

Islam, Colonialism and Resistance in the Contemporary Maghreb: A Postcolonial Perspective

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Introduction

Islam played a major role in the imperial history of Muslim countries. It is considered as a source of inspiration for the majority of anticolonial movements as well as a crucial constituent of individual and collective identities. However, the study of Islam has received inadequate attention within postcolonialism. This, indeed, reflects the secular nature of postcolonialism. It is worth noting that before the attacks of September 11, 2001, referred to as 9/11, Islam's multiple roles in an era of colonialism have been absent from postcolonial debates. Inspired by Marxist and secular orientations, postcolonial theorists and historians focused mainly on the development of secular anticolonial forms of resistance. This springs from the fact that the concept of resistance within postcolonialism has been articulated in secular terms. In his book entitled *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*, Robert Young maintains that "postcolonial theory, despite its espousal of subaltern resistance, scarcely values subaltern resistance that does not operate according to its own secular terms."¹ For this reason, Islamic forms of resistance have been largely ignored by postcolonialism despite the fact that in the heyday of empire, European powers ruled over most parts of the Islamic world. Likewise, Geoffrey Nash, Kathleen Kerr-Koch and Sarah Hackett note that a further major cause behind postcolonialism's failure to engage fully with Islam might be seen in Islamism's emergence within roughly the last forty years as a major political factor in the world. Part of the problem of writing Islamism into the scope of postcolonial theory is that it resists the latter's paradigms of resistance. As far as postcolonialism is concerned the problem has been how to situate, account for, and theorise such a wide-ranging opposition to the West, one of whose most striking achievements has been to replace the more familiar secular/nationalist/left liberation movements of the early postcolonial period.²

It goes without saying that the programmes of revolutionary modernisation attached to the first wave of anticolonial movements, understood and valorised

1. Robert J. C. Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 338.

2. Geoffrey Nash, Kathleen Kerr-Koch and Sarah Hackett, eds. *Postcolonialism and Islam: Theory, Literature, Culture, Society and Film* (New York: Routledge, 2014), 4.

by postcolonial thinkers, were imbricated in values affiliated to Western paradigms of progress and development and these appear not to apply to Islam. This indicates that postcolonial intellectuals were hostile towards any revolutionary sentiment grounded in Islam.

Islam has been absent from postcolonialism due to the latter's reliance on a secular Western epistemology. Apparently, Islam and postcolonialism seem to have contrasting epistemological provenances. This resides in the fact that postcolonial scholars have refused to engage with Islam as an anticolonial ideology. However, because of the fact that the Middle East and North Africa are changing due to the so-called Arab Spring and its aftermath, the postcolonial scholars are shifting their attention to those spaces dealing with them as new geographies of liberation. Further, 9/11 and the ensuing global return of religion have also prompted postcolonial writers to address religion in general and Islam in particular.³ With this in mind, I suppose that the great works of anticolonial Muslim thinkers and the huge efforts of Muslim anticolonial movements must be included into the scope of postcolonialism. So, through this article, I am going to incorporate national or anticolonial spirituality into the realm of postcolonial studies. Indeed, the present article investigates the complex roles Islam played in different colonial zones in the contemporary Maghreb. Simply put, in addition to highlighting the multiple roles Islam – Salafism and Sufism – played in the Maghreb particularly in Algeria, I am going to explore the different roles Islam played in colonial Morocco. I have to admit here that I will focus mainly on Morocco because it is an excellent exemplar of a colonial experience where religion used to have colonising and resisting roles at the same time. Before exploring the anticolonial function of Islam in the contemporary Maghreb, I think it is significant to throw some light on the coloniser's employment of Islam for the purpose of legitimising its policies.

Islam as a Colonial Tool in the Maghreb

It is significant to note that governing the religious affairs of Muslims became a crucial aspect of imperial rule. In the colonies, European officials regularly employed religious leaders and Islamic institutions to enhance imperial authority. In David Motadel's terms, "across the world, the governing of religion was a pivotal concern of imperial authorities. In the European empires, nowhere was this perceived to be of greater importance than in Islamic areas, as Muslims were usually considered especially sensitive subjects and prone to revolt."⁴ That is to say, the imperial authorities employed religious dignitaries and leaders to reinforce control and order. They also integrated Islamic institutions like mosques, law courts, and *madrassas* (schools) in the

3. See Jocelyne Dakhli. *Islamicités* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 2005).

4. David Motadel, "Islam and the European Empires," *The Historical Journal* 55, 3 (2012), 832.

colonial state and controlled and regulated religious rituals like the pilgrimage to Mecca. Motadel also affirms that shortly after the invasion of 1798, French colonial authorities decided to administer Egypt using the Islamic judicial system and employing religious leaders. The *Koran* was repeatedly interpreted in favour of the Grande Armée, and proclamations were translated into Koranic Arabic to give religious legitimacy to the occupying regime. Napoleon himself attended a public celebration of the Prophet's birthday (*Mawlid*) in Cairo. Also in other parts of the empire, the French soon made efforts to employ Islam for their rule.⁵

On a wider scale, from the beginning of the Western expansion into Muslim lands, imperial authorities not only made significant efforts to integrate Islam in the colonial state, but often actively sought Islamic legitimacy for their rule. This shows that the coloniser was not only interested in controlling the land but capturing the spirit as well. In particular, Sufi leaders and orders seemed to have played a crucial role in the expansion and sustenance of colonialism. In their search for local allies, the French colonial authorities, for instance, soon became convinced that it was more useful to co-operate with the sheikhs of the Sufi brotherhoods than with the less influential traditional chiefs.

Sufism, the mystical or aesthetic doctrine in Islam, has occupied a very specific place in the Islamic tradition, with its own history, literature and devotional practices. Like Muslims in general, Sufis reacted in different ways to the advent of colonialism. Some Sufi orders had an active role in the resistance to the foreign invasion. In other cases, however, Sufism sustained colonialism and negated resistance. In many countries where Sufi orders and movements emerged, the colonial authorities felt the need to tame this powerful force or to incorporate the Sufi orders into the political system. After pacifying Sufi orders, the French and the British turned them into collaborating institutions, hoping to foster an "official" Islam that would promote European colonisation. For example, not all Sufis were opposed to French activities in the Maghreb.⁶ France, for instance, attempted to gain support from Muslims in their colonies during both World War I⁷ and World War II, with a goal

5. *Ibid.*, 833.

6. This demonstrates the fact that not all Sufi orders were complicit with colonialism, but there were others which were very active in their resistance to colonialism. In fact, it is worth noting that some Sufi orders were at a certain historical junctures fierce opponents intellectually and militarily against colonialism. However, in some periods, especially after being attacked by the official authorities and the Salafists, they decided to collaborate with the coloniser. Hence, the Sufi orders lost most of their popularity because their leaders chose to co-operate with the colonial regime in the Maghreb.

7. Jillali El Adnani, "Le rôle de la Tijāniyya dans la mobilisation des combattants pendant la Première Guerre Mondiale," *Hespéris-Tamuda* LIII (fascicule 1) (Numéro spécial: Le Maghreb: Un front oublié de la Première Guerre Mondiale. Coordination Odile Moreau (2018): 91-106; Otman Bychou, "Ideology and Propaganda: How the French Reacted to the German Ottoman Recruitment of Moroccan in the Great War," *Hespéris-Tamuda* LIII (fascicule 1) (2018): 47-63.

of establishing backing from Sufi leaders during these periods of time. In Algeria, the French created what they called ‘administrative mosques’ and started to organise pilgrimages to Mecca. They instituted civil servant cadis (judges) who ruled by a new legal code, a “bastard product of Muslim law and French jurisprudence.”⁸ There is no doubt, wrote Edmond Doutté in 1900, that France can use the marabouts (Sufi brotherhoods) to its advantage: “In purely administrative matters, the marabouts have been of service to us: we have seen them order their followers, in the name of God and at the behest of an administrator of a commune mixte, to follow an administrative ruling.”⁹

