Relasi Sosialnya dalam Transmisi Syiah di Indonesia", PhD dissertation, UIN Syarif Hidayatullah Jakarta, 2005, pp. 201–4.
5. Seyyed Hossein Nasr, *Traditional Islam in the Modern World* (London: Kegan Paul, 1985), pp. 165–82.
6. Moojan Momen, *An Introduction to Shi°i Islam* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1985), pp. 200–1; Chibli Mallat, *The Renewal of Islamic Law: Muhammad Baqer as-Sadr, Najaf, the Shi°i International* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 39–40.
7. Momen, *An Introduction*, pp. 200–1; Mallat, *The Renewal of Islamic Law*, p. 40.
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Islamic Modernism, Political Reform and the Arabisation of Education: The Relationship between Moroccan Nationalists and al-Azhar University

Ann Wainscott

INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines the relationship between al-Azhar University and the Moroccan nationalist movement. It argues that al-Azhar served as the institutional link between the Islamic modernist movement[1] in Cairo led by Muhammad ʿAbduh and Rashid Rida and the Moroccan nationalists led by ʿAllal al-Fasi. The infusion of Moroccan nationalism with the ideas of religious reform propagated by the Islamic modernists strengthened the ideological foundations of the independence movement and contributed to its success. Once these reformers found themselves in positions of authority in the post-independence government, Islamic modernist ideas continued to guide policy decisions, particularly with regard to educational priorities. This is most clearly demonstrated in the Arabisation of Moroccan education that took place during the second half of the twentieth century.

In addition to Islamic modernism's influence on Moroccan nationalists and their subsequent policies, the Moroccan case is significant to scholars of al-Azhar for other reasons. First, the conversions of the most prominent early twentieth-century Moroccan nationalists to Islamic modernism illustrate the various ways that the ideologies taught at al-Azhar University became influential in another country. I highlight three particular ways that Islamic modernism spread to Morocco: (a) directly, through studies at al-Azhar University; (b) indirectly, through the hajj or pilgrimage to Mecca, which required travel through Egypt; and, finally, (c) discipleship under a former al-Azhar student. Interestingly, it was not individuals who physically studied at al-Azhar, but those who contacted Islamic modernism through the third of these methods,

discipleship, who have played the most significant role in implementing Islamic modernist policy in Morocco. This suggests that the pedagogical methods of al-Azhar and Islamic higher education in general,[2] which encouraged close relationships between teacher and student, have been at least as important as the content of ideology in the spread of Islamic modernism.

Secondly, the Moroccan case is significant to the study of al-Azhar's regional impact because the earliest efforts to introduce Islamic modernism in Morocco failed. It was not until the second introduction of these ideas to the country that they took root. This situation presents ideal circumstances to assess how local conditions and power relations affect the ability of al-Azhar graduates and their disciples to propagate the ideas they gained abroad. Thus, while Islamic modernism's role in the Moroccan nationalist movement is undeniable, it is an oversimplification to attribute its impact to the ideology itself. Rather, a particular constellation of economic, political and social factors created an opportunity that led to the ideology's adoption and spread.

Argument

This chapter argues that the adoption of Islamic modernism as the ideological foundation for the nationalist movement created the conditions of path dependence. Path-dependent arguments are rooted in the idea of "increasing returns": small choices can have long-term and far-reaching effects if they close off other potential opportunities or "paths".[3] The changes in Moroccan society brought on by increasing European penetration at the end of the nineteenth century created the perception of an economic, political and social threat that made intellectuals and elites more open to new ideologies than they had been in previous decades. Fear of European domination of Moroccan industry and political institutions created the conception that Moroccan Islam and social organisation was in danger. The impact of this perception is evidenced in how differently Moroccan elites responded to the same ideology in the late 1870s, when they rejected Islamic modernism, and the first decades of the twentieth century, when they embraced it. Once Islamic modernism had been installed, and its position solidified through the Berber *Dahir* crisis of 1930, the choice had been made. Islamic modernism was locked in as the ideological foundation for the movement. The installation of this doctrine thus constitutes a critical juncture in Moroccan history and initiates a need to ask why this particular model of religious and political reform became influential above other possible alternatives. There is general agreement among participants that it was this combination of religious and political reform that contributed to the success of both movements. Once in a position of power, Moroccan nationalists began to make policy decisions related to the future of the country. As committed Islamic

modernists, the ideology became institutionalised in the country's system of education. Education thus served as the mechanism through which Islamic modernism reproduced itself.

Organisation

The introduction concludes with a discussion of the term "Islamic modernism" and why I chose to use it in place of the term "Salafism". The central body of the chapter has three sections: the first describes the development of the relationship between al-Azhar University and Morocco, highlighting the role of trade, pilgrimage and education. The second examines prominent Moroccan Islamic modernists, including Abdullah ibn Idris al-Sanusi, Abu Shuʿayb al-Dukkali, Muhammad ibn al-ʿArabi al-ʿAlawi and ʿAllal al-Fasi, and their connection to Islamic modernism. These four graduates are significant for several reasons. First, they exemplify the three ways that Moroccans came into contact with Islamic modernism enumerated above. Secondly, the varying success of their efforts to spread the ideology sheds light on how the conditions of the local community impacted upon how this ideology was received. Finally, the third part of the chapter examines the short- and long-term impact of these graduates, with an emphasis on the ideology underpinning Moroccan educational policy. I argue that the immediate impact of the spread of Islamic modernism was the combining of two movements, one for religious reform and one for political reform, the fusion of which strengthened both. Once granted independence, the nationalist movement became a modern political party that participated in governing the country. The Islamic modernist tinge of their educational policies provides evidence that the installation of Islamic modernism as the ideological foundation of the Moroccan nationalist movement created the conditions of path dependence and served as a critical juncture in Moroccan society, the implications of which remain visible today. The chapter concludes with reflections on what the study of the Moroccan case contributes to the study of al-Azhar University and its graduates' impact on their home communities.

Islamic Modernism and Salafism in Morocco

There are some complications with describing the ideology deployed in the Moroccan nationalist struggle. Although much of the literature refers to Moroccan nationalists as Salafists, the ideology was rooted in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Egyptian Islamic modernism of Jamal al-din al-Afghani, Muhammad ʿAbduh and Rashid Rida.[4] This discrepancy is likely due to the fact that the major Moroccan nationalist ʿAllal al-Fasi himself used the term "Salafiyah" in his memoirs (1948). Subsequent scholars, presumably

relying on al-Fasi, have characterised the nationalists as Salafists. Because al-Fa-si's ideology was rooted in the ideas of al-Afghani, ᶜAbduh and Rida, and because they did not refer to themselves as Salafists,[5] I have chosen to use the term "Islamic modernist".

Further, in the twenty-first century Salafism refers to groups with very different ideologies than it did at the time of the Islamic modernists and the Moroccan nationalists. In the twenty-first century, Salafism refers to a retrogressive, puritanical interpretation of Islam resistant to any innovation from the post-*Rashidun*[6] period. Salafist belief is characterised by rejection of non-Islamic institutions and insistence on harsh punishments according to narrow interpretations of the faith. The Islamic modernists, on the other hand, had a very different approach to reconciling their faith with the challenges of the day.

Muhammad ᶜAbduh was the most influential of the Islamic modernists among the Moroccan nationalists. ᶜAbduh, the student of al-Afghani, studied at al-Azhar from 1869 to 1877 and taught there afterwards. ᶜAbduh was interested in mystical theology and was contemplating an ascetic life before he met al-Afghani. After a brief exile, he returned to Egypt where he became committed to the founding of schools and reforming al-Azhar. ᶜAbduh did not reject modern institutions; rather, he sought to reconcile them to Islamic principles and in so doing chart a middle course:

> ᶜAbduh's purpose, in all the acts of his later life as well as his writings, was to bridge the gulf within Islamic society [between those who accepted and those who rejected modern institutions and ideas], and in so doing to strengthen its moral roots. He thought this could only be done in one way. It could not be done by a return to the past, by stopping the process of change begun by Muhammad ᶜAli. It could only be done by accepting the need for change, and by linking that change to the principles of Islam: by showing that the changes which were taking place were not only permitted by Islam, but were indeed its necessary implications if it was rightly understood, and that Islam could serve both as a principle of change and a salutary control over it.[7]

Since the Islamic modernists accepted European institutions and bodies of knowledge in the context of Islamic values, referring to their disciples as Salafis is misleading given the current understanding of the term as militantly against non-Islamic institutions. Finally, at a time when the media frequently uses the term "Salafist" as interchangeable with "terrorist" or "extremist" without concern for the content of the ideology motivating the individual, it is prudent to employ the less politicised term "Islamic modernism".

One caveat is in order, however. There is one way in which Moroccan nationalists resemble modern Salafis more than Islamic modernists, and that

is in their hostility towards Sufism.[8] Due to the political and social context in which Islamic modernism was incorporated in Morocco, where Sufis were perceived as collaborating with the French colonisers, anti-Sufi elements were played up among the nationalists more than among the original Islamic modernists. Al-Fasi's claim that "the manner in which the Salfiyah movement had been conducted in Morocco had secured for it a degree of success unequalled even in the country of Muhammad ʿAbduh and Jamal al-Din, where it originated" should be interpreted as in reference to the success of the movement in taking a militant stand against Sufism.[9] This is not to say that the Islamic modernists were successful in eradicating Sufism from Morocco, only that the nationalists opposed it in tangible ways.[10] Further, al-Fasi's stance against Sufism did not prevent him from instrumentalising French acceptance of the brotherhoods. In fact, an early nationalist secret society was known as a *zaouia*, a term used as a meeting place for Sufis, and al-Fasi was sometimes referred to as "Shaykh", a term widely used in Morocco to connote the leader of a brotherhood.[11]

The Islamic modernists on the other hand, and particularly Muhammad ʿAbduh, were sympathetic to a certain kind of Sufism. ʿAbduh first encountered Sufism at the feet of his father's maternal uncle, Shaykh Darwish Khadir, who was a disciple of the Moroccan founder of the Darqawiyya order, Mawlay al-ʿArabi al-Darqawi.[12] There is also some support for the argument that ʿAbduh was drawn to al-Afghani because of his views on Sufism. The two do appear to have held similar beliefs on the subject. Both men believed that Sufism could contribute to proper Islamic practice, but rejected many of the behaviours of their Sufi contemporaries:

> For the true mysticism, as he conceived it, ʿAbduh had a great respect: it was right that Muslims should interiorize their obedience to the law. But another type of mysticism he regarded as dangerous to the mind and morals: that type which gave its devotion to the "saints" (friends of God, *awliyaʾ*) and their miracles, and so tended to divert attention from God and to place intermediaries between God and man . . .[13]

ʿAbduh's position is so ambiguous that it has led some scholars to conclude that he was a "salafi Sufi", a term that is unthinkable in the context of the modern usage of "Salafi".[14] ʿAbduh's careful discrimination between appropriate and inappropriate forms of Sufism has largely been lost by subsequent followers, including the Moroccan modernists, who were, in general, anti-Sufi.

Similarly, the father of Islamic modernism and ʿAbduh's teacher, al-Afghani, had a nuanced relationship with Sufism that is frequently oversimplified. ʿAbduh likely acquired his relationship with Sufism from his teacher, who both appreciated great Sufi thinkers while questioning the actions of his Sufi

contemporaries. ᶜAbduh writes that al-Afghani was responsible for deepening his knowledge of Sufism. In particular, al-Afghani is known to have introduced ᶜAbduh and several other disciples to the Naqshbandi mystical poet ᶜAbd al-Rahman Jami, an author whose works were not taught at al-Azhar.[15] At the same time, al-Afghani saw Sufis as preventing the Islamic community or *umma* from modernising. Although he rarely criticised Sufis directly, his complaints about the relationship between shaykh and disciple, which required total obedience, and the style of instruction offered at al-Azhar Mosque university, which relied on rote memorisation, capture his concerns and situate them within his larger intellectual priorities. He was more concerned with the advancement of the umma than opposing the brotherhoods. Al-Afghani felt that both Sufism and rote memorisation prevented the development of the critical faculties and open mind necessary for rational debate and, hence, were a threat to the progress of the community.[16] His anti-Sufi discourse should then be understood in the context of admiration for European rationalist thought and his hopes for the renewal of Islamic thought.

The socio-political context encountered by the Moroccan nationalists was quite different. In early twentieth-century Morocco, a number of Sufi shaykhs cooperated with the French in order to maintain their positions of authority.[17] Thus, the emphasis on the anti-Sufi strain of thought in Islamic modernism in the Moroccan context was rooted in resistance to French domination, while al-Afghani's critique of Sufism was related to his concerns about the decay of the umma in failing to adopt European institutions and technologies. Although this anti-Sufism could be used as the basis of an argument that the Moroccan nationalists are best identified as Salafists, a brief review of ᶜAllal al-Fasi's memoir demonstrates that his ideology is closer to Islamic modernism than Salafism.

Al-Fasi clearly articulated his views of the ideology when he wrote:

> The aim of the Salafiyah, as propounded by its founder, al-Hanbali, was the cleansing of religion from the superstitions that had crept into it and the restoration of its original purity . . . The movement, therefore, aimed at the reform of the individual as a prerequisite for the perfection of society. The success of the movement, it was realized, hinges upon the acceptance of an "open mind" towards innovations and their critical evaluation in light of the general interest. [18]

In al-Fasi's view, a strict adherence to the core doctrines of Islam will facilitate a type of personal revival that can serve as the basis for larger social changes. At the same time, this deep reverence for the faith as practised by the Prophet and the pious ancestors (or *as-salaf aṣ-ṣāliḥ*, hence the term "Salafi") was married to a measured acceptance of advances in science and technology. Thus, like

ᶜAbduh, it was not a blind acceptance of all things old as normatively good and all things new as normatively bad. Rather, al-Fasi's Islamic modernism was a streamlining of religious belief, a simplifying of practice and a careful filtering of innovation to move the umma, or Islamic community, forward in a conscious and intentional way.

Al-Fasi's Islamic modernism combined unity and tolerance with individual freedom of thought and belief. Politically, it called for self-determination; cooperation among separate Muslim nations (rather than a unified Arab political entity); the installation of the Arabic language as the dominant language throughout the Muslim world; shariᶜa as the basis for civil law "subject to constant review and interpretation"; a popularly elected assembly; and liberation from foreign control "both material and moral". Finally, it is worth noting, "Above all, the new Salafiyah rejects the idea of a secular state."[19] While there are some shared positions with modern Salafis, such as the rejection of Islamic mysticism and the insistence on the Islamic state, the nationalists' openness to technological and non-Islamic institutions separate them from modern Salafism in a fundamental way, making it more appropriate to identify their ideology as a variant of Islamic modernism.

Although what is known about the relationship between Morocco and al-Azhar is described in the next section, it must be noted that the presence of Islamic modernist ideas in Morocco is the primary evidence of the connection between al-Azhar University and the Moroccan nationalists. While it is difficult to establish concrete connections between the modernists and particular individuals, it is known that Muhammad ᶜAbduh maintained a healthy correspondence with nationalist leaders across North Africa, and that he sent a number of his publications to North African religious leaders.[20]

I. Morocco, al-Azhar and Islamic Modernism

Moroccans have been travelling through Cairo on their way to Mecca for centuries. Consequently, it is likely that Moroccan scholars have studied and taught at al-Azhar University in some capacity for hundreds of years. Early records of a Moroccan presence at al-Azhar date from the fifteenth century. During that time, there were at least thirty-six Maghribis at al-Azhar.[21] Of those scholars, at least one is known to have been from the region of present-day Morocco. The scholar known as Zarruq[22] ended up at al-Azhar while on hajj. It is said that his courses were attended by 600 students.[23] Because he completed the pilgrimage many times and attracted such a following in his lessons, it is likely that he frequented the university. Ahmad bin ᶜAli al-Jazuli (d. 1782) is also known to have studied at al-Azhar with the father of Egyptian historian al-Jabarti and a Fassi scholar, Shaykh al-Tawdi bin Suda, who was in residence there.[24] These

scholars set out from Morocco with one another on the hajj, but ended up stopping for a time to study at al-Azhar.[25] Cairo's location on the pilgrimage route between Morocco and the Hijaz thus encouraged contact between religious scholars from both regions.

It is not known how many Moroccan students attended al-Azhar, but there were certainly some.[26] In 1902, there were twenty-two Moroccan students present out of a total 645 foreign students.[27] Of significant Moroccan nationalists, at least one is known to have attended al-Azhar university: Hassan Bouayad in 1929–33.[28] Although few in number, these students were involved in several important organisations related to Moroccan nationalism, including a secret Egyptian group hoping to assist in the liberation of North Africa from French influence. There are indications that Moroccan students at al-Azhar may have facilitated communication between the group and Moroccan activists.[29] In addition, students at al-Azhar were involved in another Cairo-based group, al-Ittihad al-Maghribi (Maghreb Unity), linked to the Egyptian nationalists Shaykh ʿAli Yusuf, Ahmad Pasha Sharaʾi and Mustafa Pasha Khalifa. The group, intent on encouraging rebellion in Morocco, launched an Arabic-language newspaper, al-Haqq, in Tangier, and the group was later implicated in a plot[30] to foment rebellion in the final days of Ramadan.[31] The presence of such a group suggests, on the one hand, the existence of strong connections between Egyptian and Moroccan nationalists, and, on the other, highlights how al-Azhar acted informally as a base for facilitating these connections.

In addition to being a centre of religious learning, Cairo was also an important market for Moroccan leather goods. As a result, a large population of Moroccan merchants, numbering around 2,000, lived in Egypt at the beginning of the twentieth century.[32] Even though not formally involved at al-Azhar, these merchants likely interacted with other Moroccans, since the Moroccan community in Cairo had a certain amount of cohesion and was not completely independent of the Moroccan sultan's influence:

> All of the Moroccan expatriate community in Egypt, scholars as well as merchants, were placed under a *Wakil* (representative) appointed by the Moroccan Sultan. In the absence of formal diplomatic relations between Morocco and the Ottoman empire, he functioned as a kind of ambassador, resolving disputes within the community, as well as with overseeing the general welfare of Moroccans residing in Egypt.[33]

Presumably, he also monitored the activities, both subversive and benign, of his subjects living in Cairo.

Although the Moroccan community in Cairo appears to have been small, the links these residents facilitated between Moroccan nationalists and al-Azhar

were sufficient to result in a significant traffic in ideas between the two. This is most evident in the large number of subscriptions to Egyptian newspapers in Moroccan cities:

> There were, for example, some fifty regular subscribers to the Pan-Islamic newspaper *al-Muᶜayyad* (Cairo) at Fez alone in 1911, and those known to be taking the paper included the then Foreign Minister, Muhammad al-Muqri, the former Minister of War, Muhammad Ghibbas (usually rendered in French, Guebbas), and other important officials. Other Egyptian newspapers circulated among the élite at Fez, including *al-Ahram* (pro-French), *al-Muqattam* (pro-British), and *al-Liwa* (Pan-Islamic). Both the sultan, ᶜAbd al-Hafiz, and his then Grand Vizier, Madani al-Glawi, are known to have been regular readers of both the Near Eastern and European press. Given the small size of the Moroccan political élite, and the fact that newspapers were undoubtedly widely commented on, the significance of the press in Morocco before 1912 seems clear.[34]

In coming decades, other newspapers became more significant. Halstead, for example, found that "The leading periodicals were *al-Manar*, *al-Fath*, and *al-Zahra* from Cairo, and *ech-Chihah* from Constantine (Algeria), and by all odds the most widely read of these in Morocco was Rida's *al-Manar*,[35] a monthly review of philosophy, religion and social affairs reflecting about the same proportion of political overtones as the reform movement it represented."[36] Three of the four journals popular during the First World War were Islamic modernist in orientation,[37] highlighting the significance of the press in spreading that ideology.

These journals were extraordinarily significant. *Al-Manar* was the primary means of conversion to Islamic modernism by nationalists who did not know al-Dukkali or al-ᶜArabi al-ᶜAlawi personally, and was particularly important in the lives of the following nationalists: Mohammed Hassan al-Ouazzani, Ibrahim al-Kattani, Omar Abdeljalil, Mohammed Lyazidi, ᶜAllal al-Fasi, Ahmed Mekouar and Ahmed Benani.[38] In addition, these publications prepared the ground for graduates of al-Azhar to spread the Islamic modernist message, particularly among students of al-Qarawiyyin Mosque University in Fez, Morocco.[39] The impact of these journals also demonstrates that the newspaper itself was effective in converting non-graduates and thus was a successful strategy undertaken by Islamic modernists in Cairo.

II. Significant Moroccan Islamic Modernists

While a number of individuals were significant to the spread of Islamic modernism in Morocco, four are of particular importance: Abdullah ibn Idris al-Sanusi,

Abu Shuᵓayb al-Dukkali, Muhammad ibn al-ᶜArabi al-ᶜAlawi and ᶜAllal al-Fasi. Al-Sanusi is credited with being the first to try to spread Islamic modernism in the country. Al-Dukkali was the first to win converts to Islamic modernism among Moroccan religious scholars, one of whom, al-ᶜAlawi, would go on to be the teacher of many future nationalists. His student ᶜAllal al-Fasi led the Moroccan nationalist movement and the independence party that participated in governing in the years after the French protectorate.

Abdullah ibn Idris al-Sanusi was a lecturer at al-Qarawiyyin University. Al-Sanusi reached a position of importance upon return from a pilgrimage to Mecca in 1870 when Sultan Mawlay al-Hassan appointed him to his Royal Learned Council.[40] During his travels, al-Sanusi was exposed to the ideas of Islamic modernism, although it is not known how.[41] His appointment to the council suggests that the sultan approved of al-Sanusi's Islamic modernist principles. The other members of the council, however, including Ahmad bin al-Talib bin Sudah and ᶜAbdullah al-Kamil al-ᶜAmrani al-Hasani, both Sufis, accused al-Sanusi of being a Muᵓtazilite[42] and forced him into exile.[43] Al-Sanusi demonstrates how even those who did not formally study at al-Azhar could come into contact with the ideas propagated there through the pilgrimage and so attempt to spread those ideas upon their return. More significantly, his experience demonstrates that the conditions in Morocco in 1870 were not ripe for the spread of a new ideology.

While al-Sanusi is emblematic of those who came into contact with Islamic modernism through the hajj, Abu Shuᵓayb al-Dukkali (1878–1937) actually studied at al-Azhar following the implementation of ᶜAbduh's reforms.[44] In addition, he was chosen by the rector of al-Azhar to teach in Mecca, suggesting he was an exemplary student. He returned to Morocco in 1907 after being invited by then sultan ᶜAbd al-Hafiz to serve on his Royal Learned Council.[45] He began teaching Qurᵓanic exegesis (*tafsīr*) at Qarawiyyin University in 1908.[46] Al-Dukkali's return was recorded by the nationalist leader ᶜAllal al Fasi in his memoirs. He wrote, "The Sheikh had returned imbued with a burning desire to propagate the principles of the Salafiyah reform movement. A group of young enthusiastic supporters gathered around him. They distributed the publications of the Salafiyah movement in Egypt and accompanied him on his tours to pull down trees and shrines which had been made the object of popular veneration."[47] This quote identifies several strategies employed by al-Dukkali's disciples, such as the distribution of Salafi literature and the destruction of sites venerated by Sufis. Further, these activities highlight the anti-Sufi tone of the Moroccan Islamic modernists.

