INTERACTIONS BETWEEN NORTHERN NIGERIA AND THE ARAB WORLD IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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# Table of Contents

Introduction .................................................................................................................. 1

The Pre-Colonial Period and Intellectual Exchange between Hausa Reformists and Arab Scholars ........................................................................................................... 11

Colonialism (1903 to 1952) and Increasing Contact with the Arab World through Educational Exchange and Pilgrimage ................................................................. 16

The Independence Era (1952-1966) and the Position of Northern Nigeria in the Competition between Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia for Influence in Africa ............ 23

1966-1978: Political Turmoil and the Growth of Saudi Arabian Influence in Northern Nigeria .................................................................................................................. 37

1978-1999: The Rise of Reformist and Radical Movements amidst a Fragmentation of Middle Eastern Influences ......................................................................................... 51

1999-Present: Civilian Politics and Islamic Populism ......................................................... 77

Conclusion ..................................................................................................................... 84

Bibliography .................................................................................................................. 91
Introduction

Africans and Arabs\(^1\) have maintained contact through trade, pilgrimage, and scholarly exchange since before the arrival of Islam in sub-Saharan Africa. Beginning in the colonial era and accelerating after independence, however, technological, political, and economic changes increased the intensity and diversity of contacts between Northern Nigeria and the Arab world. Especially after the 1950s, elite Nigerian Muslims studied at Islamic universities in Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere, while hundreds of thousands of ordinary Nigerians completed the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. Arab regimes reached out to Nigerian Muslims through radio and print media. Arab leaders, missionaries, and teachers visited Nigeria as well as other African states. Arab organizations courted Nigerian religious leaders and gave funds to religious movements for the construction of mosques and Islamic schools, thereby playing a significant role in the spread of Islamic education in the 1970s and afterwards.

Such exchanges affected many Nigerian Muslims, including Sufi modernizers like Ibrahim Niasse and Nasiru Kabara, who cultivated ties with Arab Sufi centers in North Africa, Iraq, and elsewhere beginning in the late colonial period. But the impact of Arabs' cultural and religious views, as well as Arabs' financial support, was particularly strong for anti-Sufi reformists like Abubakar Gumi. Wide and sustained contacts with Arabs facilitated the emergence of a new type of Arabic-speaking Muslim elite in Nigeria that participated in trans-Sufi organizations like the Jama'atu Nasril Islam (JNI) and anti-

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\(^1\) Defining the terms "Africans" and "Arabs" can be extremely complicated. For my purposes, "Africans" refers to people living in sub-Saharan Africa, while "Arabs" refers to persons living in Arab League countries. These definitions are complicated by the presence in the Sahel region, including Nigeria, of pastoralists and others of Arab descent; however, these groups play a relatively minor role in the analysis presented here.
Sufi movements like Jama'at Izalat al-Bid'a wa Iqamat as-Sunna (Izala or Yan Izala). Exposure to Arab culture and/or modern methods of learning the Arabic language decisively influenced the ideological outlook of Nigerian reformers, while Arab financial support allowed reformers to promote their ideas through mass movements, with a profound impact on society and politics in Northern Nigeria. Reformist activism helped fuel greater Islamization in the North starting in the 1970s, and reformists' political participation contributed to the implementation of full shari'a law beginning in 1999.

Examining Nigerian-Arab contacts and their effects sheds new light on the intersection of Islam and politics in several spheres: the competition for international influence between Middle Eastern actors, Muslim participation in electoral politics in Nigeria, power struggles between Sufis and anti-Sufis, and religio-political violence in Nigeria. Though Nigeria, as an oil producer, did not receive direct aid from Arab governments at the same level that other African states did after the 1973 oil embargo, Nigeria’s position as Africa’s most populous country, the site of major Muslim-Christian tensions, and the home base of Izala, “the largest single Islamic reform movement in West Africa,”² make it an important case study in how increased contact with the Arab world affected African Islam during the twentieth century. Arab outreach to Africa, though intended to attract African support for Arab powers' stances against Israel or against each other, brought unintended consequences. Understanding these consequences creates a fuller picture of how Middle Eastern rivalries – in particular, competition between Israel and Egypt, between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, between Saudi Arabia and Libya, and between Saudi Arabia and Iran – affected local and national power struggles in sub-Saharan Africa. Examining both sides of the Afro-Arab relationship helps show

that at least for African reformists influenced by Arab actors, the process was an interactive one, and represented neither a direct imposition of Arab values and ideas on African populations nor a material transaction that left African Muslims unaffected.

Analyzing Nigerian-Arab contacts is significant for understanding religious and political dynamics within postcolonial Nigeria, but also for the study of other countries. First, the spread of reformist movements and other processes of Islamization in Nigeria affected Christian-Muslim relations in what is perhaps the world's largest country with a roughly equal number of Christians and Muslims. The Nigerian case therefore raises important questions about the role of outside influences in shaping the complex encounters between religious groups in Africa and elsewhere. Second, studying Islamization in Nigeria offers insights into the role of Arab influences on Islamization in other West African nations such as Mali, Senegal, Cote d'Ivoire, and Ghana. Third, examining connections between Nigeria and Arab countries sheds new light on the dynamics of the modern Muslim world and offers relevant comparative material to both the study of non-Arab Muslim movements' relations with Arab Muslims and to interactions among different groups within the Arab world.

This essay will analyze the available literature on the relationship between the Arab world and Nigeria. It will also focus on primary sources such as autobiographies, theological tracts, conference proceedings, and pilgrimage memoirs that reflect on contacts between Nigeria and the Arab world. It will provide a discussion of events in Nigeria with references to events and changes in the Middle East. The first part will focus on the precolonial period, when exposure to Arab scholars and Arabic literature influenced the intellectual outlook of the leaders of the Sokoto Caliphate. This contact
with the Arab world does not appear to have shaped politics in the region. The second section deals with the first five decades of colonialism, from 1903 to around 1952, when political and technological change facilitated educational exchange between Nigeria and Sudan, and to a lesser extent other Arab countries, as well as increased pilgrimage by Nigerians. The third part will explore the period from Egypt's revolution in 1952 to the coup of 1966 and death of Ahmadu Bello, when young elites in the North with western-style and Islamic education began to draw on Arab support to promote new visions of Islam. The fourth section examines the period from 1966 to the emergence of Izala in 1978, when Abubakar Gumi and other reformists used Saudi Arabian support to promote an explicitly anti-Sufi message. The fifth part treats developments between 1978 and Nigeria's democratic transition in 1999, when competition for influence by Nigerian religious entrepreneurs and Middle Eastern powers contributed to political radicalization and continued Islamization. The last section will focus on the period from 1999 to the present, wherein a return to civilian rule has brought about the emergence of a type of Islamic populism subtly influenced by micro-level Nigerian-Arab contacts as well as by the preceding decades of reformist activism. The biographies of major Nigerian leaders and thinkers like Abubakar Gumi, Ahmadu Bello, and Ibraheem Sulaiman will be utilized to help structure the essay. I also endeavor to understand how Nigerian-Arab interactions affected Nigerian Muslims at the mass level, particularly through pilgrimage and education.

This essay aims to contribute to both the literature on power struggles among Middle Eastern actors, which has largely concentrated on events in the Middle East rather than on local African reflections of Middle Eastern rivalries, and the literature on Islamic
reformism in Nigeria, which has only recently begun to systematically examine the question of how transnational ties shape the careers of local actors. By placing these two fields in greater dialogue, moreover, a re-examination of notions of Islamic modernity in the African context, as developed by scholars like Muhammad Sani Umar, a Nigerian scholar of twentieth century Nigerian Islam, and Ousmane Kane, a Senegalese scholar who has written on Izala, becomes possible. Setting Nigerian Islamic modernity in a broader, transnational context suggests that part of this alternative modernity involves participation in a global community.

The essay also responds to scholarship on the Sokoto Caliphate and its continued impact in present-day Northern Nigeria. Contemporary Nigerian reformist Muslim intellectuals, for example Ibraheem Sulaiman, have argued that postcolonial reformist efforts in Nigeria mirror the reform movement of Shehu Usman dan Fodio (1754-1817), who led a jihad against nominally Muslim Hausa rulers and established the Sokoto Caliphate in the early nineteenth century. Yet key differences separate the two movements. Contemporary reformers may invoke dan Fodio's jihad and the Sokoto Caliphate as a model for the Islamic state, but both the intellectual content of postcolonial reformism and the means reformers have employed in building a "more Islamic" society reflect a context far different from that of the early nineteenth century. Twentieth century reformism, unlike its nineteenth century antecedents, often explicitly rejected or ignored Sufism. Additionally, reformists harnessed mass media and Islamic education in an attempt to create Muslim activists who related to authorities in a more egalitarian and participatory fashion than the ruler-subject relationship in the Caliphate and as is customary in some Sufi brotherhoods. Finally, during two centuries of social and
technological change, contacts between Africans and Arabs have vastly expanded, exposing ordinary Nigerian Muslims in greater numbers and depth to direct and indirect Arab influences. Nonetheless, tracing the history of the jihad, as well as the history of Afro-Arab contacts in the region, will provide critical background to discussions about contemporary reformism.

Although major scholarship on Arab policies toward Nigeria is lacking, literature on Arab outreach to Africa at the continental level is relevant to the study of Arab influence in Nigeria specifically. This scholarship has tended to focus on Arab aid to Africa and, more recently, on Arab-funded NGOs. Western and Arab scholars produced a number of works in the late 1970s and early 1980s analyzing the motivations and impact of Arab aid in the wake of the 1973 oil embargo. Some of these scholars treated Arab aid to sub-Saharan Africa on a general level, others focused on the aid policies of individual powers, such as Saudi Arabia. Scholars also reflected on the successes and failures of efforts at Afro-Arab cooperation at the political and institutional level. However, with the slackening of flows of aid and institutional collaboration between the Arab world and Africa after 1979, fewer scholarly publications addressed the effect of Arab aid in Africa. While some studies of outside aid to Africa in the 1990s mentioned Arab aid to African countries, interest in such connections largely lay dormant until

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September 11th, after which a renewed interest in studying financial ties between the Arab world and Islamic groups led to another wave of publications relevant to the study of Arab influence in Africa. Post-September 11th works on Arab aid, however, have focused more on Islamic charities and NGOs than on direct aid to African countries by Arab governments. Nonetheless, some of these works include important information on Afro-Arab ties. Finally, a significant body of work addresses the relationships between Arab countries in sub-Saharan Africa and the Gulf Arab powers, again with frequent emphasis on aid relationships. Taken together, these works help set Nigeria's interactions with Arab powers and Arab culture in a broader context.

While works on how Arab financial aid expanded the "soft power" of Arab states in sub-Saharan Africa contribute to an understanding of relationships between Africans and Arabs, works on politics and politicians in the Arab world contain relatively little information about Arab political outreach to Africa. Biographies of major Arab leaders involved in outreach to African Muslims, such as Gamal Abd al-Nasser of Egypt and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, generally make passing reference to their activities in Africa. Biographies of Nasser treat his philosophical views on Egypt’s role in Africa or briefly touch on scholarships for African students and radio propaganda. Studies of King Faisal largely neglect his role in Africa; one helpful exception discusses his

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outreach to African Muslims. Works detailing the struggle or “Arab Cold War”
between Egypt and Saudi Arabia during the late 1950s and 1960s include little or no
emphasis on how that struggle played out in sub-Saharan Africa. Paul Jabber's report
on the improved relations between Egypt under Sadat and Saudi Arabia under Kings
Faisal and Khalid also confines its emphasis to regional politics and relationships with
the superpowers. However, three major contributions to the study of Arab regional
politics as they affected Africa, Tareq Ismael’s The U.A.R. in Africa: Egypt's Policy
under Nasser, Reinhard Schulze's work on Saudi Arabian da'wa (missionary activity) in
Africa, and Hanspeter Mattes' work on Libyan outreach to Africans, provide valuable
overviews of Arab regimes' activism on the continent. This essay builds on this
scholarship by isolating dynamics of Egyptian, Saudi Arabian, and Libyan influence in
Nigeria.

Turning to works on Nigeria, several scholars have made major contributions to
the study of Islamic reformism in Northern Nigeria, often through a focus on Abubakar
Gumi and the Izala movement. Muhammad Sani Umar has traced the development of
anti-Sufi thought in the North from its rise among anticolonial activists and Arabic-
speaking elites in the 1950s to the creation of Izala in the late 1970s. Situating anti-

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15 Hanspeter Mattes, "La da'wa libyenne entre le Coran et le Livre Vert" in Otyek, Le radicalisme islamique au sud du Sahara, 37-73.
Sufism within the context of capitalism imposed by colonialism and further economic and political changes that took place during administrative reorganization in the 1960s, the oil boom of the 1970s, and the frustration of life under military rule, Umar sees anti-Sufism as a form of protest "specifically against Sufism but more generally against many other things: traditional non-capitalist values, the religious authority of Sufi orders, and perceived corruption of religious beliefs and practices."  

Roman Loimeier treats related issues in his monograph *Islamic Reform and Political Change in Northern Nigeria*. Loimeier examines what he sees as a persistent cycle of, on the one hand, reformist efforts both within and of the Sufi brotherhoods, and on the other hand, drives toward unity among all Nigerian Muslims.  

Ousmane Kane builds on Loimeier's work by moving from what he sees as Loimeier's focus on elites within reform movements to "the modus operandi of the Yan Izala at the microlevel in Kano." In *Muslim Modernity in Postcolonial Nigeria*, Kane situates Izala within the social and political changes taking place in Kano and across Nigeria during the twentieth century and especially following the oil boom. Christian Coulon, meanwhile, has examined the new generation of ulama in Northern Nigeria, focusing on the role of Islamic and Arabic education, as well as the Islamization of university campuses in Northern Nigeria, in shaping new generations of reformist intellectuals.  

These scholars make arguments about the role of reformism and social change in shaping Islamic modernity, especially among new generations of intellectuals and ulama.

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and, conversely, the role of modernization in shaping new generations of reformers. Loimeier argues that Gumi's generation of reformers emerged as a consequence of the modernizing policies initiated by colonizers and continued by Ahmadu Bello.\textsuperscript{20} For Umar, social changes such as "transformation of Sufi orders, Maitatsine uprisings, formation of civil associations, participation in modern global discourses, and general change collectively point to Islamic traditionalism converging toward Islamic modernism, which in turn has been shifting closer to fundamentalism." Umar ties Islamic modernism to anti-Sufism and a "Wahhabi/Salafi revival" that began in Nigeria in the 1960s and culminated in the establishment of Izala.\textsuperscript{21} Izala's commitment to modernity, Umar continues, is evident in its organizational structure, its heavy focus on western-style Islamic education, and the high educational status of its leaders. Kane, similarly, argues that Izala "attempted to mediate social change" and "in the process...aimed to articulate an ideology of modernity."\textsuperscript{22}

While these scholars all frequently refer to Arab support as an influence on Izala and other reformist and hardline Nigerian movements, only a few systematic explorations of transnational connections between Nigerian movements and foreign actors exist. These works, moreover, focus on transnational ties in a broad sense, treating regional West African networks, ties with the West and African diaspora communities, and ties to the Arab and Muslim worlds. Moreover, scholars have focused on Sufi brotherhoods, as Ousmane Kane does in a piece on the Niassene Tijaniyya's missionary efforts in West

\textsuperscript{22} Kane, \textit{Muslim Modernity}, 2.
Africa, or on Nigerian movements – Sufis and anti-Sufis – more broadly, as is the case with Loimeier's recent dissection of the growth in translocal religious networks and affiliations since the eighteenth century. Loimeier rightly points out that the importance of Nigerian Muslims' ties to the broader Islamic world should not be exaggerated in relation to the strong regional African ties also cultivated by Nigerian Muslim intellectuals and leaders. However, isolating and discussing ties between anti-Sufi groups in Nigeria and the Arab powers and Iran helps show how political struggles within Northern Nigeria fit into and were influenced by regional political struggles in the Middle East.

Islam as a political force operates not just at the level of the nation-state, but also at level of transnational communities. Just as studies of Islamic groups in Algeria, Egypt, Nigeria and elsewhere have called assumptions about democratic electoral politics into question, the study of reformist Nigerians' contacts with transnational forces enhances our understanding of regional and global politics and political identities.

The Pre-Colonial Period and Intellectual Exchange between Hausa Reformists and Arab Scholars

After the arrival of Islam in Africa, precolonial Africa and Arabia maintained contact for centuries, though many translocal relationships were later disrupted by

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colonialism. Nonetheless, prior to and even after the arrival of Europeans on the continent, Arabs and Africans interacted through pilgrimage, politics, trade, war, slavery, and Sufi missionary activities in both West and East Africa. In Hausaland, Islam's penetration was limited in the beginning; the court elite professed the faith, but paganism and Islam coexisted among ordinary people. Yet Hausa cities like Kano earned a reputation for Islamic scholarship as early as the fifteenth century and became destinations for traveling Muslim scholars, including North Africans like Muhammad al-Maghili (1425-1504). Over the next two centuries, a Hausa scholarly elite emerged, shaped by Arab scholars and texts from across the Arab world. "By the first half of the seventeenth century [these] small Islamic communities were fully at home in the intellectual world of Islam," and began to produce reformists who denounced lapses in Islamic observance and the admixture of pagan and Islamic customs. Ordinary people in Hausaland also interacted with Arabs, such as Sufi holy men and Berber traders, while returning Hausa pilgrims brought news of Mecca, Medina, and other Arab centers. In this way, Arab influences played a limited but important role in the development of a broader and deeper Islamic consciousness among scholar-reformists and ordinary Muslims. This atmosphere prepared the ground for the jihad of Shehu Usman dan Fodio.

