

## **Contesting Sufis Quietism: The Role of Sufism in the Islamization in West Africa**

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***Abstract:** Sufism has been a key vehicle for expressing Islam. In the 18th century, its growth in West Africa led to a surge in Islamic conversions and the emergence of influential Muslim intellectuals, educators, and political leaders. Salafis, inspired by the writings of scholars who championed jihad and Islamic reforms, are often viewed as the sole jihadist group in the region. This study uses qualitative techniques and a historical lens to examine the significance of Sufism in West Africa, challenging the notion of Sufi passivity. It highlights key factors driving Islam's expansion, paradigm shifts, and societal Islamization, while analyzing the Sufi Brotherhood's methods of spreading Islam and shaping society. The research disputes the idea that Sufis are solely peaceful, non-political, or disengaged from activism. It focuses on how Sufis in West Africa not only spread Islam but also established states, governed people, and promoted Islam through conquest jihad. Contrary to popular belief, Sufism is not limited to political silence or spiritual withdrawal; it evolved through the Zawiya, who, despite persecution, played an active role in shaping society.*

***Keywords:** Sufism; Quietism; Islamization; West Africa.*

**Abstrak:** Tasawuf telah menjadi sarana utama dalam ekspresi Islam. Pada abad ke-18, pertumbuhannya di Afrika Barat menyebabkan lonjakan konversi ke Islam dan munculnya intelektual, pendidik, serta pemimpin politik Muslim yang berpengaruh. Kaum Salafi, yang terinspirasi oleh tulisan-tulisan ulama yang mendukung jihad dan reformasi Islam, sering dianggap sebagai satu-satunya kelompok jihad di wilayah tersebut. Penelitian ini menggunakan teknik kualitatif dan pendekatan sejarah untuk meneliti pentingnya tasawuf di Afrika Barat, serta membantah anggapan bahwa tasawuf bersifat pasif. Studi ini menyoroti faktor-faktor kunci yang mendorong penyebaran Islam, pergeseran paradigma, dan proses Islamisasi masyarakat, serta menganalisis metode yang digunakan Persaudaraan Sufi dalam menyebarkan Islam dan membentuk masyarakat. Penelitian ini menolak gagasan bahwa kaum Sufi hanya bersifat damai, apolitis, atau tidak terlibat dalam aktivisme. Fokusnya adalah bagaimana kaum Sufi di Afrika Barat tidak hanya menyebarkan Islam, tetapi juga mendirikan negara,

memerintah, dan mempromosikan Islam melalui jihad penaklukan. Bertentangan dengan kepercayaan umum, tasawuf tidak terbatas pada diam secara politik atau penarikan spiritual; ia berkembang melalui Zawiyah, yang meskipun dianiaya, memainkan peran aktif dalam membentuk masyarakat.

**Kata kunci:** *Tasawuf; Quietisme; Islamisasi; Afrika Barat.*

## INTRODUCTION

In general, the ease with which West Africans attached themselves to the new religion was made possible by the divine character of Islam, which allows for the acceptance of all cultures and traditions, except those that run counter to the idea of the unity of God. These characteristics made it easy for Islam to blend in with the African communities it encountered. During the pre-colonial and colonial centuries, virtually all of West Africa's most notable Muslim philosophers, educators, and politicians were those who had a substantial impact on the expansion and spread of Islam in the region. In all of its forms, Sufism has been and continues to be a potent expression of Islam.

Islamic religion took off in West Africa in the 18th Century; it experienced a real boom, especially in rural areas with the emergence of Sufism<sup>1</sup>, which originated in the Maghreb and is now particularly widespread in West Africa, encouraging the conversion of West Africans to Islam and later becoming the largest Islamic tariqa in this part of Africa. Moreover, the most influential Muslim scholars, educators, and political leaders of the colonial and post-colonial eras were almost all Sufis and adhered to the Qadiriya or Tidjaniya orders.

In West Africa, it could be straightforward to point the finger at other sects, such as Salafism or Wahhabism, as those who practice political Islam by opposing the government or creating armies because of jihad. Terrorists like Al-Qaeda in the Maghreb or even Ansar Dine and Also Boko Haram never identify themselves as Sufis but as Sunnis or Salafis. They claimed to be inspired by books

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<sup>1</sup> Gomez-Perez, M. (2005). "Trajectoires De L'islam En Afrique De l'Ouest." *Esprit*.

written by scholars like Mohamed B. Abdel Wahab or even Ibn Taymiyya. Therefore, it's questionable whether it's only the Salafist jihadist sects that have the doctrine of jihad when even the Sufis in history were the ones who carried the torch of jihad and Islamic reforms as well as the fight against the enemies of Islam and shirk.