In Morocco, the Darqawiya *zawiya* or *tariqa* supported and legitimated colonialism. It ordered its disciples not to resist French colonialism as long as it was the Sultan who signed the Protectorate in 1912. The *zawiya* thought it was its duty to justify the advent of colonialism and this was seen as a sign of obedience to the Sultan. In fact, the Darqawiya *zawiya* was against Mohamed Ben Abdelkarim el-Khatabi’s resistance to Spanish colonialism and refused to cooperate with the Riffian resistance. So, it had a positive attitude towards French colonialism and cooperated with it politically and militarily. More starkly, the Darqawiya mobilised the tribes to fight Mohamed Ben Abdelkarim el-Khatabi and suppress his uprising against colonialism. It was doing so because it thought that the Moroccan Sultan had given France the green light to “protect” Morocco. One of French colonial officers once wrote that “al-Arbi Darqawi’s grandson, Mawlay Abdulrahman, who was born in 1850 and died in 1927, was in a constant contact with us during the last 15 years of his life.” Abdulrahman Darqawi was a vehement defender of French colonialism and one of his famous supporting statements to colonialism was: “We are happy to welcome one hundred Christians in our narrow house, but no single Riffian Mujahid is welcomed in our neighbourhood.”¹⁰ This shows his enmity to Riffian resistance and a complicit attitude towards the presence of colonialism in Morocco. Unlike Darqawiya, which had a good relationship with the Sultan, the relationship between the Kettaniya *zawiya* and the Sultan worsened in the 1940s. That is, the Kettaniya *zawiya* had been resisting colonialism until the end of the World War Two. For instance, Şufi leaders such as Sidi Moḥammad ibn Abd al-Kabir al-Kattani and Aḥmad al-Hibah died trying to lead resistance to colonial rule. Hence, the conventional belief that Şufi leaders collaborated with the French and the Spanish (in the far north and the south of Morocco) against the Salafist nationalists reflects

8. Ricardo René Laremont, *Islam and the Politics of Resistance in Algeria 1783-1992* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2000), 14.

9. *Ibid.*, 15.

10. El Arbi El Hamdi, “The Significance of Material and Immaterial Sources for Understanding the History of Bani Zerwal: The Question of French Intervention,” in *La campagne à travers l’histoire du Maroc*, ed. Brahim Boutalib (Rabat: Université Mohammed V, 1999), 224-6.

the situation in the 1940s rather than that of the early decades of anticolonial resistance. According to John P. Halstead, the Kettaniya *zawiya* “originally opposed the French occupation. But, due to the fact that they were confronted by a reforming sultan who openly sympathized with the aims of the Salafiyyist nationalists, they often leagued themselves with the French authorities who promised, however ambiguously, to respect their prized autonomy, religiously as well as politically.”¹¹ In short, it is true that colonialism managed to exploit Islam to sustain and legitimise its existence, but Islam was also a mobilising ideology for the majority of the liberation movements in the Muslim world.

Islam and Anticolonial Struggles in the Maghreb

Throughout the imperial age, European colonialism was confronted with Islamic anticolonialism.¹² According to Edward Said, “never was it the case that the imperial encounter pitted an active Western intruder against a supine or inert non-Western native; there was always some form of active resistance and, in the overwhelming majority of cases, the resistance finally won out.”¹³ Based on this fact, Islamic anticolonial resistance in the Muslim World was very active and varied. Historically speaking, Islam has been a motor for resistance and liberation movements against Western colonialism. As a postcolonial researcher who is aware of the absence of religious resistance movements in the field of postcolonial studies, I am going to explore the role of Islam in the resistance of colonialism due to the fact that postcolonialism is “not a coherent strategy for resistance, but it names the at times self-contradictory or internally conflictual movement thought that examines, unpicks and compares multiple strategies and potential modes of critique.”¹⁴ Islam, as Anouar Majid succinctly puts it, served “as an inspiration for revolutionary fervor among the masses. Islamic cultures – like many of the world’s cultural traditions – could help “provincialize” the West and offer other ways to be in the world.”¹⁵ With this point in mind, I claim here that if postcolonialism is to sustain itself as a representative of subaltern struggles, the definition of resistance as a secular enterprise within the field of postcolonial studies must be re-defined.

11. John P. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation: The Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912-1944* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1969), 123.

12. Jane Hiddleston makes a clear distinction between postcolonialism and anticolonialism. She says that “while “anticolonialism” names specific movements of resistance to colonialism, postcolonialism refers to the wider, multifaceted effects and implications of colonial rule.” Jane Hiddleston, *Understanding Postcolonialism* (UK: Acumen, 2009), 1. Hence, in this article I am going to use the term anticolonialism to refer to the intellectual, political and military practices against colonial oppression in the Maghreb in general and Morocco in particular.

13. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), xii.

14. Jane Hiddleston, *Understanding Postcolonialism* (UK: Acumen, 2009), 5.

15. Anouar Majid, *Unveiling Traditions: Postcolonial Islam in a Polycentric World* (London: Duke University Press, 2000), 21.

It is needless to say that Islam and resistance in colonial Algeria went hand in hand. Highlighting the role of Islam in Algerian anticolonialism, Fouzi Slisli writes:

Contrary to Western conceptions, then, Algerian peasants did not rebel against French colonization out of instinctive, subconscious reflex mechanisms, as would a pack of wolves. On the contrary, Islam's social and political mandates provided an authentic anticolonial ideology capable of mobilizing the peasant as well as the urban masses. It is true that Islam catalyzed these rebellions and Islamic institutions organized them, but their goals were always political and concrete... Rather than primitive peasant culture, though, it was their Islamic faith that made it impossible for the Algerians ever to accommodate unjust colonialism in their world.¹⁶

It is evident now that the resistance to French colonialism that was active in Algeria and by extension in other Maghrebi countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries "was entirely Islamic in ideology, in culture, in organization, and even in name."¹⁷ Very importantly, Ahmed Ben Bella, the first president of independent Algeria, says: "I am Muslim first, Arab second and then Algerian. I am also proud to be an African." Ben Bella elaborates further: "I am an Islamist Pan-Arabist before I am an Algerian. The West tried hard and long to obliterate our Arab and Islamic culture. We Algerians are only too aware of this historical fact. That is why being a Muslim is an essential, a sacrosanct component of our identity."¹⁸ In effect, Algerian rebellions against French colonialism had a distinctly Islamic banner. "The heroes and the names of this anticolonial tradition are Islamic in inspiration, in practice and in organization. These facts are well known in the cultures of North Africa. They are also well known in colonial history. Why did Fanon call this anticolonial culture and tradition a peasant culture instead of what it was: a Muslim culture?"¹⁹ The answer is very simple; Fanon was a secular and Marxist revolutionary, and he therefore perceived the Algerian revolution as a secular anticolonial revolt. He never made the link between Islam and anticolonialism. He himself cites this Islamic tradition extensively and praises it without referencing. As a Marxist revolutionary, Fanon failed to grasp the role of Islam in anticolonial liberation. "His failure to reference it is understandable given his ignorance of Islam in Algeria. It is also understandable given that he was addressing a

16. Fouzi Slisli, "Islam: The Elephant in Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth," *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies* 17, 1 (2008): 102.

17. *Ibid.*, 99.

18. Amin Malak, *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), 3.

19. Slisli, "Islam: The Elephant in Fanon's The Wretched of the Earth," 103-4.

Western, atheist readership that had no epistemological frame of reference to understand the role of a non-Western religion in wars of national liberation. Fanon simply used a revolutionary terminology familiar to Western readers and cleansed from his content all references to Islam.”²⁰ Regarded as one of the prominent founding fathers of postcolonialism, Frantz Fanon avoided referring to Algerian resistance as Islamic; instead, he described it in secular terms reinforcing the secular nature of postcolonial resistance. Algerian anticolonial resistance was inspired by the *Quran* and Islam, and accordingly postcolonialism must be open to include indigenous ways of knowing and modes of criticism as well as spiritual and religious epistemologies including Islam. Being aware of the fact that the future of postcolonialism is the return to the past, postcolonial critics and historians must stress the need for a return to history in order to underline the complex roles religion/Islam played during Western colonisation.

Marie B. Perinbam also mentions that *jihad* is a concept that Muslim peasants in Algeria “would have grasped immediately. Perhaps it is no coincidence...that during the 1954-62 war, combatants were known as *mujahidin* or those who fight holy war.”²¹ Put concisely, Islam played a crucial part in shaping the social and political life in Muslim communities and proved to be a highly effective legitimising, organising, and mobilising force in a considerable number of popular anticolonial movements. It offers ways of thinking and living alternative to hegemonic Westernised imperial and capitalist forms of living and thinking. There are two types of Islamic anticolonial forces: Sufi brotherhoods and Salafist movements.

Sufi Orders as Subaltern Forms of Resistance in the Maghreb

Tellingly, the most prevalent forces of armed anticolonial struggle in the Islamic world were Sufi orders. Sufism is often viewed as a non-violent and non-political branch of Islam. But, the idea of Sufis showing little concern for politics (and only being focused on spiritual matters) is far from accurate. Another way of expressing this is that while Sufism clearly has various teachings and principles that could be interpreted to promote non-violence, Sufi movements have also developed as a response to colonialism and imperialism.²² Putting it vividly, by 1920, every Muslim country (except Persia, Turkey, Afghanistan, and parts of Arabia) had been conquered by

20. *Ibid.*, 106.