While it would be inappropriate to group the Shehu and late eighteenth century Wahhabi thinkers under the same intellectual rubric, translocal Arab contacts played direct and indirect roles in forming the Shehu's outlook. In the Shehu's youth, the echoes

of Islamic revivalist movements elsewhere reverberated in Hausaland. In Saudi Arabia, Wahhabis challenged Sufi orders, who reacted "by closing their ranks and advocating their own doctrines and way of life more militantly." There also occurred a Sufi revival at Al Azhar, the revival of the Qadiriyya brotherhood, and the founding of the Tijaniyya. These changes, and the tension between hardline reformism and Sufi syncretism, were felt in the Shehu's life. His intellectual makeup was influenced by the Arab thought of his day and of the preceding centuries. He grew up "surrounded by books," including Arabic manuscripts brought by travelers and pilgrims from North Africa, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. Most of his teachers were family members, but a decisive influence was the Tourag sheikh Jibril b. Umar. Jibril had substantial experience and contacts in the Arab world and had twice made the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina. Jibril studied not only with leading Egyptian Sufis, but also with Wahhabis in Saudi Arabia, from whom he may have derived his strict views regarding Islamic orthopraxis and the application of the shari'a. The Shehu also bore the intellectual stamp of great Arab scholars of the past, such as al-Maghili. Finally, participation in the "system of peripatetic schooling and master-seeking" normal among Fulani scholars took him and his brothers to intellectual centers throughout the Sahara; some of his peers made the pilgrimage to Mecca, though the Shehu was prevented from doing so by his father.

Arab influences, however, stayed in the background of what was primarily an indigenous movement. Around 1774, the Shehu began traveling through towns calling for Islamic reforms. He attracted followers and preached at courts and to chiefs. Given that "preaching reform in this context involved, no matter how indirectly, criticism of

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30 Hiskett, _The Sword of Truth_, 62.
31 Hiskett, _The Sword of Truth_, 32.
existing political order,” the growth of his movement fed conflicts between the Shehu and local rulers; as conflict escalated, the Shehu’s community first performed hijra to evade war before launching a full-scale jihad in 1804. The leaders of the jihad defeated their opponents and established the Sokoto Caliphate. When the Shehu died in 1817, his son Muhammad Bello emerged as the new Caliph, ruling until 1837.

The Caliphate's translocal contacts, such as those of its Qadiriyya leadership with the brotherhood's regional centers like Timbuktu, remained primarily regional and elite. Ties with the Arab world do not seem to have accelerated after the Caliphate's establishment, though Arabic literacy was an important qualification for the civil service. Leaders in Sokoto discouraged their subjects from going on pilgrimage, given its length and arduousness, but some elites who faced political difficulties undertook pilgrimage "as a form of 'flight'." More important than contacts with Arabs were the Caliphate's interactions with surrounding polities: expansion, settlement of new areas, the formation of smaller caliphates, and an influence on leaders like the Tijani sheikh Umar Tall, who stayed with Muhammad Bello on the way to and from Mecca and later led a major jihad in present-day Senegal. Such contacts, however, also introduced religious competition, which was to become a primary feature of the religious landscape of Northern Nigeria and challenge the power of the Caliphate's Qadiriyya leadership even inside the Caliphate's borders. For example, Umar Tall attracted some local scholars to

the Tijaniyya during his visit in 1831, and in the 1850s the Sokoto elite deposed the emir of Zaria for openly identifying with the Tijaniyya.37

After Bello, the Caliphate faced chronic problems of leadership. The advanced age of most incoming Caliphs and the ever-present dangers of battle meant that many died after only a few years in power. In the final decades of the Caliphate, the need for military campaigns lessened for a time, revenue for the central government increased, and settlements expanded. However, revolts broke out again and emirs challenged Sokoto's authority. In the midst of these problems, British assaults caught the Caliphate unprepared, though it is doubtful the Caliph's army could have withstood British military superiority even had the Caliph's political dominance been more secure. The Caliphate fell in 1903, and in 1914 most of Sokoto was fused with British colonial holdings in the South to form the colony of Nigeria.

In addition to its geographical influence, the Caliphate's impact on structures of governance and law in Northern Nigeria endured during and after colonialism. The Caliphate's architects in their capacity as intellectual reformers also influenced subsequent patterns of criticism against rulers. Calls for reform and justice in Hausa poetry and the presence of “pietists” in Hausa society, trends that began under the Caliphate, continued in later eras.38

In the precolonial period, contacts between Hausa and Arab scholars made an intellectual contribution to reform movements that eventually captured political power, while contacts between ordinary Hausa Muslims and Arabs played a role in heightening Islamic consciousness in the society as a whole. However, sustained and transformative

relationships between Nigerian and Arab actors do not appear to have had a decisive impact on local and regional politics in this time.

**Colonialism (1903 to 1952) and Increasing Contact with the Arab World through Educational Exchange and Pilgrimage**

The British colonial bureaucracy in Northern Nigeria restricted some avenues of cultural exchange between Africa and the Arab world but opened others, particularly in pilgrimage and education. As transportation technology improved and the peace enforced by colonial authorities permitted safer travel, some Nigerian-Arab contacts became more sustained and more influential than earlier contacts. For geographical and political reasons, Sudan was the Arab country with which Nigeria had the most contact until the final decade of colonialism. Educational and cultural exchanges with Sudan and other Arab centers, along with the different environment for the practice of Islam that developed under colonial rule, began to shape new types of Muslim identities in the North.

Colonialism created a new environment for the practice of Islam. On the one hand, British policymakers undermined the institutions of Islamic culture and society in the North. They limited the types of punishments permissible under shari'a, moved to supplant Arabic with English as the administrative language, and introduced western-style education while incorporating Quranic and Arabic schools into their administrative framework. At the same time, however, indirect rule retained and relied upon many of

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the Caliphate's administrative, legal, and educational structures. This continuity, the relative peace imposed by the British, and new means of communication and transportation facilitated the spread of Islam in and outside the North. Muslim bureaucrats, soldiers, and leaders all found new avenues for proselytization.

After the fall of the Caliphate in 1903, religious competition among Muslims broke out anew, and assumed regional and transnational dimensions. The Tijaniyya in particular expanded as a result of new foreign influences. Colonialism's enforced peace meant that larger numbers of traveling scholars came to Northern Nigeria, including Tijani sheikhs from Mauritania, Morocco, and Algeria who began arriving as early as 1909. Nigerian sheikhs from the Tijaniyya as well as the Qadiriyya attempted to broaden their religious networks and build connections with brotherhood leaders and centers abroad. However, these efforts were limited to "a small group of scholars and students." Yet as groups like the Tijaniyya proliferated, concern among Qadiri rulers and British administrators grew regarding the allegedly subversive character of such Muslims. Competition between the two brotherhoods intensified with the growth of mass Sufi reformist movements like the Tijaniyya branch headed by the Senegalese Sheikh Ibrahim Niasse, who won the support of the Emir of Kano in the 1930s during the hajj to Mecca and eventually built an enormous following in Northern Nigeria. Beginning after World War II, the Qadiri Sheikh Nasiru Kabara built a similar mass movement within his brotherhood. Such movements not only brought a more politicized

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41 Kane, *Muslim Modernity*, 34-35.
and non-traditional form of Islam to large numbers of Nigerian Muslims, they also linked them to regional and Arab brotherhood centers.\footnote{Loimeier, "Playing with Affiliations."}

As changes proceeded within the makeup of Nigerian Islam, the pace of Nigerians' contact with the Arab world accelerated. For example, improvements in transportation infrastructure began to revolutionize the hajj in the first decade of the twentieth century, diverting West African Muslims from trans-Saharan routes to routes that led through Sudan. Railways cut travel time for those with means, and “even pilgrims who could not afford the fare could follow the tracks, which gave a direct route to the Red Sea.” In the following decades, automobiles and airplanes permitted rapid travel for still greater numbers of pilgrims.\footnote{Birks, Across the Savannas, 18.} Nigerians' contacts and experiences during pilgrimage sometimes had huge repercussions for the trajectory of Islam in Northern Nigeria, as happened with Ibrahim Niasse and the Emir of Kano.

Transnational contacts also informed educational practices in Nigeria. British colonial administrators in the North co-opted the existing system of Islamic education along with local structures of governance and administration. From the start, colonial educational policy included an international dimension that engaged the Arab world. The educationist Hanns Vischer, who decisively influenced educational policy in the North in the first decade of colonialism, spoke Arabic and toured Egypt, Sudan, and West Africa to study school systems before applying his findings to Northern Nigeria, where he set up the first primary and secondary schools for the sons of chiefs.\footnote{Mark Bray, Universal Primary Education in Nigeria: A Study of Kano State (London, Boston and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 36-38.} Vischer's lasting impact can be seen in the fact that he trained the men who, in the 1920s, taught Arabic and
Islamic studies to Ahmadu Bello and his peers at Katsina College.\textsuperscript{47} British interest in Islamic education in Nigeria waxed strong in the first four decades of colonial rule. They allowed over 30,000 Islamic schools to serve a student population estimated at between 200,000 and 360,000, and experimented with blending western and Islamic education.\textsuperscript{48} However, attempts in the first half of colonial rule in Northern Nigeria to promote Arabic education produced few unqualified successes except at the western-style School for Arabic Studies.\textsuperscript{49} Arabic education, teacher training standards, and administrative methods continued to evolve at the School through the 1940s and 1950s,\textsuperscript{50} but elsewhere Arabic ceased to represent a priority in middle schools, and by the 1940s “Islamic elements within the government schools were clearly peripheral.” Nonetheless, the British invested more in Islamic education in Nigeria than in any other African territory except Sudan.\textsuperscript{51}

Sudan, in fact, became a major point of contact for educational exchanges between Nigeria and the Arab world during the colonial period. Though they retained a lasting paranoia about their struggles against the Sudanese Mahdi, British officials fostered contacts between Nigeria and Sudan in part because they considered Sudan a less radical environment than Cairo or other educational centers in the Arab world. British concern about al Azhar was so great that in 1951 they “declared that examinations of the Azhar would not be acknowledged in Nigeria”; applications of Nigerian Muslims,

\textsuperscript{47} Paden, \textit{Ahmadu Bello}, 78.
\textsuperscript{49} Umar, "Education and Islamic Trends," 134-135.
\textsuperscript{51} Hubbard, "Government and Islamic Education," 153-158.
such as Abubakar Gumi, to study at the university were often denied.\textsuperscript{52} The British also “tried to control the influx of Islamic ideas, often by screening Arabic and Islamic books and papers,” coming from Egypt and elsewhere.\textsuperscript{53} Sudan's history of educational-cross pollination and exposure to a range of Ottoman and European influences after Muhammad Ali Pasha's conquest in 1821 made it, in British eyes, an attractive alternative to Egypt for African Muslims studying abroad. As part of their educational policies in Sudan, the British took advantage of Sudan's wide base of Arabic speakers to experiment with integrating western and Islamic education. British colonialism slowly absorbed rural Islamic schools into administrative frameworks, while in the cities more rigorous attempts at blending western and Islamic education took place, such as the Ma’had al ‘ilmi in Omdurman, which became an explicit substitute for Al Azhar,\textsuperscript{54} though it featured elements of western universities.\textsuperscript{55}

Therefore when British administrators, eager to bolster Arabic education in government schools, decided to depart from the standard policy of rarely hiring outside teachers in Northern Nigeria, they turned to Sudan. In the mid-1920s, the colonial government brought three graduates of Gordon College to teach Arabic in a primary school, and in the 1930s they hired three more to teach at the Kano Law School, later the School for Arabic Studies.\textsuperscript{56} The British also sent Muslims from Northern Nigeria to

\textsuperscript{52} Loimeier, \textit{Islamic Reform and Political Change}, 153.
\textsuperscript{54} Yusuf Fadal Hasan, “Interaction between Traditional and Western Education in the Sudan: An Attempt towards a Synthesis,” in Brown and Hiskett, \textit{Conflict and Harmony}.
\textsuperscript{56} Hubbard, "Government and Islamic Education," 157.
Khartoum and Omdurman to study Arabic and Islamic law. Not only did Nigerians study in Sudan, British experiments with Islamic education in Sudan also served as models for similar experiments in Nigeria. Nigerians sometimes became active agents in the spread of such projects. For example, in the 1930s Muhammad Gidado, the Waziri of Kano, stopped in Sudan on the way to Saudi Arabia for the hajj. His tour of Gordon College inspired the creation of the School for Arabic Studies.

Though British officials took steps to close off contacts between Nigerians and Egyptians, Nigerian leaders reached out independently to Egypt during the colonial period. In 1937, the Emir of Kano visited Cairo and “appealed to the scholars of the Azhar to come to Nigeria.” Nigeria maintained some level of contact with Egypt throughout the colonial period and "a small but continuous exodus of young men to the great educational centers of Islam" in Egypt, Sudan, Tunisia, and elsewhere tied Northern Nigeria to the Arab world culturally.

Indigenous Muslim reformers also experimented with Arabic education inside Nigeria under colonialism, sometimes explicitly drawing on experiences in the Arab world. One example was Kamalu 'd-Din, who traveled on pilgrimage to Mecca in 1937/1938, studied Arab countries' education systems along the way, and founded Nigeria's first indigenous Arabic school in Lagos upon his return. Kamalu 'd-Din would continue to play an important role in Northern educational policy after independence; he

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60 Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth*, 165-166.
came into contact with Bello, and traveled with him to Egypt in 1961.\footnote{Stefan Reichmuth, "Islamic Learning and its Interaction with 'Western' Education in Ilorin, Nigeria," in Brenner, \textit{Muslim Identity and Social Change}, 185-186.} Kamalu 'd-Din was also one of around thirty elites invited to attend a seminar on Arabic education at the University of Ibadan in July 1965.\footnote{John Hunwick et al., \textit{Report on a Seminar on the Teaching of Arabic in Nigeria} (Ibadan and Kano, Nigeria: Ahmadu Bello University and University of Ibadan, 1965), 38.}

Another indigenous reformer in Arabic education was the anticolonial leader Aminu Kano, who set up a modern Arabic school in 1950 as an alternative to traditional schools; his model quickly spread to Kano, Kaduna, and Jos.\footnote{Bray, \textit{Universal Primary Education}, 59.} However, Aminu Kano’s efforts provoked controversy, and given his political conflicts with the Native Authorities, “the success of this new brand of schools worried the political establishment. Consequently, the native authorities hired thugs to destroy these schools during the elections of 1951.”\footnote{Kane, \textit{Muslim Modernity}, 64.} A western style Islamic school established in the late 1940s by Shehu Shagari, with Ahmadu Bello's support, also provoked controversy; traditional authorities and factions in the local community viewed the school as a challenge to their power.\footnote{Paden, \textit{Ahmadu Bello}, 129-130.} As in Mali and other French territories in West Africa, Northern Nigeria in the late colonial period saw an explosive intersection of nascent party politics and confrontations between reformists, some of whose efforts and views reflected influences absorbed during travel and study in Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and Sufi traditionalists.\footnote{See Lansine Kaba, \textit{The Wahhabiyya: Islamic Reform and Politics in French West Africa} (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1974).}

In the first five decades of colonialism, the introduction of western education combined with newly opened avenues of contact with the Arab world to produce significant changes in the practice of Islam in Northern Nigeria. British colonial policy
and geographical proximity made Sudan a key site of educational and cultural exchange, but Nigeria also came into greater contact with Arab countries like Egypt and with greater numbers of traveling scholars, especially Sufis, from North Africa. These contacts contributed to the rise of Sufi mass movements like those of Ibrahim Niasse and Nasiru Kabara. However, they also influenced early attempts at blending western and Islamic education, such as the "modern" schools started by reformers like Kamalu 'd-Din, and in the process affected the first modern reformist projects.

**The Independence Era (1952-1966) and the Position of Northern Nigeria in the Competition between Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia for Influence in Africa**

For roughly the two decades before and after its independence, Nigeria felt the impact of competition between Egypt and Israel for influence in Africa. Toward the end of this period, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States became donors to and actors in Northern Nigeria. As the independence period opened the door to a new phase of political and religious competition in the North, Arab influences came to play a strong role in shaping Northern Nigerian reformism.

At first, Israel's diplomatic presence in Africa exceeded that of Arab countries. From the late 1950s until 1967, Israel and the independent African states enjoyed "increasingly good relations." Israel opened a number of embassies on the continent while "Israeli and African bureaucrats, technicians and politicians" exchanged "numerous visits," and Israel signed various agreements with African countries "in ceremonies
dominated by expressions of warm friendship and cordiality." Seeking to contain Egypt, Israel concluded military agreements with its neighbors, such as Ethiopia, Uganda, Kenya, and Chad, and supported Sudan's Anyanya rebel movement. In Nigeria, each region determined its own level and type of relationship with Israel. In 1958, Southern Nigerian officials visited Israel, and although Nigeria established diplomatic relations with Israel in 1960, "the Northern region still maintained its aloofness from Israel" and "Israeli diplomats were not allowed to visit any town outside Kaduna, Kano, and Jos." At no time prior to the severance of diplomatic ties in 1973 did Nigeria set up an embassy in Tel Aviv.