Our study will be more focused on challenging Sufi's quietism by demonstrating another aspect of the order observed in history and highlighting some of the critical factors that contributed to the expansion of Islam in Africa, the shifting of the paradigm, and the Islamization of society. Some researchers have attempted to write on West African Sufis and Sufism, and several searches have been conducted on Sufi jihad and the Islamization of African society. and explains how Islam managed to win over the hearts of the native people there, who had their traditions and customs? In contemporary society, the Sufi sect is viewed as a sect of peace, tranquility, and non-interference in any political movement or activity that seeks to create ostensibly Islamic nations or use Islam as a political tool. The study aimed to challenge this view and shed light on the strategies used by the Sufi Brotherhood to disseminate Islam in West Africa, as well as their attempts to change society and create an Islamic state there. Sufis like Ousmane Dan Fodio, Oumar Tall, and Samori Toure, as well as movements like the Dyula Traders, Al Murabitun, and the Jakhanke Islamic Movement, were mentioned.

## **METHOD**

The research will follow qualitative methods, with a descriptive-analytical approach, and a historical approach will be adopted to explore a historical analysis of Sufism in West Africa. And the collection of data is from books, manuscripts, journals and articles, and that are relevant to the research topic or by collecting information in written form from Documentation, and online resources. Which explored west African Sufis and Sufism, The meaning of Sufism and Sufis.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Reduction of the Definitions of Sufism.

The definitions of Sufism are primarily based on the practices observed in Sufi's daily activities. We discuss in this section the standard definitions of classical and modern scholars on the definition of Sufism, which engages Sufism as the essence of inner devotion to God and specific spiritual life. We will highlight a different definition of Sufism implemented over many decades by Sufis in different parts of the world.

Sufism is a philosophy by which you can acquire the prerequisites for soul purification, moral purification, and reconstruction of the external and internal to achieve inner satisfaction, according to Zakaria Al-Ansari.<sup>2</sup> Sheikh Ahmed Zarouq explained by saying that Sufism is a science intended to reform hearts and single them out for God, Glory be to Him, above all else. And jurisprudence to repair work and maintenance of orders and the emergence of wisdom provisions. The fundamentals are "the science of monotheism" to achieve the premises with proof and to sweeten faith with certainty.<sup>3</sup> Al-Junayd, who is one of the famous Sufis, related that: "Sufism is the use of every Sunni character and the abandonment of every worldly character."<sup>4</sup>

So, for him, anyone who plans to be a Sufi must first apply this strictly Sunni because it is the first essence of a good Sufi. Still, it is evident that today, other groups define Sufism as very far from Sufis. Because of things they see as far from the Sunnah of the Prophet, it is often expected to see Sufis not identifying as Sunni, to the detriment of other Islamic sects, which bear that name. Additionally, As cheik Ousmane Dan fodio in his book (iihya' alsunat almuhamadiat wa'ikhmad albidae alshaytania) which means Reviving the

<sup>2</sup> Zakarīyā, A. B. (2016). "Al-Hindūsīyah Wa-Ta'ththur Ba'd Al-Firaq Al-Islāmīyah Bi-Hā. Jiddah."

<sup>3</sup> Aḥmad Zarrūq Aḥmad Ibn, & Hubayshī Ṭāhā Al-Dasūqī. (2013). "Qawā'id Al-Taṣawwuf. Maktabat Al-Īmān Lil-Nashr Wa-Al-Tawzī'."

<sup>4</sup> Al- Quṣairī 'Abd-Al-Karīm Ibn-Hawāzin. (1974). "Ar- Risāla Al-Quṣairīya. Dār Al-Kutub Al-Hadītha. "

Muhammadan Sunnah and extinguishing satanic bida'a. He explains how to combat bid'ah, which is contrary to the religion and Sunnah, and any innovations which take is against the rules of the Prophet. Emphasizing well in chapter 33 of the book the concept of ihsane, which is the very essence of Sufism, thus marking that Sufism is not a stranger to the sunnah and not in opposition, but he adds that there is also a form of bid'a, which some Sufis practiced and is indeed forbidden and not acceptable. Like tying one's body to an iron or cord, or even making oneself feel the pain of fire, and all kinds of punishments.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, Sheikh Ahmed Zarrouk proceeds by stating that Sufism is a doctrine meant to transform hearts and choose them for God; glory be to Him above all things. Additionally, there are legal provisions for the maintenance of order, restoration of worship, and the development of wisdom. The principles are "the science of monotheism," which aims to establish the claims via evidence and to strengthen confidence through assurance.<sup>6</sup> Also, the famous Imam Abu al-Hasan al-Shazly, one of the forerunners of Sufism, says: "Sufism is training the soul in servitude and returning it to the provisions of divinity. So, according to the earliest definition still in use, Sufism can be described as the theological philosophy of Islam.