Al-Dukkali's activities focused on religious, not political, revival and were largely educational initiatives. The most significant of his activities was his involvement with the Free School movement. The name Free Schools refers

not to the cost of attendance, but rather to schools free of French ideology. The curriculum of these schools emphasised Qurʾanic studies with an Islamic modernist interpretation and employed textbooks from Egypt.[48] Important graduates of the Free Schools and future nationalists included: "Abdelakder Benjellous, Mohammed El-Fassi, Mohamed Hassan Ouazzani, Ahmed Réda Guédira".[49] In order to raise funds for the schools, theatrical troupes toured the country discussing the need for educational reform and collecting donations for the schools.[50] Mohammed Lyazidi, one of al-Dukkali's students, is responsible for spreading Islamic modernism from Fez to nationalists in Rabat.[51]

In addition to his involvement with the Free Schools, al-Dukkali was deeply concerned with the training of future religious scholars at Qarawiyyin Mosque University in Fez. Despite his opposition to Sufism, al-Dukkali cooperated with Sufi Abdelhay al-Kittani in opposing French efforts to reform Qarawiyyin in the 1930s.[52] He then enlisted the support of the sultan, ʿAbdul-Hafiz, to oversee his own reforms to the curriculum:

> Through ʿAbdul-Hafiz's help, Abu Shuʾaib succeeded in adding to the curriculum of the Qarawiyin University the teaching of *tafsīr*; this was indispensable if the Salafis were to have resort to *ijtihad* (individual interpretation), the door of which, they believed, contrary to the widely accepted attitude, was not shut. During the three years which al-Dukkali spent in Fez, he himself taught the subject in the Qarawiyin, and while there a group of enthusiastic disciples formed itself around him. It was to one of these disciples, Mawlay al-ʿArabi al-ʿAlawi, that he handed on the torch of the Salafiyya in Morocco.[53]

The most significant contribution to Islamic modernism made by Muhammad ibn al-ʿArabi al-ʿAlawi, al-Dukkali's student, was transforming it from a movement of religious reform to one of political reform. As such, he can be seen as the first Moroccan "neo-Salafi".[54] Al-ʿAlawi, a former member of the Tijaniyya brotherhood, was converted to Islamic modernism by reading Ibn Taymiyya's *The Separation between the Disciples of God and the Disciples of Satan* as well as ʿAbduh's *al-Manar*.[55] He came into contact with al-Dukkali while a lecturer at Qarawiyyin. He was also a teacher at Collège Moulay Idriss.[56] As a committed Islamic modernist, he participated in the reforms to Qarawiyyin University's curriculum in 1933.[57] Al-ʿAlawi's students included many nationalists such as ʿAllal al-Fasi and Ibrahim al-Kittani.[58] In his memoirs, al-Fasi described al-ʿAlawi's activities: "Ibn al-ʿArabi's reform circle at Fez and Sheikh Abu Shuʾayb's group at Rabat carried on an intensive reform campaign through the media of public lectures, exchange of visitors, and articles in the press of Algeria and Tunisia; [since] Morocco did not at that time possess a single newspaper that

was not under French influence or control".[59] The groups that al-Fasi referred to were Islamic modernist circles, a type of reading group that had outreach activities such as those listed above. They also wrote op-eds in Islamic modernist publications such as *al-Manar*.[60] It was under al-ʿAlawi's leadership that Moroccan reformers went from consuming Islamic modernist publications to contributing to them. Further, in these reading groups Moroccan nationalists began to view their struggle against the French and their Sufi collaborators as part of a larger struggle for religious reform. This fusion of movements for religious and political reform would help them to gain public support for their position through the activities described above.

Finally, the fourth major Moroccan Islamic modernist was ʿAllal al-Fasi. His biography has been detailed elsewhere,[61] so I will give only the relevant details. He was born into a wealthy Fassi family. His father was a teacher at Qarawiyyin University as well as a merchant who founded the Nasiriyyah Free School in the city of Fez. The school "offered Arabic and Islamic education based on Arabic literature and grammar, poetry, and the study of religion as opposed to the new French protectorate schools which used French as the medium of instruction and promoted French culture".[62] Al-Fasi was himself a student there, before attending Qarawiyyin University at the young age of fourteen. It was there that he met al-ʿAlawi and was exposed to Islamic modernist doctrine. He was involved in a number of nationalist activities from the age of seventeen, including secret societies and the publication of a nationalist newsletter titled *Umm al-Banin*, as well as communication with student organisations in France and Egypt.[63] Like his father and his mentor al-ʿAlawi, al-Fasi was a teacher in the Free School movement. Al-Fasi's popularity as a nationalist leader earned him the distrust of the French and he was exiled to Gabon for nine years. He returned in 1946, only to leave for Cairo a year later. While in Cairo, al-Fasi lectured regularly at al-Azhar University.[64] These speeches are collected in the volume *Min al-gharb il al-sharq* (*From the West to the East*). He also gave a number of radio talks that are collected in the work *Nida al-Qahira* (*The Call from Cairo*). Al-Fasi's concern for Moroccan students to receive an education that was in Arabic and founded on Islamist values became significant in the post-independence era when he supported the Arabisation of the Moroccan public school curriculum, discussed below.

One final actor deserves mention, though he was not Moroccan. Shakib Arslan, a Lebanese Druze prince and former student of Muhammad ʿAbduh,[65] maintained a strong relationship with a number of Moroccan nationalists, including ʿAllal al-Fasi, Mohammed Hassan Ouazzani and Ahmed Balafrej. Out of his office in Geneva, where Ouazzani worked as his personal secretary from 1930 to 1933, Arslan intermittently published *La Nation Arab*, a pan-Islamic newsletter between 1930 and 1938. In contradiction to the publication's name, the main

goal of the paper was to promote the idea of pan-Islamism, not pan-Arabism.[66] Although Arslan had tremendous influence with Moroccan nationalists, it is unlikely that he is responsible for introducing Moroccan nationalists to Islamic modernism. By the time he began his publication, most Moroccan nationalists had already been converted to Islamic modernism as described above. His significance is in assisting them to translate their grievances into political action and in building a shared sense of struggle among Muslims across North Africa and the Middle East, and as far away as Indonesia.

III. Short- and Long-term Effects

Short term: combining religious and political reform

It is not surprising that Islamic modernism, a doctrine focused on the reform of the individual, became the ideological basis for a political movement. The doctrine itself, as specified above by ʿAllal al-Fasi, but also as described by its founders, argued for an intrinsic relationship between the reform of the individual and a reform of society. At the same time, factors local to the Moroccan context provided an added impetus to the adoption of the ideology. In particular, the surrender of the great Riffian rebel Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Karim al-Khattabi (d. 1963) in 1927 made it obvious to the nationalists that the French could not be defeated in military struggle, encouraging them to work for cultural reform. Some argue that Islamic modernism was then a tactical ideological choice, since the French attempted to allow the Moroccans a degree of autonomy with regard to their religious affairs.[67] In practical terms, French efforts to not interfere with religion allowed the young nationalist ʿAllal al-Fasi to give distinctly political speeches under the veil of religious learning while lecturing at Qarawiyyin Mosque University, launching his political career.[68] The adoption of Islamic modernism can be seen as a pragmatic choice, because a secular nationalist ideology would not have been afforded the same kind of organisational autonomy. Secondly, there is general agreement among scholars that a secular nationalist ideology would not have been capable of mobilising the type of mass support that Islamic modernism did.

While the need to oppose the French culturally and unite Moroccans along religious lines are certainly contributing factors to the success of Islamic modernism, the most compelling argument for the effectiveness of Islamic modernism was French policy and particularly the Berber Dahir crisis of 1930.[69] This and other French policies turned religious reformers into political revolutionaries.[70] The Berber Dahir of 1930[71] was the height of French efforts to establish separate judicial systems for Berbers and Arabs. The nationalists viewed it as an effort to divide the umma and they vehemently opposed the reforms. Islamic activists as

far away as Indonesia joined them in their efforts.[72] The whole affair was further complicated by the fact that there was a vague ethnic and geographic division between Islamic modernists and Sufis. Islamic modernists tended to claim Arab descent and live in urban areas, while Sufis tended to claim Berber descent and live in rural areas.[73] The divide between the two thus had political, religious and ethnic dimensions. These divisions, however, did not prevent their temporary cooperation during the Berber Dahir campaign of 1930.

The result of the Berber Dahir crisis of 1930 was the short-lived early cooperation between Berbers and nationalists. "Thus, while staunchly Berberist orders like the Derqawa and its derivative, the Kittaniyya, originally opposed the French occupation, when they were later confronted by a reforming sultan who openly sympathised with the aims of the Salafiyyist nationalists, they often leagued themselves with the French authorities who promised, however ambiguously, to respect their prized autonomy, religiously as well as politically."[74] The sympathy that Mohammed V showed for Islamic modernism thus had a significant impact on the alliances that developed in the post-1930 nationalist climate. Although Berbers such as ʿAbd el-Krim originally vehemently opposed the French presence in Morocco, the anti-Sufi position of Moroccan nationalists and their champion the sultan encouraged Sufis to cooperate with the French in the interests of self-preservation. This cooperation then provided fodder for political grievance between Islamic modernists and Sufis, since the former began to see Sufis as both political and religious rivals: they represented an impure Islam *and* were traitors. This merging of political with religious grievance only added intensity to the conflict between them. ʿAllal al-Fasi, Mohammed al-Fasi and Mohammed Lyazidi all argue that this combination of religious and political grievance is what made both Islamic modernism and nationalism successful in Morocco.[75] While the conclusion of this chapter stresses how local conditions affected the reception of Islamic modernism, this brief section demonstrates how Islamic modernism also affected local power relations.

Long term: educational reform

If the short-term effect of the importation of Islamic modernism was the success of the Moroccan nationalist movement, the long-term effect was no less significant. Islamic modernism's focus on the reform of the individual believer has consistently emphasised the role of education as the mechanism through which societal reform takes place. It is no surprise that a priority of the nationalist movement and the subsequent independence party, Istiqlal, was the Arabisation of education, or the transition from an educational system where French or Spanish was the language of instruction to Modern Standard Arabic (*fuṣḥā*). The proposal created such a controversy that it was not fully implemented for

thirty years. Istiqlal itself was divided over the form and priority of Arabisation, and the two factions were led by ꜥAllal al-Fasi and Mehdi Ben Barka, a leftist intellectual whose disagreements with al-Fasi would lead him to form a separate party in the years after independence. Al-Fasi viewed Arabisation as a means through which to encourage the development of a distinctly Arab Moroccan culture. Arabisation was a priority for al-Fasi, as demonstrated in his letter-writing campaign in support of the measure, but it would be an overstatement to say that he wanted all subjects taught in Arabic. It was later activists (not al-Fasi) who demanded the "complete" Arabisation of the educational system.[76] Indeed, his own hesitancy over Arabisation is probably best described in the fact that he chose to send his own children to *mission* schools, where the primary language of instruction was French.[77] Al-Fasi did not, to my knowledge, publicly defend this decision. Ben Barka, on the other hand, did not disapprove of Arabisation, but he viewed it as a lower priority than educational development. For him, French was the necessary primary language for Moroccan students because of the gaps in the vocabulary of Arabic.[78] He supported some Arabisation, but viewed the mastery of French as an economic necessity.

The Arabisation of Moroccan public education began in the early years of the post-independence government, when ꜥAllal al-Fasi's cousin, Mohammed, was minister of education. He announced the policy at a press conference on 25 June 1956. Beginning the following year, the first year of elementary schooling (*cours préparatoires*) was to be given in Arabic, followed by two years of schooling split between Arabic and French instruction.[79] However, there were so few proficient Arabic speakers in the country that it was necessary to import a large number of Arabic teachers from Egypt, Lebanon and Iraq.[80] In less than a decade, the process was paused by then Minister of Education Mohammed Benhima due to concerns over the quality of instruction, not to mention the ideological influence of the teachers from the Middle East, and French was once again made the language of instruction.[81]

The process was reinstated under the leadership of Hassan II, not because of his support for the policy, but due to pressure from various social actors such as the Istiqlal party, the Union of Higher Education, the National Association of Moroccan Writers and the public at large, as well as his concern over the spread of leftist ideologies.[82] The World Bank and UNESCO also supported the measure "based on the sound pedagogical notion that literacy is best spread when the language of instruction is the language of the home".[83] However, the belief that the language of Arabisation, Modern Standard Arabic, was similar to spoken Moroccan Arabic or Darija was mistaken.

Istiqlal was at the forefront of the Arabisation campaign. In a communiqué published on 3 January 1973 in the Istiqlal newspaper *al-Alam*, ꜥAllal al-Fasi appealed to the Moroccan people to demand that the prime minister Arabise

education.[84] The appeal instigated six months of petitions published in multiple Moroccan newspapers in both French and Arabic. The campaign was successful. By 1978, Hassan II had become fully committed to Arabisation, stating that "Arabization should be the irreversible point of departure for educational reform".[85] Hassan II's support for Arabisation was rooted in his concern over the rise of leftist movements on university campuses and the desire for a strengthened Islamic opposition to serve as a bulwark against them.

The process was complete by the early 1990s. The Istiqlal party and specifically ᶜAllal al-Fasi are responsible for making Arabisation a national political issue, but Hassan II is responsible for its actual implementation. Arabisation had been a priority of the Istiqlal party for decades, but it did not become national policy until the king threw his support behind it.

Consequently, while al-Fasi fought for Arabisation as part of a larger commitment to Islamic modernism, Hassan II supported the reforms due to his own political motives, namely, his desire to prevent the development of a unified opposition. Hassan II's ulterior motives in implementing the reforms highlight how the long-term impact of the ideology of Islamic modernism on Moroccan education and politics was shaped by the political, economic and social context into which it was imported.

Conclusions: The Moroccan Case

Many scholars have argued that Islamic modernism was accepted in Morocco due to the country's tendency to accept ideologies of religious reform. ᶜAllal al-Fasi himself commented: "It appears that Morocco is predisposed more strongly than any other country to accept reform movements advocating a return to true religion and the tenets of the faith."[86] Halstead, a scholar who knew many of the leading Moroccan nationalists, came to a similar conclusion, although he did not think this proclivity towards religious reform was sufficient to explain the appeal of Islamic modernism: "Morocco had always leaned towards fundamentalism in religion – the Malekite ritual prevailed there – and hence was potentially receptive to a movement such as Salafiyya, but during the time of Djamal al-Din and ᶜAbduh it had made little headway because the other conditions were wanting."[87] What were the conditions to which Halstead is alluding? What conditions explain why Islamic modernism was rejected in one period but accepted later? What does the Moroccan case demonstrate about why some graduates of al-Azhar were successful in spreading the ideologies they acquired?

The most important reason why Islamic modernism was rejected when first propagated by al-Sanusi, but welcomed in later years, was the political context in which it was introduced. In the last decades of the nineteenth century, intellectuals and scholars did not yet feel threatened by Europe. The country had not

experienced foreign occupation for over 1,200 years:[88] the Ottomans were never able to occupy Morocco, nor had the country been colonised by a European power. The first loss of territory to the French did not occur until 1900.[89] However, the first decade of the twentieth century, when al-Dukkali preached Islamic modernism, was characterised by efforts to resist French political involvement, and by civil war between two competing sultans.[90] Thus, the environments in which al-Sanusi and al-Dukkali called for religious reform were remarkably different. Calls for religious reform by al-Sanusi were likely rejected because the country was stable, and there was not yet any reason to believe that that stability was threatened either internally or externally. By the time al-Dukkali began preaching Islamic modernism at Qarawiyyin in 1908, the Moroccan state had begun to lose territory to the French and there were serious misgivings about the sultan's ability to protect the country from foreign intervention, not to mention challenges to his own political legitimacy. These misgivings are evident in the fact that the Moroccan ʿulama chose to depose the sultan the year before.[91]

In terms of social context, the lack of an educated Western elite limited the spread of reform ideologies in the late nineteenth century. "It now seems clear that the weakness of the currents of reform, Islamic modernism, and pan-Islam in Morocco is to be ascribed to the rudimentary level of the system of education."[92] Without this elite, the bureaucracy was less cohesive and the country lacked non-religious institutions to assist in uniting the educated class. At the same time, Sufi brotherhoods remained the primary means for social organisation, particularly in rural areas. As the case of al-Sanusi demonstrates, leaders of these brotherhoods held important advisory positions into the twentieth century and were willing to oppose ideologies that threatened their existence. Finally, the dispersed nature of religious leadership meant that coalitions formed by powerful scholars could side-line ideologies supported by the sultan in the 1880s. This would not be the case several decades later, as Moroccan sultans came to rely increasingly on European advisers, and Moroccan religious scholars' influence on affairs of state declined.[93]

In addition to political and social factors, several economic conditions discouraged the spread of Islamic modernism during the late nineteenth century. In a general sense, Morocco lacked a middle class or aristocracy.[94] Further, the elite were alienated by a series of reforms undertaken during that time.[95] There was thus no one to embrace or implement reforms spoken in a modernist language. At the same time, this period saw a near collapse of the Moroccan economy. Losses in the Hispano-Moroccan war of 1892 required the sultan to pay large indemnities to Spain, while foreign loans – in 1901, 1902, 1909 and 1910 – further increased Moroccan dependence on European powers.[96] In the year before al-Dukkali began preaching Islamic modernism at Qarawiyyin, Morocco had experienced a significant economic crisis.

The contexts in which al-Sanusi and al-Dukkali preached Islamic modernism were radically different. In a general sense, al-Sanusi was preaching a reformist ideology in a time of stability and continuity, a time marked by excitement rather than fear. Al-Dukkali, on the other hand, preached religious reform in a time marked by instability and a widespread sense of helplessness. European encroachment seemed inevitable. Leadership from the sultan was weak. It is not surprising, then, that al-Dukkali attracted a number of followers. The doctrine preached that practices of personal piety would lead to wider social reforms. At a time when the course of events seemed out of control, Islamic modernism offered a means for individuals to feel that their efforts were contributing to larger social goals. Thus, while the context into which Islamic modernism spread created an opportunity for the ideology, it would be an oversimplification to say that simply any ideology could have taken root at that time. Islamic modernism was unique in that it identified concrete steps for individual believers to contribute to the well-being of their society.

The Moroccan case demonstrates that the atmosphere of political and economic crisis created opportunities for al-Azhar graduates and their disciples to spread ideologies from Cairo to their home communities. The success of the spread of the ideology, though, seemed to depend less on their activities or strategies and more on the power relations of the home communities, the sources of political leadership, and the existence of a class of people willing to embrace and implement reforms. Finally, the Moroccan case suggests that ideologies of religious reform can be particularly influential when tied to movements for political reform.

NOTES

1. See the section below on differentiating Islamic Modernism from Salafism.
2. For more on this, see Imam al-Zarnuji, *Instruction of the Student: The Method of Learning/Ta Limal-Muta Allim Tariq al-Ta Allum* (Chicago, IL: Starlatch Press, 2003); George Makdisi, *The Rise of Colleges: Institutions of Learning in Islam and the West* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1981); and Dale F. Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985).
3. Paul Pierson reviews the use of path-dependent arguments in the study of politics. I follow his methodological approach in specifying an initial period of indeterminateness as well as the conditions that constitute an opening in the political opportunity structure (POS), a critical juncture based on Pierson's conception of "contingency", and finally evidence of the closing of the POS and a mechanism that reproduces the system (foreclosing or discouraging alternative paths). My argument, however, differs from Pierson in that it is embedded in a historical institutionalist rather than a rational choice approach, meaning that it does not argue that a particular equilibrium (Pierson's conception of "inertia") results. See Paul Pierson, "Increasing Returns, Path Dependence, and the Study of Politics", *American Political Science*

Review, 94(2) (2000): 251. This is rooted in a different view of institutions specified by the two approaches: "rational choice's emphasis on the coordinating functions of institutions (generating or maintaining equilibria)" and "historical institutionalism's emphasis on how institutions emerge from and are embedded in concrete temporal processes". See K. Thelen, "Historical Institutionalism in Comparative Politics", *Annual Review of Political Science*, 2(1) (1999): 369–404.

4. Jamil Abun-Nasr, "The Salafiyya Movement in Morocco: The Religious Bases of the Moroccan Nationalist Movement", ed. Albert Hourani, *St Anthony's Papers*, 16 (1967): 90–105; C. R. Pennell, *Morocco since 1830: A History* (London: Hurst, 2000).

5. Henri Lauzière, "The Construction of Salafiyya: Reconsidering Salafism from the Perspective of Conceptual History", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 42(3) (2010): 369–89.

6. The Rashidun are the rightly guided Caliphs, or the first four leaders of the Islamic community in the time after the Prophet's death. Because they knew the Prophet personally, Salafists believe that they governed in a way that was more true to the Prophet's teachings than subsequent leaders.

7. Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age 1798–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 139.

8. For more on the history of anti-Sufi religious reform in Morocco, see Edmund Burke III, "Pan-Islam and Moroccan Resistance to French Colonial Penetration, 1900–1912", *Journal of African History*, 13 (1972): 37. For more on ʿAbduh's relationship with Sufism, see Oliver Scharbrodt, "The Salafiyya and Sufism: Muhammad 'Abduh and his Risalat al-Waridat (Treatise on Mystical Inspirations)", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 70(1) (2007): 89. For a critique of Geertz's analysis of the ideology underpinning the Moroccan nationalists, see Henry Munson Jr, *Religion and Power in Morocco* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

9. ʿAllal al-Fasi, *al-Harakat al-Istiqlaliyya fil-Maghrib al-Arabi* (*The Independence Movement in the Arab Maghrib*) (Tangier, 1948).

10. For more on these campaigns, see al-Fasi, *al-Harakat al-Istiqlaliyya*.

11. John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1998), p. 82.

12. Elizabeth Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis: The Defence, Rethinking and Rejection of Sufism in the Modern World* (Richmond: Curzon, 1999), p. 108, n. 3. It is not known if this connection facilitated later relations between the Islamic modernists and the Moroccan nationalists, but it may have played a role in ʿAbduh's special concern for the North African nationalist movements.

13. Hourani, *Arabic Thought*, pp. 149–50.

14. Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis*, p. 96.

15. Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis*, p. 69.

16. Sirriyeh, *Sufis and Anti-Sufis*, p. 71.

17. Many Sufi shaykhs originally opposed the French until they realised that the sultan was sympathetic to Islamic modernism and its anti-Sufi connotations in Morocco, when they began cooperating with the French in order to protect their positions of authority.

