

Religion and the Pan-African ideal: The Experience of Salafi Islam in the West African Sub-Region

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Introduction

Salafi Islam is one of the fast growing brands of Islam in Africa in general and in West Africa in particular. Salafi Islam is an Islamic movement established with a view to making the value-pattern-embodied in the Qur'an and the Sunnah again operative in the hearts and lives of Muslims. The main aim of this paper is to examine the question of the relationship between religion and the Pan-African ideal. It seeks to address this question by exploring the experience of Salafi Islam in the West African sub-region.

The real problem in assessing and analyzing the operation of Salafi movement as it relates to Pan-African ideal is to determine which activities of the former are Salafi relevant to the latter Pan-African idea and in what specific manner they are relevant. The relationship between religion and Pan-African ideal is rather ambivalent, because the former both promotes and hinders the growth and development of the latter Pan-African ideal. To understand how, a few questions are crucial to consider: Does the emergence of Salafi Islam suggest new directions in the relationship between religion and the Pan-African ideal? Does the emergence of Salafi movement present a paradigm shift in terms of relationship between religion and Pan African ideal? If so, in what specific manner, why and how? These and many other questions are in the present state of knowledge on these matters, unanswerable.

The rest of this paper is organized into four main sections. The first section deals with research procedure. The second section focuses on the emergence and development of Salafi movement in the sub-region, paying attention to the questions such as its goals, membership, leadership, ethos and activities. The third section

examines the question of relationship between Salafi Islam and Pan-African ideal. And the fourth section summarizes and concludes the discussion and analysis.

Research procedure

This survey of opinion and attitudes of membership and leadership of Salafi Islam on the Pan African ideal was based on multi-sited ethnographic methods. The choice of area from which the sample was drawn was more or less limited by three factors of finance, time and convenience. Consequently, it became necessary for the survey to be carried out locally, and North Western Nigeria was chosen as the most convenient area. Four major cities in the zone: Kaduna, Kano, Sokoto and Birnin-Kebbi were purposefully chosen.

The sampling procedure adopted consists of snowball, judgement and opportunistic sampling. The snowball approach involves using a small group of informants who were asked to put the researchers in touch with their friends who were subsequently interviewed, then asking them about their friends and interviewing them until a chain of informants had been selected. Regarding the judgement sampling approach, we selected informants for the study on the basis of their status and previous experience that endow them with special knowledge. As for the opportunistic sampling we selected individuals with whom it is possible to cooperate (Burgess 1997:55).

Three categories of respondents selected for the study are: (i) leaders of Salafi movement (ii) members of Salafi movement and (iii) comparable members of non-Salafi groups. These categories of respondents were selected because they seemed to be the most representative example of the people likely to have participated or observed the activities of Salafi groups. The total number of respondents is 400 out of which 20% would be leaders, 40% members, and 40% comparable non-members.

The strategy for data collection entailed a standard questionnaire and interview schedule, while the strategy for data analysis was a systematic combination of quantitative and qualitative evaluations. The procedures used were purely descriptive, including frequency counts, percentages as well as chi-square and correlation analysis.

The emergence and development of Salafi Islam in the West African Sub-Region

It is a matter of the gravest consequences that despite the advances in technology and mass communication the dialectics and rhetoric of the scientific debate have failed to effectively expel religious discourse from the world intellectual forum in general and the African intellectual forum in particular. Perhaps the best indication of this is the major ‘transformation of Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam which has been occurring in different parts of the world over the past two decades, where new religious movements have been displacing the more established ones’ (Ibrahim 2000: 16). The West African sub-region is not an exception to this general rule. The most reliable barometer of this trend is the phenomenal rise of the Salafi movements in the Muslim world in general and in the West African sub-region in particular.

Every part of the Muslim world, Jega (1997:102) argues, is experiencing an Islamic revival. Muslims are rediscovering their spiritual roots and reasserting the political power that corresponds to their way of life. There is a rising trend among the youth of both sexes to observe the dictates of the Qur’an and Sunnah. A wave of conversion to the Islamic way of life is taking place in university campuses, which were hitherto citadels of anti Islamic forces. Consequently observance of Islamic dress code in conformity with Islamic injunctions concerning modesty came into vogue.