Some Western scholars, such as Reynold Nicholson, who is the most outstanding of all Western scholars of Sufism, begin his discussion of Sufism by quoting the words of Ma'ruf 'l- khaki, which he translates as: "Sufism is the apprehension of Divine Realities." Another description refers to sufis as Ahl al-Haqq, or "the followers of the Real."<sup>7</sup>

The terms "Sufi" and "Sufi" have been defined in various ways by modern Sufi leaders. One supports that The essence of Sufism lies in the purification of the senses and the will, the building up of inner and outer life, and the attainment of eternal felicity and blessedness by apprehending the Divine Realities.<sup>8</sup> Other

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<sup>5</sup> Ousmane Dan Fodio (1985) "Ihya' Alsunat Almuhamadiat Wa'ikhmad Albidae Alshaytania" , Chapter 33. Éditeur Ahmed Abdullah Bajour. / Unnoor-Book.Com/3gxqom. Page 228

<sup>6</sup> Aḥmad Zarrūq Aḥmad Ibn, & Ḥubayshī Ṭahā Al-Dasūqī. (2013). "Qawā'id Al-Taṣawwuf. Maktabat Al-Īmān Lil-Nashr Wa-Al-Tawzī'."

<sup>7</sup> Nicholson, R. (1963). "The Mystics Of Islam. Routledge And Kegan Pau."

<sup>8</sup> Mohammad Sharif Khan, A. M. (1994). "Muslim Philosophy And Philosophes." New Delhi: Ashish Publishing House.

scholars defined it as "The purification of the heart from associating with created beings, separation from natural characteristics, suppression of human qualities, avoiding the temptations of the carnal soul, taking up the qualities of the spirit, attachment to the sciences of the reality, using what is more proper to the eternal, counseling all the community, being truly faithful to God and following the Prophet (saw) according to the law. However, such distinctions only existed because each master is addressing to his audience according to their spiritual state and comprehension. Thus, every definition represents a unique facet of Sufism and is accurate in its perspective. One should consider as many interpretations as possible to understand Sufism as a whole.

But These definitions of Sufism focus on the spiritual side and put aside the Islamic activism on Sufism. We are an attempt to give another perspective that was not well known or not the standard view on Sufis, especially in West Africa,

### **Sufism in West Africa.**

There is evidence of earlier Sufi activities in parts of the Western and Central Sahara, most notably in Timbuktu as early as in the fifteenth Century; and the Air mountains in present-day Niger. However, in many instances, Sufism seems to have been a matter of individual devotion, and the extent to which the early Sufi presence contributed to the gradual Islamization of many West African peoples is anything but straightforward. It seems that it was not the influence of Sufism as mystical religiosity, but rather the combination of da'wa (the call to Islam) with social, economic, and political factors that turned Sufi communities into such formidable forces that were able to attract Muslims and non-Muslims alike.<sup>9</sup>

Sufism is the most popular and vital tradition of Islamic spirituality, esoterism, and mysticism in West Africa, which is typically structured around

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<sup>9</sup> Seesemann, R. (2010). "Sufism In West Africa." Northwesternuniversity Evanston.

orders (ṭuruq; singular, ṭarīqa) governed by master-disciple relationships and chains of initiation (silsila; plural, salāsīl) going back to the founder of the order and from him to the Prophet Muhammad. However, before the 13th Century (6th century AH), Sufism was organized around more informal master-disciple and familial relationships of transmission and initiation, such as the Jakhanke tradition of Islamic scholarship and spirituality that traces its lineage back to al-hājj Sālim Suwārī (d. 13th or 15th Century). This tradition generally rejected military jihad and active proselytization and became popular among the Djula traders of the region.<sup>10</sup> (Ogunnaike, 2020) The Dioula were, therefore, significantly influenced by this way of seeing religion as well as this way of understanding and practicing the faith, which, one can think, was by their work, which was trade, which does not need weapons, force, or even being disturbed by wars; this was to their disadvantage, therefore their acceptance of the doctrine of Salim Suwari, even if one thing is the doctrine advocated by the guide and often the practice, which is different given the circumstances.