18. ʿAllal al-Fasi, *The Independence Movements in Arab North Africa* (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), p. 114.

19. Al-Fasi, *Independence Movements*, p. 115

20. Al-Fasi, *Independence Movements*, p. 111.

21. Carl F. Petry, *The Civilian Elite of Cairo in the Later Middle Ages* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981; reprinted Scholarly Publishing Office, University of Michigan Library, 2008), p. 158.

22. His full name was Abu al-ʿAbbas Ahmad bin Ahmad bin Muhammad bin ʿIsa al-Barnusi. See Thomas Kerlin Park and Aomar Boum, *Historical Dictionary of Morocco* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006), p. 363.

23. Park and Boum, *Historical Dictionary*, p. 363.

24. Abderrahmane El Moudden, "The Ambivalence of Rihla: Community Integration and Self-Definition in Moroccan Travel Accounts, 1300–1800", in Dale F. Eickelman (ed.), *Muslim Travellers: Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 69–84.

25. El Moudden, "The Ambivalence of Rihla".

26. Halstead asserts that Eastern schools, i.e., al-Azhar, and the hajj played a small role in the nationalist movement: see John P. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912–1944* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1967), p.126. His remark is best understood to mean that the numbers of people attending schools in the east and going on the pilgrimage were fairly insignificant. This chapter is concerned not with the number of Moroccans who studied in Islamic universities or who were converted to Islamic modernism through the hajj directly, but the influence on the nationalist movement of those few who did participate in these activities. Indeed, Halstead himself dedicates a chapter in his 1967 work to "The Impact of the Arab Awakening", discussing the importance of al-Dukkali, al-ʿArabi al-ʿAlawi and the Egyptian press in the connection of the nationalist movement with the Islamic modernist doctrine, lending support to the interpretation that he acknowledged the significance of this relationship.

27. Bayard Dodge, *al-Azhar: A Millennium of Muslim Learning* (Washington, DC: Middle East Institute, 1961; reprinted 2011), p. 164.

28. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 309, n. 36, and appendix D (p. 280).

29. Burke, "Pan-Islam and Moroccan Resistance", p. 110.

30. The plan went as follows: the newspaper *al-Haqq* would inflame public opinion during the summer, and financial remuneration be provided to tribes to pay for the resistance. In addition, the group smuggled weapons into the country to arm the tribes and attempted to provide military advisers to the rebellion. The rebellion was violently put down by the French. Burke speculates that the group was financed or in other more formal ways connected to the Ottoman Secret Service, *Teskilat-i Mahsusa*, suggesting that the Ottomans did view the Moroccan sultan as a competitor to the title of caliph (see n. 33, below).

31. Burke, "Pan-Islam and Moroccan Resistance", p. 112.

32. Burke, "Pan-Islam and Moroccan Resistance".

33. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Egypt played an important intermediary role between Morocco and the Ottoman Empire. This position was necessitated because the Moroccan sultan, who claimed descent from the Prophet Muhammad,

posed a threat to the Ottoman sultan's position as caliph. Although the Moroccan sultan did not actively press his claim, he also avoided a direct relationship with the Ottomans. Their contact was secret; at least four attempts by the Ottomans to contact the Moroccan sultan through Egyptian intermediaries are known. See Burke, "Pan-Islam and Moroccan Resistance", p. 103.

34. Burke, "Pan-Islam and Moroccan Resistance", pp. 103–4.
35. According to Shakib Arslan, described below, *al-Manar* was Muhammad ʿAbduh's mouthpiece and "represented a doctrine that has become *the* doctrine for many intellectual Muslims and is spreading rapidly not only in the Arab world but also among Muslims in general". In other words, *al-Manar* was synonymous with Islamic modernism before the doctrine was even named. See Shakib Arslan, "La disparition d'une des plus grandes figures de l'Islam Rachid Ridha", *La Nation Arabe*, 7 (1935): 448.
36. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 124.
37. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 124.
38. See Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 124, n. 19.
39. The thirst of Qarawiyyin students for Islamic modernist writings was such that, "In 1928, *L'Afrique Francaise* complained that the works of medieval masters such as Ibn Taimiya were selling in Fez faster than ever before", Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 125.
40. Abun-Nasr, "The Salafiyya Movement in Morocco", p. 96.
41. The conceptual confusion between Salafism and Islamic modernism is captured well in the scholarship on al-Sanusi. Many authors refer to him as a Salafist; see Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 122; Munson, *Religion and Power*; Pennell, *Morocco since 1830*, p. 142. The exception is Burke who uses the term "Islamic modernist"; Burke, "Pan-Islam and Moroccan Resistance", p. 37.
42. Abun-Nasr, "The Salafiyya Movement in Morocco", p. 96.
43. Pennell, *Morocco since 1830*, p. 142.
44. Abun-Nasr, "The Salafiyya Movement in Morocco", p. 97.
45. Edmund Burke III, *Prelude to Protectorate in Morocco: Pre-Colonial Protest and Resistance, 1860–1912* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1976), p. 135.
46. John P. Halstead, "The Changing Character of Moroccan Reformism, 1921–1934", *Journal of African History*, 5(3) (1964): 123; Burke, *Prelude to Protectorate*, p. 135.
47. Al-Fasi, *The Independence Movements*, p. 111.
48. Halstead, "The Changing Character of Moroccan Reformism", p. 438.
49. Halstead, "The Changing Character of Moroccan Reformism", p. 205.
50. Halstead, "The Changing Character of Moroccan Reformism", p. 441.
51. Douglas Elliott Ashford, *Perspectives of a Moroccan Nationalist* (New York: Bedminster Press, 1964), p. 30.
52. Spencer D. Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul: French Education, Colonial Ethnology, and Muslim Resistance, 1912–1956* (Lincoln, NE: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), p. 38.
53. Abun-Nasr, "The Salafiyya Movement in Morocco", p. 98.
54. Abun-Nasr, "The Salafiyya Movement in Morocco", pp. 96, 99.
55. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 125.
56. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 123.

57. Geoffrey Porter, "At the Pillar's Base: Islam, Morocco and Education in the Qarawiyin Mosque 1912–2000", Department of Middle Eastern Studies, New York University, 2002, pp. 156–65.

58. Abun-Nasr, "The Salafiyya Movement in Morocco", p. 101.

59. Al-Fasi, *The Independence Movements*, p. 112.

60. Abun-Nasr, "The Salafiyya Movement in Morocco", p. 101.

61. See, for example, al-Fasi, *al-Harakat al-Istiqlaliyya*; Amnon Cohen, "ʿAllal al-Fasi: His Ideas and his Contribution towards Morocco's Independence", *Asian and African Studies*, 2 (1966); Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*; Ian Shaw, "The Influence of Islam on the Political, Economic and Social Thought of ʿAllal al-Fasi", PhD dissertation, McGill University, 1984; Sara Mogilski, "French Influence on a 20th Century ʿAlim: ʿAllal al-Fasi and his Ideas toward Legal Reform in Morocco", PhD dissertation, McGill University, 2006; and Jonathan Wyrtzen, "Constructing Morocco: The Colonial Struggle to Define the Nation, 1912–1956", PhD dissertation, Georgetown University, 2009.

62. Shaw, "The Influence of Islam", p. 16.

63. Shaw, "The Influence of Islam".

64. David L. Johnston. "ʿAllal al-Fasi: Shari'a as Blueprint for Righteous Global Citizenship?", in Abbas Amanat and Frank Griffel (eds), *Shari'a: Islamic Law in the Contemporary Context* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2007), pp. 83–103.

65. At the Imperial School in Beirut, not at al-Azhar. See William L. Cleveland, *Islam Against the West: Shakib Arslan and the Campaign for Islamic Nationalism* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1985).

66. Cleveland, *Islam Against the West*.

67. Halstead, "The Changing Character of Moroccan Reformism", p. 440; Mohamed El Mansour, "Salafis and Modernists in the Moroccan Nationalist Movement", in John Ruedy (ed.), *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), p. 61.

68. Johnston, "ʿAllal al-Fasi", p. 84.

69. Al-Fasi, *al-Harakat al-Istiqlaliyya*; El Mansour, "Salafis and Modernists".

70. El Mansour, "Salafis and Modernists", p. 60.

71. The Berber Dahir of 1930 has received extensive scholarly attention. For more, see al-Fasi, *al-Harakat al-Istiqlaliyya*; Ashford, *Perspectives*; Halstead, "The Changing Character of Moroccan Reformism"; Eickelman, *Knowledge and Power in Morocco*; Porter, "At the Pillar's Base"; Pennell, *Morocco since 1830*.

72. This campaign, led by Shakib Arslan, is well documented in Cleveland, *Islam Against the West*.

73. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 122.

74. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 122.

75. Al-Fasi, *al-Harakat al-Istiqlaliyya*; Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 119. There are a number of examples of the power of combining religious and political movements. The most significant may be "the pact of 1744 joining the sword of Muhammad bin Saʾud to the religious call (daʿwa) of the preacher Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab" that pre-dated the founding of the Saudi state in 1932. See Stéphane Lacroix, *Awakening Islam: The Politics of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 8. It was the combination

of these movements that greatly expanded the reach of the movement for religious reform.

76. I. William Zartman, *Morocco: Problems of New Power* (New York: Atherton Press, 1964).
77. Charis Boutieri, "An Ambivalent Embrace: The Cultural Politics of Arabization and the Knowledge Economy in the Moroccan Public School", PhD dissertation, Department of Anthropology, Princeton University, 2011.
78. Zartman, *Morocco*.
79. Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, p. 250.
80. Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*, p. 252.
81. Boutieri, "An Ambivalent Embrace", p. 11.
82. Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*.
83. Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*.
84. Gilbert Grandguillaume, "Language and Legitimacy in the Maghreb", in Brian Weinstein (ed.), *Language Policy and Political Development* (Norwood, NJ: Ablex, 1990), pp. 150–66.
85. Quoted in Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*.
86. Al-Fasi, *al-Harakat al-Istiqlaliyya*, p. 111.
87. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 121.
88. See Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, p. 121.
89. Burke, *Prelude to Protectorate*.
90. Burke, *Prelude to Protectorate*, p. xxi.
91. Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul*.
92. Burke, *Prelude to Protectorate*, p. 152.
93. El Mansour, "Salafis and Modernists", p. 56.
94. Burke, *Prelude to Protectorate*, p. 214.
95. Burke, *Prelude to Protectorate*, p. xx.
96. Burke, *Prelude to Protectorate*, p. xx.

PART THREE

Returning Graduates and Transformation of the Local

From Mecca to Cairo:
Changing Influences on Fatwas in Southeast Asia

YUKI SHIOZAKI

Muslim scholars (ʿulama) and Sufis have long been accustomed to undertaking extended trans-regional journeys in pursuit of Islamic knowledge. Historically, such peregrinatory ʿulama have played a significant role in transplanting ideas and practices to Southeast Asia from the Middle East. Some returned home after spending years in the Middle East, while others who remained continued to influence the discourse at home by sending written fatwas (replies to questions on shariʿa issues) in response to questions sent to them from their originating communities.[1] This chapter shows how the shift in intellectual influence away from Mecca and towards Cairo, and in particular towards al-Azhar, impacted upon the interpretation of shariʿa and the issuing of fatwas within Southeast Asian Muslim communities. The chapter focuses on the fatwas issued by Southeast Asian ʿulama from the late nineteenth century to the end of the 1960s. Emphasis is placed on tracing the influence of factors such as the Shafiʿi School, Salafi methodology and the *isnād* (genealogy of intellectual succession) of the Southeast Asian ʿulama in the Middle East[2] in order to present a clearer picture of the transformation in *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) methodology and the networks of ʿulama who used them.

The development of Islam in Southeast Asia has long been influenced by trends in the Middle East,[3] and tracing isnād is thus essential for researching the exogenous influences upon Islam in Southeast Asia over time, as well as understanding the endogenous transitions that have also occurred. Although important texts have been written on this theme,[4] there are not many studies of the intellectual networks connecting scholars within Southeast Asia, the Middle East and South Asia, especially as regards the field of fiqh. This chapter aims to illuminate these networks.

The period from the late nineteenth century through to the 1960s was a time of tremendous change in both Southeast Asia and the Middle East. It was during this period that modernisation swept through Muslim societies as a result of their encounter with European colonisation and intervention.[5] In the case of Malaysia, which achieved independence in 1957,[6] the institutionalisation of Islam in government administration and the establishment of Muslim associations of various sorts changed the relation between Islam and the state.[7] In the early twentieth century, the Malay sultanates established administrative institutions to control Islamic activities; and in the same period there was a mushrooming of private Muslim associations designed to integrate the existing Muslim networks. These institutions were intended to act as central platforms for entrenching Islamic life in society, while also helping people to adapt to the demands of modernity. Research by Roff[8] and Feener[9] has demonstrated that these institutions made efforts to preserve the hold of Islam when confronted with modernisation, and has documented how they took advantage of new technologies associated with modernity, such as printing and the mass media, to advance their message. This chapter discusses the issuing of fatwas and the adjustments in jurisprudential methodology that can be observed therein; this, I argue, was another aspect of the struggle to adapt to modernity. This adaptation can be observed in the fatwas issued by certain influential individual ʿulama, as well as in those issued by the Majlis Agama Islam (Islamic Religious Council) in each state of Malaysia.[10]

The historical period in question was also an era of intellectualism and new thinking. In the early twentieth century, significant new ideas were brought from al-Azhar to Southeast Asia, including new methodologies for the interpretation of shariʿa; and these differed from the traditional jurisprudence based on the Shafiʿi School that was popular in Mecca, the place where Southeast Asian scholars traditionally went in search of higher learning. This shift influenced not only the thinking of individual ʿulama, but also had a profound effect on the newly established Muslim institutions in Southeast Asia.

Mecca as the Gathering Place for Shafiʿi ʿUlama from Southeast Asia

As the centre for Islamic learning for Southeast Asian Muslims, Mecca reached its peak in the late nineteenth century. In every mosque in Mecca, students would read Islam's classic texts under the guidance of renowned ʿulama. The *halaqah* (reading groups) were to be found in every mosque, especially the one that was most revered, the Masjid al-Haram. The four corners of the Masjid al-Haram were dedicated to the four Sunni *madhāhib* (legal schools; sing. *madhhab*): Hanafi, Hanbali, Maliki and Shafiʿi.[11] In most Muslim countries, this

traditional system of learning began to face competition in the early twentieth century due to the spread of a modern, Western-style, education system in the Muslim world. Some semi-modern schools were even established in Mecca, mainly by non-Arab ʿulama, especially Indians.[12] In 1912, Madrasa al-Falah, a prominent reformist madrasa that aimed to combine the teaching of Western subjects with a religious curriculum, was established by an Arab merchant named Muhammad ʿAli Zaynal Rida. This madrasa became a school for many Southeast Asian ʿulama in the twentieth century.[13] Following Madrasa al-Falah, some Indonesian ʿulama established madrasas for Southeast Asian Muslims in Mecca. The most prominent examples of these were Madrasa al-Indonesiyya al-Makkiyya, established by Janan Muhammad Thaib in 1923, and Madrasa Dar al-Ulum al-Diniyah, established by Sayyid Muhsin al-Musawwa al-Palimbani in 1934. Such Indonesian madrasas were significant in attracting Southeast Asian Muslim students to Mecca.[14]

Mecca was not only the most important centre for the Shafiʿi School, but also a sanctuary for politically involved ʿulama from Southeast Asia who were sent into exile when their societies were colonised by Europeans (e.g., Ahmad Muhammad Zain al-Fatani from Patani and Abdul Qadir al-Mandili, described below). In 1800, the Dutch East Indies colony was established in Indonesia, and in 1824 the Anglo-Dutch Treaty was concluded. As a result of this treaty, the British expanded their rule in the Malay Peninsula and the Dutch concentrated their administration in the East Indies.[15] In 1826, Britain and Thailand, a significant local power, agreed to the first treaty concerning the division of the Malay Peninsula (the Burney Treaty); and after long confrontation and negotiations, most of the Malay kingdoms in the Malay Peninsula came under the protection of the British, with the exception of the Sultanate of Patani which was annexed to Thailand in 1908.[16] The rapid increase in the Southeast Asian Muslim population in Mecca, especially in the latter half of the nineteenth century, was partly caused by the political incursions of non-Muslim forces into Muslim lands, especially Patani in southern Thailand and some parts of Indonesia. Patani ʿulama would thus play a leading role in educating Southeast Asian Muslims in Mecca.[17] At the same time, this increase in the number of Southeast Asian Muslims in Mecca was also a product of the technological innovations brought by the Europeans, especially the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Steamships promoted the emigration of Arabs – especially from Hadramaut in Yemen to Southeast Asia – as well as the emigration of Southeast Asian Muslims to Mecca. Those who migrated to the Middle East for Islamic education played an important role in the development of Islamic learning in Southeast Asia, especially in the Malay Peninsula.

Ahmad Muhammad Zain al-Fatani (1856–1908) was a Patani ʿālim who lived in Mecca and taught many students from Southeast Asia.[18] His disciples from

Kelantan, such as Muhammad Yusuf Ahmad (known as Tok Kenali), would go on to play crucial roles in Islamic education in their homeland.[19] Ahmad al-Fatani's influence was exerted not only through his students, however, but also, and equally, through his publications. In collaboration with the Ottoman government, he established a publishing house, Maktab al-Turki Majdiyya al-ᶜUthmaniyya, in Mecca. He also established his own private publication enterprise, Maktab Fataniyya, through which he edited and published Islamic literature in Malay and Arabic, both classic manuscripts and contemporary writings including his own, as well as the works of the most prominent scholar from Patani, Daud ᶜAbdullah al-Fatani. Printed texts were imported to the Malay Peninsula and used as textbooks in local Islamic boarding schools (*pondok*; pl. *pondok-pondok*). Although Singapore and Penang also later became centres for Islamic publishing, Mecca was the main supplier of printed Islamic texts in Malay (*kitāb jāwī*) until the early twentieth century.[20] Another important Southeast Asian ᶜālim living in exile was Abdul Qadir al-Mandili, from Sumatra. Abdul Qadir migrated to Mecca after studying in Kedah, the northern region of the Malay Peninsula. At the same time as he educated Southeast Asian Muslims in his school in Mecca, he also criticised British and Dutch colonisation through his publications and fatwas.[21]

Until the early twentieth century, it was commonplace for Southeast Asian Muslims to request fatwas from the ᶜulama in Mecca. The oldest printed collection of fatwas issued for Muslims in Southeast Asia is *Muhimmat al Nafaʾis fi Bayan Asʾilah al-Hadith*, which was published by Maktab al-Turki Majdiyya al-ᶜUthmaniyya. The fatwas in this collection were issued mainly by a mufti of the Shafiᶜi School in Mecca, Ahmad ibn Zaini Dahlan (1817–86).[22] There are also two more collections by Ahmad al-Fatani among the other printed collections of fatwas for Southeast Asian Muslims: *al-Fatawa al-Fataniyya* and *Fatawa Binatang Hidup Dua Alam*. These fatwa collections were published around the end of the nineteenth century or early in the twentieth century.

The collection in *al-Fatawa al-Fataniyya* consists primarily of answers to questions from Muslims in Southeast Asia in the period of transition that characterised the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The collection included answers on new problems faced by East Asian Muslims due to the consequences of colonial policies – many questions, for example, focused on the classification of non-Muslim residents – whether they are *dhimmī* (protected people, non-Muslims under the protection of Muslim governance), potential dhimmī or idolatrous non-believers. The fatwas also answered questions regarding measures to be applied in engaging in social relations with them. The late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought a period of social change and modernisation to Southeast Asia. In the Muslim society of the Malay Peninsula, which fell within the scope of the protection treaty signed with the British, modernisation displayed peculiar features. Although the process of modernisation was dependent

on technological innovations such as transportation, communication and printing, just as it was in other regions, the most prominent phenomenon here was the flow of non-Muslim labourers such as Chinese and Indians, and the rapid expansion of their presence in socio-economic terms.

Within Muslim communities in East Asia, ᶜulama were historically considered to be experts on social problems and were required to issue appropriate fatwas based on their Islamic knowledge. ᶜUlama were trusted not only because of their expertise in shariᶜa, but also because of their overseas experiences. Although the ᶜulama had limited experience of Europe, they knew significantly more about relatively modernised Muslim nations such as India, Turkey and Egypt. They were expected to find solutions to modern problems based on their knowledge of similar phenomena in other Muslim contexts, and this was especially the case for those ᶜulama with experience of other Muslim societies.

In addition to these developments, another crucial issue for the region's Muslims during this period was the rise of Sufi orders such as Ahmadiyya-Idrisiyya in the Malay Peninsula. Questions and responses concerning these real-life everyday issues feature prominently in al-Fatani's fatwa collection. Al-Fatani's answers were mostly based on the traditional Shafiᶜi School, and the citations upon which he based his arguments referred to the Qurʾan, hadith and Shafiᶜi texts, especially those from Ibn Hajar al-Haythami. The following fatwa, for instance, was first published in Singapore in 1908.[23]

Question 44:

What is your opinion on *kuffār* [infidels] such as the Siam, Chinese, Kuci [from the southern area in Vietnam], Batak [an ethnicity in Sumatra], or Pangan [aboriginal residents in forests]? What name is appropriate for them? Is it permissible for us to buy their daughters, and make them mistresses [*gundik*] both in the case when they are purchased from their parents and in the case when they are purchased from other people? Under what conditions may they be taken out of their country? What is the rule for such an action? We request your answer based on shariᶜa.

Answer 44:

Kuffār in Siam and China, along with kuffār in Cambodia and Kuci, are called idolatrous unbelievers [*kuffār watanīyīn*], because I heard that they worship idols. There are two categories among groups such as the Batak and Pangan.

1st Category: If they do not embrace Islam, although the call of Islam has already reached them, their disbelief [*kufr*] is certain. If they worship idols or

do not believe known [maʿarūfat] religions, they are *man lā dīn lahu* [people without religion].

2nd Category: If the call of Islam does not yet reach them, and they do not believe in Judaism, Christianity, or similar religions, and if they are related to *ahl al-fatra* [people in a period without a prophet], they are not categorised as disbelievers.

All of the kuffār mentioned above are called *ḥarbīyūn* [people of *dār al-ḥarb*, the abode of war], as long as they do not have our leaders [*al-ḥall wa al-ʿaqd*] among them [e.g., there are no diplomatic residences nearby] and they do not have a treaty of protection [*ʿaqd dhimma*] or a treaty of peace [*ʿaqd amān*]. If they do not have Muslim captives [*asīr*] or a peace treaty with us, it is permissible for us to buy their children. It is permissible to buy children, except from their parents, outside of their country or in a situation without guaranteed security, as in the cases of smuggling and unprotected entry.