In the political and public arena voice was raised in support of subordinating the workings of modern states to the Shariah. More and more *Ulama* (Islamic scholars) are calling for the establishment of the Islamic order and return to the Salafi’s vision. From the standpoint of faith, Al-Faruqi (1986:47–8) contends:

The Muslims perceived the aberration of history as departure from the norms of faith. It was hence natural for Muslims to think that the restoration of history and of the Muslim place in it must be preceded by restoration of the faith, of its values and practices in the hearts and lives of Muslims. For this, the example of the Prophet (SAAS) and his companions, which Islam has always regarded as normative alongside the Qur’an, was ready to assume the role of ideal to which all Muslims should return. As a result, a will to reform the status

quo arose in almost every quarter. Everywhere the movements called themselves Salafi or Salafiyya in assertion of their will to remould the present in the likeness of the glorious past. To relive, to make real and present again the concretization of the Islamic vision of the Prophet (SAAS), his companions and successors, was the first determinant of their consciousness and reforming endeavour; hence, their name and nature of their reformative moves.

By now we can take Salafi movement to be an Islamic movement that identifies itself with the Islamic movement of the Prophet (SAAS) by seeking to make the values, imperatives and recommendations of the Prophet (SAAS) again operative in the hearts and lives of Muslims. Salafi movements as Moten (1996:130) noted are neither modern nor new; they represent not a response to the challenges of the West but a quest to mould Muslims' life after the Prophetic pattern in an imperfect world. The general thrust of Moten's argument is that Islamic society is capable of reasserting its Islamicity even where pressures of the West are totally absent. The impetus for Islamic resurgence in the contemporary Muslim world is the need for the Muslims to preserve their identity by maintaining continuity with the culture that has nurtured them and the urgent requirement to adapt to contemporary reality as a condition of survival. Even in the most isolated corners of the world, therefore, Muslims are bound to strive to make their society the living embodiment of Islam by interpreting the eternity of its symbols in terms of contingency of history. The jihad movements of the nineteenth century in West Africa are a good case in point.

There is a current fervour among Muslim communities for the shariah and the return to the Salaf's vision ranks high in popularity with many Muslim masses in different parts of West Africa. But the question shall be raised: what are the factors responsible for the growth and development of Salafi movement in the West African sub-region?

A number of complex factors were responsible for the resurgence of Islam in West African sub-region. The first important factor is the nature and character of Islam. The totality of Islam is an ideal which comprises a sense of meaning of Islamic values, the over-arching worldview and set of aspirations by which Muslims locate and evaluate their efforts. It is only because Muslims maintain a notion of

an enduring if not always consistently defined ideal that movements and initiatives take place (Davies 1985:45). This implies that Islam in and of itself is the *raison d'être* for the growth and development of the Salafi Islam as well as for the support it enjoyed. In line with this pattern of thought, Al Faruqi (1979: xvii) argues that:

(the) inner vitality of Islam alone, its own inner force for self-renewal *sui generis* was the sole responsible agent for reform. This inner force derives from the essence of Islam itself. It is constitutive of the Islamic religious experience. It alone is the sufficient reason for every movement in Islam, the complete explanation of every Islamic idea.

More to the point the totality of the ideology of Salafi movement and the nature of its message enable it to draw support from all social classes rather than from a particular class. Closely related to this is the new form of religious education. In essence, the new form of religious education was meant to rouse the Muslim populace from their apathetic slumber. Thanks to the effort of some *Ulama* and their followers, a considerable progress had been made in this direction. As a result of this, many Muslims have rededicated themselves to the Salaf's vision and have been appalled at the gap between their ideals of how society should operate and the ways in which it actually does operate, and have made efforts to bring reality in conformity with the ideal.

