

2. Current State of Islam in the Sub-Saharan Africa: Its expansion and Influence in Politics, Economy and Society. *Fr. Felix Phiri, Missionary of Africa*

INTRODUCTION

Historically, Islam touched the continent practically within the early stages of its inception through military campaigns that saw Muslim conquerors sweep across North Africa from Egypt to Morocco and crossing over to Spain by 711. The Muslim rollout on this side of the Mediterranean Sea was accomplished largely at the expense of Latinized and Christianized North Africa, thereby practically installing an Islamic belt in the northern part of Africa which has lasted to date. Riding on the waves of colonization, Christianity will have but an ephemeral resemblance of reversing this situation. The region has evolved to constitute what is today known as the Maghreb, five North African countries characteristically Islamic, and Egypt with a prominent Islamic south prolongation into Sudan.

Further along the eastern coast, Arab sea traders, now converted to Islam, will assure the spread of Islam all the way down to present day Mozambique, establishing trading posts that eventually became the staging posts for the inland Islamic penetration of the continent. Thus, it is from these two fronts that Islam will later find its way into the rest of the continent using three main gateways; trade, Sufism and conversion.

The main commentators about the Islamization process have cast it as “penetration” that advanced by regions and stages. In North Africa, from Egypt to Morocco, the initial process was conquest, when Arab or Arab-led armies took over the main cities and agricultural areas that stretched along the Mediterranean. But these forces neither moved into the mountains above the plain, nor attempted to go south into the Sahara Desert.

In looking at the south, or Sub-Saharan Africa, the commentators have postulated a process in three stages. The first presence came from merchants involved in the Trans-Saharan trade. These entrepreneurs and their families lived principally in the towns, often in quarters that were labeled “Muslim.” They lived as minorities within “pagan” or non-Muslim majorities. This phase is often called “minority” or “quarantine” Islam. The second phase often goes by the name “court” Islam, because it features the adoption of Islam by the rulers and members of the ruling classes of states, in addition to the merchants. No

significant effort was made to change local religious practices, especially outside of the towns. The third phase can be called “majority” Islam, whereby the faith spread beyond the merchants and ruling classes to the countryside where most people were living.¹

Muslim traders inadvertently transported Islam into the interior of the continent while pursuing their trade ambitions, thereby opening up the continent to a deeper Islamization by ‘clerics’ and more especially by Sufi orders. Over the centuries indigenous people have steadily taken to Islam through conversion and other factors such as contact with agents of Islamization from the Islamic heartland of the Middle-East have assured the permanent implantation of the religion on the African continent.

Thus, the current state of Islam in Sub-Sahara is a direct outcome of these early developments which have contributed not only to its foundation but also to its sustainability. It is against this background that we can analyze and understand contemporary expansion and Influence in Politics, Economy and Society.

I. EXPANSION; CONCEPTUAL TOOLS

Using Mostly the demographic year book, Houssain Kettani studies the Muslim population in Africa and he estimates that about 27% percent of the total population are Muslims. His study has the interest of indicating settlement patterns of the Muslim population in Africa, with North Africa claiming more than 90%, followed by West Africa with a predominance of slightly over 51%, the Eastern Africa coast with around 28%. Southern Africa trails behind with a mere 7%. This pattern is graphically represented by maps depicting a gradual concentration along those lines.

As earlier mentioned, the expansion of Islam in modern times has to be understood against the background of the early historical introduction of the religion on to the continent, its evolution over the centuries and its current manifestations. This has to be perceived in terms of a multifaceted Muslim campaign, not always concerted or organized by a centralized overall organ, but buoyed by spontaneous participation of its zealous adepts. It

¹ Muslim societies in African history; Islamization of Africa.
http://www.artsrn.ualberta.ca/amcdouga/Hist243/winter_2017/additional_rdggs/robinson_1.pdf.

is a movement inherent to Islam itself, in that Islam is a missionary religion, seeking growth through conversion of new adepts into its fold and pretending to universalism.

Theoretically, there are some Islamic concepts which help explain the Muslim drive towards expansion; *da'wah*, Jihad, Islamization, etc. Rather than phenomenologically describing the Islamic expansion, it is good also to analytically understand what underpins Islamic expansion.

1) *Da'wah*

Etymology: The Arabic term *da'wah* (lit., "call, invitation, summoning", to enter the fold of Islam) is used especially in the sense of the religious outreach or mission to exhort people to embrace Islam as the true religion.²

Historical development: After the death of Muhammad (632 c.e.), the leadership of the Muslim community became a controversial issue.... During the eighth century, the legitimacy of the Umayyads was increasingly put into question. Based in Baghdad, the Abbasids were accusing them for claiming kingship, *mulk*, thus vesting human leadership with an attribute and power that only God possesses. The lavish customs of the Damascus court underscored the anti-Umayyad *da-wa*.³ *Da-wa* thus became mainly an internal Muslim matter.

However, the external aspect of *da-wa*, "calling mankind," acquired increasing juridical importance in connection with the military expansion of Islam. According to the classical theory of jihad of the early Muslim conquests, warfare against non-Muslims could not be undertaken, nor could the protective tax of non-Muslims, *jizya*, be levied, had not a summons to Islam, *da-wa*, been issued.

During the early centuries of Islamic history, *da'wah* often had strong political orientations when used to mean a summons to support a claimant to Islamic rule. New movements would spread their ideologies of Islamic statehood through highly organized and disciplined networks of information and indoctrination.⁴ In this sense, *da-wa* came to

² "Da'wah." *Encyclopedia of Religion*. *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

³ "Da?wa." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. . *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

⁴ "Da'wah." *Encyclopedia of Religion*. *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

inherit a religio-political dimension, being the call to accept the rightful leadership of a certain individual or family. *Daʿwa* in the religio-political sense aimed at establishing or restoring the ideal theocratic state, based on monotheism. Here *daʿwa* can be understood as political propaganda inflated by Qurʾanic terminology. In spite of variations in the use of the term throughout history, this has been a recurring tendency.⁵

An important example of the application of *daʿwa* in history is the case of the Shiʿite Fatimids. Between 969 and 1171 they ruled a vast empire, with Cairo as the capital. For the Fatimids, who belong to the Ismaʿili branch of Shiʿa, *daʿwa* meant the appeal to give allegiance to the seventh imam, Muhammad b. Ismaʿil. Initially, their propaganda was directed against followers of the main branch of Shiʿa, the Imamis or Twelvers. As their power grew, the Fatimid *daʿwa* turned against the Abbasid Sunnites, challenging their caliphal authority.⁶

The Fatimids amplified the concept of *daʿwa* in accordance with Shiʿite doctrines of permanent revelation through the imams. ... it became increasingly organized and extensive. *Daʿwa* was thus institutionalized, integrating political claims with theological elaboration, centered around several educational institutions, most notably the al-Azhar University of Cairo.⁷