21. Marie B. Perinbam, “Fanon and the Revolutionary Peasantry-the Algerian Case.” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 11, 3 (1973): 442.

22. In this vein, see Lloyd Ridgeon’s edition of *The Cambridge Companion to Sufism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015); And also the very recent publication of Malik, Jamal, and Saeed Zarrabi-Zadeh (Edited by) *Sufism East and West: mystical Islam and cross-cultural exchange in the modern world* (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

foreign powers, mostly European. In a number of cases, Sufi orders were the strongest local institutions that remained when local rulers were overthrown. Some of them were transformed into anticolonial movements. Resistance by Sufis against imperialism began almost as soon as Europeans endeavored at colonising the Muslim lands. When looking at this history of colonialism in Muslim-majority states, one finds multiple examples of Sufism and Sufi orders as centers of political and military resistance movements.

There are many historical examples to illustrate the presence of anticolonial Sufi military movements throughout the Muslim World. “Many similar anticolonial rebellions,” to borrow Fouzi Slisli’s words,

were mobilized in the nineteenth century throughout north, east and west Africa, and they all were led by Sufi brotherhoods or Sufi sheikhs. Hadj el-Moqrani, Cheikh el-Haddad and Cheikh Bouamama were the most notable in Algeria after Abd al-Qadir. Elsewhere, Abd Allah Hasan fought the British and the Italians in Somalia; Al Hadj Umar Tall led the *jihad* in Guinea, Senegal and Mali; Mohammad al-Sanusi, founder of the Sanusiya movement in Libya, led the resistance against the Italians; Usman dan Fodio led the *jihad* in Nigeria; and Ma’ al ’Aynayn in Morocco.²³

It can be claimed here that one of the most active areas of Sufi resistance occurred in Africa. It is obvious that since the inception of European colonialism of North Africa, it was the Sufi orders that championed resistance to colonialism. One of the most studied Sufi resistance movements in North Africa remains the Sanusiyya. After the turn of the twentieth century, the warriors of Ahmed Sharif as-Senussi and his brotherhood waged *jihad* against the French troops in the Sahara.²⁴ In Libya, the Sanussi Brotherhood fought the Italians tenaciously for twenty years until 1932.²⁵ Along with an important role played by the Tijaniyya tariqa²⁶ in confronting the French expansion in Senegal, the Naqshbandiyya tariqa was involved in many of these anticolonial movements and took an active part in anti-Russian

23. Slisli, “Islam: The Elephant in Fanon’s The Wretched of the Earth,” 100.

24. See Jean-Louis Triaud, *La Légende noire de la sanūsiyya: une confrérie musulmane saharienne sous le regard français (1840-1930)* (Paris: Éditions de la maison des sciences de l’homme cop, 1995).

25. See Fait Muedini, “Sufism and Anti-Colonial Violent Resistance Movements: The Qadiriyya and Sanussi Orders in Algeria and Libya,” *Open Theology* 1.1 (2015): 134-45.

26. See John Glover, *Sufism and Jihad in Modern Senegal: The Murid Order*, (Rochester, N.Y.: Rochester University Press, 2007); and see also Jillali El Adnani, “La confrérie Tijaniyya entre instrumentalisation et usages politiques,” in *Politique et confréries au Maghreb et en Afrique de l’Ouest*, Sous la direction de Odile Moreau et Pierre Vermeren, *Journal d’Histoire du Soufisme* VII (Paris: Claire Maisonneuve, 2018), 59-76.

resistance in the Caucasus.²⁷ Furthermore, through his article “Sufism and Anti-Colonial Violent Resistance Movements: The Qadiriyya and Sanussi Orders in Algeria and Libya,” Fait Muedini contends that “the role of Sufi military actions against colonialism was not limited to the Middle East and the Maghreb. Sufi anticolonial rebellion movements were also quite prevalent in South East Asia.”²⁸ Many Sufi leaders played key roles in the anticolonial movement. They were mystics and developed various ideologies of *jihad* and diverse methods of resistance.

As an anticolonial spirituality, Sufism had a strong presence in Algeria for centuries. Algeria’s anticolonial tradition in the nineteenth and early twentieth century was mobilised and organised by Islamic Sufi brotherhoods in the name of *jihad* against occupation. Among the best known of these movements is Abd al-Qadir and the Qadiriyya brotherhood which waged war against French colonial troops in Algeria in the 1830s and 1840s and has been studied, among others, in Raphael Danziger’s classic *Abd al-Qadir and the Algerians*. As a “pragmatic Islamic resistance leader and a state builder,”²⁹ Abd al-Qadir was chosen because “he had earned the respect of his co-religionists as a result of the sincerity of his Islamic convictions and his impeccable moral credentials.” He organised a network of *zawiyas* through the Qadiriyya Sufi brotherhood “to prevent strife among Muslims” and “to protect the country from invaders.”³⁰ Abd al-Qadir’s *zawiyas*, like all Sufi *zawiyas*, were centers of literacy and constituted the central nerve of Sufi anticolonial revolutions. Abd al-Qadir and his followers were not the only anticolonial force in Algeria. The role of the Rahmaniyya order in the resistance to French rule in Algeria has been examined in exceptional depth in Julia Clancy-Smith’s *Rebel and Saint*.³¹ Many members of the Rahmaniyya order supported both the revolt of the Mahdi Bu Ziyan in 1849 and the uprising of Mohammad ibn Abdallah, the Mahdi of Warqala, in 1851-1855.³² In the light of what has been said, it is obvious that Sufism played a significant role in the crystallisation of Muslim

27. See Anna Zekina, *In quest of God and Freedom: Sufi Responses to the Russian Advance in the North* (Caucasus. London: Hurst, 2002).

28. Fait Muedini, “The Promotion of Sufism in the Politics of Algeria and Morocco.” *Islamic Africa* 3, 2 (2012): 37.

29. Raphael Danziger, *Abd al-Qadir and the Algerians: Resistance to the French and Internal Consolidation* (New York: Homes & Meier Publishers, 1977), 218.

30. Slisli, “Islam: The Elephant in Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*,” 100.

31. See Julia Clancy-Smith, *Rebel and Saint: Muslim Notables, Populist Protest, Colonial Encounters* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1994).

32. See Motadel, “Islam and the European Empires.” For the second half of the nineteenth century, see also: Lamine Issad, “La confrérie Rahmaniyya en petite-Kabylie de ‘surveiller et punir’ à surveiller et collaborer (1871-1961),” in *Politique et confréries au Maghreb et en Afrique de l’Ouest*, Sous la direction de Odile Moreau et Pierre Vermeren, *Journal d’Histoire du Soufisme*, VII (Paris: Claire Maisonneuve, 2018), 139-52.

anticolonial thinking. It was one of the main anticolonial ideologies that marked and still marks the history of the postcolonial Maghribine societies.

Salafism as a Theology of Liberation in the Maghreb

In addition to Sufism, Islamic reformism was influential in various anticolonial struggles in the Muslim world in general and in the Maghreb in particular. The most important reformist religious liberation movements in the Maghreb before and during colonialism include the movement of Mohamed Ben Ali Sonousi and Tahir Zawi in Libya, Abdelaziz Taalbi and Mohamed Tahir Ben Ashour in Tunisia, Abdelhamid Ben Badis and Mohamed Bashir Ibrahim in Algeria, Mohamed Ben Abdelkarim, Mohamed Ben Arabi Alawi and el-Mokhtar Soussi in Morocco, and Mohamed Amine Shanqiti (Ab Oueld Akhtour) and Wobdah Ben el-Bousiri in Mauritania. Undeniably, Muslim reformers, such as Jamal-al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi and Rifa'a al-Tahtawi, preached a renewal and purification of Islam. They thought that the return to an 'authentic' and 'uncorrupted' Islam would prevent the perceived global decline of Islam. This religious intellectual reform movement is known as Salafism. Obviously, as a revivalist form of Islam, Salafism laid the basis of anti-imperialism for diverse Islamic movements. Arguing against those who allege that Islam did not play a pivotal role in the anticolonial movements,³³ David Motadel asserts that Islamic reformist movements "became powerful forces against European colonialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."³⁴ Islam was an inspiring force for the majority of Islamic liberation movements and accordingly there is a pressing "need for comparative studies of anticolonial *jihād* movements."³⁵ By the 1930s, the Islamic reformist movements were a force to reckon with in almost every Islamic country.