Anti-imperialist attitudes and activities were a factor of high potency in the rise of resurgent Islam in general and Salafi Islam in particular. In different parts of West Africa Islam played and continues to play a significant role in the growth and development of movements of resistance against colonization and recolonization. The Muslims feel that for the past one hundred years the West had totally overpowered them politically, economically and culturally, and in the process their own institutions and way of life have become second rate. They also feel that imperialist conspiracy was responsible for their failure to make headway in socio-economic spheres of life. Now they have seen through this 'conspiracy' and risen up to challenge it. Thus, Islam is being used as a 'vehicle for striking back at the West, in the sense of people trying to reclaim a very greatly damaged sense of self-esteem' (*Times*, 16 April 1979:10).

The interface of religion and anti-imperialist struggle does not receive adequate attention from the radical intellectuals. Religion is considered suspect by such a category of intellectuals because they believe that it numbs the masses and invites them to obscurantism. Hence the inability of the masses who are under the influence of religion to become aware of their exploitation let alone rise in rebellion to improve their lot. The hostility to the idea that religion has a revolutionary significance was so strong that attempts to raise such an issue were felt to be inappropriate. Anyone who made enough protest was given the academic cold shoulder, condemned and ridiculed. The antagonism was sufficient to ensure that scholars, who wished to advance in academic circles, dropped these unorthodox ideas. However, the Iranian revolution has shown that revolutions can be based on religious idioms and ushered in by a collective action of all classes. It 'presents itself in terms of Islam, that is to say as a religious movement with a religious leadership, a religiously formulated critique of the old order and a religiously expressed plans for the new' (Lewis 1988:1).

Prior to the Iranian revolution, it was considered unworthy of a modern scholar to treat a topic that could be understood to suggest the revolutionary significance of Islam. The Iranian revolution, Krichen (2000: 26) said:

Showed that political Islam could lead a people in revolt and overthrow one of the bloodiest and most dictatorial regimes. All this happened at a time when the revolutionary dream seemed fanciful and freedom of opinion was denied in the Third World. The Iranian revolution bowed to the will of the streets and that the weapon of faith was more powerful than faith in weapons. It is scarcely surprising that the Third World peoples admired an Iranian revolution that seemed to offer a feasible answer to the endemic crisis in their countries.

The West African sub-region was no exception to this general rule. The Iranian revolution was therefore of great importance to the resurgence of Islam in the sub-region. The victory of Islamic forces in Iran marked a turning point in the history of Islamic activism. With the establishment of an Islamic republic in Iran, the idea that Islamic activism is a regressive return to the past seemed to have been replaced with the recognition that it is a sign of cultural authenticity and quest for comprehensive prosperity (*falah*). The

Iranian revolution had greatly increased the popularity of Islamic ideas and antagonism towards the old order. The usability of Islam as an instrument of protest and change had drawn many people who were antagonistic towards the old order into the fold of Salafi Islam. To many an Islamic activist Islam represents a bulwark against the transformation of his society in the image of the West. Islam, after all, discourages the acceptance of the world as it now stands with its point of reference in the West. Perhaps, this helps to explain why some intellectuals turn to Islam in their search for a suitable framework that would point the way out of current subservience to the West.

The ability of Salafi *Ulama* to articulate experienced deprivations and generate from their own base symbols and ideas alternative to dominant ones, enhances the popularity of the movement among all segments of society. Salafi mosques sprung up in almost every nook and corner of the sub-region. The movement enjoys high levels of membership and support from every section of the society. Its call for a return to Salaf's vision finds a resonance among both the western educated and masses. The mosque has once again become a centre of learning, a meeting-point for Islamic activists and medium for political education and communication. Apart from the mosque, the movement used open air preaching (*da'awah*), child and women education, adult education, as well as audio and video cassettes as a vehicle for the communication of its ideals and activities. The overall effect of all this is creating a climate of questioning on such issues as boundaries between Islam as a religion and its received cultural packaging.

