Chapter 36: Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa

Marloes Janson, SOAS, University of London

Sub-Saharan Africa is frequently, but unjustly, seen as the periphery of the Muslim world, in terms of both geography and religious influence. By contrast, North Africa is considered to be directly linked to the alleged center of the Muslim world, that is, the Arab Middle East. In fact, Islam has had a presence in sub-Saharan Africa since the earliest days of its history. This chapter tries to redress the periphery bias in the analysis of African Muslim societies – a bias that, as Loimeier (2013: ix-x) points out, is long overdue. After all, Africa is home to one of the largest agglomerations of Muslims in the world today.[1]

Stretching south across the Sahara, the vast savannah zone – known as the Sahel – is Muslim until it reaches the forest belt of West and Central Africa. Moving south, the Horn of Africa represents a second major zone of Muslim influence. Via contact with seafaring traders in the Indian Ocean, Islam came to dominate in what is now known as the Swahili coast, stretching as far south as Mozambique and the island of Madagascar. From these areas, the religion spread gradually over the centuries, moving south and west into more tropical zones, and the expansion continues today (Levtzion and Pouwels 2000; Loimeier 2013). At present, Muslims constitute a majority in North Africa and in most of the countries in the Sahel. In Sudan, Chad and Tanzania Muslims are the largest group. The population is almost equally divided between Muslims and Christians in Africa's most populous country, Nigeria. Even where Muslims are a minority, they constitute large majorities in certain regions, as for example on the Cape in South Africa,[2] northern Benin, northern Cameroon, northern Ghana, and in highland Ethiopia and coastal Kenya (Otayek and Soares 2007:

2). Although being a minority, Muslims are nevertheless important in politics in Uganda (Chande 2000), and are a force to be reckoned with on the national level in Malawi and Mozambique (Alpers 2000: 315-319). This chapter begins by mapping historical processes in the expansion of Islam in precolonial sub-Saharan Africa, before moving on to the colonial and postcolonial periods. The focus is on West and East Africa – regions that have been well documented in the literature.[3] Compared with the study of Muslim societies in West and East Africa, the topic of Islam in southern Africa is still in its infancy (but see Tayob 1999).

Scholars studying Islam in sub-Saharan Africa have long written about an "African Islam", reflecting the Sufi bias typical of scholarship on Islam in Africa.[4] This chapter aims at demonstrating that the recurrent idea of an "African Islam" hampers a better understanding of the emergence of Islamic reformist-oriented movements.[5] I conclude by pointing out new approaches to the study of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa that capture the complexity and fluidity of the different ways of "being Muslim" in everyday living, thereby challenging ingrained analytical binaries such as an "African Islam" versus "Arab Islam" and an accommodating Sufi Islam versus an orthodox reformist Islam.

History of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa

The Muslim penetration of sub-Saharan Africa has traditionally been associated with conquest, trade, migration and missionary activities, occurring in four main phases (e.g. Trimingham 1959, 1964; Clarke 1982; Hiskett 1984; Pouwels 1987; Levtzion 1994; Robinson 2004; Loimeier 2013). The first phase dates to the seventh and eight centuries, with the military conquest of much of North Africa, where political submission and conversion to Islam were considered one and the same act (Levtzion and Pouwels 2000: 2). Converted Berber-speaking nomads were well positioned to

mediate Islamic influences between the Maghreb and the Western Sudan. The Almoravid movement – translated as "the movement of those who engaged in holy war" – originated in the desert space between North and West Africa in the eleventh century (Clarke 1982: 13). It initiated the implantation of the Maliki law school (*madhab*),[6] thus giving the region a shared intellectual-legal frame of reference (Von Sivers 2000: 25-26). The Almoravid movement is also held responsible for conquering the Ghana Empire in the eleventh century, resulting into its Islamization (Levtzion 2000: 64).

During the second phase, Islam spread across the Sahara into West Africa along the Trans-Saharan trade routes. From the tenth century onward, North African Muslim merchants settled in the main towns along the trade routes (Clarke 1982: 10-12). In addition to goods like salt, merchants brought Islamic ideas and practices to West Africa. Due to its central location on the rim of the Indian Ocean, trade was also the avenue through which Islam spread in East Africa. Whereas in West Africa Islam expanded gradually from the Sahel toward the tropical forest belt of the Guinea coast, Islam in East Africa remained confined to a chain of settlements on the shore of the Indian Ocean and the islands off the coast until the nineteenth century (Loimeier 2013: 239-240). A second difference was that whereas the spread of Islam in East Africa went hand in hand with linguistic and cultural "Arabization" (Pouwels 1987: 129-131), in West Africa Arabic failed to achieve the status of a vernacular language and became the lingua franca of only scholarly circles – the "Latin of Africa" (Hunwick 2004: 133).

During the third phase, the influence of Muslim traders along with Muslim scholars was instrumental in the formation of states ruled by Muslims. "It is not always easy," writes Lewis, "to distinguish between the Islamizing role of Muslim traders, on the one hand, and of teachers and holy men, on the other, since these two activities are often associated in Muslim communities and

regularly combined in the same person" (1966: 20; see also Sanneh 1989; Levtzion 1994: Chapter 5). Traders and Muslim clerics propagated Islam under the patronage of local rulers. In the thirteenth century, Islam became the religion of state in the Mali Empire, by then the dominant political and commercial power in the Western Sudan (Levtzion 2000: 66-68).

Here it should be noted that throughout the third phase of the Islamic expansion, Islam remained a court religion. Because only the king and his immediate entourage came under the influence of Islam, the ruling aristocracy adopted a middle position between Islam and the traditional religion, patronizing both Muslim clerics and traditional priests (Levtzion and Pouwels 2000: 3). Both categories provided services to local rulers, in the form of amulets, prayers, blessings, healing and other supernatural means at their disposal to guarantee the prosperity of the polity, as well as its king. The symbiotic relation of Islam with traditional religion was attested by the Moroccan traveler Ibn Battuta when he visited the Malian court in the middle of the fourteenth century. He attended two Islamic festivals and in his book *Travels* he condemns the "vile practices" of the Malian participants, who mixed Islamic practices with traditional ones (Levtzion 2000: 67-68).