If we enter their country under their guarantee of security, any actions prohibited by them, for example, theft of their assets, murder and purchase of their children after prohibition by their leaders, are impermissible. Purchase of children from their parents is also prohibited. In such cases, children are purchased forcibly with the intention of possession [*qaṣad tamalluk*]. Possession of acquisitions in their country is only permissible when entry occurred without guarantee of security [*taʾamīn*].

To make purchased daughters mistresses [*pergundik*] is permissible after they embrace Islam, because Muslims may only have intercourse [*waṭ'*] with non-Jewish or non-Christian [*bukan kitābīya*] female slaves [*amah*] if Islam is embraced by the slave.

Non-purchased acquisitions obtained by permissible means [e.g., captives in war] may only be possessed after *takhmīs* [obligatory payment of 20 per cent of booty to the ruler]. To take daughters out of their country is not a sufficient condition for making them a mistress. Allah knows best.[24]

Ahmad al-Fatani issued the above fatwa in response to a question concerning the best way to respond to the flow of non-Muslims into the Malay Peninsula. Ahmad al-Fatani classified all non-Muslim newcomers as idolatrous non-believers (kuffār wataniyīn), except for ahl al-fatra (those who are ignorant of Allah's message). Therefore, they were not considered dhimmī (protected people, non-Muslims under the protection of Muslim governance) or potential dhimmī.

In another fatwa, Ahmad al-Fatani strictly regulated commercial transactions with non-Muslims. In a fatwa first published in Singapore in 1908, and in line with Ibn Hajar's *al-Fatawa al-Kubra al-Fiqhiyya ʿala al-Madhhab al-Imam*

al-Shafiʿi, Ahmad al-Fatani banned the rental of property to non-Muslims if they could be expected to commit sins therein such as idolatry and selling alcohol.[25]

Question 50:

A person built a house and lent it to a *kāfir* [infidel] who exploited it as a shop. The kāfir sold permissible goods such as cloth. He also sold impermissible goods such as alcohol. He placed idols in the house and worshipped them according to Chinese custom. What is the rule for such an action? Is it permissible to lend it [the house]? If it is not permissible, what is the best way to make lending permissible?

Answer 50:

If the Muslim, the owner of the house, gathers or infers that the tenant sells alcohol or worships idols, it is impermissible for the owner to lend it to the tenant, whether the tenant is Muslim or kāfir or *kāfir ḥarbī* [infidel of the abode of war, or non-Muslim out of Muslim governance], because lending means participation in sin without indispensability [*darūrāt*].

In a fatwa collection that prohibits [*ḥaram*] guiding a kāfir who has lost his way to a place of idolatrous worship, Ibn Hajar explains that such assisting is a very great sin. In addition, lending is conditional. It is impermissible to lend, if the property lent does not bring good results. Therefore, jurists [*fuqahā*] explain [*men-taṣrīḥ*] that it is impermissible to employ a worker for conveyance of alcohol, or to borrow female slaves to have intercourse [*di-waṭ°*], and other similar sins are also impermissible.

The way to avoid such lending is to contract between the owner of the house and a tenant in front of witnesses. The better way is to contract in front of a judge [*ḥakīm*] and to agree on conditions such as the prohibition of selling alcohol and pork, and the prohibition of setting idols and worshipping them. If the tenant agrees to the contract, and the owner trusts in the fulfilment of the contract by the tenant, it is permissible to lend the shop to him. Allah knows the best.[26]

Ahmad al-Fatani based these fatwas entirely on the theories of the Shafiʿi School rather than responding to the changing conditions of life in Singapore. This meant that by the early twentieth century, many of his fatwas had effectively become inapplicable to life in the Malay Peninsula. Non-Muslims, especially the Chinese, had become a significant economic force in the peninsula, and as such they were essential for the British economy and required even by Malay establishments. Under such conditions, Malay Muslims would suffer serious economic hardship if they followed Ahmad al-Fatani's fatwa. This lack of

relevance of the fatwas issued by the Shafi°i scholars based in Mecca is one of the factors that led to a demand for an alternative interpretation of shari°a on the social issues faced by Muslims in the Malay Peninsula.

The establishment of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1924 and rise of Wahhabism had a further devastating impact on the Southeast Asian °ulama based in Mecca. The rise of these new Islamic thinkers and their control over Mecca made the Southeast Asian Muslims uneasy. Another shocking incident was the Wahhabis' killing of °Abd Allah al-Zawawi (1850–1924), the Shafi°i mufti in Mecca at that time. Before his appointment as the mufti in Mecca, he had served as the Mufti of Pontianak in Kalimantan (Borneo) Island: he was therefore well known and widely adored by Southeast Asian Muslims. Although his death was accidental,[27] it nevertheless drove hundreds of Southeast Asian Muslims to flee Mecca. About 150 Muslims arrived in Singapore and spread news of the incident throughout the Malay Peninsula.[28] These developments markedly reduced the importance of Mecca as the gathering place for the Southeast Asian °ulama.

From Mecca to Cairo: The Influence on Fiqh Methodology

After the acceptance of the first Malay student at al-Azhar in the 1870s,[29] the number of Malays enrolled there increased slowly but steadily. Dodge claims that in 1902 there were only seven jāwī students among the 645 foreign students at al-Azhar;[30] according to Roff, in 1919 there were "fifty or sixty students in Cairo from Indonesia (mostly West Sumatra), with perhaps an additional twenty from Peninsula Malaya and Southern Thailand", and by 1925 there were at least 200 Southeast Asian students there. Roff supposes that the main cause of this increase in the 1920s was the improvement in rubber prices and the corresponding growth in parental cash incomes that occurred towards the middle of the decade.[31]

Although the increased number of Southeast Asian Muslims at al-Azhar certainly boosted its influence in the region, the influential reformist Muslim magazine *al-Manar*, published by Rashid Rida, also had a significant impact in shaping the Islamic discourse in East Asia in the early twentieth century. The reformism advocated by Muhammad °Abduh and Rashid Rida has often been described as Salafi due to their emphasis on direct reference to the Qur°an and hadith as sources (*dalīl*), and rejection of the four madhāhib, even though their approach was very different to that of Wahhabi Salafism. This emphasis on going back to direct references to the Qur°an and hadith rather than strictly following one madhhab appealed to certain groups of °ulama in Southeast Asia, who saw in this methodology a stronger possibility of finding real-life solutions than *taqlīd* of the Shafi°i School.

Table 7.1 Chronological table of events in the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt and Southeast Asia

Arabian Peninsula	Egypt		Southeast Asia	
			1800	Establishment of the Dutch East Indies
			1824	Anglo-Dutch Treaty
			1831–2	Rebellion against Thailand in Patani
	1869	The opening of the Suez Canal		
1892 The publication of *Muhimmat al-Nafaʾis fi Bayan Asʾilah al-Hadith*				
	1898	The launch of *al-Manar*		
			1906–8	The launch of *al-Imam*
			1908	The fall of the Sultanate of Patani
			1915	The establishment of the Majlis Agama Islam in Kelantan
			1918	The launch of *Pengasuh*
	1922	The founding of the kingdom of Egypt		
1923 The establishment of Madrasa al-Indonesiyya al-Makkiyya				
1924 The occupation of Mecca by Wahhabis				
	1928	The establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood		
1934 The establishment of Madrasa Dar al-ʿUlum al-Diniyya				
			1945	The Indonesian declaration of independence
	1952	The Egyptian Revolution by the Free Officers		
			1957	The establishment of the Federation of Malaya
1961 The establishment of the Islamic University of Medina				

From 1906 to 1908, al-Azhar-educated ⁽ulama such as Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin (1869–1956)[32] and others published a pioneering magazine named *al-Imam*. These ⁽ulama were based in Singapore and promoted reformist thought in Southeast Asia. Published weekly in its first year and monthly in the second, *al-Imam* had the largest circulation ever attained by a Malay journal prior to the Second World War. At its height, 5,000 copies were circulated in Southeast Asia every month. Many of the articles in *al-Imam* were either an elaboration or a translation of articles taken from *al-Manar*.[33] The reformist thought of ⁽Abduh and Rida made major inroads into Southeast Asia and became widely accepted.[34]

In the first decade of the twentieth century, Cairo came to be considered the centre of reformism based on the Salafi methodology. More and more Malay students were attracted there, leading some Malay rulers to express concerns about "views which are not desirable from the point of view of the Government"[35] spreading to East Asia from Egypt. While the ⁽ulama involved in the publication of *al-Imam* were promoting the Salafi methodology within East Asia, proponents of the Shafi⁽i School were still prevalent in the northeastern region of the Malay Peninsula, especially in Kelantan. In Kelantan, disciples of Ahmad al-Fatani (e.g., Tok Kenali and Abdus Samad bin Muhammad Shalih al-Kelantani, known as Tuan Tabal) were influential in administration and education. In fatwa columns in *Pengusah* (1918–), a magazine published by Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan, the main authoritative sources for shari⁽a interpretation were the Shafi⁽i School classics, especially Ibn Hajar al-Haythami, Sharbini, al-Qastalani and al-Malibari. The contentions of the following fatwa, issued by the Majlis Agama Islam Kelantan and published in *Pengasuh* in 1921, were, for example, entirely based on the generally accepted theories of the Shafi⁽i School. Responding to a question that suggests a slightly anti-Sufi bent on the part of the interlocutor, the fatwa defends Sufism (*taṣawwuf*) and the tradition of the Shafi⁽i School:

Question:

From Mr Daud bin Hajj Muhammad Nor in Kajang, Selangor, 14.5 batu [14.5 miles] from Kuala Lumpur
1. Is *Tarsih*[36] a book written by a Sufi ⁽ālim or the ⁽ālim of fiqh and hadith? If the book contains words written by a Sufi ⁽ālim and unsuited to the rules of Islam, may I follow and practice his texts?
2. According to page 182 of *Minhat al-Qarib al-Mujib*, as described by Ibn Hajar in *Tuhfah*,[37] a Prophet's hadith cited on page 238 of chapter 3 of *Mugni Khatib Sharbini*,[38] and an explanation by Nawawi in *Sharh Muslim*,[39] it is written that angels do not bring grace to a house that displays the figure of an animal.

Answer:

1. *Tarsih* is a book of fiqh. You can follow it, because the contents of the book are based not only on the author's *ijtihād* but also on texts by ᶜulama and other famous books. In addition to that, *Tarsih* has been accepted by contemporary ᶜulama.

2. The contents can be characterised as words of ᶜulama in fiqh. The parts containing discourse on taṣawwuf can be characterised as words of ᶜulama in the Sufi path.

3. The author was well versed in fiqh, Sufi thought and other similar realms. He was faithful and taught Sufi teaching in the Masjid al-Haram. Contemporary ᶜulama participated in his lectures. By these facts, we can know the superiority and rightness of the author.

4. If there are words written by Sufi ᶜulama which are unsuitable to rules of Islamic law, you must not follow them. However, only the companions of a Sufi can judge whether the words are unsuitable or not. People like us are not allowed to judge that they are unsuitable. We just follow words accepted by famous ᶜulama.

5. It has been written that ᶜulama admitted the possession of goods with animal figures on page 184 of *Minhat al-Qarib*. "And among ᶜulama there is an opinion that 'goods of animal figures' means figures drawn on dishes etc." Ibn Hajar wrote "Figures which are not ḥaram are carriable" in *Tuhfah*. Please read carefully. However, *Minhat al-Qarib* did not mention the four different opinions. In *Tarsih*, the author introduced words by al-Qastalani[40] concerning this problem. Therefore, we can say *Tarsih* is more solid than other books.

6. The author of *Minhat al-Qarib* explained that there are various interpretations of the phrase "angels do not bring grace to a house that displays the figure of an animal". Some people interpret this to mean that angels do not bring grace to houses which place ḥaram ones among figures of animals. However, other people think there is no room for compromise on this principle. Page 184 of *Minhat al-Qarib*, *Tuhfah*, and Bujayrimi[41] should be referred to.[42]

In contrast to *Pengasuh*, which was published in Kelantan, the fatwa columns published in the Singapore-based *al-Imam* were based entirely on Salafi methodology. Some fatwas in *al-Imam* criticised Sufi orders. The following fatwa provides an example of such criticism and was published as an article in *al-Imam* in 1908:

Question: From Abbas Haj Abdul Rahman, Rawa, Penang

1. During a *seloka* [*suluk*, concentrated training in a Sufi order for certain period] a person asked his master for permission to visit his sick mother.

However, the person wasn't allowed to visit his mother until after she passed away.

2. A lady's husband became sick during [the period] she was in seloka. She requested her master's permission to meet her husband. However, she was not allowed to meet him until after he passed away.

3. Parents hoped to visit their child during the period of seloka; however, the child's master did not allow him to meet his parents.

4. Is it recommended in Islam to practice seloka even if practitioners do not have knowledge on the proper way and the necessary conditions for prayer?

Answers to Four Questions:

There are people who hold off meeting with parents, husbands, wives and other family members because they are in the situation of seloka. It is not recommended in the shariʿa of Islam. If you think something is wrong in the sacred shariʿa of Islam, the wrong is done only by lazy and ignorant people in seloka. Therefore, we must teach them that they must not be lazy, because they need to get a livelihood and the real seloka and Sufi order of the religion lead people to success in this world and the hereafter. The seloka you mentioned in your question is "the pulling and binding" [*tarik ikat*, restriction under the master], not a Sufi order [*tariqa*].

On matters like rules of prayer and the ways of purification, which are written in small books [*kitāb*], you should ask knowledgeable people in your district. Please ask *al-Imam* about more difficult matters and problems for which you cannot find explanations.[43]

The Salafi methodology of direct reference to the Qurʾan and hadith, its reluctance to follow traditional madhāhib as an authority in jurisprudence and its unfavourable outlook towards Sufism led to the development of Salafi methodology in fiqh-influenced Sufi activities in Southeast Asia.[44] However, the implementation of Salafi methodology was not limited to discourse on Sufism: the period of transition and modernisation demanded further innovations in Islamic jurisprudence. During this period, as Ahmad al-Fatani's two fatwas regarding non-Muslims revealed, the traditional Shafiʿi School was often hard to apply. In the generally accepted opinions of the Shafiʿi School, only Christians and Jews could be dhimmī and coexist in the *dār al-Islām* (abode of Islam). Here, then, the Salafi methodology was more suitable for innovative jurisprudence or *ijtihād*. However, the innovative jurisprudence regarding classifying non-Muslims should not only be considered the result of the application of Salafi methodology; it must also be noted that political and economic adjustments had facilitated such innovative interpretations of the position of non-Muslims.

A 1955 fatwa by the Mufti of Terengganu, on political coalitions with non-Muslims, justified the ruling coalition formed by the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO) and the Malayan Chinese Association (MCA). By the mid-twentieth century, classification of non-Muslims as kuffār watanīyīn or ḥarbīyūn had disappeared. Even the classification of non-Muslims as dhimmī was considered politically incorrect after the 1960s. In the fatwa, non-Muslims in the Federation of Malaya were referred to as kāfir dhimmī without any further explanation. It was said that because of the maṣlaḥah, or the public welfare, realised through the coalition, the coalition satisfied the objective of shariᶜa.[45]

Salafi methodology was able to provide innovative ways of meeting the demands of the age through direct reference to the Qurʾan and hadith; indeed, the flexibility of the Salafi methodology was often considered its most innovative dimension. As we will see in the remainder of this chapter, when modern political systems attempted to involve Islamic authority in government, Salafi methodology was frequently applied in fatwas issued by pro-government ᶜulama.

Salafi Methodology and the Formation of the Official Fatwa Institutions in the Malay Peninsula

The institutionalisation of Islamic affairs in the Malay Peninsula can be traced back to the 1874 Pangkor Engagement, signed between the Malay ruler in Perak and the British. Article 6 of the treaty declared that the Malay ruler must follow a British official called the Resident, and only Islamic affairs and Malay customs remained under the jurisdiction of the Malay ruler.[46] As similar treaties were negotiated between other Malay rulers and the British, by the 1920s the Malay rulers in each state had reinforced their jurisdiction over Islamic affairs through the establishment of the Majlis Agama Islam (the supreme body of Islamic administration). Since the first establishment of the Majlis Agama Islam, in Kelantan in 1915, fatwas and other Islamic affairs such as education, zakat, institutions such as mosques, awqāf, family law, the shariᶜa court, penal enactments and doctrinal interpretation had come under the authority of sultans and state governments.

In Kelantan, a notice to regulate issuance of fatwas was issued by the Majlis Agama Islam in 1917. The notice forbade the issuance of fatwas without the approval of the Majlis Agama Islam, and provided that all fatwas issued to followers of the Shafiᶜi School must conform to generally accepted opinions of that school.[47] In 1918, the Meshuarat Ulama (ᶜUlama Council) was established as an organ for issuing fatwas under the Majlis Agama Islam of Kelantan (since renamed the Jemaah Ulama).[48] In 1952, the state government of Selangor passed the Enakmen Pentadbiran Undang-Undang Islam (Administration of

the Muslim Law Enactment), the basic law underpinning the Islamic administration and judiciary. This enactment provided for the appointment of the mufti by the sultan and the formation of a Fatwa Committee under the Majlis Agama Islam, while also detailing the process of issuing fatwas and requiring the observance of the generally accepted opinions of the Shafi‘i School. In addition, the enactment prescribed that all Muslims in Selangor must follow the fatwas announced in an official gazette. The law also established a penalty for Muslims who defied or denigrated fatwas, authorised Islamic teachers, Islamic teaching and the madhhab or the religion of Islam (this penalty was a fine not exceeding 500 ringgit, imprisonment for a term not exceeding six months, or both). Similar enactments were also legislated in other states, including Malacca (1959), Pulau Pinang (1959), Negeri Sembilan (1960), Kedah (1962), Perlis (1964) and Perak (1965).[49]

By the middle of the twentieth century, state governments in the Malay Peninsula had developed a system to monopolise fatwas, which led to Malay Muslims requesting fatwas from inland ‘ulama and facilitated the localisation of fatwa and shari‘a interpretation.[50]

The "Islamisation policy",[51] initiated in the 1970s, boosted the number of Malaysian students studying at al-Azhar (see Chapter 8). One of the reasons why al-Azhar could attract so many Malaysians was that since the 1950s it had transformed itself into a modern university that conferred degrees on its graduates. As a result of the bureaucratisation of Islamic administration in Malaysia, degree certification became indispensable for working in a variety of jobs, including the Jabatan Kemajuan Islam Malaysia (JAKIM; Islamic Development Agency)[52] of the federal government, the Majlis Agama Islam in each state, and religious schools all over the country. By the end of the 1970s, there were over 3,000 Malaysian students enrolled at al-Azhar.

The institutionalisation of shari‘a interpretation by the government and the rise of Salafi methodology occurred in the Malay Peninsula almost simultaneously with the expansion of the number of Malay students at al-Azhar University. The innovative characteristic of Salafi methodology – its flexibility – was suitable for issuing fatwas that favoured the policies of the federal government.[53] In particular, policies on ethnic relations and economic development required justification via Islamic jurisprudence. In the 1950s and 1960s, an ‘ulama-based opposition party, the Pan Malayan Islamic Party (the party was later renamed the Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS), the Islamic Party of Malaysia) criticised the ruling coalition (the Alliance), which consisted of Muslims, Chinese and Indians. The opposition party asserted that the Federation of Malaya under the Alliance was not an Islamic state, because they believed the coalition was dominated by non-Muslims.[54] The Majlis Agama Islam in Terengganu contradicted the assertions of the opposition party by issuing a fatwa in 1963. The

fatwa, which had official status, justified collaboration with non-Muslims such as Buddhists and Hindus without mentioning the theories of the Shāfiʿi School. As the basis for this justification it cited a hadith and adopted the concept of the public interest.

The following excerpt is from a fatwa issued by Majlis Agama Islam Terengganu in 1955, the year in which UMNO and MCA formed the Alliance for the Federal Legislative Council Election (the first national-level election in the Malay Peninsula). PAS criticised the Alliance for its collaboration with non-Muslims, while, in the fatwa, Majlis Agama Islam Terengganu defended the formation of the Alliance:

Question:

. . .

(2) Is it permissible in Islam to ally with non-Muslims, for example, the Alliance of UMNO and MCA?
(3) Is it permissible for Muslims to vote for non-Muslims in the state election and so on?

Answer:

. . .

(2) The alliance with non-Muslims such as the Alliance of UMNO and MCA is permissible, because it will bring benefit to the residents of this country.
(3) Because non-Muslims in this country are loyal to the state law and their religions do not oppose Muslims, they are kāfir dhimmī [non-Muslims under protection]. Islam does not prohibit cooperation with such kāfir dhimmī nor voting for non-Muslim candidates for state legislative councils, because all the nations are under just one ruling system, the democracy, and the democracy recommends respect for creeds and religions. Non-Muslims can be elected as members of the state legislative councils, because they are *ahl al-dhimma* [people under protection] and have the same rights as Muslims. They can be elected because their experiences and abilities can make a contribution to all of this country through cooperation.[55]

This official fatwa mentioned no classical theory of the Shāfiʿi School. It justified the governmental policy by reference to public benefit. In addition to the Salafi methodology, the reference to the concept of the public interest, or maṣlaḥah, emerged as another influential methodology of fiqh in Malaysia after the 1960s. Maṣlaḥah is one of the *maqāṣid al-sharīʿa*, or the jurisprudential

objectives of shariᶜa. Many official fatwas issued by Majlis Agama Islam and the National Fatwa Committee after the 1960s mentioned maqāṣid al-sharīᶜa as a source of jurisprudence. In particular, the concept of maṣlaḥah was mentioned frequently as the ground for fatwas in line with government policies on issues such as economic development. The fiqh methodology based on maqāṣid al-sharīᶜa was also disseminated in Malaysia by graduates of al-Azhar, and the increase in the number of official fatwas which referred to the concept indicates the expansion of the influence of Azhari graduates in Islamic administration in Malaysia.

In the 1950s and 1960s the ruling Alliance continued to be successful in gaining an elected majority in parliament, while PAS continued to criticise the coalition and the collaboration it embodied between UMNO and non-Muslims. To underscore the injustice it perceived in UMNO's actions from the Islamic perspective, PAS insisted that UMNO members had become turncoats through their collaboration with non-Muslims, and labelled the UMNO members kuffār, or non-believers, according to a text issued by ᶜAbdul Qadir Muttalib al-Mandili.[56] In 1963, the Majlis Agama Islam Terengganu again issued an official fatwa designed to rebut the denunciations issuing from PAS, and from which the following extract is drawn:

Question:

What is the regulation on accusing another Muslim of being kāfir?

Answer:

1. The religion of Islam prohibits Muslims from accusing another Muslim of being kāfir, because according to a hadith narrated by Abu Zarrah [a companion of the Prophet Muhammad] recorded in *Sahih Bukhari* and *Sahih Imam Muslim* [both among the most authoritative hadith collections], the messenger of Allah asserted that somebody who accuses another of being *fasīq* [disbeliever] or kāfir himself becomes fasīq or kāfir, if the accusation is wrong. All the ᶜulama in Islam have arrived at a consensus that such an action is a major sin, albeit not one of the biggest sins, because the accuser himself becomes kāfir as a result of a wrong action. . . .

