Islamic Revivalism in Contemporary Ghana

Yunus Dumbe
In the study of Muslims in post-independence Ghana the growth and proliferation of new Islamic movements, as a by-product of Kwame Nkrumah’s foreign policy, is an issue worthy of academic attention. This foreign policy, inclined towards engaging with Africa and Muslim countries (Saudi Arabia, Iran and Libya, among others) attracted movements such as Salafism, Shi´ism and the Third Universal Theory of al-Qadhafi’s Green Book into the Ghanaian religious sphere, where the Tijaniyya already played an important role. While these new movements drew inspiration from external points of orientation, their proliferation depended on the local context. The activists of the Fayda Tijaniyya and the Salafis were successful with their agenda and approach primarily due to the competing scholarly interpretations they offered and their modernised approach to propagation. Though Shi´i revivalism in recent times has combined traditional and secular education, its influence in the broader Ghanaian religious sphere is yet to be tested. The Green Book offered a particular political dimension to the Islamic revival, and some Ghanaians were influenced by its ideas on political participation.

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For Najat Lanta
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Several works have been written on Islam in modern Ghana. The overall focus of the authors was to analyse the initial Islamic influence in this region, which invariably dates back to the 15th century thereafter. Some focus on the broader initial penetration of Islam in the West African subregion, while others focus on the region now called the Volta Basin comprising Burkina Faso, Benin, Togo and Ivory Coast of which Ghana was a part too. In general, however, these studies either attempted to address the origin of Islam in most countries in the broader West Africa or specifically in the Volta Basin. Material depended on by these authors were reports by medieval Arab geographers, unpublished manuscripts by various Muslims, reports by both the British and French colonial representatives and Christian missionaries. Equally important were the unpublished graduate theses of students in the higher institutions, which analysed the historical background of Muslim settlements in some parts of Ghana. The most significant works were those authored by Nehemiah (1968), Stewart (1965), Clarke (1982), Hiskett (1984), Wilks (1989) and Weiss (2008). The corpuses of these scholarly works provided us with our firsthand source of understanding of the Islamic influences in this region.

The overall strength of the scholarly literature was related to the authors’ ability to analyse the initial Islamic influence in the broader West Africa and the Volta Basin. This most of the authors concurred began through the trading and conquest expeditions of Dyula- and Mande speaking-Muslims from the Western Sudan into the broader area of the Volta Basin and the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Nehemia’s (1968) path-breaking work on the Islamic influence in the north highlighted the process of Islamisation, which began through the dispersal of Muslim traders to northern kingdoms. This was further sustained by the incorporation of Islamic elements in the culture of the states, then integration of the foreign Muslims into the socio-political system of the north. Islamic influence was eventually consolidated with the Islamisation of members of the royal estate into Islam. Clarke (1982) highlighted how trade in gold and cola nuts, which could be found in
the Akan forest, provided the initial impetus for the Islamic influence in the Gold Coast. The significance of the trade routes, which link North Africa to the Western Sudan was emphasised.

Other authors enhanced our understanding of how the Islamisation was sustained in this region. Hiskett (1984) and Owusu-Ansah (1991) highlighted how this was achieved through the spiritual prowess of Muslim holy men. The relevance of the literacy background of these Muslim holy men to the traditional kingdoms further consolidated the Islamic influences in the palaces (Owusu-Ansah 1991). The intermediary role played by the chiefs of these kingdoms in the north, such as the Gonja, Dagbon, Mamprusi and Wala as well as Ashanti as precursors of the Islamic influence in modern Ghana was highlighted (Nehemiah 1968).

The religious worldview of these early Muslims was analysed by other authors. Sufism, the bedrock of the prevailing Islamic practices in the 15th through 19th centuries, especially the Qadiriyya and Tijaniyya, was highlighted. This was, however, preceded first by the influence of Ibadiyya and the Sufriyya ideas both of Kharijite origins, in the broader West Africa (Clarke 1982), while the Maliki school of thought shaped jurisprudential background of these early Muslims (Hiskett 1984). The significance of Sufism at this time was that it served as the main conduit of conversion to Islam.

Beside this broader overview, other important issues, which have attracted the scholarly interest of the authors, were the impact of reform movements in the late 19th century and the origin of Sufism in the region. Hiskett in his analysis (1984) provided the broader overview on the origin of these Sufi movements and their chain of spread in West Africa. Among the early reform movement was that of Usman dan Fodio in 1804. The significance of his reforms in the broader West Africa was that it facilitated the dispersal of both Hausa and Fulani natives to other West African countries for trade, but with a stricter version of Islamic practices in the Gold Coast (now Ghana). Furthermore, the Jihad of Umar Futi from Senegambia in 1851 was another reform movement, which spread the Tijaniyya movement in West Africa and the Gold Coast in particular.

Stewart (1965) built on this by analysing the origin of the Tijaniyya movement in modern Ghana. His work represents a masterpiece on both the historical and sociological background of the movement in the 1960s. In spite of his ground-breaking work, the Tijaniyya movement has gone under considerable transformation over the last decades. Holger Weiss (2008) highlighted Muslims’ engagement with the pre-colonial and postcolonial regimes.
This notwithstanding, the broad spectrum nature of these works suggests that little focus was made on the broader Islamic influence on each country. Both Clarke and Hiskett devoted six pages each, to analyse the historical development of Islam in Ghana’s northern ancient kingdoms in the 15th through 19th centuries. Even earlier studies limited their focus on the medieval Muslim kingdoms in the north, such as the Gonja, Dagbon, Wala, Mamprugu and Ashanti empires.

In recent times, Salafi revivalism has attracted the attention of other authors. Kobo’s work by far represents the most authoritative source. While the thrust of his analysis was on the role of Western educated elites who were equipped with European bureaucratic skills, which they incorporated in Islamic reform (Kobo 2012), these elites, however, represent a peripheral to Salafi reform in Ghana. The Western educated were attracted by the religious ideas of the Salafi ulama through the IRRC, and became the modernising agents of the Islamic reform.

Again, the central focus of Iddrisu’s thesis was the local version of Salafi reform, which evolved from the scholarly work of Afa Yusuf Ajura (1890-2004) in the northern region (Iddrisu 2011). While there have been a growing number of Salafi graduates from the Middle East who have joined his movement, the Ambariya Islamic Society, the present study focuses on the largest Salafi network in Ghana.

Also, some authors mentioned the new Islamic movement albeit in passing, and sometimes with misrepresentation. In his book, the History of Islamic Societies, Lapidus (1988) classified the Islamic Research and Reform Centre (IRRC) as a modernist association in addition to other Islamic organizations, which have become widespread in the post-independence Ghana. However, this view was taken without analysing the religious background of the IRRC. Moreover, at the time that Lapidus wrote his book (1988) this organisation had assumed a national character, but was mentioned in just a sentence. Weiss’ (2008) work offered even less space for the analysis of these new religious movements, which had shaped the contemporary Ghanaian Muslim experience. He further acknowledges having only a superficial knowledge of post-independence Muslim movements especially the Salafi.Wahhabi (Salafi) activism, which took shaped in the 1980s was analysed by Hiskett. However, his focus was not on the growth of the movement, but rather on the nexus between ethnicity and Salafi revivalism in Kumasi, Ashanti region. In his analysis, Hiskett (1994) identified the Hausa natives in Ghana as attracted to Wahhabism who conducted fierce vendettas against the Tijaniyya. This inaccurate identification was a
result of the generalisation failing to appreciate the distribution of the Hausa language as the lingua franca among the majority of Muslims in Ghana. (Schildkrout 1970) has highlighted how the Hausa language has been adopted as the lingua franca in the broader Islamic discourse in Ghana.

Broadly speaking, the available studies on Islam in modern Ghana have not paid much attention to the modern Islamic resurgence, which had pervaded the religious sphere since the late 1960s. Even those that analysed Islamic reform movements limited their study on a particular segment or less dominant ones. There is thus a considerable gap between the available literature and the contemporary Ghanaian Muslim religious experiences. The contemporary Muslim religious experience has been shaped by a myriad of new revivalist movements, which have contested the religious sphere with diverse mediums and agendas. This continuity of Islamic ideas in modern Ghana does not suggest that we are not dealing with a changeless movement. While the Qadiriyya movement was the precursor of Islamic influence in the then Gold Coast, it has virtually been replaced by the Tijaniyya movement in the last four decades.

Moreover, the contemporary Tijaniyya movement, which shapes the religious worldview of a majority of Ghanaian Muslims, has undergone significant internal reform and counter reform. The Tijaniyya revivalism initiated under the leadership of Ibrahim Nyass from Senegal through the Jamaat Fayda Tijaniyya (the Tijaniyya Community of Grace) in the broader West Africa and Ghana, in particular, meant that Islamic revivalism in Ghana has, to a large extent, reshaped the ethos of the mainstream Tijaniyya of the founder, Ahmad al-Tijani. This new strand of the Tijaniyya has also witnessed internal debates and fragmentations.

Moreover, at the time that some of these books were authored, the Ghanaian religious sphere was undergoing and has undergone significant religious transformations with the proliferation of new Islamic ideas, such as Salafism, Shi’ism and the Third Universal Theory of Qadhafi. In the last four decades, these religious movements have made a significant enroute in the Ghanaian Muslim communities and have attracted significant number of followers, as a result of several factors, as will be enumerated. Salafism has in the last few decades, transformed itself, as the second dominant Muslim movement in Ghana, whilst Shi’ism is still making enroute. As a starting point of this study, i will now explore the broader factors both internal and external, which provided the impetus for the proliferation of revivalist movements in Ghana.
In assessing the origin of contemporary Islamic revival movements, Ghana’s foreign policy provides a useful framework. This policy was designed and aimed at connecting Ghana with the larger Africa and so-called Third World countries as a whole. The post-independence period of shared common aspiration with many developing countries provided the catalyst for the basis of this connection. The architect of Ghana’s foreign policy was the first President, Osagyefo Dr. Kwame Nkrumah. As the first country to have attained political independence in the sub-Saharan Africa, on 6th March 1957, Nkrumah positioned himself as the natural spokesman for the continent and the Third World regardless of Ghana’s capacity in this venture (Howe 1966). His foreign policy instrument was framed, to some extent, to suggest the guardianship role of Ghana, not only for the African continent but for the Third World countries in general. The basic philosophy in this foreign policy was to forge closer alignment with the wider Africa and the Third World at large as reflected in his Pan-Africanism, decolonization and non-alignment policies. Economic emancipation of Ghana and membership with strategic international organizations equally influenced this pattern of foreign policy. However, the outcome of this policy considerably fed into the origin of the modern Islamic resurgence in Ghana.

This policy of Nkrumah also coincided with the new global political order championed by the world’s superpowers in the Cold War period. This Cold War heightened the fears among Third World countries and necessitated them to forge a platform for their common interest. The space opened for bilateral cooperation with the Third World countries, especially countries from North Africa and the Middle East, promoted cultural exchanges, which were rooted in the socio-religious values of the southern countries. It was in this context that the modern Islamic revival was enacted in Ghana. This revival was not only borne out of Nkrumah’s foreign policy, economic consideration, Ghana’s quest for natural resources such as oil and the need to forge a common political stance among some revolutionary
regimes in Third World countries further provided this impetus. It thus becomes appropriate to outline these diverse global factors, which shaped Ghana’s foreign policy. As a start, I will highlight the debate, which has taken shape on the global political paradigm of development and the struggle engaged by the Third World countries to come out with an alternative development model in contrast to the models proposed by the world’s super powers.

The 1950s, after the Second World War, represented the turning point in the history of the African quest for the development paradigm. As decolonization was gaining momentum on the continent, many countries were engaged in a search for national and regional identities suitable to their socio-cultural background and aspirations (Westerlund 1980a). As a result, various African leaders propounded their brand of political visions for the new nation-states in the aftermath of political independence. Socialism was conceived by many of these leaders as a suitable development paradigm. Julius Nyerere of Tanzania propounded Ujamaa (African socialism), Leopold Senghor, championed Negritude, while Nasser of Egypt was a proponent of Islamic socialism and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana was secularist socialism.

Though viewed as a short-lived policy (Westerlund 1980a), Nkrumah’s socialism has been the most enduring legacy, which successive political parties such as, People National Party (PNP) and Convention People People (CPP) leaned on as an important yardstick in Ghana’s quest for a development model. This was contrasted with the capitalist-orientated policies of opposition parties, the United Party (UP) and the New Patriotic Party (NPP).

The search engaged by these nationalists for both an economic and a political paradigm was underpinned by their belief that the new policies must be grounded in their indigenous and cultural identities (Lapidus 1988). This view is evident in the self-definition of their socialism as Islamic or African (Westerlund 1980a). Nyerere’s Ujamaa ideology was believed to have been inspired by religion (Westerlund 1980b), while Nkrumah’s conscientism was borne out of his fascination with religion (Mazrui, 2004). The viability of this model of development was tested in both the North African Muslim majority states and Muslim minority setting in Africa, South of Sahara (ibid). Thus religion was an integral part of socialism articulated by these African leaders, and was viewed as compatible with their indigenous identities and modern aspirations. On the other hand,
socialism was not the only issue, which gained prevalence in the new African continent.

However, this wind of political independence, which many Africans saw with a sigh of relief, was threatened by the new global political rivalry between the West and the East. The nationalists understood the consequences of the Cold War. This was arising from the fact that the development alternatives offered by the Western secular capitalism and the Eastern atheist communism and Marxism were viewed by the nationalists as incompatible with their aspirations. The fears of the consequences of the Cold War further reconfigured the global political arenas with institutions, which aimed at serving as the third force in global politics. The Non-Aligned Movement was created by Third World countries in 1962 to serve as a stabilizing force and a neutral platform from both sides of the Western and the Eastern blocs of the struggle.

At this time, religious identities became the most resilient factor shaping the aspirations of most Muslim countries. This was aside the different kinds of African socialism mooted by some African leaders such as Julius Nyerere, Leopold Sengor and Kwame Nkrumah. Both the religious and regional entities overlapped with the agenda of these African nationalists in their quest to extend their influences on the continent. Nkrumah championed the ideals of Pan-Africanism, while Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt was the proponent of Pan-Arabism and later shared Pan-Africanist ideals with the former. This was not, however, without power contestation among these Third World countries. The Saudi regime also founded the Muslim World League in 1962 to counter both Nasser’s secular Pan-Arabism as well as the Soviet atheist communism in the Middle East (Hunwick 1996).

With the success of the September 1st 1969 revolution in Libya, al-Qaddafi propounded his political vision, the Third Universal Theory (TUT) of the Green Book as an alternative to Western capitalism and Eastern communism (Esposito 2002). The World Islamic Call Society founded in 1972 provided a political instrument with al-Qadafi to promote the ideals of his religio-political vision. Thus the post-independence period opened up the space for considerable ideological competition among Third World countries with a view to gain influence. This ideological competition was, however, necessitated in view of strategic symbols and values that certain countries and their leaders were endowed with.

Egypt prides itself in the Muslim world because of the location of al-Azhar and its role as the intellectual hub of the Muslim world. This bequeathed Nasser with a unique tool to make a significant impact on many
Muslims in Africa (Westerlund 1980a). In addition, the location of Egypt as it was (and remains) a strategic crossroad between the African and the Asian continents, through which Muslims from Africa had to pass for the annual Hajj. This further bolstered Nasser’s agenda in the post-independence period (Hunwick 1990).

As the birthplace of Islam, the relevance of Saudi Arabia in the Muslim world lies in the fact that it houses two important Muslim shrines in the world, the Qabah and the Madina mosque. It was in its soil that the modern Islamic revivalism called Wahhabism was initiated by Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab. This led to the founding of the Saudi Kingdom (Sullivan 1970). The influence of the Iranian Revolution of 1979 spearheaded by Ayatollah Khomeini, and the transnationalisation of Shi’i revivalism cannot be underrated (Eickelman et al. 1996). Thus, Ghana’s quest to define her foreign policy with these Third World countries was intersected with these regimes’ strategic interests and agenda, which equally contributed to the contemporary Islamic revivalism in the country.

Committed to his vision, Nkrumah defined his foreign policy as embedded in decolonization, Pan-African unity, non-alignment and economic empowerment of Ghana. Also, his quest to connect Ghana’s membership with strategic international organizations shaped the basis of its foreign policy (Adomako 1995). This broader framework provided the conduits through which Ghana exerted her diplomatic engagement with some countries, including some Muslim states. These policies of Nkrumah were adopted by successive regimes and constituted the major benchmark in Ghana’s foreign policy. It will be realised that while Nkrumah was making considerable impact on other countries with his decolonization and African Unity agenda, such countries also influenced Ghanaians in the political and religious spheres.

The significance of decolonization was underscored in Nkrumah’s declaration on the eve of Ghana’s independence on 6th March 1957, when he stated that the independence of Ghana was meaningless unless it was linked to the total liberation of Africa (Armah 2004). With this task that he identified with himself, it raised the image of Nkrumah as the father of the African liberation movement (Mazrui 1966). However, his Pan-Africanism opened up the space for power contestation with other leaders in the continent. And Nkrumah approached this with a combination of avoiding the eclipse of his stature, by undermining his potential contenders and by forging alliances with like-minded leaders (Howe 1966). Gamel Abdul Nasser of the United Arab Republic, now Egypt, was Nkrumah’s key Pan-
Africanist ally. This was, however, preceded first by power jostling between the two leaders. Nasser’s strength in this struggle was in his prominence in the Arab world. He had initiated a union with Syria and the Yemen and was extending his influence in the larger Arab world (Hunwick 1996).

As the icon of Arab unity, Nasser’s radical outlook further necessitated Nkrumah to forge closer collaboration with him in order to have a leader who served as the unifier of the Arab nations. While the initial focus of Nasser and his policy was on the broader Arab world in both North Africa and the Middle East, Nkrumah’s interest was on the African continent as a whole. However, the overlapping of interests between the two personalities promoted grounds for cooperation, though sometime generated power contestation on whose vision the continent would be propelled.

As the tension between the two leaders was overcome, they teamed up at the Organisation of African Unity’s (OAU) conference in Casablanca, Morocco, to play leading role in the Casablanca Bloc as against the Monrovia Bloc. The Casablanca Bloc envisaged the creation of inter-state economic institutions, with the vision of implementing an African Consultative Assembly, an African Political Committee of Heads of States, as well as an Economic Committee and Cultural Committee and Joint African High Command of Chiefs of Staff (Armah 2004). This bloc was invariably composed of a significant number of Arab countries such as Morocco, Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. Nasser was on Nkrumah’s side, so most of the Arab nations felt obliged to follow suit. There were, however, attempts made by Arab nations to exploit this bloc to promote their agenda against Israel. The issue of Israeli occupation of Arab lands dominated the agenda of Arab nations in most of their meetings (Hunwick 1990). As the Organisation of African Unity was taken concrete shape, the decolonization of Nkrumah, which was intended to eliminate the “alien” forces in the continent, attracted the interest of all.

This notwithstanding, Nasser encountered a dilemma in respect of the divided loyalty of the Egyptian nation between its Arab identity on the one hand, and its geographical location in the African continent on the other. The diplomatic relations sought by Nkrumah thus counter-balanced the Egyptian virtual allegiance to the Middle Eastern Arabs and the Muslim world. The consequence of this policy on the Ghanaian socio-cultural background was considerable. The bilateral agreements promulgated between the two countries included, the establishment of an Arab Cultural Centre in Accra and dispatching Egyptian missionaries to Ghanaian schools and Muslims madrasahs (Ghana Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2004a). This
prompted the beginning of Islamic revivalism in Ghana, though drawing its impetus through the diplomatic initiatives. This revivalism stimulated Arabic literacy and higher Islamic learning through scholarships to many Ghanaian students to study in Egypt. According to Chanfi (2001), the scholarships offered by the Egyptian Ministry of External Affairs to African Muslim students to study in al-Azhari from the 1950s through 1970s were higher than those provided in the entire Arab world, Asia and Europe.

The power contest in which Nkrumah was involved when championing his foreign policy through the Pan-African agenda also included undermining his potential detractors. Having succeeded to neutralise the formation of the French West African Union by creating the Union between Ghana-Guinea and Mali (Howe 1966), Nkrumah further defused the influence of other leaders who were not enthusiastic with his approach to the Pan-African agenda. His relationship with Ibrahim Nyass, a transnational Muslim figure from Senegal, vis-à-vis the president of that country Leopold Senghor is a typical example. Nkrumah exploited Senghor’s defect for being a Catholic, and at the same time ruling an overwhelming Muslim country. Senghor’s reluctance with Nkrumah’s aggressive Pan-Africanism compelled the latter to forge relations with Ibrahim Nyass, whose influence on Muslims in West Africa could not be underrated (Seeseman 2011). The consequence of this approach of Nkrumah for the Ghanaian Muslims religious experience was considerable. While Nkrumah harnessed Nyass’s resources for his Pan-African agenda, the latter also promoted his brand of the Tijaniyya movement in Ghana, the Jama`at Fayda Tijaniyya (the Tijaniyya Community of Grace).

Other external factors that influenced Ghana’s relations with some Islamic countries was international political alliances, and membership of continental organisations such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), the Organization of African Unity (OAU), now the African Union (AU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), among others. It is important to note that as the Prime Minister of the Gold Coast, Nkrumah was one of the founding members of the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War period. Ghana also hosted the Non-Aligned Movement’s (NAM) Ministerial Summit in 1991. The opportunity of hosting the summit created a platform for Ghana to share some ideas and strengthen diplomatic ties with some Muslim states in attendance. It is undisputed that membership of such groupings creates opportunity for bilateral agreements on cultural, economic and political issues. The NAM summit hosted by Ghana in Accra in 1991, for example, strengthened Ghana’s friendship with
the Islamic Republic of Iran (Ghana Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2005). This was, however, preceded by the establishment of Iranian political and religious institutions in Ghana. The activities of the Iranian Cultural Consulate, Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD), the Iranian Medical Missions and the Islamic University of Ghana of the Iranian government contributed to an Islamic revival wave along Shi´i religious lines.

Ghana’s foreign policy, with its effect on Islamic revivalism, was not dictated by the membership of international organisations, but economic considerations and other factors have played significant part too. In part, Ghana’s quest for a reliable supply of oil played a role in her diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Libya and the Islamic Republic of Iran. As the major source of energy in the world market, these countries became economically and politically powerful. This has attracted the interest of both developed and Third World nations to forge relations with them. With their economic wealth derived from the oil boom, these Muslim states gained political influence in the world as a result of bilateral economic agreements. A closer look at the briefing of Ghana’s bilateral relations with the aforementioned countries suggests that her overriding agenda was to have a reliable supply of crude oil (Ghana Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2004 and 2005). Some of the countries like Iran promised to assist Ghana in oil exploration (Ghana Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2005).

The economic crisis, which hit the country in the late 1960s and 1980s compelled policy-makers to adopt various measures including strengthening bilateral relations with oil producing countries for preferential terms. The 1973 oil crisis, which hit the market with a high increase of 70 percent in oil price, compelled Saudi Arabia to propose a possible two-tier pricing system to give the poorer nations oil on preferential terms. While Ghana at that time made good profits from the surge of cocoa, which was higher than her official aid receipts, it was also thinking of getting supply of oil on favourable terms through bilateral relations (The Economist, December 1973). This underscores the relevance of these countries to Ghana’s economic survival. Again, in spite of the fact that Ghana had benefitted from the cocoa price bonanza in the international market in 1977, a compound of high initial oil crisis impact, including internal economic crisis, made her realign with some oil-producing countries such as Libya and Saudi Arabia (Le Vine et al. 1979).

While the period between 1983 and 1990 was regarded as an important turning point in the development of NGOs in Ghana (Atingdui et al. 1998), the government’s policy towards NGOs seemed to be a mixed one. The
massive reorganization of the public sector in view of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP), as a result of the recommendations of multilateral development partners, further unleashed harsh economic conditions on Ghanaians. At the same time, the regime banned all religious and church-related organizations and required them to reapply for registration under close government scrutiny. While these laws have affected the local religious bodies (Mumuni 1996), the period witnessed a burgeoning of Muslim Non-Governmental Organisations both from North Africa and the Middle East. The World Call Islamic Society of Libya first opened its offices in Ghana in 1982, while the Iranian Cultural Consulate and Agricultural and Rural Development NGO both were established in 1980. The Al-Muntada Educational Trust, financed by philanthropists from Saudi Arabia was founded in 1990.

These NGOs were not affected because of their interconnectedness with these countries’ diplomatic missions in Ghana. The relevance of these NGOs was in their ability to mobilize resources from some Muslim countries to provide basic amenities for the underprivileged Ghanaian Muslims in the countryside. The policy of Ghana’s government towards these NGOs was influenced by their development-orientated background and they were viewed as development partners. This overlooked other considerations like the regime’s policies towards church-related NGOs in the country. As elsewhere, the activities of some of the NGOs were tied to certain regime’s foreign policies (Kaag 2007).

The regimes to be discussed promoted their respective religious agenda through their bilateral relations with Ghana. For instance, Salafism (previously called Wahhabism) and Shi’ism are the official religious leanings of Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran respectively. Similarly, the Libyan leader, Muammar al-Gaddafi set forth the ideas contained in The Green Book as his brand of Islamic socialism and political ideology with a view to extending it to other countries in the world.

Again, certain political events in respect of revolutionary outlooks of certain regimes tend to provide good grounds for inter-state friendship and co-operation. In this case, the revolutionary explosions in Libya (1969), Iran (1979) and Ghana (1981) fostered solidarity among these countries to cooperate. Not quite too long before the December 1981 revolution in Ghana, the Iranian revolution under Imam Khomeini had taken place in 1979. Libya was also extending the revolutionary ideas of the Third Universal Theory as expounded in Muammar al-Gaddafi’s The Green Book beyond its borders. For instance, Libya’s foreign policy with Ghana in the
early 1980s was partly dictated by her perception of the ‘radical and progressive’ background of the leaders of the 31st December revolution (Joffe 1988). These countries saw themselves as sharing common experiences and could therefore co-operate in many ways.

The governments set out to extend their influences beyond their borders to other Muslims in all parts of the world with their respective religious ideologies (Eickelman et al. 1996). Consequently, Ghanaian Muslims have been affected by the religious worldviews promoted by these transnational governmental religious institutions. These factors, amongst others, have played significant roles in fostering good diplomatic relations between Ghana and the Muslim states in many spheres of national interest, and with certain religio-political implications. In the next section I will analyse the historical background of Islam in Ghana as a prelude to the main discussion of this book.

Ghana’s historical encounter with islam

Before delving into the thrust of this study, a brief background of Ghana becomes necessary in order to lay the ground for the origin of Islam in the country. The modern-day Ghana, which was previously referred to by the successive colonial masters as the Gold Coast, was carved out from the traditional kingdoms in the Volta Basin. It is located in West Africa and bordered by the Ivory Coast to the west, Burkina Faso to the north, Togo to the east and the Gulf of Guinea to the south. The Gold Coast attained political independence from the British on the 6th March 1957, and thereafter the name Ghana replaced the former.

Since mid-15th century, this country has experienced the wave of colonialism, first with the Dutch and later the British. Ghana still prides itself in Africa with the most impressive displays of European military architecture and at the same time marks the country as a centre of Africa’s notorious slave trade (Swift 2009). Ghana further prides itself from the glories of the northern kingdoms and the Ashanti empires and as the first country to have successfully gained political independence in Africa south of the Sahara. Ghana’s rich natural resources were what attracted the interest of Europeans to trade in gold, slaves, timber. This was also the case with itinerant Muslims who traded in kola nuts and slaves. This country is still abound with natural resources, such as industrial diamonds, bauxite, manganese, fish, rubber, petroleum oil and gas, silver, salt and limestone.
According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Ghana has roughly twice the per capita output of the poorest nations in West Africa.

