Contents

Chapter 5

Shaping an Islamic Space of Meaning

The Discursive Tradition

> To write about a tradition is to be in a certain narrative relation to it, a relation that will vary according to whether one supports or opposes the tradition, or regards it as morally neutral. The coherence that each party finds, or fails to find, in that tradition will depend on their particular historical position. In other words, there clearly is not, nor can there be, such a thing as a universally acceptable account of a living tradition. Any representation of tradition is contestable. What shape that contestation takes, if it occurs, will be determined not only by the powers and knowledges each side deploys, but by the collective life to which they aspire or to whose survival they are quite indifferent.
>
> —*Talal Asad*[1]

As people gradually converted to Islam, a Muslim clerisy emerged to consolidate the Islamic religion and expand its space of meaning in the Bilad al-Sudan. In the process, scholars produced a literature inspired by classical Islamic writings but addressing their particular contemporary concerns. John Hunwick[2] has suggested that Islamic writings in Africa fall broadly into four categories: historical, pedagogical, devotional, and polemical. I will add a fifth category, which I describe as political writings. These five overlapping genres form the bulk of the Islamic library in West Africa. In the main, they are written in Arabic, but among the political writings in particular, a portion is written in Ajami.

The first category of historical writings includes, in addition to chronicles that provide much of our knowledge of the precolonial West African states, a number of documents describing the customs of the people of the region, relations between merchants and scholars at different periods, and the relations between the peoples of sub-Saharan Africa, the Sahara, and North Africa. They also include a number of *ijazas* (authorization to transmit knowledge) and fatwas (formal legal opinions).

The second category is made up of pedagogical writings. Although classical Islamic texts produced outside West Africa have been circulating in the region for centuries, Sudani shaykhs produced their own commentaries and textbooks. They often wrote versified commentaries of classical texts to make them easier for their students to learn. This is true of the great intellectual centers in present-day Senegal and Mali as well as those of remote regions where Muslim communities were isolated from the major trade networks and where copies of books were difficult to obtain. Commentaries have been disparaged by some scholars as mere scholasticism with little claim to originality. This is clearly not true of all commentaries. Some of them provide opportunities for learned scholars to bring other works to bear on the issues raised in the commented text. In this sense, they are informed by deep scholarly engagement, rooted in a vast scholarly knowledge, and represent a substantial intellectual contribution. In a reevaluation of the intellectual production of the Islamic world in the so-called period of "decadence," Muhsin al-Musawi has persuasively argued that "compilers and writers of commentaries are not to be regarded merely as knowledge intermediaries; they wielded authority through their selection and choice of material, not to mention their proclaimed goal of resurrecting the dead through their own words and those of others."[3]

The third category, devotional writings, is found in most collections of West African Islamic manuscripts. They consist essentially of poetry written in Arabic, but also in African languages such as Fulfulde, Hausa, and Wolof. Most Sufi scholars wrote poems or collections of poems in praise of the Prophet Muhammad, and these poems are often recited during Sufi rituals and festivals. There are also a number of poems in praise of Sufi saints.

The fourth category, polemical writings, was produced abundantly from the beginning of the nineteenth century, when it was mainly a feature of the rivalry between the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya. Starting in the second half of the twentieth century, as the Wahhabi impact on West Africa increased, polemical writings consisted mainly of attacks on and defenses of Sufism. In the late twentieth century, from Senegal to Kenya, there was no African country with a Muslim population that had been left untouched by the polemics in regard to Sufism and its opponents.

The last and final category is that of political writings. In the nineteenth century, scholars wrote in Ajami and Arabic to protest against rulers. This is

particularly true of the Fodiawa, the community of Uthman Dan Fodio. In Hausaland, post-jihadist reformers, after bringing down the Habe kingdoms, restored the very system against which they had fought.[4] This led to the production of writings by opponents who condemned them. As noted by Bobboyi, drastic political change—such as that witnessed in Hausaland under the leadership of Shaykh Uthman Dan Fodio—could come only with huge sacrifices and great expectations. Whenever the leadership failed to meet these expectations, the very instruments used to overthrow the status quo could also be effectively exploited to subvert the new order.[5]

Drawing from this archive of writings, this chapter analyzes the ways in which Muslim scholars endeavored to shape an Islamic space of meaning in the Bilad al-Sudan, but one that was always contested. They did so by defining the Muslim political community, delimiting its boundaries, and determining who within the community gets what, when, and how.[6] They also strove to record the social and intellectual history of the Muslim community for future generations. These two concerns, I argue, have been central in the endeavors of Muslim intellectuals in the period between the seventeenth and the early twentieth centuries.

Defining the Muslim Political Community

The question of who is included in the Muslim community has been and is still debated. It was an important question in the medieval Bilad al-Sudan because of its implication for people's freedom or lack thereof, their social status, and other entitlements. The idea that some individuals could own others was accepted in the precolonial Islamic Sahel and elsewhere. The question then was whether there existed Islamic conventions governing the institution of slavery. More precisely, which category of people could become human commodities and why?

The slave trade has been central in the history, economic development, and state-building processes of most continents of the world, which understandably explains its importance in modern historiography. As the main global supplier of slaves throughout the second millennium, the black continent haunts much of the discussion about slavery. More than any traded commodity, slaves integrated Africa into the world political economy. The institution of slavery existed in Africa prior to the slave trade and Islamization, but the external demand for slaves no doubt considerably intensified it by enlarging the pool of people who

potentially could be enslaved.[7] The exportation of enslaved sub-Saharan Africans followed two directions. Lasting over a millennium and continuing well into the twentieth century, the first direction followed the Saharan trade routes to North Africa and/or the Red Sea to Asia. It is referred to as the Oriental or Islamic slave trade. Named the transatlantic slave trade, the second route of supply consisted of passage over the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas. It took place between the sixteenth and the nineteenth centuries, and reached its peak during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Because it was fairly well recorded, the transatlantic slave trade has been thoroughly studied. Slaving companies left historians with a rich archive in Western languages documenting the most crucial aspects of slavery, including statistics, regions of origin and destination, and slave markets. This archive has facilitated historical research on slavery in the Western academy. In addition, the presence of tens of millions of descendants of slaves in the Americas has prompted the rise of what has been called by various names, including black studies, Africana studies, diaspora studies, or African American studies, all of which devote considerable attention to slavery and its impact on the nation-building process of the Americas.

In contrast, the so-called Oriental slave trade[8] has not been studied nearly as thoroughly in modern universities, and this for various reasons. The first is the problem of sources. Due to poor preservation conditions, documents could not be preserved for the entire thousand or so years of the Oriental slave trade in Africa. Thus, much of the written record has been lost. In addition, the bulk of the available documents were written in Arabic, a language not accessible to many Europhone historians. That slavery was a much-debated topic in the African continent in the past several centuries is proven by a wealth of Arabic material, including commercial documents and notably correspondence between commercial agents and their masters;[9] legal treatises by Maliki authors setting general principles about enslavement, slave status, rights, and duties; and juridical verdicts produced to respond to specific instances of slavery.

Of such documents, one of the oldest to have been preserved is a treatise based on fatwas issued by Ahmad Baba in response to questions concerning slavery. This treatise, from which I quote extensively later to highlight Ahmad Baba's views, was translated by John Hunwick and Fatima Harrak as *The Ladder of Ascent: Towards Grasping the Law Concerning Transported Blacks*.[10] One of the very rare Sudani scholars to appear in all major reference works on Islam, including the three editions of the *Encyclopaedia of Islam* and the *Geschichte der Arabishen Litteratur* of Carl Brockelmann, Ahmad Baba (1556–1627) is a

much-celebrated scholar of the medieval Bilad al-Sudan. Since the mid-nineteenth century, when his work was first introduced to Western academic audiences,[11] quite a few pieces of writing devoted to his biography and scholarly works have been published.[12]