With the approach of independence, Northern Nigeria came into greater contact with Arab powers. Diplomatic contacts between African countries acquiring independence and Arab states proceeded relatively slowly during the 1950s and 1960s. With the exception of King Muhammad V's visit to Senegal in 1959, it appears that no Arab head of state paid an official visit to any sub-Saharan African country during the 1950s, while Kwame Nkrumah and Haile Selassie were perhaps the only African heads of state to visit an Arab country, in both cases Egypt, during that decade. After independence, however, Nigeria became one of the African countries with the greatest Arab diplomatic presence, hosting ten Arab embassies.

Egypt became the first Arab power to establish strong ties with Africa in the post-independence era. Egyptian politicians and the Egyptian public showed little interest in

70 Ahmed Yousef Al-Qora’i, "The Scope of Actual Arab Political Interest in Africa" in Haseeb, The Arabs and Africa; see also the remarks of Fatma Al-Jam'i Lahbabi in the commentary, 278.
sub-Saharan Africa before 1952, but following the revolution Egypt’s leaders sought to secure their own independence by working toward the liberation of other African countries, especially Sudan. As Egyptian foreign policy took shape in 1952-1954, it came to include a focus on Africa; President Muhammad Naguib met in 1954 "with representatives of the Mau Mau and with the leaders of Uganda and Nigeria, and he invited the leaders of all national movements to meet in Cairo." During this time Egyptian leaders and intellectuals argued that Africa was a critical Egyptian interest; Nasser talked about Egypt's African identity in his *Philosophy of the Revolution*, while the historian Husain Muinis, with Nasser's initial support, promoted a similar view.  

Once Nasser assumed power, Egypt became “the first state in the world to supply African liberation movements with weapons for use in armed resistance” and permitted them to open offices in Egypt. As with the Bandung Conference of 1955, Nasser supported African liberation movements and held major Afro-Asian conferences in 1957 and 1959 to establish himself as a major leader in the decolonizing world and a leader of the Arab masses. Competition with Israel and its allies also played a major role in these initiatives, especially in Nasser's rivalry with Kwame Nkrumah, under whom Ghana maintained warm relations with Israel.

In addition to diplomatic activism, Egypt reached out to ordinary Africans, especially Muslims. Voice of Africa Radio carried Quranic recitation, Arabic language education, and programs in African languages. Egypt assisted in building mosques, schools, and clinics, and offered scholarships for African Muslims at universities in

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Egypt. In a demonstration of its interest in African education, Egypt created the Institute for African Studies in 1955, spurring "the creation of similar institutes in Khartoum, Baghdad and Algiers."\(^{75}\)

Northern Nigeria responded favorably to Egyptian outreach. The number of Nigerian students studying in Egypt increased after 1952. One source estimates that Egypt awarded nearly 200 scholarships to Nigerians in the 1960s.\(^{76}\) These students linked Nigeria with the Arab world politically. When Ahmadu Bello made his first pilgrimage to Saudi Arabia in 1955, Nigerian students at al-Azhar met his party in Cairo and facilitated his interactions with Egyptian leaders.\(^{77}\) In Nigeria itself, Egyptian propaganda found a favorable audience among younger Muslims, though "the older generation, more conservative, distrusted Egyptian secularism and disliked the evidence of cultural Westernization that was so apparent in Egyptian society."\(^{78}\)

At the same time that Middle Eastern actors were competing for influence in a new international climate characterized by decolonization, the approach of independence intensified political rivalries within Nigeria. Rivalries sharpened between regions, as rising Islamic identity in the North coincided with rising ethnic and religious tensions between North and South stemming from "competition within the administration of the regional governments." Muslims and Christians both felt their positions were undermined by colonial-era changes.\(^{79}\) Feelings of mistrust grew to such an extent that as independence approached, "sectors of the northern Nigerian political and religious

\(^{74}\) Fayek, "The July 23 Revolution," 95-100.
\(^{75}\) Al-Qora‘i, "The Scope of Actual Arab Political Interest in Africa," 264.
\(^{76}\) Ismael, \textit{The U.A.R. in Africa}, 252.
\(^{78}\) Hiskett, \textit{The Sword of Truth}, 166.
\(^{79}\) Clarke and Linden, \textit{Islam in Modern Nigeria}, 17.
community seriously contemplated secession." Rivalries also grew within regions: in the North, a younger generation of western-educated elites came into intermittent conflict with older, traditional leaders. Ahmadu Bello and Abubakar Gumi, who became leaders of different groups within the younger generation, drew on international ties and experiences to solidify status and power in Northern Nigeria. Through education, pilgrimage, tours of the Muslim world, and administrative collaboration with Arab and Muslim countries, Bello and Gumi enhanced their credentials as Muslim leaders and gained access to resources that allowed them greater leverage in challenging traditional authorities.

In different ways, Bello and Gumi were well suited to the new international climate. Colonial-era western-style education had not only groomed them for positions of leadership within Nigeria, but also gave them a multicultural fluency and a global outlook that allowed them to forge ties with the broader Islamic world, particularly Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Bello's experiences studying and teaching in Nigeria's first western-style schools and colleges prepared him for multi-party politics and forged lifelong associations with powerful Nigerian elites. As Premier of the Northern Region from 1954 to 1966, he was able to both draw on tradition, in the form of the legacy of his ancestor Muhammad Bello, and his western-style education.

Gumi, who came from a line of Islamic scholars, also attended western-style schools. At the Law School in Kano, he studied under the three Sudanese teachers brought by the British in the 1930s. Gumi's traditional background, combined with his exposure to western formal education, helped produce his early notions of Islamic

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80 Clarke and Linden, *Islam in Modern Nigeria*, 41.
81 Paden, *Ahmadu Bello*.
82 Bello, *My Life*.
orthopraxis, notions that brought him into conflict with superiors in his first administrative positions. In one incident, Gumi's decision to stop attending prayers at a mosque because of the imam's practice of performing ablutions with dirt instead of water drew attention from the entire chain of local authorities, until finally the emirs intervened to settle the dispute. Gumi's hybrid education put him at odds with local scholars even in urban areas like Kano. He noted, "Most of my former teachers had background in both the European and traditional Islamic schools and that made them to be different…The city scholars had a less flexible background." Gumi's experiences reflect the ways in which during the final decades of colonialism, rising elites trained in the School of Arabic Studies, Katsina College, and Sokoto Arabic Teachers’ College “became more restive in their agitation against colonialism, the emirates, the Native Authority, and the Sufi orders.” His comments also foreshadow the rise of a new type of Nigerian ulama, products of a "mixed education" of western and Islamic settings, who would challenge traditional Islamic authorities beginning in the 1970s.

From 1954-1956, Gumi and an elite group of future university professors, diplomats, politicians, and judges studied in Sudan. At the Bakht el-Ruda Institute of Education, a training college for teachers connected with the University of Khartoum, Gumi took courses in Arabic and English and spent a considerable amount of time with Sudanese students. Gumi was strongly affected by these experiences, saying "I was able to understand the Arab social world and situate it within the context of my Islamic reading."
Education prepared Gumi and Bello for major roles in transnational Islam. Pilgrimage brought them into contact with Arab leaders – and each other. In the 1950s, when transportation improvements shortened travel time, "the British came to regard the pilgrimage as less threatening," and permitted more Northern leaders to make the journey. Bello was part of this trend. In 1955, he inaugurated his practice of making two annual pilgrimages, traveling with other Northern officials to Mecca and Medina to examine the conditions for Nigerian pilgrims. On the way they stopped in Tripoli, Cairo, Jeddah, and Riyadh, and had positive interactions with Arab officials and leaders at each juncture. On pilgrimage the following year, Bello met with Nasser in Cairo, and on another trip Bello visited Khartoum. Gumi and the other Nigerian students studying in Sudan also went on hajj in 1955 and encountered Bello’s group in Jeddah. Bello appointed Gumi imam for the trip. This pilgrimage was not only a major moment in Gumi and Bello’s partnership but also the beginning of Gumi’s lifelong relationship with Saudi Arabia and its elites. In 1957, Gumi served for nine months as the Pilgrims' Officer at Jeddah, operating out of the Pakistani Embassy and helping to manage the affairs of some 19,000 pilgrims. The next year, Gumi returned to the Kingdom with the prime minister’s delegation to inspect the pilgrimage. While in Saudi Arabia, Gumi made important business contacts that aided him later; for example, an Arab merchant he met during this time funded the publication of his book Radd al-Adhan in Beirut in 1979. Gumi was one of Nigeria’s first semi-official diplomatic representatives in the Kingdom; the station for the pilgrims’ officer in Jeddah ‘became the nucleus of a fully-

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87 Paden, Ahmadu Bello, 280.  
88 Bello, My Life, 192; 216.  
89 Gumi, Where I Stand, 68-71.  
90 Loimeier, Islamic Reform and Political Change, 155.  
91 Gumi, Where I Stand, 194.
fledged Embassy” after independence.  For his part, Bello built close relationships with the royal family, particularly the English-speaking Faisal. As the groups of ministers and officials Bello led to Saudi Arabia each year grew in prestige, "the pilgrimage [began] to take on the characteristics of a high-level diplomatic delegation.”

Contact with the Arab world and other Muslim countries had an impact on policy-making in the North in the 1950s. As Premier of the Northern Region, Ahmadu Bello embarked on a program of modernization that included Islamic reform, efforts toward pan-Muslim unity, and conversion campaigns among non-Muslims. As part of this modernization effort, young leaders in and outside of Bello's circle debated following Egypt's example of abolishing Islamic courts during the discussions about judicial reform in the late 1950s. When Northern leaders helped craft the 1960 compromise regarding the status of Islamic law in the North, they looked to Sudan (and Pakistan) as a model for their legal code. Under the compromise, Northern Muslims accepted the abrogation of Islamic criminal law, reform of alkalis’ courts and a curtailment of emirs’ authority, but gained prestige through the permanent establishment of a Northern Region Shari'a Court of Appeal, the acknowledgement that this court had equal standing with the Regional High Court, and the guarantee of a Muslim seat on the High Court. The compromise functioned relatively smoothly for nearly two decades, until the late 1970s, when the "shari'a issue" became a recurring conflict in Nigerian politics.

With independence, Northern leaders had greater freedom to “broaden their network of power and influence and promote diplomatic relations with the Arab nations.”

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At the same time, Arab powers developed a greater interest in “furthering the
development of Nigerian Islam” by sending personnel, aid, and supplies. These
contacts and the legacy of Sokoto combined to produce a pan-Islamic consciousness
among Northern politicians that made Northern Nigeria "the odd man out" among newly
independent West African nations whose outlook was more pan-African than pan-
Islamic. As had been the case during the judicial reform debate, “Northern Nigeria,
while conscious of the aspirations of its substantial non-Muslim minority, was
nevertheless much intrigued by the example of the Republic of the Sudan, Saudi Arabia,
Pakistan, the emerging North African states and, in a lesser degree, Egypt." This was
also true in the field of education. Bello built on the foundations laid by British colonial
educationists, blending Islamic and western curricula as he sought to create a modern
elite capable of administering the North on a western-style bureaucratic, but also Islamic,
basis. But he also, like his colonial predecessors, drew on Arab expertise in his
attempts to reform the Northern system; he “established a special ministerial committee
to consider [educational] reform, and sent a delegation to examine practices in the United
Arab Republic, Libya and the Sudan.”

Educational policy became one of the first official points of contact between
Nigeria and the Arab world after independence. First, exchanges with Sudan outlasted
British rule. Nigerian diplomats continued to serve as pilgrimage officers in Khartoum,
and a number of prominent Northern Nigerian professors in Islamic law and Arabic
obtained degrees in Sudan, a trend that continued for subsequent generations of Northern

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97 Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth*, 165-166.
99 Bray, *Universal Primary Education*, 60.
Numerous Sudanese teachers came to teach in Northern Nigeria or contributed to the development of modern Islamic institutions in Northern Nigeria from the 1950s as directors of schools and in other administrative functions," and "the first African conference on Islamic education," held in 1960 in Kano, was attended by "a number of Muslim scholars from Northern Nigeria, Sudan and Zanzibar." 101

Nigeria also developed contacts with other Arab countries through educational exchange. For example, Selim Hakim, an Iraqi educationist, was invited in 1961 to work with the Ministries of Education in Lagos, Kaduna, and Ibadan and investigate Arabic teaching in schools and colleges. For Hakim, the trip had international ramifications; he spoke of the “strong and ancient ties between the Republic of Iraq and Nigeria” and “noted with pleasure that [he] was the next to come from Baghdad after the official good-will mission," sent from Iraq on Nigeria's Independence Day. 102

Hakim’s visit overlapped with and potentially influenced ongoing changes in the education system. In 1962-1963, the University of Ibadan inaugurated its Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies. At roughly the same time, Ahmadu Bello University was founded and began to place emphasis on Arabic and Islamic studies at its Abdullahi Bayero College. Representative of these changes, and of the role Arabs played in them, was a seminar in 1965 at Ibadan, financed by the Embassy of Jordan and attended by prominent Nigerian intellectuals and public figures, foreign intellectuals like Izzeldin El Amin of the University of Khartoum’s Department of Arabic, and Hakim himself, who returned to Nigeria for a month to assist with the conference. The ambassadors of

100 Padon, Faith and Politics in Nigeria, 40-41.
Lebanon, Sudan, and Jordan attended the opening session, along with representatives of Iraq, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. Though the opening speaker noted ongoing problems with teaching methods and standards, he observed that students from Kano’s School of Arabic Studies had provided a corps of capable students at Abdullahi Bayero College, and that special programs for graduates of Islamic institutes were helping to train these Arabic speakers as secondary school teachers. In fact, by the mid-1960s, state schools in the North offered several pathways toward achievement in Arabic and Islamic studies.

Most prominent among the new class of religious scholars and Arabic speakers trained in both Western and Islamic systems of education was Abubakar Gumi. After independence, the mixture of Western and Islamic education that shaped Gumi’s early conflicts with authorities continued to shape his judicial and political career. In 1960, following the completion of his formal education and his travels to Sudan and Saudi Arabia, Gumi became the deputy Grand Khadi of the Northern Region. After two years, the Grand Khadi retired and Gumi took over, in an ascension that Muhammad Sani Umar calls "a watershed in the development of anti-Sufism in Nigeria." As Grand Khadi, Gumi offered Bello advice on religious issues and strove to convince him to introduce a religious component into his development projects. Encouraged by Gumi, Bello began giving money to local malams and building mosques in rural areas. When the local people "showed appreciation, he became even more enthusiastic."

As Bello came to present himself as an Islamic leader and to challenge the

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authority of traditional Islamic rulers partly on that basis, his Islamic outreach took on an international dimension. Disturbed by inter-Arab tensions and divisions in other parts of the Muslim world, he set out to bring about greater Muslim unity "through personal diplomatic initiatives." Often with Gumi at his side, Bello visited leaders in West and North Africa, Yemen, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia. Bello participated in several pan-Islamic conferences in Saudi Arabia in 1961 and 1962 and on a second tour visited Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan, Sudan, and the UAR. Bello's efforts helped spark the creation of the Muslim World League, and he was elected vice-president of the Constitution Council. He asked Gumi to represent him, and Gumi later became a member in his own right. Gumi's own profile in the Arab world grew along with Bello's. In 1963, he received the President Nasser Award from Egypt.\textsuperscript{107}

International support in turn allowed Bello and Gumi to move their efforts at recalibrating Nigerian Islam to another level. In 1962, Bello, with assistance from Gumi, founded the Jama’atu Nasrîl Islam (JNI), an organization intended to forge unity among Nigerian Muslims. The JNI rapidly established branches throughout the country.\textsuperscript{108} Through JNI, Bello and Gumi leveraged their international contacts to fund Islamic projects. A Pakistani merchant with holdings in Kaduna donated 12,000 copies of the Qur’an, Saudi Arabia gave substantial annual donations for school construction, and Kuwaiti donations helped JNI build a conference hall and a secondary school, Sheikh Sabah College.\textsuperscript{109}

In a way, Bello and the early JNI embodied the competition for influence between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, although Bello tried "to maintain good relations with both

\textsuperscript{107} Gumi, \textit{Where I Stand}, 102-104; 195.
\textsuperscript{108} Loimeier, \textit{Islamic Reform and Political Change}, 142.
groups." In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Bello maintained contact with Nasser, perhaps in part to attract the support of some anticolonial Nigerian radicals associated with his rival Aminu Kano. Egypt helped finance the construction of mosques in 1960 and 1961; in 1962, al-Azhar gave Bello an honorary doctorate, and Bello visited Cairo several times. Bello's closeness with Nasser evoked a response from Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, who "felt threatened by the expansionist policies of Egypt" and wanted "to balance the increasing Egyptian influence on Bello." Kuwait became a major donor to Bello's projects and to Northern Nigeria between 1963 and 1966, and Saudi Arabia after 1966; the collapse of Egyptian foreign outreach after 1967 ensured Gulf States' role as the primary Arab donors to Northern Nigerian reformist Muslims.