The population of Ghana, according to the year 2000 Population and Housing Census Report was 22,409,572. The country is ethnically diverse and religiously pluralistic. The dominant ethnic groups comprise the Akan, Mole-Dagbani, Ewe, Gurma, Grunsi, Ga, Guan and Mande-Busanga. Minority people are among others like Hausa, Fulani and Zabarma. The year 2000 Population and Housing Census estimated that Christianity is the dominant religion with 69 percent of the population, followed by Islam, 16 percent, and indigenous religions, 9 percent. The Muslim population in the north is concentrated in the old traditional kingdoms like Gonja, Dagbon, Mamprusi and Wala. Many Sissala also profess the Islamic faith. Christians are predominant from the middle belt to the south. However, Islam has gained ground in the extreme south especially among the Fante, through the pioneering work of Abubakar (from northern Nigeria) and two of his Fante disciples Benjamin Sam and Mahdi Apah (Pellow 1985). A significant number of Muslim populations are found scattered in southern Ghana in the Zongos (Muslim segregated settlements). Unlike the early Muslims who settled in the north, many of the southern Muslims in the Zongos are latter immigrants from neighbouring West African peoples like the natives of Kotokoli, Chamba and Basila from northern Togo, Dendi from the Republic of Benin, Hausa, Fulani, Baribari and Yoruba from Nigeria and Mali. Other immigrants Muslims include the Moshi from Burkina Faso and Zabarma from Niger.

In the political sphere, Muslims have been actively involved and on some occasions contested elections. The Gold Coast Muslim Association, which was formed as an educational and a cultural organisation in 1938 transformed itself into a political party, the Muslim Association Party (MAP) (Allman 1991). It joined the opposition to the Convention Peoples’ Party (CPP) of Kwame Nkrumah but was disbanded in 1958. In spite of their less numerical strength, Ghanaian Muslims in recent times have been fairly well represented in national politics. And most often, the conventional northern-southern power sharing tends to favour Muslims for a presidential or vice-presidential candidate. As parts of their national recognition in Ghana, Muslims have been given two national holidays, the Eidul-Fitr and Eidul Adha. The Islamic faith is further recognised in major national ceremonies. The authority of the Sunni Muslim leadership in Ghana (the subject of our study) is invested in the Office of National Chief
Imam (ONCI), while the Ahmadi Muslims represent a different leadership structure, the Ahmadi Muslim Mission.

The penetration of Islam and its initial revival

In this section, I highlight two interrelated issues concerning the first penetration of Islam in the Gold Coast namely, Islamisation and Islamic revival. Islamisation is about the expansion and the spread of the religion as well as the scale of its conversions. Revival had a stronger sense of a strengthening of the spiritual dimensions of faith and practice among the followers (Haddad 2009). The multiple nature of the scope of revivalism could be discerned from the fact that while it most often aims at targeting nominal Muslims it could also lead to the conversion of non-Muslims (Dallal 1993 and Mzrui 1988). The Islamisation of the people of the Gold Coast was a product of trading activities and conquest expeditions of Mande-speaking Muslims, who were known in West Africa as the Wangara. Migration of Muslims from the neighbouring West African countries to the Gold Coast equally constituted an integral part of this Islamisation. The policy of the colonial masters of recruiting Muslims from the neighbouring West Africa for their security interest was augmented by voluntary migration of other Muslims due to the prospects that the colonial labour economy offered. This aspect of the Islamisation represented the most enduring factor of the Islamic influence in the Gold Coast. The Islamic factor in modern Ghana partly derives its vitality from the population of these migrant Muslims.

The Islamisation was further sustained by revival through the scholarly role and the Hajj (pilgrimage to Makkah). In terms of Islamic ideas, the Qadiriyya movement set the pace for the Islamisation process, while the Tijaniyya pioneered the revivalist spirit. However, the intensity of the Tijaniyya revivalism affected the fortune of the Qadiriyya in the Muslim religious sphere in modern Ghana. While the Mande Muslims were the Qadiris who advanced the Islamisation, broadly speaking, the Hausa Muslims provided the impetus for the Tijaniyya revival. The Hausa Islamic version still shapes the contemporary Muslim experience as the Hausa language is the lingua franca in the Ghanaian Islamic tradition. Trade and commerce constituted the earliest means by which the peoples of the whole region were converted to Islam. That was the case, also, in the area of the Volta Basin as will be illustrated below.
Islam from Arabia through North Africa is known to have made its first contact with West Africa as early as in the late 7th century, through the conquest of Uqba b. Nafi. Clarke (1982), however, is of the view that West Africa made its first contact with Islam in the 8th century by means of the trans-Saharan trade routes from North Africa. The main attraction of West Africa to the North Africans was the slave trade and commerce, and not missionary zeal. The commercial attractiveness of this region was further boosted by the discovery of and the prospect of obtaining gold from the ancient kingdoms of West Africa (ibid.). These contacts between Muslims of North Africa and West Africans facilitated the conversion of the Sanhaja Berbers peoples to Islam through trading activities. Later Mande traders of the Western Sudan were converted to Islam through the influence of the North African Islamized Berbers. Clarke concludes that the realization that West Africa was the `land of gold’ made it the focus of greater attention in North Africa. This then attracted an increasing numbers of Muslim traders to the commercial centres of West Africa.

Mande traders were originally associated with the Mali Empire. Their trading adventure in gold and kola nuts in the Gold Coast made them settle in the Akan forest of Begho, near Wenchi, in the early 15th century, (Hiskett 1984). Due to the enterprising nature of the travelling Mande traders, they have been referred to as ‘Commercial Diasporas’ in the Western Sudan because of their extensive travels for trading (Wilks 2000). The impact they made on people in the Volta Basin and the Gold Coast could be seen from two interrelated processes. For the first time Begho emerged as a commercial centre in the Gold Coast, and subsequently the people were converted to Islam (Clarke 1982). Their merchandizes were transported back to Jenne and Timbuktu for onward transportation to North Africa. Other individuals and peoples of the Gold Coast were converted to Islam for their desire to learn mining, such as King Ali Kwame in the latter part of the 16th century (Hiskett 1984).

The trading activities of Mande Muslims in the Gold Coast marked the process of Islamisation of of West Africans to Islam, which further defined their cultural worldview. The influence wielded by Mande traders in the spread of Islam is related to their wandering from one place to another. As a result of trade, the Mande scholarly community in Timbuktu had arrived in Dagbon (in northern Ghana) around 1700 C.E. These scholars were known by the local person as Yarnas, which was the Mande word for religious leaders (Hiskett 1984).
Subsequently, the Islam of the Yarna was challenged by Hausa imams, whose trading activities were already rooted in the 16th century but experienced significant expansion after the triumph of Dan Fodio’s Jihads in the Hausaland in 1804. The significance of this Jihad on the religious worldview of the Gold Coast Muslims was enormous. For the first time, it promoted a stricter version of Islam through the dispersal of Hausa Muslims from northern Nigeria to the Gold Coast. While the Mande were noted for their tolerance of mixing, the Hausas were stricter (Hiskett 1984). However, these two traditions co-existed in the Gold Coast. And in places with strong Islamic influences, like the north, the chiefs held the balance between both their indigenous traditions and Islamic values.

This syncretic Islamic pattern in the north of the Gold Coast and parts of the Volta Basin in general necessitated Dan Fodio to call Muslims there as “infidels” (Nehemiah 1968). As a result, he advised Muslims to emigrate from these lands of “unbelievers”. While Muslims in the Gold Coast did not heed to his scholarly advice, Dan Fodio’s edict heightened the religious consciousness among Hausa migrants on their relations with the Mande Muslims as well as non-Muslim indigenes. It instilled a sense of religious mistrust on the part of Hausas against the Mande Muslims. A possible practical outcome of this was the segregated quarters established by Hausa migrants called Zongos. This was with a view to preserve their religious identity in the Gold Coast against the mixing. From hindsight, the origin of the Hausa Zongo settlements was as a result of their resentment against the perceived unorthodox Islamic tradition of the Mande and the indigenous non-Muslims way of life. In a sense the consequence of this social and political revolution in Hausaland on the Gold Coast Islam was that it promoted what might be called the first wave of Islamic revival through a high sense of religious consciousness against the early Mande Muslims and the indigenous non-Muslims in the Gold Coast.

The commercial viability in the Gold Coast for the Hausa traders resulted in the emergence of certain trading centres. The most notable centre was the Salaga Market in the Gonjaland, which emerged in 1775 as a Hausa-speaking town (Hiskett 1962). The Salaga Market was regarded as the largest trading centre in West Africa and attracted merchandise from Timbuktu, Borno and Hausaland. The Hausa occupation of Salaga in particular was viewed as important because it created the conditions for the later penetration of Islam in the Ashanti Empire (Nehemiah 1968) and Accra later. With the decline of the Salaga Market due to the Civil War in 1892, Muslim traders moved to the newly emerging trading centres such as Accra,
Atebubu, Kete Karachi, as well as Kintampo, Yeji and Techiman (Abass 2005). Settlements in the emerging trading centres, and intermarriages with local people expanded the Islamic influence in the Gold Coast.

The early Muslims who settled in Kumasi were trade representatives and commercial agents guarding the interests of the northern kola nut traders (Nehemiah 1968). This was also the case regarding the first penetration of Islam in Accra, especially from 1835–1865. The 1865 Report of the Select Committee of the British colonial authorities report indicated that Muslim merchants whose staples in trade were ivory and slaves had settled in James Town, Accra (Dretke 1968). This was, however, preceded by the settlement of African freed slaves, the Donkos, at Java Hill in Cape Coast. The Dutch bought these slaves from the Ashanti Kingdom to fight their wars in Java, and at the end of the wars they were settled in Elmina and got pensioned when old (Dretke 1968).

The British policy of recruiting Muslims from neighboring British West African colonies as their security force augmented the growth of Islamic influence in the Gold Coast. The Gold Coast Hausa Constabulary (GCHC) of the British recruited Hausa people from Northern Nigeria in 1872 as the core of the police and the army (Dretke 1968). Furthermore, during the British–Ashanti wars in 1873, a batch of 150 Hausa Constabulary was transferred from Lagos to the Gold Coast to strengthen the British front in Kumasi. By the close of 1900, the number of Hausa police (who were invariably Muslims) in the British army was almost up to a thousand. It is said that some Muslims were even recruited from Sierra Leone (ibid.). While trade, migration and the British policy facilitated Islamisation in the Gold Coast, scholarly activities of Muslim literates secured Islamic influence in the palaces of the chiefs and further strengthened the faith among the already Muslims.

Since some of the early Muslim traders were literates, the courts and palaces of the chiefs attracted their scholarly interest. This is particularly noticeable in the northern and the Ashanti kingdoms, a reflection of the pattern of Islamic influences in the medieval kingdoms of Ghana and Songhay. The distinctive role played by Muslim scholars in the palaces of chiefs for instance among Ashanti, Dagbon and Gonja was in rendering spiritual services and serving as the administrative bureaucrat.

Secondly, the scholarly role of these Muslims was manifested through belief in their spiritual prowess. Muhammad Al-Abyad was the Muslim advisor and imam to Fati Morukpe Jakpa, the conquering warrior-hero and the king of Gonja (Hiskett 1984). He assisted the king through spiritual
means to win most of his battles which attracted the interest of the Dagomba chief, Naa Zangina. This set the pace for Islamisation of the chiefs’ palaces in Dagbon (Weiss 2008). The role of Muslim scholars in these kingdoms fused Islamic spirituality with the already indigenous traditional forms of spirituality. This thus gave Islam a sense of recognition in these palaces and secured Muslims position in the kingdoms.

The Ashanti kingdom provides a blend of the relevance of Muslim scholars in rendering spiritual services and serving as administrative bureaucrats. However, this was also aroused by the Ashanti realization of the role of Muslim scholars in the successes achieved by the northern kingdoms in their wars. Beginning from 1816–1820, Muslim scholars played roles in Ashanti’s government as court scribes and keeping records on trade and on matters relating to wars. Some of the scholars also served in the army, performed magical and religious services (Schildkrout 1970). They further acted as ambassadors for the kings on foreign missions, and as hosts for visitors from distant countries in the north, including Mossiland, Hausaland, Timbuktu and North Africa. This was due to their literate background (Nehemiah 1968). The northern chiefs were initially the key ‘exporters’ of Islamic spirituality to the Ashanti state when they became tributary states after the Ashanti conquest.

The zenith of Ashanti–Muslim relation was reached in the reign of Nana Osei Kwame (1777–1803) when Muslims were recruited into the royal household (gyaasewa) mainly to render spiritual services (Owusu-Ansah, 1991). Owusu-Ansah (1991) reports that the Ashanti army, which invaded the Fante State in 1807, had “an Arab medical staff” with the responsibility for recording casualties and attending to the wounded. This “Arab medical staff” should not be confused with native Arabs, but rather, these Muslim scholars who were of West African ethnic backgrounds who knew Arabic.

In view of the overwhelming success of the kingdom, the Ashanti royal family appreciated the potency of Islamic spirituality. Nana Osei Tutu was believed to have been impressed by the role of Muslim scholars, which nearly made him to convert to Islam. He overtly expressed his belief in the potency of the Quran because of its powers. Other Muslim scholars like Sharif Ibrahim were invited by the Ashanti King in 1817 to pray for the king and make sacrifices to ensure the success of the Ashanti wars (Hiskett 1962).

Since 1777, the royal court led by Nana Osei Kwadwo depended on Muslim literates and initiated a program of administrative reforms for his kingdom. Muslim literates were the resource persons for the reform project. Interestingly, by the early 19th century a madrasa (school) had already been
established at Buna, west of the Black Volta to train Ashanti civil servants and headed by Abd Allah b. al-Hajj Muhammad al-Watarawi (Hiskett 1984). This centre attracted scholars beyond the Volta Basin region but also from Senegambia (Hiskett 1984), which increased the Islamic influence in the Ashanti region.

While the scholarly role of Muslim holy men promoted Islamic influences in the court of the palaces, others also sustained the growth of the religion among the already Muslims through propagation and education. Of special significance were the activities of Umar Kreke of Kete Krachi and Alhassan Jarah of Salaga. They were both educated in Nigeria and settled at Kete Krachi and Salaga respectively in 1870. While Kreke was a northern Nigerian, Jarah was from Jogu in Benin, although he was educated in Ilorin, Nigeria before he settled in Salaga. Umar Kreke was noted to have written a great deal on theological and historical subjects and composed a number of poems of a polemical nature on Christianity. Before the rise of Salaga and Kete Krachi, Gonja had had its share of Muslim intellectuals spearheaded by al-Hajj Muhammad b. Mustafa, an historian who wrote a history of the Gonja in 1752. These pioneer scholars in the Gold Coast turned Salaga, Kete Krachi and Gonja into centres of Islamic scholarly activities in the early days. Umar Kreke in particular was also noted to have been a scholar who used to travel the length and breadth of the country, especially during the month of Ramadan when his school was in recess. Some of the areas to which he traveled to disseminate Islam included Tamale, Yendi, Mamprusi, Ashanti and Tetemu (Kpong) (Abdul Razak 1996). Such trips of Umar to parts of the Gold Coast had reinforced the faith of many Gold Coast Muslims at that time, thereby raising his status as a prominent Islamic scholar.
CHAPTER 3

Sufi revivalism

In this chapter, I will highlight the origin of the first Sufi movement and its chief propagandists in the area of the Volta Basin and the Gold Coast. Sufism was an integral part of the religious worldview of the early transmitters of Islam in the Volta Basin and the Gold Coast. Deriving its origin from *Tassawuf*, in Arabic, Sufism denotes Islamic mysticism, which involves meditations and esoteric beliefs. The multiplicity of its thought is reflected in the diverse Sufi thoughts or *turuq* (sing. *tariqa*) each one with its distinct founder. Most Sufi adherents look at the Prophet Muhammad as their source of emulation as far as Islamic mysticism and asceticism is concerned.

The qadiriyya

The Qadiriyya Sufi order founded by Abdul Qadir Jaylani in the 11th century in Baghdad was the first to have permeated into the area of the Volta Basin. We are constraint, however, by lack of accurate data regarding its pioneering propagandists. This has further been compounded by lack of information on its subsequent extinction in the Gold Coast. In spite of this, it is assumed that the pioneer Muslim traders whose influence – as we have dissected earlier – which dates back in this region to the 15th century were of Qadiriyya background (Hiskett 1984). In analyzing the broader background of the origin of Qadiriyya in the Western Sudan, it has been argued that the scholarly activities of Muhammad Abdul Karim al-Maghili, a North African jurist, played a significant role in the dissemination of its thoughts in the royal courts (Hiskett 1984). He was known to have had contact with Muhammad Askia of the Soghay Empire and was well connected to the ruler of Northern Nigeria, Muhammad Rumfa who later adopted the writings of al-Maghili as his standard reference on Islam. As Qadiriyya was entrenched in these kingdoms and shaped the Islamic worldview there, its spillover to adjoining states in the Western Sudan was eminent through
migration, trade, and quests for knowledge. It is on record that Uthman Dan Fodio, the leader of the Fulani Jihad, was a Qadiri. His conquest of Hausaland has in effect spread the Qadiriyya in the Volta Basin and the Gold Coast on account of the Hausa traders who settled there (Samwini 2006).

This movement has gone through various phases of evolution in West Africa. Wright (2010) has classified the history of Sufism in West Africa into four stages and included, private individual transmission, lineage and ethnic affiliation, the consolidation of Sufi orders (mostly Qadiri and Tijani), and the emergence of the Sufi sheikh as a centre of social allegiance. Having been initiated into the order by al-Maghili, Sidi Ahmad Bakkai (1729–1811), the leader of the Kunta tribe became the chief propagandist for the proselystisation of Qadiriyya in the Western Sudan in the 19th century (Hiskett 1984). His role was further consolidated by the subsequent proselytisation of the movement by the Kunta family through propagation tours (siyaha in Arabic). This facilitated the growth of the movement in West Africa. The Mande Saghanughu traders further spread the Qadiri order into the area of the Volta Basin (ibid.).

In his pioneering work, the “Tijaniyya in Ghana: an Historical Study”, Charles Stewart (1965) analysed the background of the Qadiriyya in the Gold Coast. While his thesis provides us with firsthand information about the two main groups of Muslims who arrived in the Gold Coast, it represented a sketchy attempt on the origin of the Qadiriyya order in the Gold Coast.

The thrust of his analysis was that the Qadiriyya order was first introduced in the Gold Coast through Wangara and Hausa Muslims. According to him, the Wangara contributed in the dissemination of the Qadiriyya through the northeast in the area of Bonduku, and the Hausa Muslims came through the northwest into the Salaga Market area. These two groups played significant parts in the introduction of Qadiriyya. The activities of the Wangara merchants in the Bonduku were rooted already in the 15th century through the Jenne-Begho-Guinea routes. Secondly, the Hausa influence became prominent when the kola trade was organized by the Ashanti kingdom as a state enterprise in the 18th century to the North Africa. Weiss (2008) highlighted how the Ashanti foreign policy on trade was rested on three bases: strict state control, an Atlantic-directed gold trade and a savannah-directed kola trade. The Hausa influence was felt in the Gold Coast when they controlled this trade from Salaga through Dahomey (in Benin) to Kano and onwards to North Africa (Weiss 2008). The major transit points
along these routes thus became the assembly grounds through which the Qadiriyya teaching centres emerged in the Gold Coast.

This shaped the origin of the Salaga Market as a trading centre for these Muslims as well as its role in the dissemination of Islam in the Gold Coast. It was the largest market centre in West Africa in the 19th century (Weiss 2008). As it was transformed into a trading centre in the Volta Basin, so also did it attract leading scholars, though we lack accurate information regarding the period that these early scholars settled in Salaga and their scholarly background. This notwithstanding, Mallam Bature from Hausaland was known as the first religious scholar to have settled in Salaga and built houses for himself and his guests (Weiss 2008). He was followed by Shaydiya, who became the Sarkin Hausa, the Hausa chief. Muslim traders from Borno also settled in Salaga and built mosques there (Nehemia 1968). The arrival of Afa Sabi from Zugu in Benin was viewed by Weiss (2008) as crystallizing the transformation of Salaga into a regional centre of Muslim scholarship. The cosmopolitan outlook of the Salaga scholarly community was thus not in question. The background and the scholarly activities of the latter ulama were, however, clearer. Umar Kreke from Northern Nigeria, who had settled in Salaga in 1874, attained a scholarly reputation unrivaled in both the late 19th and the early 20th centuries’ Muslim history in the then Gold Coast. His contemporary was Alhasan Jarah, who had also settled in Salaga around the same time. Umar Kreke (1854–1934) was recognised as the spiritual head of the Gold Coast Muslims. His accomplishment in the spread of Islam in the Gold Coast and neighbouring countries included teaching and preaching tours to communities (Abdul-Razak 1996). His legacy is celebrated in various parts of the country today. While some of his students travelled from various parts of the Gold Coast to Salaga, some of them, after the completion of their education, were assigned responsibility to other communities. It was these students who exported his religious worldview, the Qadiriyya, to other parts of the Gold Coast.

As stated earlier, the Qadiriyya background of the Gold Coast community was outshined by the advent of the Tijaniyya. The factors enumerated accountings for its lack of attractiveness to the Muslims were not quite clear, though worth analysing. It suggests that the flexible ethos of the newly emerged Tijaniyya and the open space it created for the ordinary Muslims were potential to undermine the fortunes of the Qadiriyya. The latter order had initially contained the challenges posed by the Tijaniyya by absorbing its adherents, though for a while (Stewart 1965). Trimmingham (1959) argued that the Qadiriyya litanies were viewed to be too rigorous,
which makes it difficult for ordinary Muslims to be initiated. The movement was further perceived to be characterised by elitism of the *ulama* without any social relevance for ordinary Muslims (Hiskett 1980). As a movement which revolves solely around the *ulama*, one of the outcomes of this will be the perception of ordinary Muslims as the hub of the *ulama*. Unlike the Tijaniyya, Qadiriyyism might have also experienced a setback because it lacks any transnational reformer in the Gold Coast and the West African sub-region as a whole. Stewart (1965) argues that the Qadiriyya at the turn of 20th century was less strong as it did not pose any rivalry to the advent of the Tijaniyya. This thus set the stage for its gradual extinction.

Lastly, the outstanding role played by Umar Kreke for the greater part in the decline of the Qadiriyya largely accounted for this. Originally known as a Qadiriyya scholar, Umar Kreke’s pilgrimage to Makkah in 1913 rather has an effect on him to accept the Tijaniyya *wird* (litany), through his encounter with Alfa Hashim as will be discussed in the next section of this work. The dispersal of his students in most parts of the Gold Coast considerably transformed the religious background of their respective communities with the Tijaniyya order.

The systematic extinction of the Qadiriyya could be dated back to the second decade of the 20th century. This was when it had lost its wider appeal. During the course of my fieldwork in Nima, Accra in 2004, the Muslim elders identified one Mallam Yahya al-Waiz, who used to come from Nsawam in the Eastern region in the early 1940s to propagate. Having realized that he was a Qadiri scholar, the community shun upon patronizing his preaching session. In spite of this, Qadiriyya implanted the seed of Islamisation in the broader Volta Basin and the Gold Coast in particular. This was extended by the Tijaniyya and further revived the Islamic influence in modern Ghana which is discussed below.

### The Tijaniyya

The Tijaniyya movement takes its name from the founder Ahmad al-Tijani (1737–1815). The uniqueness of his movement is related to the founder’s assertion that he occupied the two highest ranks in the Sufi hierarchy as *Qutb aqtab* (pole of the poles) and *Khatm wilaya* (seal of the Sufi sainthood) (Hiskett 1980). The most authoritative sources for the purposes of my analysis on the origin and spread of the Tijaniyya in the Volta Basin and the Gold Coast have been Stewart 1965, and Hiskett 1980 and 1984 respectively.
In this context, however, Stewart’s thesis provided in-depth background regarding the first generation of the Tijaniyya leaders in the late 19th century and its representatives in the 20th century. The growth of this movement in West Africa and for that the Gold Coast was dated after 1889 (Stewart 1965 and Hiskett 1984). This period has been linked to the aftermath of the fall of the Segu empire founded by Hajj Umar Tall in 1889. In spite of the fact that members of the Tijaniyya order were already known to have settled in areas such as Zugu (in Benin), Salaga (the Gold Coast) and Hausaland (Northern Nigeria), active proselytisation of the order and its expansion took place when the descendants of Umar Tall migrated towards the eastward direction to Nigeria and the Gold Coast (Stewart 1965). While the proselytisation of the Tijaniyya was the work of the descendants of Umar, the Hausa from northern Nigeria and the local ulama popularised its dominance in the Gold Coast.

Unlike the Qadiriyya, the Tijaniyya movement since its introduction has witnessed a consistent pattern of growth in modern Ghana. While four lines of learned Tijaniyya Mallams (ulama) were identified to have introduced the order in the late 19th century, by the second quarter of the 20th century, it has attracted the interest of about 50 or 70 lines of learned scholarly propagandists (Stewart 1965). It could be assumed that these learned scholars popularised the Tijaniyya by initiating others into the movement and promoting it through education. In all, however, it was through the transmission of scholarly tradition from mentor to protégé, which promoted the movement. The Tijaniyya further consolidated its influence in the Gold Coast through the visitations of itinerant scholars from other countries such as Burkina Faso, Benin, Senegal, Mauritania, the Sudan and interaction with other Tijanis through the Hajj. Stewart has identified these itinerant scholars in the transmission of a new line of the Tijaniyya wîrd in Wenchi and Bolgatanga, among others. The legacy of Ibrahim Nyass from Senegal in the propagation of the new wîrd of the Tijaniyya, beginning from 1950s, is that which shaped the larger Ghanaian Muslims religious experience in modern time. As the Tijaniyya had also assumed an international character in the early 20th century, the latter migrant Muslims also introduced their unique scholarly background into Ghana. I highlight first these lines of scholarly transmission from the 19th century to early 20th century, while the focus of the work will revolve around the Tijaniyya revival initiated by Ibrahim Nyass from Senegal in the mid 20th century.

Key among these learned Tijani ulama in the late 19th and early 20th century was Moro (Umar) Futi, the grandson of Umar Tall, the founder of
the Masina empire. Umar Futi was believed to have initiated the Imam of Accra, Abass Muhammad, into the Tijaniyya *tariqa* in the second decade of the 20th century (ibid.). Sheikh Uthman Nuhu Sharabutu, the present national Chief Imam, was initiated into the order by Abass Muhammad, the uncle. Also Sheikh Kamaldeen Ahmad, the present Deputy Imam, was equally introduced into the Tijaniyya by Ahmadu Futa, who might have been initiated by Umar Futi.

Al-Hajj Idrissuo from northern Nigeria was identified to have propagated the Tijaniyya in Salaga in northern Ghana, while al-Hajj Ishaq from Segu introduced the order in the northeast through Bonduku. The British policy of recruiting Muslims in northern Nigeria also introduced and popularised the *tariqa* in the Gold Coast. Mallam Musa was recruited by the British from northern Nigeria into the Gold Coast to serve the spiritual needs of the Gold Coast Hausa Constabulary (GCHC). Many of the soldiers, who were Tijanis themselves after retirement, further popularized the order. Aside these lines of the scholarly community, the role played by Alfa Hashim, the nephew of Umar Tall, who had fled from Segu empire and settled in Makkah in view of the French reprisal, was remarkable in the introduction of the Tijaniyya in the Gold Coast and other parts of West Africa. He was known to have initiated many West African nationals into the *tariqa* when he interacted with them during the annual Hajj.