It is no exaggeration to say that the most important political development in the first half of the twentieth century in Algeria was the cultural and educational work that the Association of Islamic Scholars undertook. As one scholar puts it, "without the Association's work in education and culture, the Algerian movement for independence in the 1950's would have had to have

33. Fred Halliday, for example, thinks that historically Islam did not play a crucial role in the anticolonial movements in the Muslim world. He reveals that "throughout the long history of colonial wars that the British fought, from the eighteenth century onwards the enemies were nearly always not Muslims...rarely in this history of empire did the British face an insurrection from within an area under their control that was wholly or mainly composed of Muslims." Fred Halliday, *Britain's First Muslims: Portrait of an Arab Community* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010), xv. Halliday's point can be dismissed easily when we read that Islam was the most important source of inspiration for Muslims in their struggle against colonialism in India, Egypt, Libya, Algeria, Morocco, to cite only a few.

34. Motadel, "Islam and the European Empires," 847-9.

35. *Ibid.*, 851.

been postponed. Without their effort to establish a cultural basis for Algerian nationalism, the Algerian revolution would never have been successful.”³⁶ Along these lines, Fouzi Slisli also accentuates that “it is also no coincidence that the Algerian insurrection of the 1950s would have been inconceivable without the educational groundwork that the Association of Muslim Scholars did in the 1930s.”³⁷ What is crucial is that the educational and cultural effort of Islamic reformist movements was a necessary psychological precondition for the Islamic anticolonial resistance. So, the Salafist movement had its supporters in Algeria. The most important politico-religious leader of this movement in Algeria was Sheikh Abdel Hamid Ben Badis (1890-1940), who had studied at Zaitounia University, Tunisia, where he was influenced by the Salafist movement. In 1931, he founded, in Constantine, l’Association des Ulema Algeriens whose slogan was: “Islam is my religion, Arabic my language and Algeria my fatherland.”³⁸ Interestingly, Tunisian anticolonialism in the initial phase was also deeply influenced by Salafism. Ali Basha Hamba, one of its leaders, published a newspaper called *Al-Ittihad al-Islami*, from 19 October 1911 onwards. “It meant a definite orientation of his political movement towards Pan-Islamism.”³⁹ What can be noticed here is that the writings of Jamal-al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida mobilised and united Muslims against European colonialism in the Maghreb. Their writings were regarded as an intellectual revolt that paved the way for the armed resistance against colonialism.

What is intriguing is that the distinction between Islam and nationalism in the XIXth - and XXth century was blurred. Already in the XIXth century advocates of Islamic reformism, rather than challenging nationalism, had begun to blur the distinction between nationalism and religion and, more generally, between local or national identity and Islamic cosmopolitanism. Phrased in bold terms, the founding figures of Arab nationalism in the XIXth century rarely saw a contradiction between the secular idea of Arab nationalism and universal Islamic identity. According to Mohammed Bamyeh, “especially in its anticolonial phase, national consciousness had both religious and secular expressions. Everywhere in the Muslim world, up to and including the Algerian war of independence, nationalist movements combined secular and religious identities seamlessly.”⁴⁰ What is more, in his

36. Laremont, *Islam and the Politics of Resistance in Algeria 1783-1992*, 80.

37. Slisli, “Islam: The Elephant in Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth*,” 103.

38. John L. Esposito, *Islam and Politics* (Syracuse & New York: Syracuse University Press, 1998), 82.

39. Nicola A. Ziadeh, *Origins of Nationalism in Tunisia* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1962), 82.

40. Mohammed Bamyeh, “Hermeneutics against Instrumental Reason: National and Postnational Islam in the 20th Century,” *Third World Quarterly* 29, 3 (2008): 560.

article “Who Invented Egyptian Arab Nationalism?” Ralph M. Coury says that “a number of writers on Egyptian Arab nationalism have maintained that this nationalism originated in religious motives.”⁴¹ At stake here is that Islam as a political language became more prominent in the rise of cultural nationalism. For example, in the early 1930s in Egypt Rashid Rida pointed to Japan as his model for nationalism: “modernising while maintaining a strong sense of cultural identity and heritage would be precisely what revivalist Islam wished to accomplish for Muslim societies.”⁴² This demonstrates the fact that nationalism was expressed in the language of Islam and hence many modern Islamic anticolonial liberation movements in the Maghreb were really secular and ‘progressive’ movements thinly veiled in the garb of religion.⁴³ In a nutshell, Islam is not incompatible with nationalism. National spirituality, an alliance of nationalism and Islam, is seen as the inspirational ideology of the liberation movements in almost all the Muslim lands in general and the Maghreb in particular. It is true that Islamic reformism or Salafism succeeded in its nationalist struggle against colonialism, but it failed to build a democratic and modern nation-state. Salafism, as Lahouari Addi points out, “had two aims: to liberate the country from colonial domination and to modernise society. It succeeded in the first but failed in the second because it denied the historicity of Muslim society that it confines to a mythical past.”⁴⁴ So, Salafism succeeded to mobilise the masses against colonialism in the Maghreb, but it failed to create a modern nation-state in which Islam and democracy could go hand in hand.

Salafism as a Mode of Resistance in Morocco

As a nationalist reaction to European expansion and a reform movement originating in the late XIXth century in the teachings of Jamal al-din al-Afghani, Mohamed Abduh and Rachid Rida, Salafism made a profound impact on Morocco. The anticolonial role for early Salafist-liberal thinkers was carried over into the formation of XXth century nationalist movements. Regarded as a theology of liberation and protest against oppression and social injustice, the writings of Reda, Abduh and al-Afghani became the banner of anticolonialism in the Muslim world in general and in Morocco in particular. Salafist ideas deeply affected the spirit of Moroccan anticolonial liberation movement during the first half of the twentieth century, inspiring many

41. Ralph M. Coury, “Who Invented Egyptian Arab Nationalism?” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 14 (1982): 249.

42. Bamyeh, “Hermeneutics against Instrumental Reason,” 557.

43. Edmund Burke, “Theorizing the Histories of Colonialism and Nationalism in the Arab Maghrib,” in *Beyond Colonialism and Nationalism in the Maghrib: History, Culture, and Politics*, ed. Ali Abdullatif Ahmida (New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2nd ed., 2009), 23.

44. Lahouari Addi, “Islam Re-Observed: Sanctity, Salafism and Islamism,” *The Journal of North African Studies* 12, 3-4 (2009): 342.

nationalists with new political and religious programmes. In his *Rebirth of a Nation: The Origins and Rise of Moroccan Nationalism, 1912-1944*, John P. Halstead confirms that Salafism permeated the thinking of the early Moroccan nationalists and “played a more prominent role than any other Middle Eastern nationalist movement. After the turn of the century, then, Moroccan intellectuals became far more receptive to teachers and publications which carried the Salafiyyist message.”⁴⁵ This means Moroccan nationalists were eager to welcome and exploit pan-Islamic ideas in their struggle against colonialism. In his article entitled “Pan-Islam and Moroccan Resistance to French Colonial Penetration, 1900-1912,” Edmund Burke argues that

Morocco, situated at the meeting point of African and Near Eastern civilizations, provides a good example of Pan-Islam in action, as, under the pressure of French penetration, Moroccan officials began to turn toward the Near East for assistance. Historians interested in resistance to imperialism in Africa may find in the Moroccan case an example of how Pan-Islam sought to forge political links between Near Eastern and African resistance movements.⁴⁶

Moroccan anticolonialism, therefore, served as a model of how pan-Islamic groups from the Middle East, particularly from Egypt, sought to intervene in support of indigenous Moroccan efforts to resist foreign imperialism. It is worth pointing out that many of the pan-Islamic textbooks and newspapers came from Egypt and played an unprecedented role in sharpening the sense of national consciousness of Moroccan nationalists. Salafist magazines such as *al-Fath*, *al-Manar*, *Majalla al-salafiyya* and *al-Haq* published a series of articles in the early twentieth century urging the unity of all Muslims against the French in the Maghreb. What is at stake is the fact that they advocated the return to the simple principles of Islam and hence had a profound impact upon the Moroccan nationalists. In the words of Edmund Burke, “the relatively large number of subscriptions to Eastern Arabic (chiefly Egyptian) newspapers among the bourgeoisie of Fez, Tangier, Rabat, Sale, and no doubt Tetouan, suggest considerable intellectual contact between Egypt and Morocco.”⁴⁷ In addition to this, there were also many Moroccan students in Egypt, studying chiefly at al-Azhar University. Among them were the future leaders of Moroccan anticolonialism, Abdullah ibn Idris al-Sanusi and Abu Shuaib al-Dukkali.