The Sufi groups in West Africa significantly expanded during the 19th and 20th centuries. As a result, there have been three eras in the history of Sufism in West Africa. The first is scholarly lineage affiliation before the eighteenth Century; the second is the emergence of Sufi orders as significant social, spiritual, and intellectual institutions during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries; and the third is the popularization of these Sufi orders with the rise of the Sufi shaykh as a center of the social organization during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

However, this schema is heuristic and varies somewhat geographically, with older forms of Sufi practice, transmission, and social organization persisting in many areas through the early 21st Century. These shifts in organization responded to and catalyzed broader socio-political and economic changes in the region; for example, the Sufism of scholarly lineages seems to have coincided with or followed the development of "caste systems" in West Africa, although the

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<sup>10</sup> Ogunnaike, O. (2020). "Sufism, Islamic Philosophy, And Education In West Africa." Online Publication.

emergence of Sufi orders in the region appears both to coincide with and to have contributed to the marked socio-political and economic upheavals of the late 18th and 19th centuries, culminating in the emergence of new colonial societies in which Sufi orders and leaders played an increasingly prominent role.<sup>11</sup> (Tamari, 1991)

The Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya are the significant order of Sufism in West Africa. Scattered groups calling themselves ShiidhiIyya are found, and hamawiya. The Isawiyya traveled along trade routes from Zinder to the Upper Volta.<sup>12</sup> Now, several additional groups have emerged within the same Sufi organizations. For instance, the Tijaniyya founded by Cheik Ahamd Tijani has several additional semi-groups. Like the hamawiya in Nioro established by Cheik Hamaulah, the faydha Tijaniyya formed by Cheik Ibrahim Nyasse, or even the omariyya established by the lineage of Cheik Oumar Tall. Thus, they're trendy in West Africa than in any other surveyed region of the Muslim world, owing mainly to the efforts of these movements and Sufi orders, with 92 percent of Senegalese Muslims, 55 percent of Chadian Muslims, and 37 percent of Nigerian and Ghanaian Muslims claiming affiliation to a Sufi order. 14 However, because many of the most influential Muslim scholars.<sup>13</sup> In light of this, it is crucial to know the Sufis of western Africa's epistemology structure.

Drawing upon the Qur'an and hadith, a long tradition of lived practice, oral traditions, and the writings of figures such as al-Ghazālī, the Shādhilī Sufis Ibn 'Atā Allāh al-Iskandarī, Ahmad Zarrūq, and Muhammad al-Yadālī, as well as Tijānī sources such as the Jawāhir al-Ma'ānī (Pearls of meanings) of Sidī 'Alī Ḥarāzīm that details the teachings and sayings of the order's founder, Shaykh Ahmad al-Tijānī, al-hajj 'Umar Tal's al-Rimāh, and the works of local Qādirī

<sup>11</sup> Tamari, T. (1991). "The Development Of Caste Systems In West Africa" . Journal Of African History 32.

<sup>12</sup> "Islam In West Africa." (N.D.). Institutional Islam <https://Wasscehistorytextbook.Com/3-Islam-In-West-Africa-Introduction-Spread-And-Effects/>.

<sup>13</sup> Ogunnaike, O. (2020). ."Sufism, Islamic Philosophy, And Education In West Africa." Online Publication .



Sufis such as Sīdī Mukhtar al-Kuntī and ʿUthman ibn Fūdī, and others, Sufi epistemology in West Africa (as elsewhere) revolves around the discussion and acquisition of maʿrifa, a direct, existential, experiential knowledge of the Divine Reality and the self that is undeniable and transformative. Among other colorful similes, this form of knowledge is likened to taste (dhawq) in its immediacy and certainty, and it is contrasted to ordinary conceptual knowledge (ʿilm or dirāya).<sup>14</sup>

This particular form of knowledge is not "produced," constructed, or achieved through study. Still, it is instead unveiled, inspired, transmitted, or granted by God through the intermediary of the Prophet and Sufi masters (shuyūkh), usually in conjunction with a rigorous regimen of spiritual-ethical-psychological exercises, which typically consists of the strict observance of the sharīʿa (Islamic law); sunna (Prophetic example); the purification of character traits (akhlāq) and psychological states (ahwāl); keeping company with and obeying a realized master, who typically would prescribe the invocation (dhikr) of various litanies (awrād)—mainly names of God, the Shahāda ("There is no god but God"), and prayers upon the Prophet (salāt ʿalaʿl-nabī)—and recitation and contemplation of the Qurʿan.<sup>15</sup>

However, this theory could be criticized because these Sufis, had centuries ago, derived from this theory, because the majority of the method's founders broke these rules by turning to politics, even though they isolated themselves from engaging in battles or politics and building states, which may preoccupy them. Regarding the spiritual worship they understood and recorded in their writings, they were forced to follow a different pattern, which may seem strange due to shifting social and political circumstances. Therefore, it is worth wondering, for example, the extent to which the Sufi theory of Al-Ghazali could be quite different in application to that of Sheikh Othman bin Danfodio. For instance, Sheikh Omar Al-Fouti appears to apply Sufi knowledge and scientific principles

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<sup>14</sup> Watt, W. M. (2005). "Imam Al-Ghazali's Deliverance From Error And The Beginning Of Guidance" . Malaysia: Islamic Book Trust.