The most influential person in the introduction of the Tijaniyya in the Gold Coast was Umar Kreke, a scholar from Kano, Nigeria. He was initiated into the order by Alfa Hashim in 1913. Kreke was known to have performed the Hajj as a Qadiriyya scholar but returned as a Tijaniyya (Hiskett 1984). Prior to his Hajj, he was widely recognized as the spiritual head of the Gold Coast Muslims. His legacy in the Islamic tradition in Ghana has attracted considerable scholarship attention (Iddrisu 2008, Abass 2005, Abdul-Razak 1996, Hiskett 1984 and Stewart 1965). He popularised the order through teaching and preaching tours to Muslim communities. A significant number of Muslim scholars across the length and breadth of the country identified him as their teacher, even if they had met him only during his tours for weeks or months. Others too have travelled from afar to study under him. And upon the completion of their studies, he assigned them to communities, which requested for imams (Iddrisu 2008). It was the generation of his students who consolidated the influence of and popularised the Tijaniyya in modern Ghana.
Abdulahi Dantanu, a scholar of considerable repute in Kumasi, the Ashanti region, received his scholarly certification from Umar Kreke, though he had studied before under Muhammad Kano. Dantanu’s students shaped the scholarly tradition in Kumasi. Mallam Babali was another student of Umar Kreke, who also produced a chain of students from his school. Mallam Salaw, the influential Muslim chief (Sarkin Zongo) in Kumasi, was believed to have been initiated into the Tijaniyya either by Umar Kreke or his teacher, Mallam al-Hasan, the father of Abdulahi in Yendi. These disciples of Kreke turned Kumasi into a scholarly centre in the first quarter of the 20th century. The present national Chief Imam of Ghana, Sheikh Nuhu Sharugutu, was a disciple of Mallam Dantanu likewise most of the contemporary Muslim leaders traced their scholarly background to Kumasi or Yendi.

The jama’at fayda and the tijaniyya revivalism

The architect of Tijaniyya revivalism in Ghana was Ibrahim Nyass from Senegal (1900–1975). This was, however, connected to the wider revival he embarked upon in the broader West African sub-region. His distinctive role in the Tijaniyya movement has attracted different interpretations. Hiskett (1980) considered Nyass to have popularised the Tijaniyya movement, while Paden (1973) viewed him as a reformer in the Tijaniyya. In my view, these two perspectives, are interrelated and intersect with the idea of revival. Popularisation connotes the wider reach and the spread of religious ideas to the various strata of the society. And with reform, it presupposes new approaches and interpretations were infused in the body of the Tijaniyya doctrines and practices. In the context of revivalism, both perspectives are mutually reinforcing, though exclusive. The interconnectedness of these two perspectives in the Tijaniyya revivalism through the Jama´at Fayda Tijaniyya to be illustrated here is ubiquitous in modern Ghana. The Jama´at Fayda Tijaniyya (the Tijaniyya Community of Flood or Grace) was founded by Ibrahim Nyass as the hub of his revivalist ambition in the West African sub-region.

Previous scholarly works have highlighted the exceptional role played by Nyass in the Tijaniyya revival in Ghana. Stewart (1965) was the foremost scholar to mention that the man of greatest fame among the Tijaniyya in Ghana was Ibrahim Nyass, who is generally recognised as the spiritual leader of the movement. However, while summarizing the attractiveness of
the Tijaniyya in modern Ghana, in contrast to the Qadiriyya, he fell short to highlight the unique religious worldview and the organisational dimension of the activities of the Jama’at Fayda in Ghana. Hiskett (1980) analysis of the social basis of the popularity of the Fayda movement stands as the most authoritative source so far. However, considering that subsequent events emerged within the movement, which shaped the theological differences, there is a vacuum to be filled in the current literature regarding this movement in Ghana.

Fayda, which literally connotes flood or emanation in Arabic, simply carries populist expansion of the Tijaniyya movement in a moment of suffering, which humankind will encounter. This understanding of the Fayda provided Ibrahim Nyass with a catalyst to exert his influence within the Tijaniyya movement. He identified himself as the bringer of the Fayda (sahib fayda) through the confirmation of other Tijani scholars. The Fayda has it precedence in the statement made by the founder of the Tijaniyya, Ahmad al-Tijani, who predicted that it would come upon his companions, so that the people would enter their path in throngs, at a time when they are subjected to extreme ordeals and hardship (Seesemann 2011). The exceptional role played by Ibrahim Nyass in the popularisation of the Fayda was in connection with the practice of tarbiya, which is a spiritual path of seeking God (Brigaglia 2001). Nyass popularised the idea of tarbiya to the masses as the centre pillar of his understanding of the Fayda, which was in contrast to the prevailing practice within the Tijaniyya. The practice of tarbiya was originally restricted to the learned people and involves seclusion and fasting. With the power to initiate others into the Fayda and sharing it with those who believe in his power to save them through the tarbiya, Ibrahim Nyass identified himself as sheikh murshid (the guiding sheikh) and Ghawthul zaman (saviour of the century) (Hiskett 1980). It was in this context that he could be seen as the key revivalist of the Tijaniyya movement in the mid 20th century. He embarked upon tours to disseminate and to win public support for his religious movement and new teachings in the West African sub-region. As a result, the successor of Alfa Hashim, Ahmad Abdul Rahman submitted to his authority in Makkah. He also met the emir of Kano Abdulahi Bayero in Makkah who recognized him as the supreme leader of the Tijaniyya (Hiskett 1980). As a means of consolidating his influence in the sub-region, Ibrahim Nyass further dispatched emissaries to other countries to persuade Muslim leaders to acknowledge him as the succour of the century (Loimeir 1997). The role of these emissaries was felt when Muhammad al-Hadi Maulud Fal made transit in
Ghana during his return from a trip to Makkah. Maulud Fal initiated the recruitment of *ulama* in Ghana to acquire mentorship from Nyass in Senegale. This thus set the stage for the latter’s broader influence in Ghana. He recommended Mallam Adam (popularly called Baba Makaranta) in Kumasi to Ibrahim Nyass for mentorship (Abdul Wadud 2008).

Subsequent students and members of the Fayda further identified his hometown, Koalak, as a centre for both education and pilgrimage in the West African sub-region. Having visited him in Senegal, some Ghanaian parents recommended their wards to study under Ibrahim Nyass in Senegal. Mallam Salisu Shaban and Mustapha Ibrahim, among others were among these early students. Prior to the missionary role, the Fayda movement had benefitted from the proselytisation activities of the Nigerians trader-scholar communities who were already engaged in extended trading in the Gold Coast. These Nigerians were the Salgawa community, namely Umaru Falke, Tijani Usman and Muhammad Sani Kafanga who were known to have visited Nyass in Koalak and initiated the spreading of his teachings in the Gold Coast and Nigeria (Loimeir 1997).

Loimeir (1997) has argued that the Fayda movement founded by Ibrahim Nyass had found favours with the British colonialists, who depended on him as a counterforce to the radical independence movements in the colonies. Similar examples were further cited to show that the British supported other Tijaniyya leaders such as Sidi b. Umar in his tour to the colonies with the aim to set up committees, which would induce a pro-British policy against the radical independence movements in West Africa. However, extant records on the grounds in Ghana suggest contrary to Nyass’s close affinity with the British agenda. While the British demonstrated their indifference towards his religious activities, local sources linked him to the activities of the nationalists in the independence struggle in the Gold Coast. Though the reason for his first visit to Ghana in 1952 was not very clear, his spiritual guidance was sought by the first President, Kwame Nkrumah, for political independence (Hussain 2005). His famous epistle, *Ifriqiyya lil-Ifriqueen* (Africa is for Africans) in which he contributed to the African liberation struggle further discounts this assertion (Nyass 1962). He could thus not have played the double roles of an agent for the pro-British policy and at the same time being an advocate of African liberation struggle. In spite of this, Ibrahim Nyass and his Jama’at Fayda Tijaniyya rather benefitted from the post-colonial political climate of party politics, which had affected Muslim leadership in national politics, explained below.
The events of the pre-independence political party activities beginning from 1948 have had considerable impact on Muslim leadership and caused the growth of the Fayda movement in Ghana. The Muslim leadership in the Gold Coast had founded the Muslim Association Party (MAP) as a counter political force to the dominant Convention Peoples' Party (CPP) led by Kwame Nkrumah. This was necessitated in view of the perceived discrimination that Muslims experienced in the distribution of materials, in the aftermath of the Accra earthquake in 1939. In order to safeguard their interest in national politics these Muslim leaders transformed the Gold Coast Muslim Association (GCMA), a benevolent organisation, into a political party, the Muslim Association Party (MAP). The MAP courted political alliances first with other political parties, including the United Gold Coast Convention (UGCC), though with little success. The latest was the Convention People Party (CPP), which had split from the UGCC. Muslim leaders were motivated to support the CPP on account of its manifesto which in part promised to extend support for the madrasah system, where Arabic and scriptures in addition to the mainstream secular curriculum would be taught (Price 1954). However, the MAP leadership was disappointed, because when the CPP led by Nkrumah won the 1951 election, it failed to fulfill its political manifesto to Muslims. It was this political marginalisation that necessitated the leadership of the MAP to contest future elections as an independent political party. Drawing its strength from the support offered by the Muslim leadership, the MAP succeeded in winning seats in municipal elections in 1953 and 1954 in both Accra and Kumasi (Allman 1991). Abass Muhammad, an Imam in Accra, and other Muslim tribal leaders were recognized as the chief patrons of the party who provided the political space for the activities of the MAP (ibid.). Muslim religious leaders and chiefs in Kumasi further extended their support for the MAP political project (Skildkrout 1976). However, the activities of the MAP polarised the Muslim communities into factions. This was also at the time that the political sphere witnessed rapid polarization on ethnic and regional lines (Kobo 2010). At the same time the CPP also formed the Muslim Youth Congress, led by Z.B. Shadow and Mallam Mutawakilu, as a counterforce to the MAP. The differences became apparent when two Muslim leaderships were leading different congregational prayers during the Eid festivity (Allman 1991).

While these political differences shaped the Muslim community in Ghana, Ibrahim Nyass visited Ghana in 1952 and was the guest to Ahmadu Futa, a pro-CPP advocate. It was the pro-CPP elements who introduced
him to the President, Kwame Nkrumah, through which spiritual consultation, pan-African ideals and decolonization cemented the relations between them.

As Kwame Nkrumah was declared the leader of the new independent nation, the institution of the Muslim leadership was subjected to various repressive measures. Undoubtedly, these measures favoured his Muslim loyalist. While most of his Muslims sympathisers were accorded with political appointments and recognition, the leading functionaries of the MAP were subjected to repressive measures. Z.B Shadow Qudus was appointed the national organizer of the Young Pioneers, the youth wing of Nkrumah’s CPP, while Abdulai Barou and M.S. Saly were in charge of the membership bureau at the CPP head office and Deputy Director of Workers Brigade respectively.

On the other hand, Imam Abass of Accra was dismissed from his post as the Chief Imam of Accra and instead Amadu Futa (d. 1961), a CPP loyalist, was appointed. Nkrumah further extended his repressive measures against Muslim leaders in Kumasi. He deported Ahmadu Baba, the Hausa headman as well as the subsequent three leaders after him (Winchester 1976). In addition, the CPP government led by Nkrumah secured legislation to ban political organizations on ethnic and religious lines. In effect, the MAP was banned in national politics. Instead, the Muslim Council of Ghana was founded in 1953 as the mouthpiece for Muslim leadership led by Nkrumah’s sympathizers (Mumuni 1994). As this organization promoted Nkrumah’s political interests in the Muslim community, so also did the activities of the Fayda of Ibrahim Nyass benefit from the political climate. Weiss (2008) mentions that Nyass made a trip to the northern Ghana by air. This suggests the support of the political regime Nyass had at that time.

Available literature tend to portray that the Tijaniyya, and for that matter the Fayda movement, in Ghana was non-political (Stewart 1965 and Hiskett 1980). However, as I have demonstrated above, several data point to the contrary. The leading figures of the Tijaniyya movement prior to the advent of the Fayda advocated political Islam in Ghana, while the Fayda movement further benefitted from the favourable political climate during Nkrumah’s regime. The MAP political agenda and the persecutions that were meted out to the Muslim leadership have attracted considerable scholarly interest (Allman 1991 and Ryan 1996). Aside from his interest in Nyass’s spiritual service, Nkrumah further identified him as a useful resource for his domestic policies, at the peak of MAP’s political opposition to his leadership ambition. His religious activities were found by the Nkrumah’s
regime as useful in order to detract the attention of Muslim leadership from national politics.

Aside this favourable political climate, the Fayda was to make its impact on Ghanaian Muslims as a result of the search embarked on by local ulama. Prior to the appearance of Nyass in the Gold Coast, the activities of the Fayda movement in Senegal had already attracted the interest of the leading ulama circle in Kumasi. Available records suggest that since 1948, some leading ulama had initiated a trip to Senegal during the occasion of Maulud (Abdul Wadud 2008). This intention did not, however, materialise as the general transportation system, including the railway service, was not in operation, especially from Bamako to Dakar. This compelled these Muslim leaders to return to Ouagadougou and write to Ibrahim Nyass regarding the difficulty they encountered on their journey (ibid.).

The extant records on the visit of Ibrahim Nyass to Ghana in 1952 are conflicting. While one source attributes Nyass’s visit to Ghana on his personal initiative, another source suggests that he was on a transit on British Airlines (now British Airways) to Makkah for the annual pilgrimage. He was believed to have been stranded in Accra for a day or two. These conflicting sources were, however, unanimous that he was a guest of Amadu Futa, a religious leader and a political sympathiser of Kwame Nkrumah’s CPP. The sources do not further clarify whether or not his return from the pilgrimage on the transit was the time when he initiated the nationwide tour to popularise the Fayda movement in Ghana.

The success of the Fayda popularised by Nyass emanates from its popular appeal among ordinary Muslims. The Ghanaian Muslim elites, including the ulama and the businessmen were, however, his key target during this initial visit. Having won the support of Muslim leaders in Accra, initiation into the Fayda movement was spontaneous. In part, his charismatic background played a vital factor in the success of his mission. During this first visit, he was neither known to have been accompanied by any emissary nor having recruited agents to campaign for him. Muslims of diverse backgrounds including ulama, traditional chiefs and businessmen embraced the Fayda movement. For other reasons, the leading ulama in Accra such as Mallam Atta Alhassan, Mallam Barow, Abass Muhammad and Mallam Haruna Rahshid, were not known to have publicly embraced the Fayda movement. It is, however, sufficient to suggest that the polarised political sphere in the Muslim community between the MAP supporters led by the ulama on the one hand and the pro-CPP elements who were partly
connected with the Fayda activism on the other might have contributed to its lack of popularity among the leading ulama in Accra.

This initial visit of Nyass thus consolidated the Fayda among the elites and laid the foundation for its growth. As a result of this, his subsequent visit to Ghana could be likened to a wind of total change within the Tijaniyya movement. The numerous chains of transmission (silasil, sing silsila) of the Tijaniyya that many of the leading ulama had and which connected their scholarly authority to the founder of the Tijaniyya, were abandoned in place of Nyass’s Fayda one. Muslim leaders in Accra led by Amadu Futa and Baba Norga led him to interact with the Kumasi Muslims. The overwhelming reception that Ibrahim Nyass had in Kumasi significantly opened up for the wider influence of the Fayda in Ghana. This was partly because Kumasi in the 1950s served as the hub of Islamic intellectualism in Ghana. This city at that time used to attract students from different parts of the country because of its outstanding scholars such as Mallam Dantanu and Baba al-Waiz. The large crowd attracted during his visit was likened to a day of Muslim festivity in the city (Abdul Wadud 2008). While in Kumasi, he received an invitation from the Ya Na (the king of Dagbon in northern Ghana), the Gulpe Na (the regent of Tamale) and the Muslim leaders of the community (Weiss 2008). This he honoured with the Muslim leaders of Kumasi and Accra.

In every community that his entourage made a stopover, people were initiated into the movement. Many people also joined his entourage to the next community (Iddrissu 2008). The Fayda was viewed like a messianic movement promoting the salvation of all Muslims. According to Weiss, the Acting Chief Commissioner in Tamale was impressed with what overwhelming enthusiasm that Tamale Muslims, who numbered about 6,000 assembled at the airport to welcome Ibrahim Nyass. Similar crowds welcomed him in Yendi. It is on record that Abdulahi al-Hassan, the leading scholar in Yendi accepted the Fayda wirk (ibid.). In all these visitations, Muslim leaders were initiated into the Fayda movement, which was to shape the popular Muslim discourse in Ghana. The ulama became the spiritual guides (muqadams)¹ of the new movement and were authorized to initiate their followers into it.

There were, however, exceptions to the reception accorded to Nyass in Ghana. Stewart (1965) noted that Muslim leaders in Wenchi and Wa

¹ Muqadam is a title in Sufism for a religious scholar who has attained a certain degree in ranks and has thus been endowed with the power to initiate others into the movement.
refused to acknowledge Nyass for their belief that his *wird* was a ‘corrupt’ one, in contrast to the “pure” line of orthodoxy they followed. Hiskett (1980) further argued that the Wangara-dominated Islamic traditions in the north of the Gold Coast rejected Nyass’s Fayda.

Ibrahim Nyass toured other communities during his subsequent visit to Ghana in 1961 and 1965. The remarkable dimension of the 1965 visit was as a result of an invitation extended to him by the President of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah. As the country was slated to host the Organisation of the African Unity’s conference in Accra in that year, Nkrumah felt that the preparations were running into difficulties. He sought the spiritual powers of Ibrahim Nyass to make the conference a successful one (Maduka 1997). The Report of the Apaloo Commission highlighted how Nkrumah made a present of a Mercedes Benz to Nyass for the successful service rendered to him and the state.

The appeal of the fayda and its fragmentation

Significant works were done on the wider appeal of the Fayda movement from the 1960s through the 1980s. Various factors have been identified for the appeal of this movement, which included the social basis and its thriving on modernity. Hiskett (1980) has demonstrated how the order attracted the poorer and illiterate masses, who joined it for the joy in paradise in recompense of the worldly deprivations they encounter. The element of ethnic self-assertion is also embedded in its attractiveness as the followers viewed Ibrahim Nyass as God’s sent messiah to redeem the black and the African peoples. The movement further combined modern techniques of tape-recording and composed vernacular songs to popularise its thoughts in Ghana. The Jama’at Fayda was also viewed as an instrument of Islamic revivalism in modern time, which was a continuation of the work of Umar Futi (d. 1864). While Hiskett had dealt with the popular appeal of the movement, I will focus on the robust theological worldview of the Fayda and the subsequent controversies that it generated in Ghana. The distinctness of the Fayda is its emphasis on the idea of *tarbiya*, the Sufi way of seeking God. Seesemann (2011) had argued that Nyass reinvigorated this previous spiritual training in the Tijaniyya in ways unseen and unheard of in West Africa and even within the Tijaniyya. In the Ghanaian context, the idea of *tarbiya* has attracted overwhelming interest in religious activism among Muslims irrespective of age, gender and
occupation. This spirited enthusiasm was apparent during the Sufi congregational devotions (dhikr) and the celebration of the birthday of the prophet (Maulud Nabi). Hitherto, limited space was offered by the conservative Tijaniyya leadership to these ceremonies, which thus affected the patronage by the masses. Secondly, with the advent of the Fayda, the understanding of the Maulud celebration has changed and assumed a different dimension.

To begin with, a plausible explanation for the hype in interest for the Fayda activism among Muslims in Ghana was the strict conditionality that is attached to becoming a member in the movement. The conditions included, regular observation of mandatory religious worship, offering of prayers, recitation of the Tijaniyya litanies and mandatory Friday afternoon group recitation, among others (Abdul Wadud 2008). The recitation of the litanies was originally and exclusively done by the learned persons in their individual capacities and not in congregations. The practice of tarbiya was contingent on having been initiated into the Fayda movement. Initiation into the tarbiya thus promoted two mutually reinforcing issues. For the first time, it promoted strict religious observance among the new entrants into the movement. Membership in the Fayda thus connotes religious renewal among these Muslims. Secondly, it also initiated the liberalisation of religious practices, which was originally the exclusive preserve of a certain class of people in the society. The practice of tarbiya by the masses thus promoted a strong sense of inclusiveness in the new Fayda movement and equality in the attainment of divine salvation irrespective of a person’s status.

Its prominence in Ghana further emanated from its ability to combine with both the traditional and modern notion of leadership as understood in the popular local context. Sarkin faila was one of such leadership titles. Strictly speaking, Sarki is a Hausa word for a traditional chief who rules and adjudicates issues relating to his subjects. In this context, however, it designates the chief organiser of the Fayda movement. Such a person might not by necessity be a scholar, but because of his wealth and influential role in the community, he is given this title. He has among his duties to mobilise members and to create an enabling space for Fayda activism. He also serves as the commander of the movement in times of conflicts. This movement further bridged the gap, which existed in gender participation on religious activism in the early post-colonial period in Ghana. Magaajian fayda was the female organiser of the movement, though traditionally it means the queenmother. Among her roles was to mobilise the female counterpart for
religious activities and further serve as an inspirational leader. In the structure of the Fayda movement was the Abnai Fayda, which stands for the youth wing of the Fayda movement. These groups thus serve as the interface between the ulama and the masses by coordinating the religious activities. By combining the local notion of leadership and infusing it in modern leadership structures, the Fayda movement attracted unprecedented interest across the various strata of the Muslim society. This thus made it to triumph in popular religious discourse.

The process of initiation into the practice of tarbiya is shrouded in strict secrecy between the guiding Sheikh and the credulous that makes its difficult by others to discern (Seesemann 2011). It, however, revolves around a spiritual master guiding a disciple to go through five rounds of hadrat (presences) in order to experience God. Through the practice of tarbiya, the novice learns that there is only one God who created everything and forms a unity with the creation. Secondly, Muhammad is viewed as the first creation of God and embodies all creation. A disciple further learns that Ahmad Tijani emerged from Muhammad while Ibrahim Nyass emerged from the former. Lastly Ibrahim Nyass is the manifestation of the whole of being (Hiskett 1980).

At the inception of the Fayda movement with this new understanding of the tarbiya, the leading Tijaniyya scholars have criticised Nyass on the manner that it was being imparted to the illiterate masses (Seesemann 2011). Their accusations revolve around two fundamental issues, namely the manner of initiation of people, which was said to contravene the laid down rules by Ahmad Tijani (the founder of the movement): and secondly, the outrageous claims make by some of the initiates tend to devalue the significance of tarbiya. These accusations were to become some of the greatest challenges the movement confronted with. Joseph Hill (2001) has argued that when not properly guided during the tarbiya initiation, the disciple becomes highly disorientated and socially disconnected, which may lead him or her to awkward behaviour. These challenges became apparent during the life time of the founder of the Fayda. Some of the initiates who had overwhelming intense experiences of sudden illumination or made claim to it, started telling others about it in public (Seesemann 2011).

The Ghanaian Muslim religious sphere was not isolated from these incidences which were perceived to undermine the shari’ah values. As will be shown, several factors worked against the ideals of the tarbiya, which include religious fanaticism and the inadequate capacity of the ulama to control the spiritual experiences of the followers. This was further worsened
when division set in among the ulama on how the tarbiya could be experienced, including shari‘ah related issues. Sufi revivalism under the Fayda movement experienced fragmentation between the masses on one hand and the leading ulama themselves on the other hand. The dividing line was how the tarbiya could be understood and experienced. This polarisation divided the front of the ulama into two blocs between those who supported the masses’ experience of tarbiya and the ulama who were sensitive to the shari‘ah ethos.

In the subsequent decades of its foundation in Ghana, the Fayda movement had degenerated into extreme polemics. The first crisis that the new movement experienced emanated from the scholarly community. Some ulama like Abdullah Jaffar have viewed it as an instrument to reinvigorate a new scholarly authority. Jaffar a leading scholar in Kumasi in the early 1960s founded a counter messianic movement from the dominant Fayda movement called the Jam‘at Yati Yati (simply means, the messiah is coming, in Arabic), which aimed at attracting followers. This movement aimed at promoting a third force within the Tijaniyya with different theological outlook. He identified himself to be superior to Prophet Moses. He further issued new Fatwas, which suggest that Muslims do not need to perform prayers when the time had elapsed and disagreed with women performing the mandatory waiting period (idda)\(^2\) (Dumbe 2011). These ideas were viewed by the leading ulama in Kumasi as conflicting with the shari‘ah. This necessitated them to seek the support of Ibrahim Nyass who labeled Jaffar as an imposter (dajjal) and expelled him from the Fayda. This strategy of expulsion seems to have worked for the Fayda as Jaffar was believed to have repented and was re-admitted into the movement (Nyass 1962). This perceived deviancy further reflected in the masses attitude in the Fayda movement.

Significant numbers of the followers make claims that they have ‘seen’ God. It was quite common that people demonstrated the extent of their piety in public, after having gone through the initiation process. This was evident in the unusual behaviour that some people put in public. This polemic degenerated into a marker of identity in the community. The detractors of the Fayda (who were invariably the Salafis) labelled them as Nawun Nyarba in Dagbani or Yan Ganin Allah in Hausa, (meaning those who see God), while the tarbiya advocates equally labelled their opponents as Munkirei (those who deny the reality) (Pobee 1991 and Iddrisu 2010).

\(^2\) Idda is a waiting period for a woman whose husband has passed away.
The manner of realising this spiritual aspiration among Fayda followers induced these labels, which became important markers of identity in the Muslim religious sphere in Ghana and still are.

The polemics which characterized the debates among the masses further defined the theological differences among the leading ulama in Ghana. The central issue was whether one can really ‘see’ God in physical manner as a result of the practice of the tarbiya. While a significant number of the ulama were against this form of expressing the tarbiya, others endorsed it. The rank of the Tijaniyya ulama was polarised between the radical populism of the proponents of tarbiya and the shari´ah-inclined ulama. Abdullah Maikano, Salisu Shaban and Abdul Wadud Harun distinguished themselves as the main proponents of the tarbiya as expressed by the masses. However, their position was largely borne out of the incessant religious attacks initiated by the Salafis, through the Islamic Research and Reformation Center (IRRC) (to be discussed later). The unique scholarly backgrounds of these individuals provide interesting material for analysis.

The image of Abdullah Ahmad Maikano Jallo (1928–2005), a graduate of al-Azhar University looms large in modern Ghana in the defense of the Tijaniyya tarbiya message. Having had his early Islamic education in both his native home Abouso in the Western and Kumasi in the Ashanti regions, Maikano sought further education at al-Azhar University in 1956. He later worked with the Ghana Armed Forces as a chaplain in the 1960s and subsequently resigned because of his interest in religious activism. Maikano acquired his image as the vanguard of the Tijaniyya beginning from 1960s at a time when the majority of the Tijaniyya leadership was not prepared to engage with the Salafis in open public debate. His activities instilled a sense of confidence and restored hope among Tijaniyya followers of their religious practices. Because of his role in the defense of the Tijaniyya, Maikano’s image has been transformed as the supreme leader of the Tijaniyya movement in Ghana. Maikano’s archrival in this scholarly engagement was Afa Yusuf Ajura (d. 2005), a leading Salafi scholar at Tamale in northern Ghana. The relationship between these two opposing scholars could be likened to that of saint and devil.