45. Halstead, *Rebirth of a Nation*, 121.

46. Edmund Burke, “Pan-Islam and Moroccan Resistance to French Colonial Penetration, 1900-1912,” *The Journal of African History* 13, 1 (1972): 97.

47. *Ibid.*, 103.

Viewed in this light, Moroccan anticolonial nationalism was born out of religious revivalism. It began as a religious or cultural reformist movement based on the principles of Salafism. This implies that Moroccan anticolonial thought originated in religious motives in the sense that it took Islam as a background or a basis on which it built its plans and demands against colonialism. Since its inception, the national liberation movement in Morocco subscribed to Salafism and was inspired by its principles. It adopted it as an *idéologie mobilisatrice* against the coloniser's ideology. The Moroccan anticolonialists believed that sticking to the teachings of Islam was very important in their struggle against imperialism. For them, the French conquest was seen as a conquest by a Christian power aiming at the destruction of Islam. The French influence was seen as detrimental to their traditional way of life which was identified with Islam. For this reason, Moroccan anticolonial forms of resistance were inspired by Salafist ideology and therefore the Moroccan anticolonialists called for *jihad* against the foreign colonial powers. To illustrate, Spanish colonialism was opposed by Muhammed Ben Abdelkarim al-Khatibi, who in the early 1920s called for *jihad* against the Spanish occupation of the Rif. This shows that Moroccan anticolonial resistance came out of sanctuaries and mosques. Mosques played a significant role in the resistance to colonialism. The lessons of ulemas in the Qarawiyyin school in Fes and that of Ibnu Youssef in Marakesh, to mention only a few, were mobilising men, women and children to stand against colonialism. In brief, most of Moroccan anticolonial activists studied at the Qarawiyyin where they came under the influence of Salafist ideology.

Regarded as the founding fathers of Moroccan anticolonial nationalism, Abu Shuaib al-Dukkali, Ali al-Sousi, Muhammed Ben al-Arabi al-Alaoui, Ahmed al-Nadiri and Abdesselam Serghini were profoundly influenced by the Salafist thinking. In his article entitled "The Changing Character of Moroccan Reformism, 1921-1934," John P. Halstead asserts that Salafism "came to life in Morocco, under the guiding inspiration of the Sheikh Doukkali, a disciple of Mohamed Abdou."⁴⁸ The first Moroccan Salafist was Abu Shuaib bin al-Dukkali, often called the "Moroccan Abduh." He studied in al-Azhar and came under the influence of Rashid Rida and his *al-Manar* group. He was also a teacher at Qarawiyyin and instilled in his students Salafist ideas which were a source of inspiration against colonialism. Al-Dukkali had two main disciples, Muhammed Ben al-Arabi al-Alaoui and Abdesselam Serghini. Considered as the spiritual fountainhead of Moroccan liberation movement, Muhammed Ben al-Arabi al-Alaoui became the most influential spokesman for the Salafist view after the First World War and through his teaching at the Qarawiyyin; he

48. John P. Halstead, "The Changing Character of Moroccan Reformism, 1921-1934," *The Journal of African History* 5, 3 (1964): 438.

influenced most of the leading Moroccan nationalists. In particular, Allal al-Fassi, the most famous Moroccan anticolonial activist, himself came under his influence as early as 1925 when he was still a student in Fes. Putting it succinctly, the task of leading the Salafist movement after the First World War fell to a former student of Muhammed Ben al-Arabi al-Alaoui, Allal al-Fassi. This latter was a Salafist and founded the nationalist Independence Party which led an anticolonial struggle against colonialism. Thus, it is obvious that the Salafists in the 1920s were deemed as “the remaining important religious group in Morocco with the capability of articulating a defense of the rights and cultural heritage of Muslims in Morocco in the face of growing French dominance.”⁴⁹ Led by Allal al-Fassi, the post-World War Salafism in Morocco turned out to be a political project aiming at educating and animating Moroccans against French and Spanish colonisation.

In the post-First World War era, Salafism continued to shape the thinking of the Moroccan anticolonialists. Allal al-Fassi and other Moroccan anticolonialists turned to the Arabo-Muslim universal as a reference point. They identified themselves with the Middle Eastern Salafism in their cultural and religious preoccupations, their attempted synthesis of religious and political reform, and their rejection of the separation of the mosque and state. In their view, all modernisation, be it constitutional, juridical, or educational, was to be firmly imbedded in the matrix of Islam. Of paramount significance is the fact that they used Islam as a mode of resistance against the coloniser. As a signatory of the independence manifesto and one of the eminent Moroccan anticolonialists, Hachemi Filali declares that

we were influenced by the Arabo-Islamic *nahda* [renaissance] in the East and the Muslim world in general. We were also aware of all the methods (secret or open) in use via the Arab political thought we read about in books, Egyptian and Arab newspapers and magazines... as well as reading on the salafi and political thought of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and Muhammad Abduh, al-Kawakibi, Rashid Rida and other leading thinkers. Back then, reading this material encouraged us to create a parallel or equivalent to these movements in Morocco in order to oppose the protectorate.⁵⁰

What can be deduced here is that Salafism played a crucial role in the struggle for Morocco’s independence just as in the rest of the Maghreb. Lahouari Addi maintains that “in the Maghreb, particularly in Algeria,

49. Jamil Abun-Nasr, “The Salafiyya Movement in Morocco: The Religious Bases of the Moroccan Nationalist Movement,” *St. Anthony’s Papers* 16, 3 (1963): 91.

50. Fadma Ait Mous, “The Moroccan Nationalist Movement: From Local to National Networks,” *The Journal of North African Studies* 18, 5 (2013): 744.

Morocco, and Tunisia, Salafism corresponded to the patriotic expectations of the peoples who rejected colonial domination.”⁵¹ So, anticolonialism in the Maghreb had its source in religion.

Interestingly enough, the post-First World War Moroccan anticolonialism owed a great deal to the writings of Chakib Arslan. Arslan was considered as the prime mover of Moroccan anticolonialism, and his ideas and contacts were undoubtedly important for the thinking of Moroccan anticolonial leaders. He had close contacts with Allal al-Fassi, Mohamed Mekki Naciri, Abdessalam Bennouna, Ahmed Balafrej, Mohammed al-Fassi, Mohammed Hassan al-Ouazzani. Umar Ryad asserts that

the anticolonial reformist activism of the Druze Prince Shakib Arslan (1871-1946) was one of the most important impulses that nurtured the thoughts of many Moroccan leaders. In his political career Arslan moved from Ottomanism to Arabism and ended as a sincere advocate of Islamic nationalism. Though a resident of Switzerland, his ideas were put on the political agenda of the nationalist movements in Morocco and was said to have penetrated the consciousness of the North African masses.⁵²

At stake here is the fact that Chakib Arslan appeared on the Moroccan stage as “a universal spokesman whose counsel transcended local concerns and embraced the entire Arab-Islamic cause.”⁵³ His solution for the political predicament of Muslims was to establish a common ground between the North African and Eastern Arab movements in their struggle for independence. He made his residence in Geneva a ‘testing ground’ for new political strategies of resistance and international Islamic activities. To be more precise, it can be said that Arslan’s *La Nation Arabe* was a source of inspiration for many Moroccan leaders. More specifically, Arslan helped the Moroccans in organising protests against the Berber Dahir, a decree created by French protectorate in Morocco on May 16, 1930, with the objective of dividing the Arabs and Berbers. In his book *The Moroccan Soul: French Education, Colonial Ethnology, and Muslim Resistance, 1912-1956*, Spencer D. Segalla argues that Arslan’s uncompromising stance against the Berber Dahir was one of the significant sources of inspiration for a number of young nationalists in Paris, Tetouan and other Moroccan cities. “Dozens of people established

51. Addi, “Islam Re-Observed,” 341.

52. Umar Ryad, “New Episodes in Moroccan Nationalism under Colonial Rule: Reconsideration of Shakīb Arslān’s Centrality in Light of Unpublished Materials,” *The Journal of North African Studies* 16, 1 (2011): 117.

53. William L. Cleveland, *Islam against the West: Shakib Arslan and the Campaign for Islamic Nationalism* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1985), xix.

a new organisation under the name *Zawiya*, which directed the campaign further and began to mobilise other societies in Moroccan cities.”⁵⁴ In brief, Arslan’s special involvement in the Moroccan cause turned the Salafism idea from a merely religious philosophy into a political movement, and nurtured the spirit of Moroccan anticolonial nationalism.