Despite its expansion, Islam remained marginal in sub-Saharan Africa until the time of the jihadist movements in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which were motivated by the desire to eliminate *shirk* (idolatry) at chiefly courts in order to establish systems of government based on Islamic principles. The most prominent was Usman dan Fodio's jihad in Hausaland (modern northern Nigeria), which resulted in the creation of the Sokoto Caliphate in 1809 – the largest state in West Africa until it was conquered by the British in 1903 (Last 1967). While the Sokoto Caliphate determined Islamic practice in West Africa, the Zanzibar Sultanate became the focal point of the religious and cultural life of the East African coast in the nineteenth century. The

bombardment of Zanzibar by British naval forces in 1896 sealed its transformation into a British protectorate (Pouwels 2000: 265; Loimeier 2013: 229-234).

Loimeier (2013: 291) concludes that the Muslim caliphates and sultanates resulting from jihad movements in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries constituted an important political experience, because for the first time in sub-Saharan history Islam became the only source of political legitimacy. Jihadist movements were, however, crucial not only in the expansion of Islam as a political force, but also in anticolonial resistance. For example, the man whom the British characterized as the "mad Mullah" (Sayyid Muhammad Abdallah Hassan) of Somalia conducted a jihad between 1898 and 1920 to resist the territorial ambitions of the British, Italians and Ethiopians. The Sayyid (an honorific title for the alleged descendants of the Prophet Muhammad) belonged to the Shadhiliyya Sufi order and confronted the Qadiriyya, who collaborated with the European rulers, with the aim of establishing an independent Islamic state for Somalis (Kapteijns 2000: 235-237; Loimeier 2013: 202-209).

The final phase of the Islamic expansion in sub-Saharan Africa began in the nineteenth century under influence of the Sufi orders (*turuq*). Starting in the mid-nineteenth century, the Tijaniyya, under the leadership of al-Hajj 'Umar Tall (d. 1864), gradually superseded the Qadiriyya – which had originated in Baghdad in the thirteenth century – as the largest Sufi order in West Africa. Al-Hajj 'Umar Tall led a large-scale jihad movement in the area of present-day Mali, resulting in mass conversion (Robinson 1985). Popularly-based Sufi orders reached the East African coast much later; only near the end of the nineteenth century did the Qadiriyya, 'Alawiyya and Shadhiliyya become active and trigger a movement of conversion to Islam (Bang 2003). But although they had a much shorter history than the Sufi orders in West Africa, the East African Sufi orders played an important role in bringing newcomers to Islam. Their egalitarian attitude attracted

migrants, marginalized upcountry converts and (ex)slaves who had been routinely excluded from power (Loimeier 2013: 237).

Remarkably, although none of the European colonial powers developed a coherent Muslim policy, the colonial period, that is, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, saw the large-scale conversion of Africans to Islam.

The Colonial Period

The relationship between colonialism and Islam was a complex one. Although colonial rule put an end to the jihadist movements and colonial governments attempted to prevent Islam from expanding, the process of Islamization accelerated during the colonial period and the number of converts increased due to colonial policies and activities. According to Launay and Soares (1999), the rise in the number of Muslims during the colonial period can be explained in terms of developments within the "Islamic sphere" – a Muslim public arena that existed separately, though not detached from, the colonial public sphere. Muslims throughout sub-Saharan Africa took advantage of the new possibilities created by colonialism, thereby expanding the Islamic sphere.

To be better able to control their Muslim subjects, colonial officials maintained close contacts with local Muslim rulers and religious scholars. Only a minority of Muslim leaders resisted colonialism or tried to avoid conquest by making the *hijra* (migrating beyond the reach of colonial authorities):[7] the majority chose accommodation or collaboration (Levtzion and Pouwels 2000: 13). For instance, Senegalese *marabouts* (Muslim clerics) collaborated closely with the French colonial rulers.[8] This collaboration implied that the colonial government used marabouts to mobilize support for its programs and to collect taxes, and in return allowed them to exercise influence on the shaping of Senegalese society and polity (Villalón 1995). In neighboring Gambia,

the British colonial rulers acknowledged the centrality of Islam by making room for some elements of the Sharia law in the legal system (Janson 2014: 41). Likewise, the *'ulama* (Islamic scholars) of the East African protectorates were co-opted into the regime's service as salaried *qadis* (Islamic judges) and other "native" officials (Kapteijns 2000: 238-239).

Second, new means of communication and transport facilitated travel and the flow of ideas among African Muslims and between African Muslims and their counterparts elsewhere. The explicit aim of the improved infrastructure was to stimulate the flow of raw materials – peanuts, palm oil, cotton, wild rubber, coffee and cocoa – and of labor to support the colonial enterprise. By building roads to previously inaccessible areas of the country and opening the hinterland, colonial rulers unwittingly enabled Muslim clerics and traders to communicate with one another and expand their spheres of influence (Nyang and Janson 2009: 284). Moreover, by putting an end to jihads and local warfare, colonial governments were able to guarantee safe travel over long distances (Launay and Soares 1999: 505). Africans from the countryside migrated to the growing urban centers where they came under Muslim influence. Mobility thus facilitated the expansion of Islam. As a result, more standardized ways of being Muslim emerged during the colonial period. In this context Eickelman (1989) speaks of a "generic Islam" that is centered around the assumed universals of Islam (see also Launay and Soares 1999: 506). This new trend was reflected in the increase of the number of African Muslims who were able to set out on the *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca. It is here that Muslims were brought face-to-face with a diversity of their fellow Muslims. As such, the *hajj* is a tool to integrate the worldwide community of Muslims, the *umma* (Eickelman and Piscatori 1990).

The advent of Islam in South Africa also occurred in conjunction with colonialism. The first Muslims in South Africa, the "Malay", were taken from Southeast Asia by the Dutch colonists in

1658. A second group (1860-1911) came from India as indentured laborers to work on Natal's sugar plantations. The Malay and Indian Muslims make up the two largest groups among the Muslim population of South Africa today (Vahed 2000: 44-45). Under British rule, the Cape Muslim population gained religious freedom and the number of mosques increased. However, the growing size of the Cape Muslim community triggered a number of communal disputes over the leadership of mosques, as a result of which it was never able to achieve the kind of political unity that would have been necessary to influence Cape Town's political development in decisive ways in the late nineteenth century (Loimeier 2013: 16, 261).

Whilst colonial attitudes towards the Muslim subjects remained ambivalent, Islam turned into a majority religion in large parts of sub-Saharan Africa in the twentieth century. At the transition to independence, a new wave of Islamic reform erupted.