The common scholarly genealogy between Abdul Wadud Harun (b. 1955) and Abdullah Maikano suggests that issues regarding the defense of the Tijaniyya orthodoxy will strengthen their resolve. Maikano was once a student of Muhammad Harun (d. 1983), the father of Abdul Wadud. While Maikano distinguishes himself through his preaching tours to inspire the Tijaniyya followers, though youthful as he was, Abdul Wadud put himself
as the key defender of the Tijaniyya in Kumasi. Many of the sectarian conflicts in Kumasi and other parts of the country between the Salafis and the Tijaniyya were basically ignited by the activities of these two scholars (Anning 2009). The scholarly background of Salisu Shaban as a disciple of the founder of the Fayda (Ibrahim Nyass) meant that issues relating to the defense of the Tijaniyya orthodoxy will shape his background. In one of his fierce debates with the Salafis at the Nima Community Centre in 1975, Shaban threatened bloodshed if his opponent would not stop attacking the Tijaniyya. As defenders of the Tijaniyya tarbiya ethos, these scholars acquired enviable reputation within the Tijaniyya fraternity across the length and breadth of the country.

The religious stance of these scholars was largely shaped by their tendency to reinforce the populist position of the masses of ‘seeing’ God. Having won the trust of the masses, these radical ulama made attempts to extend their religious stance before the leading scholars of the Tijaniyya. This was in a sense to assert their scholarly authority. The attempts of these scholars, however, experienced strong opposition within the movement. In one instance, during the celebration of Maulud in 1983, Abdul Wadud was known to have appealed to the followers that when their detractors (the Salafis) refute their claim that they (the Tijaniyya followers) ‘see’ God, members should respond that they ‘see’ Him in the broad daylight. This view of his was swiftly countered at the forum by Muhammad Kamil Mustapha Khalifa (d. 2011), a leading Tijaniyya scholar in Kumasi. Sheikh Kamil likened such positions to cheap populism. In his view “the Tijaniyya ethos is not so common for any Muslim who can pick it in the market anyhow like any commodity” (Armiyau interview, 2012). It was believed that this fierce reaction generated intense tension among the leading ulama at the forum.

The following year witnessed another attempt to justify the populist perspective of the Tijaniyya tarbiya when Salisu Shaban made similar remarks. It brought Aminu Ajura to his feet to react to this. Mallam Aminu argued that the Tijaniyya values constitute an integral part of the shari‘ah and not the vice versa (Ajura interview, 2012). The division within the Fayda was thus widened with contrasting understanding of the tarbiya. These differences, which characterised the leadership rank of the movement, degenerated into labels between those who do not share on the populist tarbiya stance and its proponents. Proponents of the tarbiya populism labelled their opponents in the Tijaniyya Munkrei Faila, in
contrast to their position as *Yan faila*³ (Fayda members). *Munkrei Faila* literally suggests those Tijaniyya Muslims who shared some extent of theological commonalities with the Salafis. As noted earlier, *Munkrei* was originally a label coined against the Salafis because of their denial of the reality of the Tijaniyya worldview to ‘see’ God. In a sense the populist *tarbiya* proponents thus viewed the other Tijaniyya leaders opposing them as not truly fit in the theological worldview of the Fayda. While these labels have left an indelible mark within the Fayda movement in Ghana, some of the leading proponents of it have abandoned their positions. Abdul Wadud Harun and Salisu Shaban do not associate themselves with this trend anymore, on account of a subsequent development within the movement, which is discussed below.

Aside these controversies of ‘seeing’ God, the populist stance of the *tarbiya* further generated other religious consequences in Ghana. One major consequence of the mass initiation of the ordinary Muslims, including illiterate ones, was the fact that it emboldened them as authorities on religious matters. Some of the initiates had neglected to perform the mandatory religious rituals for the beliefs that through the practice of the *tarbiya* God had forgiven them their sins. As could be discerned from their view, the *tarbiya* platform offers a superior means of attaining divine salvation. The widespread support of these tendencies among the Fayda followers was not in question. The impact of this negative dimension of the understanding of the *tarbiya* among the Muslim communities was considerable. In a book, Alfa Ahmad (d. 2009), a local scholar, dissected common practices such as religious laxities, which were quite rife among the Kotokoli and Chamba Muslims in Accra, Asamankese, Ahamasu and Kejebi among other places (Ahmad 1964). The legendary role played by Abubakar Abdullah Mola (d. 1962) in the eradication of these tendencies among Muslims is still fresh in Ghana. Not only did he adopt coercive measures against Muslims who failed to observe the religious rituals but arrested the most recalcitrant ones to Muslim traditional authorities in Kumasi (ibid.). This position of his was, however, an exceptional one of the *ulama* role in the eradication of the excesses people associated with the *tarbiyya*. Because of his frequent resort to coercive measures in the propagation of Islam it has earned him an accolade as *Mallam Maibolala* (the Mallam who whips).

³ *Faila* means Fayda in the Ghanaian local parlance.
Again, the euphoria with which people embraced the Fayda movement further produced a religious sub-culture in Ghana. One effect of the Fayda activism was the institutionalization of Mauluud Nabi (the celebration of the birthday of the prophet) as a mass gathering for the ulama and the ordinary members. Hitherto, Maulud was an exclusive festivity for children in the Madrasah system. These children mount a public platform (with the assistance of their teachers) to demonstrate their oratory skills in Quranic recitation and other religious sermons. This was preceded by procession on the major streets in the city as a form of publicity of the Maulud anniversary.

However, with the advent of the Fayda, the idea of the Maulud acquired a different meaning as a mass religious gathering for the Tijaniyya fraternity regardless of level of literacy, age, gender and class. The greater parts of the Maulud celebration is spent on dhikr (collective remembrance of Allah), sermons delivered on the significance of the prophet’s birthday and its relevance in modern time. There is also entertainment dimension to the Maulud celebration as poems and melodious songs were equally recited and sung in praise of the Prophet and other religious personalities such as the founder of Tijaniyya and Ibrahim Nyass. Other topical issues relevant to Muslims interest are discussed.

As this platform now attracts Muslims of diverse backgrounds, the debate on gender segregation attracted the concern of the ulama. This was when the debate on mixing of sexes was becoming a norm during the festivity. As the debate on gender segregation was raging, drumming and dancing further became dominant features in the Maulud celebration (Abdul-Razak 1996). The leadership front of the Fayda was divided regarding the permissibility of these practices. Again, the populist-inclined ulama led by Abdullah Maikano tolerated it for the view that it attracts the interest of youth and women to religious events. This position did not find favours with the majority of the ulama who proscribed it on moral grounds. These differences among the ulama on gender segregation as well as drumming and dancing provided the catalyst for contrasting personality influences in the Fayda movement in modern Ghana.

The fame attained by Abdullah Maikano within the Fayda fraternity was largely a result of the youth-friendly religious platform that he promoted, wherein mixing of the sexes and drumming and dancing was tolerated. Central to his argument was the need to balance the gap between the conservative religious platforms of the elders and the interest of the youth in religious activities. This view of his is underscored by the dominance of the elderly and the ulama in religious platforms at the expense of some
youth-centered religious medium. And in terms of interest, a vast gap exists between the motive behind the involvement of the elderly and the youth in religious activities. Ismail Ashura, a disciple of Maikano, further highlighted that the position of Ghanaian Muslims as a minority group in a pluralistic state meant that they are confronted with a myriad of cultural onslaughts, which can undermine their religious integrity. He cited several instances of forces, which work against Muslim values, such as the influences of other religious groups, the secularly inclined state policies and external cultural influences of hip hop entertainments. As a consequence of these religious stances, Maikano’s popularity in Ghana has potentially reconfigured the Muslim religious sphere with a third force. The Jello Tijaniyya is a new movement that upholds his religious worldview, which has now identified itself as the Ghana Tijaniyya movement. With the overwhelming reputation he acquired among the youth, Maikano harnessed their zeal in religious activism to fight against not only the Salafis but also his opponents in the Fayda. This might suggest his intolerance of religious differences in the movement but underscored the gravity of the religious differences.

Significantly, the repercussions of other religious positions that Maikano sometimes adopted has the potential of severing his relations with the leading ulama in the Fayda. These differences were not as a result of scholarly rivalry but were underpinned by theological differences. The thrust of these religious differences is the limit, which the shari’ah placed on the number of women a Muslim can marry. However, Abdullah Maikano seems to have a different view regarding this. In his view, the limit placed to marrying four wives is a general rule, which can be overruled by certain exceptional situations, such as a scholar’s need for extra assistance during religious service and for extended family lineage. Since 1976, Maikano vociferously engaged his colleagues, including his mentors, on debates over the marriage beyond the religious prescription, a position that they have strongly resented. With the passing of time, and with his growing influence in the national sphere, Maikano disregarded the concerns of his peers and married more women above the rules. The reactions of his peers were spontaneous, though partly dictated by the incessant criticism by the detractors of the Fayda (the Salafis). This compelled the leading ulama of the Fayda in Kumasi to sign a joint letter addressed to him demanding an explanation for his actions. In the view of these ulama, in the absence of any cogent reason, he should repent (Baban Makaranta 1981). This joint position was also a view shared by the leading Fayda ulama in Ghana.
Maikano’s subsequent pronouncements that he has prayed and recited the Quran more than the Prophet significantly alienated him from the Fayda scholarly fraternity (Dumbe 2011). While these pronouncements represent characteristics of intoxication or drunken stage in Sufism (sukr) who de-emphasise the shari‘ah and declare union with God openly, which is contrasted to sober Sufis who observe lord-servant relationship demands (Voll 2009), the persistent Salafi diatribes against Maikano’s ideas couple with his tolerance of mixing of gender and marrying women beyond the shari‘ah regulations deprived him of support within the Fayda. Nuhu Sharugubutu, the national Chief Imam in Ghana and also a Tijaniyya, viewed the latter scholarly ideas of Maikano as undermining the sanctity of Islamic moral norms (Sharugubutu interview, 2012). As a consequence, Maikano was ex-communicated by the ulama from the Fayda movement. The absence of a community of ulama during the mourning period of his funeral (taziya) underscored the gravity of the severed relations with the late Maikano.

Maikano rise to prominence and his fall must be viewed within the context that his strength and popularity was rested on his colleagues’ ulama understanding of his scholarly role conforming to the shari‘ah values. This is in spite of the mixed reactions one gets among Muslims about the image of Maikano in contemporary Ghana. To many of his opponents, the only legacy that Maikano has introduced in Ghana was religious extremism, deviancies and intolerance to alternative views even within the Fayda. However, to most of his sympathisers the religious activities of Abdullah Maikano brought about religious liberalisation that made religious practices relevant to the masses and the younger generation. Not only did he attract significant followers from his hometown (Prang, in Brong Ahafo region) irrespective of socio-economic class and his influence among the Muslim youth is ubiquitous. His hometown has become a centre of a minor pilgrimage, which attracts the youth during the celebration of the Maulud anniversary in Ghana and beyond. His portraits compete with that of Ibrahim Nyass and the national Chief Imam, Uthman Nuhu Sharugubutu. Maikano’s heritage thus represents the Ghanaian version of the Fayda. This is in spite of the fact that it might be viewed to have drifted away on values and characterised by tension with the dominant Fayda. The contemporary Tijaniyya revivalism is expressed along these two polarities, namely the mainstream Fayda of Ibrahim Nyass, and the Jello Tijaniyya movement.

This was not the only key issue, which shaped the debate. There were also external pressures emanating from the persistent Salafi criticism of the
Fayda movement. The activities of the Fayda have generated strong reservation among the Salafi fraternity, which to some extent compelled most of the ulama within to initiate reform in order to comply with the shari‘ah. This external pressure coupled with the shari‘ah-inclined ulama have contributed to reshaping the Fayda discourse in modern Ghana.

Conclusions

In this study I have highlighted the trajectory of Sufi revivalism in the modern Ghana. As observed, its advent and revivalism was characterised by internal competition, especially between the Qadiriyya and the Tijaniyya. This competition was dictated by the extent of the relevance of the Sufi thoughts to the interest of the masses. The most vibrant one in this contestation structured its thoughts on flexibility in order to be responsive to the interests of the masses.

In spite of the fact that the Qadiriyya was the precursor of Islamisation, its influence in modern Ghana could not commensurate with this background. Its perceived inflexibility to the masses, however, deprived it of a space in modern Ghana. Unlike the Qadiriyya, the Tijaniyya represented a revivalist movement, which has continuously defined its relevance in the broader West Africa and Ghana in particular. Taking its revival inspiration from the Fayda, this movement attracted followers as a result of the prospects it provided for the masses. As a dynamic movement it further contested its influence by ‘overstrectching’ its values (through its advocates) beyond the perceived mainstream Islamic norms. This is in spite of the tension arising from the diametric religious positions. This in effect reinvigorated the religious space with a contrasting worldviews within the Fayda movement, the mainstream Fayda Tijaniyya and the Jello Tijaniyya Fayda. While the Fayda of Ibrahim Nyass defines contemporary Sufi revivalism, the potential of the Jello Tijaniyya in reshaping Sufism in Ghana cannot be underated. Its flexible ethos has, to a large extent, generated interest from the youth who have found it as the most responsive platform to their religious needs. It has in the last decades been as a rival force to the Fayda of the founder (Ibrahim Nyass).
CHAPTER 4

Salafi revivalism

The advent of Salafism in modern Ghana and its revival was a post-independence phenomenon.¹ As an Islamic category, Salafism aims at purifying Islam from perceived external cultural influences. It further preaches a return to the study of the basic sources of Islam, the Qur’an and the Sunnah, and seeks to enact religious practices that held precedence three generations after the time of the prophet (Haykel 2010). The approach of this movement to jurisprudential sources is shaped by eclecticism and at the same time rejection of taqlid (imitating one school of thought). Its impetus is linked to different centres. Ahmad bun Hanbal’s (d. 855) rejection of the use of reason (ray) in place of scriptural sources was perceived to be Salafi in perspective. The modern Islamic revival movements in both the 18th and 19th centuries, such as Wahhabism and modernist reformism of Abduh and Afghani, were influenced by Salafi perspectives.

The Salafism under discussion here is much connected to the scholarly heritage of Muhammad bun Abdul Wahhab, otherwise called Wahhabism. This religious worldview is propagated by the Saudi state as a state ideology and foreign policy instrument in modern time. Boosted by the discovery of oil, the Saudi regime has exported this brand of Islam, beginning from the 1960s, to various parts of the Muslim world as an alternative form of spirituality to the dominant Sufi movement in Africa. Madawi al-Rasheed (2007) and Evers Rosander (1997) both offer an apt analysis regarding the success of this strand of Islamic movement. In Madawi’s view, the

¹ It is appropriate to clarify the kind of Salafis I refer to here, who constitute the focus of my studies. I use Salafis to designate students who have been recruited and educated in the Middle Eastern universities and sponsored to undertake propagation in their respective communities. Some authors like Kobo (2012) and Iddrisu (2011) have already highlighted the local version of Salafi reform initiated by Afa Yusuf Ajura in Tamale, Adam Apiedu in Kumasi and Hamza Abdul Salam in Accra among others, which is not the focus of this study. With the exception of Hamza Abdul Salam, the overall focus of these traditional clerics was to wage crusade against un-Islamic customs in marriage, funeral rites, the use of charms and amulets. It remains unclear the extent to which these ulama have embraced Salafism in totality, yet espoused ideas akin to its.
interconnectedness of this movement with the Saudi regime has aided its spread in the Muslim world through the outpouring of charity, construction of mosques, educational institutes and Islamic centres. Evers Rosander further highlighted the appeal of this movement because of its connection with modernity, urbanity and material success. The influence of Saudi Arabia in many African Muslim lives was viewed as emanating from the perception that a good life will reach them through the rich Islamic countries in the East (Evers Rosander 1997). While these observations might not be different from the Ghanaian Muslim experience, Salafism further contested its influence in Ghana through vociferous open air propagation. The scholarly role of its advocates in the religious sphere has been the most enduring factor of its influence in Ghana. Beginning in the 1960s, Salafi revivalism in Ghana has taken different forms. It was, however, dictated by the Saudi agenda through open propagation, the religious interpretations engaged by Saudi graduates to define intra-Muslim relations and the activities Salafi NGOs as well as the Salafi madrasah platform.

Salafism as a Saudi foreign policy instrument first manifested in the Ghanaian religious sphere with the Ghana’s diplomatic relations with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1961. The role of the Saudi embassy in Accra at that time was not only limited to conducting diplomatic relations with its counterpart, the Ghanaian Government. The Islamic Desk in the embassy was an offshoot of the Saudi Ministry of Religious Affairs, which coordinate matters on religious activities and humanitarian services with Ghanaian Muslims. Kamali Khalid, an Indian national, was in charge of this Desk, who further initiated Islamic studies at the then Central Mosque in Accra since 1967. This was the first conscious manifestation of Salafism in Ghana.

However, Salafi revivalism has taken different forms after Umar Ibrahim graduated from the Islamic University in Madina, Saudi Arabia, in 1968. Having assisted Kamali Khalid in the Islamic studies session, the religious activities of Umar Ibrahim inspired the founding of a modern organization, the Islamic Research and Reformation Centre (IRRC) in August 1969. Salafi revivalism at this time took the dimension of a social movement. However, as many Ghanaian students from Saudi universities returned, Salafi revivalism was shaped by fierce contestation on religious authority over what constitutes acceptable methods and approaches to propagation (dawah). In the subsequent decades, especially beginning from the 1980s, Salafi revivalism assumed a humanitarian role. Another dimension of the growth of Salafism in modern Ghana has been through the activities of higher madrasah studies, which offer students with access to scholarship.
schemes to undertake seminary university education in the Arab world. As a start, I will highlight Salafi revivalism through the scholarly role of the first Ghanaian graduate from a Saudi university. This will be followed with the search engage by these graduates to present an acceptable manner of propagation. I further explore Salafi revivalism through the activities of the NGOs and the madrasah platforms in Ghana.

The Islamic research and reformation centre (1968–1989)

Salafism initially attracted much interest in Accra partly through the scholarly activities of Umar Ibrahim, the first Ghanaian graduate from Saudi Arabia in 1968. For almost a decade (1969–1980) his legacy shaped the Salafi discourse in Ghana prior to the graduation of other students from Saudi educational centres.

Umar Ibrahim was born to Ibrahim Abdullah in 1932, a Basila Muslim from Benin, who had settled in the then Gold Coast in 1917 for a prospect in cocoa farming. Ibrahim was educated by his father and later handed him over to Bunyamin Alhassan, an itinerant Hausa scholar. He traveled to Koforidua and later to Accra in 1945. As an anxious student interested in religious studies, he embarked on a trip to Sudan with a view to study at al-Azhar in 1958, though unsuccessfully. He later made a journey to Makkah, in Saudi Arabia, and enrolled at Darul Hadith in 1959, and subsequently began his studies at Madina University in 1964. He graduated from the university in 1968 with a degree in shar’iah.

Having returned to Ghana in the same year, Umar Ibrahim settled at Nima, a community founded by Amadu Futa in 1932. He initiated propagation in the community and as a result of the interest developed by a cross section of the community it culminated in the founding of an organization, the Islamic Research and Reformation Centre (IRRC) in August 1969. The membership of this new organization cut across various strata of the society including traditional ulama who were disillusioned with the dominant Tijaniyya Fayda movement. A key to the success of this new organisation was the interest showed by Western-educated Muslims in its activities. These Western-educated were deeply experienced in national politics, and the new organization benefitted from these rich experiences from the Ghanaian political and secular sphere. The Western-educated Muslims became the driving force for the movement’s activities as they constituted themselves into the Administrative hub of the movement, (its
executive committee). These elites who were equipped with European bureaucratic skills transformed the movement into modern one (Kobo 2012). The traditional ulama who formed the Council of Ulama and Imams (CUI), played a role in propagation and served the spiritual needs of the group. Other members of this new organization were traders and transport operators. The enthusiasm attached to this new organization enabled these Muslims to gain the limelight in the popular discourse in Accra.

The successes made by Umar Ibrahim with his Salafi agenda among these Muslims were interconnected with several factors. The ban imposed by the successive political regimes on Kwame Nkrumah’s political functionaries in national politics has affected many of his sympathizers in the Muslim communities. The first Director of the IRRC was Mijinma Sumana Saly, who was a member of Kwame Nkrumah’s Convention Peoples’ Party (CPP). Saly actively played a role in the CPP’s Propaganda Team, which toured the country to campaign. He was subsequently appointed by Nkrumah as the Deputy Director of the Workers Brigade and later the Security Coordinator of this Brigade.

However, with the overthrow of Nkrumah, Saly lost his position. Similarly, Abdulai Barou (b.1928), the Deputy Director of the IRRC, was a Councilor of Nima and a member of CPP in charge of the membership Bureau at the Headquarters. Labaran Ibrahim (d. 2012) was the Secretary for the CPP at Ward 11 and subsequently became the Counciler. Like Saly, these Muslims lost their employments when Nkrumah was overthrown and were equally banned in active politics for being Nkrumah sympathisers. Their membership with the IRRC thus opened up another platform for participation in the Muslim public space. Two other related issues regarding the successes of the Salafi movement are also worth highlighting. These executives, who aside from their deep experiences in national politics, brought their understanding of the Western secular political space to bear in the management of the movement. Also, as the descendants of early Muslim settlers in Accra, the influence of these Muslims in the social sphere cannot be underrated. In this social context, the traditional ulama who had embraced this movement also brought their deep experience in propagation in the IRRC’s activities. Imam Ahmadu Barou (d. 2011) was the first imam of the Friday Mosque in Nima since 1971 who had also embraced the movement. Kamaldeen Ahmad, the present Deputy national Imam and Hussein Zakaria were respected ulama in the whole of Accra. The scholarly background of Hamza Abdul Salam (d. 1985) transformed the successes of the movement. As a former member of the Muslim Student Society, an
umbrella organization of the *ulama* in Nima, his deep experience in propagation endeared him to many people. His preaching was believed to depict real life issues in the society and thus attracted many people to the IRRC’s activities (Dumbe 2011). Abdul Salam was the founder of the Tafsiliyya Islamic school in 1948. It was in the backdrop of these factors that the IRRC succeeded with its Salafi agenda, though it drew its inspiration from Umar Ibrahim’s religious ideas. Salafism propagated by Umar Ibrahim and assisted by these diverse forces in the society was viewed as a modernist reformist movement intended to bring about transformation to Muslim life in Nima and Accra in general.

The religious worldview of this movement was initially shaped by Umar Ibrahim’s anti-Sufism. His influence was, however, a response to the pervasive influence and the perceived widespread abuses people associated with the Tijaniyya *tarbiya* popularised by Ibrahim Nyass. While the idea of *tarbiya* was discussed in the previous chapter, I focus here on the Salafi response to its expansion and characteristics in Ghana. The enthusiasm with which people embraced the *tarbiya*, for its power to deliver them salvation, has had effect on many of them to relegate to performing the mandatory religious rituals. It was this that gave rise to Salafi revivalism in Ghana through the scholarly role of Umar Ibrahim. The initial common agenda shared by the IRRC’s members against the *tarbiya* was to educate the public through a popular platform about religious rituals. However, this popular form of education was subsequently extended to religious polemics. These members began discouraging the masses from engaging in the *tarbiya* practice and in effect the Fayda movement. The dominant understanding of the IRRC’s members was that the practice of the *tarbiya* has the potential of taking away Muslims from the fold of Islam because of their inability to perform the mandatory religious rituals. This position of the IRRC *ulama* thus began to sow the seed of aversion towards the popular *tarbiya* practices through their outreach propagation in the community.

From the onset then, Umar Ibrahim served as the star preacher of this movement. Having drifted away from the core of the IRRC, which was to offer a popular form of education on religious rituals, Umar subsequently censured the Sufi devotional practices for the belief that they were not founded on the Quran and the Sunnah. He further preached against the prevailing religious practices, such as the use of charms and amulets, the practice of divination and spiritual consultation. By contrasting the prevailing religious practices with scriptural standards, and embodied in an anti-Sufism hype, the religious activities of Umar Ibrahim attracted
curiosity among many Muslims in Accra. This anti-Sufism stimulated by Umar Ibrahim defined the IRRC’s image in the public and in effect attracted a label by its detractors as a Wahhabi movement. This movement popularized its activities through outreach to communities. And the interest developed by people in different communities necessitated the formation of branches. The Darkuman branch in Accra was formed in 1971.

Having been successful in their outreach to most parts of Accra since April 1972, members were contemplating whether to extend their activities to the Tijaniyya strongholds beyond Accra in other regions like Nsawam, Koforidua and Kumasi, or to places with strong revert to Islam in Accra, like Mabruk and Labadi. These Salafis viewed themselves as a viable movement to counter the dominant Tijaniyya in Ghana. A delegation of ulama from Kumasi led by Sulley Muhammad paid a special visit to the IRRC offices in Accra in 1971. A reciprocal visit was made by its members to Kumasi in 1972. Again, the Salafi activities also reached Nsawam and Koforidua as well as Sekondi.

However, these attempts by the IRRC leadership to expand their activities to other regions were not without resistance from the Tijaniyya group. The Tijaniyya attempts to disrupt the Salafis adventure at Nsawam and Sekondi through the powers of the state were unsuccessful. Their success in Kumasi to repel the Salafi outreach through the state powers provides interesting analysis. The Tijaniyya ulama in Kumasi who had consented to an earlier arrangement for a debate with the Salafis in 1972 withdrew from it, because of what they had gathered, that the Salafis “do not love the prophet”.

Despite that these Salafis arrived and met an empty venue, as a result of the earlier decision taken by the Tijaniyya leadership, they decided to mount a platform to propagate. They were, however, disrupted by the police for organising a public forum without a permit. In a meeting organised by the Regional Minister, the visiting Salafis downplayed the gravity of their differences with the Tijaniyya by describing themselves as Muslims who were engaged in religious research. This was countered by the Tijaniyya leadership by arguing that Muslims in Kumasi practise a type of Islam, which demands that they put on a white calico on the ground while praying, which has been denounced by their opponents as superstitious.

For his concern for peace in his region, the Minister dismissed the Salafis by declaring that “You Mallams (ulama) from Accra, my Mallams do not want you here. Go back to Accra”. The sympathy that the political leadership had for the Tijaniyya in Kumasi thus repelled the Salafi outreach
in 1972. This decision of the Minister was greeted as a victory for the Tijaniyya. It was in 1975, however, that Salafism gained a foothold in Kumasi when a local scholar, Abdul Samad Habibullah embraced the movement. Subsequent to this, the Kintampo branch was inaugurated in 1976. Geographically, Kintampo is located at the centre of Ghana, and the fact that Salafi ideas permeated this community within a decade underscores the speed with which its values were propagated and embraced.

The IRRC, which grew from a locally confined movement in Nima, had become a full-fledged regional and national one and was recognized as an important social movement in Ghana. It was recognized by state agencies such as the Department of Social Welfare, the National Youth Council (NYC) and the Opportunity Industrialization Centre (OIC), among others. As it achieved national prominence, the IRRC was recognized by other Islamic organizations like the Ghana Muslim Community (GMC) and the Ghana Muslim Mission, founded by indigenous Ghanaian Muslim reverts in 1956.