In a functional perspective, the core of the Fatimid use of *daʿwa* was similar to that of the Sunnite Abbasids. The amplification of *daʿwa* among these competing groups involved an understanding of political propaganda and aspirations based on theological criticism against other rulers. In both cases, thus, the core concern was the leadership issue. The Qurʾanic term *daʿwa* was rendered relevant primarily in the context of claims to political power. The Fatimid idea that propagation and acceptance of Islam should not be regarded

⁵ "Daʿwa." Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World. . *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

⁶ "Daʿwa." Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World. . *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

⁷ "Daʿwa." Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World. . *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

as a singular event, but as a continuous process, forebears central themes in modern uses of *daʿwa*.⁸

Decline in usage of *daʿwa* from the time of the Fatimids to early modern times, despite the significant expansion of Islam that occurred in both Asia and Africa. Two of the reasons for this recession may be the legal formalism and the development of Sufism:

- The authority of institutional law appears to have contributed to circumventing the centrality of the concept of *daʿwa*, which was primarily understood in terms of the connection between religious legitimacy and political power.
- The logic of Sufi expansion has usually been essentially different from state-centered or establishment Islam and, as a consequence, not in need of conceptions of *daʿwa* in the religio-political sense.

European colonialism and Christian mission brought Muslims into intense encounters with non-Muslim ideas and practices. Facing such challenges, many Muslims felt a need to reconsider or defend Islam, as well as to inform non-Muslims about Islamic principles and creeds. In this context, partly novel conceptualizations of *daʿwa* claimed a core position in the Islamic debates and practices.⁹

Of more lasting impact with regard to the rethinking of *daʿwa* was the Salafiyya movement, the leading figures of which were Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (d. 1897), Muhammad ʿAbduh (d. 1905), and Rashid Rida (d. 1935). Inspired particularly by Ibn Taymiyya's (d. 1329) early critique of *taqlid* and legal formalism, they called for the reform of Islamic law by reopening the gates of *ijtihad*. The movement also took a decisively critical stance to the influence of secular and Christian ideas. ... Of more lasting impact, however, were the Salafiyya efforts to strengthen Islamic awareness and solidarity in face of modernity.

⁸ "Daʿwa." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. . *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

⁹ "Daʿwa." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. . *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

Thus, *daʿwa* increasingly was understood in terms of edification and, most prominently, education, *tarbiya*.¹⁰

A preceding event of paradigmatic importance was the abolition of the caliphate in 1924. *Daʿwa* increasingly became an endeavor to reform the individual, rather than the public, institutions of society. Thus, society was to be Islamized "from below." This vision can be ascribed mainly to Hassan al-Banna (d. 1949) and Abu l-Aʿlaʾ Maududi (d. 1979), who were both of towering importance for the conception of *daʿwa* among later generations of Islamists.¹¹

A different methodology of *daʿwa* was suggested by Tablighi Jamaʿat, founded by Mawlana Muhammad Ilyas in 1927. This movement of Sufi background turns its back on political activity and concentrates on the devotional life. Yet, it emphasizes the centrality of *daʿwa* in terms of a missionary dut. ... *Daʿwa* is to be performed as voluntary preaching of the message in small groups. Instead of, for instance, publishing books or arranging publicly visible events and campaigns at university campuses, *daʿwa* is performed from door to door.

In 1962, Saudi Arabia founded the Muslim World League, *Rabitat al-alam al-Islami*, for promoting international *daʿwa* efforts. This was one year after the establishment of an Islamic university in Medina for the training of *daʿwa* workers. ... The activities of the Muslim World League increased in the 1970s when several councils, such as the World Council of Mosques, were formed. The idea of promoting international Islamic cooperation through the Council of Mosques was partly inspired by the previous establishment of the World Council of Churches.

Due to the oil boom of the 1970s, enormous oil revenues allowed countries like Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to lend most substantial support to the Islamic movement that worked for the (re)establishment of "true" Islam. Funds were used for, among other things, Islamic

¹⁰ "Daʿwa." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. . *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

¹¹ "Daʿwa." *Encyclopedia of Islam and the Muslim World*. . *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

research projects, charities, distribution of Islamic literature, international conferences, and festivals.

Previously, Muslims had been largely opposed to relief-work and social-welfare concerns as part of *da-wa* endeavors, criticizing Christian missions for using such efforts in order to make proselytes. Increasingly, however, charity directed primarily to Muslims has become an integral part of much *da-wa* work.

As a reaction to the Saudi influence on organizations like the Muslim World League, new *da-wa* instruments were formed in other countries. In Libya, for instance, Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi established the Islamic Call Society, *Jam'iyat al-Da-wah al-Islamiyya*, in 1972, concentrating on *da-wa* efforts in sub-Saharan Africa. A decisive blow on Saudi Arabian hegemony was the Iranian revolution of 1979. The *da-wa* efforts of the Iranian Islamic Information Organization once again highlighted the question of political legitimacy.

In the late twentieth century, new *da-wa* organizations cropped up all over the Muslim world, including in Europe and North America. Moreover, many governments set up *da-wa* departments for education and propaganda, particularly in the universities. In Pakistan, for example, the University of Islamabad in 1985 created a *Da-wah* Academy for training *da-wa* workers, producing and distributing literature in several languages as well as organizing conferences, special courses, and other events. The academy has an extensive international network of cooperating *da-wa* organizations, including the Muslim World League. Another important *da-wa* organization, whose primary objective is to propagate Islam through missionary activities, is the Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI), which was started in 1982 by Ahmed Deedat in Durban. ... Particularly significant in Europe and North America, the IPCI has concentrated on polemics against Christianity. The increasing interest in social welfare as a part of *da-wa* work was reflected, for instance, in the formation in 1988 by the Muslim World League of the World Muslim Committee for *Da-wah* and Relief. Education and health care is on the program of many *da-wa* organizations, like the Indonesian *Diwan Dawat al-Islam* and the West African Ansar al-Islam.

Among Muslim intellectuals, not least in Europe and North America, *da'wa* to a significant degree has been associated with interfaith dialogue. Thus, Qur'anic injunctions such as "Invite all to the Way of thy Lord" (16: 125) have been reinterpreted in an ecumenical sense.

However, the visions of al-Banna and Maududi are continuously present, especially in African, European and North American organizations. ... The conception of *da'wa* among such organizations combines ecumenical efforts with insistence on edification and mobilization among Muslims, predominantly by book publishing and, increasingly, by engagement in the political and educational systems of the Western societies.