The New Wave of Islamic Reform in Postcolonial Africa

Despite the colonial impetus to the expansion of Islam, Christian missions spread throughout sub-Saharan Africa in the twentieth century. While many Africans acquired literacy and formal Western education and became Christian, Muslims – who continued to follow their traditional Islamic system of education – had less access to formal education and less opportunity for development. Consequently, Christians came to have a "privileged position" in society (Chande 1998: 6-8; see also Comaroff and Comaroff 1991). With the rise of a class of literate African Christians, Muslims became less important to the colonial administration, and Muslim communities tended to become marginalized from the modern economic sector. The imbalances created by these unequal circumstances make up much of the legacy being experienced by Muslims in postcolonial Africa (Sperling 2000: 297). Thus began a wave of Muslim emancipation with Muslim parties and

pressure groups calling for a Muslim equivalent to the Christian mission schools established in the colonial period. Money coming from oil-producing Muslim countries since the 1970s facilitated the implementation of these demands (Skinner 1990: 133-135).

Since the 1970s, an increasing number of African students also received scholarships to universities and colleges in Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Upon their return to sub-Saharan Africa, they attempted to reform Islam by purifying it from local traditions. Their attempts resulted in local disputes about the "correct" practice of Islam. An example is the *qabd-sadl* dispute, that is, the dispute over the position of the arms in prayer in parts of West Africa. Whereas the Maliki school of law recommended *sadl* (arms outstretched), new Muslim movements of reform affiliated with the Saudi-oriented Wahhabiyya and the Indo-Pakistani Tablighi Jama'at insisted on *qabd* (arms folded over the chest) (Loimeier 2013: 23-24). Other forms of ritual practice over which conflict broke out in East African Muslim communities were the celebration of Muslim holidays and in particular the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad, the *maulidi* (Ar. *mawlid*). Although *maulidi* is celebrated by significant parts of the Muslim population of the Kenyan coast (and elsewhere in Africa), the form of the celebrations (the use of musical instruments, textual recitation in either Arabic or Kiswhahili, etc.) is highly contested from within. The strong influence of Islamic reformism over the last few decades has largely rejected *maulidi* as undue religious innovation in Kenya (Kresse 2006).

Due to the importance of proper ritual, ritual practices have often been at the center of local disputes in African Muslim communities (Launay 2004: 27, 105). These disputes touch on questions of education, authority and religious identity. On the grounds that they were educated in formal institutions in the Arab world, reformist Muslims claim to have more insight into the proper interpretation of Islam than scholars who were trained in the traditional Muslim education system.

Owing to the new Afro-Arab cooperation in the 1970s, a number of international Muslim organizations involved in both *da'wa* (mission) and development-oriented activities capitalized on this new interpretation of Islam.[9]

Under the influence of the Iranian Revolution, with the increased presence and resources of the Arab Gulf States and Saudi Arabia, the exposure to a more reformist type of Islam stirred up an Islamic revival in sub-Saharan Africa (Lacunza-Balda 1997; Loimeier 2003; Masquelier 2009; Schulz 2012). This resulted in an increased visibility and assertiveness of Islam in society, as manifested in the mushrooming of mosques, Islamic schools and clinics, which identify much of the public – and especially urban – space as Islamic. Since the 1990s, media-savvy Muslim intellectuals have captured the media. They publicly called into question the religious authority of the established Muslim scholars – the *'ulama* – leading to a fragmentation of religious authority (Eickelman and Piscatori 1996). The spread of new media technologies thus set in motion the process of the democratization of religious knowledge. No longer are the *'ulama* regarded as the sole guardians of Islam; religious authority is now in many hands. Islamic radio and television broadcasts, as well as audiotapes of preaching and religious pamphlets, have brought about a public debate on what "true Islam" involves (Hackett and Soares 2014).

Transnational movements such as the *Jama'at Izalat al-Bid'a wa-Iqamat as-Sunna*, that is, the Society for the Removal of Innovation and Reinstatement of the Sunna or Izala for short in West Africa (Loimeier 1997; Kane 2003), and the *Tablighi Jama'at* – a missionary movement that originated in India and that has made inroads in West Africa (Janson 2014), East Africa (Chande 2000; Wario and Amara 2013) and South Africa (Moosa 2000; Vahed 2003) – fed on and contributed to increasing internal debates about Islam and Muslim subjectivity in sub-Saharan Africa. The efforts of (trans)national Muslim movements of reform to popularize religious

knowledge by offering Muslims autonomous access to the sources of faith, have created the basis for a new interpretation of Islam and a novel understanding of "being Muslim" (Loimeier 2003: 256).

Transnational reformist Muslim movements shed light not only on the divergent opinions of what being Muslim means, but also on the interconnections between Muslims in Africa and elsewhere. They offer African Muslims the means through which to surpass local identities and local modes of belonging and to identify instead with the *umma*. As such, these movements connect the local with the national and the global, and open up an avenue for mapping the complex articulations between religion and politics (Soares and Osella 2009: 8-9). The emergence of a "transnational Islam" (Roy 2004) thus helps us to think beyond binaries such as an allegedly tolerant and "traditional" local Islam versus an orthodox and "modern" global Islam, which for a long time have dominated the study of Islam and African Muslim communities (Loimeier and Seesemann 2006; see also below).

Since the 1990s, increased global interconnections, along with economic and political reform and liberalization and the weakening of the postcolonial state, have played a major role in the transformation of the religious landscape in sub-Saharan Africa (Otayek and Soares 2007). In virtually every Muslim community on the continent, the decades since the 1990s have been marked by heated debates about who is authorized to speak in the name of Islam and for whom. In many cases these debates have taken the form of increased tensions between reformist Muslims and Sufi practitioners. In countries as diverse as Niger and Ethiopia, religious disputes resulted in reformists accusing Sufi Muslims of being not "true Muslims" (Masquelier 1999; Østebø 2012). *Bid'a*, "innovation" or deviation from the Prophet Muhammad's path, is in the opinion of reformist Muslims largely related to the Sufi practice of Islam. By attacking "superstitions" such as the

veneration of Sufi saints and the trade in amulets and other manifestations of Sufi Islam, reformist movements thus represent a "de-mystifying trend in religion" (Loimeier 2003: 260).