Ahmad Baba was born on October 26, 1556,[13] and died on October 22, 1627, in Timbuktu.[14] He was a teacher and a bibliophile. His library comprised sixteen hundred books in sixteenth-century Timbuktu. The Arabic Literature of Africa attributed fifty-eight scholarly works to him, including his fatwas on slavery. Ahmad Baba was known not only in the Bilad al-Sudan, but also in North Africa, where he sojourned after the fall of Songhay. As previously mentioned, Al-Mansur, the Moroccan ruler, sent an expeditionary force of four thousand soldiers led by Spaniard Pasha Jawdar to invade Songhay in 1591. Despite heroic resistance, the Arma (army of Moroccan musketeers) conquered Songhay amid huge destruction and for a short while established Moroccan vassal rule there. In the aftermath of the conquest, some prominent Timbuktu scholars, whose libraries the Moroccan invaders confiscated, were exiled in chains to Marrakesh.[15] All of them died in an epidemic of plague except Ahmad Baba, who survived and ultimately returned to Timbuktu.[16] The *Tarikh al-Sudan,* one of the major Timbuktu chronicles written by Ahmad Baba's student 'Abd al-Rahman al-Sa'di, poignantly narrates the events leading to their arrest and exile.[17] Ahmad Baba resided in Morocco between May 1594 and February 1608. After two years of house arrest, he was freed but was required to remain in residence in Marrakesh. He was invited to teach in a major Marrakesh college, the Congregational Mosque of the Sherifs, now called the Congregational Mosque of the Mawwasin.[18] He taught and composed several pieces of work in Marrakesh. Some of his students became very influential scholars and helped consolidate his reputation. They include Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Maqqari al-Tilimsani (d. 1041/1632); Ibn Abi Nu'aym al-Ghassani (d. 1032/1623), qadi of Fez; and Ibn al-Qaḍi, qadi of Meknes (d. 1025/1616).[19] A leading authority in Maliki jurisprudence, Ahmad Baba authored a much-cited bibliographic dictionary of Maliki jurists.[20]

Classical Islamic theory of international relations divides the world between the Abode of Islam and the Abode of War, a division largely dictated by realpolitik. In the jungle of pre-Islamic Arabia, relations between tribes were either governed by mutual alliance or enmity. When two conflicting tribes confronted each other, the victorious party disposed of the persons and goods of the defeated tribe as it saw fit. This was theorized in Islamic law in a similar way.

According to Maliki jurisprudence, the political leader of the Muslim community (imam) could do one of the following: kill defeated enemies, let them go free, make them pay ransom, make them pay the poll tax and retain their religion, or enslave them.[21]

The trade in human commodities was profitable in the medieval period, and racial prejudices against black people was so deeply entrenched that free-born Muslims, as previously mentioned, were being enslaved by other Muslims, partly because of the color of their skin. But pious Muslims were concerned about not violating Islamic rules governing slavery. Two individuals, named Sa'id Ibrahim al-Jirari and Yusuf b. Ibrahim b. 'Umar Al-Isi, consulted Ahmad Baba on the issue. Broadly speaking, they asked Ahmad Baba three sets of related questions about slavery in the early seventeenth century. The first set was about the timeline of Islamization of the Sudani regions that supplied North Africa with slaves. The second set of questions dealt with the burden of proving the status of slaves captured from lands known to have been Islamized long ago. The third set addressed deeper epistemological justifications of enslaving black people. The language in which the questions were framed suggests that both Al-Jirari and Al-Isi had some knowledge of Islamic rulings about slavery by earlier jurisconsults. But they wanted to take advantage of the reputation of Ahmad Baba as a leading exponent of Maliki jurisprudence and his presumed sound knowledge of the Islamization of the Sudan as a Timbuktu native. Concerning the first set of questions, Al-Jirari asked:

> What do you have to say . . . concerning slaves brought from lands whose people have been established to be Muslims, such as the lands of Borno, 'Afnu, Kano, Gao, Katsina, and the like whose adherence to Islam is widely acknowledged among us. Is it permissible to have possession of them and to buy and sell them as we wish or not? . . . For it is known that, according to the Shari'a, the reason why it is allowed to own [others] is [their] unbelief. Thus, whoever purchases an unbeliever is allowed to own him, but not in the contrary case. Conversion to Islam subsequent to the existence of the aforementioned condition has no effect on continued ownership. Were those lands which we mentioned, and other similar lands of the Muslims of the Sudan, conquered and [their] people enslaved in a state of unbelief, while their conversion occurred subsequently—hence there is no harm in [owning them] or not? One of the qadis of the Sudan reported that the imam who conquered them whilst they were unbelievers chose to spare them as slaves, since he had the choice . . . and that they still remain in a state of slavery, and whenever the sultan needs any of them he brings in as many as he wants.[22]

Ahmed Baba concurred that unbelief was a necessary condition for owning a person, but subject to some limitations. Muslim princes who made a contract of protection with Christians and Jews spared them from enslavement because they lived in the Abode of Truce (*Dar al-Sulh*), an intermediary category in Islamic theory of international relations between the Abode of Islam (*Dar al-Islam*) and the Abode of War (*Dar al-Harb*).[23] Concerning the periodization of conversion of the Islamized Sudani Muslims to Islam, Ahmad Baba stated the following:

> You asked: Were these aforementioned lands belonging to the Muslims of the Sudan conquered and their people enslaved in a state of unbelief, while their conversion to Islam occurred subsequently, so there is no harm [in owning them] or not? The reply is that they converted to Islam without anyone conquering them, like the people of Kano, Katsina, Bornu and Songhay. We never heard that anyone conquered them before their conversion to Islam.[24]

Finally, Ahmad Baba dismissed in the following terms Al-Jirari's comment that a Sudani qadi had ruled that some of these groups were conquered before conversion and, although not captured at the moment of conquest, were spared as potential slaves who could at a subsequent date be called to serve at any time:

> You said: one of the qadis of the Sudan reported that the imam who conquered them whilst they were unbelievers chose to spare them [as slaves]. I say this is something we have never heard of, nor has [any information about it] reached us. So ask this Sudani qadi who this imam was, and at what time he conquered their land, and which land he conquered. Let him specify all this to you. His statement is very close to being devoid of truth. If you investigate now, you will not find anyone who will confirm the truth of what he said. What is based upon what he says, therefore, is not to be given consideration.[25]

As Hunwick and Harrak note, Al-Jirari suggested that "the conquered unbelievers were simply left where they were but were considered slaves who could be taken into service at any time."[26] What was at stake was a definition of who could be enslaved, purchased, or sold. Defining slaves as a social category would have allowed the enslavement of a fairly large population, including free Muslims.[27]

A second set of questions asked by Al-Jirari dealt with the burden of proving slave status of people raided in areas known to have been Islamized. It is well known that at the height of the slave trade, many raiders, regardless of their

religion, felt little bound by "ethical" rules governing the capture and sale of slaves. Muslims and non-Muslims alike were raiding lands known to have been Islamized for a long time, and their Muslim inhabitants were enslaved and sold. The practice was sufficiently commonplace to warrant the issuance of several fatwas by Muslim jurists. But Maliki jurists were divided about on whom the burden of proof should fall.[28] While mentioning in a long response a series of conflicting opinions by Maliki jurists on the topic, Ahmad Baba unambiguously ruled in favor of obligating the purchaser to prove slave status and giving the person claiming to be Muslim the benefit of the doubt.

> In the *Nawazil* of Abu Asbagh Ibn Sahl, [we read that] the generally accepted view is that whoever claims to be free and mentions that he is from a land in which free persons are frequently sold, and if the purchaser confirms that he bought him from such a land, then . . . the purchaser is charged with proving the person's slave status . . . Sidi Mahmud the qadi of Timbuktu . . . would accept their word without requiring them to prove that they are from those lands.[29]

The third set of questions relates to deeper philosophical issues about what received wisdom feeds racial stereotypes against black people. Al-Jirari raised the question of the Noah curse, one of the mythological origins of the blackness of the skin.

> What is the meaning of the hadith mentioned by al-Suyuti in *Azhar al-'urush fi akhbar al-Hubush* (The Flowers of the Throne Concerning Information about the Ethiopians) when he said Ibn Mas'ud reported that Noah bathed and saw his son looking at him and said to him; "are you watching me whilst I bathe? May God change your color!" And he became black and he is the ancestor of the Sudan. Ibn Jarir [al-Tabari] said: "Noah prayed for Shem that his descendants should be prophets and messengers, and he cursed Ham, praying that his descendants should be slaves to Shem and Japhet."[30]

Drawing from authoritative sources, Ahmad Baba dismissed in unequivocal terms these stereotypes:

> As regards the hadith which you cited from Jalal al-Din al-Suyuti's *Azhar al-'urush fi akhbar al-Hubush,* coming from the hadith of al-Hakim, on the authority of Ibn Mas'ud, that Noah was bathing and saw his son looking at him and said him: "Are you watching me bathe? May God change your color!" And he became black and he is the ancestor of the Sudan—I came across it myself in his book entitled *Raf' Sha'n al-Hubshan* (The Raising of the Status of the Ethiopians), and the actual words are: "As for the blackness

> of their skins, Ibn al-Jawzi said: "it is evident that they were created as they are without any apparent reason." However, we narrate [the following account]: the children of Noah divided up the earth and the children of Shem settled at the center of the earth and they had among them both darkness of skin and whiteness. The sons of Japhet settled in a northerly and easterly direction and they had amongst them both redness of skin and whiteness. The sons of Ham settled in the south and in the west and their color changed. He [Ibn al-Jawzi] said: "As for what is related about Noah's nakedness being exposed and Ham not covering it and being cursed, this is something not proven and is not correct."[31]