<sup>15</sup> Ogunnaike, O. (2020). ."Sufism, Islamic Philosophy, And Education In West Africa." Online Publication.

in different ways to what was used in the real world in his book *Al-Ramah* on the sidelines of Jawaher Al-Ma'ani.

### **The spread of Islam through Sufi jihadist movements in West Africa**

This part of our study will talk about the first Sufis traders, who seem to be the first to spread Islam peacefully Islam, and then the shifting to the Sufis movements, Which made an essential effort in spreading or reforming Islam all over West Africa. Starting with the Al Murabitun movement and the Jakhanke Islamic Movement, their jihad, Ousmane dan fodio, Oumar tall, and end with The, and Samori Toure.

The Dyoulas are an ethnic group in West Africa who have long been known for their trade between West Africa or Sub-Saharan Africa and North Africa; they have been greatly influenced by Muslim traders from the north who belonged to the Islamic Sufi Brotherhood. They easily accept this religion. and for several reasons, but particularly, and to facilitate their trades.

From the Atlantic coast of Senegambia to Niger and from the southern edge of the Sahara to forest zones further south, the Dyula conquered the former territory of the Mande culture. They established decentralized townships in non-Muslim colonies that were connected to a vast commercial network, creating what was known as a (trading diaspora) moreover due to commercial necessity, they established settlements under the protection of various local kings who frequently gave them self-governance and autonomy. They also opened up new markets. The structure of Dyula trading companies was based on the (lu) which literally means the (house) and also means a (working unit) made up of a father and his sons as well as other attached males. Thus, members of a specific Dyula dispersed from the savanna to the forest, governed the flow of merchandise and information,

made decisions, and successfully oversaw the supply and demand economic mechanisms.<sup>16</sup>

In the Ghana empire, Muslims lived under the auspices of a non-Muslim king, who invited Muslim traders to the capital and employed literate Muslims in his court. According to the geographer Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Abi Bakr al-Zuhri (1137–54) writing in 1137, the people of Ghana converted to Islam in 1076. This must have happened under the influence of the Almoravids, a militant Islamic movement in the southwestern Sahara. According to the geographer al-Sharif al-Idrisi (1100–65), Ghana was a Muslim state in 1154 and still among western Sudan's most powerful. By the middle of the thirteenth Century, however, Ghana's power had declined, and the political center of gravity shifted southward, where Mali, on the upper reaches of the Niger River, emerged as the dominant power. Al-Bakri's writings imply that there were also local Muslims in Ghana, traders who were part of a commercial network that extended from the towns of the Sahel to the sources of gold in the south. Muslims established trading centers that, by the end of the fifteenth Century, reached the fringes of the forest. They created a commercial diaspora with a common religion, language, and legal system, the Shariah, a personal and extraterritorial divinely ordained law, which added to the mutual trust among merchants. Conversion to Islam thus became necessary for those who wished to join the commercial network. Therefore, their desire to succeed in business and their positive interactions with other businesspeople who have converted to Islam may have been significant factors that influenced their choice to become Muslims.

Islamization in sub-Saharan Africa, which has been going on for almost a thousand years ago, was through a peaceful process. Hunwick, in his book, stated "that the Berbers who inhabited the buffer zone between the Arabs in the north and the black Africans who lived in the south took on the active role as the agents of Islamization after having been converted."<sup>17</sup> The dyulas accepted Islam From the Sanhaja Berbers, and through their scholars and merchants, they actively

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<sup>16</sup> Kevin Shullington. (2004). "Encyclopedia Of African History" . Routledge; 1 Edition.