But Islamic reform not only resulted in religious disputes; the new possibilities for claiming religious authority also had the effect of empowering marginalized groups in society, including women and youth. Most significantly, political liberalization in African Muslim societies has given voice to Muslim women's organizations, which have played an active role in redefining notions of family life, sexuality and moral self-fashioning (Alidou 2005; De Jorio 2009; Augis 2009). Furthermore, Muslim women nowadays take an active part in movements of popular learning and piety in many parts of Africa (Mahmood 2005; Masquelier 2009; Schulz 2012; Janson 2014). Not only women, but also young people have gained a greater and more visible role in religious life in present-day Africa. Inverting intergenerational relationships, youth are now assuming the position of religious authorities for themselves, leaving the established Muslim elders in a state of powerlessness – a position normally associated with youth (Last 1992; Samson 2005; Masquelier 2007; Janson 2014). For example, the Durban-based Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa (MYMSA) played a pivotal role in disseminating reformist ideas, thereby carving a niche for Muslim youth in politics (Tayob 1995). Many Muslim youth have made use of South Africa's new political freedoms and its liberal constitution to pursue their distinctive rights. For many, this is part of a broader reformist program of introducing stricter Islamic codes in public and private spheres (Vahed and Jeppie 2005: 267).

It can be concluded that although most sub-Saharan independent nation states – with the exception of Mauritania (set up as an "Islamic Republic" at independence),[10] Ethiopia (which historically has been identified with the Coptic Church or Orthodox Christianity) and the special case of South Africa under apartheid rule – started off with secular constitutions, the efforts of

postcolonial governments served to foster the spread of Islam. With religion becoming politically salient, a heated debate erupted between different religious communities about who "owns" the state. Indeed, much of post-independence history has been a conflict over the control of the state. A case in point is Tanzania, where religion constitutes a platform of political mobilization for both Muslims and Christians, and where historical legacy and postcolonial policy have led into the emergence of religious disputes over development and national political leadership. The number of Muslims in Tanzania has grown considerably since the late nineteenth century. Yet this growth has not been translated into a corresponding increase in the number of Muslims holding positions in the political, educational and economic arenas. In the eyes of many Muslims, Tanzania has become a Christian country. The *Baraza Kuu la Waislamu Tanzania* (BAKWATA), that is, the National Muslim Council of Tanzania, was established in 1968 to serve Muslim interests. Nevertheless, Muslims increasingly became dissatisfied with the Council, seeing its role as representing the government instead of representing Muslim aspirations for political development. To redress the structural imbalance between Muslims and Christians, several new Muslim organizations proliferated in Tanzania in the 1980s, with the aim of opposing state-informed concepts of "true Islam" as presented by BAKWATA and developing modern Islamic education. Since then, Muslim-Christian disputes have dominated public debates in Tanzania with Muslims and Christians attacking each other's faiths in their public preaching, resulting in religious violence (Loimeier 2007).

Contradicting the typical image promulgated in the Western media of the radicalization of African political Islam and deteriorating Christian-Muslim relations (a tendency that has gained more currency since 9/11 and the recent upsurge of Boko Haram in northeastern Nigeria),[11] many African Muslims emphasize the significance of individual reform rather than political struggle in

bringing about social transformation. Moreover, a striking feature of interreligious relations in several African countries is their peaceful nature and their relative lack of political cleavages (Soares 2006). Although conflict and violence are closely associated with the image that people (both outsiders and Nigerians themselves) have of Nigeria, religious clashes are just one aspect of Christian-Muslim manifold relations in the country. Christians and Muslims have long lived side by side in southwestern Nigeria, often in harmony with "traditional" practitioners – the boundaries between the three not always sharply demarcated (Peel 2000). In a similar vein, the East African upcountry regions are informed today by a multitude of interfaces between Islam, Christianity and African religions (McIntosh 2009). These interfaces have inspired Africanists to adopt a comparative approach that focuses on how Christians and Muslims align with and copy from each other, sometimes in interaction with so-called traditionalists (Larkin and Meyer 2006; Peel 2015; Meyer and Janson 2016). Where Christian-Muslim conflicts prevail,[12] it would be better to describe the causes of these conflicts as a mixture of different factors, with religion being only one of them and many of them rooted in postcolonial development (Falola 1998; Loimeier 2013: 292).

"African Islam" versus "Islam in Africa"

Despite the long history of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa, the study of Islam has long been neglected by Africanists. They considered Islam not "authentically" African and therefore not a legitimate subject of study. Conversely, sub-Saharan Africa is often perceived as peripheral to the field of Islamic studies. Somewhat ironically, whereas Islam has not been "African" enough for some, Africans have not been "Islamic" enough for others (Launay 2006; Loimeier 2013: ix).

As Triaud (2014) points out, the scientific partition between African Studies and Islamic Studies (or its predecessor Orientalism) superimposed itself over an epistemological divide within

the colonial and postcolonial scholarly world between an "African Islam" (referred to as *Islam noir*, literally "black Islam", by French colonial authorities; see Monteil 1980), which is inherently syncretic, and an "orthodox" or "Arab Islam". The idea that there is a specifically "African Islam" formed the basis of colonial policy with regard to Islam from the second decade of the twentieth century onwards. Although the concept of *Islam noir* has been severely criticized (Launay and Soares 1999; Brenner 2000; Seesemann 2006; Triaud 2014), there is still a tendency to depict Islam as practiced in sub-Saharan Africa as less orthodox than that practiced in the Arab Middle East. For example, in their edited volume *African Islam and Islam in Africa* (1997) Westerlund and Rosander describe "African Islam" as more flexible and adaptable than what they portray as "Islam in Africa", thereby reviving the colonial tradition of *Islam noir*. Another example of the endurance of *Islam noir* is Robinson's *Muslim Societies in African History* (2004), in which one chapter is devoted to "The Islamization of Africa" and the subsequent one to "The Africanization of Islam".

Following Geertz' lead, who in his pioneering book *Islam Observed* (1968) compared Moroccan and Indonesian culture through the lens of Islam, social scientists finally started dealing seriously with Islam as an object of study. But once again African Muslim societies were analyzed along contrasting paradigms as either "Sufi" or "reformist". A major concern in the Africanist study of Islam has been how to document the diversity within Muslim communities without violating the religion's universal features (Holy 1991; Brenner 1993). Or, in the words of Launay (2004: 5), "how can the very diverse – if not diverging – religious beliefs and practices of Muslims be comprehended within a single idea of 'Islam'?" The contrasting and competing Islamic discourses and practices in Muslim Africa are often studied in terms of a distinction between a Sufi and a reformist tradition – a distinction that is redolent of the earlier "African Islam" versus "Arab Islam" contrast.