2. The issue of whether it is permissible to vote for non-Muslims as members of parliament is not a religious matter. In the states of Malaysia, the regulations of elections are accepted by all the political organisations and are fitting for the objectives of the Federal Constitution of the Malay land. In the Constitution, either Muslim or not, all the citizens are admitted to have the same rights and duties under the state law, if they are loyal to the state

law and follow it. The Constitution delegates authority on Islamic affairs to the sultans.

> In the light of these facts, we cannot overlook how large is the *maslihat am* [public interest] in the election of non-Muslim members of Parliament. Therefore, from the viewpoint of shariᶜa, it is permissible for Muslims to vote for non-Muslims who are admitted as citizens under the conditions of the Constitution.[57]

This official fatwa cited hadith as the basis for its justification; there was no mention of the classical theory of the Shafiᶜi School, and the concept of the public interest was also deployed. This fatwa shows that by the 1960s the official institutions of the Islamic administration were no longer bound by the Shafiᶜi School. Most of the official fatwas were based on the Salafi methodology and turned on direct references to the Qurᵓan and hadith, as well as the concept of maqāṣid al-sharīᶜa. This transition in the methodology for shariᶜa interpretation brought with it new flexibility, and in official fatwas this flexibility was applied mainly to the justification of government policies such as inter-ethnic cooperation and economic development.[58]

Islam is declared "the Religion of the Federation" in Article 3 of the Malaysian Federal Constitution. The provision of Islam as the official religion of state, and shariᶜa as the main source of legislation, can be found in the constitutions of many Muslim countries, including Egypt. However, Malaysia has the peculiarity that the Malay ruler is designated as "the Head of the Religion of Islam" in the Federal Constitution (Article 3), and also that it provides for the unlimited authority of rulers, and of the Majlis Agama Islam under those rulers, regarding Islamic affairs. As a result of the governmental authority over Islamic affairs, fatwas have been strictly controlled by the government; and, historically speaking, such unlimited authority over fatwas has been very rare in the Muslim world. Malaysia is peculiar even within Southeast Asia, and contrasts with Indonesia where there are Muslim organisations with millions of members – such as Nahdlatul Ulama and Muhammadiyah[59] – but no formal state control. The other characteristic of Malaysia is that it has the highest number of graduates from al-Azhar University, and their influence is manifest in administration, education and fiqh methodology. This phenomenon is primarily the result of the government's promotion of study at al-Azhar.

Conclusion

The period of domination of the Shafiᶜi School in Southeast Asia came to an end after the occupation of Mecca by Wahhabis in 1924; although the Shafiᶜi tradition has remained influential in some institutions such as the Majlis Agama

Islam in Kelantan, it no longer exercises a monopoly on the interpretation of shariᶜa. Underpinning the spread of the Salafi trend, we may observe the increasing institutionalisation of the Islamic administrative organisations as a part of the modernisation of governance in Southeast Asia – the establishment of the official religious authorities such as Majlis Agama Islam in the Malay Peninsula is just one example of this. Such religious authorities required a flexible form of shariᶜa jurisprudential interpretation in order to justify government policies. In official institutions such as the Fatwa Committee under the Majlis Agama Islam, the Salafi methodology was implemented because of its flexibility and capacity for innovation. The transition of the centre of Islamic learning from Mecca to Cairo laid the foundations for the absorption of Islamic jurisprudence into the state system, and led to a form of Islamic jurisprudence that was in line with the Malaysian government's projects for social engineering. This example shows how, historically, southeast Asian Muslims have absorbed the intellectual movements in the learning centres in the Middle East and adjusted them for their own benefit.

Notes

1. "Fatwa", in Wizara al-Awqaf wa al-Shuʾun al-Islamiyya al-Kuwait (ed.), *al-Mawsuᶜa al-Fiqhiyya* (Kuwait: Tabaᶜa Dhat al-Salasil, 1983).

2. The Muslims from Southeast Asia were collectively called *jāwī*. Their script, used by Southeast Asian languages – especially Malay – and written in Arabic script, is also called jāwī. Although most contemporary writings use the Latin alphabet (*rumi*), many classics of Islamic literature in Southeast Asia (*kitāb jāwī*) were written in jāwī. All the texts, including fatwas, analysed in this study were written in jāwī, and are translated by the author.

3. M. Feener, *Islamic Connections: Muslim Societies in South and Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2009).

4. See, for instance, Azyumardi Azra, *The Origins of Islamic Reformism in Southeast Asia: Networks of Malay–Indonesian and Middle Eastern 'Ulamā in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Crows' Nest and Honolulu: Allen & Unwin and University of Hawai'i Press, 2004); M. van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning: Pesantren dan Tarekat: Tradisi-Tradisi Islam di Indonesia* (Bandung: Mizan, 1990); Md. Sidin Ahmad Ishak and Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East: With a Bibliography of Malay Printed Works Published in the Middle East* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 2000); P. Riddelle, *Islam and the Malay–Indonesian World: Transmission and Responses* (Singapore: Horizon Books, 2001); W. Roff, *Studies on Islam and Society in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009).

5. On the social transformation of Southeast Asian Muslims under colonial rule, see Ahmad Ibrahim *et al.* (eds), *Readings on Islam in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985); K. S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali (eds), *Islam in Southeast Asia: Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st*

Century (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1985); F. R. von der Mehden, *Islam: Interaction between Southeast Asia and the Middle East* (Miami, FL: University Press of Florida, 1993); and Taufik Abdullah and Sharon Siddique (eds), *Islam and Society in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1986).

6. In the Malay Peninsula, Muslim kingdoms coexisted after the establishment of the first Muslim kingdom in Malacca in the fifteenth century. The British obtained Penang Island in 1786. The Muslim kingdoms in the Malay Peninsula were gradually colonised throughout the nineteenth century. At the time of independence the name of the country was the Federation of Malaya. In 1963, the country was renamed Malaysia, when Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak affiliated with the Federation. Singapore separated from Malaysia in 1965 because of ethnic contradictions.

7. On the institutionalisation of Islamic administration and Muslim associations, see Roff, *Studies on Islam and Society*; and M. Yegar, *Islam and Islamic Institutions in British Malaya: Policies and Implementation* (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1979).

8. Roff, *Studies on Islam and Society*.

9. M. Feener, *Muslim Legal Thought in Modern Indonesia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

10. In the Malaysian government Islamic affairs are the exclusive jurisdiction of the Malay rulers. Contemporary Malaysia consists of thirteen states and the Federal Territory. In nine of these states the constitutional leaders are hereditary Malay rulers. These Malay rulers are called *raja* in Malay. Seven of them have the title sultan. In four states, the heads of state are elected by the state legislative councils. At the federal level, the constitutional head of the Federation is the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, elected by the nine Malay rulers every five years. Only the Malay rulers are eligible to be Yang di-Pertuan Agong, and they choose one of their own as the constitutional head of the Federation in rotation. Article 3 of the Federal Constitution of Malaysia declares that the Malay rulers are not only the constitutional head of each state, but also "the Head of the Religion of Islam" in their states. In the four states without Malay rulers, along with the Federal Territory, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong is given the status of "the Head of the Religion of Islam". To execute the absolute authority of the Malay rulers over Islamic affairs there are Majlis Agama Islam in every state and in the Federal Territory.

11.. See *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "al-Masdjid al-Ḥarām" (Leiden: Brill, 1960).

12. C. Bosworth, *Historic Cities of the Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 373.

13. Bosworth, *Historic Cities*, p. 373. See also *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Makka – The Modern City".

14. M. Ishom Saha (ed.), *Dinamika Madrasah Diniyah di Indonesia; Menelusuri Akar Sejarah Pendidikan Nonformal* (Jakarta: Pustaka Mutiara, 2005).

15. See also *The Encyclopaedia of Islam*, s.v. "Indonesia".

16. Thanet Aphorsuvan, *Rebellion in Southern Thailand: Contending Histories* (Washington, DC: East-West Center, 2007).

17. The downfall of the Sultanate of Patani in southern Thailand caused an exodus of Patani ᶜulama. Patani was the centre of Islamic learning in the Malay Peninsula until the nineteenth century. After the failed rebellion against the Thai kingdom in 1831 and 1832, many ᶜulama migrated from Patani to Kelantan, Terengganu,

Kedah and Mecca. In the rebellion, the ruler of Patani allied with rulers in Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah in the northern part of the Malay Peninsula. The downfall of Patani led to the rise of Islamic learning centres in other areas of the Malay Peninsula, especially in Kelantan, Kedah and Terengganu. Many of the pondoks, or boarding learning centres, were established by ᶜulama who were part of the diaspora evacuated from Patani. The downfall of Patani laid a twofold foundation for the flourishing of Islamic learning in the Malay Peninsula in the twentieth century: (i) the activation of pondoks in the Malay Peninsula, especially in Kelantan, Terengganu and Kedah; and (ii) support for Southeast Asian Muslims who undertook Islamic learning in the Middle East. Finally, in 1908, the Sultanate of Patani was completely merged with Thailand. When the Federation of Malaya declared independence in 1957, Patani was not included in the Federation. See Ibrahim Syukri, *History of the Malay Kingdom of Patani*, trans. Connner Bailey and John Miksic (Athens, OH: Ohio University Center for International Studies, 1985), pp. 62–4.

18. W. Kraus, "Sejarah Wilayah Muslim, Modenisasi Islam Thai dan Gerakan Pemisah", in Farid Mat Zain and Zulkarnain Mohamed (eds), *Muslim Selatan Thai: Konflik dan Perjuangan* (Shah Alam: Karisma Publications, 2008), pp. 42–3.

19. Ismail Che Daud, *Tokoh-Tokoh Ulama' Semenanjung Melayu (1)* (Kota Bharu: Majlis Ugama Islam dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan, 2001).

20. Ishak and Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, pp. 60–3.

21. Ramli Awang, *Syeikh Abdul Qadir al-Mandili (1910–1965): Biografi & Pendidikan Akhlak* (Skudai: Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, 2008). See also Abdul Qadir Muttalib al-Indonesi al-Mandili, *Islam: Agama dan Kedaulatan* (Egypt: Matbaᶜat al-Anwar, 1954).

22. N. Kaptein, *The Muhimmāt al-Nafāis: A Bilingual Meccan Fatwa Collection for Indonesian Muslims from the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Jakarta: INIS, 1997).

23. Wan Mohd Saghir Abdullah, *al-Fatawal Fathaniyah Syeikh Ahmad al-Fathani: Membicarakan Shufi, Hadits, Fiqh Perbandingan antara Dunia Nyata & Ghaib* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 2002), vol. 1. pp. 1–8.

24. Ahmad Zain al-Fatani, *al-Fatawa al-Fataniyya*, 3rd edn (Patani: Matbaᶜat Fatani, 1957), pp. 92–4; Saghir Abdullah, *al-Fatawal Fathaniyah Syeikh Ahmad al-Fathani*, vol. 3. pp. 251–3.

25. Saghir Abdullah, *al-Fatawal Fathaniyah Syeikh Ahmad al-Fathani*, vol. 1. pp. 1–8.

26. Al-Fatani, *al-Fatawa al-Fataniyah*, pp. 100–1; Saghir Abdullah, *al-Fatawal Fathaniyah Syeikh Ahmad al-Fathani*, vol. 3, pp. 241–2.

27. Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "In Search of an Islamic Leader: Malay Perceptions of Ibn Saᶜūd's Triumph and the Domination of the Waḥābīs in Saudi Arabia", *Studia Islamika*, 11(2) (2004) .

28. Othman, "In Search of an Islamic Leader".

29. Ahmad al-Fatani is believed to be the first Malay student at al-Azhar. After his acceptance at al-Azhar in the early 1870s, other Malay students were also attracted there. See Ishak and Othman, *The Malays in the Middle East*, pp. 46–7; see also Wan Mohd Shaghir Abdullah, *Fatawa Tentang Binatang Hidup Dua Alam Syeikh Ahmad al Fatani* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbitan Hizbi, 1990).

30. B. Dodge, *al-Azhar: A Millennium of Muslim Learning* (Washington, DC: Middle East Institute, 1961), pp. 164–5.

31. Roff, *Studies on Islam and Society*, p. 133.

32. Muhammad Tahir Jalaluddin was born in Minangkabau, Sumatra Island, in 1869. After studying both in Mecca and at al-Azhar, he was appointed as a mufti in Perak in the western Malay Peninsula. After his service as mufti, he worked in Islamic education in Johor in the southern Malay Peninsula. He promoted the reformist thought of Muhammad ᶜAbduh and Rashid Rida through periodicals such as *al-Imam*, *al-Ikhwan* and *Saudara*. See Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "Egypt's Religious and Intellectual Influence on Malay Society", *KATHA – Official Journal of the Centre for Civilisational Dialogue*, 1 (2005): 26–54.

33. Othman, "Egypt's Religious and Intellectual Influence", pp. 1–18.

34. The publishers of *al-Imam* were forerunners of such Salafi supporters in Southeast Asia. Groups such as Persatuan Islam (Islamic Association: Persis) and Muhammadiyah in Indonesia followed them.

35. Roff, *Studies on Islam and Society*, pp. 134–43. At the Conference of Rulers in 1927, the sultan of Selangor expressed his disapproval of sending young Malays to Egypt, because political thought there and mixing with other Southeast Asian students such as Sumatrans and Javanese could bring undesirable influences to the Malay Peninsula. The sultan proposed setting up a local college of higher Islamic education as a solution. In 1955, the first college of higher Islamic education, Kolej Islam Malaya, was established. In 1982, the International Islamic University Malaysia was established as a part of the "Islamisation policy". Following these universities, other Islamic universities and colleges, such as Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (Islamic Science University, established in 1998), were established by the federal and state governments. In addition, departments of Islamic studies were opened in other national universities. While local universities provided places for Islamic learning, thousands of Malaysian students still studied in the Middle East. Due to their insufficient calibre, local universities were not a serious alternative to the Middle Eastern universities.

36. *Tarsih al-Mustafidin Khasiyya Fath al-Muᶜin* was written by an ᶜālim from Hadramaut, ᶜAlwi al-Saqqaf (d. 1916). This book is a commentary on *Fath al-Muᶜin* by Zayn al-Din al-Malibari (c. 1567), a popular text of fiqh in the Shafiᶜi School in Southeast Asia. Cf. van Bruinessen, *Kitab Kuning*.

37. *Tuhfah* is an abbreviation of the name of a fiqh text of the Shafiᶜi School, *Tuhfah al-Muhtaj bi Sharh al-Minhaj* by Ibn ᶜAli ibn Hajar al-Haithami (also known as Shihab al-Din Abu al-ᶜAbbas Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn ᶜAli ibn Hajar al-Haithami). *Tuhfah* is a commentary on *Minhaj al-Talibin* by Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi (d. 1277).

38. *Mugni Khatib Sharbini* is another name for *Mugni al-Muhtaj*, by Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Khatib Sharbini (d. 977 H). *Mugni al-Muhtaj* is also a commentary on *Minhaj al-Talibin* by Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi.

39. *Sharh Sahih Muslim* is a commentary on a hadith collection by Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi, *Sahih Muslim*.

40. Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Qastalani (d. 1517) is the author of *Irsyad al-Sari li Sahih al-Bukhari*, a commentary on a hadith collection by al-Bukhari.

41. Bujayrimi refers to Sulayman ibn Muhammad al-Bujayrimi (d. 1806). His main work was *Hashiyah al-Bujayrimi ᶜala al-Manhaj al-Mussamat al-Tajrid li-Nafᶜ*

al-ʿAbid ʿal-Sharh Manhaj al-Tullab li-Abi Yahya Zakariya al-Ansari. It is a commentary on *Manhaj al-Tullab* by Zakaria bin Muhammad al-Ansari (d. 1520). *Manhaj al-Tullab* is a commentary on *Minhaj al-Talibin* by Yahya ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi (d. 1277).

42. *Pengasuh*, 78 (19 August 1921).

43. Cf. *al-Imam* (5 January 1908). See also Abdul Aziz Mat Ton, *Pengislahan Masyarkat Melayu: Perbincangan al-Imam (1906–1908)* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2006), pp. 286–7.

44. On the conflict between the Salafis and the Sufis in Southeast Asia in the early twentieth century, see N. Kaptein, "The Conflicts about the Income of an Arab Shrine: The Perakara Luar Batang in Batavia", in Huub de Jonge and Nico Kaptein (eds), *Transcending Borders: Arabs, Politics, Trade and Islam in Southeast Asia* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2002), pp. 185–201.

45. Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Terengganu, *Fatwa-fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Terengganu: Dari Tahun Hijrah 1372–1389 Bersamaan Tahun 1953–1970* (Kuala Terengganu: Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Terengganu, 1971).

46. Institut Terjemahan Negara Malaysia, *Perjanjian & Dokumen Lama Malaysia: Old Treaties and Documents of Malaysia 1791–1965* (Kuala Lumpur: Institut Terjemahan Negara Malaysia, 2008), p. 33.

47. Notice 45/1917, 18 December 1917, *Majlis Agama Islam dan Isti'adat Melayu Kelantan*.

48. Following the example of Kelantan, similar organs headed by muftis were established in each state, such as the Jawatankuasa Fatwa (Executive Committee of Fatwa) or the Jawatankuasa Shariah (Executive Committee of Shariʿa).

49. Ahmad Mohamad Ibrahim, "Acara Mufti Membuat Fatwa", in Abdul Monir Yaacob (ed.), *Mufti dan Fatwa di Negara-Negra ASEAN* (Kuala Lumpur: Institut Kefahaman Islam Malaysia, 1998), p. 97.

50. Y. Shiozaki, "Fatwā Control System in Malaysia: Controlling Interpretation of Sharīʿah by Modern Muslim State', *Islamic World*, 76 (2011): 1–32.

51. In 1969, the Rulers' Conference decided to establish the Majlis Kebangsaan Bagi Hal-ehwal Agama Islam (the National Islamic Religious Council). The objective of the council was to standardise and strengthen the systems of Islamic administration within each state. The federal government initiated the intensification and standardisation of Islamic administration throughout Malaysia, and under the Mahatir regime (1981–2003) this policy accelerated.

52. In 1997, JAKIM was established under the Prime Minister's Office as a secretariat of the National Islamic Religious Council. The main function of JAKIM is to standardise and coordinate Islamic administration in each state, while another function is to convene the periodic meetings of muftis in each state. The meeting is called the Jawatankuasa Fatwa Kebangsaan (National Fatwa Committee). In the meeting, drafts of fatwas prepared by JAKIM are debated. The drafts are issued as fatwas in each state subsequent to a resolution by the National Fatwa Committee.

53. M. B. Hooker, "Fatwa in Malaysia 1960–1985", *Arab Law Quarterly*, 8(2) (1993): 93–105.

54. Abdul Qadir Muttalib al-Indonesi al-Mandili, *Islam: Agama dan Kedaulatan* (Egypt: Matbaʿat al-Anwar, 1954), p. 35.

55. Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Terengganu, *Fatwa-fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Terengganu*, pp. 27–8.

56. Muttalib al-Indonesi al-Mandili, *Islam: Agama dan Kedaulatan*, p. 36.

57. Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Terengganu, *Fatwa-fatwa Mufti Kerajaan Terengganu*, pp. 49–51.

58. Hooker, "Fatwa in Malaysia".

59. Two major Muslim organisations were established in Indonesia in the early twentieth century: Muhammadiyah (in 1912) and Nahdlatul Ulama (in 1926). After independence in 1945, the Indonesian government was relatively disinclined to include Islamic affairs in the state system. In Indonesia, under the Pancasila (Five Principles), the fundamental principle of the state system, Islam was categorised as one of the five "monotheistic religions" (the other four being Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist and Hindu). However, since the 1970s controls on issuing fatwas have gradually increased. Majelis Ulama Indonesia (MUI) was established in 1975 under the strong direction of the government. Although MUI is not a governmental body, but a private organisation, it has deep connections with the government, especially the Ministry of Religion. MUI can be considered a coalition of Muslim organisations in Indonesia, including Nahdlatul Ulama, Muhammadiyah and Dewan Dakwa Islamiyah. Traditionally, the jurisprudence methodology based on the Shafiʿi School was sustained in Indonesia due to the predominance of Nahdlatul Ulama, especially in education. However, in the late twentieth century the numbers of graduates from al-Azhar rapidly increased in Indonesia, and Salafi methodology became popular not only in Muhammadiyah, but also in new institutes such as MUI and Partai Keadilan Sejahtera. The methodology based on maqāṣid al-sharīʿa is not so predominant in such organisations, although there are many ʿulama who prefer to mention maqāṣid al-sharīʿa on an individual basis. See Moh. Nurhakim, "Tanzim al-Taqalid al-ʿIlmiyyah al-Islamiyyah fi Jawah fi al-Qarn al-Tasiʿ ʿAshar wa Nufudhuh Nahw al-Tatawwur al-Islami fi Induisiyya", *Studia Islamika*, 2(4) (1995); Syamsul Anwar, "Fatwā Purification and Dynamization: A Study of Tariḥ in Muhammadiyah", *Islamic Law and Society*, 12(1) (2005): 27–44; Suwito and Muhbib Abdul Wahab, "Majlis al-ʿUlama al-Indunisi fi Munadalat al-Barnamij al-Siyasi", *Studia Islamika*, 2(4) (1995); and Moch. Nur Ichwan. "ʿUlamāʾ State and Politics: Majelis Ulama Indonesia after Suharto", *Islamic Law and Society*, 12(1) (2005): 47–72.

CHAPTER 8

"Azharisation" of ʿUlama Training in Malaysia

Hiroko Kushimoto

If one wishes to understand the global influence of al-Azhar, few countries present a better case study than Malaysia. Of Egypt's approximately 11,000 Malaysian students, al-Azhar University hosts more than 4,000 in the departments of Religious Studies and Arabic Studies alone.[1] The number of Malaysian students at al-Azhar surpasses even the 3,239 Indonesian students who study there, and the implications of this become more pronounced when one considers the population size of each country: Malaysia has only 17.3 million Muslims, comprising 61.3 per cent of the country's population,[2] while Indonesia has the largest Muslim population of any country, 177 million.[3] The difference is tenfold.

The reasons for the popularity of al-Azhar among Malaysian students become apparent when one looks at the Malaysian system of ʿulama training.[4] Malaysian ʿulama are trained through a religious school system that is separate from the national system, and the outstanding feature of these religious schools is that the religious studies and Arabic curriculums follow the system at al-Azhar. The textbooks are imported from al-Azhar and reprinted in Malaysia; the certification given upon passing the final examination (called STAM)[5] for the al-Azhar curriculum is recognised upon entrance to undergraduate courses at al-Azhar;[6] and after the STAM examination, Malaysian students who wish to continue their study at al-Azhar are provided with orientation information by the state religious office and sent in groups to Egypt. Most of the students receive scholarships from the various religious bodies within their respective states,[7] and the majority live together in hostels provided by the state religious offices. These official forms of support make their lives at al-Azhar quite comfortable.