The missionary work of the Salafi movement was organized into seven components: wards, township, local government, and state, zonal, national and international levels. The central theme in the discourse of Salafi Islam is *Tawhid* (unity of God) and return to true Islam devoid of deviations, distortions and perversions. The central question therefore becomes that of what is really Islamic and what is an additive mixture of sufism and local customs. Something that all the Salafi groups in the West African sub-region share is that many of their activities appear to be unrelated to and perhaps even radically divorced from the sufi Islam. As their missionary work is essentially concerned with the propagation of the unity of God and

condemnation of idolatry in every shape and form they often come into confrontation with the sufi fraternities and adherents of African ancestral beliefs. Members of sufi brotherhoods such as *Qadiriyya* and *Tijjaniyya* like those who adhere to the African ancestral beliefs are regarded by Salafi groups as ‘mushrikun’, meaning those who ascribe the attributes, power or authority of God to others beside Him and/or worship others beside Him.

Salafi groups regard Sufism to be a dangerous innovation (*bidi'a*) created by enemy of Islam (Gumi 1994:167). Hence Sufism as far as they are concerned is weed in the field of Islam that must be uprooted once and for all. It is ineluctably dragging the Muslim *Ummah* (society) into a danger of becoming a stable chrysalis. The Sufi groups on the other hand, viewed Salafi groups as *Wahhabites* and arch-enemies of Islamic saints (*awliya*). The ancestral beliefs have no place in the Salafi scheme of things. As for the local customs, the Salafi groups argued, must meet the test of Islam and become fully subsumed in an Islamic worldview. In essence, the totality of Salafi missionary work is reduced to a critique of Sufism and traditional beliefs and customs.

Another important area of Salafi activities is social provisioning. The Aid Groups of the movement engage in humanitarian activities such as first aid to accident victims, disaster relief efforts, traffic control and helping the sick on the occasion of outbreak of epidemic disease. The Salafi groups also engage in marriage match making by arranging marriages between members. During the Ramadan fast and *eid* festivities they provide food items and clothes to widows and divorcees in the community. The movement's activities in the here and now are oriented around the fulfillment of the future, and its strategies for this fulfillment rest upon a long-term vision. Moreover, as Du Preeze (1980) has rightly argued, religion must be socially and politically relevant, it must speak to the present needs of and problems facing the people before it can, if ever address them on their relation to the next world.

To be sure, the Salafi groups do not try to wrest power from the secular authorities but they recognize the centrality of political power in the concretization of the Salaf's vision. Their political discourse centers on the means and mechanics of subordinating the workings of the modern states to the Shariah. This they feel will

lead to the return to a kind of political system where leaders are chosen by members of community rather than imposed by force, and where the behaviour of the leaders is clearly dedicated to serving the community instead of satisfying their personal ambitions. The Salafi groups wanted to create a condition under which Islam supplies the norms and rules that govern the social and political order across the West African sub-region at least. Their concern for promotion and consolidation of transnational common religious ties made them feel that the vital interests of Islam require a stable and integrated African community. Hence, their concern for large-scale community building. This brings us to the question of relationship between Islam and Pan-African ideal.

As Kwame Nkrumah (1970) once argued the future of Africa will be a synthesis resulting from the dialectic of African, Islamic and European civilizations (Paden 1986:7). The growth and development of Salafi Islam on the West African sub-region seemed to have offered a space in which creative thinking about the place of Islam in the Pan-African ideal can take place. But questions should be asked: Is Salafi Islam saying anything radically new to and different from what already exists in the Islamic religious market? Does it have the capacity to make a qualitative difference as far as promotion of the Pan-African ideal is concerned? In short, do Salafi *Ulama* have the capacity to present the Pan-African ideal in terms the understandable and acceptable to Muslim publics, why and how? These are some of the questions the next section of the paper will attempt to answer.

The Salafi Movement and the Pan-African ideal

In this part of the paper, our interest lies in the identification and analysis of responses to the questionnaire with a view to establishing whether there is a strong relationship between Salafi Islam and the Pan-African ideal. The first question raised is whether there is no such thing as Yoruba or Hausa Muslims, but there are only Muslims. The response to this question is shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: On whether there is no Yoruba or Hausa Muslim but only Muslims

Variable	Leaders	Followers	N o n - followers	Total	
Strongly agree	80	120	70	270	68.5
Agree	0	30	30	60	15
Disagree	0	0	20	20	10
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0
Undecided	0	10	40	50	13.5
Total	80	160	160	400	100

Source: Questionnaire administered

From the table it is clear that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement. All the leaders (i.e. 80) strongly agreed with it. On the part of the followers, 120 out of 160 strongly agreed with the statement. This means 100% of the leaders and 75% of the followers strongly agreed with the statement. This is in sharp contrast with non-members who only 70 out of 160 strongly agreed with the statement.