In the so-called Sufi understanding of Islam, Muslims treat certain charismatic persons – living or deceased religious leaders, saints, or marabouts – as intermediaries between ordinary believers and Allah. Such charismatic religious leaders, their descendants and their followers are organized into Sufi orders (Ar. *turuq*, singular *tariqa*), which have become one of the main organizational forms for the practice of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa (Soares 2005: 9-10). Adherence to a Sufi order is expressed through a special litany of prayers as well as by engagement in Sufi practices, including the consultation of religious specialist for divination, healing and the request of amulets, pilgrimage to Sufi shrines, and the performance of religious festivals commemorating the birth of the Prophet or a Sufi saint. Largely because of the prominent position that Sufi orders occupy in the religious-political landscape in mainly Senegal, they have attracted a great deal of scholarly tradition (e.g. Cruise O'Brien and Coulon 1988; Villalón 1995; Mbacké 2005).

The Sufi tradition is often studied in opposition to a reformist tradition, which is believed to call much of the former into question. As we have seen above, reformists condemn Sufis' "incorrect" practice of Islam and seek to reform the way Islam is practiced locally by modelling themselves on the Arab Middle East. Through trade networks and education, reformist ideas reached Muslim communities in sub-Saharan Africa (Brenner 2000; Loimeier 2003; Miran 2006). Starting in the 1970s, with money coming from the oil countries, an increasing number of Africans have received scholarships to study at universities and colleges in the Arab world. Upon their return to their home countries, they spread a reformist interpretation of Islam.

Although the binary between a Sufi and reformist Islam is challenging, it oversimplifies the fragmented and fluid nature of religious practice in Muslim Africa. Most Muslims in sub-Saharan Africa today are neither members of Sufi orders nor self-proclaimed reformists (Otayek and Soares

2007: 7). During my ethnographic field research in the Gambia, it struck me that the majority of my interlocutors identified themselves as "ordinary Muslims"; they did not affiliate themselves officially with any of the Sufi orders, and since the term "reformist" is associated with religious "radicalism" they did not call themselves reformists either (Janson 2014: 10). A second flaw, as outlined above, is that the analytical model that opposes Sufism and reformism implies a hierarchical structuring of Islam in that Sufism is often believed to be less "orthodox" than reformism, which is termed a "purer" form of Islam. A related shortcoming is that the Sufi-reformist dichotomy frequently involves a teleological perspective in which Sufi Islam eventually gives away to a version of "true", reformist Islam. For instance, Umar (1993) claims that Islam in Nigeria today has to be understood as a historical transformation from Sufism into anti-Sufism or reformism.

In practice, however, Islamization does not proceed along a unilinear path from an accommodating, syncretic religion to a pure, orthodox one. Recent scholarship has illustrated that the moral and spiritual transformation Muslims go through in ongoing Islamization processes is often filled with temptations and struggles (Schielke 2009; Janson 2016). Finding ways to cope with these challenges, they move in and out of religious movements, often shifting their religious allegiances. Muslims' shifting allegiances explain why the study of new formations of Muslim identity in Africa (and beyond) should take into account not only the cultivation of piety, but also the imperfection and failure of everyday living. According to Marsden, studies of Muslim societies that focus narrowly on moral self-fashioning are "unable to confront the ways in which Muslims are called upon to face, explain and contend with inconsistencies and complexities in their attempts to live virtuous lives" (2005: 260-261). I would therefore like to conclude with a plea for a study of Islam that takes lived religiosity as its starting point and that warrants against the essentialism

encapsulated in many of our analytical concepts, including an "African Islam" versus "Arab Islam" or a "Sufi Islam" versus "reformist Islam".

Living Islam

The commonplace approach to Islam in social science scholarship is as a "discursive tradition". According to Asad (1986: 14), Islam needs to be interpreted as a tradition consisting of discourses that seek to instruct Muslims in the correct form and purpose of a given practice. In this view, a practice is Islamic because it is authorized by the discursive traditions of Islam as represented by the Quran and *hadith* – the accounts of what the Prophet Muhammad said and did. Although the interpretation of Islam as a discursive tradition sheds light on the interplay of its singular terms and its universal, global import, it also has certain shortcomings because it passes over the fact that for many Muslims Islamic tradition is not merely discursively shaped (Schielke and Debevec 2012). In fact, many Muslims put more emphasis on religious orthopraxy (emphasis on correct religious practice) than on orthodoxy (emphasis on correct belief and doctrinal conformity). This prompts us to search for an approach to Islam that is more perceptive of everyday religious practice.

The current focus on "living Islam" (Saktanber 2002; Marsden 2005; Schielke and Debevec 2012) resulted from a shift in scholarship whereby Islam was no longer studied as another aspect of social structure in the same way as, for example, kinship (Gellner 1981), but as a part of the actual world in which Muslims live. As Seesemann (2005: 327) points out, a focus on the quotidian may facilitate a deeper understanding of how Islam operates in a particular social setting. Taking such a course shifts the emphasis from the narrowly political, macro-oriented analysis in studies of Muslim societies towards a perspective that focuses on how ideas, doctrines and practices related to Islam undergo a process of contextualization in specific localities.

Drawing upon Haenni and Holtrop (2002), Otayek and Soares (2007: 17-19) capture Muslims' everyday experience of religion in the notion of *islam mondain*, that is, "Islam in the present world". *Islam mondain* helps us to apprehend the variety of Muslim identities and the porosity of boundaries between these identities in the contemporary world in which Muslims find themselves, making efforts to produce themselves as modern religious subjects within contexts of considerable political and economic uncertainty, as well as increased global interconnections.

One can see this way of "being Muslim" especially among mainstream African Muslims,[13] like the Nigerien Muslim youths cited by Masquelier (2007: 257-258) who ask themselves, in media outside the control of established religious authorities and the state, "what it means to be Muslim, a citizen, or simply a youth with moral convictions". The Islamic revival in African Muslim societies needs to be interpreted in terms of these questions rather than in normative categories or unhelpful binaries, including "African Islam" versus "Arab Islam" or "Sufi Islam" versus "reformist Islam". Indeed, questions about what it means to be Muslim challenge us to shift the attention from a narrow analysis of Islam in Africa as a coherent belief system towards a perspective that focuses on how Muslims actually live religion in their daily lives, and the ambiguities, contradictions and aspirations as the constitutive moments in their lived religiosity.