"In the modern period, *da'wah* most often refers to Islamic missionary activities, which are increasingly characterized by long-range planning, skillful exploitation of the media, establishment of study centers and mosques, and earnest, urgent preaching and efforts at persuasion."¹² ... *Da'wah*, then, is the cutting edge of Islam and as such is directed at fellow believers as well as at the multitudes outside the *ummah* who nevertheless possess the God-given *fiṭrah* (*sūrah* 30:30), or "inherent character," also to be intentional Muslims.¹³

***Da'wah* and tolerance**

According to Salim al-Hasi: "The Arabic word *da'wah* means 'an invitation' or 'a call to share.' Therefore, *dawah* in its essence merely means the conveyance of the message of Islam to people."

Da'wah as mission should never be spread by force (*sūrah* 2:256). If the hearers refuse to embrace Islam, then they should be left alone. But a committed Muslim should not give up the task of *da'wah*.¹⁴ Underlining the aspect of conveyance, several Qur'anic verses indicate that the concept is void of compulsion and obligation.

Da'wah should not be understood as the struggle to convert people into the faith. Islam did not declare the conversion of people to the faith as an obligation of Muslims. We read in the Quran what means:

¹² "Da'wah." *Encyclopedia of Religion*. *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

¹³ "Da'wah." *Encyclopedia of Religion*. *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

¹⁴ "Da'wah." *Encyclopedia of Religion*. *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

{But if they turn aside, We have not sent you as a watcher over them; on you is only to deliver (the message); and surely when We make man taste mercy from Us, he rejoices thereat; and if an evil afflicts them on account of what their hands have already done, then surely man is ungrateful.} (Ash-Shura 42:48)

Muslims strongly believe that their duties in *da`wah* are limited to the conveyance of the message. They also believe that embracing Islam is due to guidance, which only occurs by the grace of Allah.

{It is true you will not be able to guide everyone whom you love; but Allah guides those whom He will and He knows best those who receive guidance.} (Al-Qasas 28:56)

Performing *dawah* is governed by several guidelines. First, there is no compulsion in religion.

{Let there be no compulsion in religion: Truth stands out clear from error: whoever rejects evil and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy hand-hold, that never breaks. And Allah hears and knows all things.} (Al-Baqarah 2:256)

Second, *dawah* should be practiced with wisdom and the best preaching.

{Invite (all) to the way of your Lord with wisdom and beautiful preaching; and argue with them in ways that are best and most gracious: for your Lord knows best who have strayed from His Path, and who receive guidance.} (An-Nahl 16:125)

Third, Muslims are not held responsible for the deeds of other nations.

{Say: You shall not be questioned as to our sins, nor shall we be questioned as to what you do.} (Saba' 34:25)

2) Jihad

In addition to organizations and networks concentrating on *Da'wa* (the intensive propagation of the radical-Islamic ideology through missionary work) there are others who focus on the Jihad (in the sense of using forceful means). Some groups combine the two. The choice of *Da'wa*-oriented groups for non-violent activities does not always imply that

they are non-violent in principle. Often they simply do not yet consider armed Jihad expedient for practical reasons (Jihad can be counterproductive or impossible because of the other side's superiority) or for religious reasons.¹⁵

In early 2011, as the Arab Spring revolutions were just beginning, a *New York Times* article concluded that for most analysts, "the past few weeks have the makings of an epochal disaster for Al Qaeda, making the jihadists look like ineffectual bystanders to history while offering young Muslims an appealing alternative to terrorism." The vast majority of terrorism experts believed the revolutions sweeping the Middle East and North Africa were the death knell not only for regional despots, but also for the jihadist movement.

In fact, the opposite occurred. The significant spike in terrorism in Africa since the onset of the 2011 Arab Spring revolutions is as undeniable now as it was unanticipated at the time.¹⁶

Even if the Middle East and South Asia generally attract greater political and media attention, the large and growing problem of jihadism in Africa can no longer be ignored. This is perhaps illustrated most vividly by the data of the 2013 Global Terrorism Index. For number of deaths attributable to terrorist violence, Nigeria came fourth after Iraq, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In a newer survey at the end of 2014 it even comes second for number of deaths, behind Iraq but ahead of Afghanistan. In November 2014 alone 786 people were killed by Boko Haram in Nigeria. If one considers that the number of victims in Nigeria increased significantly in 2014, and also includes deaths in Somalia, Kenya, Tunisia, Libya and Algeria, it becomes clear that Africa is in fact one of the most important arenas of jihadism.¹⁷

¹⁵ Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *The Challenge of Dawah Political Islam as Ideology and Movement and How to Counter It*, HOOVER INSTITUTION PRESS, 2017, p. 39-40.

¹⁶ Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, Spike in African terrorism highlights the importance of jihadist innovation, February, 26, 2018, <https://warontherocks.com/2018/02/spike-african-terrorism-highlights-importance-jihadist-innovation/>.

¹⁷ Guido Steinberg and Annette Weber (Eds.) *Jihadism in Africa Local Causes, Regional Expansion, International Alliances*, RP 5 June 2015 Berlin, https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/research_papers/2015_RP05_sbg_web.pdf#page=101.

The comparison of the very different African terrorist organizations laid out in this study clearly demonstrates that there is no independent pan-African jihadist ideology. The groups' propaganda rests on a rather narrow shared base, according to which the governments in the region, regardless whether Muslim or Christian, are all lackeys of Western (or Christian) imperialism (or unbelief) and must therefore be violently removed.

In Libya the efforts of Ansar al-Sharia and other groups are directed above all against the attempts by non-Islamist political forces to form a secular central government. Their actions have played a decisive role in bringing the country to the brink of a devastating civil war. In Tunisia the jihadists have also grown stronger since 2011. Their objective is to prevent a stabilization of the new political system through sporadic attacks. This has not succeeded, but the jihadists hold out in the mountainous regions along the Algerian border, while the open border to Libya remains a source of danger for Tunisia's internal security. In northern Algeria al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb is greatly weakened and no longer in a position to threaten the stability of the state. Much more threatening are the activities of groups operating in the name of AQIM or as splits from it in Mali and the Sahara. Although they have lost their refuge since the French intervention of early 2013, they continue to profit from the permeability of the region's borders.

Nigerian jihadism is currently stronger than its North African counterpart and characterized by spectacular acts of violence. The pure numbers of victims, as well as targets including the major city of Maiduguri in the north-eastern state of Borno, military bases in Cameroon and villages in Chad, demonstrate that the formerly local group of Boko Haram has mutated into a powerful violent organization with a wide radius of operations. It no longer mobilizes to introduce sharia, but to destroy the entire state and its disbelieving citizens. In Africa's most populous nation, the occupation of even just one region by violent actors has far-reaching and catastrophic repercussions on security, as well as on the economy of the entire country. In Somalia al-Shabaab stands under pressure after important senior figures were killed in US drone attacks or defected to the government. Yet the organization continues to grow, as does its support in Kenya's coastal regions where the Muslim population feels excluded and disadvantaged by the Kenyan state.