These developments reflected Saudi Arabia's changing role in the Muslim world. Prior to the early 1960s, "Saudi Arabia barely concerned itself with the systematic diffusion of its state ideology" and did not seek ties with reformist or anti-Sufi movements outside the Gulf region. During the first stage of the "Arab Cold War" between Saudi Arabian and Egypt, succession struggles within the Saudi royal family and the need to combat Egyptian influence in Yemen prevented the Kingdom from becoming a major donor to African countries. Under King Faisal, however, Africa became an ideological battleground between Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabian ulama fought al-Azhar's influence outside the Arab world, the Islamic University in Medina trained missionaries to send abroad, and the Muslim World League, created in 1962, brought African Muslim leaders like Bello and Ibrahim Niass into contact with the Saudi

leadership. Faisal toured Africa in 1965 as part of his attempts at pan-Islamic organizing. As Egyptian influence in Africa lessened toward the end of the decade, Saudi Arabia slowly took on greater leadership on the continent.

Gumi was an important broker in Nigerian-Saudi Arabian relations. Because of his friendships and contacts in Saudi Arabia, as well as his standing as a scholar, “he became the most important councillor of the Saudis and the Kuwaitis in the 1960s in respect to investment, allocation, and distribution in Nigeria of monies from Gulf states.” Gumi provided advice to both Nigerians seeking Gulf funding for projects and to Gulf donors unsure of the viability of such projects, and therefore Gumi could not only “channel monies to Nigeria,” but also “decide the allocation of these funds.” One scholar suggests that it was Gumi’s growing anti-Sufism that helped attract Saudi Arabian support for Bello’s initiatives.

Egyptian influences continued to affect JNI, however, and remained operative in Nigeria even after Egypt's role in Africa shrank in the 1970s. JNI brought some of the Muslim Brotherhood’s literature into Nigeria. The Brotherhood’s ideas were reflected, directly or indirectly, in the thought of Gumi, the writings of Islamist Nigerian newspaper columnists like Muhammad Higab, and “the nascent Islamic socialism found amongst Kano factory workers.” As one study reflects, “Though it is impossible to prove any direct links between the Ikhwan and Nigerian fundamentalism, the parallels are striking and probably not due merely to convergence.”

118 Clarke and Linden, Islam in Modern Nigeria, 100-102.
In the years just before and after independence, dynamic political changes brought the young reformers around Ahmadu Bello to power in Northern Nigeria. At the same time, decolonization in Africa opened new spaces for competition between Egypt and Israel, and later between Egypt and the Gulf States. As Bello sought a new type of religious legitimacy for his modernization program, these two trends intersected, and young Nigerian leaders with access to transnational networks began using Arab resources to promote ideas about Islam that either sought to "transcend" Sufism or to challenge traditional Sufī leaders outright. This trend continued even after Bello's death, leading to outright anti-Sufism and culminating in mass reformist movements like Izala.

**1966-1978: Political Turmoil and the Growth of Saudi Arabian Influence in Northern Nigeria**

The decline of Egypt's influence in Africa and Israel's deteriorating relations with African countries after 1967 solidified Saudi Arabia's position as the dominant Middle Eastern power in Africa from the late 1960s until 1979. Meanwhile, political turmoil inside Nigeria, such as the 1966 military coup that claimed the lives of Bello and other Northern Muslim politicians, the installation of a military regime from 1966 to 1979, and the civil war from 1967-1970, led to more outspoken anti-Sufi efforts and political participation by Northern reformists. In this context, Saudi Arabian wealth became a critical source of support for a more confrontational type of reformism.

Nasser's defeat at Israel's hands coincided with a rise in Saudi Arabian oil profits. In the power vacuum after 1967, the Kingdom asserted leadership in the Muslim world,
especially Africa, by disbursing more aid and helping to create new institutions, such as the Organization of the Islamic Conference (founded 1969), the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (founded 1973), and the Islamic Development Bank (founded 1975). Saudi Arabia did not act alone: in the late 1960s and early 1970s, new aid institutions emerged throughout the Gulf, such as the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, founded in 1968 and sponsored by Kuwait, Egypt, and other Arab powers, and the Abu Dhabi Fund for Arab Economic Development, chartered in 1971. After 1973 other Arab powers like Kuwait and the UAE provided aid to African countries as well. Saudi Arabia, however, both disbursed the most aid and operated with the most explicitly political and religious agenda.  

Saudi Arabia’s slowly expanding role in Africa in the late 1960s dovetailed with a changing international outlook among Africans. Saudi Arabian outreach to Africa continued in the form of aid and a tour by Faisal of Chad, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, and Uganda in 1972. Meanwhile, opposition to Israeli policies grew rapidly in Africa after 1967, and the OAU condemned Israel in several resolutions even before the 1973 Arab-Israeli war. A number of African countries broke diplomatic ties with Israel before 1973, and by the year’s end all but four had done so. Even after the war ended, Israeli ties to South Africa and incidents like the Israeli raid at Entebbe airport in 1976 fueled anti-Israeli sentiments in Africa. Nigeria was one of the countries that broke relations in 1973, though tensions were inflamed earlier by Israeli support for the Biafran secessionists during the civil war.  

When oil prices rose during the embargo Arabs imposed after the 1973 war,

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119 Simmons, *Arab Foreign Aid*.
120 Mertz and Mertz, *Arab Aid*, 32; Sylvester, *Arabs and Africans*, 196-204.
121 Adejokun, "Nigeria and Israel," 170-173.
African leaders pressured Arab governments to offer them aid and special oil prices.\textsuperscript{122} Gulf countries anxious to prevent global economic destabilization and secure new allies increased aid outflows to billions of dollars by 1974.\textsuperscript{123} For its part, Nigeria was often excluded from aid disbursements by institutions like ABEDA because it was an oil producer,\textsuperscript{124} and received relatively little in comparison to other West African countries like Guinea, Mali, and Senegal.\textsuperscript{125} Arab financial support for Nigerian religious entrepreneurs, however, was often plentifully available.

Within Nigeria, Bello's death and the rise of Saudi Arabian influence catapulted Abubakar Gumi to a position of tremendous influence. In this new environment, his anti-Sufi activism became more explicit. In 1967, Gumi began preaching on the radio in Kaduna, and by the early 1970s began "disagreeing openly with the popular scholars."\textsuperscript{126} Gumi built mass appeal through his ability to adapt traditional Islamic oral teaching to the new format.\textsuperscript{127} In 1969 he attempted to bring Sufi leaders under the umbrella of JNI, but the Kano elite, doubting his sincerity, rejected the offer.\textsuperscript{128} From then on, Gumi increased his condemnation of special practices, withdrawal from the world, and veneration of leaders and saints. In 1970 he elaborated his anti-Sufi views in a series of articles, which precipitated a serious backlash. Controversy grew with the publication in 1972 of Gumi's tract \textit{Al-Aqidatul Al-Sahiha bi Muwafaqat al-Shari'ah}.\textsuperscript{129} Gumi also began to speak out on national political questions, harshly criticizing President Yakubu

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{122} Simmons, \textit{Arab Foreign Aid}, 91-92, Mertz and Mertz, \textit{Arab Aid}, 34.
\textsuperscript{123} Simmons, \textit{Arab Foreign Aid}, 11-12; 25-26.
\textsuperscript{124} Simmons, \textit{Arab Foreign Aid}, 92-101; Sylvester, \textit{Arabs and Africans}, 54-62.
\textsuperscript{125} Olaniran, \textit{Foreign Aid}, 42-57.
\textsuperscript{126} Gumi, \textit{Where I Stand}, 132.
\textsuperscript{128} Loimeier, \textit{Islamic Reform}, 145-146.
\textsuperscript{129} Gumi, \textit{Where I Stand}, 133-146.
\end{footnotesize}
Gumi's activism proceeded through mass organizations as well as mass media. Following Bello's death, Gumi maintained a central role in JNI. The organization lost government support after the Northern Region was dissolved in 1967, and the Gowon government temporarily halted much of the Arab aid flow in the late 1960s by nationalizing JNI’s schools and decreeing a halt to Gulf donations. However, Gumi’s connections with Saudi Arabia remained a critical source of funds and power, and aid resumed in the 1970s when the Gowon regime’s decree was lifted. King Faisal gave a significant sum to JNI in 1973, and the following year Saudi Arabia funded the establishment of the JNI Training School in Kaduna; there the Muslim World League paid the salaries of two foreign teachers, one Sudanese and one Indian. Additionally, Nigerians with experience in the Arab world continued to occupy leadership positions within the movement; Ibrahim Dasuki, a lieutenant of Bello's who became secretary general of the JNI from 1971 until 1988 when he ascended to the Sultanate of Sokoto, had been pilgrims’ officer in Jeddah from 1958 to 1960, after Gumi, and also served in the Nigerian embassy in Sudan. JNI expanded its outreach program, and in 1970 began including Southern as well as Northern Muslims. This paralleled a broader process of integration for Northern and Southern Muslims in the 1960s and 1970s. Though debates between Sufis and anti-Sufis in the 1970s drove a wedge into efforts for unity, moves toward integration at this time foreshadowed more successful efforts

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131 Loimeier, *Islamic Reform*, 139-144.
following the interreligious violence of the 1980s.

As Gumi pursued reformist causes and mobilization more aggressively, several trends prepared the way for the shift in Islamic consciousness in Nigeria that would allow Izala's rise. One such trend was the micro-level assistance Nigeria received from the Arab and Muslim worlds during the 1970s, when Arab and South Asian Muslims came to Nigeria in greater numbers and participated in government and the private sector. Throughout the decade, “when manpower was scarce in the north, the government recruited personnel from Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, and other Muslim countries.”134 At the same time, “ever-increasing numbers of 'missionaries,' doctors, and teachers from Pakistan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria...played an important role in bringing Nigerian Muslims closer to their co-religionists in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa.”135 After 1973, the Muslim World League entered a new phase of activity, creating a council of African Muslims in 1976, opening offices in Gabon in 1974 and Dakar in 1977, funding the construction of mosques, and sending hundreds of missionaries to the continent.136 Commerce also promoted micro-level contacts with the Arab world; although military governments' indigenization policies137 initially spurred the departure of many Lebanese living in Nigeria, after Lebanon's 1975 civil war many Lebanese returned to Nigeria; many took Nigerian citizenship, and by 1988 one estimate calculated that around 2,000 Lebanese were living in Kano, many of them traders.138

Economic and social changes taking place within Nigeria also favored the

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134 Falola, Violence in Nigeria, 30.
135 Clarke, "Islamic Reform in Contemporary Nigeria," 532.
urbanization that would help propel later reformist mobilization. The political instability of the late 1960s and a drought in the Sahel from 1968 to 1973 shifted much of Nigeria’s population to cities and placed a severe strain on Nigerian agriculture. Conscription during the civil war absorbed “a significant part of rural manpower,” and the gap between urban and rural incomes soared as inflation and imported food cut into agricultural profits. When investment in infrastructure neglected rural areas, “all the requirements of a massive urban drift were fulfilled.”

Urbanization and social change set the stage for the rise of mass reformist movements in the urban North.

Travel and pilgrimage, which brought Nigerians into greater contact with Arab Islam, also affected Islamic consciousness. In the 1970s, Nigerians returning from study at al-Azhar and elsewhere moved into civil and military service in significant numbers. Meanwhile, the number of Nigerians making the hajj exploded. Oil boom wealth, urbanization, and the rapid expansion of transportation infrastructure put the hajj within reach of more Nigerians. Statistics on numbers of pilgrims reflect the growing ease of travel. One estimate suggests a rise from less than 2,500 pilgrims in 1956 to nearly 50,000 in 1973. Over 100,000 Nigerians made the hajj in 1977, putting Nigeria’s numbers second only to Indonesia’s. During economic crises in 1977-1978 and 1981-1982 government quotas limited the number of pilgrims to 50,000, but one source estimates that “altogether, close to half a million Nigerian performed the Hajj between 1979 and 1982,” including many who went twice.

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140 Clarke, "Islamic Reform in Contemporary Nigeria," 532.
142 Clarke and Linden, *Islam in Modern Nigeria*, 62.
The growing importance of pilgrimage to Nigerian society was reflected in greater government involvement with hajj operations and increasing interest on the part of academia in studying hajj dynamics. As the number of pilgrims soared, the private agencies that proliferated during the colonial period and the 1960s gave way to Pilgrims Welfare Boards. The first of these appeared in the Western Region in 1958, and in 1975 federal authorities created a National Pilgrims Board with national and zonal offices. Meanwhile, the titles of undergraduate and masters’ theses submitted at Nigerian universities during the decade reflected some Nigerian students' interest in understanding the hajj from a sociological and economic perspective.

Nigeria's new role in the hajj spurred collaboration between Nigerian intellectuals at Ahmadu Bello University and Saudi Arabian researchers from the Hajj Research Center at Ummul Qura University in Mecca. Their quantitative study of Nigerian pilgrims, undertaken in 1982, paralleled projects in Egypt, Indonesia, and Pakistan and was the first Nigerian study of Hajj except for official reports prepared at the end of each pilgrimage season. The team carried out a questionnaire of some 2,000 pilgrims on the 1982 hajj, wrote an assessment of the hajj's economic impact in Nigeria, and documented Nigerian materials related to the hajj. The authors themselves went on Hajj in 1983, and participated in a "National Conference on Hajj" in Zaria from July 22-24, 1983,

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149 Hajj Research Project Nigeria, Vol. 1, i-ii.
featuring Gumi as a guest speaker.\footnote{150 Hajj Research Project Nigeria, Appendix 2, 36.}

The results of the team's survey suggest that most oil boom pilgrims were ordinary Nigerian Muslims, reinforcing the notion that pilgrimage had a serious effect on micro-level processes of Islamization. A large majority of pilgrims were Hausas or Yorubas.\footnote{151 Hajj Research Project Nigeria, Vol. 3, 15.} Most were young or middle-aged, male, and married. Pilgrims often came from rural areas and lacked formal education, but most were middle-class, working as businessmen, housewives, landowning peasants, and civil servants. Less than ten percent spoke or read Arabic, though almost all had received some type of religious education.\footnote{152 Hajj Research Project Nigeria, Vol. 1, 32-38.}

Ordinary Muslim pilgrims found Saudi Arabia a challenging but powerful experience. Most pilgrims were undertaking their first hajj, and moreover were leaving the country and interacting with Muslims of other nationalities for the first time. Despite complaints about guides and accommodations,\footnote{153 Hajj Research Project Nigeria, Vol. 1, pp. 47-48; Vol. 3, pp. 169-170.} after roughly a month's exposure to Saudi Arabian culture pilgrims reported largely positive interactions with Arab merchants, taxi drivers, and officials, as well as with Nigerians resident in the Kingdom. Over eighty per cent of the respondents “considered the treatment of Saudis and pilgrims from other nationalities towards them as friendly.”\footnote{154 Hajj Research Project Nigeria, Vol. 1, pp. 42-43.}

The complexity of pilgrims' engagement with the pilgrimage experience and with the Kingdom during the 1970s can be seen in the pilgrimage journal of Lateef Jakande, a Southern journalist who later became a national politician.\footnote{155 Lagos State, "Alhaji Lateef Jakande,” Lagos State Government, \url{http://www.lagosstate.gov.ng/c/portal/layout?p_l_id=PUB.1162.12}, Accessed 25 April 2009.} Jakande went on hajj in 1977 and had a deeply mixed experience. On the one hand, he witnessed how the high
number of pilgrims caused severe problems in travel and accommodations, including
conditions that lead to death. He characterized Saudi Arabian merchants as "hard-headed
negotiators and money-minded businessmen." He criticized political and journalistic
repression in the Kingdom, as well as poor infrastructure and inadequate transportation.
At the same time, he was impressed by the Kingdom's wealth and its system of free
education.  