This intellectual exchange is enlightening about discourses on and practices of slavery in seventeenth-century North and West Africa. Ahmad Baba knew Islamic rulings very well and was able to back his juridical verdicts with teachings of the highest authorities in the fields of hadith and *fiqh*. This exchange was not the first fatwa produced by Ahmad Baba on slavery. We know from another set of replies by Ahmad Baba that, while in residence in Morocco,[32] he was invited by a man named Al-Isi to update him through a fatwa about the religious distribution of the population and timeline of the Islamization of the Bilad al-Sudan, which provides clues to knowing who could and could not be owned according to Islamic law. Al-Isi's knowledge of Islam in the Bilad al-Sudan relied on a previous fatwa issued by Sidi Makhluf al-Balbali:

> Sidi Makhluf al-Balbali mentioned in his reply that those among them who are Muslims . . . it is not lawful to own them. Similarly all of the Fulani, though they dispute with one another and some raid others, making predatory incursions, unjustly and aggressively, like the Arabs who attack free Muslims and sell them unjustly. It is not lawful to possess any of them . . . Then we wish you to give clarification of this question, since Islam may have entered some of these lands after his death, or [in other cases] it may have disappeared, and [people] may have returned to unbelief. We also wish to have your reply about what we shall mention concerning what we heard about the names of some tribes, and what you know about the lands and tribes we have not heard . . . So that we could discover the truth regarding all those who are lawful to be owned and those who are to be avoided.[33]

In his replies, Ahmad Baba provided an exhaustive discussion of the religious composition of the population of the Bilad al-Sudan in the early seventeenth century—which groups had been Muslims for a while, which were partially Muslim, and which groups did not convert to Islam in the west and central Bilad al-Sudan:

> Those whom we have ascertained to be Muslim are all the people of Songhay and its kingdom [stretching for a distance of] some two months in length. Similarly all of Kano are Muslim since ancient times, likewise Katsina, Zakzak, and Gobir. However, close to them are unbelieving people who the Muslims may raid because of their extreme proximity, so we have heard, and they bring them to their place as unbelievers and slaves. As regard to these people, if it is established among you that a slave woman is from these unbelievers and was merely raised in the city of Kano or Katsina or Zakzak or Kabbi, and subsequently converted to Islam, then there is no harm in buying them, since she was taken captive while an unbeliever . . . Similarly, all the people of Borno are Muslims, but close to them also are unbelievers whom the people of Borno raid. The ruling is as before . . . The People of the Rock are of different groups: some are Muslims . . . if anyone of them is made captive, then beware and keep clear of him, for he is a free Muslim. Then there are people . . . forming part of another populace which only their creator can count. These groups are unbelievers until [the] present day. Whomever of them you get hold of, buy him for he was made captive as unbeliever.[34]

Ahmad Baba's reply to Al-Jirari and Al-Isi discussed extensively the status of Islamization of the west and central Sudan, including blacks and some Arabized Berbers. He obviously was not totally opposed to slavery or the enslavement of black people, but he did object to the practice of enslaving Muslims, which was commonplace in the Maghreb, as he was able to witness during his years of exile in Morocco. We do not know how widely this specific fatwa circulated in the Bilad al-Sudan or to what extent it affected practices of slavery. But we do know that defining who is Muslim remained a major debate in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, during which time the slave trade peaked. The demand for slaves contributed to fatally undermining the moral foundations of West African societies. Both Islamized and non-Islamized societies violated rules about enslavement. While Ahmad Baba and other seventeenth-century intellectuals were essentially pacifist, subsequent generations of scholars had a stronger commitment to political struggle. Indeed, from the eighteenth century on, clerical classes rose in various parts of the Bilad al-Sudan to challenge the moral bankruptcy of West African societies, of which slavery and political oppression by ruling classes were the most visible manifestations. The drawing of the boundaries of the Muslim community and the qualifications to exercise religious and political authority became even more important in this context. It determined patterns of alliance and conflicts not just between Muslims and non-Muslims, but also among self-designated Muslims, specifically between

idealists longing for an ideal Islamic social order and realists of the Suwarian tradition. In many areas, very learned and assertive scholars used sophisticated Islamic legal reasoning to justify emigration and/or military action against those who stood in their way. In the process, they clashed with "pagans" and with self-designated Muslims who would not embrace their project. Many such instances are well documented in the nineteenth century.

In what follows, I spotlight two of the most telling illustrations. The first one is the Fodiawa justification for attacking Hausa states and Borno in the nineteenth century. The second is Umar Tall's elaborate explanation for attacking the Islamic state of Masina. These examples are particularly important because they illustrate the rise to political prominence of the two most impactful clerical groups in the west and central Sudan. The Fodiawa ruled the most powerful economic and political system in nineteenth-century central Sudan, while Umar Tall succeeded in establishing his authority for a short period of time in more than 150,000 square kilometers of the western Sudan. Never before and never again has such a large territory been submitted to an Islamic authority in the western Sudan.[35]

Takfir: The Justification for Waging War against Fellow Muslims

Contemporary Islamic jihadi organizations have justified war against Muslim governments on the grounds that they have not ruled according to Allah's revelation. These Islamists claim to have been inspired by Abu 'l A'la Maududi or Sayyid Qutb, who argued that sovereignty belonged only to God and that any ruler who does not rule according to what Allah has revealed is an apostate whose unbelief demands holy war. This debate on modern Islamism is, however, often conducted without reference to earlier intellectual discussion on a similar topic. I have argued elsewhere that a look at nineteenth-century revivalist movements reveals striking similarities between new and old Islamism.[36] I will further illustrate this contention here by referring to pamphlets produced by Uthman Dan Fodio in Hausaland at the turn of the nineteenth century.

In his biography of Uthman Dan Fodio, Mervyn Hiskett argued that he was "a scholastic and his intellectual assumptions were those of an old world."[37] In a rejoinder, Sudanese historian M. A. Al-Hajj hypothesized that the intellectual work of Uthman Dan Fodio was produced in response to specific historical events. To back up his claim, Al-Hajj subdivided Dan Fodio's forty-year career

as a writer into three main phases in relation to his political project.[38] First, he treated the pre-jihad phase (1774–1804), in which Dan Fodio, in his writings, teachings, and preaching, emphasized clarifying belief and unbelief, promoting education and literacy, and denouncing those local customs and traditions deemed incompatible with Islam. This phase was characterized by relative moderation, because Uthman Dan Fodio believed that he could peacefully promote the Islamic order, for which he longed, through preaching and teaching. The second phase (1804–1808) coincides with the jihad period. At this juncture, Dan Fodio had lost any illusion of a peaceful Islamization from below because of Hausa rulers' determination to prevent Muslims from practicing their religion as they saw fit. To galvanize the energy of his followers, he understandably focused on drawing on his writings and preaching the boundaries between belief and unbelief, friends and foes. His approach was very Manichaean: one is either a friend who allies with the jihad and, thus, a Muslim, or one is an opponent and becomes an unbeliever regardless of one's knowledge of and commitment to Islam. A third, post-jihad period (1808–1817) focused on the consolidation of the caliphate. At this juncture, the community had already toppled all Hausa states and established its rule in what became the Sokoto Caliphate. As a consequence of the routinization of charisma, the concern of Dan Fodio shifted from identifying and combating opponents to a preoccupation with state building and community preservation. He became more moderate in his views.

Uthman Dan Fodio began his preaching career in 1774, when he was twenty years old.[39] A decade later, his following, known as Jama'a, centered in Degel, a town that was part of the city-state of Gobir and had grown considerably. In 1788, Dan Fodio exacted from the then sultan of Gobir Bawa the commitment not to interfere with his plans to promote Islam. Per that request, the sultan pledged to allow him to preach in Gobir and to let people who so wished to join him. The sultan further agreed that all men wearing a turban (meaning scholars) be treated with respect, that all those held prisoner be freed, and, finally, that citizens of Gobir not be burdened by taxes.[40] It was in that spirit that Dan Fodio completed his magnum opus sometime before 1793.[41] Titled *The Revival of the Sunna and the Destruction of Innovation,*[42] this erudite work of thirty-five chapters drew on dozens of sources,[43] reviewing a wide range of creeds and rituals, and comparing and contrasting what conforms to the tradition of the Prophet Muhammad and what falls within the realm of "Satanic innovations." In jurisprudence, he draws from the most authoritative in Maliki

texts, including the *Muwatta* of Malik b. Anas, the *Mudawwana* of Sahnun, the *Mukhtasar* of Khalil, and the *Risala* of Ibn Abi Zayd al-Qayrawani. In theology, he draws from Al-Sanusi's treatises and on al-Laqani's *Jawharat al-Tawhid* (The Gem of Islamic Theology). He uses the main treatises of hadith, such as Muslim and Bukhari. Writing on Sufism, he uses the famous *Ihya 'Ulum al-Din* (Revival of Religious Sciences) of Al-Ghazzali and the *Hikam* of Ibn 'Ata Allah al-Iskandari, along with the *'Umdat al-Murid al-Sadiq* (The Reliance of the Sincere Disciple) of Zarruq. Writing about sira, he uses the *Shifa* of qadi Iyad. In matters related to legal rulings, Dan Fodio draws from the *Mi'yar* of al-Wansharisi. In political theory, he cites the *Siraj al-Muluk* (Lamp of Kings) of Tartushi, which is a classic in the Islamic "mirror of princes" genre. Themes covered in his work include faith, prayer, and fasting; rules governing the building and attendance of mosques, relieving oneself, performing major and minor ablutions, alms giving, pilgrimage, commerce, inheritance, food and drink; and seeking remedies from sickness, spiritual purification, closing, visions and dreams, circumcision, funerals, marriage, oaths, and slaughtering animals.