When the data was subjected to further analysis by means of chi-square and partial correlation the calculated $\chi^2 = 2.4$ is far less than $\chi^2_{0.99} = 29.141$ obtained from the chi-square table; we thus conclude that the statement is widely accepted. The partial correlation is 0.5521 respectively while controlling for leaders, i.e. holding leaders constant. Also the partial correlation between leaders and followers holding non-followers constant is 0.9110. This implies that there is a high relationship between leaders and their followers.

The second question concerned whether Islamic identity must not be determined by ethnicity, nationality or geography.

Table 2: On whether Islamic identity must not be determined by ethnicity, national or geography

Variable	Leaders	Followers	Non - followers	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	80	160	160	400	100
Agree	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0
Undecided	0	0	0	0	0
Total	80	160	160	400	100

Source: Questionnaire administered

With regard to this question, the statement is unanimously accepted. Perhaps this is due to the fact that Islam is against social discrimination. This is in line with the Qur'anic verse: 'O Mankind, we have created you all from a male and a female and made you into tribes and nations so that you would know one another. Verily the most honourable among you, in the sight of God, is he who is the most righteous among you'. It is interesting to note that Pan-Africanism is diametrically opposed to all forms of racial discrimination. Moreover, since the calculated $\chi^2 = 5.4$ is less than the $\chi^2_{0.99} = 29.41$ obtained from the χ^2 table, the unanimous acceptance of the statement is beyond any reasonable doubt.

Closely related to the second question is the third question which centers on the fact that Islam does not discriminate on racial, ethnic, linguistic, economic or educational grounds for it believes in unity of humanity. All the three categories of respondents unanimously agreed with the above statement. Similarly on the question of whether any Muslim of decent character can lead congregational prayers, all the categories of respondents strongly agreed with the statement. All these suggest the idea of racial equality, which is an important cornerstone of the Pan-African ideal.

When the three categories of respondents were asked to respond to the statement ‘if you are born into the Nigerian view of Islam you are not a true Muslim’, the statement is rejected out rightly. This is because all of them strongly disagreed with the statement. However, on the question of whether every African state must insist on ethnic identity and language as the criteria for determining citizenship, the respondents are somewhat divided as indicated by table 3.

Table 3: On whether every African state should insist on ethnic identity and language

Variable	Leaders	Followers	N o n - followers	Total	Percenta-ge
Strongly agree	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	0	0	0	0	0
Disagree	0	0	20	20	5
Strongly disagree	70	150	110	330	83.75
Undecided	10	10	30	50	12.5
Total	80	160	160	400	100

Source: Questionnaire administered

The partial correlation between leaders and followers controlling for non-followers is 0.9568. The partial correlation between followers and non-followers controlling for leaders is 0.4229. This implies that the degree of correlation is less between followers and non-followers concerning the above view.

As regards the question of whether marriage proposal can be rejected on purely national or racial grounds, the respondents unanimously disagreed. But on the question of whether free movement of people and goods throughout the African continent must be encouraged, the opinions of the respondents slightly differed. While all the leaders (80) strongly agreed, 155 out of 160 followers strongly agreed. As for the non-followers, 140 out of 160 strongly agreed.

Table 4: On whether African governments should encourage free movement of people and goods throughout the African continent

Variable	Leaders	Followers	Non - followers	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	80	155	140	375	93.75
Agree	0	05	20	25	6.25
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0
Undecided	0	0	0	0	0
Total	80	160	160	400	100

Source: Questionnaire administered

The χ^2 calculated for the variables are 1.600, 1.600 and 1.800 which are far less than the χ^2 in the table; while the partial correlation between leaders and followers is 1.0000. This suggests closer relationship between leaders and followers. Also controlling for leaders, partial correlation between followers and non-follower is the same as that between leaders and followers (i.e. 1.0000) suggesting that there is a high degree of relation between all the three categories of respondents concerning the above view.