<sup>17</sup> Hunwick. (2006). "West Africa, Islam And The Arab World: Studies In Honor Of Basil Davidson." Princeton: Markus Wiener Publisher.

disseminated the Islamic faith throughout Sub-Saharan Africa and beyond. The Dyula traders then spread it across West Africa, especially around the Volta basin. All these were because of Islam's rationality, simplicity, and adaptability coupled with its tradition of scholarship. They diffused Islam along the caravan routes and to various cities on their trade missions. After a while, many became knowledgeable in the Islamic faith and pursued further learning. Thus, the Saghanughu clan of the Wangara especially had an early interaction with Islam. Some speculate that its members may have belonged to the Ibadiyya sect, an offshoot of the Kharijiyya sect that preceded the Almoravid conquest.<sup>18</sup>

The Almoravids or al-Murabitun is an Arabic term as they called themselves, were an Islamic Berber dynasty that established an empire in Morocco and eventually took it over a wide region of Northwest Africa, including modern Morocco, Western Sahara, Mauritania, and part of Algeria. The empire stretched as far south as modern Senegal and north as the Iberian Peninsula, 'modern Spain and Portugal'. The Almoravids aimed to spread Islamic traditions throughout Northern Africa and Al-Andalus, which was Islamic Spain then.<sup>19</sup> Abdallah Ibn Yasin founded the dynasty. The capital was Marrakesh, a city that was the ruling house founded in 1062. The Gudala nomadic Berber tribes of the Sahara traverse the territory between the Draa, the Niger, and the Senegal rivers. They were crucial in preventing the fall of Al-Andalus to the Iberian Christian kingdoms when they decisively defeated a coalition at the Battle of Sagrajas in 1086. This enabled them to control an empire that stretched 3,000 kilometers North to South, from Senegambia to Spain.<sup>20</sup> This power enables them to spread Islam in all the lands.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibrahim, M. S. (2011). "The Decline Of Sufism In West Africa: Some Factors Contributing To The Political And Social Ascendancy Of Wahhabist Islam In Northern Ghana." McGill University Montreal.

<sup>19</sup> Elkholy, A. T. (2016). "The Almoravids/Al-Murabitun" (1040–1147).

<sup>20</sup> Samuel Adu-Gyamfi, B. K. (2018). "Islam In West Africa. Introduction, Spread And Effects." History Textbook.

They conquered the Ghana Empire, the first known in West Africa, sometime around 1076. and collected tribute from the Sudan to the extent that the authority of the rules of Ghana dwindled, and they were subjected to and absorbed by the Soso, a neighboring people of Sudan. Moreover, the traditions in Mali related that the Soso attacked and took over Mali, and the ruler of the Soso, Soumaoro Kante (Soumangourou Kante), took over the land.

The Jakhanke Islamic Movement arose in the 12th Century under the charismatic scholar Alhaji Salim Suwareh, who helped spread Islam in Mali, Guinea, Senegal, and The Gambia, the most Islamized countries in West Africa today.

The Jakhanke Islamization effort has borne fruit; they belong to a bigger group, the Serahuli ethnic group, also called Soninke in other writings. Today, they are erroneously categorized as Mandinka. They speak a dialect of Mandinka, but their 'Mandikanization' was largely because they were hosted by Mandinka chiefs when the Jakhanke moved from the present-day Republic of Mali to the Senegambia region. They started a peaceful propagation of Islam in the Senegambia region.

This is all the more relevant as we write today because of the rampant violence associated with Islam in many parts of the world. Much of the subsequent styles and techniques associated with the peaceful spread of Islam in Senegambia is their creation. They professed the peaceful path to Islam. They did not raise the sword to spread the religion. They resorted to more peaceful methods such as establishing Koranic schools and mosques, upgrading mosques, holding sessions on Koranic exegesis, preservation of holy sites where yearly Islamic gatherings take place, and being itinerant traders who took Islam to their clients and customers. But just as they had methods, they also had tactics! For example, they believed in numbers and were keen to multiply their tribes or disciples. The disciples had gone through years of tutelage and would be allowed to disperse and mass up new disciples. Through massification, the Jakhanke helped to strengthen their religion.

Alhaji Salim Suwareh, the founder of the Jakhanke Islamic movement, was central to the success of the Jakhanke missionary work. His early life is shrouded in mystery. He died around 1500 and reputedly made seven pilgrimages to Mecca, where he had relatives and lived before relocating to Black Africa to spread Islam, settling in the Jaka region of Masina, in present-day Mali. Hence the name of his people Jakankhe, meaning in Mandinka 'those who hail from Jaka'. When he completed his seventh hajj, he returned to Africa and stayed. He led his people from Jaka Masina to Jaka Bambuku. When the animist ruler of Bambuku became hostile, Suwareh did as the Prophet of Islam did when Meccans started to throw stones at him: flee into exile. Suwareh led his band of talibes toward present-day Senegambia. The historian Professor Sanneh writes that since this hijra or flight-like movement, Jakhanke 'have been united by a close bond of solidarity based on fidelity to Suwareh characterized by bonds of solidarity.