This book of his makes clear Dan Fodio's project of creating a new Muslim moral subject living in a society governed by the Sunna of Prophet Muhammad in Gobir. The text established his reputation not just as a scholar, but as a community leader with a vision to bring about fundamental reforms toward a real Islamic order. His community kept increasing in subsequent years. Not long after the completion of *The Revival of the Sunna and the Destruction of Innovation,* the relations between his community and the sultan of Gobir started to deteriorate. The growing following of Dan Fodio worried the sultan of Gobir, who feared that he was creating a state within a state. Nafata, who became sultan of Gobir in 1794, decided to reverse Bawa's accommodationist policies toward Dan Fodio and his community. He ruled toward the end of the last decade of the nineteenth century that nobody except Dan Fodio be allowed to preach. He further banned Muslims from wearing the turban and veil and ordered that converts whose parents were not Muslim return to their former religion.[44] As documented in the Sokoto jihad literature, the community not long after this confronted the troops of Gobir, then ruled by Yunfa, the son of Nafata who became sultan in 1802. In a strong requisitory, Dan Fodio had unambiguously shifted the focus of his critique to Hausa rulers, whom he wanted to disqualify to mobilize the crowd for jihad. In a very erudite writing of the jihad period titled "On the Obligation to Emigrate," Dan Fodio

revisited Ahmad Baba's fatwa to argue that Hausaland did not qualify as a Muslim country.

> Another class is those lands where Islam predominates and unbelief is rare such as Borno, Kano, Katsina, Songhay, and Mali according to the examples given by Ahmad Baba . . . These . . . are [also] lands of unbelief without any doubt, since the spread of Islam there is [only] among the masses but as for their sultans, they are unbelievers . . . even though they profess Islam . . . It is undisputed that the status of the land is that of its ruler—if the ruler be a Muslim, the land is a land of Islam and if he be an unbeliever, the land is a land of unbelief, from which flight is obligatory.[45]

During the first decade of the nineteenth century, Dan Fodio's followers conquered most of Hausaland. It was in this period that Dan Fodio authored the work *The Book of Difference between the Governments of the Muslims and the Governments of the Unbelievers,*[46] destined for his followers who conquered Hausa states. Unlike in *The Revival of Sunna and the Destruction of Innovation,* he does not content himself with making general criticisms of the social and political order. He provides a detailed critique of the Hausa kingdoms, entirely refuting the notion that they are Islamic and explaining to his followers how the ideal Islamic government differed from the governments of pre-jihad Hausa kingdoms:

> Indeed, the intention of the unbelievers in their governments is only the fulfilling of their lust for they are like the beast . . . One of the ways of their government is succession to the emirate by hereditary right and by force to the exclusion of consultation . . . one of the ways of their government is the building of their sovereignty upon three things: the people's persons, their honor, and their possessions; and whomsoever they wish to kill or exile/or violate his honor or devour his wealth they do so in pursuit of their lusts, without any right in the Shari'a. One of the ways of their government is their imposing on the people monies not laid down by the Shari'a . . . One of the ways of their governments is their intentionally eating whatever food they wish, whether it is religiously permitted or forbidden, and wearing whatever clothes they wish, whether religiously permitted or forbidden, and drinking what beverages (*ta'am*), they wish . . . and taking what women they wish without marriage contract, and living in decorated palaces, whether religiously permitted or forbidden, and spreading soft (decorated) carpets as they wish, whether religiously permitted or forbidden. One of the ways of their government which is well-known, is that they bring presents which they call gaisuwa. One of the ways of their governments is the devouring of

the alms of women who are subject to their authority. One of the ways of their governments is to place many women in their houses, until the number of women of some of them amounts to one thousand or more. One of the ways of their government is to delay in the paying of a debt, and this is injustice. One of the ways of their government is that the superintendent of the market takes from all the parties to a sale, and the meat which he takes on each market day from the butchers . . . One of the ways of their governments is the taking of people's beasts of burden without their permission to carry the sultan's (food) to him . . . One of the ways of their government is to change the laws of God, and an example of that is that the Shari'a decrees that the adulterer shall be flogged if he is not married, and stoned if he is married, and that the thief shall have his hand cut off, and that he who kills a person deliberately shall be killed, or if the killing was unintentional, shall be ordered to pay the blood money, which shall be divided among the heirs of the slain man . . . One of the ways of their government which is also well-known is that whoever dies in their country, they take his property, and they call it "inheritance," and they know that it is without doubt injustice. One of the ways of their government is to impose tax on merchants, and other travelers. One of the ways of their government, which is also well-known, is that one may not pass by their farms, nor cross them without (suffering) bad treatment from their slaves. One of the ways of their government is that if the people's animals go among their animals, they do not come out again unless they give a proportion of them, and if the sultan's animals stray, and are found spoiling the cultivated land and other things, they are not driven off. One of the ways of their governments is to compel the people to serve in their armies, even though they are Muslims . . . and whosoever does not go, they impose upon him a money payment, not imposed by the Shari'a. One of the ways of their government which is also well known, is that if you have an adversary (in law) and he precedes you to them, and gives them some money, then your word will not be accepted by them, even though they know for a certainty of your truthfulness, unless you give them more than your adversary gave. One of the ways of their governments is to shut the door in the face of the needy. One of the ways of their governments is their forbidding to the worshippers of God part of that which is legal for them, such as the veiling of women, which is incumbent upon them, and turbans for men, which is Sunna for them . . . One of the ways of their government is that they . . . will not abandon the custom which they found their forebears practicing, even though it is evil. One of the ways of their government is the putting of dust upon their heads when giving a greeting, and it is an evil custom . . . One of the ways of their government is their being occupied with doing vain things (continuously) by night or by day, without legal purpose, such as beating

drums, and lutes, and kettle-drums . . . One of the ways of their governments is the giving of a gift to one who conducts them before the ruler. One of the ways of their governments is lying and treachery and pride, and you cannot see one of them who does not give himself airs, and anyone who shows the least lack of respect (for them), they punish him for that; and these characteristics which have been mentioned, all of them are according to the way of the unbelievers in their governments, and everyone who follows their way in his emirship then he has in truth followed the way of Hell fire.[47]

After conquering the Hausa kingdoms of Northern Nigeria denounced as non-Muslim, the community of Fodio attacked Borno in 1805, which they likewise charged as being non-Muslim. They defeated the army of the king of Borno, but they were later driven out by a coalition led by Muhammad Al-Kanami (1776–1837), a very learned scholar and political leader of Borno. Al-Kanami exchanged letters with Muhammad Bello, refuting the argument of the Fodiawa that attacking Borno was lawful.[48]

As Muslim clerics fought to establish states in West Africa in the nineteenth century, they often clashed with other Muslims. The typical justification for attacking other Muslim states was that their rulers apostacized by befriending non-Muslims or allying themselves with non-Muslims against Muslims. A number of contemporary jihadi organizations justified waging war against Muslim governments on the grounds that they were allies or puppets of Western regimes. A close look at the nineteenth-century polemical Islamic literature in West Africa reveals historical antecedents to such patterns of proclaiming other Muslims "infidels."

Another important illustration is the jihad of Umar Tall, a towering figure of nineteenth-century West African Islam who succeeded in establishing a huge empire centered around Segou in the mid-nineteenth century. Umar Tall had sojourned in Sokoto following his pilgrimage to Mecca. During his seven-year stay, not only was he exposed to the jihad literature of the central Sudan, which provided a model for the region in the nineteenth century, but his proximity to Sultan Muhammad Bello enabled him to learn the art of statecraft. Umar left Sokoto after the death of Bello with the intention of waging jihad in the western Sudan. He initially sought to extend the Islamic zone of influence by targeting and conquering non-Muslim Bambara states. But he also ultimately clashed with another Muslim state, the Diina, established by Ahmad Lobbo, a former disciple of Dan Fodio.[49] In his work titled "Sword of Truth concerning What Happened between Umar and Ahmad b. Ahmad,"[50] Umar

explained why he attacked the Diina. His text drew inspiration from a pamphlet with a similar title attributed to Uthman Dan Fodio, in which Dan Fodio claimed to have had a vision of the Prophet Muhammad and 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani girding him with a sword of truth to wage war against false Muslims and to establish an Islamic state in Hausaland. The arguments, methodology, and canonical sources from which Umar Tall drew for his demonstration are very similar to Uthman Dan Fodio's requisitory against Hausa states and Borno, as exposed in Dan Fodio's works mentioned earlier.