According to an article published by the BBC last June, after the 2012 killing in Kenya of the Muslim cleric Aboud Rogo Mohammed (accused of supporting al-Shabab in Somalia), his followers came under pressure and moved south. They built a presence in Kibiti, Tanzania, and crossed the Ruvuma River into Cabo Delgado by 2015. Using incomes made from smuggling, religious networks, and people-traffickers, the extremist cells paid to send young men to Tanzania, Kenya and Somalia for military and Islamic training. The income also helped bring radical clerics to Mozambique.¹⁸

Especially in sub-Saharan Africa (Nigeria and Somalia) the jihadists demonstrate a pronounced interest in establishing their own state. And the major territorial gains of Boko Haram in Nigeria leave no doubt as to the importance of finding new approaches to dealing with terrorist groups in Africa. These will have to focus above all on the local causes of their popularity.

Although both al-Shabaab and Boko Haram operate successfully in their own terms, each binding several thousand supporters and placing weight on formal acceptance by al-Qaeda (al-Shabaab) or solidarity with the Islamic State (Boko Haram), the fighters of both organizations operate largely in their own countries and rarely travel to join jihadist operations in Syria, Iraq or Afghanistan. ... The consequence is that jihadists from sub-Saharan Africa are more likely than their counterparts from Tunisia or Algeria to be found operating in their home region. This expands the possibilities to find responses to the jihadist challenge at the local or regional level. The flip side is that it is considerably more difficult to reintegrate fighters who have attacked “their own people”.

3) Islamization

“It is indeed accurate to state that the goal of *da‘wah* is to Islamize; but it is more complex, more sinister, and more far-reaching than the idea of missionary work it suggests.”¹⁹

(Islamize)²⁰ comes from the word (Islam), so it is, in short, to make something relate to Islam or to make it in the accordance with the worldview of Islam. We can say that

¹⁸ <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-44320531>.

¹⁹ Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *The Challenge of Dawa Political Islam as Ideology and Movement and How to Counter It*, HOOVER INSTITUTION PRESS, 2017.

²⁰ Shihab al-Tamimi, (Islamization Of Knowledge), The meaning and Definition.

Islamization started with the first message of the Prophet Muhammed (SAW), and after him, all his companions, Muslim scholars and revivalists undertook this mission. But the term (Islamization) has been widely used during the last three decades of the second millennium.

(Islamization) appears to be synonymous with the term Islamic Revivalism (Renaissance) which is defined as a reform-oriented movement driven by a conscious change in Muslim thought, attitude and behavior and characterized by a commitment to revive Islamic Civilization.

Therefore, it is clear that the term Islamization refers to planned and organized changes designed to improve the individual and society by conforming them to Islamic norms.

There are three major forces constituting this movement:

(a) Reformism that refers to forces that tend to reform Muslim society by reforming individuals with the help of the basic social institutions.

(b) Activism that refers to a political or jihadist movements.

(c) Intellectualism which refers to the movement of Islamization of knowledge that inspires and motivates Muslim intellectuals to advance, promote and disseminate knowledge, to seek reformation of Muslim thought, Islamic methodology and to facilitate Islamic transformation of Muslim communities in Muslim as well as non-Muslim countries.

As the Islamization is so important and an urgent need to revive the whole *Ummah* from its weakness and backwardness, the Islamization of knowledge (IOK) is the most important and urgent step to that aim. It is the first stage in that path. Prof Mumtaz Ali indicates that

"Contemporary Islamic revivalists have convincingly argued for the need for comprehensive Islamization of all dimensions

of private and public life. But according to them, this goal cannot be achieved until and unless contemporary secular knowledge and modern Western educational system are Islamized".

Following the early uncoordinated penetration of Islam into Africa which saw the community grow into the second largest on the continent, Islam has continued to expand

across the continent, driven by the desire to implement *da'wah*, Islamize the continent or participate in jihadist campaigns. These three factors play out in four main domains in favour of Islamic propagation; Islamic governments, Muslim International Organizations, Non-Governmental Organizations and individual Muslim Initiatives.

a) **Muslim Governments**

Although Muslim states participate in the modern era of nation-states, their functioning is predominantly defined by fostering and protecting the Islamic character of their citizens. Hence *da'wah*, Islamization and even jihad are part and parcel of the political agenda of the Muslim states. Governments, primarily those of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and Iran, fund radical *da'wah* efforts and, occasionally, jihadist efforts. [From 1973 through 2002, the Saudi kingdom spent an estimated \$87 billion to promote *da'wah* abroad. Josh Martin estimates that, since the early 1970s, Middle Eastern charities have distributed \$110 billion. To give just one example, the Saudi Al-Haramain foundation (closed in 2004) built 1,300 mosques, sponsored 3,000 preachers, and produced 20 million religious pamphlets.]²¹

In a continent with nearly 650 million Muslims, most of them Sunnis, Saudi Arabia has employed its religious identity as a leverage to extend its influence. Its interference in Nigeria's domestic affairs, notably by backing the Sunni Izala society, illustrates Saudi attempts to consolidate a strategic and ideological foothold among Africa's Muslim population.

- **Africa and the Saudi-Iranian rivalry**

Indeed, in West Africa, Iran and Saudi Arabia have both tried to use sectarian tensions as a leverage in order to extend their own influence. They have used similar strategies, i.e. funding mosques and Islamic schools, thus establishing their own networks in Africa, in the name of which they are then able to justify their interferences. For instance, in Nigeria, where, as described above, Saudi Arabia has been very active, Riyadh and Tehran have financially and politically supported the domestic Sunni and Shiite domestic groups, thereby deepening the country's sectarian divide.

²¹ Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *The Challenge of Dawah Political Islam as Ideology and Movement and How to Counter It*, HOOVER INSTITUTION PRESS, 2017, p. 46.

Moreover, prior to 2015 and the signing of the nuclear deal, Iran was eager to use Africa to break out of its isolation on the international stage. Its efforts focused on the Horn of Africa, where some states were facing similar diplomatic confinement. The relationship between Iran and Sudan, based on military and intelligence cooperation, illustrates this approach. Sudan thus became strategically significant for Tehran by enabling it to supply arms to its proxies. Likewise, Iran established similar strategic cooperation with Somalia and Eritrea. Therefore, Iran's desire to establish a foothold in the region, which would notably have enhanced its influence on the international stage by granting it control of two straits vital for international trade – Bab al-Mandeb and Hormuz – soon emerged as a direct threat to Saudi interests. Saudi Arabia thus responded by using financial carrots and diplomatic pressures to make these countries break off relations with Iran – and it succeeded. Likewise, Riyadh has used this same strategy, namely financial inducements to keep states away from Iran and bring them under its control, in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Iran is not the only state with which Saudi Arabia has been rivaling in Africa. Two major Middle Eastern powers, Egypt and Turkey, have been competing with Riyadh's influence. Indeed, by intervening in East Africa, the Saudi kingdom has stepped in Cairo's backyard. Saudi attempts to develop a military presence in Djibouti, but also their interest in Ethiopia's sources of energy, have fueled Egypt's suspicion about its partners' intentions.