The success of the Salafi movement in its mobilization activities brings to light several factors accounting for this. Its ability to depend on multi-lingua media to convey its messages to the audience during the outreach programs was an example. The ulama were asked to bring their exceptional skills in languages in order to broaden the interest of the audience in their activities. Hamza Abdul Salam was asked to translate their speeches into the Ga and Ewe languages, while Hussein Zakaria was tasked to translate into English (Minutes of proceedings, 1971). Secondly, invitations extended by the public to the movement for outreach propagation during social functions, such as naming ceremonies, marriage and bereavement were used to mobilize donations for the family. This was not what obtained in the Muslim sphere. The ulama had depended on these functions for their economic interest. The affiliation of the youth wing, the Islamic Research and Youth Organisation (IRYO) founded in 1971, with many state agencies such as OIC, NYC and Social Welfare, also enabled the movement to tap employment and vocational training for many Muslim youth in the community. This thus attracted many Muslims to the activities of the IRRC in view of the numerous incentives it offered them.

These successes of the IRRC were later on marred by internal differences within the movement beginning from 1984. The organisation was torn between two power blocs, the Western-educated executive on one hand and the youth wing with Umar Ibrahim on the other hand. The uprising initiated by the youth against the executive, for their non-cooperation in the
IRRC’s activities, effectively disintegrated the organisation. Umar Ibrahim and the youth wing steered the affairs of the IRRC’s new regime for some time. This was further bolstered when many of his graduate students returned from studies in the Middle East. The dismissed executives constituted themselves into a bloc by identifying themselves, the Old Islamic Research in contrast to the New Islamic Research led by Umar Ibrahim and the youth. Shuiab Abubakar, the second Ghanaian graduates from Saudi Arabia 1971, was recognised by these dismissed members as their official imam. While the impetus for Salafi influence in Ghana was as a result of the role played by Umar Ibrahim through the IRRC and supported by Muslims of diverse backgrounds, the growing number of graduate students from the Middle East meant that its contemporary revivalism took different forms. The Supreme Council for Islamic Call and Research was the first platform created for all the Ghanaian graduates from Saudi Arabia. We will now explore its role in Salafi revivalism in respect of the search embarked on by these graduates on question of religious authority among these graduates.

The supreme council for Islamic call and research

Beginning from the 1980s there has been a growing number of graduate students from Saudi Arabia, who were equally sponsored to engage in propagation. While their religious activities contributed to the pervasive influence of Salafi thought in Ghana, these graduates first lacked any formal organisation that serve as a rallying centre for their interest. The Supreme Council for Islamic Call and Research (SCICR) was founded in 1985 to serve this need. Membership of this organisation was in practice largely confined to Saudi graduates. This was in spite of the fact that there were other graduates from Kuwait and Bahrain who were equally engaged in the propagation of Salafism in Ghana. The SCICR platform was a result of external pressure from Saudi religious authorities, which was intended to coordinate the religious activities of their graduate students in Ghana. However, the platform of this organisation attracted competing scholarly interpretations among members on what constitute acceptable modes of propagation, more specifically in respect of the relevance of anti-Sufism. As a start I will explore the role of the Saudis in the founding of this organisation and how this platform attracted competing interpretations of Islam in the context of intra-Muslim relations and with other groups.
The interest of the Saudi in the founding of this organisation was aimed at creating an interface between their Ghanaian graduates and the Saudi religious establishments. Available records suggest that Sheikh Abdallah Mu’ayad, the then Director in charge of da’wah at the Muslim World League during one of his visits to Ghana in 1985 encouraged the founding of the SCICR. This position of his was borne out of the observation of the fragmented nature of the activities of Saudi graduates in Ghana. Because the religious activities of most of these graduates were sponsored by different Saudi religious establishments, such as the Muslim World League and the Islamic Fatwa Centre (Darul ifta) of the Ministry of Endowment and Islamic Affairs, the sense of cohesion among them was lacking. This was in spite of the fact that these graduates were sponsored to undertake propagation on Salafism in Ghana and further share a common ideological agenda. There were other graduates from Kuwait and Bahrain who were equally engaged in proselytisation but were not part of this platform. The SCICR was thus born out of this vision.

From the broader perspective, however, Mu´ayad’s role must be seen from the desire of the Salafi religious centres in Saudi Arabia to consolidate their influences in sub-Saharan Africa. Structures were created from national to sub-regional and continental levels to coordinate the activities of their religious interest in Africa. Having formed the leadership of this new organisation in Ghana, each of these Saudi-sponsored scholars was expected to report their activities to the head of the SCICR, who in turn would report to the West African leader in Nigeria. The West Africa representative further reports to the African representative in Kenya. However, this scheme by the Saudis to promote their global religious agenda encountered diverse interpretations on how it should be pursued. In Ghana, for instance, these Saudi-graduates were divided on key theological issues especially their relationship with other local religious groups. Secondly these ulama were further divided on which form of organisational structures that ought to represent their interest. This thus considerably undermined the Saudi global agenda, which intended to engender a consensus among its graduates through this platform.

One other key factor, which worked against the Saudi agenda in Ghana, was the fact that the unresolved internal power politics, which had characterised relations during the IRRC crisis in 1984, had other consequences for the newly created SCICR platform. On the other hand, the paradox arising from the contestations of the religious sphere by the Saudi scholars promoted Salafism as a national Muslim movement, which in
effect promoted the Saudi global religious agenda. The global Salafi agenda was not nurtured through the Saudi-sponsored religious platform, the SCICR, but rather through the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama’ah (ASWAJ) founded by the dissatisfied of the former.

To start with, as this organisation was formed in Kumasi, Umar Ibrahim was unanimously elected as the President, for being the first Ghanaian graduate from Saudi Arabia. However, the unsettled differences in the IRRC resurfaced in the power politics of this new organisation and affected its success. The power politics was fought between Umar Ibrahim and Shuiab Abubakar, the recognised imam of the discontented members of the IRRC.

As a result, it was agreed that the SCICR’s crisis should be solved through rotation of leadership between Umar Ibrahim and Shuiab Abubakar. For the start, Umar Ibrahim had his six months leadership tenure as President. However, Shuiab’s tenure was fraught with lack of support and cooperation from Umar Ibrahim and his graduate students. This nearly crumbled the organisation. Again, the interest showed by the Saudis in this organisation necessitated experimenting with another formula. This time the SCICR experimented with open and competitive elections, which were supervised by Muhammad Bun Ka’uud, a member of the Higher Religious Council in Saudi Arabia. This, it was thought, could reconcile the differences and bring about sanity and cohesion within the SCICR. Having had discussions with the feuding parties and the Saudi-sponsored ulama, Bun Ka’uud supervised an election, which was contested by Umar Ibrahim, Shuaib Abubakar and Dr. Ahmad Umar for the presidency. Because of the dissatisfaction that the majority of Saudi graduates had regarding the personality differences between Umar Ibrahim and Shuiab Abubakar, they voted overwhelmingly for Dr. Ahmad Umar in 1991. This, it was thought, could bring about neutrality in the leadership of the SCICR.

However, the leadership style of Dr. Ahmad Umar plunged this organisation into another crisis. While it was the popular will of the SCICR members, which brought Dr. Ahmad Umar to power, his perceived undemocratic leadership style gradually weakened the SCICR. According to aggrieved members, Ahmad consistently refused to call for Executive Council meetings as well as the Annual Congress, and thus entrenched himself as the life President of the organisation. Though he has been retired by the Saudi authorities, he is still the President of the SCICR.

The moderate religious stance he adopted towards the Sufi groups especially the Tijaniyya Fayda has other consequences on his prominence among his colleagues Salafi graduates in Ghana. Ahmad dissociated his
leadership from anti-Sufi rhetorics, which was implicated in spate of sectarian conflicts in parts of Ghana. The outcome of this policy of his was a mixed one. While this has won him respect in the Office of the National Chief Imam (ONCI), a Sufi-dominated national Muslim leadership in Ghana, it generated a significant dissatisfaction among a section of the Saudi graduates. In spite of this leadership politics, the role of the SCICR in Muslim religious life is worth analysing.

When this platform was created, it broadened scholarship opportunities for the prospective Ghanaian students who were not linked to the IRRC and Umar Ibrahim’s higher madrasah activities but wish to study in the Gulf universities. It also served as a major point of reference for most Ghanaian Islamic organisations with interests in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries. Significantly it established theological colleges at Tema in Accra, Kumasi in the Ashanti region and another one in Tamale in the northern region. These colleges serve the educational interest for many of the students who have graduated from higher madrasahs but have been unable to gain scholarships to study in universities in the Arab world (Musah interview, 2011).

Again, its moderate approach to da’wah and respect for religious diversity has reduced the religious tension that the IRRC has introduced earlier. Because of this moderate stance, the SCICR has been accused by the radical Salafi elements for undermining the broader Salafi agenda in Ghana. The SCICR cooperation with other Salafi organisations like the IRRC will have paved the way for a united Salafi front in Ghana. In spite of this, its leading members, such as Shuaib Abubakar, Dr. Ahmad Umar and Mahmoud Gedel, have been co-opted into the Advisory Committee of the ONCI. For sometimes now, Mahmaoud Gedel represented the ONCI on the National Peace Council and was the convener of the National Hilal Committee in Ghana. Other members of the SCICR represent the ONCI at major national functions and beyond. Its relationship with the Office of the Chief Imam has further attracted criticism that some members of the SCICR nurture their dream to occupy the national office when a vacancy occurs.

However, the tensions within the Salafi families in Ghana were dictated by both theological and personality differences, which manifested first through the IRRC crisis and subsequently the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal Jama’ah (ASWAJ) (to be discussed later). The SCICR’s relationship with the Office of the National Chief Imam is aimed at offering an alternative interpretation of the Islamic tradition on intra-Muslim relations rather than to be viewed as an attempt to counter the influence of the ASWAJ in the Muslim
community. It also suggests that the purpose of the SCICR’s adoption of the moderate approach to da’wah is to show the elasticity in the interpretation of the Islamic tradition in contrast to the perceived extreme and radical polemicism of the ASWAJ, notwithstanding the fact that, when members of the SCICR were part of the IRRC, they propagated a radical approach to da’wah. Thus, these Salafis contested the religious sphere with different interpretations of the religion, though this might be viewed as struggle for authority. In spite of this, the SCICR represents a bloc in the propagation of Salafism in Ghana.

The moderate religious position of the SCICR has enabled it to reach out to a larger audience in the Muslim communities regardless of their religious idiosyncrasies. Secondly, its relationship with the ONCI has, to some extent, infused Salafi ideas through the advisory roles of its members in this national Muslim institution. Lastly, the SCICR members who represent the ONCI are viewed as potential national Muslim leaders in Ghana. The SCICR might lack mass membership, yet most of its members in their individual capacity have built up a high reputation for themselves in the Muslim communities. In spite of this, the SCICR plays an insignificant advocacy role in the Ghanaian socio-political landscape. Also, the organization has not extended its propagation activities to non-Muslim communities. Lastly, the domain of the SCICR da’wah is limited to the urban cities.

The Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-jama’ah

The Ahlus-Sunnah Wal- Jama’ah (ASWAJ) is the mass membership platform for the Salafis in Ghana. This movement emerged in 1997 as a result of unsettled differences in the SCICR on da’wah and questions on representation of ulama. In addition, the elitist background of the SCICR, as an umbrella organisation for the Saudi ulama, further meant that the interest of the masses has not been resolved in the Salafi leadership structures in Ghana. This was to be further fed by the power politics, which had characterised the relations in the SCICR, especially between Umar Ibrahim and Shuiab Abubakar and later the moderate policy adopted by Ahmad Umar on da’wah. Since he assumed the leadership of the SCICR in 1991, Ahmad Umar has consistently promoted his moderate da’wah policy by working in league with the likeminded ulama even in other regions. A considerable number of the ulama who were not in line with his thought
were believed to have been alienated from the structures of the SCICR. The outcome of this approach generated dissatisfaction among some members.

Secondly, the background of the ASWAJ partly emanated from the question of representation of the Salafi ulama who were not trained in Saudi or other Middle Eastern universities. The SCICR members regarded this platform as an organisation for Saudi graduates who networked with official institutions in the Kingdom on religious matters in Ghana. This position undoubtedly underscores the economic relevance of the SCICR to these Saudi graduates, which had to be protected for their interest. It in effect, alienated those ulama who were not Saudi graduates to be part of the SCICR as a viable Salafi movement.

However, the background of ASWAJ must be seen from the fact that some graduates have been engaged in a search for a viable platform for Salafi identity. Since the 1960s Salafism as an identity for a Muslim movement and its representation in the national political sphere have not taken concrete shape. The earlier attempt was the IRRC, though it was later viewed by most Salafi graduates as an organisation for Umar Ibrahim and his graduate students. In addition, the SCICR rapport with the ONCI, a Sufi-dominated Muslim national office, meant that, the Salafi identity could not have gained impetus at the time. This organisation was thus conceived by some ulama to represent the spiritual aspiration of all ulama with Salafi leaning and the ordinary Muslims irrespective of their educational backgrounds, occupation and gender.

The initiative for the founding of this movement originated from the radical elements of the SCICR such as Taufiq Bakr, Kamil Muhammad who were discontented with the leadership style of Ahmad Umar. Secondly, some of the ulama like Basheer Yendu and Anas Alhassan, who were not trained in Saudi universities, also found the ASWAJ platform as an appropriate. Because of the moderate religious position of the SCICR leadership on anti-Sufism, the religious activities of these radical ulama gained the credibility among the masses in the country. By couching their worldview in anti-Sufi polemical terms, these ulama attracted the interest of the masses in their activities. These discontented ulama thus thought about creating a broader platform with others who shared with them the ideological agenda in collective outreach propagation. With their anti-Sufi rhetoric, these ulama were viewed by Salafi sympathisers as the defenders of the orthodoxy. It was in this context that they gained recognition and legitimacy in Ghana. This was in spite of the fact that their activities further fragmented the quest for a united Salafi leadership in this country.
However, the outcome of their activities was that it heightened the sectarian tension with the Tijaniyya Sufi movement. This degenerated into conflicts in some parts of the country like Kumasi, Wenchi and Techiman. These conflicts resulted in the loss of lives, properties and displacement in these parts of the country. As a result, Kamil Muhammad and Taufiq Bakr were both arrested and were bounded in the 1990s for engaging in sectarian conflicts in Kumasi. As members of the SCICR, whose sectarian activities were perceived to have created religious disturbances, their membership was severed from the organisation through summary dismissal. By this act, the SCICR thus disowned itself from the activities of these Muslims. However, the consequence of this dismissal was considerable in reshaping the religious sphere with another Salafi group. While the dismissal dented the image of these *ulama*, it rather provided the catalyst for them to rally behind other *ulama* whose backgrounds were already marginalised by the SCICR leadership. The religious space was thus contested by the Salafis of various divides on what constituted acceptable mode of propagation. One consequence of the dismissal was the fact that the credibility of these *ulama* exposed them to the surveillances of the state and its security apparatus since their activities were believed to pose threat to peace in the country (Aning 2009).

Arising from this, the new ASWAJ leadership evolved within the context of question of credibility. These *ulama* were viewed by the Sufi-dominated national Muslim leadership, the Office of the National Chief Imam, (ONCI) as troublemakers in view of their role in sectarian conflicts in the Muslim communities. The ONCI thus disrecognised them on any meaningful engagement on Muslim matters in the country. When the radical Salafi *ulama* engaged the ONCI to mediate on the sectarian conflicts, the outcome of the arbitration committee’s findings went against their expectation. This was in spite of their perception that their followers were the victims in most situations. The overall principle, which guided most of the committee’s decisions, was that the sectarian activities of these *ulama* were intended to question the authority of the National Chief Imam. In effect, the evidence given by this Imam in most of their arbitration outweighed theirs. The recognition wielded by the ONCI in the Ghanaian political landscape at the time was incontestible. In spite of the fact that the occupant of that office and those surrounding it were members of the Tijaniyya movement, the remote nexus between the ONCI and the causes of the sectarian conflict did not preclude its sympathy towards the Tijaniyya movement. The lack of support offered them by the SCICR leadership in the arbitration weakened
their front. This situation was further complicated as these Salafis have neither had an elected leadership nor any formal leadership structure.

The possible solution conceived by these Salafi *ulama* was to form a movement and elect its leadership in order to withstand these challenges. This thus gave birth to the ASWAJ as a Salafi movement in Ghana. In order to win the support of the larger Muslim public, the ASWAJ was conceived as a popular platform for all *ulama* and ordinary Muslims. The founding of this organisation was, however, met with strong resistance by both the SCICR and the ONCI. These two Muslim organisations understood the repercussion of the ASWAJ on their authority in Ghana and thus initiated measures to curb its prominence. In all, however, opposition to its formation was expressed in terms of extremism, sectarian conflicts and above all connected it to an attempt by some elements to create religious instability in Ghana.

Umar Ibrahim, who has already been marginalised in the SCICR structures, had accepted to be the National Imam of the ASWAJ. The SCICR leadership reacted by dismissing him from the organisation, since according to them it conflicted with their organisation’s objectives (SCICR, April 21, 1997). The SCICR further embarked on a smear campaign in the public to discredit this new organisation with a press release in the national media, thus dissociating itself from the founding of the ASWAJ. It branded the ASWAJ leadership as “faceless individuals bent on creating religious disturbances in the country” (*Daily Graphic*, 14 August, 1997). The overall idea was to discredit and thus to generate lack of interest by the public on the new organisation.

The reaction of the ONCI took various forms though were intended to question the legitimacy of this new group and to instigate the state security against the newly formed movement. The ASWAJ’s interconnectedness with the sectarian conflicts in parts of the country offered the ONCI a convenient instrument to indict it. The Advisory Committee to the national Chief Imam construed the election of Umar Ibrahim as attempts to introduce religious fundamentalism with the aim of creating confusion and chaos as had happened in parts of the country (Advisory Committee, 5th Sep. 1997). It thus appealed to state security to check the activities of this new group with purposely fanatical and Jihadist agenda in Ghana. In their press conference, the Council of the Muslim Chiefs, an organisation of Muslim headmen, which also doubled as the advisory committee of the national Chief Imam, portrayed the ASWAJ as a fundamentalist movement.
formed to undermine the authority and the unity of Muslims under the National Chief Imam (Muslim Chiefs, 18th Sept. 1997).

The backdrop of the position of the Muslim Chiefs must be seen from the fact that, since its formation in the 1953, it has viewed itself as the sole custodian of Muslim leadership in Ghana with the sole authority to appoint imams in Accra. The election of Umar Ibrahim by a section of Muslims without the Council’s mandate has thus been interpreted as undermining its authority. The Council further challenged the appropriateness of the ASWAJ, identifying their background with the label Ahlul-Sunnah (those who follow the prophetic way of life). In the view of the Council of Muslim Chiefs, since all Muslims in Ghana follow the Sunnah of the prophet, why should some few Muslims opt themselves for this label? Though, the identity of this new organisation was contested, this does not preclude the deeper religious meaning embedded in the position taken by the ASWAJ members. The media propaganda was followed with disruption of ASWAJ’s activities and intimidation by the state security.

The attempts by the leadership of the ASWAJ to initiate the first separate religious worship centres on the occasion of Eidul Fitr (an annual Muslim festivity) were disrupted by the police. The police had initially granted a permit for the ASWAJ for a separate Eidul Fitr festivity at the Awoshie School Park in Accra in 1998. It later turned down this request on the ground that the Tijaniyya leadership has threatened to shed blood if the Salafis were allowed to perform their separate prayers (Umar interview, 2012). The disruption was subsequently followed with the appeal made by the police to these Muslims to halt organising separate religious activities because of their potential to breach the prevailing peace (Nanfuri 1989).

In spite of this initial lack of recognition by other Muslim groups, including the SCICR, the ASWAJ has become the most recognised Salafi movement in Ghana on account of several factors. The mass base membership platform that it has adopted has attracted a significant number of followers. This was further augmented when this movement established branches in all the districts as well as the regional and national levels in Ghana. Not only did the branches offer a leadership platform to some people but enabled them to create activities in their respective communities. The national leadership of the movement coordinate with the regional members and the districts to organise annual conventions in various parts of the country. Because of its mass support platform, this movement has attracted recognition from other civil society groups such as the Ghana
Conference on Religion and Peace, the Inter Faith Waste Management Committee initiated by the World Bank, among others.

Also, its active engagement in the resolution of Muslim domestic issues through its Arbitration Committee has earned its recognition from the civil legal fraternity such as the Legal Aid Scheme, Domestic and Victims Support Unit (DOVSU) of the Ghana’s Police Service, the Commission of Human Rights and Administrative Justice (CHRAJ), and the Federation of African Women Lawyers (FEDA). Lastly, with the deepening of democratisation in Ghana, the mass based platform of the ASWAJ has attracted recognition from diverse political parties because of its potential to deliver en bloc vote.

By combining sectarian polemics with active social engagement in the Muslim social sphere, the ASWAJ have eclipsed the influence wielded by the SCICR. Other members of the SCICR have further been attracted into the activist-orientated platform of ASWAJ. This movement to some extent is put at par with the ONCI on major national Muslim issues in Ghana. Since 2002, this organisation has further created networking with other Salafi sister organisations in the West African sub-region. The offices of the Rabitul Du´at (League of Salafi Ulama in the West Africa) are located in Ghana. It is an umbrella organisation of all Salafi ulama in this region. The annual convention of the ASWAJ attracts other Salafi organisations from the sub-region, while this organisation further participates in their activities.

Salafi educational centres

The impetus for Salafi influence in modern Ghana was largely not connected to the activities of Salafi organisations through outreach propagation alone. The growth of Salafism was partly through the educational centres. Salafi influence was felt through the activities of these educational centres, which attracted and continue to attract the interest of the youth in education. Several factors account for the appeal of Salafi education to many students. The level of deprivation for Western education among Muslims in Ghana has, to a large extent, contributed to the appeal of Salafi higher education. The missionary role played by the Arab states with scholarship incentives for Muslim students thus attracted them to Salafi education. However, an understanding of the structure of education in the Ghanaian secular sphere sheds light on this.
Muslims’ disinterest in secular education during the colonial era was a result of the fear of Muslim parents of their wards being converted into Christianity. This has compelled many Muslim parents to restrict them access to Western education. This crisis was further compounded when the colonial authorities tolerated and encouraged unfettered missionary activities in various levels of education (Iddrisu 2005). Thus, the background of the Muslim Association Party (MAP), which was founded in the 1954, was partly fuelled by the agitation among these Muslims for special kind of education for Muslim children in the then Gold Coast (Allman 1991).

The lack of patronage of the Western education considerably aggravated the economic deprivation among Muslims in both the Zongos and the north. The pervasiveness of this deprivation has significantly characterised the background of Muslims living in the Zongos as the hub of urban poor in Ghana. Muslim parents in both the north and the migrant Muslims from neighbouring West African countries, who were reluctant to allow their wards to pursue Western education, survived through menial jobs as labourers and securitymen. The traditional madrasah system operated by the ulama, which depended on the generosity of the proprietor, has limited progression with prospect in professional careers other than becoming an imam or a religious teacher.

Thus with the wind of decolonisation gaining momentum, some Muslim states such as Saudi Arabia and Egypt thought to extend their ideological and religious agenda on the newly open religious space in the Third World parts of predominantly Muslim countries (Hunwick 1996). This ideological agenda of the Muslim states became apparent as the various scholarship schemes meant for Muslims in the Third World countries were in religious sciences. The overall agenda of these states was not to develop the human resource capacity of their counterparts in natural sciences but rather their sectarian religious agenda.

In spite of the fact that the graduates from these Arab countries played a limited role in both the secular economic and political space, they became agents of modernising Islamic education in Ghana. This modernisation is reflected in the prospect of progression in education, the use of modern text books and popularising the use of the Arabic language. Most of the higher Salafi educational centres were established by these graduate students from Middle Eastern universities. The Institute of Islamic Studies in Accra was founded by Umar Ibrahim in 1969, while the Al-Azhariyya Educational Complex in Kumasi was founded by Adam Baba, another graduate of Madina University. Since 1971, the Saudi embassy in Ghana has co-opted
the Anbariyya Educational Centre in Tamale founded by the pioneer Salafi in Ghana, Afa Yussuf Ajura, for its scholarship scheme (Idrissu 2010). These educational centres depend on external pedagogies and especially on Saudi literature for imparting knowledge to their students. This was in keeping with the level of competitiveness of accessing scholarship with other educational centres in Ghana.

As an ideological agenda largely shapes these Salafi educational activities, it further exacerbates the already existing tension generated through the outreach propagations of the Salafi organisations. The background of Umar Ibrahim and his madrasah activities illustrates a good case. His madrasah activities were initially welcomed by the larger Muslim leadership in Nima. The proprietors of two traditional madrasahs especially the Tafsiliyya and the Tahniyya Islamic Schools, had initially consented to their pupils to attend his classes. These classes were organised at the Nima Central Mosque. However, having realised that Umar’s activities were connected to promoting a different religious worldview, some of the proprietors, like the Tahniyya Islamic School in Nima, withdrew its support from this arrangement.

Secondly, his madrasah activities further experienced setback when the Sufi leadership of the mosque became apprehensive of the ‘strange teachings’ as it was couched. This compelled the leadership to eject him from the mosque. The search for space for his madrasah activities have necessitated him to relocate to Abeka, a suburb of Accra before relocating back to Nima on the land donated by Ali Toloba. Umar Ibrahim’s background illustrates a typical example of the struggle engaged by some Salafis to establish their education in Ghana.

In spite of the Arabisation and ideological agenda of madrasah schools, Salafi educational centres have promoted a level to quality Islamic education in Ghana. Given that most of the teachers are graduates from theological universities who as a consequence have taught the students in fluent Arabic. This has enabled the students to read, speak and recite relevant literature of the religion. The strength of these institutions further lies in their ability to train students as tutors for the traditional madrasah system at the primary education level in Ghana. Thus, such students have been given a formal school certificate. Some institutions like Al-Azhariyya and Anbariyya have further been integrated into the mainstream secular educational system sponsored by the state through the Islamic Education Unit of the Ministry of Education. By depending on the resources offered by the state, it has enabled them to promote secular education in addition to keeping their ideological agenda.
With the booming of the economies of some Arab countries, access to funding for educational infrastructures and activities in the country was facilitated. Prior to the 9/11 attacks on the United States of America, Salafi educational centres attracted significant numbers of scholarships in addition to fundings for educational infrastructures. These educational centres have succeeded to promote an alternative space for Muslim education in Ghana through the Islamic Education Unit. They have thus emerged as a strong educational bloc in the Muslim community in terms of providing access to modern education.

This notwithstanding, Salafi educational centres are still fraught with a number of challenges. Some of them have still not been integrated into the mainstream secular educational system sponsored by the state. There are numerous reasons for this, among which the fear of losing a grip of their ideological agenda and the proprietors losing their jobs. The outcome of this is that graduates from these centres are seen as an extended product of the outside Arab world rather than as Ghanaians. This is because such a graduate from the Salafi institutes cannot relate effectively in the secular space of the country. Also, the higher madrasah training offers by these institutions tend to exclude its benefits to young girls and women at the higher level of education. The only exceptions are those ones operated by the Islamic Education Unit of the Ministry of Education, though these are mostly limited to the junior high school level. The al-Sadique Educational Complexes established by al-Muntada Islami, a transnational Salafi NGO, for higher madrasah education in both Wenchi in the Brong Ahafo and Nyakrom in the Central regions for the primary and junior high school levels have both collapsed.