A crucial notion in the demonstration of Umar Tall, which is also found in the Fodiawa's arguments against Borno, is the notion of befriending (*muwalat*) unbelievers against fellow Muslims. Umar Tall discusses five different types of muwalat. First is the muwalat in the sense of natural love that one might feel toward a partner or a family member, which is permissible. Second is the love or spirit of good understanding that one displays in public toward infidels out of fear. This is an attitude that necessity might dictate to pious Muslims and for which they cannot be blamed. Third is the muwalat toward infidels aimed at procuring goods that they possess. This is forbidden according to Umar. Fourth is the assistance provided to infidels protected by a truce in conformity with the Shari'a against forms of injustice threatening them. This is lawful. Fifth is the muwalat consisting of providing assistance to infidels in a way that contradicts the Shari'a and contributes to undermining and destroying Islamic religion. This is the case when Muslims provide assistance to "People of War" (non-Muslims) and help them commit acts contrary to the Shari'a. This, according to Umar Tall, is an "act of infidelity."[51] In the last paragraph of his work, Umar proclaims his adversary Ahmad. b. Ahmad an infidel in the following terms:

> From this, it is clear that he [Ahmad] has provided a testimony against his own self that he is not a part of the Islamic nation (*milla*). On the contrary, he has joined those who commit hypocrisy, those who believe neither in God, nor in his Messenger, and who try to prevent the fulfillment of the will of the Almighty God. This is evidenced by his claim that the Pagans did convert to Islam, and by his misleading of his followers whom he convinced that he and his pagans are following the path of the truth and that he and his followers are better guided than we are in the path of the truth. In addition he claims that we erred to the extent of allowing and even forcing pagans to fight against us, to shed our blood, and legitimizing the seizure of our property and the violation of our honor. He therefore had joined the party of the hypocrites among the People of the Book.[52]

After the many successful jihads of the nineteenth century, jihad leaders faced a daunting task: to build "genuine Islamic institutions" in the ruins of those states that they denounced and brought down. Such a radical transformation was far from easy, because the leaders had a very diverse following. In Hausaland, for example, the number of idealists with a firm commitment to an Islamic state were not that many. After the jihad, quite a few combatants were tempted to enjoy the privileges of the Hausa royal system—and in fact succeeded in restoring it by the mid-nineteenth century.[53] The vision of the Islamic state and how to promote it was an important debate throughout the nineteenth century.

Constructing Political Authority

The work of Abdullahi Dan Fodio[54] opens an interesting window into this debate within the community of the Fodiawa. To relate Abdullahi's intellectual production to its political context, Sidi Mohamed Mahibou suggested that it can be periodized into four phases. The first is the period from 1777 to 1804, in which he is a disciple and the spokesperson of his brother, Uthman Dan Fodio. Abdullahi produced much of his poetry in that period. The second period is the early jihad, from 1804 to 1807. Toward the end of this period, Abdullahi was disenchanted with the conduct of the jihad to the point of withdrawing from the community and attempting to go to Mecca for the pilgrimage. During the third period (1807–1812), he formed a separate group of committed believers and produced most of his political writings. The fourth period starts in 1812, when Uthman Dan Fodio divided the Sokoto Caliphate into two parts, both under his supervision. In one part, he appointed his son Muhammad Bello, and in the other, his brother Abdullahi, to enable each to devise his own vision of the Islamic state. Abdullahi wrote his commentaries of the Qur'an and most of his works on Sufism during this last period.

A distinguished feature of Abdullahi's political works is that all three contain the word *enlightening—diya* in Arabic—in their titles,[55] suggesting an intellectual effort to enlighten people about an important issue. Written in Kano at the request of its inhabitants in 1806, the first is titled "Enlightening Rulers concerning Their Rights and Duties." This treaty was the opportunity to express disagreements over a number of issues regarding the organization of the jihad and the state in Sokoto. In five chapters, this text covers the themes of emigration (*hijra*); the appointment, rights, and duties of the imam and his administration;

and the politics based on Shari'a (*siyasa shar'iyya*). It concludes with the discussion of pilgrimage and pious visits to the shrine of the Prophet.[56] On the issue of hijra, Abdullahi supported the view that Muslims should emigrate from any land where the practice of religion is not possible. But he does not proclaim infidels those Muslims who failed to emigrate. The first chapter dealing with the appointment of the imam and the rights and duties of the imam and his administration is particularly interesting. Abdullahi argues that the institution of the imam, which is interchangeable with that of caliph, is a permanent institution in Islam. But he acknowledges that the institution has often degenerated to kingship in the past. This was particularly the case for Muslim rulers who did not procure and redistribute wealth according to the Shari'a.

The imam, according to Abdullahi, must first and foremost be just. Other qualifications include knowledge, integrity, maturity, competence, and male gender. He also discusses two criteria that are controversial among scholars: that the imam must be a member of the tribe of the Quraysh and the sole leader of all the Muslim community. If the imam is just and fulfills all other criteria, Muslims must obey him. Concerning the duties of the imam, Abdullahi argues that he must be pious and concerned about community matters. He must be convinced that he is the representative of God and successor of the Prophet. He must abide by the law to provide a model for his subjects. He appoints able and just functionaries to staff the administration of the state (notably vizirs, emirs, and judges). Through periodic meetings, he must maintain communication with subjects in order to be updated about their concerns and remedy them to the best of his capacity. He must collect taxes and redistribute state income in conformity with the Shari'a. Finally, he must decline any form of gifts, because accepting them can lead to the corruption of the state apparatus and its mores.[57]

In the post-jihad period, Abdullahi had expressed disagreements with his brother Uthman's views on a number of issues regarding the organization of the state, including the use of musical instruments; the use of the title of king; the wearing of clothes ornamented by gold and silver; and the related question of the magnificent appearance of state authorities such as imams, judges, and governors.[58] In his early writings (such as *On the Obligation to Emigrate*), Uthman Dan Fodio condemns the use of musical instruments on the basis of their rejection by many Muslim jurists. But in his *Najm al-ikhwan* (Star of the Brothers), Uthman Dan Fodio argues that they should not be systematically rejected, whereas Abdullahi had consistently opposed the use of any musical

instrument, basing his opinion on the majority of Muslim jurists. Regarding the magnificent appearance of state officials, Uthman Dan Fodio condoned it in his *Najm al-ikhwan,* on the grounds that, unlike believers during the lifetime of the Prophet, later generations of Muslims tended to respect people of authority merely for their majestic appearance. Abdullahi disagreed and argued instead that piety is all that is required from an imam. On the issue of ornamentation of clothes with gold and silver, Uthman Dan Fodio suggested that the occasional wearing of such was a way of expressing gratitude for God's favor and a way of raising the morale of Muslims and humiliating unbelievers. Abdullahi totally rejected that opinion, on the grounds that no Maliki scholars allowed it. Finally, Uthman Dan Fodio argued in his *Najm al-ikhwan* that names like *khilafa* (caliphate), *imara* (emirate) *Wilaya* (principality), *Saltana* (sultanate), and *Mulk* (kingdom) are acceptable. Abdullahi had expressed disagreement with such an opinion in both the *Diya al-Sultan* (Enlightening the Ruler) and *Diya Ulu al-amr* (Enlightening Those Charged with Authority).

Chronicling History

A second set of writings in the Islamic archive that attempted to consolidate Islamic identity deals with the chronicling of social and intellectual history. Most of these writings are chronicles and hagiographies. Several chronicles were composed to describe the political history of the whole or parts of the Bilad al-Sudan. They focused on the rulers and the major events during their rule. Some chronicles, such as the *Tarikh al-Sudan* by Al-Sa'di, provide biographical accounts of scholars and holy men of Jenne and Timbuktu,[59] but it was really the biographical dictionaries that specialized in mapping the intellectual landscape. Biographical dictionaries primarily are of two types. The first category is sect specific. The *Nayl al-ibtihaj,* or its revised form, *Kifayat al-Muhtaj,* by Ahmad Baba falls within this category. It complements the *Dibaj al-mudhahhab* by Ibn Farhun with a few more biographies, including eighteen from the Bilad al-Sudan. The second category covers the ulama of a specific region, regardless of religious affiliation. The eighteenth-century work titled *Fath al-Shakur* by al-Bartili[60] belongs to this category. This genre remained active until the twentieth century. The *Al-Wasit fi tarajim udaba Shinqit,* which specifically covers present-day Mauritania,[61] is an important illustration.