Likewise, Riyadh's activities in Africa will likely clash with Turkish interests. Apart from its many economic enterprises, Ankara, through its schools and foundations, has emerged as a significant rival regarding Sunni leadership in the region. Yet, it should also be highlighted that competition for influence in Africa is raising tensions within the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. The dispute with Qatar has been extended onto the African continent, where the Qatari emir's visits to Senegal, Guinea, Ghana and Ivory Coast were translated as a direct challenge to Saudi economic and political influence. Sudan, Eritrea and Djibouti have similarly been drawn into the tensions and have downgraded their relations with Qatar. As a response, Qatar has withdrawn its peacekeepers from Eritrea and Djibouti.

Therefore, although Saudi investments offer significant potential for the development of the African continent, the transfer into Africa of pre-existing religious or political tensions, with Iran as well as with other Arab countries, provides additional opportunities for the

African Muslim communities which end up benefiting from the competition among major Muslim countries vying for greater influence.

- **Turkey**

Turkey's Diyanet, the directorate of religious affairs, housed in the office of the prime minister, puts Islamic policies into practice. In 2006 it hosted, in Istanbul, the first Religious Leaders Meeting of African Continent Muslim Countries and Societies, attended by religious leaders from 21 African countries. ... In 2009 the Diyanet invited 300 Muslim students from countries including Mozambique, Togo, Mauritania, Sudan, Uganda and Côte d'Ivoire to study as imams in Turkey. ... The Diyanet, the budget and reach of which has extended significantly in recent years, has served to distinguish Turkey from other emerging powers engaged in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), in that its policy goes beyond humanitarianism and economic interests. Turkey is a member of the OIC, together with 22 SSA countries for which Erdoğan has given particular attention to aiding development. As prime minister in 2005, he toured six OIC members – Burkina Faso, Chad, The Gambia, Mali, Niger and Senegal – and launched a programme to improve food security and the cotton industry in these countries. Turkey has also collaborated with the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Center for Development of Trade to encourage industrialization in Africa.

b) International Muslim Organizations

For as long as it existed, the caliphate portrayed some semblance of unified leadership, bringing all the Sunni Muslims under one leadership umbrella. Following its abolition in 1924 and in resonance with changes on the world stage, Muslim organizations with a certain pretense to internationality have emerged. Having failed to achieve their initial goal of reconstructing the caliphate, most of these organizations have now become instrumental in providing the necessary framework for Islamic social intervention through sustainable *da'wah*.

- **The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**

OIC is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world. It endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the

Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

The Organization was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco on 12th Rajab 1389 Hijra (25 September 1969) following the criminal arson of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem.

The Organization has the singular honor to galvanize the Ummah into a unified body and have actively represented the Muslims by espousing all causes close to the hearts of over 1.5 billion Muslims of the world. The Organization has consultative and cooperative relations with the UN and other inter-governmental organizations to protect the vital interests of the Muslims and to work for the settlement of conflicts and disputes involving Member States. In safeguarding the true values of Islam and the Muslims, the organization has taken various steps to remove misperceptions and has strongly advocated elimination of discrimination against Muslims in all forms and manifestations.

Da'wah Activities; A prospective Vision

Islamic *da'wah* is a fundamental pillar in the field of joint Islamic action. The Organization of the Islamic Conference believes that *da'wah* should start from an effective, positive, flexible and objective strategy allowing the Islamic *Ummah* to achieve its objectives.

In compliance with Islamic resolutions adopted at the level of the Islamic Summit Conference and the Council of Foreign Ministers which call for the dissemination of the teachings of Islam with a view to reinforcing Islamic solidarity, unifying efforts aimed at defending Islamic causes, a serious initiative has to be taken at the international level to promote knowledge of Islam in the three official languages of the OIC and to highlight the tolerance and noble values Islam is preaching and establish dialogue among world religions and civilizations in order to strengthen cooperation relations and reinforce commonalities. This can be achieved through:

1. Linking Muslim communities to the rest of the world through the organization of symposia and conferences to clarify the civilizational image of Islam and Muslims in the outside world.

2. Contribution of the Coordination Committee to building bridges of fraternity and cooperation among contemporary civilizations so as to bring about human coexistence of humanity as a whole.
3. Conducting more research on the challenges facing the Islamic *Ummah* in the 21st Century and the way to address them.
4. Reacting to the false allegations against Islam and the Islamic civilization.

- **Muslim World League**

Riyadh's program to spread the Wahhabi doctrine in Africa often functions through purportedly Muslim international organizations. Perhaps the most prominent of these is the Muslim World League (MWL) that, despite its purported nongovernmental status, was created and is maintained by the Saudi government. MWL Secretary General Dr. Abdullah Al-Turki, for example, formerly served as the Kingdom's Minister of Islamic Affairs, and it has been estimated that 99 percent of the League's financing came from Saudi Arabia.

Founded in 1962, the MWL advocates "the application of the rules of the Shariah either by individuals, groups or states" and develops "methods of the propagation of Islam in accord with the dictate of the Quran and the Sunnah." Toward these ends, the MWL and its various arms coordinate worldwide efforts of Muslim preachers, construct mosques, promote Islamic education and culture through the mass-media, and extend humanitarian relief to the misfortunate.

MWL work in sub-Saharan Africa was initiated from the time of the organization's founding, paving the way for an attempt at continent-wide Islamist coordination in 1976 with its sponsorship of the first All-Africa Conference held in Mauritania. At the conference the MWL could already claim that it was providing in Africa immense "moral and material support to Islamic organizations in accordance with the principles of [the Islamic] religion which ordains solidarity and brotherhood among Muslims throughout the world."⁸ This would become the MWL's leitmotif over the following decades.

Evidence of the MWL's continued commitment to sub-Saharan Africa is found in its sixteen foreign offices located in the region (nearly half of the worldwide total), in addition to 36 (of 70 worldwide) offices of the International Islamic Relief Organization, a subsidiary body

the MWL. Through these offices the MWL has done much to advance Islamism. As the Islamist regime established its control of Sudan in the early 1980s, for example, the MWL gave Khartoum two million copies of the Quran for conversion work and assisted in the training of religious teachers.

- **World Assembly of Muslim Youth**

The World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), established in 1972, is another Saudi maintained “independent” organization – its secretary general Sheikh Saleh bin Abdul Aziz Al Al-Sheikh doubles as the Saudi Minister of Islamic Affairs – actively promoting Islamism, funding at least 48 mosques in sub-Saharan Africa. Much of WAMY’s activity, however, is directed toward education. In war torn Somalia, for instance, where youth are particularly susceptible to radical influences, the organization funded the Imam Nawawi educational complex serving 2,300 Somali students.