This chapter attempts to provide answers to two broad clusters of questions. The first cluster concerns why Malaysia developed an education system that

draws so heavily upon al-Azhar, and why there is such extensive official support for sending students there. The second cluster concerns what it means for individual students to study at al-Azhar, and how the relationship with al-Azhar is viewed by Malaysian society. In response to the first cluster of questions, this chapter shows how the adoption of the al-Azhar curriculum in the nation's religious education system was the result of the efforts both of individual ʿulama and local communities. After Malaysian independence in 1957, however, the state governments became involved in the religious schools, and subsequently the federal government also strengthened its role in their administration and in sending students to al-Azhar. Two factors in particular were responsible for this growth of support for al-Azhar education at the community, ʿulama and governmental levels: first, the complicated social and educational context of Muslims in multi-ethnic Malaya (Malaysia); and, secondly, the context of an Islamic resurgence in Malaysia after the 1970s that stressed the political importance of Islamic education.

As for what it means to study there, the chapter shows that the increased access to al-Azhar has dramatically changed the dividends that students can draw on their return from Egypt. In the 1960s, studying at al-Azhar was a rare occurrence, and precisely because they were so rare, the generation of Malaysian students who studied there went on to play important roles both in Islamic organisations and the government in the 1970s. However, as a result of the rapid increase in their number, the graduates of al-Azhar now face difficulties in finding even rather basic jobs such as being a religious teacher in an elementary school. From the 1960s to the 2010s, what it has meant to study at al-Azhar has undergone significant change, both at the level of the individual and for society.

The first section of this chapter explains the process of "Azharisation" experienced by the Malaysian religious education system, from its beginnings in individual efforts in the 1910s, up to the federal involvement of the 2000s. The second section describes the transformation of the individual experience of studying at al-Azhar, comparing different generations of Malaysian students in terms of their reasons for studying at al-Azhar, their lives in Egypt, and the roles they played upon returning to Malaysia. In the conclusion, the chapter analyses the direct and indirect results of Azharisation. The evidence in this chapter is based on fieldwork, interviews and archival research conducted in the state of Kedah in the northern Malay Peninsula from March 2006 to July 2008, and in Kuala Lumpur from July 2008 to March 2011.

The "Azharisation" of Malaysian Institutions of ʿUlama Training

The early Malay students of Islam regarded Mecca as the climax of their journey for knowledge, and this situation endured for centuries (see Chapter 7 for

details). Students from the Malay Peninsula would learn the basics of Islam in the local traditional institutions of Islamic learning, called *pondok*s in Malay (sing. *pondok*, pl. *pondok-pondok*), then move on to centres of advanced Islamic learning in northern states such as Kelantan and Patani. After many years of study in Masjid al-Haram, they would return to Malaya to teach in mosques or pondoks, or to open new pondoks. These students of Islam from the Malay archipelago were called *jāwī* students.

It was in the early twentieth century that the preference for Mecca as the main destination for higher Islamic education began to change, and many Malay students began to study at al-Azhar in addition to Mecca. One of the earliest Malay or jāwī students at al-Azhar was Wan Ahmad Zain al-Fatani (1856–1908).[8] Ahmad al-Fatani is still regarded as one of the most prominent sources of traditional Islamic learning in East Asia, having edited and published numerous religious writings (*kitab*, lit. "book") of the old Malay ᶜulama, especially those who were active in the eighteenth century. The majority of jāwī who were active ᶜulama in the twentieth century and who were educated in Mecca had studied under Ahmad al-Fatani. However, Malaya began to see a gradual increase in the number of returning students who had absorbed the reformist ideals represented by Muhammad ᶜAbduh. This approach favoured engagement with the original Islamic sources with a view to interpreting them in the light of reason and modern needs, as opposed to *taqlīd* of the Shafiᶜi School, which was the traditional practice in the region. Although this approach was Salafi in its methodology – given its emphasis on going back to the original texts – it was considered modernist because it preferred the reinterpretation of the core texts in the light of modern concerns instead of strict adherence to the positions taken by a specific school of thought. Tahir Jalaluddin (1869–1956) was the first such graduate of al-Azhar, and was well known for the propagation of reformism in the style of Muhammad ᶜAbduh through his journal *al-Imam* (1906–8). Tahir Jalaluddin and other writers for *al-Imam* also contributed to the establishment of modern Islamic schools, which, as with the reforms initiated at al-Azhar under Muhammad ᶜAbduh, combined religious education with modern education. The first example of these Islamic schools was the Madrasa al-Iqbal, established in 1907 in Singapore. This model for a modern Islamic school gradually spread throughout Malaya in the first three decades of the twentieth century.[9] Due to their being modelled on al-Azhar, these modern Islamic schools began to attract more Malay students to al-Azhar itself.

The spread of modern religious schools and their adoption of the al-Azhar model should be analysed with two factors in mind. The first is the Malay educational environment, and the other is the modernisation of al-Azhar. Modern education was introduced to Malaya by Western missionaries in the early nineteenth century. The first of these schools to be opened was Penang Free School,

established in 1815. These missionary schools were established in urban areas, using English as the main language of instruction; this, though, made these schools less accessible for Malay, the majority of whom lived in rural areas. Malay schools that taught in the Malay language began to be established after 1854, when the British East India Company adopted a new policy for enhancing mother-tongue education in their colonies.[10] Malay schools rapidly spread throughout Malaya at the turn of the century, yet Malay education remained limited to the elementary level, and secondary education was only provided in English, excepting certain teacher training colleges that used Malay.

The transformation of al-Azhar into a modern institution for religious education began in the 1870s, with the introduction of new subjects and new methods of examination. The first significant change in the system came with a law passed in 1896 under the influence of Muhammad ⁿAbduh, who had argued for the modernisation of al-Azhar. The law introduced a new system of eight years of secondary education and four years of higher education, with certificate examinations at each level. However, it was not until 1911 that the process of drastic transformation into a modern institution really began for al-Azhar. Eccel refers to the transformation that occurred after the law of 1911 as "bureaucratisation", and points out that numerous institutions for religious instruction all over Egypt were arranged into a hierarchy that placed al-Azhar at the top.[11] The whole system was divided into three levels: elementary, secondary and higher education, which were each allocated four years.[12] The economic base of the education system also changed during this period. After the independence of Egypt in 1922, the Egyptian government began to control the *waqf* income that had supported the autonomy of the ⁿulama of al-Azhar. This policy, designed to break the economic base of the ⁿulama, was completed in 1954 under the Nasser regime.[13]

The reform contained in the law of 1930 was equally important: it aimed to ensure employment for the university's graduates. It was at this time that the name of the four-year higher educational institution was changed from "mosque" (*jāmiⁿ*) to "university" (*jāmiⁿa*); the university's degrees were also made equal to that of national universities.[14] The elementary and secondary levels were rearranged into four years of elementary (*ibtidāʾiyya*) and five years of secondary (*thanawīyya*) education. Students who passed the last examination in the secondary school were given a certificate titled *shahāda al-thanawīyya*, and the portion of secular subjects was increased to up to 30 per cent of the curriculum. Eccel refers to this feature of the transformation in the 1930s as "professionalisation".[15]

The development of modern religious schools in Malaya strongly reflected these shifts. Muslim leaders saw the British schools as problematic, not only because of the limited opportunities they provided for Muslims, but also because

of the lack of religious education. Thus, ʿulama trained in the Middle East took initiatives to establish modern religious schools to provide alternative educational opportunities for Malay children. For example, Madrasa Hamidiah (now known as Maktab Mahmud) was opened in Alor Star, Kedah, in 1914. The initiative was taken by Wan Sulaiman Wan Sidik (1874–1935), who studied in Mecca and served as *shaykh al-Islam* in Kedah. Wan Sidik invited two Arab ʿulama, from Mecca and al-Azhar, respectively, to teach in the madrasa, and imported textbooks from Egypt as well.[16] In 1938, a teacher who had graduated from al-Azhar was appointed as principal. He reformed the system of the madrasa into a seven-year curriculum based on the model of the al-Azhar secondary school. In 1955, the system was further developed into a twelve-year programme to prepare students to enter al-Azhar University. The courses were divided into three levels – elementary, lower secondary and upper secondary – and each level was four years in length.

Another example is Madrasa Muhammadiyah (now known as Maahad Muhammadi), opened by the Kelantan Council of Religion[17] in 1917. In the beginning, it had only three grades for boys aged 9–15 years old and used Malay as the medium of instruction – some textbooks were imported from Egypt and translated into Malay for that purpose.[18] However, in 1937 it was developed into a four-year course based on the agreement and support of al-Azhar.[19] The madrasa was further reformed into a nine-year curriculum based on the three levels of al-Azhar education, elementary (*ibtidai*), lower secondary (*idadi*) and upper secondary (*thanawi*),[20] which were each allocated three years. Maahad Muhammadi's certification was recognised by al-Azhar in 1960 and some students from the school entered al-Azhar University for the first time at the end of the 1960s.[21]

The application of the al-Azhar system was not limited to schools – such as Maktab Mahmud and Maahad Muhammadi – that were related to the religious administration of the state government. In the 1930s and 1940s, many similar schools were established on the model of these famous schools. Most of these schools were supported by donations from the local community or from the private property of the family of the supreme leader of the school (*tok guru*). They received no official support and there were no offices to supervise their administration and curriculum – this was, then, a totally independent effort on the part of religious leaders to adopt the model of al-Azhar.

However, the schools' curricula were not necessarily imported directly from the al-Azhar system, at least not at this stage; rather, they were the product of a mixture of that system with other models, including traditional Islamic learning. The modern system of religious schools – with standards, a curriculum organised by years and examinations – was generally called the *nizami* (organised) system, in contrast to the traditional *umumi* (general) system, whether it

originated from the al-Azhar system or not. The origin of the name nizami is unclear, but one possibility is that it stems from *dars-e-nizami*, the systematic religious curriculum developed in eighteenth-century India.[22] The influence of the Indian madrasa can also be traced through the connection with Mecca. There were some madrasas in Mecca that had a modern system and accepted students from Malaya, and one of the famous destinations for these students was Madrasa Saulatiyah, which was established by an Indian Muslim. Some of the teachers who developed curricula for the madrasas in Malaya in the 1920s and 1930s were graduates of this madrasa and applied this school's system in their own institutions.[23]

By the 1960s this combination of influences had been transformed into a single al-Azhar stream of influence. Among the factors playing a role in this transformation were the new policies of al-Azhar, as well as the establishment of privileged preparatory courses for al-Azhar in Malaysia. Al-Azhar was further reformed as a modern university under Nasser in the 1950s – al-Azhar University and its elementary and secondary schools having come fully under the control of Nasser's government after the revolution in 1952. The budget for al-Azhar came to be distributed by the government and its funding was increased.[24] In general terms, opportunities for education and employment were expanded under the new government. A standardised examination system was introduced to prepare for the expansion of higher education. This pushed al-Azhar to place more stress on non-religious subjects in order to ensure the employment of graduates and attract students. In 1960, al-Azhar opened new faculties of Commerce, Engineering, Agriculture and Medicine, in addition to the traditional Arabic and Islamic departments. A 1961 law decreed that a certificate from the al-Azhar secondary school would qualify a student to enter any university in Egypt, making the al-Azhar school stream entirely equal to the government school system. The modern reform of al-Azhar made the institution part of Egypt's national education system and so made the ʿulama part of the bureaucratic school system.

In tandem with this transformation, since the 1920s al-Azhar had been accepting more and more foreign students. This policy was further accentuated in the 1950s when al-Azhar provided generous scholarships for foreign students, contributing to a rapid increase in their numbers, especially from Asian countries.[25] The preparatory course for foreign students (Maʿahad Buʿuth) was established as well. The first college for female students was opened in 1962, and the number of female foreign students increased in the 1970s.[26]

The establishment of Islamic higher education institutions in Malaya based on the al-Azhar model was linked to the developments at al-Azhar itself. In 1955, the Kolej Islam Malaya (Malay College of Islam) was established as the first institution for Islamic higher education in Malaya. It was the fruit of long

effort, reaching back to the 1920s, on the part of the Muslim leaders of Malaya; but although a variety of Muslim individuals and groups were involved, it would not have been achieved without the support of the sultans (rulers of Malay states), especially the sultan of Selangor. It should be noted that the sultans' attitude towards studying at al-Azhar was not necessarily positive. For example, Roff notes, based on a record of discussions among the rulers in 1927, that there had been a suggestion from the sultan of Selangor to establish a local college of higher Islamic education.[27] He disapproved of sending students to Egypt, not only because of the expense, but also "because it introduces them to undesirable matters" – where the phrase "undesirable matters" implied political influences such as anti-colonialism and movements towards an alliance with Indonesia as a result of communication with students from the Dutch East Indies. On the other hand, *Pengasuh*, a journal of the Kelantan Council of Religion (the sultans' advisory council) consistently published articles that recommended sending students to al-Azhar for higher education and provided reports on students' life there.

Irrespective of the intentions behind its establishment, however, Kolej Islam Malaya functioned as the main gate to al-Azhar due to the consonance between their curricula. In the beginning, the school had two years of preparatory courses and five years of higher education. In 1961, Mahmud Saltut, the rector of al-Azhar appointed by Nasser's government, was invited to Kolej Islam to discuss the curriculum. He agreed to recognise the higher certificate of Kolej Islam as equal to al-Azhar's bachelor's degree, and to accept holders of that certificate onto al-Azhar's master's course. Al-Azhar also agreed to send two teachers to Kolej Islam. As a result, ten graduates of Kolej Islam succeeded in entering al-Azhar master's course in 1963.[28] However, Kolej Islam soon transformed its educational system in order to concentrate on secondary education, since it could not maintain its students' achievements at the higher level. Since then, Kolej Islam has played a role in gathering superior students from all over Malaysia in order to provide them with preparatory training and send them to al-Azhar.[29]

The establishment of Kolej Islam had the effect of promoting the standardisation of the curriculum of the religious schools, since such schools now had an opportunity to send their students to universities by preparing them to enter Kolej Islam, even if by themselves they could not prepare their students for university life. In 1963, the Yayasan Pengajian Tinggi Islam Kelantan (YPTIK; Kelantan Foundation for Higher Islamic Education) was established in Kelantan, where it played a role similar to that of Kolej Islam. These institutions made studying at al-Azhar far more accessible for Malay students.

Introduction of the al-Azhar Curriculum by
State (Local) Governments

Up to this point, the introduction of the al-Azhar curriculum had been an inde-pendent effort without any institutional support. The first active official initi-ative for standardisation based on the al-Azhar curriculum began in the 1970s. The state religious councils, which first appeared in Kelantan in 1915, had been established in all thirteen states by the early 1970s. These religious councils began to provide financial support to the independent religious schools, and in some cases provided these schools with concrete sets of guidelines. Kelantan was one of the earliest states to import the standardised curriculum based on al-Azhar. One of the reasons for this initiative was the declining popularity of religious schools, which had resulted from the expansion of educational opportunities for Muslims in the government school system.

Educational opportunities for Muslims, the majority in Malaysia, rapidly expanded after the late 1960s. This transformation was connected to the 1961 Education Act and the 1963 Language Act, both of which were designed to integrate the multi-ethnic citizenry[30] and give substance to Article 152 of the Constitution (1957), which provided that the national language should be Malay. The language of secondary schools was gradually switched from English to Malay, and the number of Malay students increased from 2,315 in 1957 to 28,067 in 1964. The abolition of entrance examinations for secondary schools in 1964 caused the number of students to jump to 294,832 in 1975.[31] In addi-tion to the language policy, the New Economic Policy (NEP), initiated in 1971, further promoted educational opportunities for Malay students. The NEP aimed to correct the socio-economic imbalance between ethnic groups, particularly between the Chinese and the Malay, which was believed to have been a factor in the traumatic ethnic conflict of 1969. These policies led to the establishment of various universities and colleges in the early 1970s, and to a rapid increase in the number of Malay Muslim students.

This expansion of educational opportunity in the government school system resulted in a decrease in the number of students in religious schools. Kelantan, for example, which for centuries had been the largest centre of religious learn-ing, had 182 religious schools in 1962, but the number dropped to 158 in 1968 and 89 in 1972.[32] One of the responses to this was an initiative on the part of religious schools and state religious offices to introduce the al-Azhar curriculum more systematically, in order to ensure greater opportunities for higher educa-tion. The Kelantan state religious council introduced a standardised curriculum, examinations and a certificate in 1971. The introduction of a standardised cer-tificate abolished the certificates that had previously been issued individually by each school. Although other states soon introduced similar policies, the pressure

for standardisation remained weak. In Kedah, the religious council only offered guidelines such as a list of textbooks and the choice of curriculum, while the certification was issued by each religious school.

The situation changed drastically in the 1990s. Although it is rare for the statistics recorded in schools and religious offices to be entirely accurate, it is clear that the number of students in religious schools had begun to increase in the late 1980s – Madrasa an-Nahdhah, for instance, one of the famous religious schools in Kedah, never had more than 300 students before 1983, but this number had doubled by 1986 and reached 1,400 in 1988. This increase was caused by the Islamic resurgence in Malaysia that emerged in the 1970s, and the so-called Islamisation policy intensively promoted by the Malaysian government after the 1980s.[33] In the early 1970s, the leaders of Islamic movements – especially the members of the Angkatan Belia Islam Malaysia (ABIM; Malaysian Muslim Youth Association) – began to criticise the education provided in government schools, which conveyed little Islamic knowledge and had few classes for religious education. Mahathir's government, established in 1981, employed many leaders of such movements so as to include Islamic elements in various aspects of government policy.[34]

In terms of education, a new curriculum was introduced that stressed Islamic values, with almost twice as many school hours (240 minutes per week) now set aside for religious subjects, as well as the integration of Islamic elements into other subjects and elements of school life. Opportunities to receive Islamic higher education inside the country were also expanded. The establishment of the International Islamic University, in 1982, was one of the most symbolically important results of the Islamisation policy under Mahathir's government, and it was a development that elevated parents' expectations of religious education. In order to answer the growing demand for Islamic education, the government not only facilitated Islamic higher education, but also created employment for graduates of religious schools. These measures enhanced the future options for the graduates of religious schools, and made religious education, including study at al-Azhar University, important for finding jobs as religious teachers or in government offices.

The introduction of the new standardised al-Azhar curriculum at the state level, which occurred around 1994, further popularised study at al-Azhar. For example, in 1994 the Department of Religious Affairs of Kedah officially imported an al-Azhar curriculum based on an agreement between the department and al-Azhar University. It launched a new curriculum called the "Maʿahad Buʿuth curriculum", which followed the system of Maʿahad Buʿuth, the al-Azhar secondary school for foreign students. The examination referred to as the Sijil Tinggi Agama (Higher Religious Certificate) was also introduced, and the certificate was issued in the name of the department. The textbooks of

Maʿahad Buʿuth were imported from Egypt and reprinted in Kedah bearing the logo of Kedah Council of Religion.[35] The textbooks were distributed to the religious schools by the departments. Now it was clear to everyone that studying in a religious school was, in effect, preparation for studying at al-Azhar; and if they did not go to al-Azhar, the graduates of religious schools would enter the department of Islamic studies at a local university, which ensured that they would at least become a teacher of religion in an elementary school. The number of students in religious schools peaked in the 1990s. Looking again at the example of Kedah, the number of students in the independent religious schools there was 21,175 in 1994, and reached a peak of 23,556 in 1995. The number slightly declined after 1996, but remained in excess of 20,000 until 2001.[36]

This new curriculum and the associated examination system resulted, for the first time, in the bureaucratic standardisation of independent religious schools. Prior to this, the independent religious schools had basically been free in their choice of educational content: there had been loose guidelines as a condition of financial assistance from state religious offices, but there was little bureaucracy in their implementation. Nevertheless, this standardisation was achieved without obstruction, because the independent religious schools already had similar systems in place as a result of their having adopted the al-Azhar curriculum. In other words, al-Azhar, as the model for religious education, prepared the independent religious schools in Malaysia for the standardisation and bureaucratisation that was later to come.

National (Federal) Control of Religious Schools and Study in al-Azhar

In the late 1990s, standardisation did finally begin at the federal level. The first drastic change was the introduction of a federal standard examination, the Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia (STAM; Malaysian Higher Islamic Religious Certificate), in 2000. It was based on the memorandum of understanding signed on 18 November 1999 between al-Azhar and the Ministry of Education Malaysia to launch the single certificate system in Malaysia. According to officers of the ministry, al-Azhar had complained that some of the Malaysian students were entering al-Azhar with a lower level of ability and were taking longer to graduate. Thus, the purpose of introducing the STAM was to "ensure that all of our students who enter al-Azhar are excellent".[37] The memorandum included the provisions that al-Azhar would accept only the STAM, instead of the existing twenty-six certificates issued by various religious departments and schools; the curriculum for the STAM examination would be that of Maʿahad Buʿuth al-Islamiyya al-Azhar; textbooks used for this curriculum would be those taught in Maʿahad Buʿuth; al-Azhar would give copyright over the textbooks to the

Ministry of Education Malaysia; and the examination would be prepared by the ministry with the assistance of al-Azhar if necessary.[38] Moreover, as a part of the condition for al-Azhar's acceptance of STAM students, the memorandum included the provision that students must also pass the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (Malaysian Certificate of Education), the certificate for completion of the secondary education curriculum of the Ministry of Education Malaysia. This meant that, for the first time, students who had studied only religious subjects were not allowed to enter al-Azhar; it also meant that the religious schools had to be serious about the government curriculum for non-religious subjects if they were to send their students to al-Azhar.

The final move from the federal government to control the religious schools came with the sudden announcement by Prime Minister Mahathir that in October 2002 he would withdraw the financial support provided to independent religious schools. The Ministry of Education had provided a modest amount of financial support to the independent religious schools since the end of 1957, but the government now said that it was necessary to withdraw that support in order to review the undesirable level of achievement by their students. It was also stated that some of these schools were inspiring students with radical and anti-government sentiments. Although the amount was not so large that its loss immediately created financial crises for these schools, this withdrawal of official support made parents hesitant to enrol their children because they were now afraid of being labelled anti-government. The number of students in religious schools rapidly decreased, and some small schools were forced to close. The federal government set up a committee to discuss a resolution to the situation, and offered the religious schools a choice: they could either be fully government-supported schools under the Ministry of Education or fully independent schools without any support from the ministry. As a result, by January 2006, 134 out of the 305 independent religious schools had registered as fully government-supported;[39] this meant that the religious schools that chose to be government-supported became fully integrated into the state bureaucracy.