Work Cited

Ahmed, Chanfi. "Networks of Islamic NGOs in Sub-Saharan Africa: Bilal Muslim Mission, African Muslim Agency (Direct Aid), and al-Haramayn." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 3.3 (2009): 426–37.

Alidou, Ousseina D. *Engaging Modernity: Muslim Women and the Politics of Agency in Postcolonial Niger*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2005.

Alpers, Edward A. "East Central Africa." In *The History of Islam in Africa*, eds. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, 251–71. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000.

Asad, Talal. 1986. *The Idea of an Anthropology of Islam*. Occasional Paper Series. Washington, DC: Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University.

Augis, Erin J. "Jambaar or Jumbax-Out? How Sunnite Women Negotiate Power and Belief in Orthodox Islamic Femininity." In *New Perspectives on Islam in Senegal: Conversion, Migration, Wealth, Power, and Femininity*, eds. Mamadou Diouf and Mara Leichtman, 211–33. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Babou, Cheikh. *Le Jihad de l'âme : Ahmadou Bamba et la fondation de la Mouridiyya au Sénégal, 1853-1913*. Paris: Karthala, 2011.

Bang, Anne K. *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea. Family Networks in East Africa, 1960-1925*. London: Routledge, 2003.

Brenner, Louis. "Introduction: Muslim Representations of Unity and Difference in the African Discourse." In *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Louis Brenner, 1–20. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993.

⎯⎯⎯. *Controlling Knowledge: Religion, Power and Schooling in a West African Muslim Society*. London: Hurst, 2000.

Chande, Abdin N. *Islam, Ulamaa, and Community Development in Tanzania: A Study of Islamic Trends in Tanzania, East Africa*. San Francisco: Austin & Lawrier, 1998.

⎯⎯⎯. "Radicalism and Reform in East Africa." In *The History of Islam in Africa*, eds. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, 349–69. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000.

Clarke, Peter B. *West Africa and Islam: A Study of Religious Development from the 8th to the 20th Century*. London: Edward Arnold, 1982.

Comaroff, Jean and John Comaroff. *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, Vol. 1. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.

Cruise O'Brien, Donal B. and Christian Coulon, eds. *Charisma and Brotherhood in African Islam*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988.

De Jorio, Rosa. "Between Dialogue and Contestation: Gender, Islam, and the Challenges of a Malian Public Sphere." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15 (2009): 95–111.

Eickelman, Dale F. "National Identity and Religious Discourse in Contemporary Oman." *International Journal of Islamic and Arabic Studies* 6.1 (1989): 1–20.

Eickelman, Dale F. and James Piscatori, eds. *Muslim Travellers. Pilgrimage, Migration, and the Religious Imagination*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1990.

____. *Muslim Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.

Falola, Toyin. *Violence in Nigeria: The Crisis of Religious Politics and Secular Ideologies*. Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 1998.

Fisher, Humphrey J. *Ahmadiyyah: A Study in Contemporary Islam on the West African Coast*. London: Oxford University Press, 1963.

Geertz, Clifford. *Islam Observed: Religious Development in Morocco and Indonesia*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1968.

Gellner, Ernest. *Muslim Society*. Cambridge and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Hackett, Rosalind I.J. and Benjamin F. Soares. "Introduction: New Media and Religious Transformations in Africa." In *New Media and Religious Transformations in Africa*, eds.

Rosalind I.J. Hackett and Benjamin F. Soares, 1–16. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2014.

Haenni, Patrick and Tjitske Holtrop. "Mondaines spiritualités: 'Amr Khalid, 'shaykh' branché de la jeunesse dorée du Caire." *Politique africaine* 87 (2002): 45–68.

Hiskett, Mervyn. *The Development of Islam in West Africa.* London: Longman, 1984.

Hodgkin, Elizabeth. "Islamism and Islamic Research in Africa." *Islam et Sociétés au sud du Sahara* 4 (1990): 73–130.

Holy, Ladislav. *Religion and Custom in a Muslim Society: The Berti of Sudan*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Hunwick, John O. "West Africa and the Arabic Language." *Sudanic Africa* 15 (2004): 133–44.

Janson, Marloes. *Islam, Youth, and Modernity in the Gambia: the Tablighi Jama'at*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press/International African Institute, London, 2014.

____. "'How, for God's sake, can I be a good Muslim?' Gambian Youth in Search of a Moral Lifestyle." *Ethnography* 17 (2016): 22–46.

Kaba, Lansiné. *The Wahhabiyya. Islamic Reform and Politics in French West Africa*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974.

Kane, Ousmane. *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Study of the Society for the Renewal of Innovation and Reinstatement of Tradition*. Leiden: Brill, 2003.

Kapteijns, Lidwien. "Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa." In *The History of Islam in Africa*, eds. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, 227–50. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000.

Kresse, Kai. "Debating Maulidi: Ambiguities and Transformations of Muslim Identity along the Kenyan Swahili Coast." In *The Global Worlds of the Swahili. Interfaces of Islam, Identity*

and Space in 19th and 20th-Century East Africa, eds. Roman Loimeier and Rüdiger Seesemann, 209–28. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006.

Lacunza-Balda, Justo. "Translations of the Quran into Swahili, and Contemporary Islamic Revival in East Africa." In *African Islam and Islam in Africa. Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*, eds. David Westerlund and Eva Evers Rosander, 95–126. London: Hurst, 1997.

Larkin, Brian and Birgit Meyer. "Pentecostalism, Islam and Culture: New Religious Movements in West Africa." In *Themes in West African History*, ed. Emmanuel K. Akyeampong, 286–312. Oxford: James Currey, 2006.

Last, Murray. *The Sokoto Caliphate*. London: Longman, 1967.

——. "The Power of Youth, Youth of Power: Notes on the Religions of the Young in Northern Nigeria." In *Les jeunes en afrique. La politique et la ville*, vol. 2, ed. Hélène d'Almeida-Topor, 375–99. Paris: L'Harmattan, 1992.

Launay, Robert. *Beyond the Stream: Islam and Society in a West African Town*. Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2004 [1992].

——. "An Invisible Religion? Anthropology's Avoidance of Islam in Africa." In *African Anthropologies: History, Critique and Practice*, eds. Mwenda Ntarangwi, David Mills and Mustafa Babiker, 188–203. London: Zed Books, 2006.

Launay, Robert and Benjamin F. Soares. "The Formation of an 'Islamic Sphere' in French Colonial West Africa." *Economy and Society* 28.4 (1999): 497–519.