Historians of West Africa have diverged in their interpretation of the motivations of the chronicle writers.[62] In an analysis of the ideological background

of the Timbuktu chronicles, Jean Pierre Olivier de Sardan and Djibril Tamsir Niane have seen the chronicles as a celebration of the social hierarchy of Songhay prior to the Moroccan invasion—that is, the alliance between the Askya dynasty and the learned class of urban traders to dominate the large population of slaves. In a critique of such an interpretation, Paulo F. de Moraes Farias raised a number of important and valid points. While recognizing that the seventeenth-century chronicles are useful historical sources for the study of the region, Moraes Farias argued that the chronicles are not always factually true. Using epigraphic evidence in royal tombstones of Gao, he showed, for example, that the title of Askya was used at least two centuries before the time mentioned in the chronicles—the arrival of the Askya Mohammad Ture's dynasty in Songhay. Moraes Farias showed that the authors of the seventeenth-century chronicles built on earlier reliable writings, but that sometimes they also borrowed from the local folklore and myths. Above all, their motivation was to reconcile the ruling Moroccan Arma with the surviving Askya elites. To do so, they constructed the notion that three great empires succeeded one another in the Sahel (Ghana, followed by Mali, followed by Songhay), a construction that informed the modern historical reconstruction of the Sahel. Moraes Farias contrasted such imperial claims for Songhay with the more modest description of Songhay as a mere sultanate by Ahmad Baba a few decades earlier. The authors of the seventeenth-century Timbuktu chronicles, Moraes Farias argued, provided a unified narrative of the Sahel from time immemorial to the moment of their writing, in order to present preinvasion Songhay as a successor empire to Ghana and Mali, which could rival in scope the Moroccan state. Moraes Farias further argued that the attempt to reconcile elites was the raison d'être of the seventeenth-century chronicles as a genre. This endeavor was not successful, because the Arma and Songhay elites were divided. After the failure of this attempt, the seventeenth-century chronicle died as a genre.[63]

A third school of thought, which resonates with my own position, envisions the chronicles in the *longue durée* in the genealogy of the *tarjama* or the *tabaqat*.[64] In his introduction to the annotated translation of the *Fath al-Shakur*, Chouki El-Hamel argues that the *Fath al-Shakur* belongs to the same intellectual genealogy as the Timbuktu chronicles and the biographical dictionaries written by Ahmad Baba. It was written with the goal of updating and completing them by putting emphasis on reputed ulama of the Bilad al-Takrur and their contribution to Islamic knowledge and particularly Islamic law. By

producing biographical dictionaries of ulama of their region, Muslim scholars in the Bilad al-Sudan hoped to make their intellectual contribution better known, and to be rewarded for doing so.[65] The selection of whom to include in such a compilation was of course arbitrary. Most compilers cited and praised scholars that they admired. Al-Bartili[66] draws from earlier compilations of works such as the *Tarikh al-Sudan* of Al-Sa'di. Of the 210 authors listed in the *Fath al-Shakur,* he composed 167 pieces and reproduced the remaining 43 from earlier works such as *Tarikh al-Sudan.* The overwhelming majority (125) of scholars listed in Al-Bartili's dictionaries claimed Arab origin; 38 are of Berber origin, and only 15 of black Sudani ethnicity. Al-Bartili includes many scholars from North Africa, such as Ibn Battuta, who only visited the Sudan briefly. He even includes scholars from North Africa and elsewhere who never sojourned in the Bilad al-Sudan. El-Hamel argued that Al-Bartili was trying to prove that the Takrur, understood as the western Sahara, was actually part of the Arab world. To be fair to Al-Bartili, his goal was simply to cover the most prominent intellectuals (*a'yan 'ulama*). By doing so, one could argue, he aimed to provide a picture of the Bilad al-Sudan as fully integrated in a unified Islamic epistemological universe to which he believed it belonged.

While Al-Bartili was writing from Walata in the eighteenth century, his fellow countryman Muhammad al-Amin Al-Shinqiti, who wrote in Egypt in the early twentieth century,[67] shared the same goal: to make the contribution of pious and learned Muslim scholars better known. When Al-Shinqiti informed a learned Egyptian scholar about his project, the latter was surprised, because he believed that only peoples of the East had contributed to Islamic knowledge. Authors of chronicles and biographies emphasized the importance of piety. Their chronicles and biographies conveyed an Islamic vision of history according to which God is always on the side of believers and in which the best people of God's creation are the ulama or the *awliya.* The miracles of the saints are narrated on several occasions in such works, as is the punishment of all enemies of God who ventured to harm them. In this sense, the Timbuktu chronicles were a genre alive and well in Sahelian history before and after the seventeenth century.

It is clear from our survey that Maliki jurisprudence provided the larger discursive space for learning, teaching, and writings in the Islamic west in the post-Almoravid period. When clerical classes reached a critical mass and had enough confidence to pursue the Almoravid project of implementing a strict Islam—i.e., in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries—they drew extensively

on major Maliki texts to state their political project of creating a new Muslim subject and promoting an Islamic political dispensation in the Bilad al-Sudan. While the language of scholars is rooted in theology, their texts addressed real-world concerns. They delimited the boundaries of the political community to determine who should get what as well as when and how. Like Muslims elsewhere, Sudani scholars shared in what Talal Asad describes as the Islamic discursive tradition, that is "a tradition of Muslim discourse that addresses itself to conceptions of the Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present."[68]

In Chapter 6, I will shift my attention to the study of the response of Muslim intellectuals to European colonial rule. As I will show, the colonial state had a very ambivalent relationship with the Arabic language and Muslim scholars. The presence of an educational system and literates in Arabic was clearly an asset in the process of consolidation of the colonial state. Their link to the precolonial Islamic state and jihadi and anticolonial credentials was perceived as a threat, however. Thus, the colonial state simultaneously strove to build on this Islamic education system while attempting to sever it from its Islamic roots in order to promote a modern European colonial subject.

Chapter 6

Islamic Education and the Colonial Encounter

Zalamuna wa rabbina zalamuna
Absat al-haqq fi'l-dunya haramuna

They have oppressed us, O God, they have oppressed us
Of the most elementary right they have deprived us.
—*Cheikh Tidiane Gaye*[1]

As of the writing of this book (2015), the Qur'anic school my mother started more than six decades ago has been radically transformed. From a school without a classroom, in the yard of my family's house in Dakar, it has become a network of schools serving different purposes to different clienteles in different linguistic combinations. The largest school of the network, Keur Sultan, is based in a centrally located neighborhood at the entrance to the capital city of Dakar. More than 20,000 students have attended the school in the past two decades. Its student population now exceeds 1,500 students. Keur Sultan was built on a plot of land of 3,500 square meters granted to my mother by the Senegalese state, then ruled by President Abdou Diouf, as part of the state's commitment to support the modernization of Islamic education and promote gender equality. Foreign donors, including late Prince Sultan Bin 'Abd al-'Aziz of Saudi Arabia, after whom that specific school was named, donated most of the funding for the buildings. Keur Sultan started an integrated curriculum model, which became very widespread in the Muslim world from the 1980s on. This consisted of offering all courses as in the public school system in a European language (French in this case). In addition, students receive a few hours of initiation into the Qur'an, Islamic theology, and the Arabic language. Unlike in the traditional Qur'anic schools that focus on the memorization of the Qur'an—schools such as the one I attended, which still exist—most pupils in this integrated curriculum configuration are taught in both French and Arabic. This entails a slightly heavier workload, but nothing like the ordeal I experienced as