Pilgrimage introduced greater numbers of Nigerians to the Arab world, but other
trends, such as the spread of Islamic education, also brought Arab influences to bear on
the growing trend toward reformist mobilization. As Arabs and other foreign Muslims
came to Nigeria and Nigerian Muslims traveled to the Arab world in greater numbers,
changes took place in the North's education system that ultimately favored an expansion
of Islamic schools. Federal policies indirectly encouraged the spread of Islamic
education. In 1976, the Gowon regime introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE).
Oil wealth in Nigeria allowed movement toward universal enrollment on a greater scale
than in any other African country, and policymakers set ambitious goals for enrollments.
UPE aimed partly to achieve national unity in the wake of the civil war and reduce
"regional imbalances and their political consequences." Yet many Northern Muslims
were deeply suspicious of the system, viewing it as "a subtle form of Christian
indoctrination." Nonetheless, some Northern state governments initially embraced the
new policy. Unlike other states, Kano’s government even supplemented federal funding

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157 Bray, Universal Primary Education, 4.
with its own. Leaders hoped that UPE would “ensure a place for Kano citizens in the modern national economy,” and that a sustained push at the state level would help overcome Muslim antipathy.¹⁵⁹ This enthusiasm quickly collapsed in the face of UPE’s problems – national leaders' undefined goals, planners' underestimation of enrollments, violent resistance, and a lack of widespread economic benefits in Kano and elsewhere. In 1980, “the Commissioners for Education of the ten Northern states officially described UPE as a disaster.”¹⁶⁰

However, UPE spurred the rise of Islamic education in several ways. First, to combat Muslims’ misgivings about UPE’s potentially Christian undertones, states like Kano hired additional malams and Arabists to teach Arabic, the Qur’an, and religious sciences in government schools.¹⁶¹ Second, by driving demand for schooling, UPE created opportunities for Islamic schools in the North and West.¹⁶² Islamic schools in the North already occupied a strong position before the introduction of UPE. Following Bello’s death in the 1966 coup and new administrative divisions in the North, the regional government's promotion of Islamic education had faltered and Western and Christian education spread in some areas,¹⁶³ but in other areas, like Sokoto, members of Bello's circle like Shehu Shagari still had state backing to open western-style Islamic schools.¹⁶⁴ Meanwhile, educational changes continued outside of formal education policy, including expansion of Islamic schooling, especially for adults. For example, although Kano state ministries paid little attention to adult education in the 1960s and

¹⁵⁹ Bray, Universal Primary Education, 7-8.
¹⁶⁰ Bray, Universal Primary Education, 11-12.
¹⁶¹ Bray, Universal Primary Education, 79.
¹⁶² Reichmuth, "Islamic Learning," 179.
¹⁶³ Ohadike, "Muslim-Christian Conflict," 104.
¹⁶⁴ Paden, Ahmadu Bello, 130, note 67.
1970s, the population of Kano nearly doubled in the decade from 1952 to 1962, and “one result of this rapid growth [was] the increased attendance at voluntary adult education schools.” In Kano, business at adult education centers and Quranic schools boomed in the 1970s, with some schools boasting attendance in the hundreds. Additionally, many more pupils attended the ilm schools than government secondary schools. Therefore when declining oil revenues and government neglect brought the education system to a crisis, Islamic schools filled the vacuum for schoolchildren, including many girls. Later, Izala became a prime mover in this arena, building schools for children but also becoming "a pioneer in offering adult classes for Arabic/Islamic literacy," especially to married women.

UPE also wrought political changes that gained significance as graduates of UPE schools entered adult society. This new electorate, literate in English and Hausa and therefore able to participate more deeply in politics, was receptive to messages of Islamic authority and solidarity. At the same time, graduates of Islamic schools represented a new, modern Islamic elite. The cultural capital acquired through Islamic learning "could be invested for political gains, most notably in winning the mass support of Muslims toward specific political ends." An increased emphasis on Islamic themes by politicians and authorities later became evident in places like Kano in the 1980s, as the

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165 Bray, *Universal Primary Education*, 52.
167 Bray, *Universal Primary Education*, 57.
170 Christelow, "Three Islamic Voices," 228.
171 Umar, "Education and Islamic Trends," 140.
state government responded to social tensions and incidents of religious violence like the Maitatsine riots by tolerating both the construction of more mosques and increased activity by reformists inside the mosques, including “the appointment as imams of persons who are the products of both the Western and Islamic educational systems.” Authorities also funded Islamic education, “authorized the state-owned television and radio stations to give increased air-time to Islamic activities” and, responding to demands by activists, established Islamic committees to advise the state on its responses to social problems.\textsuperscript{172}

Meanwhile, Islamization proceeded at Northern universities. Muslim student groups, such as the Muslim Students’ Society, exploded in the 1960s and 1970s. By 1970, the MSS counted four hundred branches. This influence not only permeated universities, but filtered into surrounding communities, where “students were encouraged to help teach Arabic and religious knowledge in primary schools.”\textsuperscript{173} The federal government created some Islamic studies programs in Northern universities as a response to Muslim demands, and these programs began turning out larger numbers of Arabic teachers, qadis for shari'a courts, and Islamic intellectuals. However, the reforms left many Muslim activists unsatisfied, and they continued to agitate within universities for further Islamization.\textsuperscript{174} Reductions in funding for Nigerian universities and students between 1976 and 1978 sparked major student protests, resulting in boycotts, arrests, violence, and closure of some institutions.\textsuperscript{175}

\textsuperscript{172} Bawuro Barkindo, "Growing Islamism in Kano City since 1970: Causes, Form and Implications" in Brenner, \textit{Muslim Identity and Social Change}, 101-104.
\textsuperscript{173} Paden, \textit{Faith and Politics in Nigeria}, 30.
\textsuperscript{174} Coulon, "Les nouveaux oulemas," 130-132.
Meanwhile, educational connections between the Arab world and Africa deepened in the 1970s both because of new institutions and an increased Arab intellectual interest in Africa. As before, African students attended Arab universities like al-Azhar and Morocco's El-Qarawiyyn University, but newer Islamic institutions like the Saudi Islamic University, Omdurman University, and the Religious Institute of Qatar now welcomed large numbers of African students. Other, non-religious institutions also served African students, such as the Institute for African Research and Studies in Cairo, which in 1970 began training African and Arab specialists in African history, geography, politics, languages, and other areas, and the Institute for African and Asian Studies in Khartoum, which in 1972 started offering postgraduate training in sociology and languages of Africa. Universities throughout the Arab world offered courses on African history and politics.\footnote{176}{Al-Qora’i, "The Scope of Actual Arab Political Interest in Africa," 264-265.}

The impact of these changes outlasted the weakening of Afro-Arab ties in the late 1970s, when Arab interest and influence in Africa peaked and Africans expressed disappointment in Arab efforts. A flurry of institutional activity had not disguised the reality that most Arab aid in the 1970s had gone to other Arab countries, and Arab African countries like Mauritania and Somalia received considerably more than non-Arab African countries.\footnote{177}{Mertz and Mertz, Arab Aid, 25-28.} Thus despite initial Arab aid to Africa and a measure of cooperation, "latent and simmering differences" erupted at conferences in 1976 and 1977\footnote{178}{Abdel Malik Auda, “An Evaluation of the Afro-Arab Cooperation Experiment” in Haseeb, The Arabs and Africa, 585-588.} and African leaders' demands for increased aid and more political action by Arab leaders in certain African conflicts went largely unheeded. After 1976, Arab aid declined.
while institutional activity slackened; with the dramatic events of 1979, Arab attention
turned elsewhere, resulting in further reductions in aid.

Moreover, the impact of these changes was not dulled when the monopolistic
control over foreign funding by elites like Gumi began to slip in the late 1970s, and new
Nigerian religious entrepreneurs began to compete for external support from a broader
field of Middle Eastern forces, including Muammar Qaddafi's Libya, post-
Revolutionary Iran, and a reinvigorated Israel. Rather, when the anti-Sufi reform
movement that Gumi sponsored, Izala, burst onto the scene in 1978, it represented a
powerful force for religious change, and it drew on Saudi Arabian financial support – but
it also operated within a more complicated field of actors characterized by intense intra-
Muslim religious competition. In other words, religious competition in Nigeria
intensified along with religious competition on the world stage.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, Saudi Arabia became the dominant Arab power in
Africa and in Northern Nigeria, and anti-Sufi reformists with connections to the Arab
world, such as Abubakar Gumi, began to openly express anti-Sufi sentiments. Saudi
Arabia played a major role in facilitating increased contact between Nigerians and Arabs
through migration, travel, aid, education, and pilgrimage. These contacts, along with
social changes like urbanization and the spread of Islamic education in the North, had an
impact on Islamic consciousness in Nigerian society. Despite increased competition for
influence in Nigeria by Nigerians and Arabs at the end of the 1970s, Saudi Arabian
influence and the trends powered by micro-level Nigerian-Arab contacts became factors
in the rise of Izala and the proliferation of various radical movements.
1978-1999: The Rise of Reformist and Radical Movements amidst a Fragmentation of Middle Eastern Influences

As competition between foreign actors for influence in Nigeria intensified and new radical groups made a dramatic entrance onto the national stage, Nigeria entered a period of political instability and interreligious conflict. In the late 1970s, Nigeria prepared for the end of military rule and transition to civilian political control, culminating with elections in 1979. This transition raised questions about the role of religion in the federal constitution, which centered on the issue of creating a Federal Shari'a Court of Appeal, and about the role of religion in electoral politics. In this way, ongoing processes of Islamization and social change in the North intersected with the concerns of Northern leaders and thinkers about the North's changing, and weakened, role in national politics.

Dissatisfaction with the 1960 compromise on the role of Shari'a in the federation grew after 1967. When the Northern Region was split into states, regional courts were also divided into less powerful units. Questions about the place of the courts in a federal system led to proposals for a high court. In 1977-1978, the Constitution Drafting Committee's plan for a Federal Shari'a Court of Appeal sparked an interreligious debate so bitter that the military regime intervened. When the proposal for the court was dropped, many Muslims felt they had lost the prestige and sense of finality regarding the status of shari'a in the federation that they had found in 1960, and suffered from “an acute sense of victimization at the hands of Christians and of ‘Christian’ – i.e., Western – laws.
and legal institutions, coupled with a determination to regain lost ground." Many scholars identify the shari'a debate as a key event in fostering interreligious conflict, setting the stage for "twenty years of Muslim discontent that helped bring on the Revival of Islamic law of 1999." 

In the tense atmosphere surrounding the civilian transition and the shari'a debate, reformist preachers connected with Abubakar Gumi founded Jama'at Izalat al-bid'a wa Iqamat as-Sunna in 1978; Isma'il Idris, "one of Gumi's leading disciples," became the movement's official leader. Gumi downplayed his own role in the founding of Izala, but was widely regarded as the group's mentor and leader. Various factors seem to have influenced the creation of Izala, among them threats of violence against reformist leaders by Sufis, but from the beginning the movement functioned both as a platform for anti-Sufism and as a vehicle for political mobilization in the North. Izala's rapid spread, fueled by preaching tours and wide cassette distribution, attracted youth, poor people, and women. It also attracted more powerful Nigerians who were ready to break with traditional balances of power. Through the movement, rising political elites could reach new constituencies, and business elites could gain access to Gumi's contacts, particularly "Saudi commercial partners and decision makers." Izala provided what Gumi and his reformist colleagues had not been able to achieve through careers in state institutions like the judiciary, through JNI, or through radio and print media. a mass movement that fundamentally challenged social, religious, and political hierarchies in Northern Nigeria.

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182 Kane, Muslim Modernity, 85.  
183 Gumi, Where I Stand, 155-163.  
184 Kane, Muslim Modernity, 85-87.  
185 Loimeier, "Islamic Reform," 292.
While many argue that Saudi Arabian support aided Izala's expansion and success, observers differ as to the extent of Saudi Arabian influence on the movement. The Nigerian scholar Don Ohadike condemns Izala as “active agents of Saudi imperialism in Nigeria.”\textsuperscript{186} In contrast to this, John Paden argues that Izala “is not coterminous with Saudi Wahhabiyya or other forms of Salifiyya" and that Saudi Arabian leaders, wary of alienating West African Sufis, "emphasize the Sunni connection rather than a Wahhabi connection.”\textsuperscript{187} Nonetheless, Wahhabi influences appear in Izala's intellectual outlook. Izala preachers employed texts written by Muhammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhab in their proselytization efforts; Ousmane Kane sees a Wahhabi/Salafist doctrinal influence on Izala in their use of \textit{takfir} (excommunication), a practice “currently more prevalent in Northern Nigeria than elsewhere in West Africa.” Izala preachers may have used Saudi Arabian texts because they were distributed at no charge by “Saudi religious and cultural networks.” At Gumi’s suggestion the Islamic University of Medina sponsored the publication of an anti-Tijaniyya polemic, written by a disaffected Nigerian Tijani sheikh at the Department of Islamic Studies at Bayero University, which Izala preachers used in their campaign against the Sufi brotherhoods.\textsuperscript{188} Finally, Saudi donors helped Izala in building its own mosques, a key factor in the movement's spread.\textsuperscript{189}

Izala also represented an outgrowth of longer processes of Islamization. For example, the hybrid forms of western and Islamic education that shaped Izala's leaders also influenced the movement more broadly. Both Gumi and Idris attended the School of Arabic Studies, and many other Izala preachers "had attended either the School of Arabic

\textsuperscript{186} Ohadike, "Muslim-Christian Conflict," 107.
\textsuperscript{187} Paden, \textit{Faith and Politics in Nigeria}, 30.
\textsuperscript{188} Kane, \textit{Muslim Modernity}, 123-128; Loimeier, \textit{Islamic Reform and Political Change}, 226.
\textsuperscript{189} Loimeier, \textit{Islamic Reform and Political Change}, 217.
Studies…or the schools of the JNI in Kaduna in the 1960s and 1970s and had been educated there by Gumi personally," and afterwards preached throughout the North in connection with JNI's educational activities.\textsuperscript{190} For many such preachers, involvement in JNI and Izala meant forging transnational contacts; in Kane's biographical sketches of several Izala preachers, he notes that one came to Jos in 1969 and "was groomed by Shaykh Muslim Khan, a Muslim scholar from Pakistan who was paid by the [Muslim World League] to teach in that school. Having gone through Shaykh Khan's teachings, he found the reform ideology appealing." Another, younger man studied in the early 1980s at the Egyptian cultural center in Kano, participated in an international competition in Quranic recitation in Saudi Arabia, and subsequently won a scholarship to study at the Islamic University of Medina.\textsuperscript{191} These micro-level contacts between Izala members and Arabs challenge the speculation that “Abubakar Gumi’s role as mediator of Saudi Arabian influences was ‘sufficient’ as an external link for the Yan Izala”\textsuperscript{192} and caution against exaggerating Gumi's role when discussing Izala's connection to the Kingdom.

These influences combined to produce the type of "Islamic modernism" that scholars like Kane and Umar have discussed in reference to Izala. For example, an emphasis on "modern" Arabic and Islamic education was reflected not only in the background of Izala's leaders, but also in its activities. One of Izala's main projects was the establishment of modern Islamic schools, explicitly modeled after the School for Arabic Studies, to educate its members.\textsuperscript{193}

\textsuperscript{190} Loimeier, \textit{Islamic Reform and Political Change}, 209.
\textsuperscript{191} Kane, \textit{Muslim Modernity}, 105-109.
\textsuperscript{192} Loimeier, "Playing with Affiliations," 361.
\textsuperscript{193} Umar, "Education and Islamic Trends," 134-135.
Yet even as Izala emerged as the strongest Nigerian reformist movement to date, other religious movements and actors participated in the field of religious competition, including rival reformist groups, movements inspired by the Iranian revolution, radical protest movements, and a new generation of Sufis. This competition paralleled, and was partly shaped by, a fragmenting of Saudi Arabian influence in sub-Saharan Africa as other Middle Eastern actors like Libya and Iran also cultivated ties with African Muslims.

As Egypt's influence in Africa and other parts of the Muslim world waned in the 1970s, Muammar Qaddhafi, leader of Libya's 1969 revolution, presented himself as successor to Nasser's mantle. Qaddhafi's revolutionary socialist ideology worried the Saudi leadership, and his views on Islam led Saudi Arabian ulama to declare the Colonel a heretic. Yet Qaddhafi did pose a challenge to Saudi Arabian influence in Africa. Beginning in the mid-1970s, Libya created new institutions like the World Islamic Call Society, which opened offices throughout the continent (including in Kano) and gave scholarships to hundreds of African students to study Arabic and Islamic law in Libyan universities. From the early 1970s through the 1980s, dozens of Nigerian students traveled to Libya with support from the Islamic Call Society. Libya also began sending a number of missionaries abroad, of whom roughly half went to African countries, including a few to Nigeria. As a more explicitly political form of outreach, Libya organized Islamic conferences in Togo (1982) and Benin (1985), and distributed aid, especially medicine, to countries in West Africa and elsewhere on the continent, including Nigeria.\textsuperscript{194} Libya also built a relationship with Nasiru Kabara of the Nigerian Qadiriyya, as well as with other Nigerian Sufis, in the 1980s.\textsuperscript{195}

\textsuperscript{194} Hanspeter Mattes, "La da'wa libyenne."
\textsuperscript{195} Loimeier, "Playing with Affiliations."
Another major rival was Israel. Israel lost a great deal of influence in Africa after 1973, but not irrevocably. Israeli investment in Africa continued in the 1970s, and Nigeria was one of the main beneficiaries of Israeli capital. By the early 1980s, Israeli technicians were reappearing in many African countries, including Nigeria, where Israel kept an economic foothold thanks to support from Southern politicians.\(^{196}\) In the early 1980s, Israeli leaders began a new wave of outreach to Africa and succeeded in inducing Zaire to resume relations and sign a contract for military assistance, whereupon several Arab countries cut off diplomatic relations and aid to Zaire.\(^{197}\) Throughout the 1980s, Nigerian regimes refused to re-establish relations with Israel, and allowed the PLO to open an office in 1983.\(^{198}\) However, support for Israel continued among some elements in government, and around 1982 “more than 100 members of the Nigerian House of Representatives submitted a petition calling for the recognition of Israel.”\(^{199}\) Ultimately, Nigeria restored relations with Israel in 1992.\(^{200}\)

A further challenge to Saudi Arabian power in Africa came with the Iranian revolution in 1979. As events like Egypt's peace treaty with Israel and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan overshadowed the Kingdom's interest in Africa, the Islamic state in Iran became a powerful and dynamic rival for leadership and influence in the Muslim world. In Nigeria, Iranian outreach contributed to the emergence of radical movements in the 1980s who would challenge the “conservatism” of Izala and other reformists.