This Azharisation of ʿulama training was closely linked with the processes of modernisation and bureaucratisation of religious instruction. Training ʿulama had been an independent activity since before the introduction of the modern education system. With the development of the modern secular education system, religious learning for ʿulama training gradually adopted modern organisational forms. Al-Azhar provided the best model for the new type of ʿulama training, supplanting the traditional kitab learning which had been based on the model of Masjid al-Haram. As a result of independent efforts on the part of some schools to import the al-Azhar model, religious schools throughout Malaya/Malaysia became more similar to each other, and this paved the way for the standardisation at the state level based on the al-Azhar curriculum.

Moreover, the introduction of the al-Azhar curriculum at the state level in turn conditioned the standardisation at the federal level, again based on al-Azhar. The Azharisation of ʿulama training was thus first promoted by individual leaders, then by the state religious offices, and finally by the federal Ministry of Education. At the same time, this process of Azharisation promoted the integration of ʿulama training into the bureaucracy of the modern education system. In other words, the Azharisation of ʿulama training led to government control of the ʿulama, so reducing the latter's scope to criticise the government.

The Experience of Studying in al-Azhar and its Meaning for Individual Students

The earliest generations, 1900s–1940s

The establishment of an ʿulama training system in Malaysia based on al-Azhar has changed the experience of the students who study at al-Azhar, while also transforming the social role and life course of al-Azhar graduates in Malaysia.

The first generation of Malay students who went to al-Azhar in the early twentieth century prepared the foundations for student life there. They also provided the first examples of the celebrated careers that could follow such an educational experience, playing important social roles in Malaya from the first decade of the twentieth century onwards. Tahir Jalaluddin (1869–1956) was among the earliest of the outstanding returnees. Born in West Sumatra, he moved to Mecca in 1880 and studied there for thirteen years. He then continued his study at al-Azhar for four years until 1897. As discussed above, al-Azhar at that time was experiencing the beginning of significant reform under the influence of Muhammad ʿAbduh. Jalaluddin took Arabic Studies, Shariʿa and Mathematics. During his stay in Cairo, he was significantly influenced by the progressive ideas of al-Afghani, Muhammad ʿAbduh and Rashid Rida.[40] After studying again in Mecca for several years, he finally went back to Malaya in 1900 and joined the journal *al-Imam*, which contributed to the spread of reformist ideas. He also worked as a teacher and headmaster in various religious schools in Penang and Perak, and was the administrator of the state religious schools in Johor.

Returnees from al-Azhar at that time did not necessarily contribute to the promotion of reformist ideas. There were some returnees from al-Azhar who played important roles in the Kelantan Council of Religion, which was in favour of social reform, but clearly kept a traditionalist position in terms of a legal methodology that adhered to the opinions of the Shafiʿi *madhhab*. Muhammad bin Khatib Mohd Said is a salient example here. He was born in 1888 and studied in Mecca and at al-Azhar for ten years before returning to Kelantan in 1914.

Soon after his return, he worked to establish the council and was appointed as its first secretary in 1915. He was later promoted to be the prime minister of the state in the 1920s.[41]

In addition to these examples of emerging prominent figures, the Malay al-Azhar students in the 1920s also began to relate their activities through Malay journals. In the mid-1920s, for example, *Pengasuh*, the journal published by the Kelantan Council of Religion since 1918, often published news from the Middle East. The journal covered a variety of topics, including the life of Malays in Egypt and what it was like to study at al-Azhar, through the perspective of Malays in Egypt. *Pengasuh* repeatedly referred to the benefit of an education at al-Azhar, possibly contributing to the widespread public sense of longing for that institution as the place of the highest learning.[42] In addition to the reports in journals published in Malaya, jāwī students in Egypt published their own journals. One of the most famous of these was *Seruan Azhar* (*Call of Azhar*), first published by jāwī students in October 1925 and circulated among religious leaders and students throughout the Malay archipelago.[43]

Through these prominent figures and journals, people in the Malay Peninsula learned about al-Azhar as a destination for religious knowledge and came to recognise its authority. The rising reputation of al-Azhar is reflected in the news about Hijaz during the war between Sharif Hussain and Ibn Saᶜud. *Pengasuh* repeatedly published the opinions of al-Azhar ᶜulama in order to convince Malays that "Wahhabis" were part of the Sunni Muslim community and not contrary to any of the four madhhabs.[44] The same attitude can be found in another article which makes reference to al-Azhar ᶜulama in support of their criticism of the secularisation policies of Mustafa Kemal.[45] *Pengasuh*'s attitude is significant because it was among the few journals that took a clear position in defence of the traditional method of adhering to the madhhab. Because of this position, *Pengasuh* was preferred not only by the Muslim leaders who were educated in government schools, but also by the traditional ᶜulama who had typically learned in Mecca and taught in pondoks.

The first important development among Malay students in the early twentieth century was the establishment of structures and systems for supporting their student life. In 1922, jāwī students formed an association, the Jamaᶜat al-Chairiah al-Talabijja al-Azhariah al-Jawiah (Welfare Association of Jawa students).[46] Roff estimates that there were at least 200 Southeast Asian students in Cairo by 1925, while *Pengasuh* also reports that there were about 150 students from the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra, Java, Borneo and other places.[47] The increasing numbers of Southeast Asian students in the Middle East at this time was strongly supported by the boom in the price of rubber. The number of pilgrims from British Malaya increased in the 1920s, with the minimum annual number being 12,184 in 1927.[48] In addition to the financial factor, the unstable

situation in Mecca, caused by the war, also contributed to redirecting students from that erstwhile centre of learning for jāwī students to Cairo, at least for the period around 1925.

However, the increase in the number of jāwī students and the formation of their student associations did not immediately improve their life. As far as students from the Malaya Peninsula were concerned, it was not until 1924 – when Syed Hassan bin Ahmad al-Attas, a Hadrami descendant from Johor, visited Cairo – that the effort to improve the students' lives began. Syed Hassan al-Attas was born in Pahang in 1832, the son of a rich trader, Syed Ahmad Hassan al-Attas. After studying in Malaya, he travelled to the Middle East and received part of his education at al-Azhar. He stayed in Egypt for twelve years and then returned to Malaya to contribute to developing religious institutions, such as Madrasa al-Attas Johor in 1914 and Madrasa al-Attas Pahang in 1923.[49]

Syed Hassan visited Cairo in 1924 to find qualified teachers to teach in his schools. Meeting some senior Malay students, he found their circumstances far from satisfactory. In making efforts to help them, he came to learn that there had been a waqf specially donated by a wealthy Egyptian for the sake of jāwī students; the purpose of the waqf had, however, been forgotten over time, and it had eventually turned into a general waqf. On discovering this, Syed Hassan met with several well-known Egyptian ʿulama, such as Muhammad Jawhari al-Tantawi, in order to find a means to use the waqf to help jāwī students. With the help of these famous ʿulama, Syed Hassan had a meeting with the Minister of Waqf and Prime Minister Saad Zaghlul to address the problem, as well as to ask for funds to send teachers to Malaya. After the discussion, the ministers decided to appoint a committee (lajnah), consisting of various ʿulama as well as Syed Hassan, to take care of the matter. The committee also pledged that, instead of sending Egyptian ʿulama to Malaya, they would educate Malay students in Egypt to a sufficient level for them to meet the requirements for teaching in Syed Hassan's madrasa. Thus, they agreed to make efforts to improve the situation of Malay students both in their daily lives and with respect to their studies. Syed Hassan had rented a house to accommodate about ten Malay students who had been living in the dormitory (riwāq) at al-Azhar, but its condition was not satisfactory. With the help of the committee, they were not only provided with accommodation, but teachers also came to give special lectures in their new abode.[50]

This active support provided by al-Azhar corresponded with the general policy of that time for promoting the university's influence all over the Islamic world. In the 1920s, the Egyptian government and al-Azhar had agreed upon the gradual increase of the al-Azhar budget and to increase the number of foreign students.[51] In fact, the committee that had discussed the matter of the jāwī students had been established as one of the branches under the "committee for

Eastern students".[52] Under these circumstances, the Malay students were able to prepare the basic facilities which would be expanded upon by later generations. Nevertheless, the support they received from Egyptian sources was not sufficient, and the students and the committee repeatedly called for donations from their homeland.[53] It was during this period that the customs were established of Malay students living together in the hostel and having tutorial studies there in addition to their formal classes.

Study in al-Azhar in the mid-twentieth century

The number of Malay students at al-Azhar continued to increase, albeit gradually, until the end of the 1960s.[54] The experience of studying at al-Azhar in the mid-twentieth century was strongly related to the development of a modern education system in Malaya in the 1950s. One of the most important events was the establishment of the first university, the University of Malaya, in Singapore in 1949. The main language of secondary and higher education in Malaya had been English, and thus the educational opportunities for Malay Muslims were still limited.[55] It was not until 1963 that a government Malay secondary school opened. Despite the limited opportunities for Muslims,[56] the establishment of a university in their homeland motivated Islamic leaders and religious students to seek higher education in Islamic knowledge. This was the prime motivation for those students who studied at al-Azhar from the 1940s to the 1960s. Religious secondary schools, and local institutions of Islamic higher education, such as Kolej Islam Klang and al-Azhar, played an important role in providing Muslim students with alternative opportunities for higher education.

The Malay students who had left their homeland by the 1960s had various routes by which they might reach al-Azhar. The most celebrated path to al-Azhar was through Kolej Islam Klang. This school was only for the best students from religious schools in Malaya. Most of the students who studied at al-Azhar in the 1960s and 1970s obtained positions in local universities, government offices or, at the very least, as religious teachers in government secondary schools, and it was not uncommon for them to be offered scholarships for further studies at Western universities in order to obtain master's degrees and doctorates.

Abdul Hamid Othman (1939–2011) was an example of an al-Azhar graduate who played a key role in the Islamisation policy of the Mahathir government.[57] He was born to a poor family in rural Kedah and finished his elementary education in a government elementary school. His circumstances did not allow him to proceed to the government secondary school, and thus his only option was to study in a religious school in Kedah. When he finished his fourth year at that school, he moved to a more famous religious school in Perak and then entered Kolej Islam Malaya, which had opened in 1955. He arrived at al-Azhar

in 1961 and studied in the Faculty of Shariʿa until 1965. Upon his return to Malaya, he was first offered a teaching position at Kolej Islam and then at the National University of Malaysia – the latter having been established in 1971 as the second university in Malaysia that had a department of Islam. He was also appointed to teach in the first Islamic teacher's college when it was opened in 1975. This was during an intense period in the establishment of Islamic higher education in Malaysia. During this time, he began to be consulted by Mahathir, then minister of education, on religious matters, and this was the beginning of his life-long relationship with Mahathir, who served as prime minister from 1981 to 2003. Abdul Hamid was appointed to lead various government departments on religion, such as the Department of Islamic and Moral Education in the Ministry of Education, and the Religious Matters Section of the Prime Minister's Office, which was later upgraded into a department due to his efforts. Abdul Hamid's career studying in religious schools and at al-Azhar in the 1960s thus allowed him to become a pioneer in the expansion of Islamic education and administration.

Razali Nawawi, three years younger than Abdul Hamid Othman, made a different kind of contribution to the development of the Islamic movement in Malaysia, although he had a similar trajectory from religious schools to al-Azhar.[58] Born in 1942, in a peasant family of Kelantan, Razali was sent to the government Malay elementary school. Despite his good results and interest in English and science, his father did not allow him to go to the English secondary school because he believed it educated children to be unbelievers (*kāfir*). He was sent to a religious school and then continued his studies at Kolej Islam Malaya. After achieving a bachelor's degree there, he was sent to al-Azhar for his master's degree in 1964. He received a scholarship from the Kelantan government, which was sufficient to fund part of his subsequent travels. Since study at al-Azhar was "only for the degree" and he could not learn anything for spiritual improvement there, he wished to leave Egypt as soon as possible. He never made contact with Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood, which was banned and strictly monitored by the Egyptian government. Moreover, he was reluctant even to interact with Egyptians in general. The majority of Malaysian students were afraid of the secret police who regularly monitored students' activities.

When he achieved a master's degree from al-Azhar – with an additional diploma of education from Ein Shams University – he decided to move to England. It had long been his desire to study English in order "to be rich", because of the hardships of his impoverished childhood. With his saved money and newly achieved scholarship granted again by the government of Kelantan, he studied English for a year in London, and then took a course for the diploma in law at the University of London. He then moved to Birmingham University

for a Master of Comparative Law degree, and returned to Malaysia to be a lecturer in the Faculty of Islam at the National University of Malaysia.

It was in England that he discovered the international Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaᶜat-i-Islami through their books and activities. In London, he began to organise small discussion groups, called *usrah* (family), and formed an association of Malaysian Muslim students. This experience involved him in the establishment of the Malaysian Muslim Youth Association (ABIM), and he became its first president in 1972. Under the leadership of Anwar Ibrahim during the 1970s, ABIM became the largest and most influential organisation in Malaysia. Anwar Ibrahim joined Mahathir's government in 1981, and served in various ministerial positions, ultimately as the deputy prime minister, until he was dismissed in 1999.[59] Even though he never served as a government officer, Razali Nawawi was one of Anwar's closest colleagues and was a member of many government committees related to Islamisation policies. Razali Nawawi is one of the first generation of students to have studied both at al-Azhar and at universities in the West. This would become a typical career trajectory for Islamic academics in the 1980s and 1990s, as Islamic higher education rapidly expanded in Malaysia.

These examples show that al-Azhar functioned as an alternative venue for higher education, providing Malay students with the opportunity to achieve higher social status. Prior to the early 1960s, it was only wealthy Malay children, such as members of the royal family, who had the chance to study at foreign universities, but the existence of al-Azhar and the Malay support system provided the opportunity for ordinary Malay students to study at a university as well. Kolej Islam Malaya became a destination for excellent students from religious schools who wished to secure their access to higher education. However, it was not the only door to al-Azhar, and in the 1960s Malay students had other ways to reach that university after their study in religious schools. One of the major paths was via South Asia. Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, the supreme leader of the Pan-Malaysian Islamic Party (1930–), was born in Kelantan and studied in local pondoks before continuing his study in Darul Ulum Deoband in India from 1952 to 1957. He then moved to al-Azhar to major in Arabic as an undergraduate and in Islamic law in his master's course. He returned to his homeland in 1962 to teach in religious schools and soon emerged as a political leader.[60] Nik Aziz's pattern of studying in South Asia before going to al-Azhar became a model for students in the 1970s, partly due to their admiration of him.[61]

Indonesia was another destination for Malay students seeking Islamic higher education. Ustaz R (pseudonym) served as a teacher of religion in government secondary schools from 1977 until he retired in 1999.[62] Born in Kedah in 1944, he studied at a religious school in Kedah until he achieved the fourth-grade certificate of secondary education (Shahadah Empat Thanawi). In 1969, he

decided to continue his study at the al-Washliah University in Medan, Sumatra. The religious school in Kedah had connections to other universities in Medina, Egypt and Indonesia, but he chose Indonesia because it was cheaper, and offered the additional advantage of allowing him to study in both Indonesian and Arabic. After achieving the Bachelor of Shariᶜa and Diploma of Education in Medan in 1973, he was sent to al-Azhar by the university to be admitted to the third year of undergraduate courses. Although there was a dormitory for Malaysian students (riwāq), he did not stay there because he was married to a Malaysian woman from the same university in Medan. His three years in al-Azhar were filled mostly with intensive study. All the Malaysian students were very close to each other, and he often attended tutorials conducted by senior Malaysian students outside the formal lesson schedules. He also joined the activities of the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), and took part in some excursions during semester breaks that not many other Malaysians joined.

He intended to continue his studies at al-Azhar in order to become a teacher, believing this to be the ideal job to realise Islamic morals that stress the importance of sharing knowledge. As soon as he returned from al-Azhar, he was employed as a teacher of religion in a government secondary school and served in various locations around peninsular Malaysia until he retired to Kedah.

By the 1960s, the opportunities for Malaysian students to study at al-Azhar had gradually expanded, thanks to such official supports as the preparatory courses in Kolej Islam, scholarships and the student hostels in Cairo. In addition to the official modes of support, foreign institutions for Islamic learning in countries such as Indonesia and India also provided other avenues through which to prepare for study at al-Azhar. Students were returning with university degrees that were still rare for Malaysian Muslims just at the moment when the structures for religious education and administration were expanding. The degrees gave them higher social status and crucial roles in the Islamic resurgence and Islamisation policies of the 1970s and 1980s.

Study in al-Azhar after its popularisation

The popularisation of study at al-Azhar began in the 1970s. One new phenomenon at this time was an increase in the number of female Malaysian students studying there. Al-Azhar opened a women's college in 1962, and in the 1970s the number of female students rapidly increased.[63] In the early 1970s, there were some female graduates of al-Azhar who taught in famous religious schools such as Maktab Mahmud in Kedah. The increasing number of female students is evidence of an improvement in the Malaysian students' environment at al-Azhar, including student hostels and associations.

Rates of enrolment in religious schools in the early 1970s were generally stagnant because of the rapid increase in educational opportunities for Muslim students in the government school system; religious schools tended to become an alternative for students who had failed in government schools. However, the children of religious families, such as those of religious teachers, generally still enrolled in religious schools even though some religious teachers themselves preferred to send their children to government schools. One of the important changes of this period was the increasing attainability of higher education. By the late 1970s, going to college, whether religious or secular, had already become an achievable dream for most Malay people. Study at al-Azhar was now only one of a number of choices available for higher education, and was no longer considered as special as it had been for the previous generation. Student life was more relaxed, with an increasing number of students and an expansion in the amount of support they were offered.

Badrulamin Baharum,[64] one of the leaders of the People's Justice Party Malaysia (Keadilan), was among the al-Azhar students of this time. He was born in 1961, the son of the imam of the masjid in Tawau, Sabah. He was an excellent student in the religious school in Sabah and was thus sent to a famous religious school in Selangor, and then to the Kolej Islam, where he received his certificate in 1978. According to him, this certificate was more respected than the current STAM, because it evidenced a level of skill in reading and speaking Arabic that was sufficient for study at al-Azhar. He entered the Faculty of Shariʿa in 1979 along with eight friends. His student life had been supported by a scholarship from the Sabah Foundation worth up to 10,000 RM a year. All the students from Sabah received the same scholarship, while students from elsewhere received scholarships from their respective states or the federal government.

Students in Cairo at that time could enjoy certain freedoms. The city of Cairo tempted many of the Malaysian students to stay out and enjoy themselves until the small hours; even for serious students, it was unusual to finish their studies in four years. Badrulamin was one of the rare students who did finish his course in four years and with good results. However, it was only in the first year that he attended all his university classes, because attendance was not obligatory. Once registered, students did not need to do anything other than to sit the examinations – these examinations were difficult, but the students could prepare themselves adequately by reading alone. In the third and fourth year, Badrulamin taught other Malaysian students privately more often than he attended his own classes. In fact, the first thing for new students to do was find senior students who were good at teaching. Some of the more famous teachers, including Badrulamin, retained their popularity upon their return to Malaysia.

Although his daily interactions were mostly with the Malaysian students, he also joined in with some activities of the Indonesian Bugis students' association,

because his father was of Bugis origin. Generally, the Malaysian students were more intimate with students from southern Thailand than with Indonesians; they often held joint events such as soccer games and Thai boxing, but there were no activities related to Islamic movements. Although the Islamic resurgence in Malaysia had begun in the early 1970s, its influence was still limited to the Malaysian universities and urban high schools. Badrulamin had been exposed to ABIM in Kolej Islam, where many of the students actively participated in the movement. Despite his interest in Islamic movements, he did not have an opportunity to join any Malaysian or Egyptian movements in Egypt. Only a few Malaysian students joined the activities of the Muslim Brotherhood, although it was not rare for Malaysian students to attend the open lectures or sermons by leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood in mosques.

Badrulamin became actively involved in the Malaysian Islamic youth movement ABIM only after further study in Britain. Soon after his return to Malaysia, he was employed as a lecturer at the newly established International Islamic University Malaysia. He was sent by the university to continue his master's and doctorate courses in the United Kingdom, and worked as an associate professor in the International Islamic University until 1999. Since he resigned from the university as a result of a political dispute, he has worked as a "free preacher" who teaches in places such as prayer houses and offices, and also as a politician of the opposition party Keadilan. A "free preacher" is someone who teaches upon invitation without official association with any institution; thus, the authority of a free preacher is based only upon his speaking ability, character and religious knowledge. To be a graduate of al-Azhar is important in achieving this level of authority.

In the 1980s, the Malaysian students at al-Azhar numbered in the thousands. A wide range of factors motivated these students to study at al-Azhar, including becoming teachers of religion, following the model of Islamic leaders in the Islamic movements or Islamic party, curiosity about life in a foreign country, and, above all, an appetite for religious knowledge. By this point, it was not only the preparatory courses such as Kolej Islam that were issuing certificates for al-Azhar, but also the independent religious schools. In 1977, for example, Madrasa an-Nahdhah, in Kedah, became one of the first independent religious schools to establish an agreement with al-Azhar University for their certificate to be recognised, with the first student entering al-Azhar with this certificate in 1979.

The graduates of al-Azhar in the 1980s and the early 1990s did not have difficulty finding work. The religious schools were in need of teachers to meet the rapid increase in students. This is clear from the fact that many Indonesian graduates of al-Azhar and other higher Islamic institutions had been employed in these schools in the 1980s. One of the Indonesian teachers, for instance,

who is still teaching in a religious school in Kedah, graduated from al-Azhar in 1982. While at al-Azhar, he made friends with Malaysian students from Kedah and after graduation was asked to teach in a religious school there. Although there were eight Indonesian religious teachers when he started teaching in his current school in 1989, currently only two remain because most such teachers in Malaysia worked on a ten-year contract. As the increasing number of Malaysian graduates filled the teaching positions in the 1990s, they went home.[65]

The introduction of the Maʾahad Buʾuth curriculum and new standardised examinations at state level in 1994 made it easier for students to continue their study at al-Azhar. The support system for student life in Egypt was improved by each state government as well. In addition to the federal student association, the Malay Association of the Arab Republic of Egypt (PMRAM), the student association of each state was officially recognised and provided with a budget from the state government. The students' hostel was also expanded and rebuilt by the state governments to accommodate the increasing number of students.[66] Government officers were sent by both federal and state governments to take care of their students, and, in addition to this official support and protection, the news from seniors and friends who were already studying at al-Azhar motivated junior students who were still in religious schools to study there. Today, most of the candidates for study at al-Azhar already have close friends, siblings or cousins there who provide them with information and will help them when they arrive.

However, this popularisation inevitably also provided opportunities for students with lower levels of ability to study at al-Azhar. Although the achievements of Malay students in al-Azhar had not been a problem for the earliest generations, this rapid increase of students now caused new problems, including a large number of failing students. Moreover, by the end of the 1990s, the positions for religious teachers or officers had already been filled by graduates of al-Azhar and domestic higher education institutions; in the 2000s, therefore, unemployment became visible among al-Azhar graduates, and especially so after the withdrawal of financial assistance to religious schools. While the unemployment of university graduates in general emerged as a serious problem in the same period, the unemployment of al-Azhar graduates was linked to unique factors such as competition with graduates of local universities and the decrease in the number of religious schools.