Lecocq, Baz and Paul Schrijver. "The War on Terror in a Haze of Dust: Potholes and Pitfalls on the Saharan Front." *Journal of Contemporary African Studies* 25.1 (2007): 141–66.

Leichtman, Mara A. *Shiʻi Cosmopolitanisms in Africa: Lebanese Migration and Religious Conversion in Senegal.* Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015.

Levtzion, Nehemia. *Islam in West Africa: Religion, Society and Politics to 1800*. Aldershot: Variorum, 1994.

____. "Islam in the Bilad al-Sudan to 1800." In *The History of Islam in Africa*, eds. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, 63–91. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000.

Levtzion, Nehemia and Randall L. Pouwels. "Introduction: Patterns of Islamization and Varieties of Religious Experience among Muslims of Africa." In *The History of Islam in Africa*, eds. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, 1–18. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000.

Lewis, Ioan M., ed. *Islam in Tropical Africa*. Bloomington & London: International African Institute, 1966.

Loimeier, Roman. *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997.

____. "Patterns and Peculiarities of Islamic Reform in Africa." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33.3 (2003): 237–62.

____. "Perceptions of Marginalization: Muslims in Contemporary Tanzania." In *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*, eds. Benjamin F. Soares and René Otayek, 137–56. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

____. *Muslim Societies in Africa: A Historical Anthropology*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Loimeier, Roman and Rüdiger Seesemann. "Introduction: Interfaces of Islam, Identity and Space in 19th-and20th-Century East Africa." In *The Global Worlds of the Swahili. Interfaces of Islam, Identity and Space in 19th and 20th-Century East Africa*, eds. Roman Loimeier and Rüdiger Seesemann, 1–14. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006.

Mahmood, Saba. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005.

Mamdani, Mahmood. *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: A Political Perspective on Culture and Terrorism. America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 2004.

Marsden, Magnus. *Living Islam: Muslim Religious Experience in Pakistan's North-West Frontier*. Cambridge and New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

Masquelier, Adeline. "Debating Muslims, Disputed Practices: Struggles for the Realization of an Alternative Moral Order in Niger." In *Civil Society and the Political Imagination in Africa: Critical Perspectives*, eds. John L. Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, 219–50. Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1999.

____. "Negotiating Futures: Islam, Youth, and the State in Niger." In *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*, eds. Benjamin F. Soares and René Otayek, 243–62. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

____. *Women and Islamic Revival in a West African Town*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2009.

Mbacké, Khadim. *Sufism and Religious Brotherhoods in Senegal*, transl. by Eric Ross. Princeton, NJ: Markus Wiener Publishers, 2005.

McIntosh, Janet. *The Edge of Islam: Power, Personhood, and Ethnoreligious Boundaries on the Kenya Coast*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009.

Meyer, Birgit and Marloes Janson. "Studying Islam and Christianity in Africa: Moving Beyond a Bifurcated Field." *Africa*, in press.

Miles, William F.S. "West African Islam: Emerging Political Dynamics." In *Political Islam in West Africa: State-Society Relations Transformed*, ed. William F.S. Miles, 1–18. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2007.

Miran, Marie. *Islam, histoire et modernité en Côte d'Ivoire*. Paris: Karthala, 2006.

Monteil, Vincent. *L'Islâm noir*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1980.

Moosa, Ebrahim. "Worlds 'Apart:' Tablīghī Jamāʿat in South Africa under Apartheid, 1963–1993." In *Travellers in Faith: Studies of the Tablīghī Jamāʿat as a Transnational Islamic Movement for Faith Renewal*, ed. Muhammad Khalid Masud, 206–21. Leiden: Brill, 2000.

Nyang, Sulayman S. and Marloes Janson. "Gambia." In *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. John Esposito, 283–6. New York, NY and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Østebø, Terje. *Localising Salafism: Religious Change among Oromo Muslims in Bale, Ethiopia.* Leiden: Brill, 2012.

Otayek, René and Benjamin F. Soares. "Introduction: Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa." In *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa*, eds. Benjamin F. Soares and René Otayek, 1–24. New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Peel, J.D.Y. *Religious Encounter and the Making of the Yoruba*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2000.

____. *Christianity, Islam, and Orisa-Religion: Three Traditions in Comparison and Interaction*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2015.

Pouwels, Randall L. *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800-1900*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987.

Robinson, David. *The Holy War of Umar Tal*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985.

____. *Muslim Histories, African Societies: The Venture of Islamic Studies in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Roy, Olivier. *Globalised Islam: The Search for a New Ummah*. London: Hurst, 2004.

Saktanber, Ayşe. *Living Islam: Women, Religion and the Politicization of Culture in Turkey*. London: I.B. Tauris, 2002.

Salih, Mohamed A. "Islamic NGOs in Africa: The Promise and Peril of Islamic Voluntarism." In *Islamism and its Enemies in the Horn of Africa*, ed. Alex de Waal, 141–81. London: Hurst, 2004.

Samson, Fabienne. *Les marabouts de l'islam politique: Le Dahiratoul Moustarchidina Wal Moustarchidaty, un mouvement néo-confrérique sénégalais*. Paris: Karthala, 2005.

Sanneh, Lamin. *The Jakhanke Muslim Clerics: A Religious and Historical Study of Islam in Senegambia.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1989.

Schielke, Samuli. "Ambivalent Commitments: Troubles of Morality, Religiosity and Aspiration among Young Egyptians." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 39.2 (2009): 158–85.

Schielke, Samuli and Liza Debevec. "Introduction." In *Ordinary Lives and Grand Schemes. An Anthropology of Everyday Religion*, eds. Samuli Schielke and Liza Debevec, 1–16. New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2012.

Schraeder, Peter J. "La guerre contre le terrorisme et la politique Américaine en Afrique." *Politique africaine* 98 (2005): 42–62.

Schulz, Dorothea E. *Muslims and New Media in West Africa: Pathways to God*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2012.

Seesemann, Rüdiger. "The Quotidian Dimension of Islamic Reformism in Wadai (Chad)." In *L'islam politique au sud du Sahara. Identités, discours et enjeux*, ed. Muriel Gomez-Perez, 327–46. Paris: Karthala, 2005.

____. "African Islam or Islam in Africa? Evidence from Kenya." In *The Global Worlds of the Swahili. Interfaces of Islam, Identity and Space in 19th and 20th-Century East Africa*, eds. Roman Loimeier and Rüdiger Seesemann, 229–50. Berlin: Lit Verlag, 2006.