The proclamation of the Berber Dahir was decisive in the transformation of the Salafist movement from an intellectual circle composed mostly of scholars into a popular political movement. The anticolonial nationalists made every effort to get the Berber Dahir abrogated. Stated in different terms, “the Dahir gave young nationalist figures, now prepared and ready for political action, a specific target. It provided the opportunity for a geographically dispersed young generation to combine its forces and organise in opposition to the protectorate system.”⁵⁵ What is at issue here is that the protests took a religious turn. Islam was the most potent factor which the Moroccans could use to frustrate the French efforts to divide the Berbers from the Arabs because Islam was the most enduring tie which bound them together. One of the manifestations of this outlook was the special prayer – the *Latif*⁵⁶ – read in the mosques.⁵⁷ As a spiritual form of resistance, the *Latif* movement “commenced in the Great Mosque of Sale in June 1930 and which spread rapidly to all the major cities owing to the popular enthusiasm aroused.”⁵⁸ The *Latif* protest in Moroccan cities against French Berber policy was the seminal moment from which the Moroccan anticolonial liberation movement developed. The *Latif* prayer itself became both a classic mode of protest in the Moroccan repertoire and a ritualised framing device, as the refrain “Oh Merciful God: We request Your Mercy in whatever destiny may bring, Oh Merciful God! Do not separate us from our Berber brethren,” was repeated over and over in demonstrations over the next two decades. Hence, the *Latif* prayer was used in mosques to publicise the threat and energise demonstrations, including marches and petitions, against the French coloniser. The leaders of the *Latif* protests truly shared a belief that the decree represented an explicit manifestation of a broader French Berber policy that threatened the fundamental unity of the Muslim community in Morocco. These protests did have some effect and consequently the French authorities

54. Spencer D. Segalla, *The Moroccan Soul: French Education, Colonial Ethnology, and Muslim Resistance, 1912-1956* (London: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), 211.

55. Ait Mous, “The Moroccan Nationalist Movement,” 747.

56. The *Latif* is a communal prayer to the Saviour, which is sometimes employed in modern Islam to express public grief on occasions regarded as national calamities.

57. Adria Lawrence “Rethinking Moroccan nationalism 1930-44,” *The Journal of North African Studies* 17, 3 (2012): 477.

58. Halstead, “The Changing Character of Moroccan Reformism, 1921-1934,” 443.

were so deeply impressed by the vehemence of the opposition that the Dahir had aroused that they tacitly allowed it to remain a dead letter.

Significantly enough, the most notable contribution of the Salafist movement in Morocco was the creation of the free schools by the anticolonial Salafists. The *raison d'être* of the free schools was to resist the French policy of assimilation as pursued through the schools supported by the French authorities as well as to preserve the cultural heritage of Islam. The free schools made it possible for Moroccan children to receive a relatively modern education in keeping with Muslim traditions. A number of Moroccan anticolonialists like Muhammed Ghazi, Mokhtar Soussi, Allal al-Fassi, Ahmed Balafrej, Ibrahim al-Kettani, Abdelaziz Bendriss and Hachemi al-Filali were intimately connected with this movement. It is of primary importance to point out that the founders and directors of the free schools had been educated, with very few exceptions, at Qarawiyyin University, where their exposure to novel ideas was chiefly limited to the reform programme of Salafism, which stressed the purification of Islam and an educational defense against cultural assimilation by the West.⁵⁹ As John P. Halstead aptly phrases it, "it is not at all surprising that Salafiya was the vehicle chosen to carry forward the evolving resistance movement ... Salafiyists already were in charge of many of the free schools where the young could be properly indoctrinated."⁶⁰ So, it can be noted that the Salafist movement played a great role in the modernisation of the Moroccan society and in the shaping of Moroccan anticolonialism.

Arrestingly, Moroccan anticolonial forms of resistance were not only highly religious, but done so under the auspices of nationalism. To put it differently, religion and nationalism went hand in hand in the Moroccan struggle against colonialism. In addition to its reliance on Islam a key religious and cultural factor of unity as well as a powerful instrument of distinction from the religion and culture of the coloniser, Moroccan anticolonialism also gravitated in a more secular direction. This resides in the fact that the Moroccan liberation movement was inspired by both religious and secular ideologies.⁶¹ An investigation of Moroccan anticolonialism showed that Islam is compatible with nationalism. Alternative and syncretic visions have been envisaged that blended nationalist ideologies and religious discourses and as a result we need to reconsider our understanding of nationalism as a discursively secular phenomenon. In Morocco, the nationalists drew their

59. George Joffé, "The Moroccan Nationalist Movement: Istiqlal, the Sultan, and the Country," *The Journal of African History* 26, 4 (1985): 290.

60. *Ibid.*, 440.

61. See Mohamed El Mansour, "Salafis and Modernists in the Moroccan Nationalist Movement," in *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa*, ed. John Ruedy (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1996), 53-71.

nationalism from their religion. In his book *The Independence Movements in Arab North Africa*, Allal al-Fassi wrote that

it is impossible for a historian of the independence movement in Morocco to ignore this crucial phase in the development of popular consciousness in our country. It is right and proper to emphasize that the confluence of the salafiyya and the nationalist creeds had had the roost beneficial effect upon both of them.⁶²

It can be deduced here that in Morocco, anticolonialism was based on spiritual nationalisms that amalgamated religion and secular nationalism seamlessly.⁶³ Accordingly, the distinction between Islam and nationalism was blurred in Morocco. This blurring of the boundaries of Islam and nationalism in Morocco dated back to the XIXth century writings of the founding fathers of pan-Islamism, namely Jamal-al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh, Rashid Rida, Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi and Rifa'a al-Tahtawi. What can be drawn here is that Islam and secular nationalism were closely intertwined by the majority of the anticolonial movements in the Maghreb and the Middle East. This formula, a marriage between Islam and nationalism, is a fundamental feature of anticolonial nationalism not only in Morocco but also in the Maghreb.

Sufism as an Anticolonial Subaltern Spirituality in Morocco

While Salafist beliefs gained support among many religious and political leaders, many Sufi orders still existed in Morocco from 1900 onward. The Sufi orders not only continued to exist, but also maintained a presence in the political sphere of society, often challenging colonialism, as well as the domestic political leaders. It is argued that Moroccan Sufism and anticolonial resistance were inextricably linked. In other words, Sufism played a significant role in anticolonial resistance in Morocco. Unlike the assumption that Sufis were usually portrayed as quietest and non-political forces, the Sufi orders had a long history of involvement in politics and community affairs that include specific political and military campaigns against colonialism and authoritarian regimes.⁶⁴ As a form of spirituality, Sufism can be regarded as an important component of Moroccan anticolonialism in that it acted as a great source of

62. Allal al-Fassi, *The Independence Movements in Arab North Africa*, Trans., Hazem Zaki Nuseibeh (New York: Octagon Books, 1970), 112.

63. Along similar lines, Azzedine Layachi affirms that "in their struggle against French colonialism, Algerian, Moroccan, and Tunisian nationalisms based their calls for resistance to the colonizer and for the establishment of independent nation-states for their respective societies both on secular tenets of nationalism and...on Islam." Azzedine Layachi, "Islam and Politics in North Africa," in *The Oxford Handbook of Islam and Politics*, eds. John L. Esposito and Emad El-Din Shahin (Oxford: Oxford, 2013), 2.

64. For an informative historical account of Sufism and resistance in Morocco, see Sahar Bazzaz, *Forgotten Saints: History, Power, and Politics in the Making of Modern Morocco* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010).

strength and inspiration for anticolonial movements in the XIXth and the early part of the XXth century. Many of the major wars against expanding colonial powers in the XIXth century were fought by individuals and movements that were inspired by Sufism. In a similar vein, Mohamed El Mansour argues that

the most characteristic feature of Moroccan Sufism had always been the fact that it was directed towards the common man. No less important was the role played by Sufi orders in the *Jihad*. In fact, since the fifteenth century the local *zawiyas* had played an important role in defense against frequent invasion attempts from the Iberian Peninsula and, for this reason, needed a constant mobilisation of the people. Being an essentially rural movement, operating within an illiterate population, the simplification of Sufi principles became a necessity.⁶⁵

Historically speaking, the cultural soil of resistance to imperial domination was mostly formed from maraboutic components. Moroccan cities and countryside were littered with marabouts, holy shrines made of the burying grounds of local saints. The shrines of the *sharifs* or local saints were places where revolutionaries and rebels met. The social fact is that Moroccans followed saints and were recruited in their armies to fight liberation wars. Overrating the *Baraka*, a spiritual power, of saints was an incentive to the subalterns to stand their ground against oppression and not to give up the fight. For instance, the Shadhili tariqa was the forefront opponent of the Portuguese in the 15th century, the most notable of the Sufis being Imam al-Jazuli. In addition to the *zawiya* of Shadhiliya, the *zawiya* of Raisouniya contributed also to the success of the battle of Oued el Makhazen in 1578.⁶⁶ What is interesting is that the relationship between Sufism and resistance is deeply-rooted in Moroccan history. Seen in this light, the Sufis were amongst the foremost leaders of *Jihad* against colonialism in Morocco.