The story of one couple from Kedah, who studied together at al-Azhar beginning in 1998, is illustrative of the problem. The couple were married in Egypt, and the wife finished her studies in five years; the husband, however, was unable to pass one of his subjects and so extended his study until the eighth year. While waiting, the wife opened small Malaysian restaurants to earn a livelihood. Finally, the husband gave up and the family returned to Malaysia in 2005. They

looked for employment in religious secondary schools, but could not find work: most of the schools were hurt by the decreasing number of students and were being forced to fire teachers. While looking for jobs as teachers, they opened a home Qurʾanic school to meet the minimum needs of a humble life.

The introduction of a programme called J-Qaf in government primary schools helped many such unemployed graduates of al-Azhar. It was initiated by the new prime minister, Abdullah Badawi, who replaced Mahathir in 2003. The J-Qaf programme was a new arrangement for Islamic education in government schools, with a focus on jawi (Malay language written in Arabic script), Qurʾan study, Arabic and *fardu ain* (basic knowledge of Islam that is obligatory for everybody). When the Ministry of Education employed new teachers for this programme, the graduates of al-Azhar and other universities in Arab countries were given priority in order to improve the teaching of Arabic. Many of the unemployed graduates took advantage of this opportunity.

Since popularisation, graduating from al-Azhar no longer entails privilege. However, it remains important to have studied at al-Azhar if one wishes to be recognised as a religious authority. For example, the teachers of senior classes at religious schools that follow the al-Azhar curriculum should still be graduates of al-Azhar or other famous Arab universities. Nevertheless, because of the popularisation of higher education in Malaysia, in many cases the bachelor's degree from al-Azhar is no longer enough. Since it is rare for Malaysian students at al-Azhar to continue their studies in the graduate schools of al-Azhar, those who seek higher education degrees normally enter master's courses in other universities in Malaysia or abroad. Today, a majority of the graduates of al-Azhar who are working as academics, senior officers, famous preachers or political leaders hold qualifications higher than the master's degree.

Students' experiences of al-Azhar, and indeed the meaning of studying there, have both changed in accord with the Azharisation of religious schools in Malaysia and the popularisation of study at al-Azhar. Al-Azhar is no longer the exclusive choice for higher Islamic learning, and the university's graduates are no longer celebrated as people with special knowledge. However, al-Azhar still attracts a large number of Malaysian students, not only because of the accessibility and official support they are provided, but also because it represents the highest level of Islamic learning. Malaysian universities do provide various courses in Islamic studies, but their students are rarely fluent in Arabic – though it must also be noted that even the students at al-Azhar are not entirely fluent, since they generally interact only with Malaysians. Some students who are serious about studying Arabic choose Jordan, Syria or other Arab countries where there are smaller numbers of Malaysian students. Nevertheless, al-Azhar remains a destination for serious students because there they can look for opportunities to study under famous shaykhs not only in the classroom, but also in the masjid and

elsewhere. The combination of its reputation as the highest centre for Islamic learning and the accessibility and availability of support contributes to the flow of Malaysian students to al-Azhar today.

Conclusion: The Result of "Azharisation"

By the late twentieth century, Malaysian students had become the largest group of foreign students at al-Azhar. This increase was both the cause and the result of the "Azharisation" of ʿulama training in Malaysia. The development of al-Azhar into a modern religious institution, on the one hand, and the lack of educational opportunities for Muslims in Malaya, on the other, had contributed to the development of the al-Azhar-based religious education system in Malaya. Al-Azhar began to attract students from Malaya in the early twentieth century, and some returnees from al-Azhar established modern Islamic schools that took al-Azhar as their model. These modern religious schools provided alternatives for Muslim students in Malaya whose educational opportunities were restricted; al-Azhar was the only chance for most of them to obtain a higher degree. The development of the al-Azhar-based religious school system, together with financial and material support, motivated students to study at al-Azhar. The al-Azhar-based religious school curriculum was established as the standardised examination system, first at state level and then at federal level. The religious secondary schools, which had almost exclusive responsibility for the basic training of ʿulama in Malaysia, were completely "Azharised" with the official adoption of the curriculum and examination system.

The Azharisation of religious secondary schools transformed the careers of the graduates of al-Azhar, and resulted in a marked change in the impact they could have on their return from Egypt. The returnees from al-Azhar in the early twentieth century played key roles as the founders and higher officers of religious schools. When the Islamic institutions for higher education were established in the 1970s, the graduates of al-Azhar were employed as the first generation of professors. The graduates of the 1980s and early 1990s did not have to worry about future jobs because of the many positions as teachers of religion or other officers that became available as a result of the Islamisation policy. However, the supply of al-Azhar graduates surpassed demand in the late 1990s, and in the early years of the new millennium the returnees from al-Azhar began to face difficulty in finding jobs.

As previous studies have emphasised, the returnees from al-Azhar did indeed bring back new ideas and ideologies to their homeland in the early twentieth century. However, the increased number of students did not result in religious disputes or political instability. Rather, the students were sent out with the support of state governments and state religious offices, and took advantage of

the Islamisation policy on their return. Students at al-Azhar rarely had contact with Islamic movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. Although a small portion of the student body was indeed close to the Muslim Brotherhood and later played a role in the Islamic political movements active in Malaysia, few of them imported any political ideas or Islamic movements directly from Egypt. Rather, it was the Malaysian students who studied in Western universities and joined international Islamic movements there who had a more direct impact on the Islamic revival movements in Malaysia in the 1970s, as in the cases of Razali Nawawi and Badrulamin Baharum above.

The Azharisation of ʿulama training had a great influence on the development of Islam in Malaysia. The immediate result was the establishment of a standardised modern religious education system in Malaysia. In the beginning, the importation of the al-Azhar curriculum was an independent initiative on the part of the religious schools, but later this was promoted by state and federal governments. This indirectly led to government control of the ʿulama. Indeed, it is not unusual for the governments of Muslim-majority countries to integrate the ʿulama training system into the national bureaucracy in order to place ʿulama under government control. However, the unique characteristic of the process of bureaucratisation in Malaysia was that it was facilitated by importing the system of al-Azhar: in other words, Azharisation indirectly resulted in the bureaucratisation and control of ʿulama in Malaysia.

The Azharisation of the religious school curriculum resulted in the popularisation of study at al-Azhar. Together with the increasing level of official support, this made studying at al-Azhar easier and more accessible. This increase in the number of students inevitably entailed an increase in the number of failed students. In addition to the general deterioration in student quality, the expansion of domestic institutions for Islamic higher education resulted in the relative depreciation of the value of the graduates of al-Azhar in Malaysia. As one of the officers in the Malaysia Department of Islamic Development commented, until the early 1980s the graduates of al-Azhar had been distinguished with the title *ustaz* (male teacher of religion), while the graduates of local Islamic departments were called *encik* (general title for male); but now there is no distinction between the two, and ustaz (fem. *ustazah*) is used for anyone who has been educated at a religious school to at least secondary level.

Al-Azhar has significantly influenced ʿulama training in Malaysia. However, the ideological and political influence was not as significant as previous studies have assumed. This influence was limited to the early twentieth century and the 1980s. The more important, and long-term, influence was exerted through its institutional aspects. It was al-Azhar itself, as the model of a modern religious school system and an alternative destination for higher education, that resulted in the Azharisation of ʿulama training in Malaysia. Although the value of

al-Azhar as an alternative higher education institution has declined with the expansion of higher education in Malaysia, the al-Azhar-based religious secondary school system still functions as an almost exclusive institution for preparing students to major in Islamic studies at universities both locally and abroad. The influence of al-Azhar as an institutional model, especially at the secondary level, has remained undimmed, even when higher religious education in Malaysia was taken over by local universities.

NOTES

1. In 2011 there were 10,758 Malaysian students in Egypt, with 4,736 majoring in Religious Studies and Arabic Studies, and most of the latter were at al-Azhar. This data is provided by the branch of the Ministry of Education Malaysia in the Malaysian Embassy in Egypt. The number is accurate as of 24 November 2011, see at: http://www.educationmalaysiaegypt.net, accessed 17 November 2012.

2. Department of Statistics Malaysia, 2010, Population Distribution and Basic Demographic Characteristics, Department of Statistics Malaysia. Malaysia is a multi-ethnic country, consisting of Malay (53.6 per cent), Chinese (25.8 per cent), Indian (7.6 per cent), non-Malay Bumiputra (indigenous ethnic groups, 11.6 per cent) and others (1.4 per cent). Malay is defined as Muslim in the Constitution.

3. United Nations Statistics Division, 2006, "Population by Religion, Sex, Urban/ Rural Residence", *Demographic Year Book Special Census Topics*, United Nations Statistics Division, available at: http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/ dyb/dybcensus/V2_table6.pdf, accessed 16 November 2012.

4. Here, "ᶜulama" is used as an analytical term based on its basic meaning in Arabic: men of knowledge. This differs from the Malay understanding of this term. In the Malaysian context, "ᶜulama" implies those who have an excellent level of Islamic knowledge, typically with training in the Middle East. Ordinary religious teachers with a moderate level of knowledge are only recognised as *ustaz* (pl. *ustazah*). Although the distinction between "ordinary ustaz" and "ᶜulama" may differ based on context, people are conscious of the difference.

5. Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia (Malaysian Higher Islamic Religious Certificate), see below.

6. This condition was revised in 2010, and currently Malaysian students are given another examination in the Arabic language in order to enter al-Azhar, in addition to the STAM examination.

7. Malaysia is a federation of thirteen states, and Islam the sole official religion. The highest authority on Islamic matters is the ruler of each state. The majority of the rulers are called sultans.

8. Ahmad al-Fatani was the first student from Southeast Asia to move from Mecca to study at al-Azhar. He later returned to Mecca where, as noted in the previous chapter, he played a prominent role in the Southeast Asian Muslim community. However, he remained highly appreciative of his time at al-Azhar and recommended that his students study there. He studied in Egypt for seven years, including the period 1876–9, when he wrote and published several poems and books. Wan

Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, *Sheikh Ahmad al-Fathani: Pemikir Agung Melayu dan Islam (Jilid 1)* (Kuala Lumpur: Khazanah Fathaniyah, 2005), pp. 43–53.

9. Hiroko Kushimoto, "Islam and Modern School Education in the Journal *Pengasuh*: Review of the *Kaum Muda–Kaum Tua* Dichotomy", *Studia Islamika*, 19(2) (August 2012): 207–49.

10. Ven. D. D. Chelliah, *A History of the Educational Policy of the Straits Settlements*, 2nd edn (Singapore: G. H. Kiat, 1960), pp. 21–2.

11. A. Chris Eccel, *Egypt, Islam and Social Change: al-Azhar in Conflict and Accommodation* (Berlin: Schwartz, 1984), p. 281.

12. Bayard Dodge, *al-Azhar: A Millennium of Muslim Learning* (Washington, DC: Middle East Institute: 1961), pp. 140–1.

13. Dodge, *al-Azhar*, pp. 143–7.

14. Eccel, *Egypt, Islam and Social Change*, p. 280.

15. Eccel, *Egypt, Islam and Social Change*, p. 279.

16. The books were imported from Cairo without mentioning al-Azhar; see "Purchase of Arabic books for boys in Madrasa Limbong Kapal", letter received by the office of Shaykh al-Islam Kedah, No. 413/1339, dated 1922, National Archive of Malaysia.

17. The formal name is Majlis Ugama dan Adat Istiadat Melayu Kelantan (Kelantan Council of Religion and Malay Custom), subsequently referred to in this chapter as the Kelantan Council of Religion. This council was established as a committee directly under the sultan to discuss matters related to religion and Malay customs. Under this modern arrangement, the administration of religious matters such as collection of zakat and the issuing of fatwas was centralised. For details, see Kushimoto, "Islam and Modern School Education".

18. Majlis Ugama dan Istiadat Melayu Kelantan, *Penyata Tahunan Majlis Agama dan Istiadat Melayu Kelantan Tahun 1917 (Annual Report of Kelantan Council for Religion 1917)* (Kelantan: Majlis Agama dan Istiadat Melayu Kelantan, 1917), p. 50; Abdul Razak Mahmud, *MAIK: Peranannya dalam Bidang Keagamaan, Persekolahan, dan Penerbitan di Kelantan Sehingga 1990* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 2010), p. 104.

19. Muhammad Yunan Mahmood, *Sejarah Maahad Muhammadi 1937–1997* (Kota Bharu: Maahad Muhammadi Lelaki, 1997), pp. 7–9.

20. These Arabic terms can be spelled in various ways in romanised Malay.

21. Mahmood, *Sejarah Maahad Muhammadi*, pp. 45–52.

22. For details of the curriculum, see Barbara D. Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India: Deoband, 1860–1900* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), pp. 31–2.

23. For example, Shaykh Abdullah al-Maghribi, an Arab teacher from Tripoli who had taught in famous madrasas, held a higher degree (ᶜalīyah) from this madrasa. See Mohd. Sarim Mustajab, "Sheikh ᶜAbd Allah Maghribi: Teacher and Kaum Muda Activist", in Alijah Gordon (ed.), *The Real Cry of Syed Shaykh al-Hady* (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1999), pp. 250–1. Muhammad Arsyad contributed to setting the curriculum of Madrasa al-Ulum al-Syariah (established in 1937, in Perak) based on the model of a madrasa in Mecca. The model was Madrasa Dar al-Ulum al-Diniyah, which had been established in 1935 through the efforts and donations of the people of Malaya, itself following the model of Madrasa

Saulatiyah. Sabri Said, *Madrasah al-Ulum al-Syariah Perak, 1937–1977: Satu Kajian Pendidikan Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1983), pp. 63–4; Mohammad Redzuan Othman, *Islam dan Masyarakat Melayu: Peranan dan Pengaruh Timur Tengah* (Kuala Lumpur: Penerbit Universiti Malaya, 2005), pp. 73–4.

24. Dodge, *al-Azhar*, p. 166.

25. Eccel, *Egypt, Islam and Social Change*, p. 297.

26. Dodge, *al-Azhar*, pp. 158, 221.

27. William Roff, *Studies on Islam and Society in Southeast Asia* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), p. 134.

28. Abdullah Muhammad Zin *et al.* (eds), *Pendidikan Islam di Malaysia: Dari Pondok ke Universiti* (Selangor: Lembaga Bersekutu Pemegang Amanah Pengajian Tinggi Islam Malaysia, 2005), pp. 37–51.

29. Zin *et al.*, *Pendidikan Islam*, p. 52.

30. This language policy was even more crucial for national integration after the creation of Malaysia in 1963, which added the two multi-ethnic states of Sabah and Sarawak in northern Borneo (East Malaysia).

31. Sufean Hussin, *Pendidikan di Malaysia: Sejarah, Sistem dan Falsafah* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1993), p. 40.

32. Mahmood, *Sejarah Maahad Muhammadi*, p. 62.

33. Rosnani Hashim, *Educational Dualism in Malaysia: Implications for Theory and Practice* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1996).

34. Syyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Islamic Leviathan: Islam and the Making of State Power* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

35. Majlis Agama Islam Kedah (Kedah Council of Islamic Religion) is the decision-making institution for Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Kedah (Department of Islamic Religious Affairs Kedah).

36. No title, hand-written statistics of religious schools in Kedah (typed after 2000), provided by Jabatan Hal Ehwal Agama Islam Negeri Kedah, June 2008.

37. Text of a speech by the Minister of Education at a meeting concerning the agreement of academic cooperation between the Ministry of Education Malaysia and al-Azhar. Text of a speech by the Minister of Education on the day of the agreement. "Teks Ucapan Y. B. Menteri Pendidikan Malaysia untuk Ucapan di Majlis Pemeteraian Perjanjian Kerjasama Akademik dan Kebudayaan (Sijil Tinggi Agama Malaysia [STAM]) antara Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia dengan al-Azhar al-Syarif", dated 18 November 1999.

38. A document provided by Ministry of Education Malaysia, "Perjanjian Persefahaman Akademik dan Kebudayaan antara Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia dengan al-Azhar al-Syarif Republik Arab Mesir (Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Education and al-Azhar)", dated 18 November 1999.

39. A document provided by the Department of Islamic and Moral Education, Ministry of Education Malaysia, "Program Pendaftaran SAR dan SAN & Program J-QAF", dated 2007, p. 40.

40. Djamily Bachtiar, *Riwayat Hidup dan Perjuangan Sheikh Tahir Jalaluddin al-Falaqi al-Azhari* (Kuala Lumpur: Asmah, 1994), pp. 27–8; William Roff, *The Origins of Malay Nationalism* (Kuala Lumpur, Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 61.

41. Abdul Rahman al-Ahmadi, "Notes Towards a History of Malay Periodicals in

Kelantan", in W. Roff (ed.), *Kelantan: Religion, Society and Politics in a Malay State* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 172.

42. For example, *Pengasuh*, No. 164 (8 February 1925) published a translation of a letter sent to Malay rulers and leaders asking for support for developing religious schools and sending students to Egypt, the "last destination for the nobility of Arabic language, the existence of al-Azhar university and knowledge of religion".

43. These journals were meant for circulation in their authors' homeland, not in Cairo. According to *Pengasuh*, there had been other journals before *Seruan Azhar*, but they were not sustained due to lack of support from the homeland. *Pengasuh* called for support from its readers to support *Seruan Azhar*. "Seruan Azhar dan Seruan Pengasuh", *Pengasuh*, No. 182 (1 November 1925), pp. 7–9. For details about *Seruan Azhar*, see Roff, *Studies on Islam and Society*.

44. For example, "Soal dan Jawab, Mazhab Wahhabi", *Pengasuh*, No. 157 (29 October 1924), pp. 4–8.

45. For example, "P.P." [Pengarang Pengasuh – a penname for the chief editor of *Pengasuh*], "Bahagian Rencana: Lompatan Turki: Fatwa Sheikh al-Islam Mesir", *Pengasuh*, No. 192 (23 March 1926), pp. 7–12.

46. Roff, *Studies on Islam and Society*, p. 133.

47. "Seruan Azhar dan Seruan Pengasuh", *Pengasuh*, No. 182 (1 November 1925), p. 8.

48. Roff, *Studies on Islam and Society*, p. 343, gives the number of pilgrims from Malaya between 1924 and 1940.

49. For accounts of the life of Syed Hassan, see Mahayudin Yahya, *Sejarah Orang Syed di Pahang* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1984), pp. 77–9; Mohammad Redzuan Othman, "The Origins and Contribution of the Early Arabs in Malaya", in Tagliacozzo Eric (ed.), *Southeast Asia and the Middle East: Islam, Movement and Longue Durée* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009), p. 103.

50. This story is based on letters sent to *Pengasuh* by al-Haji Muhammad Idris al-Marbawi, a senior student at al-Azhar. The letters were serialised in three instalments; "Bahagian Kiriman: Azam yang mulia Syed Hasan al-Attas Johor Baharu datang ziarah ke Mesir", *Pengasuh*, No. 154 (14 September 1924), pp. 3–7; "Azam yang mulia Syed Hasan al-Attas Johor Baharu datang ziarah ke Mesir", *Pengasuh*, No. 156 (13 September [mistype of October] 1924), pp. 2–6; "Azam yang mulia Syed Hasan al-Attas Johor Baharu datang ziarah ke Mesir", *Pengasuh*, No. 159 (27 November 1924), pp. 2–7.

51. Eccel, *Egypt, Islam and Social Change*, pp. 295–6.

52. "Bahagian Kiriman", *Pengasuh*, No. 169 (24 April 1925), pp. 7–8.

53. This urgent need for donations is clear from the fact that Abdul Aziz Effendi al-Syaimi, one of the committee members, travelled to Malaya with pictures of Malay students and committee members to ask for donations (*Pengasuh*, No. 159 (27 November 1924), p. 7). Abdul Aziz Effendi had taught in madrasas in Singapore and other places in Malaya for nine years and met Syed Hassan al-Attas there ("Azam yang mulia Said Hasan al-Attas Johor Baharu dating ziarah ke Mesir", *Pengasuh*, No. 156 (13 September 1924), p. 5).

54. According to Eccel, the number of students from Malaya based on the record of al-Azhar is as follows: (students from Malaya/total foreign students) 1958 (40/2,527); 1959 (70/2,788); 1960 (77/2,930); 1961 (113/3,016); 1962 (110/2,725); 1963

(140/2,884); 1964 (180/3,627); 1972 (199/2,500). The numbers for before 1964 include both primary and secondary schools and the university, but the number for 1972 is only for the university (see Eccel, *Egypt, Islam and Social Change*, pp. 300, 304–5). This data is based on records by the Ministry of Awqaf and al-Azhar Affairs, and possibly counts only those who received scholarships from al-Azhar. Since not all students received scholarships, the numbers may be assumed to be much larger.

55. The majority of Malays still lived in rural areas and their elementary education was provided in Malay. In contrast, the majority of the urban population comprised Chinese and Indian traders. The cities had English elementary schools in addition to Chinese and Tamil elementary schools. Thus, the rural Malay educated in Malay elementary schools were at a disadvantage in English secondary and higher education institutions.

56. In 1959, the Malay students in the University of Malaya still numbered no more than sixty-two among a total of 322. By contrast, there were 192 Chinese students. Kay Kim Khoo, *100 Years the University of Malaya* (Kuala Lumpur: University of Malaya Press, 2005), p. 107.

57. This information about Abdul Hamid Othman is based on an interview with him conducted on 16 December 2008.

58. This information about Razali Nawawi is based on an interview with him conducted on 14 November 2010 in his house in Bangi, Selangor.

59. Anwar was dismissed as a result of a dispute between him and Mahathir concerning economic policy after the Asian economic crisis in 1998.

60. Jamal Mohd. Lokman Sulaiman, *Biografi Tuan Guru Dato' Haji Nik Abdul Aziz: Seorang Ulama' serta Ahli Politik Malaysia di Abad ke-20* (Selangor: SULFA Human Resources & Development, 1999), pp. 15–18.

61. Study in Southeast Asia, especially in the Deobandi madrasas, became more popular in the 1980s under the influence of Jamaat Tabligh (Tabligh-e-Jama‘at).

62. This information about Ustaz R is based on an interview with him conducted on 5 October 2006 in his house in Alor Setar.

63. Dodge, *al-Azhar*, p. 221.

64. This information about Badrulamin's life is based on interviews conducted on 8 September 2006 and 18 May 2010 in his house in Kepong, Selangor.

65. This story is based on an interview conducted with Ustaz N (pseudonym) and his wife on 25 June 2006 in Madrasa an-Nahdhah Kedah.

66. For example, the first students' hostel for Kelantan students was built in 1980, followed by two more hostels that opened in 1987 and 2011.

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Note: n signifies endnote, t signifies table