On the question of whether every African has the right to claim the citizenship of any African state if he/she so desires, both the leaders and followers strongly agreed. While 63% non-followers strongly agreed, 10 agreed, 5 disagreed, 10 strongly disagreed and 35 remained undecided. This means 100% of both leaders and followers strongly agreed with the statement. As for the non-followers, 69% strongly agreed, 22% remained undecided, while the remaining percentage disagreed.

The respondents were asked whether obstacles should not be placed against transnational flow of ideas and information throughout the African continent and their responses are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: On whether obstacles should not be placed against transnational flow of ideas and information throughout the African continent

Variable	Leaders	Followers	N o n - followers	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	30	70	30	130	32.5
Agree	10	35	30	75	18.75
Disagree	20	20	40	80	20
Strongly disagree	13	05	10	28	7
Undecided	7	30	50	87	21.75
Total	80	160	160	400	100

Source: Questionnaire administered

Since the calculated $\chi^2 = 53.01$ exceeds $\chi^2_{0.99} = 20.09$ obtained from the table, we conclude that majority of the respondents were of the view that obstacles should not be placed against transnational flow of ideas and information.

On the question of whether religious contact must be encouraged between different parts of Africa, all the leaders and followers strongly agreed. Only 20 out of 160 non-followers agreed, 40 disagreed, and 100 remained undecided. This means 100% of both leaders and followers strongly agreed with the statement. About 19% and 6% of non-followers strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively while 20% remained undecided.

The respondents were asked whether socio-economic interactions between citizens of different African states must be discouraged. They responded as par table 6 below.

Table 6: On whether socio-economic interaction should be discouraged between citizens of African states

Variable	Leaders	Followers	Non-followers	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	0	0	0	0	0
Agree	0	0	20	20	5
Disagree	0	05	40	45	11.25
Strongly disagree	80	155	0	235	58.75
Undecided	0	0	100	100	25
Total	80	160	160	400	100

Source: Questionnaire administered

The table shows that the partial correlation between leaders and followers is 0.9994 controlling for non-followers: This implies that there is high degree of relation between leaders and followers concerning their response to the above statement than between followers and non-followers controlling for leaders (0.0000).

On the question of whether there is need for every religious group in Africa to find satisfactory bases of cooperation and partnership between people of different states in the continent, both the leaders and followers unanimously strongly agreed. This is in sharp contrast with the response of non-Salafi members, who about 31% remain undecided while 13% strongly disagree. The respondents were asked whether people of every state in Africa must show their willingness to share their wealth with people of the less fortunate sister African states, both leaders and followers were unanimous in strongly agreeing with the statement as shown in the table below.

Table 7: On whether citizens of every state in Africa should be willing to share their wealth with other citizens of less fortunate African states

Variable	Leaders	Followers	N o n - followers	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	80	160	80	320	80
Agree	0	0	30	30	7.5
Disagree	0	0	0	0	0
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0
Undecided	0	0	50	50	12.5
Total	80	160	160	400	100

Source: Questionnaire administered

Table 7 indicates that majority of the total categories of respondents (80%) strongly agreed with the statement that people of every state in Africa must show their willingness to share their wealth with the citizens of the less fortunate African States. Only about 31% of the non-followers remain undecided.

Table 8 shows the responses to the question of whether as Muslims, they will use everything at their disposal to promote African unity and solidarity.

Table 8: On whether respondents will use everything at their disposal to promote African unity and solidarity

Variable	Leaders	Followers	N o n - followers	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	70	150	0	220	55
Agree	10	0	80	90	22.5
Disagree	0	0	05	5	1.25
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0
Undecided	0	10	75	85	21.25
Total	80	160	160	400	100

Source: Questionnaire administered

On the above question, 6% of the followers and 47% of non-followers remain undecided. The partial correlation between these categories of respondents is 0.3403 which is very low compared to partial correlation between leaders and followers which is 0.9839 controlling for non-followers. This suggests a high degree of relation between leaders and followers. For instance 88% and 94% of leaders and followers respectively strongly agreed that they would use everything at their disposal to promote African unity and solidarity. This is in sharp contrast with 50% of the non-followers who only agreed while 47% remained undecided.