Dan Fodio, ethnically a Fulani, is mainly remembered for his jihad against local Hausa leaders in areas nowadays located in the south of Niger and Northern Nigeria. And up to the present day, Muslims in Niger and Nigeria continue to evoke the memory of the Islamic state established as a result of dan Fodio's successful jihad. Many regard him as Islam's renewer (*mujaddid*) during his time. Dan Fodio's writings index him as a scholar of Islam who combined a strong profile as a Sufi with expertise in *fiqh*, or Islamic jurisprudence. Several of his works were written to justify his decision to wage jihad against nominally Muslim rulers who failed to implement the *shari'a*. It is noteworthy, however, that the final impetus to start the jihad came from a vision where 'Abd al-Qadir al-Jilani, the founder of the Qadiriyya, permitted him to take military action. Once the structures of his Islamic state were in place, Dan Fodio withdrew from politics and devoted the last years of his life to teaching and contemplation. Although considered the pivotal figure in the spread of the Qadiriyya in this part of West Africa, dan Fodio needed to set up firm organizational structures for his Sufi path, and the Qadiriyya was his only Sufi affiliation. Rather than organizing their

followers into tight-knit Sufi communities, his descendants established the Sokoto Caliphate as their political and religious power base. Until today, the Sultan of Sokoto figures as the nominal head of the Qadiriyya in the region.

Only in the twentieth Century, under the leadership of Nasiru Kabara in Kano, the Qadiriyya emerged as a Sufi order with a mass following.<sup>21</sup> (seesemann, 2010)

These men are Sufis, as we have mentioned about their trade, and those who preceded them, such as Hujjat al-Islam, Imam al-Ghazali, and Uthman bin Danfoudi, kept people away from idleness, laziness, and dependence. Instead, Sheikh Othman Davodio mentioned it in his book *Reviving the Muhammadan Sunnah and Extinguishing Satanic Innovations* in Chapter Thirty-Three. From the book, it is among the Sufi innovations according to some Sufis that idleness, lack of earning, and sitting, and he quoted everything that Sheikh Ahmed Zarouq said "just as it is not correct to bury crops in bad land, it is not correct to be idle in an unsatisfactory state, which was forbidden in agreement. It seems clear to Sheikh Ousmane dan Fodio in his book that a Sufi must rise, work, integrate into society, do his best to have the right impact on others, as well as be able to call on the people to Islam and defend Muslims

In the library of Timbuktu where there were thousands of manuscripts of Muslims and especially Sufis of West Africa, we can see books that were just dedicated to work, one example of this manuscript on craftsmanship and agriculture titled "albarakat fi fadl alhiraf w alzare" which means (Blessing in the virtue of crafts and culture) by Jamal al-Din Muhammad bin Abdullah bin Omar bin Muhammad al-Yamani al-Habashi, which encourages Muslims to work to practice trades so as not to be a burden on the community. Pointing to handicrafts and agriculture, the article focuses on the Prophet's hadith and the Koran verses that speak directly or indirectly of work and do not cause lethargy.

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<sup>21</sup> Seesemann, R. (2010). "Sufism In West Africa." Northwesternuniversity Evanston.



Image of a page from the book, accessed from the Electronic Manuscript Library of Timbuktu, Umar ibn Sa'id al-Futi Tal, (1794 – 1864), born in Futa Tooro, Senegambia, was a West African political leader, Islamic scholar, Tijani Sufi and Toucouleur military commander who founded the short-lived Toucouleur Empire encompassing much of what is now Guinea, Senegal, and Mali.

And Similar to dan Fodio, al-Hajj ‘Umar started his campaign after a vision of the Prophet Muhammad in which he received permission to wage jihad against the “pagan” Bamana in the upper Niger area. The last twelve years of his life are a history of conflict and jihad campaigns. More ever In 1852, he proclaimed a jihad against pagans, lapsed Muslims, European intruders, and the backsliding rulers of Futa Toro and Futa Jallon. His Jihad began with the conquest of Futa Toro and by 1862 his empire included Timbuktu, Masina, Hamdallahi, and Segou.<sup>22</sup>

After he failed to defeat the French colonial rulers, Omar Tall launched a series of assaults on the Bambara kingdoms of Kaarta and Ségou (Segu). The Kaarta capital of Nioro du Sahel fell quickly to Omar Tall's mujahideen, followed by Ségou on 10 March 1861.<sup>23</sup> When Segu fell, their king, Ali Diara (Bina Ali),

<sup>22</sup> Lapidus, I. (2014). "A History Of Islamic Societies". New York: Cambridge University Press 3rd Edition.