C) Nongovernmental organizations

Including also local charity organizations, they directly undertake *da’wah*, Islamization programs and even support jihadist initiatives. Sunni Islamic NGOs such as the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates are of more interest than Shiite NGOs at the present time because they are more numerous and more active in the West. Many well-funded Islamic “charitable” foundations support *da’wah* indoctrination, even if they stop short of funding jihadist activities themselves.

- **Africa Muslims Agency**

Since January 1987, the Africa Muslims Agency also known as Direct Aid International operated in 29 countries in Africa and one of the key elements of Africa Muslims Agency since January 1987, has been to institutionalize Relief work. Africa Muslims Agency played a key role in the 80’s in bridging the gap in Africa between the indigenous population and the donor community.

Over the past 30 years Africa Muslims Agency/Direct Aid International has established itself as a trustworthy, dependable organization that supports the underprivileged in Southern Africa and on the Continent of Africa, when it comes to winter projects,

Ramadhan feeding, disaster relief, it has many successes eg: Somalia in the 90's, Sudan, Kenya, Mozambique floods, drought stricken areas, thousands of masjids, water projects that are currently being done in Niger, Mozambique and Malawi. It has built thousands of water wells on the Continent of Africa, hundreds of Schools and Educational Facilities, multiple number of hospitals/clinics as well a few fully fledged universities, many orphanages where thousands of orphaned children that are supported through AMA/DAI programmes all over Africa, many bursaries are also given, there are many success stories of people that have grown tremendously because they have come through the AMA educational programme.

The organization has offices in 29 countries around Africa, four thousand full time staff members for when a crisis happens in a certain area, the office there assists the people on the ground to be able to continue work even after the media has left, even after the bottle neck is released. It builds, digs boreholes, drills water wells, builds masjids, builds classrooms, to create *da'wah*, to bring people to the religion of Islam and to be able to educate them.

- **Hizmet**

At the forefront of Turkish civil society engagement in Africa is the 'Gülen movement' – referred to by the exiled followers of Fethullah Gülen as Hizmet, meaning service for others. The movement began as a faith-based, non-political, cultural and educational effort inside Turkey, and it has since spread globally. It puts a premium on interfaith dialogue, and once had close ties to the AKP – with which it agreed on the need to take advantage of globalization's opportunities. The movement's financial support comes from a tradition of Turkish and Islamic charity, especially provided by the business community. ... The movement is best known in SSA for the high-quality schools – primary and secondary institutions, as well as one university – that Turkish business people inspired by Gülen have financed. There is no central organization in charge of the schools, which are fee-paying private institutions with rigorous academic standards, and which follow the curriculum of the host country. There are close ties between the schools and Turkish sponsors doing business in the countries where they are located. A key to their success is the network that they provide. Graduates in the DRC, for example, often speak Turkish and

help drive Turkey's commercial interests. There are approximately 96 Gülen-affiliated schools in SSA countries. Nigeria has the most (17), and is the location of the only Gülen-affiliated university in Africa – the Nigerian Turkish Nile University in Abuja. Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Senegal, South Africa and Tanzania all have six or more schools.

The influence of the Gülenist movement on Turkey's Africa policy has been such that it was credited by many observers with pioneering the opening up to the continent, but the recent schism in relations between Erdoğan and Gülen has led some within the Turkish establishment to call for a revision of foreign policy. President Erdoğan has even urged foreign governments, including those in SSA, to close down Gülen-affiliated projects. At the Second Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit in November 2014, Erdoğan warned the assembled African leaders of the 'hidden agendas' of the Gülenists. Pro-government media sources have reported that Erdoğan has managed to convince Gabon and Senegal to shut down Gülenist-run schools, and that the Republic of the Congo and Somalia have implemented processes for their closure. However, President Filipe Nyusi of Mozambique has expressed his support for the movement, announcing in mid-2015 that he intended to visit the Gülenist school in Maputo from which his son had graduated. Côte d'Ivoire's deputy education minister was reported as having informed one news agency that Erdoğan's stance against Africa was 'similar to colonial states' in seeking an 'educationally backward' continent.

- **Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH)**

Turkey's non-governmental Humanitarian Relief Foundation (IHH), which provides relief following wars and natural disasters, began its activities in Africa in 1996 with the delivery of aid to Somalia. It now operates in 35 SSA countries. It has, for example, constructed hundreds of water wells; and as of March 2014, IHH had performed more than 76,000 cataract-removal operations in Africa. The organization also conducts *Qurban* campaigns to ensure that impoverished Muslims receive meat from animals that have been slaughtered in accordance with Islamic requirements.

- **Kimse Yok Mu**

Kimse Yok Mu ('Is Anybody There' – KYM) is a non-governmental, Gülen-inspired relief organization, established after the 1999 earthquakes in Turkey, which has expanded globally. Unlike the Gülen affiliated schools, KYM has a formal, hierarchical structure and organized mechanism for fundraising. Between 2006, when it began assistance to Africa, and 2013, KYM provided about \$65.4 million to 45 countries. KYM assistance to Africa reached its highest point in 2011, but it has since declined; in 2013 it distributed about \$17.5 million to 43 African countries, with most aid going to development projects, health, education, water wells and support for orphans. During Ramadan KYM offers *iftar* (fast-breaking meals) and food packages in many SSA countries. The AKP government's efforts against the Gülenist movement have even extended to KYM, which has had its bank accounts frozen and which was reported in April 2015 to be under investigation for alleged terrorist activities. None the less, KYM, which inter alia aims to build 1,000 new schools in Africa by 2020, has subsequently signed a memorandum of understanding with the African Union on efforts to increase cooperation in aid, development and education.

D) Individual Muslims

Although the above operate on the basis of organizational structures, much of their success depends individual Muslim zeal. All the Muslims, to a varying degree, individually participate and contribute to *da'wah*, jihadist campaigns or Islamization efforts; some by providing the necessary material needs at all three levels, others through personal involvement, be it in charitable work, be it in verbally spreading the message of Islam and inviting others to join.

II. Source of Finances

The Islamist infrastructure worldwide relies heavily on *zakat*, the mandatory charity demanded by Islam, usually 2.5 percent of one's annual earnings. One way of financing the agenda of Islamization is investing these efforts in humanitarian aid. Individuals who are poor or needy are assisted by these funds. There is a meaningful tie between the giver and the receiver, but both the giver and the receiver are assumed by the agents of *da'wah* to be

working toward one goal: Islamization. For the recipient of such aid, the way to give back is through *da'wah*.²²

In 2015, the British-based Development Initiatives group estimated that “the global volume of *Zakat* collected each year through formal mechanisms is, at the very least, in the tens of billions of dollars.” If informal mechanisms are included, “the actual amount available is likely to be much higher, and could potentially be in the hundreds of billions of dollars.”²³

State-sponsors of Islam have been conducting their jihadist campaign in Africa for more than 40 years, but only began to gain great leverage with their burgeoning petrodollar influence in the 1970s. Despite African Islam’s historically temperate tradition, Islam was met by insufficient resistance to arrest its spread. This phenomenon is explained by the scholar Eva Evers Rosander, who notes that “in relations between African Muslims and foreigners from the Arab (oil) countries, those who have the financial means dictate the Islamic discourse.”