40. Loimeier, *Islamic Reform;* Kane, *Muslim Modernity;* Kaba, *Wahhabiyya.*
41. W. Raven, "Sira," *Encyclopeadia of Islam II* on whom this paragraph relies.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Malik, Al-Muwatta, "hadith 1614," accessed December 26, 2012, http://www.dailyhadithonline.com/2011/02/01/the-prophet-was-sent-to-perfect-good-character/.
45. See Wilks, "Transmission of Learning," 168.
46. Literally, "nothing happened to me."
47. Niasse, Celebration of the birthday of the Prophet Muhammad." Our translation from the Wolof language.
48. See Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire,* 65–67, or Mukhtar b. Yahya al-Wangari, "Shaykh Baghayogho al-Wangari and the Wangari Library in Timbuktu," in Jeppie and Diagne, *Meanings of Timbuktu,* 281–282.
49. Khassim Diakhaté, "Al-Sanusi, un Africain ash'arite au 15ème siècle," *Ethiopiques,* 66–67, 2001, 69–84. Louis Brenner, *Réflexion sur le savoir islamique en Afrique noire* (Bordeaux: Centre d'étude d'Afrique noire, 1985), chapter 3, "Enseignement théologique en fulfulde."
50. Brenner, *Réflexion,* 57.
51. Muhammad al-Wali b. Abdallah al-Fulani, *Al-manhaj al-farid fi ma'rifat 'ilm al-tawhid,* in Arabic Literature of Africa, Vol. IV, 267; Brenner, *Réflexion,* 57.
52. Brenner, *Réflexion,* 62.
53. Hall and Stewart , "Historic 'Core Curriculum,'" 140. The same argument was made earlier by Michel Chodkiewicz, a leading expert on Ibn 'Arabi. See M. Chodkiewicz, "The Diffusion of Ibn 'Arabi's doctrine," *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society* IX (1991): 36–57.
54. Bernd Radtke, "Studies on the Sources of the *Kitab Rimah Hizb al-Rahim* of 'Umar Tall," *Sudanic Africa* 6: 73–113, has compiled all citations. He is the main source of information for this paragraph.
55. Radtke, "Studies on the Sources of the *Kitab Rimah.*"
56. See Said Bousbina, "Les mérites de la Tijaniyya d'après "Rimah" d'Al-Hajj 'Umar," *Islam et sociétés au Sud du Sahara* 3 (1989): 253–260.
57. *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur,* II, 335, S, II, 464.
58. *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur,* S, II, 876.
59. *Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur,* II, 462, S II, 704.
60. For more on Zarruq, see Ali Fahmi Kashim, *Zarruq, The Sufi: A Guide in the Way and a Ladder to the Truth, A Biographical and Critical Study of a Mystic from North Africa* (London: Outline Series, 1976); Scott Kugle, *Rebel between Spirit and Law: Ahmad Zarruq: Sainthood and Authority in Islam* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006).
61. Hall and Stewart , "Historic 'Core Curriculum,'" 123.
62. Ibid., 121.

63. Last, "Book in the Sokoto Caliphate," 143.
64. See "Al-Bakri," in Levtzion and Hopkins, *Corpus,* 82.
65. Ousmane Kane, "Reconciling Islam and Non Islamic Beliefs: Reflection on a Talismanic Textile of the Art Institute of the Chicago," *Islam et Sociétés au Sud du Sahara* 2: 137–161.
66. Levtzion, "Islam in the Bilad al-Sudan," 69.
67. See Chapter 5.
68. Aziz Batran, *Tobacco Smoking under Islamic Law: Controversy over Its Introduction* (Beltsville, MD: Amana Publications, 2003).
69. Al-Naqar, *Pilgrimage Tradition.*
70. Chanfi Ahmed, *West African 'ulamā' and Salafism in Mecca and Medina* (Leiden and Boston: E. J. Brill, 2015), back cover.

5. Shaping an Islamic Space of Meaning: The Discursive Tradition

1. Talal Asad, "The Idea of Anthropology of Islam," *Qui Parle?* 17, no. 2 (Spring 2009), 24.
2. John Hunwick, "The Arabic Literature of Africa Project," in Jeppie and Diagne, *Meanings of Timbuktu,* 303–310, 314.
3. Muhsin J. Al-Musawi, *The Medieval Islamic Republic of Letters. Arabic Knowledge Construction* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2015), 92. I thank Professor Mamadou Diouf for drawing my attention to this work.
4. See, for example, Abdullahi Mahadi, "The State and the Economy."
5. Hamidu Bobboye, "Ajami Literature and the Study of the Sokoto Caliphate," in Jeppie and Diagne, eds., *Meanings of Timbuktu,* 123–133, 129.
6. This is a classical definition of politics. See Harold Lasswell, *Politics: Who Gets What, When and How?* (New York: Meridian Books, 1958).
7. John Fage, "Slavery and the Slave Trade in the Context of West African History," *Journal of African History* X, no. 3 (1969): 393–404.
8. Academic coverage of the subject includes that by Allan Fisher and Humphrey Fisher, *Slavery and Muslim Society in Africa: The Institution in Saharan and Sudanic Africa, and the Trans-Saharan Trade* (London: Hurst, 1970); John Ralph Willis, ed., *Slaves and Slavery in Muslim Africa* (London, England; Totowa, NJ: F. Cass, 1985); James L. A. Webb, *Desert Frontier: Ecological and Economic Change along the Western Sahel, 1600–1850* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995); Hall, *History of Race in Muslim Africa.*
9. Bruce Hall, "Enslaved Paths of Circulation in the Sahara and Sahel. Commercial Networks and Slave Agency between Ghadames (Lybia) and Timbuktu (Mali) in the 19th Century," in Chouki el Hamel and Paul Lovejoy eds., *Confluence of Cultures,* (Princeton: Marcus Wiener, forthcoming). I thank Bruce Hall for granting permission to cite this piece.
10. John Hunwick and Fatima Harrak (annotated and translated by), *Mi'raj al-Su'ud:*

Ahmad Baba's Replies on Slavery (Rabat: Institute of African Studies, 2000). The book is referred to henceforth as Ahmad Baba, *Ladder of Ascent.* It was composed in 1615 in Timbuktu. See Cleaveland, Ahmed Baba al-Timbukti, 42.

11. M. A. Cherbonneau, "Essai sur la littérature arabe au Soudan d'après le Tekmilet ed-Dibaje d'Ahmed Baba le Tombouctien, *Annales de la Société archéologique de Constantine* ii (1854–1855): 1–42.
12. On Ahmad Baba, see Cleaveland, "Ahmad Baba and His Islamic Critique of Slavery in the Maghreb"; Hunwick, *Arabic Literature of Africa,* IV: 17–31; Brockelmann, Gesc*hichte der Arabischen Litteratur* II: 618; Supplementbänden II: 715–716; Mahmoud A. Zouber, *Ahmad Baba (1556–1627). Sa vie et son œuvre* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 1977); John Hunwick, "Ahmad Baba and the Moroccan Invasion of the Sudan (1591)," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 2, no. 1 (1962): 311–328; John Hunwick, "A New Source for the Study of Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti (1556–1627)," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 27 (1964): 568–593; Mohamed Zaouit, "Mi'raj as-su'ud et les Ajwiba: Deux consultations juridiques d'Ahmad Baba de Tombouctou relatives à l'esclavage des noirs au Bilad al-Sudan au XVIème et début du XVIIème siècle: édition critique et analyse historique," PhD diss. in history, University of Paris 1, 1997; ISESCO, *Ahmad Baba al-Timbukti: Buhuth al-nadwa allati 'aqadatha ISESCO bi-munasabat murur arba'a qurun wa nisf 'ala wiladatihi,* Proceedings of a symposium organized by ISESCO four centuries and a half after the birth of Ahmad Baba (Marrakesh: ISESCO, 1993).
13. There is no consensus on his place of birth. Paul Farias states that Arawan, 250 kilometers north of Timbuktu, is his place of birth, and Tim Cleaveland claims that he was born in Timbuktu. See Cleaveland, Ahmed Baba al-Timbukti, 45.
14. Paulo F. de Moraes Farias, "Ahmad Baba."
15. Levtzion, "Islam in the Bilad al-Sudan," 74.
16. Hunwick and Boyle, *Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu,* 134.
17. See Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire,* chapter 23, titled "Pasha Mahmud's Campaigns: Arrest of Timbuktu Scholars," 218–236.
18. Paulo F. de Moraes Farias "Ahmad Baba."
19. Ibid.; Hunwick and Boyle, *Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu,* 133.
20. Titled *Nayl al-Ibtihaj fi Tatriz al-Dibaj,* it was written as a supplement to *Al-Dibaj al-Mudhahhab fi ma'rifat a'yan 'ulama al-madhhab* by Ibrahim b. Ali b. Farhun. See Hunwick, *Arabic Literature of Africa,* Vol. IV, 23.
21. See, for example, a treatise by a leading exponent of the Maliki jurisprudence: Khalil b Ishaq al-Jundi, *Al-Mukhtasar,* Paris, 1318/1900, translated by G.-H. Bousquet as *Abrégé de la loi musulmane selon le rite de l'imam Malek* (Alger, 1956), 209.
22. Ahmad Baba, *Ladder of Ascent,* 14.
23. Ibid., 23.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., 24.