The Sufi resistance to French colonialism continued into the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Sufi sheikhs' emphasis during colonialism was to increase the faith and piety of citizens, as this was seen as one aspect of anticolonial resistance. The Sufi orders offered the strongest resistance to the triumphant military forces of colonialism and showed more vitality in combating, and more lucidity in understanding, its pernicious cultural influence. Just as the orders fought against the initial material onslaught of the French, so they were the most tenacious fighters against the

65. Mohamed El Mansour, *Morocco in the Reign of Mawlay Sulayman* (Wisbech: MENAS Press LTD, 1990), 153.

66. Abdelilah Leghzawi, "Dawr as-Shurafā' al-wazzāniyīn fi al-jihād wa almuqāwama wa al-ḥaraka al-wataniyya," in *Dawr az-zawayā wa al-'ulamā wa ṣṣulahā' fī alkifāh wa al-jihād khilāla alḥiqba almu'āsira min tārikh al-maghrīb - alminṭaqa as-shamāliya al-gharbiya namūdhajan* (Rabat: Manshūrāt al-mandūbiya as-sāmiya liqodamā' al-moqāwimīn wa a'dā' jaysh at-tahrīr, 2006), 82.

cultural imperialism that came in the wake of the French victory. Another way of expressing this is that the Sufis played an important part in upholding the basic ethos of Islam in society as a whole; and that they did so in the service of what constitutes the spiritual quintessence of Islam. In playing this double role, they offered the most effective resistance both to colonialism as such and to the underlying cultural and psychological threat posed by colonial rule. For the purposes of illustration, the *zawiya* of Darqawiya contributed actively in the battle of el-Hri against French colonialism in 1914.⁶⁷ Moreover, the Shareef Moulay Ahmed Raysouni managed to unite many tribes in his resistance against colonialism in the late of the XIXth and early XXth centuries. In the words of Khalid Bekkaoui and Ricardo René Larémont, “following the capture of Oujda by the French in 1907, the Boutchichi Sheikh Mukhtar Ben Hajj Muhyi Eddine, apparently relying on his baraka or spiritual power, led a *jihād* against the French for several months before being captured and incarcerated.”⁶⁸ Along with the *zawiyas* of Raysouniya and Darqawiya, the *zawiya* of Boutchichiya valiantly resisted the colonial enterprise. Thus, Sufism was an organisational basis of resistance against colonialism in Morocco.

Equally important, founded by an Idrisid shareef Mawlay Abdellah Ibn Ibrahim in 1678, Wazzani *zawiya*, or Wazzaniya, played a remarkable role in the liberation struggle against colonialism. It joined the Nationalist Movement and contributed to the mobilisation of people against colonialism. Based on the *Quran* and *Sunna*, the sheikhs of the *zawiya* educated and mobilised their disciples to fight the coloniser. This stems from the fact that the founder of Wazzani *zawiya*, Mawlay Abdellah Shareef, gave more importance to the notion of *jihād* against imperialism.⁶⁹ It is also to be discerned that the shareef Sidi el-haj Abdelsalam ben Arbi al-Ouezzani was the leader of the battle of Tetuan against the Spanish coloniser in 1860.⁷⁰ The Wazzani *zawiya*'s resistance to French colonialism was so fierce in the second decade of the XXth century. The battles against French colonialism were led by the shareef sidi Mohamed oueld sidi Hamani al-Shahidi al-Touhami al-Wazani. He was the leader of the Wazzani revolution and a legitimate representative of Wazzani shareefs.⁷¹ What is more, the Wazzani *zawiya* participated in the Riffian war (1920-1927) against Spanish colonialism. This displays the fact that the sheikhs of the *zawiya* mobilised people to join Mohamed Ben Abdelkarim al-Khatibi in his resistance against colonialism.

67. Ibid., 82.

68. Khalid Bekkaoui and Ricardo René Larémont, “Moroccan Youth Go Sufi,” *The Journal of the Middle East and Africa* 2, 1 (2011): 34.

69. Leghzawi, “Dawr as-Shurafā’ al-wazzāniyīn,” 84.

70. Ibid., 87.

71. Ibid., 88.

In addition to the Wazzaniya, the Kettaniyya *zawiya* was also a crucial actor within Moroccan anticolonialism. While using the doctrines and institutions of Sufism, the Kettaniyya mobilised the Moroccan masses from different social classes and various regions in defense of the nation's sovereignty. The convergence of the Kettaniyya *zawiya* and resistance against foreign occupiers in Morocco is illustrated by the cases of its prominent sheikhs, namely Mohamed ibn Jahfar al-Kattani, Mohamed al-Kattani and Mohamed ibn Abd al-Qadir al-Kattani. Salient here is that although the shareef Mohamed al-Kattani played a significant political role in Moroccan society and its political scene at the end of the nineteenth century, classical national history continues to overlook his contributions.⁷² Yet, al-Kattani had an impact in his society, not only in his native city Fes, but also beyond, where he had extensive allies, disciples and followers among Northern tribes and in cities such as Tangiers. Keenly discerning the danger of European encroachment on Moroccan sovereignty, Mohamed al-Kattani abandoned his ascetic life and engaged in political activism. In so doing, he called both for *tajdid* (Islamic renewal) and resistance against all forms of foreign dominance in Morocco.⁷³ In this regard, Sahar Bazzaz contends that "the Sufi shaykh Muhammad al-Kattani (1873-1909) is best known for his efforts to combat the rising tide of European political and economic domination during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."⁷⁴ Fait Muedini also opines that "Sufi sheikh Muhammad bin Abd al-Kabir al-Kattani was a major challenge to not only French colonialism, but also to the sultan."⁷⁵ Put in nutshell, Moroccan Sufi orders played an eminent role in the development of anticolonial nationalism. However, their relationship with the Salafists and the Alawi Sultan was marked at times by strategic cooperation and at times by mutual rejection. To make the point very clear, the fact that the Sufis, sharing the sharifian lineages with the Alawi Sultan, had a strong presence in the public sphere in colonial Morocco pushed the latter to ally with the Salafists in order to stem the tide of the Sufis. It is of particular importance to point out here that the Alawi Sultan

72. I would love to point out here that the relation between the Kettaniyya *zawiya* and the Moroccan Sultan got worse at specific historical junctures. For example, Abdelhay Kettani, one of the prominent sheikhs of the Kettaniyya brotherhood, revolted against the Moroccan Sultan and was accused of collaboration with the French authorities. Since then, targeted by the Makhzen, the Kettaniyya *zawiya* lost its profound influence and the anticolonial roles of its main sheikhs had been erased from national history. Abdellah Hammoudi, *Master and Disciple: The Cultural Foundations of Moroccan Authoritarianism* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 18.

73. See Abdallah Laroui, *Les Origines sociales et culturelles du nationalisme marocain (1830-1912)* (Paris: Maspero, 1977).

74. Sahar Bazzaz, "Heresy and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Morocco." *The Arab Studies Journal* 2, 1 (2003): 67; see also her article "Reading reform beyond the state: *Salwat al-Anfas*, Islamic revival and Moroccan national history," *The Journal of North African Studies* 13, 1 (2008): 1-13.

75. Fait Muedini, "The Promotion of Sufism in the Politics of Algeria and Morocco," *Islamic Africa* 3, 2 (2012): 213-14.

used Salafism to counter and reduce the influence of Sufism. As a result, the Sufi orders were demonised, attacked and eventually marginalised by the Salafists and the Alawi Sultan in Morocco during and after colonialism.⁷⁶ Another equally blunt way of saying this is that Sufism was exiled from the public sphere not only in Morocco, but also in the other Maghrebi countries. That is, the Sufi orders were absent from the public sphere in the postcolonial Morocco and this situation continued until the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States of America. It is worth noting that 9/11 has signalled the return of Sufism into the public sphere after a long period of marginalisation in the Maghreb in general and in Morocco in particular.⁷⁷ When Sufism was a powerful force before and during colonialism, the Moroccan Sultan and his government (Makhzen) made use of Salafism as a bulwark against Sufism, but today, ironically, they have been promoting Sufism as an alternative to Salafism since 9/11.