Saudi Arabia also provides considerable official assistance to African communities. An example of a channel for such assistance is the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD) that commenced operations in 1974 – established to support development projects and programs primarily in Africa and Asia. Between 1975 and 2002, the SFD granted loans to sub-Saharan countries totaling more than \$1.9 billion. Additionally, over roughly the same period the SFD provided grants to African countries facing exceptionally difficult circumstances in the amount of nearly \$750 million. This assistance, while not explicitly designated as propagation activity, is part of the Islamization process.

Riyadh is also involved in overt propagation of Islam south of the Sahara – according to several Saudi sources, more money is provided to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs than to Saudi ambassadors for activity in Africa. While it is difficult to quantify the Kingdom’s involvement in the region, some anecdotal evidence hints at the scope of its activity. Saudi Arabia has fully or partially funded numerous mosques and Islamic centers – that some

²² Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *The Challenge of Dawah Political Islam as Ideology and Movement and How to Counter It*, HOOVER INSTITUTION PRESS, 2017, p. 38-39.

²³ Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *The Challenge of Dawah Political Islam as Ideology and Movement and How to Counter It*, HOOVER INSTITUTION PRESS, 2017, p. 45.

accounts suggest number in the thousands – throughout sub-Saharan Africa: examples include the King Faisal Mosque and Center in Guinea (\$21.3 million), the King Faisal Mosque in Chad (\$16 million), Bamaco Mosque in Mali (\$6.7 million), and the Yaondi Mosque in Cameroon (\$5.1 million).¹⁶ The funding of these, of course, is often implicitly contingent on the appointment of a Saudi approved imam.

The Kingdom has similarly participated, on a grand scale, in propagation through formal education. A donation of \$13.9 million, for instance, allowed the construction of the King Fahd Charity Complex Plaza that serves as an endowment for the Islamic University in Uganda. Similarly, the International University of Africa (formerly the Islamic African Center) in Sudan, established to, in the words of its first director, “fight against the hatred and rancour towards Arabs and Islam which European colonialism has implanted in the hearts of Africans,” has received considerable funding from Saudi Arabia. Less conspicuous is Saudi support for innumerable madrassas that are, as explained by one Ethiopian journalist, “jihad factories nurturing potential bin Ladens.”

III. Strategies

From North Africa to Indonesia, and beyond, Muslim individuals and organizations are strenuously dedicated to missionary activities, utilizing the media and other advanced means of communication and "market research." *Da'wah* faculties are prominent in Muslim training schools and universities, and the hope is that the strong obligation to spread Islam will be felt by Muslims at all levels of society.²⁴

Often *da'wah* happens near conflict zones. In places where Muslims seem beleaguered, Islamic “charitable” efforts are nearly always accompanied by *da'wah*.²⁵

And while much attention is paid to the possibility that poverty encourages Islamism, markedly less consideration is given to Islamism’s facilitation of poverty. By creating inter-communal strife and dueling systems of law (one of which, shari’a, is by no means growth-friendly), Islamism discourages the very investment that has the potential to pull Africa out of the economic abyss.

²⁴ "Da'wah." *Encyclopedia of Religion*. *Encyclopedia.com*. 30 Oct. 2018 <<https://www.encyclopedia.com>>.

²⁵ Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *The Challenge of Dawa Political Islam as Ideology and Movement and How to Counter It*, HOOVER INSTITUTION PRESS, 2017, p. 40.

Islamization lays a foundation of Islamic awareness that is a necessary precondition for the introduction of Islamism. Activity to promote social welfare – a tactic adopted from Christianity – is a primary method used by international Islamists attempting to demonstrate to African Muslims their importance to the *umma*. The short-term objective of such activity, then, is the creation of distinct Islamized segments of society that can later be leveraged for Islamist objectives.

Once established, Islamized populations are led toward acceptance of Islamism by measures intended to portray the secular status quo as antithetical to Muslim well-being. Islamist fringe elements attempt to foster a mood of defiance among Islamized populations against external influences. One commonly utilized tactic, for example, is to petition that Muslims be permitted to be governed by shari'a. The inevitable opposition to this demand confirms to Muslims their sense of persecution, allowing increasingly radical rhetoric and action to become acceptable. By portraying themselves as defenders of legitimate Muslim rights, Islamists are thus able to wrest control from the moderate center.

It has long been Riyadh's policy to export the state faith, however, and when oil revenue began to swell the Kingdom's coffers, Saudi propagation of Wahhabism in sub-Saharan Africa commenced in earnest. Common methods employed in this endeavor include the funding of mosques, Islamic centers and madrassas; the facilitation of travel to the Kingdom for purposes of the *hajj* and educational exchanges; the contribution of humanitarian aid and other charitable work; and the provision of support for "indigenous" Wahhabi organizations. This collective effort has been aimed at assuring Saudi control of the Islamic message reaching Africa's Muslim populations.

Saudi encouragement of Islamization in the region is marked. The Kingdom has transported and hosted hundreds of thousands of Africans performing the *hajj*, many of whom have undertaken the pilgrimage at the full expense of the Saudi government. It has distributed inestimable copies of the Quran in strategically important African languages such as Somali, Hausa and Zulu. And in 2002 alone, the Kingdom provided *Iftar* meals in 31 African countries benefiting more than 430,000 fasters.

Saudi dissemination of Wahhabi ideology has, moreover, taken advantage of technological advances. The recently established Channel Islam International – made possible through the patronage of Prince Bandar Bin Salman Bin Mohammed Al Saud, who serves as an advisor to Crown Prince Abdullah and as Chairman of the Private Commission for Islamic Call in Africa – attempts, with its satellite reach into more than 60 African and Middle Eastern countries, to “sow the seeds of religious education and growth, in meticulous compliance with the teachings of the Noble Quran and of the Prophet Muhammad.”

Riyadh’s propagation activities in sub-Saharan Africa have met with great success. A number of movements and organizations have been borne of Wahhabi inspiration – from the Izala of Nigeria, to the Al-Falah of Senegal, to the Jamiatul Ulama of South Africa. Often, Saudi Arabia directly funds these groups, as is the case with the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council and the Muslim Association of Malawi. Importantly, the indigenous face of these groups puts them in a particularly advantageous position to advance their program from the bottom up – grassroots methods for the introduction of Wahhabism include the co-opting of local media and the organization of public meetings, among others. The significance of these movements cannot be underestimated.