Salafi development and proselytising initiatives

Since the 1980s, Salafism as the second dominant Muslim discourse in Ghana has been characterised largely by its role as a humanitarian mission. This humanitarian dimension of Salafism was linked to the activities of Saudi development-related NGOs in Ghana. These NGOs anchored their core objectives as development agents and have thus attracted resources from Saudi organisations and philanthropists for educational infrastructure, health, agricultural facilities and further provided benevolent services for Ghanaian Muslims. The activities of these NGOs filled in the vacuum existing in the Muslim humanitarian services and further complemented
both the role of the state in providing social services and that of the traditional communal support system in Ghana.

In a broader perspective, the economic relevance of these NGOs must be viewed in the light of the fact that they emerged at the time when Ghana’s economy was under severe stress, especially in the 1980s. In view of the worsening decline of the economy, the PNDC regime (1981–1992) in 1983 accepted the prescription of the Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which sought to remove state intervention in the provision of free social amenities (Kessey 2005). As the regime was looking for alternative social interventions, the then Head of State, Flt Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings requested development aid from Islamic states and NGOs from such states (Anning 2009). As a result of this, the 1980s represented the booming of Muslim NGO activities in Ghana, in spite of the fact that Ghanaian state policies towards the NGOs and voluntary organisations were inconsistent. The advent of charismatic Christian organisations was viewed with suspicion (Atingui 1998). The Ghanaian regime adopted unprecedented repressive measures by banning most Christian organisations, while approaching Muslim transnational NGOs with tolerable postures.

In this section, the broader development initiatives offered by the Saudi Government to Ghana’s Government are analysed. This will be followed up by the activities of the Saudi–affiliated NGOs founded by the graduate students in Ghana. While the activities of these NGOs were not without their sectarian agenda, it is their developmental–orientated initiatives that shaped their outlook in the larger Ghanaian public sphere. These NGOs are viewed as alternative platforms for funding by different community leaders. Evers Rosander (1997) argues that the appeal of Salafism emanates from its being in tune with urbanity and material success. However, this view underrates the Salafi appeal, which cut across any geographic setting. In this section I will show how its appeal is strongly rooted in the countryside as a result of the material support it offers to the underpreviledged people and deprived communities. In Ghana in particular, one of the strengths of Salafism is related to the development initiatives of the Salafi NGOs to underprevileged peoples in both the urban setting and the countryside.

The Salafi non-profit organisations to be discussed in this section have offered development projects to Muslim institutions, members of government, District and Municipal Assemblies, Muslim and non-Muslim Members of Parliament (MPs) as well as traditional authorities (chiefs). By extending aspects of their developmental facilities to other groups, the Salafi
organisations have won the credibility of the larger Ghanaian public, which thus ensures the growth of Salafism in a different dimension. The democratisation dispensation, which the country had embarked on, entails competition for the inadequate resources provided by the state and its agencies. This thus reinforces the patronage by other groups of the development projects facilitated by Salafi-orientated organisations. First, I highlight the regime’s broader engagement in respect of development assistance to Ghana’s Government in general before proceeding with the role of Salafi organisations. The central thesis of this section is that Saudi Arabia’s broader humanitarian and relief services extended to the Ghana’s Government are interconnected with its religious agenda.

Saudi development assistance to Ghana

The broader framework through which Saudi development assistance was facilitated in Ghana was the Saudi Fund for Development (SFD). Its development aid was managed by the recipient government. When a review is made regarding the overall bilateral agreement between the Saudi Government and the Ghanaian counterpart, it becomes clear that this form of assistance was related to health and agriculture, but in a quite a limited way. Ghana’s Government secured a funding of 9.5 million dollars for the construction of 35 health posts in 1995. It is, however, worth highlighting that these projects were invariably sited in the Muslim-dominated areas in the country. Secondly, the agricultural sector received lesser consideration of the Ghana-Saudi relations as the only contribution was the 70 million Saudi Riyals for the provision of corn mills and crop storage facilities for the people in Atebubu, Techiman and Dormatin. Ghana’s Government further secured extra funding of 13 million dollars for the rehabilitation of the Tema and Takoradi ports respectively and an additional loan for the Tetteh Quashie-Mamfie Road project between 2001 and 2008.

An important bilateral agency represented by the Saudi Government in Ghana, on behalf of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), is the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). The OIC is an interstate Muslim organization, which founded the IDB to mobilise monetary support for member countries. In spite of the fact that Ghana is not a member of the OIC, the Bank still allots a sizable proportion of its funds to Muslims in minority settings like Ghana. The focus of the IDB activities is on education, especially promoting Muslim educational infrastructure and
offering scholarships in medical sciences, agriculture and engineering-related disciplines to be undertaken in Turkish universities.

The original intention of IDB’s scholarships was to be undertaken in the Ghanaian public universities. However, the high demands made by the Ghanaian universities compelled the IDB scholarship secretariat to route it to Turkish universities. In recent times, the scholarships are also offered in Ghana for deserving Muslim students who gain admission at any of the public universities in the sciences based on merit. Since 1986, 221 Ghanaian students have benefited from the scheme. Half of the students have so far graduated, while 115 students are still benefitting. Until 2006, a total amount of 3,762,000 United States dollars had been spent on the students in Ghana.

In addition, the IDB offered various forms of assistance to Muslim educational infrastructure in Ghana. As parts of its aim to promote science education among Muslim students in Ghana, the IDB constructed the Islamic Science Secondary School, which provides science education to many Muslim children in the Northern region of the country. It has also donated science equipments to the Tamale Secondary School and the Ghana Secondary School, both in Tamale. Other projects financed by the IDB scheme include Junior Secondary School projects at Tamale, Bimbila and Wulensi. This is with a view to ensuring accessible education to Muslim students and helping the Government to meet its target of free compulsory basic education (Gbadamoshi interview, 2009). Rahimu Gbadamoshi is the Country’s Director of the IDB. He explains the rationale targeting the three northern regions with the IDB’s projects, which according to him was due to the deprived nature of these areas as far as education is concerned. However, projects were not distributed on an even basis since the Northern region has many more Muslims than the Upper East and Upper West regions.

The Salafi-educational centre in Nima, Accra, owned by Umar Ibrahim, also benefitted from a partial funding from the IDB. The centre consists of a four-storey building, comprising a primary and junior secondary school, which all fall under the aegis of the Islamic Education Unit of the Ghana Education Service (GES). A portion of the centre also serves as classrooms for the Institute of Islamic Studies, a higher theological seminary founded by Umar Ibrahim for Salafi education in Accra. Programmes are offered from junior secondary to senior secondary levels in the Arabic language, and the students having the prospect to gain scholarships to study at the Islamic University in Madina in Saudi Arabia, or any other university within the Saudi Kingdom.
Between 1987–2005, the IDB gave a total amount 4,146,000 U.S dollars to Ghana. The assistant coordinator, Hudu Moctari, mentioned that the organization has approved 28 projects, which are in the pipeline for the various Muslim communities. The trend for the distribution of the IDB’s projects indicates that about 80 percent are located in the Northern region of Ghana. It implies that Muslims within the Northern region have subscribed to the projects earlier than any other community.

Table 2: Approved IDB Projects in Ghana between 1987–2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Beneficiary</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date Approved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 Hostels for UDS</td>
<td>Ghanaian Government</td>
<td>Nyanpka</td>
<td>1988 &amp; 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polytechnic Institute</td>
<td>Ghanaian Government</td>
<td>Tamale</td>
<td>6/4/1988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Islamic Studies</td>
<td>Islamic Research &amp; Reformation Centre</td>
<td>Nima, Accra</td>
<td>9/9/1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten, primary school</td>
<td>The Hijra Club</td>
<td>Accra</td>
<td>4/8/1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational Training Centre</td>
<td>Anbariya Islamic Society</td>
<td>Tamale</td>
<td>6/4/1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary and Junior Secondary School</td>
<td>Northern Region Cooperating Council</td>
<td>Yendi</td>
<td>8/17/1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary &amp; Secondary School</td>
<td>Northern Region Cooperating Council</td>
<td>Walensi</td>
<td>12/14/1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Binjae Primary School</td>
<td>Regional Coordinating</td>
<td>Binjae</td>
<td>3/17/1997</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It is difficult to de-link the Saudi Government’s diplomatic motive with Ghana vis-a-vis its religious agenda. While engaging with the Ghanaian Government on bilateral issues it further pursues its religious agenda in the Muslim communities through the Islamic Desk. This Desk is a sub-office within the Saudi Embassy in Ghana, which liaises with the state-affiliated religious centres in the Saudi Kingdom, such as the Muslim World League (MWL), the World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY) and the Fatwa Centre of the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Endowment. It further coordinates the activities of Saudi NGOs with the Ghanaian Muslims. Thus the Saudi religious agenda constitutes an integral part of its diplomatic relations with Ghana. This has further been bolstered with the institutionalization of Wahhabism (Salafism) as a state religion and its relevance as a foreign policy instrument (al-Rasheed 20007). The Saudi regime has been successful with its religious agenda through the activities of the NGOs founded by its graduates in Ghana, which is the focus of this section.

The activities of the Salafi NGOs

This study shows that since the 1980s Ghanaian Muslims who graduated from Saudi universities have founded NGOs, which enable them to attract development projects for the Muslim communities. Notable of these NGOs founded by these graduates are the Centre for Distribution of Islamic Books, al-Muntada Educational Trust and al-Hudaibiyya, among others.
The relevance of these NGOs in the Ghanaian social economy must be seen from the fact that they have filled in existing vacuum in the delivery of educational infrastructures, religious centres (mosques) and humanitarian services. The educational opportunities created by Arab countries for Ghanaian Muslims have further enhanced transnational networking among the graduates who attracted funding for religious activities in Ghana. The roles of these graduates were not limited to development initiatives they provided but also introduced modern techniques in propagation such as the use of workshops, seminars and camping through their NGOs. While strengthening the faith of Muslims, these NGOs further drew them towards opportunities in the Ghanaian secular system. This notwithstanding, the activities of these NGOs was, to some extent, interconnected with a proselytising agenda. Salafism was promoted and consolidated through the activities of these NGOs in Ghana regardless of the religious tensions they might generate.

The Centre for the Distribution of Islamic Books was the first local NGO with Saudi affiliation. It was founded in 1980 by Muhyideen Rufai Ahmad who promoted development in Ghana. Al-Rajhi International and Commercial Bank in Riyadh was the major source of funding for this Centre’s activities. This organisation used to attract at least $400,000 in a year, through the bank’s zakat funding for humanitarian activities for Muslims. The activities of the Centre included provision of educational infrastructures and scholarship opportunities for Muslim students. The Holy Quran School at Ada, Khalid bn Walid at Kasoa and Umar bn Khatab’s primary at Madina in Accra were wholly funded by the Centre. It also provided partial funding for other schools such as the Wataniyya School founded by Baba al-Waiz, a leading Tijaniyya scholar, and the al-Azhariyya Schools, both at Kumasi. The Centre further assisted with partial funding for Khalid bn Walid School in Koforidua and the Islamic School in Wa to expand their educational infrastructures. It further offered scholarships to Muslim students in various tertiary institutions undertaking studies in various disciplines.

A unique element introduced by the Centre was in the domain of organising workshops for Muslim students in the tertiary institutions in Ghana, something that had hardly ever been done before in the Muslim communities. The workshop platforms were used to address contemporary issues affecting Muslims such as participation in national politics and the relevance of modern education. The expertise of Muslims in the public service was depended on for the workshops. While the objective was to
educate Muslims to embrace the secular Ghanaian economy, the religious dimension to the workshops featured prominently. Significant schedules of the workshops were spent educating the students on religious rituals, including what is lawful and forbidden. This was to strengthen the faith of Muslims. Literature published by the WAMY, the International Student Organisation (IIO) and other Saudi religious centres was distributed, which bears the hallmark of Salafi perspectives to Islam. In the late 1990s, the Centre became defunct as a result of the liquidation that the al-Rajhi Bank had undergone.

The al-Muntada Educational Trust, a Saudi-funded NGO based in London is another transnational Muslim organization in Ghana. It first established its offices there in 1990 and subsequently expanded to sixteen other countries in the West African region. This organization has anchored its mission in five areas of development, namely education, water, health, building of Islamic centres assisting imams as well as seasonal support during the month of Ramadan and Eidul adha celebration. The outstanding contribution of this NGO is in education. As a result, it has adopted three approaches in its educational delivery in the country, which include:

1. Providing educational infrastructures to the needy Muslim communities. The ownership of these types of projects rests with the communities.
2. Putting up educational institutions and managing them.
3. Formation of Quranic circles, which are aimed at targeting the youth.

With the first approach, the organization has constructed about six school projects in five regions in the country for the needy Muslim communities. The Kutuia School in Wa, the vocational training centre for Muslim women in Kumasi as well as the Rahmaniyaa School in Tema were all assisted with educational infrastructures. The Tahiriyaa and the Badariyya Schools in both Tamale and Kintampo have similarly benefitted from some classrooms blocs.

The policy of al-Muntada on education is further seen in the establishment and managing of educational centres. Good examples of these types of projects are the Al-Siddiq Educational Complex at Nyakrom and another one at Wenchi, in the Central and Brong Ahafo regions respectively. These schools were both built in 1990. While both have facilities from kindergarten to the junior secondary level, the Nyakrom one has a Senior Secondary School too. These two schools have been integrated into the
mainstream state-funded educational system under the supervision of the Islamic Education Unit (IEU) of the Ghana Education Service (GES). The two educational centres absorb a significant number of graduates from Middle Eastern universities in Ghana. In 2003, the number of students was 1081, partly because of the perception of their integrated curricula of both Islamic and secular subjects. Based on the policy of the schools’ management, their teachers shaped the Salafi background of the institutions.

Al-Muntada Trust was also the pace setter in the organisation of the Quranic cells in Ghana, otherwise called the Halkat Quran. The target of the Quranic cells was the primary school-going children. They are taught and guided through the art of memorising the Quran and certain rudiments of the religion in both the mornings and evenings. Evidence of the popularity of these cells is seen from the fact that about 6000 Quranic circles existed nationwide with 200 Islamic teachers on the payroll of the organisation in 2006.

In addition, al-Muntada Trust was the first to introduce in 1995 the idea of camping and targeting tertiary students in the various universities and polytechnics. The camps, most appropriately, are used, when students are on long vacations and last for a month. In the camps, students are taught various courses in Islamic studies, such as the forbidden and lawful in Islam, the Islamic creed, contemporary challenges facing Muslims and the Muslim youth as well as Islam and national politics. These camps have been means through which Muslim students’ identities are shaped, though with a Salafi leaning. They provide platforms for socialisation among the participants. The organisation also experimented with weekend Islamic studies for students in some tertiary institutions, especially in the campuses of the University of Ghana in Accra and the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi. This is intended to give basic guidance on religious matters for Muslim students who lack any form of rudimentary Islamic knowledge.

This notwithstanding, al-Muntada promotes its religious agenda through its activities, which sometimes further exacerbates the sectarian tensions in some parts of the country. The educational centres managed by the organization, especially the one located at Wenchi in the Brong Ahafo region was partly implicated in the spate of the sectarian conflicts between the Tijaniyya and the Salafis in 1998. Aside from their style of teachings, the teaching staffs further engaged in the religious propagation in the community. It was believed that parents were becoming apprehensive because their wards were taught to disregard the established religious practices,
which could not be verified through the scriptural standards. These children were taught to pay preference to God’s injunction at the expense of obeying their parents (Hamidu interview, 2012). The idea was to create a rupture between the younger generation and the older ones in respect of religious practices. The incessant condemnation of religious beliefs and practices through the classroom was further fuelled by the religious propagation in the community. The sectarian conflicts eventually forced the closure of the educational centre in Wenchi in 1998, as the teachers were targeted and threatened by the Tijaniyya group.

Again, the Salafi agenda found its meaning in al-Muntada’s activities whenever a community requested for a mosque project. This NGO adopted multiple means to ensure that its agenda prevails. It demands first a full transfer of the ownership of the land to its custody. Secondly, it insists on writing an undertaking with the community that it would send down an imam to take charge of the mosque. The basic idea is to have absolute control and management of the yet to be constructed Islamic centre. This is in spite of the fact that the community might have their Imam. This policy is to keep to the pledge with their donors of promoting Salafism in their sponsored activities. In some cases, the communities would enter into the agreement but renege to fight for the local or the existing imam when the project is completed. This tendency of al-Muntada of promoting the Salafi agenda through their development projects created tension wherever its established mosques in certain parts of the country, like in Tarkwa and Aboasi, all in the Western region, Effiaakuma in the Central region and Jasikan in the Volta region. The case of the Tarkwa illustrates the extent to which the organisation can go to secure its interest. Having unsuccessfully petitioned the traditional authority (the paramount chiefs), the organisation lodged a case in the law court for redress. In some of the cases, the disputes were interpreted as Salafi-Tijani conflicts, while in some cases it was regarded as a disagreement between the al-Muntada and the community. In all scenarios, the interest of the organisation prevailed through both dialogues and recourse to the law court. It succeeded to appoint the substantive imam or the deputy.

These incidences did not affect the image of this NGO as a reputable one in Ghana. This NGO has received a number of commendations from the office of the Vice President of the Republic of Ghana, District Assemblies, the Ghana Education Service and the Ghana Health Service. These commendations consistently cite the support of this organisation in the
building of educational infrastructures, health screening and provision of potable water in the rural parts of Ghana.

The activities of al-Furqan Islamic Society, a transnational organisation, based at Jeddah in Saudi Arabia were largely aimed at promoting Salafi footholds in parts of Ghana. This society provided various forms of assistance to Salafi sympathisers at Bawku in the Upper East region and its surrounding communities. It built a mosque, called Masjidul Umar, in 1995, and another one, Masjidul Usman in 2003. In addition, the society built a mosque in 2005 at Sabon Gari in Bawku, known as Abdullah’s Mosque, and another at Yamanda, also in Bawku. It shows that the interest of the organisation is to advance the Salafi course in Ghana.

The al-Huda Islamic Society was founded in 1992 by Ghanaian graduates from Saudi universities, led by Armiyau Jibril and Dr. Muhammad Bashir. This organization has instituted four main development plans on its objectives, namely: education, benevolence, projects, and investments.

With its focus on education the organization has constructed a multi-million Islamic centre called Abdullah bn Mas’ud Centre for Quranic Memorization at Gbawe in the Greater Accra region. The funding of this project was a generous donation made by Abdullah bn Masud, a famous Saudi Quran reciter. It was in celebration of his legacy that this centre was established. The centre attracts students from some West African countries such as Togo, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Benin, Niger and Nigeria for a three-year diploma course in Islamic studies on scholarships. The Arabic language, English, French, and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) are integral of the subjects taught at the centre. Ghanaian graduates from the Saudi universities constitute the overwhelming teaching staffs of the institute and shape its Salafi background.

Like the al-Muntada Educational Trust, al-Huda Islamic Society is also involved in the promotion of Quranic circles in Ghana. These circles are mostly concentrated in three regions, namely, the Greater Accra, Ashanti and the Northern region. In all, the Quranic cells of Al-Huda attract about 700 students daily.

The most vibrant Saudi-affiliated NGO in Ghana in recent times has been al-Hudaibiyya Relief Services, which started its operations in Accra 2004. This organization represents an interface between the Saudi official religious centres and the philanthropists on the one hand and the Ghanaian Muslims on the other. Its background was shaped by the events in the aftermath of September 11th attacks on the United States of the America in 2001. This organisation was founded primarily to take up the role of the
Directorate of Mosques and Humanitarian Services, (Idaratul-Binai Masajid Wal-Mashari Khairiya), under the Ministry of Islamic Affairs and Endowments. The Directorate of Mosques and Humanitarian Services was closed as a result of the anti-terrorism measures instituted by the Saudi regime. This was when its humanitarian delivery was perceived to have been lax and thus contributed to extending benevolence to potential terrorist networks.

Since its founding in Ghana, al-Hudaibiyya has developed innovative approaches to its development initiatives for the Muslim communities. Realising the enormous developmental needs of Muslims in Ghana, it has introduced the idea of Markaz, (centre in Arabic). Among the facilities included in every such centre are: a school, a mosque, potable water, and sometimes a residence for the imam. These development packages were instituted after a careful assessment of the needs of the Muslim communities. The overall idea was to address the shortcomings in the nature of humanitarian delivery by the existing Muslim NGOs in Ghana. The feasibility of these development projects could be viewed by the interest of prospective donors in the organisation’s activities. The contributions of al-Hudaibiyya to the Ghanaian Muslim community cannot be fully captured in this section as a result of its enormity. For the sake of brevity, it is prudent however to illustrate its contribution through Table 3 on a regional basis.

Central, Western, the Upper East and the Upper West regions received the least of al-Hudaibiyya-funded projects. The reason for this situation has been explained by Muhammad Hadi, the Operation Director. According to him, these communities, as compared to others, did not apply for projects from the organization on time, partly due to lack of information about the organisation’s activities.

In short, the organisation has dug fifteen wells of potable water in the Eastern region, and built six markazs and four mosques. The organisation has also dug twenty-three wells of potable water in the Central region, five schools and four mosques. In the Greater Accra region it dug fourteen wells of potable water, constructed eleven schools and ten mosques, each with a school, comprising four classroom blocs in each mosque. Al-Hudaibiyya also had dug wells of potable water, and constructed two schools and eleven mosques with a markaz in each district in the Ashanti region. In the Western region it has constructed three mosques; two of these mosques have four classroom blocs with quarters for an imam and his assistant, a mortuary as well as a borehole (Hadi interview 2009).
Table 3: Distribution of al-Hudaibiyya Projects in the Regions of Ghana

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Number of Mosques</th>
<th>Number of Wells with Potable water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong Ahafo</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the Upper East region, it has constructed three schools, one mosques and a school of classroom bloc also with quarters for an imam and his assistant. In addition, al-Hudaibiyya constructed two mosques and provided sources of potable water in the Upper West region. As observed, a substantial portion of al-Hudaibiyya’s projects are in the Northern region. The district distribution of these projects there is shown in Table 4:
Table 4: The Distribution of Saudi–Funded Projects by Districts Facilitated by Al-Hudaibiya Relief Services in the Northern region of Ghana.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>Number of Schools</th>
<th>Number of Mosques</th>
<th>Number of Wells with Potable water</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Savelugu</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamale</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yendi</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zabzugu</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mamprusi</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Karaga</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5: The Distribution of Al-Hudaibiyya Projects on a Regional Basis in Percentages

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Mosques</th>
<th>Boreholes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Greater Accra</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashanti</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volta</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brong Ahafo</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern</td>
<td>65.7</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper East</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper West</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The outcome of this study suggests that the overall interest of al-Hudaibiyya is in the area of educational infrastructure, mosques some with housing facility for the imams and their assistants, and mortuaries and sources of drinking water attached to some mosques. The organisation has brought about a significant transformation in Muslim humanitarian delivery in Ghana, especially with its policy of a markaz in one community. This implies that the organisation has instituted a holistic development for Muslims.

The regional distribution of al-Hudaibiya projects shows that, as indicated earlier, the Northern region as a whole has most of the projects, especially projects on education and mosques (65.7% and 61.5% respectively). While the organization has done a mapping of communities’ development needs, which influenced them to allocate more to the Northern region, it is not certain that it falls within the regional pattern of underdevelopment in Ghana. In terms of level of poverty, the three northern regions have been viewed to constitute the poorest regions in Ghana. It has been argued that four out of ten people are poorer in the Upper East, three out of ten in the Upper West and two out of ten in the Northern regions in that order (Weiss 2008). Parts of this imbalance between the poverty trend and the organisation’s pattern of developments delivery have been necessitated by the lack of synergy between the accredited state departments and the Muslim development NGOs. However, aspects of its humanitarian delivery especially those related to building of Islamic centres (mosques), do not fall under the responsibility of state departments. Moreover, because of its sectarian agenda of solely providing humanitarian service to Muslims, it further complicates the role of the states in its activities. NGOs like al-Hudaibiyya basically depend on request from the communities, which are aware of its activities. Thus the beneficiary communities were among the first to have applied for the projects. It might also imply that they have subscribed to these types of projects more than Muslims in any other region in Ghana. Lastly, the Northern region might have had an added advantage over other communities because the founder of the organisation was known to many people, as an indigene of the area.

Al-Hudaibiyya organisation sought applications from the various communities based on their needs for possible assistance, at the same time taking into consideration the prospective donors’ interests in projects especially relating to education and wells of potable water. Indeed, the execution of these projects for the needy communities by al-Hudaibiya has filled in a gap in the Government’s quest for equitable national develop-
ment. At the same time the organisation has taken up role of projects that do not fall under the Government’s purview, especially projects on Islamic centres (mosques).

Table 6: A Summary of Saudi Government Contributions to Ghanaian Muslims

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizations</th>
<th>Contributions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SFD7</td>
<td>141 million Riyals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Islamic Desk</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDB8</td>
<td>20 executed 28 pending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Hudaibiyya</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Mutada</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Al-Huda</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 SFD: Saudi Fund for Development.
8 IDB: Islamic Development Bank. It is a joint bank established by members’ of organization of Islamic conference. Its headquarters is based in Saudi Arabia. The Saudi Government is a substantial shareholder.
In view of the enormous development initiatives offered by al-Hudaibiyya to the deprived communities, it has become a centre of patronage by Ministers of state and Members of Parliament (MPs). This has been necessitated in view of numerous requests for developments made by the people in the constituencies, which the state cannot provide or sometimes fall outside its purview. Both the Muslims and non-Muslim MPs requested for development projects from this NGO in order to authenticate their commitment to the development of Muslims for political votes. In order to enhance their political credibility and popularity in the constituency, these politicians most often represent themselves as agents of development. In a situation where a development project is earmarked by an NGO for a community of which the MP might not be associated with it, he/she forwards him or herself before the leadership of the NGO to create the impression that he/she represents the community. As a result it tends to reinforce the credibility of the Salafi NGOs, including al-Hudaibiyya. In some of the instances that an MP or a District Assembly requests for a project, such a request is forwarded to their sponsors who in turn demand that the state or its agent must give an assurance that the amount donated to the community on behalf of the NGO would be judiciously utilised for the purpose. This is in spite of the fact that the project is being executed by their sponsored NGO in Ghana. The overall idea is to get the endorsement and assurance from the state on the operation of the NGO and that it will not undermine the activities of the NGO on such a project. Records further suggest that these politicians sometimes overstretch the generosity of the NGOs by appealing to them to sponsor Muslim leaders in their constituency to undertake the pilgrimage to Makkah (hajj). The overarching aim is to win the sympathy of Muslim leaders and their followers for vote.

Conclusions

This study shows that since the advent of Salafism in Ghana, it has consistently explored different modes of reviving its ethos in the Muslim religious sphere. As observed, Salafi revivalism has taken different contours and was made possible because of its advocates making issues from the local context. While the contemporary Salafi revivalism in Ghana is fuelled by Saudi supports through both scholarships and humanitarian services, its relevance could be viewed from its role in the local context. This movement first contested against the nature of practices of the Tijaniyya tarbiya. In this
context, while discouraging people to embrace the *tarbiya* they offered Salafism as an alternative form of spirituality to these Muslims. The appeal of Salafism in Ghana further attracted deeper search for authority among its advocates regarding the appropriate manner of propagation. In all, however, Salafism through the ASWAJ succeeded by providing efficient structures to meet the teeming aspiration of Muslims of diverse backgrounds who subscribes to its ethos. Arising from this, it is difficult to connect this success to the Saudi’s expectation since it was the local context that defined it.