\(^{196}\) Sharawi, "Israeli Policy in Africa," 293-299.
\(^{198}\) Al-Qora’i, "The Scope of Actual Arab Political Interest in Africa," 259.
\(^{199}\) Sharawi, "Israeli Policy in Africa," 313.
Saudi Arabia did not abandon Africa in the face of competition and pressing concerns elsewhere in the world. In Nigeria, Saudi religious organs like the Dar al-Ifta "provided assistance to some local religious entrepreneurs" as "a local countermove…to curb Iranian influence and sponsor its own conception of Islamic puritanism." Additionally, the Nigerian and Saudi Arabian governments cooperated more closely. When economic crisis hit Nigeria in the early 1980s, Saudi Arabia provided a $1 billion loan. One Nigerian Christian scholar argues that this loan, along with Nigerian membership in OPEC, brought Nigeria closer to the Kingdom; he claims that Saudi Arabia responded to Nigerian government outreach by pumping money into Nigeria for Islamic propaganda, construction of mosques and Islamic schools, and scholarships for Muslim students and teachers. Some traditional ulama perceived a Saudi Arabian influence on jurists and legal rulings in Nigeria and accused “wealthy Saudi publishers and the country’s Ministry of Religious Affairs of removing and/or censoring classical texts because they are deemed un-Islamic.”

At the same time that a broader set of international actors were vying for influence in Africa, some Nigerian leaders in Izala and the reformist movement more broadly began to resent Gumi’s leadership and control. In the late 1970s and 1980s, “the mushrooming of Northern Nigeria’s reformist affiliations started to erode Abubakar Gumi’s initial (and rather personal) quasi-monopoly on external funding from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the Gulf States.” Rivals who left Izala and set up their own groups

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201 Kane, *Muslim Modernity*, 78.
204 Walles, "Shari'a and Politics," 661.
"had to search for new donors." One such group was Da'wa, headed by Shaykh Aminudeen Abubakar, a sometime disciple of Abubakar Gumi and affiliate of Izala whose Arabic skills and ties to Arabs put him in a position to find new channels of support. Abubakar, born in 1947, attended the School of Arabic Studies and the Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies at Abdullahi Bayero College. Growing up, he came into frequent contact with Arabs resident in Northern Nigeria, studying Arabic at an Egyptian cultural center and building relationships with Arab merchants in Kano. Through an Egyptian contact, Abubakar discovered the works of Hasan al-Banna, Sayyid Qutb, and other Muslim Brotherhood thinkers. Abubakar incorporated their ideas into his preaching, and by the end of the 1970s he "and his clientele were in the forefront of the demonstration against the secular state in Kano and in other cities of Northern Nigeria." In 1979 he began to work with Gumi, who put him in contact with Saudi Arabian and Kuweiti religious bodies, groups who later financed the construction of Abubakar's headquarters in Kano. Dissatisfaction with Gumi’s dominance and exclusive control of foreign funding led Abubakar to “cultivate new sources of finance in Libya, Kuwait, and the Emirates.” However, beginning in this period and continuing through the early 1980s Abubakar moderated his views concerning the Islamic state. Though initially a purveyor of Iranian influence among the MSS and other Nigerian Muslims after 1979, Abubakar soon had a change of heart and tilted closer to Saudi Arabia. Saudi mediation brought about a reconciliation between Abubakar and Gumi in 1981, and under these influences Abubakar publicly denounced Khomeini in 1982, provoking a schism in the MSS. As he took on institutional responsibilities, serving as vice-principal of an Arabic

207 Kane, *Muslim Modernity*, 75-80.
teachers' college, and became "part of the Kano establishment," Abubakar dropped his radicalism. However, he continued to receive funding from Arab donors, particularly Libya after the late 1980s, and maintained a certain distance from Gumi and Izala.

Some religious challenges to the state's authority originated in lack of economic opportunity rather than in ideological activism financed by foreign actors. For example, followers of the millenarian preacher Marwa, or Maitatsine, initiated several bloody riots in the first half of the 1980s. Paul Lubeck has persuasively explained the riots as a consequence of social friction caused by the uneven integration of itinerant Quranic students into urban capitalist society in the North. The riots' seriousness was exacerbated by a climate of political weakness, division among elites, and laxity on the part of the state. This group clearly stands outside the broader reformist movement and its transnational ties. Though some non-Nigerian Africans followed Maitatsine, Arab influences appear absent in the movement's makeup. In fact, one scholar argues that Maitatsine’s followers viewed him as an African prophet in explicitly anti-Arab terms.

Nigerian groups inspired by the Iranian revolution maintained a longer career of Islamic radicalism than either the Da'wa group or Maitatsine's followers, and their activities directly reflected foreign influence. After the revolution, the Iranian embassy in Nigeria "sponsored Islamic politico-religious activities, including funding Islamic magazines and sending many Nigerians to Iran for training"; these activities found an extremely receptive audience among students. Some radicals within and outside the

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212 Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*, 139-140.
214 Kane, *Muslim Modernity*, 78.
MSS began to identify, in different ways, as "Shi'a"; one prominent leader of this tendency was Ibrahim el-Zakzaky, who studied at the School for Arabic Studies and Ahmadu Bello University.\textsuperscript{215} At ABU, el-Zakzaky participated in the MSS' radical activities, and in 1979 and 1980, he led demonstrations off campus, "calling for a second jihad, condemning the Nigerian constitution as un-Islamic, and demanding the acknowledgement of the shari'a on a national level."\textsuperscript{216} In 1980, el-Zakzaky traveled to Iran and returned with propaganda films which he showcased on recruitment tours in Northern universities. These efforts contributed to further student radicalism.\textsuperscript{217}

El-Zakzaky was expelled from ABU in 1980 and imprisoned during much of the 1980s, but MSS radicals continued demonstrating throughout the decade.\textsuperscript{218} El-Zakzaky’s personal popularity was undiminished, and his “releases from prison were always met by welcoming crowds of thousands of his followers, who included among them university students and lecturers.” Powerful followers of el-Zakzaky like Yakubu Yahaya, a "Shiite" leader in Katsina, continued to challenge the Nigerian state in the 1990s. Although Yahaya was captured, tried, and jailed after his group's attack on the offices of the \textit{Daily Times} in 1991, violence involving Shiites continued in Northern cities. Despite his legal problems, “Al-Zakzaky retains his respect and leadership.”\textsuperscript{219}

Some pro-Iranian radicals remained devoted to the Iranian ideal in the late 1980s. But other radicals dropped their support, disenchanted with Iran after the Iran-Iraq war, Iranian pilgrims' riots in Saudi Arabia, and the revolution’s shortcomings. "As a consequence, some [Nigerian radicals] turned to Libya, others to Saudi Arabia, while still

\textsuperscript{215} Umar, "Education and Islamic Trends," 139.
\textsuperscript{216} Loimeier, \textit{Islamic Reform and Political Change}, 299.
\textsuperscript{217} Muhammad Sulaiman, "Shiaism," 187.
\textsuperscript{218} Loimeier, \textit{Islamic Reform and Political Change}, 299-300.
\textsuperscript{219} Falola, \textit{Violence in Nigeria}, 194-203.
others, in particular the Muslim intellectuals connected with the ‘Umma’ group, came to favour the importance of Nigeria’s own indigenous revolutionary models, in particular the Sokoto jihad.” The latter group, affiliated with intellectuals like Ibrahim Sulaiman, would later play a major role in shaping the implementation of shari'a. Meanwhile, Iran changed gears and began reaching out to Nigerian Sufis, such as the Tijani sheikh Dahiru Bauchi, who visited Iran in 1988.\footnote{Loimeier, “Playing with Affiliations,” 362.}

Along with increased competition between religious actors in Nigeria in the late 1970s and 1980s, the transition to civilian rule saw a new beginning for electoral mobilization along religious lines.\footnote{Falola, Violence in Nigeria, 2.} Gumi, for example, intervened in electoral politics, exhorting Muslims to vote for Muslim candidates, supporting Shehu Shagari’s NPN in 1979 and 1983, and emphasizing the need for women to vote.\footnote{Christelow, “Three Islamic Voices,” 231.} Yet intra-Muslim divisions complicated the political landscape in the North. Shagari’s election in 1979 and re-election in 1983 “did not particularly advance the cause of Islam as a political theme in Nigeria. In fact the very opposite was true.”\footnote{Patrick Ryan, “In My End Is My Beginning: Muslim and Christian Traditions at Cross-Purposes in Contemporary Nigeria” in Soares, Muslim-Christian Encounters in Africa, 205.} The waning influence of a divided North and a concentration of power and resources in the South meant that all administrations, including ones with Muslim heads of state, “were increasingly influenced by interest groups of non-Muslim origin from the South or the Middle Belt.” Shagari and Ibrahim Babangida were both surrounded by primarily Christian advisers.\footnote{Loimeier, Islamic Reform and Political Change, 7.}

Religious competition intersected with political uncertainty and economic strain to produce violence both among Muslims and between Muslims and Christians. As
Falola says, “If the 1970s were a decade of verbal wrangling and public demonstrations, the 1980s and 1990s were known for riots and outright political violence.”\textsuperscript{225} Beginning in 1978 and continuing off and on through the 1980s, Izala members clashed violently with Sufis during their preaching tours in rural areas and Northern cities. Nigerian politics were never far from such clashes. One scholar suggests that the frequency of such clashes fluctuated in relation to political events in Nigeria, increasing during periods of political stagnation but falling when participants engaged in electoral politics in 1979, 1983, and 1987.\textsuperscript{226} Meanwhile, interreligious clashes began in the late 1970s and by the early 1980s, "appeals for religious tolerance became part of the regular speeches of government functionaries and religious leaders."\textsuperscript{227} Student radicalism played a role in incidents of interreligious violence, which often broke out at university campuses. Campus conflicts at Ahmadu Bello University, Usmanu dan Fodio University and elsewhere forced police responses and protracted school closures, and sometimes spread into surrounding areas, as happened with a dispute between Christians and Muslims over the placement of a cross at the University of Ibadan in 1985-1986.\textsuperscript{228}

Interreligious violence did not reflect foreign influence in any discernible fashion. In fact, John Hunwick argues that outbreaks of violence in the late 1980s owed more to the economic effects of the IMF’s Structural Adjustment Program, including the dramatic devaluation of the naira, than to interreligious tension. “Interfaith antagonism” was restricted to the "war of words," though such antagonism may have crossed into violence in the 1990 coup attempt by Major Gideon Orkar, who justified his actions in a radio

\textsuperscript{225} Falola, \textit{Violence in Nigeria}, 3.
\textsuperscript{226} Loimeier, \textit{Islamic Reform and Political Change}, 215-216.
\textsuperscript{227} Falola, \textit{Violence in Nigeria}, 175.
\textsuperscript{228} Falola, \textit{Violence in Nigeria}, 3-4, 175-177.
broadcast by implying that the Middle Belt and the South needed to resist attempts at Northern domination. Economic deprivation may have also fueled violence at the level of daily life, such as "a wave of armed robberies" that demonstrated, in one view, "the growing antagonism toward the affluent" among the poor and the growing "army of unemployed primary and secondary school leavers" and unemployed university graduates. For the "oppressed and dispossessed," then, "religious fanaticism may constitute an instrument...to challenge the status quo."  

The "war of words," however, became quite sharp, and accusations against Muslims often involved reference to Arab complicity. If some Nigerian Muslims were becoming more radical, so too were some Nigerian Christians. Neo-charismatic churches exercised a stronger influence on the character of Nigerian Christianity after the collapse of the oil boom economy in the early 1980s, coming into conflict not only with Muslims but also with older denominations, whom some neo-charismatic Christians saw as irrelevant to the needs of contemporary Nigerians. Powerful Christian organizations like the Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN) became important political actors and launched fierce rhetoric against Muslims, charging them with desiring to form an Islamic state in Nigeria. After the Kafancan riots in 1987, CAN criticized Muslim youth movements “for their radicalism and their substantial clandestine collection of funds from anti-Christian countries like Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Iran. These foreign countries were allegedly involved in a conspiracy to Islamize all Nigerians.”

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229 John Hunwick, "Introduction" in Religion and National Integration in Africa, 4-5.
231 Ryan, "In My End is My Beginning," 210-213.
232 Falola, Violence in Nigeria, 164.
The Nigerian state, unable to halt interreligious violence, alternated between attempting to reduce tensions and instrumentalizing religion for political purposes. Falola argues that military regimes, with some variation depending on their domestic and international legitimacy, employed religious rhetoric and patronized religious institutions as a means to “justify exploitation, divert attention from government inadequacies, and whenever occasions demand, as an instrument of social mobilisation.” Falola writes that Muhammad Buhari’s government “wisely avoided any overt religious posturing” after taking over from Shagari, partly because of the Maitatsine riots. Nonetheless, the regime’s “covert romance” with religious groups “provided a fertile ground for religious distractions” such as the riots in Gombe in April 1985.

Some government attempts to instrumentalize religion for political and diplomatic purposes exacerbated rather than reduced interreligious tensions. In 1986, Babangida sent dignitaries to the OIC meeting in Fez to apply for membership. Babangida, some speculate, joined the OIC to solidify Northern Muslim support, bolster his credentials as a Muslim, and attract financial aid. The decision provoked a bitter response from Nigerian Christians, who "immediately mobilized against the OIC," voicing outrage in newspapers, sermons, church newsletters, prayer and fasting sessions and initiating “a full-scale attack against the government and Nigeria’s Islamic elite.” The Babangida regime's lame response, the formation of a "Religious Affairs Council" composed of Christians and Muslims, did little to alleviate the tension, and in fact "the council found it most difficult to convene a successful meeting." Nigerian Christians’ accusations that

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Babangida was “preparing to turn Nigeria into an Islamic state (with himself at the head of it) [grew] ever more frequent and shrill.” Bitter debate about the meaning of Nigeria’s membership in the OIC and allegations that Babangida was supplanting Christian state employees with Muslim ones continued to undermine Christians’ confidence in Babangida.\(^{237}\)

Pilgrimage also caused controversy. Despite the introduction of the quota system, problems plagued hajj operations throughout the 1980s. Quotas fluctuated in the first half of the decade when “a special ‘presidential allowance’ for additional places was introduced, and the numbers [of pilgrims] began again to rapidly increase.” Persistent accusations of political favoritism in the distribution of these allowances caused Buhari to make reductions in the mid-1980s. Nonetheless, a “burning debate” raged over the hajj, with Muslims decrying state restrictions on pilgrimage and Christians complaining of favoritism toward Islam. Meanwhile, government fears of Islamist influence transmitted through networks solidified in Saudi Arabia or through "Wahhabi" literature distributed in Nigeria by returning pilgrims led to further supervision of pilgrimage operations.\(^{238}\)

The crisis over Nigeria’s membership in the OIC, the severity of the Kafancan riots in 1987, and increasing Christian success in local elections created new incentives for Muslim unity.\(^{239}\) Toward the end of the decade, calls for Muslim unity by prominent leaders brought Sufis and anti-Sufis closer. Izala and Sufi groups affirmed a peace agreement in January 1988.\(^{240}\) Yet such moves came at the same time that Izala's cohesion and political power began to fracture. In the mid-1980s, tensions between Izala

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\(^{237}\) Hunwick, "Introduction" in Religion and National Integration in Africa, 6-7.

\(^{238}\) Steed and Westerlund, "Nigeria," 72-73.

\(^{239}\) Loimeier, Islamic Reform and Political Change, 293-311.

\(^{240}\) Hunwick, "Introduction" in Religion and National Integration in Africa, 9, note 14.
and the Nigerian government under Shagari and Buhari gave way to greater cooptation of the movement by the state and political actors. Official recognition came in 1985, and political entrepreneurs increasingly used the movement as “an institutional channel for the negotiation of relations with the state.” At the same time, “infiltration intended to control the Society was done by patrons of the movement who were part of the state apparatus.” The reliance of many Izala preachers upon patrons facilitated this takeover, and those who opposed it were eventually marginalized.241 Finally, Izala saw factional splits over whether Sufis were Muslims or not. A hardline faction continued to accept Idris' leadership, while a more tolerant group coalesced under Musa Maigundu, the national chairman. Interestingly, the faction that accepts Sufis as Muslims includes a small but influential group that studied at the Islamic University in Mecca. Generational changes as graduates of Izala schools enter leadership positions have also made the movement more flexible and less radical.242 Moreover, although Gumi maintained a high national and international profile until the end of his life, winning Saudi Arabia's King Faisal Award for services to Islam in 1987,243 one scholar speculates that authorities pressured Gumi to tone down his inflammatory political rhetoric.244 These developments did not signal the cessation of Izala's activities, but Gumi’s death in 1992 “threw them into a serious crisis of orientation,”245 and at present the movement may have greater dynamism outside Nigeria, especially in Niger, than inside.