The respondents were asked to respond to the question on whether every Muslim must support the idea of a United Africa subject to a single government and they responded as shown in the table 9.

Table 9: On whether each Muslim should support the idea of a united Africa subject to a single government

Variable	Leaders	Followers	N o n - followers	Total	Percentage
Strongly agree	80	150	0	230	57.5
Agree	0	10	50	60	15
Disagree	0	0	05	5	1.25
Strongly disagree	0	0	0	0	0
Undecided	0	0	105	105	26.25
Total	80	160	160	400	100

Source: Questionnaire administered

The partial correlation between followers and non-followers is low (0.1366) compared to that of leaders and followers (0.9975) which implies that leaders and their followers tend to be closer in accepting this view than followers and non-followers.

When asked to respond to the question of whether Muslims should go against the idea of free movements of goods and people throughout West Africa, all the three categories of respondents were unanimous in strongly disagreeing. Perhaps, this is because Islam is in favour of free movement of goods and people.

Regarding the question of whether Muslims must arrest the process of detribalization that is taking place throughout the West African sub-region, the respondents were unanimous in strongly disagreeing. However when the respondents were asked to respond to the question of whether there is every need for modification of the present global states system to meet the needs and test of Pan-African ideal, they slightly differed. For instance both the leaders and members of Salafi movement strongly agreed (60%) while only 30% of the non-members strongly agreed. For those that remained undecided formed 25% of the total respondents from non-members category.

Concerning political unification of Africa all the respondents in the category of leaders and members respectively strongly agreed

while only 25% of non-members strongly agreed. Six percent of non-members remained undecided.

Conclusion

In this paper we tried to make intelligible the religious roots of the Pan-African ideal from the standpoint of Islam. Islam as a religion advocates social equality, unity of humanity and antagonism to all forms of oppression be it racial or colonial. The Pan-African Idea of unity between Arab Africa and Black Africa is perfectly in harmony with the Islamic value of unity of human race. This suggests the religious roots of Pan-Africanism.

Religion as Mbiti (1970:261) noted, is 'the backbone of African life', hence the affinity of Islam to some ideological underpinnings of Pan-Africanism. Three general conclusions flow from our discussion and analysis. First is that the strength of Salafi movement in the West African sub-region must in some sense be a reflection of its diverse interests which allows members of different character, ability and enthusiasm to find some activity that matches their aptitude. The fact that Salafi movement in the sub-region has encouraged and made space for the participation and involvement of people of different nationalities such as Nigeria, Niger, Ghana, Benin, Cameroon, Mali, and others in its activities is enough proof of its concern for large-scale community building. Many a member of Salafi group feels that the vital interests of Islam require a stable and integrated West African community. After all, they wanted to promote and consolidate the trans-ethnic and transnational religious ties that hundreds of years of existence of Islam in the sub-region had fostered, hence the support for idea of international cooperation and partnership throughout the sub-region.

The second conclusion is the fact that Islam has shown itself throughout its history to be an effective bulwark against colonialism and imperialism had indicated that some significant aspects of Pan-Africanism have close affinity with Islam. The anti-colonial and anti-imperialistic character of Islam is so strong that in many a Muslim community Western culture formed no more than a thin and brittle veneer. By virtue of this fact, it could be argued that Islam has a role to play in the search for a suitable framework that would point

the way out of current subservience to the West. Islam then seems to have the capacity to provide intellectual fermentation for the African mind during the period of transition from the Organization of African Unity to African Union. Many Muslims have viewed Islam as an appropriate response to the perceived inadequacy of Western oriented models of development.

And third is that, the empirical section of the paper, though limited in scope, has clearly established that some aspects of the Pan-African ideal have roots in the religious life of the people. The data presented and interpreted indicated a strong relationship between Islam in general, and Salafi movement in particular and Pan-African ideal. Our analysis though simple, is therefore a useful spadework and may provide both the stimulus and the indications for further research in this field.

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