Salafism further became relevant in the Muslim religious sphere for its role in humanitarian delivery and the opportunities it offered to Muslim students. In spite of the fact that the activities of the Salafi NGOs might be sectarian, their role in Ghana’s quest for development cannot be understated. The various forms of support kept this movement to be in tune with modernity, while fulfilling its religious obligation along the Salafi ethos. As dissected earlier, Salafi revivalism has also taken a different shape as a potent civil society member in the Ghanaian religious sphere. The activities of the ASWAJ represent a good example through its networking with state organisations and civil society groups on matters relating to Muslims. Salafism has thus been integrated into the national secular sphere through the role of the ASWAJ.
CHAPTER 5
Shi’ism and the search for religious space

The introduction of Shi’ism as a religious movement in Ghana was interconnected with this country’s diplomatic relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran. The common political aspiration shared by both countries as revolutionary regimes in the 1980s provided space for this political cooperation. Prior to the Ghana’s 1981 Revolution of the People’s National Defence Council (PNDC), the Iranian Revolution had already taken shape since 1979. This positive political climate thus provided the atmosphere for Shi’i influence in Ghana.

From the broader perspective, four organisations of the Iranian Government are engaged in various activities with overlapping functions of promoting both its political and religious agenda in Ghana. These include the Iranian Embassy, the Cultural Consulate, the Agriculture and Rural Development and the Iranian Medical Mission. The Ahlul-Bait Foundation also exists as an autonomous institution from the state-funded ones, as mentioned above, though all of them have one common agenda of promoting Shi’ism. While the Iranian state-funded organizations have made little success in promoting Shi’ism, the activities of the Ahlul-Bait Foundation have considerably transformed Shi’i influence in Ghana and beyond. In the first part, I will explore the initial rapprochement made by the state-funded organizations and the challenges encountered. This will be followed up with the successes made by the Ahlul Bait Foundation in Shi’i proselytisation in Ghana.

The role of the Iranian cultural consulate

With the establishment of the Iranian Embassy in Ghana in 1982, bilateral and cultural agreements were ratified between the two countries, aimed at promoting economic, political cooperation and cultural exchange. The consequences of this new relation on Muslim religious experience in Ghana were considerable. Shi’i religious ideas were interconnected with the
cultural exchanges promoted in Ghana. A key Iranian institution, which promoted cultural relations was the Cultural Consulate established there in the early 1980s. This institution serve as a cultural bridge between the two countries by promoting Iranian art, tourism, science, and history, while at the same time learning about the Ghanaian culture to be introduced in Iran. The religious agenda of the Iranian Government became an integral part of the activities of the Consulate. Bearing in mind that the Iranian culture is intertwined with Islam, the Muslim community was thus identified as partners in this cultural collaboration. This provided the incipient extension of the Shi´i religious worldview in the Muslim community in Ghana.

Shi’ism is an Islamic doctrine, which puts emphasis on the reverence of the household of the prophet and further views Ali ibn Abi Talib, the third caliph and the cousin of the Prophet, as the legitimate leader of the Muslim ummah after the death of the latter (Jafri 1989). The exclusivity of the leadership of the Muslim ummah to a particular family is thus emphasized in Shi´i thought. This is traceable from the Prophet to Ali (his son-in-law), from Ali to Hasan, from Hasan to Hussein and ends with with the 12th Imam, Muhammad b. Hasan, the Mahdi. He has disappeared and will reappear later to reform the world from injustice, corruption and oppression (ibid.). Since the year C.E 1500, when the Safavids’ had adopted Shi’ism as the official religion of Iran, it has become a religious instrument for successive regimes (Moadel 2002). This was further boosted by the 1979 Iranian Revolution, which identified Shi´ism as its foreign policy instrument (Eickelman et al. 1996).

However, the Cultural Consulate’s agenda to disseminate Iranian values, including Shi´ism, will to a large extent depend on the approaches it adopts. First, the Consulate identified Western-educated Muslims as its collaborators to extend Shi´i influence in Ghana. Unlike the Salafis, whose religious ideas attracted the interest of the Western-educated Muslims; the Consulate provided employment opportunities for such Muslims. It consciously targeted and recruited these Muslims to serve as the interface with the Muslims in Ghana. Seebaway Zakaria, an educationist, was not only instrumental in the initial establishment of the Iranian Embassy and its activities, but was later appointed at the Cultural Consulate.

Conscious of the Ghanaian political climate, the Consulate integrated its activities within the shared political revolutionary spirit of the two countries. The local journal that it founded was called the Revolution Review. This was partly done to gain acceptability by the larger Ghanaian society. Ghanaian Western-educated Muslims led by Seebaway Zakaria,
Armiyau Shuiab and Abdul Salam Adam, have one common professional background for being educationists. These Muslims became the editors and feature articles writers of this journal at one time or the other. The magazine provided a forum for addressing issues relevant to the Consulate’s agenda, such as the relevance of the Islamic shari’ah, the role of women in Islam, Islam and modern education, bribery and corruption among others. The ideas presented in the journal were designed along the Shi’i form of Islam as these writers were encouraged to depend largely on Shi’i literature for references. Sometimes a culling of writings of renowned Shi’i scholars who have published on the Iranian revolution and its relevance in modern time was made in this journal. These Muslims further extended their writings in national dailies such as the Ghanaian Times and the Weekly Spectator on issues relevant to the Consulate’s agenda. These writers further responded to the polemics of other religious groups against Muslims in both the national dailies and the Revolution Review. The activities of the Consulate were thus viewed as a cultural renaissance in Ghana, though they depended heavily on the skills of the Western-educated Muslim elites.

Also, the Cultural Consulate organised public lectures through which the intellectual resources of these Western-educated Muslims were exploited. Events were organised on the relevance of the Iranian Revolution for Muslim emancipation and its role to counter the Western cultural intrusion on Muslim lands, among others. Because some of the activities cut across broader lines of global events affecting Muslims, such as the Palestinian political crisis, they attracted both the religious and political solidarity among many people. The Quds Day is a religious event organised by the Consulate on the Israeli occupation of the third Holy Muslim shrine (the Jerusalem mosque) located in Palestine and commemorated in Ghana. This event attracted not only Muslims but important politicians and journalists who share similar aspirations with Palestinians. This platform thus bolstered the image of the Consulate among the larger Ghanaians for fighting injustice in the world.

In addition to using media and the workshop fora, these Muslims were expected to extend the Iranian influence in the larger Muslim communities. The various strata of the Muslim communities especially the ulama, the student organisations and youth clubs, were targeted, though the success of the Consulate was a mixed one.

Due to aspects of shared religious values, the Consulate’s activities attracted interest from Tijaniyya ulama. It did not, however, commensurate with the Consulate’s agenda to extend its influence among them. A
mammoth Maulud anniversary was organised in Accra and subsequently in Kumasi for the most important Tijaniyya *ulama*. This strategy seems to have worked for the Consulate as it won the friendship of many Tijaniyya *ulama* in Ghana and thus opened a space for collaboration. Annual celebrations of Iranian religious activities such as the Quds day, the birthday of Fatima, Hasan and Husein among others, witnessed a huge patronage of these *ulama*. This was the outcome of the rapport and partly as a result of a shared religious sentiment. The Tijaniyya movement had a high regard for the household of the prophet’s family, and thus any religious event organised in that regard was welcome. Equally important was the fact that important religious events organised by the Tijaniyya *ulama* witnessed a high representation of the Iranian mission, both from the embassy and from the Cultural Consulate. The Consulate at this time further sponsored some religious activities of these *ulama*, especially the celebration of the Maulud anniversary (Kramer 1997).

With the establishment of the offices of the Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) in 1990 of the Iranian Ministry of Agriculture as a benevolent organisation in Ghana, it partially boosted the religious economy of some Tijaniyya *ulama*. While the scope of the ARD was quite broad and focused on assisting underprivileged communities in Ghana with basic amenities, Tijaniyya *ulama* benefitted significantly from the educational infrastructure of this organisation. Prior to its operation in Ghana, most Islamic organisations with transnational connections in Ghana were the Salafi-orientated ones, which viewed the Tijaniyya movement as a key competitor in the religious sphere. Despite that fact that these transnational NGOs would not support Sufi religious activities, the core objective of the Salafi organisations was to harness their transnational networking with the Arab world for their sectarian influences in Ghana. Thus the extent of marginalisation of the Tijaniyya on the benefits of transnational networking was ubiquitous prior to the activities of the Iranian NGOs.

Through these various levels of engagements, the Cultural Consulate won the support of some leading Tijaniyya *ulama* such as Jamal Baba al-Azhari, Mallam Iddris (Mallam Thousand), Sani Murtala Suley, and Mustaphha Yaa Jalal. These *ulama* were further sponsored by the Consulate to visit the Islamic Republic of Iran for the first time during the celebration of important national events. In addition, the Consulate constituted most of these *ulama* into a body and supported them to organise refresher courses for their colleagues on religious activities. This boosted the rapport that the
Consulate built with the Tijaniyya *ulama* and motivated them to defend its activities in the public against the Salafi diatribes. In addition the activities of the Consulate also attracted the interest of some Salafi *ulama* like Basha Iddris Ibrahim in Tamale, Northern region. Basha Iddris is the regional Imam of the Ahlus-Sunnah Wal-Jama`ah (ASWAJ) and was earlier on a leading figure of the Anbariyya Islamic Society, the foremost Salafi movement in northern Ghana founded by Yusuf Ajura (d. 2007). He parted company with the Anbariyya in view of internal differences.

As a result of the Cultural Consulate’s rapport with Basha, it depended on his influence to extend its activities in the Northern region. For a while, Basha became the interface between the Consulate in Accra and the *ulama* in this region. His engagement with the Iranians has, however, attracted conflicting representations in Ghana. For some Muslims (both Salafis and non-Salafis), Basha was a Shi´i at a time but withdrew as a result of external Salafi pressure. However, in his testimony to this researcher, he declared that he was more influenced by the political aspect of the Iranian revolution i.e political Islam, than by the religious aspects. To him, the Iranian state was the only true Islamic country in the Muslim world for identifying itself as an Islamic Republic. However, it was believed that the visit of the Grand Imam at Makkah (Muslims Holy shrine there) to Ghana in 1988 was partly connected to the Saudi’s apprehension that one of their leading scholars, presumably Sheikh Basha, was engaging with the Iranians. This visit was followed up by another one in 1989 to Wa in the Upper West region, to bolster the support for the orthodox Muslims’ crusade against the Ahmadis. Apart from Sheikh Basha, it is difficult to identify any prominent Tijaniyya who came under the influence of Shi´ism. Some Tijaniyya *ulama* participated in Shi´i activities and significantly benefitted from them but avoided embracing Shi´ism.

In spite of this, the Consulate’s relations with these *ulama* provided the space to attract the interest of some of their students into Shi´ism through scholarship opportunities to undertake studies in Iran. The Tijaniyya *ulama* had earlier on rejected Salafism and the offer for its higher education in Saudi Arabia. However, the Iranian rapprochement must be viewed as a lesser evil than the Salafi, because of the total Salafi rejection of Sufism. These students became the first pioneer Shi´i scholars in the various Muslim communities. They further played an instrumental role by filling in the vacuum in the Shi´i theological seminaries as teachers.

The activities of the Cultural Consulate further targeted Muslim Students organisations, especially the Ghana Muslim Students Association (GMSA).
Armiyau Shuiab, a leading theologian and an educationist succinctly, recollected his first engagement with the Iranians. This was when he was the leader of the national GMSA in the late 1980s. According to him, it was partly because the larger Sunni organisations were apathetic to supporting students’ activities. The Consulate thus became relevant in the Muslim religious sphere partly because of the vacuum for support of students’ activities. Unlike the Salafi NGOs, which organised platforms and programs for students, the Iranians rather offered full sponsorship for the students’ programs. The Consulate further offered scholarships to needy students in both tertiary and pre-tertiary institutions. This thus brought the students organisations closer to the Iranians. Depending on this cordial relationship, the Consulate also organised seminars and workshops for students in tertiary institutions. While the idea was to revive the Islamic spirit, it was occasioned with important religious events in Iran. These students were for the first time through these seminars and workshops exposed to religious ideas, cultural and political events, which took place in Iran.

In most instances, the portrait of Imam Khomeini was displayed at such fora by the Consulate to indicate a full support for the Iranian revolution in Ghana. In addition, the Consulate sponsors the celebration of the Prophet’s birthday, the birthday of Fatima and the Badr Day and thus inspires a sense of history, which keeps the Islamic spirit high among these students and the participants at these fora. The Consulate further organises Farsi (Persian) language classes for students in tertiary institutions. In pursuit of its policy to assist the state to expand educational opportunities, the Consulate has established several libraries called Imam Khomeini Libraries in the major cities such as Accra, Kumasi and Tamale. These libraries are stocked with resources in both Arabic and English which largely contain literature on Shi´i values. Students who turned these libraries into their studies centres were exposed to Shi´i literature and ideas.

The Iranians further exploited the crisis created by the Rushdie Affairs to bolster their image among Ghanaian Muslims as defenders of orthodoxy. This was against the backdrop of the fact that Ayatollah Khomeini had made a global spotlight with his famous fatwa (religious edict) calling for the killing of Salman Rushdie. The Consulate had succeeded to galvanise the support of many Sunni Muslims by weeping up the religious sentiment,

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1 Badr Day: is in reference to the war fought by the Holy Prophet of Islam, Muhammad against the Makkans at a place called Badr. The nascent Muslim community led by the Prophet was victor at this war. This was in spite of the less numerical strength of the Muslims against the Makkans.
that Rushdie had denigrated the Holy Prophet and Islam. It sponsored Muslim leaders to organise demonstrations, which attracted overwhelming crowds on principal streets in the major cities in Ghana. The intended counter forum by the Ahmadis in the following days at the University of Ghana, Legon, however, experienced a setback in view of the close relations between the Iranians and the student leadership. The argument of the student leadership led by Armíyau was that such a counter forum could lead to bloodshed among the Muslim students with its consequences of spillover in the Muslim communities, which must be nibbed in the bud. The interest of both Ghana’s Foreign Ministry and the National Security in this view was partly to safeguard the country’s cordial relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, both noted for their revolutionary zeal at the time. In the end, a firm instruction was issued from the National Security to cancel the program. This favourable political climate, coupled with the Consulate’s relationship with Muslim students provided the catalyst for its influence on Muslim religious sphere in Ghana.

Depending on some Western-educated Muslims and students for its activities, the Consulate gradually succeeded in extending its activities to other Muslims in Ghana too. However, the extent to which it has succeeded to influence these people with its religious agenda (Shi‘ism) is somehow difficult to discern. It is difficult to suggest that any of the Western-educated who were associated with the Consulate fully embraced Shi‘ism. Like some traditional ulama, these Muslims in general promoted the Consulate’s activities but avoided embracing Shi‘ism. Several factors underscore this scenario. A key factor was that most of the Western-educated were graduates from the religious studies in public universities who have been exposed to rigorous intellectual training on issues of inter-religious relations. The intellectual outlooks of these Muslims have been shaped by a liberal background of appreciating religious diversity, while steeped in their traditional religious or sometimes eclectic approach to Islamic practices. These Muslims might reconcile their religious ideas with some aspects of Shi‘i practices and maintained a positive relationship with leading Shi‘i figures, but that does not imply adopting Shi‘ism as a religion. Secondly, the average Sunni Muslim in Ghana resent the Shi‘i denigration of the companions of the Prophet to the extent of rejecting the first three orthodox caliphs: such as Abubakar, Umar and Uthman. It is this and other factors that have robbed Shi‘ism of followers among the Western-educated Muslims and Muslim students.
Education as the cornerstone in Shiʿi revivalism

While this initial rapprochement towards some Western-educated, the traditional Tijani ulama and students, which did not result in conversion to Shiʿism, the new approach to Shiʿi revivalism was through education and this reversed the trend. Shiʿi revivalism through education in recent times has witnessed significant interest in the Muslim community. This revival combines both traditional and secular education in Shiʿi proselytisation. This brings to focus the activities of three educational centres, namely the Ahlul-Bait Theological Institute, the Islamic University College and the numerous vocational training centres established by the Consulate. Students are attracted into the opportunities of these institutions and are thus exposed to Shiʿi influences and ideas. As will be observed, the growth of Shiʿism through education in Ghana is further exploited to extend its influences to other African countries. Shiʿi students from other West African countries are recruited to undertake education in Ghana, while graduates from the Theological Institute are recruited as missionaries to other African countries. This has been possible in view of the stable religious as well as political climate in Ghana. In spite of this, Shiʿi influence in comparison to both the Tijaniyya and the Salafi movements is insignificant.

The targets for these educational centres have been the youth from deprived communities who otherwise lack opportunities for education. Some of the students might have not been exposed to any form of Islamic education before. The Ahlul-Bait Institute was first founded in Accra by Sheikh Irwani in 1986 but was taken over by Alama Said Tabatabaii in the same year. It is a branch of the International Ahlul-Bait Foundation, a non-profit organization in Iran. The overall objective of this foundation is to spread Shiʿi Imamiyya (twelver Shiʿism) in the world. Though the initial rapprochement made by Tabatabaii towards students in the tertiary institutions did not result in conversion into Shiʿism, his madrasah activities through the Ahlul-Bait Institute attracted many underprivileged Muslims. The Institute grants full scholarships to these students, including free accommodation, feeding and monthly stipends. Graduates from this Institute have chances of gaining a scholarship either to study in Iran or the Islamic University College in Accra.

Much of the successes of Tabatabaii, with his madrasah agenda was connected to his sense of tolerance, respect for and the cordiality he built with Tijaniyya ulama. Tabatabaii had earlier embarked on visitations to most Muslim leaders in parts of Ghana, except Salafis. This has yielded a
positive outcome with invitations extended to him by the Sufi leadership to their activities. What further consolidated his *madrasah* was that some of the Tijaniyya *ulama*, with deep training in Islamic scholarship, like the late Jamal Baba and Inuwah Jum'ah, were recruited as tutors. With shared values, any sense of suspicion between the two religious blocs was eroded, and thus a space was opened for the students of the Tijaniyya to participate in his higher *madrasah* activities. Many of the students who had graduated from that school and had benefitted from scholarship opportunities to study in Iran became the nucleus of the staff. Shi‘i influence at this time took a different dimension. Shi‘ism thus took both its distinct shape of a full-breed scholarly community and the indigenous character, devoid of dependence on Sufi sympathisers. Not only did these graduates become tutors in the *madrasah* but also indigenous propagators of Shi‘ism in the Ghanaian Muslim community.

However, the biography of some of these pioneer Shi‘i graduates from Iran suggest that Shi‘ism was already to make its influence on Ghanaian Muslims as a result of students’ quest for higher Islamic studies irrespective of its sectarian background. The aftermath of the Iranian revolution has, however, set the pace for the popularization of Shi‘ism in most parts of the Muslim world. This was embedded in the conviction of its architect, Ayatollah Khomeini (d. 1989), who argued that the revolution was not exclusively an Iranian affair, but rather an Islamic revolution which must be exported to all parts of the Islamic worlds (Eickelman et al. 1996). The Shi‘i Islamic worldview is an integral part of the revolution. Abdul Salam Abdul Hamid Bansi (1956–2012) was the first Ghanaian Shi‘i scholar to have graduated from the Iranian seminary in Qum. He was the first imam of the Shi‘i community in Ghana.

When his biography is reviewed it becomes clear that his Shi‘i influence was neither through the Tabatabaii’s *madrasah* nor through the activities of the Cultural Consulate. It was rather his quest for Islamic education, which he had nurtured during his childhood. This took him to parts of Ghana and some Islamic countries. Born at Tula in Burkina Faso, Abdul Salam Bansi received his primary education from his mother and later under his father, who was a religious leader. Bansi further traveled to Bawku in 1971 in the Upper East region in Ghana to study under Muhammad Amin, a physically challenged religious scholar. His quest for knowledge further took him to Accra in 1974 where he studied at the Ansarul Deen Islamic School in Accra New Town.
Having successfully completed his primary education, Bansi secured admission at the Institute of Islamic Studies in 1977, the foremost Salafi institute in Nima, founded by Umar Ibrahim. Bansi completed his higher studies in 1983. However, his desire to secure a scholarship to pursue further studies in the Islamic world was unsuccessful. He worked under Umar Ibrahim as a typewriter for a while and later decided to embark on a trip in search of knowledge. This quest for knowledge took him through Togo to Benin, then to Nigeria and later to Niger. He taught for a while at Agades in Niger before making his way to Algeria and then to Libya. His hope to secure admission in both Libya and at al-Azhar in Egypt was unsuccessful, which compelled him to continue to Syria. The interest he developed in open Shi´i propagation in Syria motivated a Saudi philanthropist to assist him to study in Iran. This became the watershed from his initial Salafi background to Shi´i influence.

His return to Ghana in 1988 after his graduation set the stage for deeper religious politics with other groups in the community. As the first Ghanaian Shi´i scholar, Bansi was viewed as a stranger – in view of his religious ideas – by both Sufis and the Salafis who had dominated the religious sphere in Accra. His situation was further complicated because the sectarian label imposed on him by his opponents caused his relatives to reject him. However, the organization he founded in 1988 the Imam Hussein Foundation, created the social space to interact with students interested in his activities. He disseminated copies of literature on Shi´ism to these students, who later developed interest in acquiring education under his guidance. However, the activities of this organization experienced a setback when the landlord ejected him, as a result of the pressure put on him by the Salafis for harbouring an ‘infidel’. The organization relocated to a property in Nima owned by Kamaldeen Ahmed, the present Deputy National Chief Imam of Ghana, and a Tijaniyya muqadam.2

Like Bansi, the quest for higher religious knowledge predisposed Abubakar Kamaldeen Ahmed (b. 1961) to Shi´ism. Abubakar succeeded Bansi as the imam of the Shi´i community in Ghana in 2012. Having studied under his father, Abubakar had further experience in education from both al -Azhar and the American University in Cairo in 1983. He later studied at Hawza (a seminary) in Iran in 1985 and graduated in 1987. However, Abubakar comes from the background of a scholarly family, which is divided between the two leading religious groups, the Tijaniyya
and the Salafi. His father is the Deputy National Chief Imam of Ghana as well as a muqadam of the Tijaniyya, while his uncle Shuiab Abubakar was a leading figure of Salafism and was once the President of the SCICR. In view of this complex background of his family, it necessitated Abubakar to adopt a subtle approach to propagation of Shi´ism in order to avoid any backlash from both sides of the religious divides in the family. Though educated in Iran, he did not identify himself with Shi´ism but was seen as the vanguard of the Tijaniyya. For the start, Abubakar reviewed a book written by a leading Salafi theologian in Kumasi, Abdul Samad Habibullah against the Tijaniyya movement. In his review, he highlighted the author’s shortcomings in many ways, a copy of which was subsequently circulated to leading Tijaniyya ulama (Abubakar interview, 2011). The teachings of Ibrahim Nyass on tarbiya, which became controversial in parts of the West Africa and Ghana in particular, were equally defended in his writing. This thus bolstered his image among the leading Tijaniyya ulama in Ghana. Having gained this acceptability, Abubakar gradually defended aspects of Shi´i beliefs before his relatives and subsequently extended this in the public sphere.

However, the role of these two scholars and others was felt not in open propagation but rather in education, especially through the Ahlul-Bait Theological Institute. Their efforts were complimented with the founding of the Islamic University College by the Ahlul-Bait Foundation in Iran. This university was established in the year 2001 and defines its mission to train the youth for employable skills and nurturing an appreciation of religious diversity and understanding in Ghana. By defining its objectives within the Ghanaian secular political sphere, this university offers opportunities for the numerous students, while Shi´ism thrives in its agenda and academic programs.

The Islamic University College has been granted with accreditation by the National Accreditation Board of the Ministry of Education and has been affiliated to both the Department for the Study of Religions and the Business School of the University of Ghana. The Islamic University College offers programs from Religious Studies, Business Administration, and Computer Science. Outstanding students from the Theological Institute were attracted by scholarship opportunities to study at the University College. This university has become an icon of the Shi´ah Imamiyya in Sub-Saharan Africa. Shi´i students from the neighbouring English-speaking countries in West Africa, such as Sierra Leone and the Gambia, are offered scholarships to study there. In addition, Shi´i youth sympathisers in South Africa were encouraged to accept scholarship opportunities at the Islamic
University College, though with little success (Matteen interview, 2009). However, in keeping with its ideological agenda, most of the scholarship awardees, including the foreign students, were restricted for Religious Studies. The overall agenda of awarding the scholarships to foreign students to undertake Religious Studies is to export Shi´ism to their respective countries. Shi´ism as a religious doctrine is part of the core courses offered for all students irrespective of their academic disciplines. Students in the university have been targeted with major Shi´i religious activities as participants. In collaborating with the Cultural Consulate, the university authorities provide a space for Shi´i activism and encourage the students to attend any important religious events in the campus. The University’s campus is seen as a conducive space to propagate Shi´ism among the students irrespective of their academic disciplines.

Because of the favourable religious climate on the campus, students with Shi´i affiliation have formed an association, the Ahlul-Bait Students Society, with the main agenda of spreading Shi´ism among their peers. The leaders of the Student Society are graduates from the Theological Institute who have been given scholarships to pursue studies at the University College.

Similarly, Shi´ism has been promoted through other organisations founded by the graduates from Iran, graduates from the Ahlul-Bait Institute and the Islamic University College. The League of Ahlul-Bait (Rabitatul Ahlul-Bait) was formerly led by Abdul Salam Bansi. It was to serve as the umbrella organization for all Shi´ites in Ghana. However, this organisation did not live up to its vision in view of internal power struggle. This led to the founding of the Ghana Muslim Shi´ah Society in 2003, led by Abubakar Kamaldeen Ahmed. The overall agenda of this organisation is to project Shi´ism by using the English language in the local media. The founding of this organisation suggests that some members were marginalised in the existing leadership structures of the Shi´ites fraternity (as explained above). The leadership of this new organisation view themselves as progressive Shi´ites, who engage with other Ghanaians in the media and in the broader language in contrast to the traditional mode of engagement of other Shi´i organisations. The entire role of this organisation in the propagation of Shi´ism is very minimal.

The World Ahlul-Bait Assembly (Majma Ahlul-Bait) is the umbrella organisation for the Shi´i ulama, the students and the ordinary Shi´i members in Ghana. This was borne out of the inactive nature of the previous organisations coupled with the internal differences, which had characterised the relations among members. The initiative of this organi-
organisation came from Dr. Muhammad Khatami, an Iranian and the Consular of the Cultural Consulate who intended to provide a broader platform for all Shi´ites in Ghana. Its leadership was later taken over by another Iranian expatriate, Dr. Hakim Illahi Abdul Majid, who was the Rector of the Islamic University College. The organisation facilitates the transnational networking between the Ghanaian Shi´i ulama and other Shi´i centres in the world through which their religious activities and monthly stipends are supported. However, a majority of its members are graduates from the Theological Institute who are in their youthful ages. This has thus affected their ability to engage in open air propagation in the community. The operations of this organisation have been limited mostly to the welfare of its members who further engage in activities limited mostly within the Shi´i community. The organisation is presently being led by Muhammad Jajah, a Ghanaian graduate from an Iranian seminary. Since the formalisation of these Shi´i-led organisations, little attention is paid to the involvement of the Tijaniyya leadership in Shi´i activities, if not for ceremonial purposes.

In spite of the fact that the graduates from the Shi´ite educational institutions play insignificant roles in open public propagation in Ghana, some of them have been recruited and posted as missionaries to other African countries. The International Ahlul-Bait Foundation based in Iran has employed some of these graduates from Ghana to propagate in South African townships especially among the blacks, in Johannesburg and Soweto. I have interacted with five of these Ghanaian Shi´ite missionaries, in addition to a Kenyan scholar in South Africa, in the years 2008 and 2009.