26. Hunwick and Harrak in Ahmad Baba, *Ladder of Ascent,* 13, n. 11.
27. Al-Jirari's questions in Hunwick and Harrak, 17.
28. Abdel Wedoud Ould Cheikh, "Islam et esclavage en Mauritanie," unpublished paper, 13. I am grateful to the author for supplying me a copy of this paper.
29. Ahmad Baba, *Ladder of Ascent,* 27–29.
30. Ibid., 16–17.
31. Ibid., 30–31.
32. Ibid., (n. 86 by Hunwick and Harrak, 46).
33. Ibid., 41–43.
34. Ibid., 43–48.
35. David Robinson, "Umar Tall" in John Esposito ed. *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), vol. 4, 265-266, 266.
36. Ousmane Kane, "Islamism. What Is New, What Is Not? Lessons from West Africa," *African Journal of International Affairs* 11, no. 2: 157–187.
37. Hiskett, *Sword of Truth,* 133.
38. Muhammad al-Hajj, "The Writings of Shehu Usman Dan Fodio." This paragraph relies on al-Hajj. Ahmad Kani suggested a slightly different periodization: a pre-jihad period (1774–1804), a jihad period (1804–1810), and a post-jihad period (1810 to the death of the shaykh in 1817). Ahmed Kani, "Some Reflections on the Writings of Shaykh 'Uthman b. Fudi," *Kano Studies* (new series) 2, no. 1 (1980): 1–9.
39. Last, *Sokoto Caliphate,* 6.
40. Ibid., 8.
41. Ibid., 9.
42. Shehu Uthman Dan Fuduye, *The Revival of the Sunna and the Destruction of Innovation,* translation and introduction by Alfa Umar Muhammad Sharif bin Farid (Sennar, Sudan: Sankore, 1998).
43. In the appendix of the English translation, Sharif mentions forty-three different sources. See Fudiye, *Revival of the Sunna,* 266–267. Ahmad Kani mentions sixty-five sources. (Kani, "Some Reflections," 4). This divergence may be due to slight differences in the surviving copies of the work.
44. Last, *Sokoto Caliphate,* 12.
45. 'Uthman Dan Fodio, *Bayan Wujub al-hijra,* 176–177. Along the same lines *as Revival of Sunna and Destruction of Innovation,* Dan Fodio draws from fifty-five different works of forty-five authors.
46. See Hiskett, "Kitab al-Farq."
47. Hiskettt, "Kitab al-Farq," 567–569.
48. For an overview of the Sokoto Borno conflict debate, see Louis Brenner, "The Jihad Debate between Sokoto and Borno, Historical Analysis of Islamic Political Discourse in Nigeria," in J. F. Ade Ajayi and J. D. Y. Peel, eds., *People and Empires in African History* (London: Longmans, 1992), 21–43. For a Borno perspective on the war, see Muhammad al-Kanami, "The Case against the Jihad

1813," in Collins, ed., *Documents from the African Past.* For a Sokoto perspective, see Muhammad Bello Infaq al-Maysur, in Arnett, *The Rise of the Sokoto Fulani.*

49. See Bintou Sanankoua, *La Diina. Un empire peul du XIX e siècle.*
50. The Arabic title is *Sayf al-Haqq al-mu'tamad fi bayan ma waqa'a baynahu wa bayn Ahmad b. Ahmad.* Several authors have commented on and translated the text partially or fully. For a full translation and commentary, see Sidi Mohamed Mahibou and Jean-Louis Triaud, *Voilà ce qui est arrivé. Bayan Ma waqa'a d'al-Hagg 'Umar al-Futi. Plaidoyer pour une guerre sainte en Afrique de l'Ouest.* See also Muhammad al-Muntaqa Ahmad Tall, *Al-Jawahir wa al-durar,* 735.
51. See Mahibou and Triaud, 127–130, in which Umar elaborates the five types of *muwalat,* invokes several sources in Maliki jurisprudence, and in particular cites Al-Maghili and Abdullah Dan Fodio to make his point.
52. Umar Tall, *Sayf al-Haqq* in *Mahibou and Triaud, Voilà ce qui est arrivé,* 138.
53. For a study of how the *sarauta* system was restored in post-jihad Kano, see Abdullahi Mahadi, "The State and the Economy."
54. For a complete list of his works, see John Hunwick, *Arabic Literature of Africa: The Writings of Central Sudanic Africa,* Vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 1995), 86–113; Sidi Mohamed Mahibou, *Abdullahi Dan Fodio;* Zahradeen, "Abdullahi b. Fodio"; Abdullahi, *On the Search for a Viable Political Culture.*
55. *Diya -Hukkam fi-ma lahum wa 'alayhim min ahkam, Diya al-Sultan wa ghayrihi min al-ahkam, Diya al-Siyasa wa fatawi wa nawazil.*
56. Mahibou, *Abdullahi Dan Fodio,* 56–57.
57. Ibid., 63–64.
58. As noted by Ahmad Kani, these issues are extensively discussed by 'Abd al-Qadir b. Mustafa in his *Masa'il al-khilaf* (Controversial Issues), completed in 1864. See Ahmad Kani, *Intellectual Origin of Sokoto Jihad,* 96–98, on which I rely in this paragraph.
59. Hunwick, *Timbuktu and the Songhay Empire,* chapters VI, IX, X, and XI.
60. Hamel, *La vie intellectuelle islamique dans le Sahel ouest-africain.*
61. Al-Shinqiti, *Al-Wasit.*
62. See, for example, Djibril Tamsir Niane, "Mythes, légendes et sources orales dans l'oeuvre de Mahmoud Kati" *Recherches Africaines* (études guinéenes) nouvelle série; 1, 1964, 36-42. Sekene Mody Cissokho, "L'intelligentsia de Tombouctou aux XVe et XVIe siècles," *Bulletin de l'IFAN* 4 (1969); *idem, Tombouctou et l'Empire Songhay,* (Dakar and Abidjan: Nouvelles Editions Africaines, 1975); Paulo F. de Moraes Farias, "Intellectual Innovation and Reinvention of the Sahel: The Seventeenth-Century Timbuktu Chronicles," in Jeppie and Diagne, eds., *Meanings of Timbuktu,* 95–108.
63. Moraes Farias, "Intellectual Innovation," 95–97.
64. Hamel, *Vie intellectuelle islamique,* 38–39.
65. Ibid.
66. See Hamel, *Vie intellectuelle islamique,* 79–81, on which this paragraph relies.
67. Al-Shinqiti, *Al-Wasit.*
68. Asad "Idea of Anthropology of Islam," 20.

6. Islamic Education and the Colonial Encounter

1. Cheikh Tidiane Gaye, "Takwin al-'atilin" (training the [future] jobless), cited in Hunwick, *Arabic Literature of Africa,* Vol. 4, 386.
2. In regard to French West Africa, this process was analyzed in a major conference convened in 1994, the proceedings of which were published as David Robinson and Jean-Louis Triaud, eds., *Le temps des marabouts: Itinéraires et stratégies islamiques en Afrique occidentale française v. 1880–1960* (Paris: Karthala, 1997). Another major work of accommodation in Senegambia is David Robinson's *Paths of Accommodation: Muslim Societies and French Colonial Authorities in Senegal and Mauritania 1880–1920* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2000).
3. In Mauritania, French colonial rule found support among Sufi leaders including Sidiya Baba (d. 1927). See Alan Verskin, *Oppressed in the Land? Fatwas of Muslims Living under Muslim Rule from the Middle Ages to the Present* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 2013), 104–111. Shaykh Sa'ad Buh, who discouraged his brother, Mal 'Aynayn, from opposing the French, is another supporter of French rule. See Dedoud Ould Abdallah, "Guerre Sainte ou sédition blamable," in Robinson and Triaud, *Temps des Marabouts.* Many prominent Sufi leaders of Senegambia endorsed French colonial rule. See Robinson, *Paths of Accommodation.*
4. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), chapter 1.
5. Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject,* 73.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. One such movement is the Sanusiyya, a Saharan Sufi organization founded by Muhammad b. 'Ali al-Sanusi (1789–1857), with ramifications in Chad and Niger. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the Sanusiyya confronted the French, the British, and the Italians militarily as the latter were vying for colonial occupation of Africa. See Jean-Louis Triaud, "Sanusiyya" *Encyclopaedia of Islam II,* or the most comprehensive study of this movement by the same author: *La Légende Noire de la Sanusiyya: Une confrérie musulmane saharienne sous le regard français 1840–1930* (Paris: Editions de la Maison des Sciences de L'Homme, 1995).
10. Several Mahdist movements have been suppressed during and after colonial rule. See, for example, Asma'u G. Saeed, "The British Policy towards the Mahdiyya in Northern Nigeria: The Study of Arrest, Detention and Deportation of Sa'id B. Hayat 1923–1959," *Kano Studies* (new series) 2, no. 3 (1982): 95–119; Alhaji Hamidu Alkali, "The Mahdi of Toranke," *Kano Studies* 1, no. 4 (1968): 92–95; Hamidou Dialla, "Mousa Aminou, le Mahdi de Ouani," in Robinson and Triaud, eds., *Le Temps des marabouts,* 373-393.