All in all, different factors account for the expansion of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa today.

- Muslim states: by supporting da ‘wah work in Africa, intervention in bilateral interstate relations which favour the acceptance of Islam and by playing host to African Muslims, especially young students wanting to pursue their Islamic studies.
- Muslim organizations: in this era of NGOs, Muslims are taking their share through realization of social projects, alongside providing the necessary infrastructures to the indigenous communities; mosques, madrasas, schools, clinics, etc.
- Migration factor: Muslims, like any other people, are in constant movement into and within the continent, thereby indirectly exporting Islam into places where it has never been that significant before.
- Traders: Muslims from the Middle-East and Asia have seized investment opportunities in retail and wholesale businesses as well as construction works where they have not only employed the natives who may not have been Muslims initially but also bring realities of their religion into daily contact with their clients.

- Marriages: getting married to or marrying in a Muslim family has drawn into the fold of Islam new members sometimes beyond the person directly concerned.
- Qur'anic schools: many are the children who have found themselves to be Muslim through peer influence and participation in Muslim activities.

IV. INFLUENCE

a) Politics

In the early stages of its history in Africa, Islam sought more to collude with local political leadership to pave its way into society at large. Of late it has not only found profound inroads into the African politics but continues to exert increasing influence.

- With the help of petrol-dollars, gulf states have lured some African politicians not only into embracing Islam but also to make religious concessions towards it, e.g. building sumptuous mosques, luring their countries into the OIC.
- Membership to the Organization of the Islamic Conference provides multiple channels by which Islam is now funnelling down its political influence on the continent. As stated on its website: "The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world. It endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world."²⁶
- Even as a minority community, Muslims constitute an electorate category courted by politicians. Muslims more and more seek going beyond active support of politicians to actually imposing themselves and their religion in the political arena.
- The growing impact of political Islam in the political landscape of Africa is being redefined as well; active participation in global alliances against the perceived Islamic threat, pre-emptive policies and measures to contain growing Islamic influence and to ward off risks of Islamic radicalization

²⁶ https://www.oic-oci.org/page/?p_id=52&p_ref=26&lan=en.

b) Economy

Islam which claims to cover every aspects of human society has also exerted considerable influence in the economic domain of Africa.

- Inter-state bilateral trade: Thanks to the oil rich countries, Islam has been able to exert economic influence on Africa even at the top political level. Many countries have benefited and continue to benefit from inter-state bilateral economic agreements.
- Financial institutions: organizations such as the Islamic Development Bank, Kuwait Fund for Development, Africa Muslim Agency, Islamic Relief Agency, etc., channel considerable amounts of aid to Africa through economic cooperation and loans. Islamic charitable organizations and individuals: they wield a lot of economic influence. The practice of Zakat generates a lot of resources which are then redistributed among Muslim populations. More and more these organizations are becoming more sophisticated in their disbursement of the resources thus collected, embarking on projects with long-term impact especially in the agricultural domain and rural development.
- Islamic Finance: Through its own religious principles, Islam is also redefining the understanding of economy (Islamic finances, halal authorities). At this level, Islam prides in its proposition of a model deeply rooted in Islamic ethics; the Islamic financing. In their IMF working paper on Islamic Finance in Africa, Enrique *et al* conclude: Although Islamic finance in Sub-Saharan Africa is at a nascent stage, its potential lies on the size and expansion of its Muslim population and the concomitant expansion of Islamic finance activities in other parts of the world. The development of Islamic finance in SSA could usefully complement countries' efforts to deepen their conventional financial systems by broadening the range of available options, extend maturities, and facilitate hedging and risk diversification. In addition, Islamic financing can also contribute to the development of small and medium enterprises and microfinance activities.²⁷

²⁷ <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2014/wp14149.pdf>.

- On a popular level, cities like Dubai have become referential for wholesale and retail entrepreneurship. The growing informal market economy has led to intensified interactions with the Middle-East, leading to greater exposure of Africans to the Arabo-Muslim culture.

c) Society

Today more than ever before, Islam has become an unavoidable reality in the African society. The impact of Islam on the society is mostly due to its religious particularisms. Practically Islam provides its religious coloration to every aspect of social life, blending at times with the African culture and coexisting with it most of the times. In major parts of the continent, Islam tends to be tolerant towards local culture. However, there has been a growing tendency towards radicalization and intolerance. Islam is influencing society in some of the following manners:

- Education: Islam is a complete system with its own education program adapted to the different stages of its adepts' growth cycle. Much of this education takes place around the mosque in the madrasa and demands of the participant regularity in attendance and perseverance in duration. The expectation is such that Muslim children are expected to give equal if not more importance to their religious education at the mosque as they do to secular education, where this not discouraged even. Therefore, the influence of Islam on education in Africa would therefore have to be understood in its own terms and not in terms of the acceptance or rejection of it. Whatever be the case, the outcome is that Muslim children who have been shielded from western education end up not participating actively in domains that require exposure to western education. Apart from Boko Haram in Nigeria, the Muslim community has tried to accommodate itself with western education either by proposing hybrid school curricula for their children or parallel programs in which the children can take part simultaneously.
- Linguistic: undisputedly, the lingua franca among all the Muslims is Arabic, even those who do not master it at all are expected at least to learn and pray in Arabic. Although as a language it has not really made significant gains in terms of popular usage, Arabic has left indelible marks on some African languages such as Swahili and

Hausa. The teaching of Arabic to Muslim children has contributed their literacy in Arabic and Islamic sciences, something that may be enticing for children potential converts.

- Marriage: in regions with long-standing practices of Muslim coexistence with other traditions, it has been relatively common to see Muslim women getting married to non-Muslim men. But in regions where the Islamic phenomenon is rather new, there has been the tendency to instrumentalize marriage as a tool of proselytization and Islamization.
- Family: although very much similar to African families in many aspects, Islam has had its impact on family particularly by emphasizing the universal character of the Muslim brotherhood, all Muslims are brothers, and also by accentuating some of such practices as are already found in traditional African families; polygamy, circumcision, male dominated patriarchal systems.
- Culinary habits: restricted foodstuffs such as pork and forbidden drinks with alcoholic content have become the dividing line between Muslims and others. To guard and guide against consumption of such halal authorities have been instituted and are gaining popularity even among non-Muslims, albeit for want of proper government authorities to regulate food safety. In this line, the issue of animal slaughter is increasingly becoming an issue in multifaith communities, let alone food sharing during social and mixed family gatherings.

Dress code: like in other domains, Islam has a prescribed dressed code particularly for female adepts. Generally, Muslims pride themselves in their dress code a religious distinctive mark. Donning such attires displace the preponderance of Islam in a given locality and can sometimes be used to mark the entry into the fold of Islam. Although a practice found also among other religions, the Muslim dress code is not without controversy in western oriented secular societies.

Fr. Felix Phiri, MA