Conclusion

All in all, as I have shown earlier, Moroccan anticolonial resistance, and by extension anticolonialism in in the Maghreb such as Algeria, had Islamic roots. In fact, Islam had a complex relationship with colonialism. On the one hand, it was used by the coloniser as a colonial instrument. Some Sufi and Salafist movements and figures collaborated with the coloniser and justified and sustained its presence. On the other hand, Islam played an active role in the resistance to colonialism. It was a mobilising ideology for many Muslim liberation movements in the Maghreb. In the Maghreb Islam was the only force capable of animating and mobilising the masses against European colonialism. In Morocco and Algeria, for example, Salafist and Sufi movements were so fierce and violent in their struggle against colonial aggression. This indicates that anticolonialism mainly in Morocco and Algeria was based on Islam. In particular, Moroccan nationalists used Islam as a source of inspiration in their resistance against French and Spanish imperial powers. What is interesting is that due to their appropriation of modern Salafism which encourages Muslims to pick up what is appropriate for the Muslim soil from the West, the Moroccan nationalists combined Western ideas and Islamic ones as a strategy in resisting Western colonialism. So, Moroccan anticolonial resistance found its inspiration in a mixture of Western ideas and Islamic ideologies. This amalgamation between Western epistemologies and homegrown spiritualities run across almost all anticolonial discourses and practices. As a matter of fact, national spirituality was the bedrock of many anticolonial movements

76. See Addi, "Islam Re-Observed," 340.

77. Isabelle Werenfels, "Beyond Authoritarian Upgrading: The Reemergence of Sufi Orders in Maghrebi Politics," *The Journal of North African Studies* 19, 3 (2014): 276.

in the Maghreb. This emanates from the fact that the writings of the founding fathers of Muslim liberation theology such as Jamal al-din al-Afghani, Mohamed Abduh, Rachid Rida and Chakib Arslan had a profound impact on the formation of anticolonial movements in the Maghreb. The most significant point to be drawn from what I have presented in this article is that although Islam was and still is an essential identity-marker and a political factor in the Muslim world, the relationship between Islam and postcolonialism has not been sufficiently investigated. Thus, because postcolonialism is a neutral theory, I strongly believe that postcolonial scholars and Muslim/Arab intellectuals should work together in order to create what I call Arabophone or Arabo-Islamic postcolonial studies. So, my article contributes to the ongoing debate on Islam and postcolonialism and urges the latter to include in its scope a rich legacy of Islamic liberation theology. Postcolonialism is evolving and expanding, and it is still a vital paradigm which can be applied today to account for the complex realities in the Maghreb and other parts of the Muslim world. In this sense, as Africans could create their African postcolonialism to discuss their own colonial experiences, Muslims could also create their own Islamic postcolonialism.

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الملخص: الإسلام، الاستعمار والمقاومة في المغرب الكبير المعاصر: مقارنة ما بعد كولونيالية

غني عن القول أن أشكال المقاومة الماركسية والعلمانية قد أعطيت لها أولوية كبيرة في خطاب ما بعد الاستعمار، ذلك أننا نجد تقريباً جميع أعمال ما بعد الاستعمار البارزة التي تم إنتاجها في الثمانينيات والتسعينيات من القرن الماضي قد احتفت بالطبيعة العلمانية والماركسية لنضالات التحرير المناهضة للاستعمار. وهذا ينبثق من حقيقة مفادها أن مفهوم المقاومة ضمن كتابات ما بعد الاستعمار قد تم تعريفه بالاصطلاحات العلمانية. ولذلك، قام مؤرخو ونقاد ما بعد الاستعمار بتهميش دور الحركات الدينية المناهضة للاستعمار لصالح حركات التحرير العلمانية والقومية والماركسية، وتجنبوا أيضاً التحقيق في العلاقة بين الدين والاستعمار. غير أن العودة العالمية للدين بعد الحادي عشر من سبتمبر 2001 دفعت نقاد ومؤرخي ما بعد الاستعمار إلى إعادة فتح موضوع مسألة الدين. ومن هذا المنطلق يحاول هذا المقال التقريب بين الإسلام ونظرية ما بعد الكولونيالية، فيقدم الإسلام بوصفه إيديولوجية مُعبئة للحركات المناهضة للاستعمار في المغرب الكبير المعاصر من جهة وأداة للاستعمار يستخدمها المستعمر للحفاظ على هيمنته من جهة أخرى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الإسلام، الصوفية، السلفية، الاستعمار، المقاومة، ما بعد الكولونيالية، المغرب

الكبير.

Résumé: Islam, colonialisme et résistance dans le Maghreb contemporain: une perspective postcoloniale

Le discours postcolonial a accordé une place primordiale aux formes de résistance marxiste et laïque. Presque tous les écrits postcoloniaux du premier plan publiés dans les années 1980 et 1990 ont abordé la nature laïque et marxiste des luttes de libération anticoloniales. Cela découle du fait que le concept de résistance dans le post-colonialisme a été défini en termes séculaires. Ainsi, les historiens et critiques postcoloniaux ont marginalisé le rôle des mouvements religieux anticoloniaux en faveur des mouvements de libération laïques, nationalistes et marxistes, et ont évité d'étudier le lien entre religion et colonialisme. Cependant, le retour en force de la religion dans le monde après le 11 septembre 2001 a incité les critiques et les historiens postcoloniaux à poser avec d'autres dimensions la question de la religion. Cet article est une tentative de rapprochement entre le post-colonialisme et l'islam, et ses argumentations présentent l'islam à la fois comme une idéologie mobilisatrice des mouvements anticoloniaux dans le Maghreb contemporain ainsi qu'un outil de colonialisme utilisé par le colonisateur pour soutenir sa domination.

Mots-clés: Islam, soufisme, salafisme, colonialisme, résistance, postcolonialisme, le Maghreb.

Abstract: Islam, Colonialism and Resistance in the Contemporary Maghreb: A Postcolonial Perspective

It goes without saying that Marxist and secular forms of resistance have been given much priority in postcolonial discourse. We find that almost all prominent postcolonial works produced in the 1980s and 1990s celebrated the secular and Marxist nature of anticolonial liberation struggles. This emanates from the fact that the concept of resistance within postcolonialism has been defined in secular terms. So, postcolonial historians and critics marginalised the role of religious anti-colonial movements in favour of secular, nationalist and Marxist liberation movements, and avoided investigating the link between religion and colonialism. However, the post-9/11 global return of religion has pushed postcolonial critics and historians to re-open the question of religion. Viewed as an attempt to bring postcolonialism and Islam closer, this article presents Islam both as a mobilising ideology for the anticolonial movements in the contemporary Maghreb and a tool of colonialism used by the coloniser to sustain its domination.

Keywords: Islam, Sufism, Salafism, Colonialism, Resistance, Postcolonialism, 9/11, the Maghreb.

Resumen: islam, colonialismo y resistencia en el Magreb contemporáneo: una perspectiva postcolonial

Huelga afirmar que el discurso postcolonial gana un gran terreno en las formas de resistencia marxista y laica. Es relevante que casi todas las obras postcoloniales, en primer plano, publicadas en los años ochenta y noventa del siglo anterior han conservado la naturaleza laica y marxista de las luchas de liberación anticoloniales. De hecho, eso pone de relieve que el concepto de resistencia en el Post-colonialismo ha sido definido en términos seculares. Por tanto, los historiadores y críticos postcoloniales han marginalizado el papel de los movimientos religiosos anticoloniales a favor de los movimientos libretistas laicos, nacionalistas y marxistas, han evitado estudiar el lazo existente entre religión y colonialismo.

No obstante, el debate religioso que surgió después del 11 de septiembre empujó los historiadores y los críticos postcoloniales a controvertir de nuevo la cuestión de la religión. De hecho, dicho artículo intenta acercar entre el Islam y la teoría pos-colonialista, incluso presenta el Islam, de un lado como ideología movilizadora de los movimientos anticoloniales en el Magreb contemporáneo y de otro, lo concibe como herramienta colonialista usada por el colonizador para sostener su dominación.

Palabras clave: Islam, sufismo, salafismo, colonialismo, resistencia, post-colonialismo, el Magreb.