Skinner, David E. *Islam, Education and Politics in West Africa*. Proceedings of the Fifth Birmingham Sierra Leone Studies Symposium, 15–17 July 1988, 133–8. Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1990.

Soares, Benjamin F. *Islam and the Prayer Economy: History and Authority in a Malian Town*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005.

____. *Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa*. Leiden: Brill, 2006.

Soares, Benjamin and Filippo Osella. "Islam, Politics, Anthropology." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 15.1 (2009): 1–23.

Sperling, David C. "The Coastal Hinterland and Interior of East Africa." In *The History of Islam in Africa*, eds. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, 273–302. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000.

Tayob, Abdulkader. *Islamic Resurgence in South Africa: The Muslim Youth Movement*. Cape Town: University of Cape Town Press, 1995.

____. "Counting Muslims in South Africa." *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa* 5 (1996). Cape Town: Centre for Contemporary Islam, University of Cape Town.

____. *Islam in South Africa: Mosques, Imams, and Sermons*. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1999.

Triaud, Jean-Louis. "Giving a Name to Islam South of the Sahara: An Adventure in Taxonomy." *The Journal of African History* 55.1 (2014): 3–15.

Trimingham, John S. *Islam in West Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959.

____. *Islam in East Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964.

Umar, M. Sanni. "Changing Islamic Identity in Nigeria from the 1960s to the 1908s: From Sufism to Anti-Sufism." In *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Louis Brenner, 154–78. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1993.

Vahed, Goolam. "Changing Islamic Traditions and Emerging Identities in South Africa." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20.1 (2000): 43–73.

____. "Contesting 'Orthodoxy': The Tablighi-Sunni Conflict among South African Muslims in the 1970s and 1980s." *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 23.2 (2003): 313–34.

Vahed, Goolam and Shamil Jeppie. *Multiple Communities: Muslims in Post-Apartheid South Africa*. www.hsrcpress.ac.za, 2005.

Villalón, Leonardo A. *Islamic Society and State Power in Senegal: Disciples and Citizens in Fatick*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Von Sivers, Peter. "Egypt and North Africa." In *The History of Islam in Africa*, eds. Nehemia Levtzion and Randall L. Pouwels, 21–36. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000.

Wario, Halkano Abdi and Ramzi Ben Amara. "Door to Door Daʿwa in Africa: Dynamics of Proselytization in Yan Izala and Tablīghī Jamāʿat." In *Religion on the Move: New Dynamics of Religious Expansion in a Globalizing World*, eds. Afe Adogame and Shobana Shankar, 159–77. Leiden: Brill, 2013.

Westerlund, David and Eva Evers Rosander, eds. *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists*. London: Hurst, 1997.

Notes

[1] According to the CIA World Factbook, about half of Africa's population professes Islam (https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook).

[2] As Tayob (1996) observes, although Muslims form less than two percent of the South African population, statistics do not reflect their religious experience. Residential concentration of Muslims in racially segregated areas in Cape Town means that many of them live in proximity to mosques and Islamic schools and have a strong sense of being Muslim (Vahed and Jeppie 2005: 252-253).

[3] Given the sheer number of countries and their diversity in these regions, individual cases cannot be described but I will point out broad patterns with reference to some key examples.

[4] Sufism (Ar. *tasawwuf*) refers to the mystical tradition in Islam characterized by esoteric practices, special litanies of prayer and techniques of invoking Allah's names as ways of approaching Him.

[5] These movements are variously known as Wahhabi, Salafi, Islamist or simply Sunnite Islam in sub-Saharan Africa (Kaba 1974; Hodgkin 1990; Loimeier 2003; Miles 2007). What they have in common is what Roy calls "a quest to define a pure religion beyond time and space" (2004: 11). They aim at purging Islam from unlawful innovations (*bid'a*) by returning to the purported origins of Islam.

[6] The majority of Muslims in Africa are Sunnis belonging to the Maliki (dominant in North and West Africa) and Shafi'i (predominant on the East African coast) legal schools of thought. Exceptions are Shi'i Muslims in parts of West Africa (Leichtman 2015), Ahmadis – a Muslim movement with a strong missionary component going back to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (d. 1908) from Punjab in India (Fisher 1963) – and Isma'ilis in East Africa and in areas of Asian Muslim immigration in South Africa.

[7] A prominent example is Shaykh Amadu Bamba M'Backe, the founder of the Senegalese Muridiyya Sufi order, who was sent by the French rulers into exile twice: to Gabon from 1895 to 1902 and to Mauritania from 1903 to 1907. Bamba's vexed relationship with the French has prompted later followers of the Muridiyya to praise him as a hero of the anticolonial struggle (Babou 2011).

[8] Although borrowed from the French colonial lexicon, the term marabout is widespread in local discourse in West Africa and has grown into a self-designation. It refers to a wide range of religious specialists, from head of a Sufi order to Islamic healer and Quranic teacher (Soares 2005: 30-32).

[9] Examples are the Africa Muslims Agency (Kuwait), International Islamic Relief Organization (Saudi Arabia), *Al-Haramain* (Saudi Arabia), World Islamic Call Society (Libya), *Munazamat al-Da'wa al-Islamiyya* (Sudan) and the International African Relief Agency (Sudan). Ahmed (2009: 426-427) interprets the widening of the concept of *da'wa* linking moral reform with social welfare as the "Red Cross complex". In competition with the Christian Red Cross and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), contemporary Muslim associations feel obliged to provide all kinds of educational services and charity (Salih 2004).

[10] On 11 December 2015, President Jammeh declared the Gambia an Islamic Republic. The Gambia follows Mauritania as Africa's second Islamic Republic, although the country's secular constitution remains unaltered (http://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/the-gambia-expert-briefing/).

[11] Since 9/11, the Western world's line-drawing of Islam has resulted in a binary view of what Mamdani (2004) calls "Good Muslim" versus "Bad Muslim". This way of understanding Islam has resulted in various US "counterterrorism" initiatives in sub-Saharan Africa, such as the Pan Sahel Initiative and the follow-up program, the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Initiative (Schraeder 2005: Lecocq and Schrijver 2007).

[12] It should be noted here that disputes among Muslims are as virulent today as are polemics between Muslims and Christians (Masquelier 1999).

[13] By way of a better term, "mainstream Muslims" stands here for those Muslims who combine piety with pragmatism in their struggle to participate in the definition of Islamic modernity (see also Masquelier 2007; Janson 2016).