<sup>23</sup> Delafosse, M. (1968). "The Negroes Of Africa: History And Culture." New York: Port Washington, Kennikat Press.



fled to Hamdullahi.<sup>24</sup> taking with him the traditional idols of the royal family. Under his sons, the Islamic empire established by al-Hajj 'Umar was divided into various successor states that ultimately succumbed to the French military conquest of Western Sudan,

The movements of 'Uthman dan Fodio and 'Umar Tall are the two most prominent Sufi-led jihad campaigns of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century West Africa. Although these movements made significant contributions to the spread of Islam in many parts of West Africa, it was only after the establishment of European colonial rule that West Africans began to adopt Islamic beliefs and practices on a large scale. Indeed, in the period between the 1880s and the 1930s, Islam made more significant advances in Africa than ever before. This development raised concerns among officials in European colonial governments, whose policies inadvertently supported the spread of Islam rather than containing it.

Samory Touré, also known as Almany Samory Lafiya Toure, was a Muslim cleric, a military strategist, and the founder and leader of the Wassoulou Empire. This Islamic empire was in present-day north and south-eastern Guinea and included part of north-eastern Sierra Leone, part of Mali, part of northern Côte d'Ivoire and part of southern Burkina Faso. Samori Ture was a profoundly religious Muslim of the Maliki jurisprudence of Sunni Islam.

Described as African Napoleon, Samory Toure built a Muslim empire fighting off the French colonization of West Africa in the 19th Century. And He became known as a devoted Muslim with impressive social ethics. He sent Quran teachers to almost all the villages of his region to spread Islamic understanding. He personally monitored many students of the Quran, testing their knowledge of the holy book, and rewarding the most successful ones.<sup>25</sup> and The students who graduated from the Islamic school played a key role in spreading the word of Islam across the region. Therefore, Islam spread rapidly in Guinea, the Ivory

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<sup>24</sup> Roberts, R. L. (1987). "Warriors, Merchants, And Slaves: The State And The Economy In The Middle Niger Valley, 1700-1914." Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

<sup>25</sup> Tasc, U. N. (2020). "Samory Toure: A Legendary African Muslim King Who Fought French Colonialism." . .Trt World.Com.

Coast, Mali, Sierra Leone, and Liberia in the late 19th Century, when Toure ruled the region.

In 1881, as French forces clashed with his soldiers, he gave a befitting reply to the invaders. The gallant efforts made by Toure's army to repel the French invasion helped him earn the nickname the Napoleon of Africa. By 1898, he had moved to Liberia, as Britain refused to support his resistance against France by denying him the supply of weapons. Toure formed a second empire and established its new capital in the city of Kong, Upper Ivory Coast 'Cote d'Ivoire.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study attempts to challenge the fact that the Sufi sect is defined and perceived today as a sect of peace, tranquility, and non-interference in any form of political activity or activism, which may aim to build so-called Islamic states, to use Islam as a social, religious or even political means to be able to propagate its power or even to apply a form of jihad. Which is not jihad of the soul as it is well known to Sufis, but jihad with sword and weapon, and even resistance against colonizers, vigorously participating in societal life; this sect can, therefore, be studied differently from what many people think and have written, political silence or even spiritual retreat and withdrawal from all activity can be qualifiers linked to Sufism but is not its only essence, definition, philosophy, theory a la convenient. In the same way in Egypt as well as North Africa, the Sufis did not leave themselves at the bottom of the ladder but instead ruled, ruled states, and spread Islam by starting a jihad of Conquest; we have therefore focused the illustration with the example of West Africa, how the dissemination and propaganda of Islam took place, and this, on the one hand in a Pacific way, some 'an individual or trader who made traders who later accepted Islam during their journey between northern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa, Then sent to the south Sahara. as well as by the good of the zawiya who were melted by people, and

attracted followers, may have been fascinated by this way of worshiping God, and also by the fact of the habits and behavior of the Sufis who were then good people and respectful, people who might seem insignificant in the face of quarrels. Then by the conquests of the lands undertaken the Sufi scholars themselves, like that of El hajj Oumar tall, Samori Touré with the establishment of his kingdom of wassoulou, where Cheik Ousmane dan fodio, by national Islamic movements guided by leaders who of Al hajj Salim suwareh, with the jankanke Islamic movement, and also by Al murabitun who were One of the first Sufi groups to Conquer Africa nurd precisely the Maghreb, arrived in the empire of ghana. All this shows another face to the Sufi sect is not such a simple group and always remains in spiritual retreat, and has nothing to do with the problems of society or even politics.

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