Izala's decline as a cohesive political force paralleled the rise of a group of Northern intellectuals whose activism could be labeled "post-reformist." These thinkers

241 Kane, Muslim Modernity, 217-224.
245 Loimeier, Islamic Reform and Political Change, 209.
focused not on confronting Sufi traditionalists, but on reinterpretting the Sokoto Caliphate and applying its lessons to contemporary Nigeria. Scholars like Muhammad Sani Zahradeen, Ibraheem Sulaiman, Usman Bugaje, and Shehu Umar Abdullahi, emerged from the intellectual elite of the MSS – Zahradeen was a patron of the movement at Bayero University Kano,246 while Sulaiman served as MSS president in 1973-1974.247 Their views on the Islamic state were products of the Islamization that took place in Northern Nigeria in the 1970s, while their desire to restore full shari'a came out of the disappointments of the 1977-1978 shari'a debates. At this time, many younger Muslim intellectuals felt that only observance of shari’a could restore order in the midst of interreligious tension, high crime rates, and economic and political instability.248 Younger intellectuals published books on shari'a and urged greater incorporation of Islamic law and Islamic economics into university curricula – and society itself.249 These were not antidemocratic radicals like el-Zakzaky, nor did they engage in violent confrontation with the Nigerian state. Rather, they used university positions and other organizations to enunciate and promote the intellectual framework of the Islamic state. While their lack of overt alliances to Arab actors distinguishes them from other radical groups operating in the 1980s, their less public engagement with Arab contacts should be seen as a response toward both the changing national and international climate.

Sulaiman and others seem to have taken up the call, sent forth by the MSS branch in Kano in 1980, to study various Islamic political systems, including the Caliphate and

247 Loimeier, Islamic Reform and Political Change, 311.
248 Walles, 658.
249 Falola, Violence in Nigeria, 85.
revolutionary Iran, with the aim of “recommending a suitable model for Nigeria.”

From his base at the Center for Islamic Legal Studies at Ahmadu Bello University, Sulaiman became a leader in the movement to reopen the study of the Sokoto Caliphate during the 1980s, completing two major works wherein he presented the Shehu and the Caliphate as models for solving contemporary Nigerian political and social problems. For Sulaiman, the Shehu's life testified to the ability of Muslims to recreate the Prophet's life "at any age and in any place," while the experience of Sokoto lays out the blueprint of the Islamic state, especially the importance of an “absolute commitment to the application of the Sharia in almost all its ramifications.” His colleagues shared his views. Umar Abdullahi's On the Search for a Viable Political Culture: Reflections on the Political Thought of Shaikh 'Abdullahi Dan-Fodio, published around the same time, aimed to make Abdullahi’s ideas more accessible to Nigerians and apply those ideas to solving Nigeria’s "chronic political instability, economic aridity, social perturbation and juridical nonsense." Umar deployed Abdullahi’s ideas to attack secularism, Western mass media, and the materialism of contemporary ulama. Similarly, Usman Bugaje spoke at a 1986 conference on Nigerian politics and decried colonialism's secularizing influence on a disunited Nigeria peopled by “an irksome and arrogant Christian minority; an alienated and discontented but unyielding Muslim majority; [and] a few secularized elite filling vacancies created by colonialism; all living in a colony whose economy is

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255 Abdullahi, On the Search for a Viable Political Culture.
wholly controlled by western imperialism." Bugaje maintained that an Islamic political system modeled after the Prophet Muhammad's community in Medina was "the only hope for humanity, especially the beleaguered and unfortunate people of Nigeria."²⁵⁶

Much of these intellectuals' activism and outlook seems like a response to the experiences of reformist movements like Izala and radical movements that came out of the MSS. Like Gumi, Sulaiman effectively harnessed mass media forms to communicate his views, writing a weekly column in English for the *Sunday New Nigerian* and contributing frequently to *The Radiance*, the magazine of the Muslim Students' Society at Ahmadu Bello University.²⁵⁷ The organizing efforts of Sulaiman and others, however, came not in the form of mass movements but rather in the form of elite organizations to promote Muslim unity. Thus in the wake of the OIC crisis in 1986, Sulaiman played a leadership role in the creation of the Council of Ulama, an outgrowth of the MSS; the new organization leveled harsh criticism at JNI, “which is held to be both an ‘official’ and an ‘irrelevant’ organisation which has betrayed the heritage of Usman dan Fodio and the Sokoto Caliphate.”²⁵⁸

Their activism has also sought to further Islamize university campuses. For example, Sulaiman and his colleague Sule Ahmad Gusau, who became a lecturer in the Department of Economics at Usmanu dan Fodio University in Sokoto in 1981, were important figures in the drive for the teaching of Islamic economics. In the 1980s, the two scholars penned a number of articles on applied Islamic economics in Nigeria. In the mid-1980s, the Department of Economics began to offer some courses on Islamic

²⁵⁷ Christelow, "Three Islamic Voices," 230.
economics, a field of study the department enlarged in its 1990 syllabus. Despite objections from other teachers at the university, funding problems, and lack of interest from many students, the Department “has become one of the major centres of research on Islamic Economics in Sub-Saharan Africa," and established ties with the Center for Research in Islamic Economics in Jeddah, the Islamic University of Medina and the Islamic International University of Malaysia.259

The relationship between Sulaiman's circle and the Arab world can be seen in the context of their apparent desire to break with earlier reformists' models of activism. Loimeier argues that intellectuals in Sulaiman's circle "de-emphasize the importance of affiliations with translocal players" in the Arab world, accepting support from outsiders but maintaining an intellectual orientation toward indigenous historical models of Islamic reform. "Much more important for the development of Muslim political discourses in Northern Nigeria than specific regional affiliations with Saudi Arabia or other countries" he writes, "is the development of a ‘Muslim Internationale’ that has started to grow in the context of a number of translocal conferences organized by Muslim world organizations, such as the Organization of Islamic Conference.” Yet Loimeier's formulation, while perhaps accurate, risks obscuring the ways in which micro-level contacts with the Arab world have shaped these thinkers even when explicit orientations toward Arab powers are absent. Loimeier himself writes that “ties and networks of these Muslim ‘internationalists’ were largely formed in the course of their studies at Al-Azhar, the Islamic University of Medina, the Universities of Khartoum and Umdurman and, more recently, the Islamic University of Mbale in Uganda," as well as through ties to Sudanese

teachers and Arab-backed NGOs like the Africa Muslim Agency. Indeed, both Bugaje and Zahradeen undertook postgraduate study in Khartoum. Sulaiman has also built ties with Arab academic institutions, as seen above. Micro-level contacts with Arabs have both shaped the outlook and furthered the careers of these intellectuals.

Therefore, Sulaiman and others' lack of affiliation to Arab powers should not be seen in isolation and conceived of as a simple preference for Nigerian models, but rather as a conscious reaction to the impact of external affiliations on Nigerian reformist projects. As students and then professors in Northern universities, in many ways at the epicenter of foreign-influenced Islamic radicalism, Sulaiman and others saw the advantages and disadvantages that identification with Saudi Arabia and Iran brought for MSS radicals and for Izala activists. This is true not just in the sense that the Council of Ulama's organizers deplored divisions in the Nigerian Muslim community exacerbated by rival Muslim movements, but also in the more universal sense of Islamic politics that Sulaiman embraced as compared with Gumi. For Sulaiman and other Islamic thinkers of his generation, Islam became “an intellectual identity.” Whereas Gumi defended Islam as a communitarian identity, “Sulaiman tries to detach [Islam] from any particular communal basis, to present it as a universal as opposed to a particularist solidarity, as an ideology relevant to all Nigerians.” Unlike Gumi, Sulaiman regards even Muslim leaders in a secular system as “kufr” (unbelievers). In a cynical reading, one could even see Sulaiman's invocation of the Sokoto Caliphate and his tendency to laud the ideals of independence-era Nigerian Muslim leaders "before turning to the condemnation

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263 Hiskett, *The Sword of Truth*, x-xi.
of their methods” as mere techniques in his effort to promote Islamic ideals that have relatively little to do with Nigerian history.\textsuperscript{264}

Finally, Sulaiman and his circle came to prominence after a new, more diffuse pattern of Arab outreach and aid to Africa had replaced the earlier, more concentrated model. While state-level aid by Arab powers to Africa has continued through the 2000s, African Islamic NGOs have proliferated widely. Between 1980 and 2000, their number tripled from roughly 2,000 to roughly 6,000.\textsuperscript{265} Many such organizations draw support from Gulf Arab states, transnational Islamic NGOs, and Libya.\textsuperscript{266} The Saudi Arabian government and wealthy citizens in the Kingdom have played a major role in funding Islamic NGOs worldwide, partly to counter the influence of Iran, which "produced no equivalent to the Islamic NGOs."\textsuperscript{267} Islamic NGOs backed by the Kingdom have established a major presence in Africa, such as the International Islamic Relief Organization (IIRO), founded in 1978.\textsuperscript{268} However, despite direct supervision of some NGOs and an insistence during the 1990s that Islamic NGOs reduce their political character and increase their professionalism, Arab governments have not been able to fully control Islamic NGOs in Africa and elsewhere. This was true in the case of the Da'wa Islamiya Agency, founded in 1980 in Khartoum as "a tool of the Gulf states in pursuit of influence in Africa,” which was commandeered in the early 1990s by Hasan al-

\textsuperscript{264} Christelow, "Three Islamic Voices," 238-239.
\textsuperscript{266} Holger Weiss, Begging and Almsgiving in Ghana: Muslim Positions towards Poverty and Distress (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2007: Research Report No. 133), 110.
\textsuperscript{267} Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan, Charitable Crescent, 71-2.
Turabi and other hardline Sudanese Islamists. In light of the multiplicity and complexity of current funding patterns, therefore, it seems that Arab financial backing is no longer be available on a level or in a way that would allow African political and religious leaders to undertake extensive campaigns of mosque and school building, as happened with Bello and Gumi in the 1960s and 1970s.

The fragmentation of reformist movements and religious authority in Northern Nigeria in the 1980s has paralleled a diversification of Arab projects in Africa. As Iran, Saudi Arabia, Libya, and other Middle Eastern actors competed for influence in Nigeria, and Nigerian actors competed for their patronage, the increasingly complex web of interactions may have reduced the space for an actor like Gumi, or even Aminudeen Abubakar, to emerge. Thus an elite reformist leader like Sulaiman, even had his organizational methods and political outlook duplicated Gumi's, would likely not have found the same level of Arab resources available to back his projects in the mid- to late 1980s.

As Nigeria entered the 1990s, the influence of religious leaders with strong ties to the Arab world appeared to be waning, yet micro-level contacts continued to transmit Arab influences in several arenas. These contacts, insofar as they promoted the continued "saturation of the public sphere" with Islamic themes, would have a major political impact after the next transition to civilian rule in 1999. First, Islamization and the spread of diverse forms of Islamic modernity fueled growing demands for the implantation of an Islamic state in Nigeria. While many Muslims did not explicitly identify with reformist or Islamist tendencies, the activities of Izala and the rising political Islamic consciousness fueled by Sulaiman and others affected a broad swath of

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269 Benthall and Bellion-Jourdan, Charitable Crescent, 116.
the population.

Second, pilgrimage continued to shape Muslim identities. A portrait of the various influences competing to shape Islamic consciousness is provided by the hajj account of Usman Liman, a young Northern statistician and "non-aligned Muslim" who went on pilgrimage in 1991. Liman's writing reflects many aspects of his Muslim identity. First, the trip marked his material success. Second, religious tensions and competition permeated his journey. Liman complained of Christians’ attitudes toward the hajj and "intense hatred" toward Islam, asking, "Why can’t the Christian practice his religion without twisting it in rivalry to Islam?"\[270\] Moreover, Liman’s trip was punctuated by contact with hardline Nigerian Islamic groups: a follower of el-Zakzaky studying Islamic law at the University of Medina, Izala preachers, and Abubakar Gumi, whose fame was so widespread that Arab shopkeepers would ask about his health, and whose adulation among Nigerian pilgrims was so high that when Gumi and a delegation of pilgrimage officials visited the Nigerian camps at Mecca, “the Amirul Hajj was literally ignored.”\[271\] Third, the trip was a political experience; in Medina, Liman eagerly talked about political events in the Islamic world with those he met, seeming to support anti-Western leaders, such as Saddam Hussein, while denouncing Muslim countries that had gone too far toward pleasing the West.\[272\] Finally, Liman, who was favorably impressed by many aspects of modernization in Saudi Arabia, strongly hoped to participate as an equal member in the global Muslim community, and was therefore deeply embarrassed by his countrymen’s aggressive and undignified conduct at airports and in the Holy Cities.

\[272\] Liman, *Hajj 91*, 44-47.
Additionally, business contacts with the Arab world have affected religious practice and consciousness in contemporary Nigeria. Institutions like the Nigeria-Arab Association and the Nigeria-Arab Chamber of Commerce and Industry facilitate business arrangements between Nigerian and Arab businessmen, helping to charter Islamic banks, encouraging investment by Arab banks in Nigeria, and promoting Nigerian goods and industry at trade exhibitions in the Gulf.\textsuperscript{273} Members of the Nigerian Lebanese community, such as NACCI’s deputy president Hasib Moukarim, play a key role in forging such connections. Nigerian religious leaders like Lateef Adegbite also play an important role by straddling the business world, in his role as Executive Chairman of the Nigeria-Arab Association, and the religious realm, in his role as Secretary-General of the Nigerian Supreme Council for Islamic Affairs.\textsuperscript{274} Finally, the economic opportunities offered by pilgrimage have contributed to the transmission of transnational influences, as a growing class "of 'pilgrim traders' – surnamed 'Yan Kano-Jeddah' for the fact that they spent their time in planes between Kano and Jeddah" have come to perceive "Saudi Arabia's technological and infrastructural development…as being the result of a well-mastered Islamic management, a proof of the modernity of Islam."\textsuperscript{275}

The rise of global media also involves Nigerians more intensely in issues that affect the global Muslim community. One scholar who studied Hausa broadcasts on international radio stations such as the BBC, VOA, and Deutsche Welle in the late 1990s noted that Nigerian listeners evinced a strong interest in international debates around


shari'a, the rights of Muslim minorities, and gender issues within Islam, as well as an awareness of events involving Islam in America and Europe. Increased consciousness of global issues is also reflected in the fact that many Nigerians named babies after Yasir Arafat in the 1980s, after Saddam Hussein around the time of the Gulf War, and after Osama bin Laden after September 11th.

Processes of Islamization begun in the 1970s and earlier also remain in effect. The Islamization of schooling, for example, has continued into the present. Although only around a third of Nigerian students attend secondary school, the parallel system of Islamic education remains strong in the North. Indeed, "the number of Islamic schools in a Muslim population center such as Kano may be as high as twenty thousand." Additionally, one source estimates that Nigeria continues to send around 20,000 pilgrims to Saudi Arabia annually; these pilgrims return with thousands of Arabic books.

As Islamization proceeded, albeit in a somewhat fragmented fashion, the approach of the promised resumption of civilian rule in 1992 precipitated further tension over the role of religion in public life. Many feared that the planned two-party system, in the absence of parties with clear ideological terrain, would devolve into a contest between a Muslim party and a Christian party. Some factions started coalescing in anticipation of that development, and both the 1990 gubernatorial elections in Lagos and Kaduna and the presidential primaries of 1993 reflected interreligious tensions and the presence of religious issues in the public arena. The annulment of Moshood Abiola's 1993 electoral

277 Kane, Muslim Modernity, 236.
278 Paden, Faith and Politics in Nigeria, 12.
victory and the subsequent takeover by Sani Abacha temporarily shelved the question about how electoral politics and religious identity intersected, in addition to provoking widespread apathy and disenchantment with the political process. Violence continued in the 1990s with clashes in Bauchi, Kano, and Katsina in 1991, in Kaduna in 1992, in Kano and Sokoto in 1994, and again in Kano in 1995. After the stalled political transition resumed, however, religious issues once again came to the forefront in Northern politics.

In 1979, the Iranian revolution marked a shift in Middle Eastern actors' competition for influence in Africa. The same year, Nigeria's civilian transition marked the beginning of a new phase of interreligious competition in the country, often characterized by violence. The 1980s were a high point for reformist movements such as Izala, and radical movements such as the Nigerian "Shi'a," with heavy recruitment and substantial impact on both electoral and extra-electoral politics; these movements transmitted and/or explicitly represented Middle Eastern influences on a mass level. Yet religious authority, political power, and access to international backing fragmented at the same time, such that by the end of the decade voices like Ibraheem Sulaiman, with relatively casual ties to Arab actors, represented perhaps the most dynamic form of intellectual leadership in Northern Nigeria. Micro-level contacts between Nigerians and Arabs continued to affect many sectors of public and private life in the 1990s, from business to pilgrimage to media consumption, but the importance of religious leaders with overt ties to Arabs, Iranians, or other Muslim foreigners decreased.

1999-Present: Civilian Politics and Islamic Populism

Falola, *Violence in Nigeria*. 