Shi´ism also thrives in modern Ghana through the vocational training centres constructed by the Agriculture and Rural Development (ARD) NGO. These vocational centres are of different types and included apprenticeship in dressmaking and electronic engineering. The centres have provided potential avenues for employable skills for many underprivileged people who otherwise would not have access to formal education. So far, 67 of these centres have been constructed nationwide with about 37,700 people benefitting from various kinds of training. Some of these centres, like Fatima Zahra Dressmaking Centre located at the Accra Girls’ Secondary area, are given basic Islamic education with a Shi´i proclivity. Quite often invitations are extended to these trainees to participate in programs organized by any of the Iranian institutions, such as the Embassy and the Cultural Consulate.
Conclusions

As this discussion shows, Shi´ism has been engaged in search for a space in Muslim religious sphere over decades now. The initial rapprochement which targeted the Tijaniyya ulama, the Western-educated and the students in the tertiary institutions did not yield any strong positive outcome. This was in spite of the role played by the institutions affiliated to the Iranian Government to advance its foreign policy interests in Ghana. These Muslims of diverse backgrounds did not see any motivation to embrace Shi´ism. Nevertheless, Shi´i revivalism has taken a shape through a blend of traditional and secular education by targeting the underpreviledged in the society who otherwise lack this opportunity. Shi´i revivalism has thus been repackaged to reflect the opportunities in the local Ghanaian context.

By integrating traditional and secular education in its proselytising agenda, Shi´ism attracts people into its activities for the opportunities it offers them. The potential of Shi´i growth in the current secular Ghanaian political sphere could thus not be underated. The opportunities given to the graduates from the Theological Institute to undertake education at the Islamic University College will enable them to fit into the secular Ghanaian economy. The prospects of the graduates to gain employment in the public sector, while steep in their Shi´ites religious worldview are high. This will thus extend Shi´i influence into the national political bureaucracy in Ghana. However, the extent to which these graduates will balance their Shi´i identity vis a vis the available incentive in the secular sphere will determine its growth in Ghana. This is when there is no more external impulse to identify with its.
Islamic revivalism in modern Ghana was not only contested on religious lines, it was also reinvigorated on political perspectives. The activities of the Third Universal Theory (TUT) are an important example of this form of revivalism. The TUT was a socio-political theory propounded by Col. Muammar al-Qadhafi (d. 2012). He staged a coup on 1st September 1969 and toppled the Libyan monarch, King Idris, a descendant of the Sanusiyya Sufi order. The impetus for this revolution and its interconnectedness with a regenerated form of Islamic revival has been emphasized (Joffé 1988).

The revolution which brought al-Qadhafi to power is called al-Fateh revolution, which means opener, for it signifies the opening and ushering in of a new era in Libyan and Muslim history. This revolution was thus viewed as conquering of backwardness, ignorance, national impotence and poverty (Ayoub 1987). The teachings of the TUT are disseminated in the Green Book. The proponent of the revolution associated the colour green of the book to the Prophet of Islam and by which it was intended to be both an Islamic alternative and an option for Third World aspirations (Esposito 1995).

The author of the Green Book underscores its relevance in modern time because of the perceived failure of the prevailing political theories. The Little Red Book of the Chinese, Mao Tse-Tung’s ideological guide for a Third World revolution, and the Old and New Testaments of the Bible for Jews and Christians could not resolve the myriad of problems affecting humanity (ibid.). The Green Book was seen further as an attempt to replace the Marxist as well as the capitalist political economy in the world. In the first part of this chapter, I explore the ideas embodied in the Green Book. This is followed by analysing Libyan humanitarian services to Ghanaian Muslims and finally the impact of the TUT on Ghanaian political structures.
The ideas embodied in the Green Book

As the ideas embodied in the Green Book were driven by al-Qadhafi’s vision, he relentlessly appropriated both the religious and political space to propagate its values in Libya. In effect, he initiated major reforms in the society, which affected the religious institutions and rendered some aspects of Islamic tradition irrelevant. These reforms nationalised the religious endowment (waqf), while the relevance of the ulama in modern time was questioned (Joffé 1988). The corpuses of the Islamic tradition such as the Sunnah and ahadith (deeds and prophetic sayings), qiyas (legal analogy) and ijma (consensus-building) were viewed by al-Qadhafi as manmade laws and thus constituted shirk and ought to be rejected (ibid.). This thus emboldened al-Qadhafi to view himself as an Islamic revivalist and an ideologue. He offered the TUT as an alternative religio-political worldview in contrast to the existing Islamic traditions in Libya and elsewhere.

The book is divided into three parts, covering political, economic and public aspects respectively. The author addresses issues relevant to human endeavour in each section. For the start, the book identifies the modern means of governance as the major problem affecting humankind. It does not see the solution of this political crisis in capitalism and communism and thus rejects traditional forms of modern governance such as democracy, parliaments, and political parties.

The author thus offered an alternative political worldview, which is premised on the popular participation of the citizenry in politics. In the view of the author, there should be no representation in lieu of the people and that representation is a falsification of democracy. Also he argued that the party system aborts democracy (al-Qadhafi 1980). In the view of al-Qadhafi, the party system creates divisions in the society as well as opportunities for party cronies at the expense of ordinary members of the society.

On the economic and production systems, the Green Book regards both the Marxist and the capitalist models as exploitative. The TUT therefore proposes a new form of socialism, called natural socialism in which the resources of the nation are shared equitably, in order to ensure justice in society. This, it believes, will free humanity from all forms of bondage and servitude. The social basis of the TUT was viewed as intertwined with the national factor. In the view of the author, the social bond, which binds together each human group, from the family to the nation constitutes ‘the dynamic force of human history. A key highlight of the book’s view on religion is its neutrality in endorsing any of the major religious traditions,
though it was driven by the author’s Islamic conviction. In this book, while religion was viewed as conforming to natural law with each nation entitled to its religious foundation, its potential to influencing the unity of the nation or otherwise was underscored. The teachings of the Green Book were equally exported to different parts of the world, including Ghana.

In Ghana, the ideas of the Green Book were largely intertwined with the cultural exchanges package through Ghana’s diplomatic relations with Libya. Though Ghana’s relations with Libya predate the 1969 September revolution, the post-September revolutionary period signifies an important landmark in the relations between the two countries. When a review is made, it shows that economic and ideological factors underscore the basis of the relations between the two countries. Ghana’s quest for oil necessitated her rapprochement towards Libya, while the latter depended on this relation to extend her ideological influence in Ghana. In the early post-independence period, Pan-Africanism dictated the relations between the two countries. This was, however, replaced with the revolutionary wave, which later shaped the relations in the 1980s. This revolutionary background of the two countries has attracted different scholarly interpretations. For Nyang (1988), Jerry John Rawlings viewed al-Qadhafi as a revolutionary comrade because of his anti-imperialism. To Hunwick (1996), however, the symbiotic chemistry running between the two leaders was the interest in the ideas of the TUT. In the next section, I will analyse the activities related to the TUT and its impact on the Ghanaian political scene. This will, however, be preceded by studying the role of Libyan institutions in humanitarian services in Ghana.

Libyan humanitarian service

Ghana’s bilateral relations with Libya provided the catalyst for the establishment of Libyan religio-political institutions in Ghana. The Islamic Call Society and the Libya Arab Cultural Centre established their offices in Ghana. These two institutions functioned from different dimensions, though their activities were mutually reinforcing with the overall agenda of promoting Libyan foreign policy. The Islamic Call Society served as the religious instrument of the Libyan foreign policy. In this sense it provided humanitarian and relief aid to other countries in times of needs and helped in the management of Islamic centres built by the Government of Libya.
(Joffé 1988), while the Libya Cultural Centre delivered the political agenda of the Libyan Government.

As a humanitarian organisation, the Islamic Call Society extended its activities to Ghanaians in the early 1980s. It provided numerous kinds of assistance in the form of educational infrastructure and built vocational training centres as well as numerous Islamic centres for Muslims. Its activities were non-sectarian, though the majority of the beneficiaries of these facilities were both the Tijaniyya and the secular Muslim leadership. It has succeeded to forge a strong rapport with many Muslims in Ghana through the humanitarian delivery.

In the field of education, the Islamic Call Society has built a senior secondary school for the Muslim community at Asem in Kumasi, a primary school at Takoradi in the Eastern region and the Islamic School in Wa in the Upper West region. Similarly, the Wale Wale Muslim community in the Northern region benefitted from a primary school project, while the Darul-Hijra Islamic School at Mamobi in Accra was assisted with furniture. The Suhum Muslim community in the Eastern region benefitted from a Girls’ Senior Secondary School project through the Islamic Call Society. This was when al-Qadhafi was on his way to the OAU’s conference in Lome, Togo, in the year 2000. He heeded to the request of the Muslim community for a school project. The Islamic Call Society further extended financial aid to other Islamic schools such as the Ansar al-Islam Institute, the Sheikh Mukhtar Nouri School, the National School, the Idrissi School and the al-Huda School, among others.

Equally important was the fact that the Libyan Government donated a double-decker Nissan pick-up truck to the headquarters of the Islamic Education Unit at Tamale in the Northern region. The Education Unit was subsequently assisted with resources in its management by the Libyan Government. The study reveals that huge sums of monies were spent on Muslim students both in Ghana and abroad who were undertaking various form of education. An element in the Libyan support for Muslims in Ghana was the award of scholarships to study in universities in Libya. The scholarships were tenable in a faculty of the Islamic Call Society, based in both Benghazi and Tripoli. The overall objective of the scholarship awards was to recruit these graduates to work in Libyan religious institutions in their respective countries (Joffé 1988). A significant number of Ghanaian Muslims who have graduated from these universities are now working in Libyan missions in Ghana and in the secular education sector.
An important aspect of Libyan Government support to Ghana was the construction of vocational centres such as the ultramodern Islamic centre located at East Legon in Accra. This was built to create employable skills and opportunities for people who wished to take up fashion design as a profession. The vocational centre has a clinic attached to it. Similar support was offered by the Islamic Call Society on behalf of the Libyan Government in health delivery to other institutions such as the Hidaya Islamic Call Clinic project at Wa.

In all, two Muslim institutions which have benefitted tremendously from the Libyan Government were the Hidaya Islamic Call Clinic and the Federation of Muslim Councils. The Hidaya or the Islamic Guidance Society was originally founded to eradicate the activities of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Movement in Wa in the Upper West region. This society at a time became much connected to Libya and consistently benefitted from a booming funding of its activities in education, agriculture and health infrastructure.

The Federation of Muslim Councils (FMC) was the brainchild of the previous Libyan leader, Muammar al-Qadhafi. This was an attempt he made to bring about unity among Muslim groups in Ghana. During his three days visit to Ghana for the celebration of the Third Anniversary of the 31st December revolution in 1982, al-Qadhafi observed the fragmented nature of the Muslim leadership. He appealed for Muslim unity in Ghana in order to move the ideal of the 31st revolution forward (Mumuni 1994). Al-Qadhafi subsequently pledged to bring to realization this vision with his resources, which culminated in signing an accord among the various Ghanaian Muslim factions in Tripoli, Libya in 1987. The Libyan Government consequently followed with the funding of the activities of this organization, including the component organizations under it. However, when the FMC became defunct, the Libyan Government provided support for the activities of the Coalition of Muslim Organisations in Ghana (COMOG), founded in the 2001. His support for Muslim leadership was intended to draw them closer to his foreign policy agenda, to be analysed below.

The *Green Book* and the Ghanaian community

While the activities of the Islamic Call Society were humanitarian and meant to foster rapport with the Muslim communities, the Cultural Centre directed its activities to the broader secular Ghanaian political sphere. It
activities thus made an impact on Ghanaians with Libyan political thoughts. Apart from the free computer training it offered for Ghanaians, the library it operated was invariably stocked with literature on the teachings of the *Green Book*. At the same time, most of its seminars and workshops were targeted at Ghanaians in general.

An important issue focused on by the Cultural Centre was the organisation of seminars and workshops to disseminate the ideas of the *Green Book* in Ghana. It however, approached this role as an intermediary by coordinating with some Ghanaians to form another platform called the Ghana Centre for Study of the Green Book. It was through this platform that the Libyan political ideas were disseminated. The activities of this centre have attracted mixed scholarly interpretations. Hunwick and Nyang have highlighted its role in another strand of Islamic revivalism. Nyang (1988) in particular, argues that the Ghana Centre for the Study of the *Green Book* and that of Burkina Faso are noted to be the most active ones in Sub-Saharan Africa due to the appeal of their activities to people across various strata. On the other hand, others have concluded that the activities of the *Green Book* in Sub-Saharan Africa were a virtual failure. In his article the “Libyan Debacle in Sub-Saharan Africa”, Saint John (1988) links this failure to the lack of credibility of al-Qadhafi’s political and ideological agenda in sub-Saharan Africa. This to John thus rendered Libya’s foreign policy irrelevant. Similarly, it has been argued that al-Qadhafi did not persuaded other progressive regimes to adopt the principles of the TUT in the *Green Book* (Joffé 1988). In this section, I will demonstrate how these views were based on generalizations of these authors and lack a thorough examination on country-specific profiles on the activities of the *Green Book* in Africa. Using Ghana as a case, the ideas embodied in the *Green Book* were viewed as being relevant in the Ghanaian political sphere and thus necessitated the adoption of some of its aspects in Ghana’s political structures. This success of Libyan foreign policy in Ghana was, however, intersected by Ghana’s quest for a viable development model. The search for a development paradigm was preceded by the initial hostility between the two countries as the following narrative illustrates.

As a starting point, Libya foreign policy in 1980–1981 towards Ghana generated a national debate. It first started when Ghana had accused Libya of meddling in its internal affairs in 1981. As a result of this, the Government ordered the Libyan regime to close its Libya diplomatic mission in Ghana. The Government subsequently refused to participate in the African Cup of Nation tournament scheduled in Libya in 1982. This
policy of Ghana’s Government, however, provided the catalyst for Libya to test its lobbying powers in order to reverse this policy. It first put pressure on its graduate students in Ghana to lobby the opposition parties in the Ghana’s parliament to reverse this decision. Abdulai Alhassan, a member of parliament for the leading opposition party, the Popular Front Party (PFP), who represented the Gushegu constituency (1979–1981) in the Northern region accepted this challenge from the Libyan graduates. In the broader sense, Libyan humanitarian services to African Muslim communities were the most convenient argument employed by these graduates to appeal for a reversion of this policy. In the view of these graduates, Ghanaian Muslims stood to loose more from Libya-assisted development projects should the government refuse to honour the tournament.

Apart from his political agenda, Alhassan was moved by the religious solidarity factor in this case. In his view, Libya as a Muslim country must be supported by other Muslims in this kind of situation. Consequently, he organised a press conference at the Parliament House, to make a case for the Government to send the national team to Libya. He further emphasized the need for Ghana’s Government to dissociate the political differences from the participation in the tournament. Immediately after the press conference, there were discussions on both the Ghana Broadcasting Corporation’s television and radio stations. Since the views expressed in the press conference did not agree with the Government’s position, these discussions were not broadcasted. In spite of this, the press conference generated a national debate in the public, which in the end pressurized the Government to send the national football team, the Black Stars, to participate in the tournament. It was the latest tournament that the nation won.

However, the regime led by Dr. Hilla Limann of the People’s National Party (PNP) between 1979–1981, was short-lived. It was overthrown by Flt Lieutenant Jerry John Rawlings in 1981, otherwise referred to as the 31st December revolution of the People’s National Defence Council (PNDC). This opened the prospect for new relations between the two countries. The economic crisis that the junta inherited compelled the leadership to engage in search for viable models of development from other Third World countries. Beside the revolutionary background of the two regimes, Jerry John Rawlings further viewed al-Qadhai’s socialism as a model for emulation. Rawlings thus tolerated the activities related to the Green Book in Ghana. The 1981 political climate thus fostered a positive environment for Libya’s agenda. Alhassan’s success in the first test made him become the icon for Libya’s political agenda in Ghana. In spite of the fact that he sought
a self-imposed exile in the Republic of Togo, he was looked for by the Libyan authorities when they were allowed to re-open their embassy in Ghana.

Alhassan was assigned with a far greater responsibility by the Libyans to establish the Ghana Centre for the Study of the Green Book. He was further assisted by Dr. Abdullah Botchwey and Mr. Ibrahim Adai, among others. While the founders of this centre were invariably Muslims, the target and the participants for their activities was the larger Ghanaian public. Significantly, Abdullah Botchwey was the Deputy National Coordinator of the Libyan-founded Muslim leadership platform in Ghana, the FMC. The FMC provided the platform of mobilization of Muslims in the activities of the Green Book. These Muslims embarked on grassroots mobilization of members, including academics to join the study centre. Workshops and seminars were organised to support the ideas in the Green Book and its relevance in modern society.

The success of the study centre in Ghana emanated from the interest of academics in the universities in the ideas of the Green Book. These academics came from diverse religious and social backgrounds, drawn mostly from both the Universities of Ghana and the Cape Coast. Some of these academics led by K.G. Nukunya were equally sponsored to visit Libya in order assess the impact of the ideas of the Green Book. Nukunya indicated that he was motivated into active participation in the activities suggested by Green Book because of its unique political teachings. As a result of their academic engagements on the ideas in the Green Books these scholars conceived of compiling publications. The editors of the book were Professors G.K. Nukunya and Tom Kumekpor.

In his concluding analysis under the title, the Third Universal Theory and the Vision of a Just Well Ordered Society, Nukunya, argued that some issues raised in The Green Book relating to the instrument of governing, housing, wages and transportation gave proof of a sound and desirable basis on the practical ideas of The Green Book in modern time (Nukunya 1990).

Other academics, such as Kwakuvi Azasu, have written complete book on the Green Book. He likens al-Qadhafi’s socialism to Nkrumah’s socialist-friendly policies in the early post-independence period in Ghana. Azasu is a lecturer at Winneba University and the Director of Research at the Africana Mission in Ghana. His major motivation in writing the book was that he was morally bound to defend a policy elsewhere, which he had benefitted from in Ghana before. Al-Qadhafi’s socialism was viewed as a direct replica of Nkrumah’s vision for Ghanaians. According to Azasu, thanks to the
socialist policies of Nkrumah most people in Ghana were educated and could make meaningful contributions to the nation in various fields. Other motivation for Azasu was the fact that the *Green Book* calls for social values and respect for traditional and religious norms regardless of their shape.

The impact of the *Green Book* on the Ghanaian society could be viewed in diverse ways; particularly in the domain of politics. In addition to their scholarly engagement, academics further generated debate in public and in the media on the ideas of the *Green Book*. Because the political regime was in search of a viable model of development, it accepted aspects of the ideas of the *Green Book* on political participation, especially the Unit Committees in Ghana’s political system. The Unit Committee became the next sub-unit in District Assembly structures in Ghana’s 1992 constitutional provision.

Prior to the constitutional rule, the PNDC regime had experimented with the Unit Committee structures during the revolution period (1982–1992) called the People’s Defense Committees (PDC), which allowed for mass participation of the citizenry on matters of governance. This Unit Committee, which aimed at grassroot participation of the citizenry in the democratic process, has the implementing powers at the district level. The facilitation of debate on the *Green Book* in Ghana was not without opposition from some sections of the public. Generally, the major argument was that the TUT was an Islamically motivated political theory devised by the Libyan leader to spread Islam in disguise. Therefore, to accept aspects of its teachings in the Ghanaian political landscape was to tolerate the diffusion of Islamic culture into Ghana (Nukunya interview, 2008).

Conclusions

The success in the diffusion of the ideas in the *Green Book* highlighted the warm political relations with Libya at a certain time. Conscious efforts made by al-Qadhafi to export his religio-political theory to Ghana. By sponsoring the academics in the activities of the *Green Book*, the Libyan authorities found a huge intellectual powerhouse defending their ideas in Ghana.

The overall motive in this intellectual debate was not religious but to synthesise the relevant ideas for national development. The relevance of the *Green Book* to the Third World aspiration was thus demonstrated here. It showed the interest of two regimes to share ideas pertinent to the vision of their respective nation. However, this interest was not based on a mutual and equal platform as the study suggests, it was rather a deliberate attempt
by Libya to exert its influence on others. It was propelled by what it offered in terms of ideas and the fora it created and coordinated in Ghana.
In this study I set out to explore the background of modern Islamic revival movements in contemporary Ghana. The background of these revival movements in Ghana was a result of several factors, both internal and external. Ghana’s foreign policy towards Third World countries, dating back to 1957, was the catalyst for the influence of these movements. This foreign policy was underscored by Ghana’s agenda to extend its Pan-Africanist, decolonization policies as well as its overall role as a guardian of the African continent. These policies opened the competitive space among African leaders who competed with Nkrumah with visions and policies on the shape of the continent. It was observed that the struggle made by the first President of Ghana, Dr. Osagyefo Kwame Nkrumah, with his agenda in the continent necessitated networking with prominent Muslim leaders from the West African sub-region and North Africa, such as Ibrahim Abdullah Nyass from Senegal and Gamel Abdul Nasser from Egypt. While Nkrumah succeeded to extend his decolonisation and Pan-African unity agendas through these networking, the impact of other regimes and individuals on the Ghanaian religious sphere was considerable. The Islamic revivalist movements thus derive their impetus through this ideological space created in post-independence Ghana.

It was observed that in his bid to counter the opposition from other leaders in the West African sub-region, such as Leopold Sengor from Senegal and Felix Houpehuet Boigny from the Ivory Coast, Nkrumah forged rapport with Ibrahim Nyass, a charismatic Muslim leader from Senegal. Ibrahim Nyass delivered Nkrumah with his agenda of Pan-Africanism and decolonization policies. However, this was done with a reciprocal influence on Ghana’s religious sphere with Nyass’s religious ideas taking shape in modern Ghana. The influence of the Jama’at Fayda Tijaniyya revivalism in modern Ghana was a corollary of this. The patronage enjoyed by him from the political leadership entrenched this movement as a modern Muslim movement in Ghana.
As observed, the background of Islamic revivalism was further necessitated by economic considerations. Given the declining of Ghana’s economy, the country’s interest to secure reliable supply of crude oil necessitated its relations with some Muslim countries, such as Libya, Saudi Arabia and the Islamic Republic of Iran. The unique religious significance which the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has in the Muslim world as the custodian of the two most significant Muslim shrines, Kabah and the Prophet’s Mosque in Madina, further underscores its relevance. Ghana’s economic consideration in this foreign relation with these countries was the catalyst for the ideological penetration of the Wahhabi (Salafi), Shi´i and the ideas of the Third Universal Theory.

While foreign regimes and individuals set the stage for the modern Islamic revival in Ghana through scholarship, humanitarian activities of their NGOs and other incentives, the success was not however driven by their expectations. A central issue arising from this thesis is that the activists of these movements, especially the Fayda Tijaniyya and the Salafi, have a sharp disagreement among themselves in understanding the religious meaning embedded within their respective movement and how to appreciate that of others. These disagreements were however tailored to reflect broader shari´ah principles. In all, however, as transnational movements, the different understandings of the religious values in each of the movement is that which shaped their relevance rather than their transnational connection with some Muslim regimes and charismatic individuals.

Broadly speaking, Ibrahim Nyass set the stage for the vitality of the Fayda movement, which partly emanated from his populist liberalization of the religious space for the masses. However, the Fayda platform provided the space for these activists to offer different interpretations of how religious values could be experienced. In the Ghanaian context, the theological differences within the Fayda movement were initially tolerated, especially regarding what the tarbiyya meant. This disagreement, as we have seen, was related to how the tarbiyya could be realised. However, this tolerance of the diverse expressions of the tarbiyya did not mean its endorsement.

A key figure whose image shapes the Fayda discourse in modern time was Abdullah Maikano. He represented an enigmatic figure both within the movement and in the broader Ghanaian religious context because of his religious positions. Maikano was at a time arguably the chief propagandist of the Fayda movement because of his role in containing the Salafi diatribe against the Tijaniyya. At the peak of the Salafi incessant criticism of the Tijaniyya, the defense offered by Maikano made him enjoy an over-
whelming solidarity among most members of the movement. This latter attempts to offer a radical redefinition of the religious issues within the Fayda on mixing of sexes, drumming and dancing as well marrying above four wives attracted spontaneous disapproval from the majority of ulama. This significantly suggests that the support of most Fayda ulama for Maikano was measured to limit it within the framework of the broader Islamic shari’ah values. It might suggest that Maikano’s agenda was to inaugurate his religious authority in the movement. However, his position was borne out of a desire to reinterpret religious values to reflect broader interests of the movement. This disagreement on interpretation of religious values thus reinvigorated the Fayda movement with diverse understandings. Maikano’s youth-friendly religious ideas established his unquestioning authority in Ghana. This is in spite of the fact that most Tijaniyya ulama still adhere to the mainstream Fayda of the founder.

Salafi revivalism was also underscored by its relevance to the local context rather than by its transnational connection with the outside world. In this context, the unwavering commitment of Umar Ibrahim, with his Salafi worldview, inspired the founding of the IRRC. Umar Ibrahim derived his influence from his relentless struggle against Sufism because of the perceived popularity of the Tijaniyya tarbiyya. Secondly, he further contested his authority by providing higher forms of education and opportunities for scholarships, which were hitherto not available within the local context. This thus bolstered him as a key religious ideologue in the Muslim public sphere.

However, Umar Ibrahim riding his prominence on anti-Sufi polemic experienced a setback when a broader platform, the SCICR, was created, by graduates from Saudi Arabia. Though most of them were equally trained in Madina University, the SCICR platform as the umbrella organisation for Saudi graduates with the agenda of propagating Salafism was divided on modes of propagation and the question of organisational structures. The central issue was the relevance of anti-Sufism in the Salafi discourse. Secondly, the Salafi graduates were equally divided on whether to have a scholarly community system of leadership structure or a mass-based movement.

As a result of these theological disagreements, the perceived drifting towards elitism of the Saudi-sponsored SCICR and its Sufi-friendly policy, considerably generated dissatisfaction among the leading Salafis to form the ASWAJ as a mass-based platform with anti-Sufi proclivities. Salafism thus authenticated its relevance in Ghana through its power of differentiation of pure believers as against those outside it. The ASWAJ thus offered an
alternative religious platform for people who subscribed to its ethos as their source of identity in Ghana.

The success of Salafi revivalism in Ghana partly emanated from the material benefits it promoted through the activities of the Salafi transnational organisations. The activities of these organisations underscored the relevance of the external factors in Salafi revivalism. The relevance of these organisations in Muslim religious sphere cannot be underated. The activities of these organisations filled in the vacuum that existed in Muslim humanitarian delivery in Ghana. Not only were these organisations providing opportunities for educational infrastructures, vocational training centres, potable water, health and agriculture, but they also provided alternative platforms for Muslim students in public universities. These organisations further promoted their religious values through these programs. The opportunities offered by these organisations were thus comprehensive.

The revival of the ideas in the *Green Book* further illustrated Ghana’s quest for a model of development intersecting with an external agenda. However, the success made in promoting the ideals of the *Green Book* was dictated by the commitment of both politicians and academics. The interest developed by these elements in the ideas and activities proposed in the *Green Book* thus provided the impetus for its influence in Ghana. This interest was shaped by an intellectual debate aimed at using the best ideas from it for Ghana’s development paradigm.

The outcome of this volume suggests that Shi´i revivalism is still taking shape and more time is required to underline its pattern of growth. In all, however, its sponsors in the Iranian mission are still dictating its pattern of growth.
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