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With Nigeria’s transition to democratic rule in 1999, a number of trends converged, some of which subtly reflected Arab influences. For decades, reformist mass movements had promoted new and more political Muslim identities. Meanwhile, intellectual activism by reformists like Gumi and post-reformists like Sulaiman had elaborated detailed programs for the Islamic state and the restoration of full shari’a. Although Islamic politics did not seriously penetrate the presidential contest, nor did the Nigerian federation show increased signs of becoming an Islamic state, the democratic opening unleashed the latent force of these trends at the state level. When political entrepreneurs harnessed the mass Islamic consciousness seeded by Izala and combined it with the intellectual vision of the Islamic state developed by Sulaiman and others, they forged an "Islamic populism" powerful enough to dramatically alter the role of Islam in governance in the North.

At the presidential level, Northern Muslim politicians and voters accepted a compromise: a Christian would be president, but one acceptable to the North. Thus prior to the presidential elections of February 1999, one journalist found, “the political debate in the north [focused] on the merits of the candidates, irrespective of their religious affiliation.” Although no major Muslim candidate entered the race, “[Olusegun] Obasanjo’s election did have a definitive Islamic spin to it.” Obasanjo had strong ties with Northern Muslim military elites, and “fifteen years of draconian, self-enriching, and pathological rule” by Northern military leaders “had convinced even the Northern

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Muslim establishment that at least a titular power shift was indispensable for Nigeria’s political survival. Obasanjo was the perfect choice.”

Yet Obasanjo’s election, while seemingly acceptable to most Northern Muslims, did not fulfill the political aims of some elites. Many observers have interpreted the move to impose shari'a in Zamfara and elsewhere after the elections as an assertion of Muslim political autonomy. Going a step further, William Miles draws a distinction between “Muslim ethnopolitics,” or efforts to mobilize religion for vote-getting purposes, and “Islamic theopolitics,” or efforts to extend Islamization through implementing shari’a or undertaking other reforms. Though Muslim ethnopolitics came into play in Obasanjo’s election, Miles says, “General disillusionment with democratic politics and economic outcomes in Nigeria has channeled Islamic theopolitics in extra-electoral directions.”

Dissatisfaction with or disengagement from the national electoral process may have partly motivated the decision to impose shari'a in Northern states. Yet for several reasons, Nigerian actors did not see implementation of shari'a as an act of antidemocratic radicalism. First, elected politicians implemented shari'a, believing or at least claiming that they did so with substantial popular support. Second, although a lack of coordination throughout the legal system caused serious problems and raised important questions about fairness and discrimination along class lines, it is important to bear in mind that "northern Nigeria is the only region in the Islamic world where Islamic criminal law

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284 Miles, "Muslim Ethnopolitics," 229.
is implemented within the framework of a non-Islamic and essentially secular constitution.” Additionally, in one sense implementing shari'a represents a "re-Islamization of criminal law" and a return to the pre-1960 situation, albeit with greater codification, greater independence from central state control, and a greater range of criminal punishments. Third, Nigeria's most radical Islamic groups have rejected the manner in which shari'a was implemented. For example, though el-Zakzaky and his followers called stridently for the imposition of shari'a during the late 1980s and 1990s, he rejected the state-led implementation in Zamfara in 1999, arguing “that shari’a could only be realized through djihad, and not by Western democratic processes like elections.” Even after the passage of shari'a law, some Nigerian radicals continued to pursue their demand for an Islamic state through violent means, as happened in the clashes between the "Nigerian Taliban" and the state in 2003.

Not only did the elected elites who pursued implementation of shari'a claim to be expressing the will of the people, they also brought reformist intellectuals, ulama, and leaders into the political and judicial process to legitimate their actions. At first, the younger generation of Islamic intellectuals had a complex reaction to the implementation of shari’a in 1999-2001, as did traditional ulama. Some, who favored a more gradual progression toward an Islamic state, such as Bugaje and Gusau, were ambivalent. Bugaje and others, such as Sanusi Lamido Sanusi, eventually distanced themselves from

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287 Peters, "Re-Islamization," 225.
288 Peters, "Re-Islamization," 220.
the implementation of sharia, earning bitter criticism from journalists. For the most part, however, "given the enormous popular support…even traditionalists and modernists who had publicly stated that 'full Shari'a' was not feasible were quick to identify with the program." Sulaiman spoke in favor of it at a conference with major Nigerian leaders and Arab scholars. He and others in his circle, like Zahradeen, aided state governments; after the 2003 elections, the governor of Kano State appointed Zahradeen as chair of the Zakat Commission, one of the administrative bodies that helped administer aspects of shari’a law. As Director of the Center for Islamic Legal Studies, Sulaiman participated in drafting Zamfara's shari'a codes, and consulted with the committee from Sokoto charged with preparing the shari'a code for that state. Former radicals were brought into the political process as well: Aminudeen Abubakar became chairman of the hisbah committee for enforcing shari'a in Kano.

In this context, it becomes possible to talk about "Islamic populism" – a form of Islamist electoral politics which argues that implementing Islamic reforms will bring the state more into line with people's economic and social needs – and also to talk about the indirect role that Arab influences played in forging Nigerian Islamic populism. Evidence for the populist tenor of shari'a implementation can be seen in campaign rhetoric in 1999 and especially in 2003, when Northern politicians instrumentalized the shari'a issue "to

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293 Weiss, “The Concept of Islamic Economy as Articulated in Sokoto,” 183.
increase political legitimacy" and win elections "for being 'more principled' than their predecessors or other state governors with respect to the implementation of both full sharia and popular welfare programs."³⁰⁰ In 2003, incumbent governors in Sokoto, Kadima, and Zamfara won re-election partly on shari'a platforms.³⁰¹ Further evidence of populist rhetoric appears in official state documents related to shari'a, such as a 2000 paper by Zamfara's attorney general which argued that not only had shari'a improved public morality and reduced crime, but had also cut government costs, allowing "payment of minimum wage" and "wealth redistribution."³⁰²

Regarding the role of Arab actors, it would be difficult to prove any direct Arab influence on Northern leaders' decision to implement shari'a. Arab diplomats attended launches of shari'a in various Northern states.³⁰³ Some Nigerian leaders, though, took pains to deny a connection between shari'a implementation and the Arab world.³⁰⁴ Nonetheless, it is possible to argue that indirect Arab influences, in the form of the Izala movement and other foreign-backed proponents of Islamization in Nigeria, did play a major role in facilitating the passage of shari'a.

Specifically, some have suggested that Izala directly influenced events in Zamfara and elsewhere. "The link between Izala and pro-sharia politics seems to be most clear in Zamfara state," Loimeier writes. He identifies Ahmed Sani Yerima, the governor of Zamfara in 1999, as "an ABU graduate and a supporter of the Izala movement and, more recently, of the Ahl as-Sunna group"; among Sani's supporters in implementing the

³⁰⁰ Loimeier, "Quest," 68.
shari'a, moreover, was a prominent businessman affiliated with Izala, while many leading opponents of shari'a had long been opponents of Izala.\footnote{Loimeier, "Quest," 65-69.} Moreover, one portrait of Sani, which talks about his religious and political activities in the mid-1990s, such as building a mosque in his home and reaching out to youth to enlist them in his activism toward restoring the shari'a,\footnote{Nura Suraj Gusau, The Role of Political Leaders in the Development of Society: Governor Ahmed Sani's Modest Contribution to the Development of Zamfara State through Religious Re-awakening (Gusau, Zamfara State, Nigeria: An-Nur Printing Press, 2005), 7-8.} is highly reminiscent of some of the political entrepreneurs Kane describes in his account of Izala's supporters.\footnote{Kane, Muslim Modernity.} Ties between Izala and shari'a politics were less overt elsewhere, but Loimeier sees the Ahl as-Sunna groups that played a key role in the implementation and enforcement of shari'a in Kano and elsewhere as "a new generation of Izala…more at home with local dialectics of development than international agendas."

Izala and other reformist Muslims helped create the political space that allowed the passage of shari'a. According to Kane, "reformers participated in the struggle to expand the democratic space," both by denouncing "autocratic rule using Islamic idioms" and by challenging social hierarchies, and thereby "empower[ing] marginalized groups."\footnote{Loimeier, "Quest," 65-69.} Moreover, Muhammad Sani Umar writes, "over two decades of active mobilizing, organizing and preaching by Izala have significantly raised Islamic consciousness in Nigeria to saturate the public sphere, so much so that nothing could gain public legitimacy without recourse to Islam."\footnote{Kane, Muslim Modernity, 244-245.} In a parallel vein, Souley Hassane argues that against a backdrop of economic crisis and faltering democratization in the 1990s, Islamic intellectuals in Northern Nigeria and Niger became powerful opinion leaders.
leaders. This was especially true for Hausa Muslims who graduated from Saudi Arabian universities and returned to their home countries during this period; their superior Arabic skills and credibility in Islamic learning earned them a special place in public and political discourse. In these ways, reformist activism by Izala and other actors forged a link between Islamic modernism and political and social democratization. In that Arab financial backing enabled some of this activism, and experiences in the Arab world shaped some of the key thinkers and leaders in this process, Arab influences appear to have affected Nigerian politics in subtle but real ways.

**Conclusion**

Nigerian Muslims are keenly, and increasingly, aware that processes of globalization affect their lives. In essays compiled by the Nigeria Association of Teachers of Arabic and Islamic Studies (NATAIS), Nigerian Muslim scholars discussed globalization, terrorism, and the relationship between the western and Islamic worlds in the post-9/11 era. Participants tended to define globalization as, in one scholar's formulation, only the "most recent manifestation" of Western hegemony in an "eternal rivalry" between the Western and Muslim worlds. Globalization, for many participants, threatened to undermine Islam, as Westerners deployed a double standard

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311 Hassane, "Les nouveaux elites islamiques."
regarding human rights to criticize shari'a laws, while simultaneously violating human rights in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Guantanamo Bay.  

Yet parallel to and in relationship with the encounter between the West and the Rest known as globalization, translocal exchanges have taken place between Nigeria and the broader Muslim world that have propelled an expansion of Islam’s public role in Nigeria. Not by mere coincidence does NATAIS' collection of essays on globalization also contain several pieces on efforts to "Islamize knowledge" in Nigeria. One contributor dates the beginning of the contemporary phase of this effort to international conferences on Islamic education held in the 1970s and 1980s in Kano, Mecca, Pakistan, Malaysia, and Sudan, some of which were attended by Nigerian scholars. Efforts to Islamize knowledge could even serve as an antidote, some argued, to the corrupting and deadening influences of the “alien system” of western education and decades of “moral degeneration, economic degradation, educational backwardness and intellectual sterility, particularly amongst youths.” These scholars’ enthusiasm for Islamic intellectual renewal emerges from a decades-long rethinking of the place of Islam in Northern Nigeria, a project that has been influenced by Arab actors.

This essay has argued that Nigeria's contacts with the Arab world, which occurred at a much greater rate in the twentieth century than in previous eras, reflected Arab powers' geostrategic considerations but intersected with processes of Nigerian political

313 A.O. Omotosho, "The West and Islamic Law in the Age of Globalization" in Muhibbu-din, Globalization and Terrorism, 14-17.
314 Solagberu, Abdur-Razzqaq Mustapha Balogun. "Islamization or Re-Islamization of Knowledge?" in Muhibbu-din, Globalization and Terrorism, 58.
315 Rafiu Ibrahim Adebayo, "The Viability of Islamization of Knowledge Programme in Nigeria; Motivating Factors and Problems of Implementation" in Muhibbu-din, Globalization and Terrorism, 180.
and social change in ways that Arab actors did not intend. Though Nigerian Muslims of many theological stripes, including prominent Sufi leaders, cultivated international contacts beginning in the late colonial period, postcolonial anti-Sufi reformists and Islamist radicals made use of their transnational ties to pose direct challenges to social, religious, and political hierarchies in Northern Nigeria. Thus while Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Libya were jockeying for influence in Africa, often competing with other Middle Eastern actors like Israel and Iran, Nigerian reformists were harnessing the resources foreigners made available in order to build mass movements, bid for control of new physical and intellectual spaces, and encourage the implementation of full shari’a.

Moreover, Arab financial and theological contributions to Nigerian reformism occurred in tandem with a broader shift in Islamic consciousness among ordinary Nigerians that was also shaped by contact with the Arab world. Islamic identity changed in response to the introduction of mass western education, urbanization, and political crisis, but also in response to increased Arabic literacy, the pilgrimages millions of Nigerians undertook to Mecca and Medina, the presence of Arab-backed organizations and Arab teachers, missionaries, and businessmen inside Nigeria, and decades of educational exchange between Nigerian students and intellectual centers in Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and elsewhere. Moreover, a wide circle of Nigerians indirectly felt the cultural and political impact of Nigeria's increasing exchange with the Arab world through mass movements like Izala that drew on Salafi theology and because of Arab-educated Nigerians who occupied prominent places in Nigerian universities, courts, and other institutions.
Certainly, the political ramifications of Arab-Nigerian contacts changed in response to events and struggles in the Arab world, as the influence of Egypt gave way to a greater role for Saudi Arabia in Africa, and as this role gave way to a more diffuse pattern of involvement in Africa by Middle Eastern actors. With this diffusion of aid and power, and the expansion of translocal contacts, the importance of individual Nigerian players in transmitting Arab influences seems to have decreased. In the 1960s, Ahmadu Bello acted as a focal point for Egyptian and Saudi Arabian efforts to reach out to Nigerian Muslims. In the 1970s, Abubakar Gumi exercised tremendous power in brokering relations between Nigerians and donors in the Gulf. Yet with the emergence of new religious entrepreneurs in Northern Nigeria in the late 1970s and 1980s such as Aminudeen Abubakar, Ibrahim el-Zakzaky, and Sufi leaders who forged new transnational ties, no longer could any single Northern leader act as the primary conduit for Arab funds or friendship. Contemporary intellectual luminaries like Ibraheem Sulaiman have tended to participate more in broad transnational networks, the “Muslim internationale,” in Loimeier’s words. Yet even if the peak of direct Arab influence in Nigeria, as mediated through Bello, Gumi, and movements like Izala, occurred decades before the implementation of shari’a in 1999, the rise of Islamic populism evident in recent Nigerian elections contains echoes of this earlier period. If contemporary Islamic politics in Nigeria represents the convergence of two trends – a modern Islamic consciousness promoted by reformist movements like Izala, and a vigorous push for shari’a led by reformist intellectuals – then certainly Arab influences continue to operate in Northern Nigeria.
That transnational Islamic networks have produced such dramatic effects in Northern Nigerian society and politics, despite or perhaps because of the increasing diffusion and fragmentation of Arab and other influences, invites reflection about the implications of the Nigerian example for other countries in Africa. In recent decades, Arab and other foreign Islamic influences have appeared in many African countries. One example is Ghana, where the growth of Muslim NGOs since the 1980s has brought sponsorship from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, and Libya, as well as leadership roles for Ghanaian graduates of Saudi Arabian universities. While Nigeria’s extremely high level of interreligious tension, economic inequality, and political instability suggests caution when comparing it with other West African nations, it seems that Islamic associations funded from abroad and managed by Arabic speakers are an important feature of the religious landscape across the region. It is clearly possible that they will become an important feature of the political landscape as well.

The Nigerian case also has implications for the study of the Arab world itself. Just as social change and foreign influences have led Arabic-speaking Africans to question traditional religious hierarchies, notions of religious authority are changing the Arab Gulf States as well as these societies feel the effects of mass education, literacy in formal Arabic, new media, and faster travel. In the Gulf, where “educational expansion has kept up with population growth in quantity if not always in quality,” mass education “allows people to ‘talk back’ to religious and political authorities in [the] public language” of formal Arabic. “Education, like mass communications, also makes citizens more conscious of their political and religious beliefs and practices and encourages

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thinking of them as a system, allowing for comparison with other ideas and practices.”

In this new environment, “it is no longer sufficient to practice Islam; one must now be able to explain beliefs.” Thus in Oman, for example, as a new generation of educated Omani steps into public roles in youth clubs and community mosques, “state authorities are becoming aware that their actions can shape religious discourse but not control it.”

If Muslim modernity in Nigeria, to use Ousmane Kane’s phrase, involved a transformed sense of social and political relationships, perhaps a similar phenomenon is on the rise in other parts of the Muslim world; if, moreover, transnational contacts fueled the development of this alternative modernity in Nigeria, perhaps patterns of alternative globalization are not only making the entire Muslim world more interconnected, but also reorienting its notions of authority and participation.

Looking back, it is clear that the twentieth century drew Nigerian Islam into greater dialogue with emerging forms of transnational Islam. To simplify the picture somewhat, bearing in mind the ways in which influences fluctuated and overlapped, it seems that Nigerian-Arab interactions expanded in widening geographical arcs. The colonial period brought Nigeria into greater contact with other West African communities, North Africa, and Sudan. The independence period brought Nigeria into greater contact with Egypt and Israel. The postcolonial period brought Nigeria into greater contact with Saudi Arabia. In recent decades, this widening geographical sphere of contacts seems to have given way to a more diffuse, interconnected web of exchange with diverse corners of the Muslim world. Looking forward, then, it seems that

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320 Eickelman, “Kings and People,” 202-204.
321 Eickelman, “Kings and People,” 204-205.
translocal contacts between groups and individuals, not just religious and political leaders, will increasingly shape the social and political dynamics of Muslim communities around the world.
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