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IN SOUTHERN AFRICA**  
History, Contemporary State & Future Perspectives  
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**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 3<sup>RD</sup> INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS ON ISLAMIC CIVILISATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: HISTORY, CONTEMPORARY STATE & FUTURE PERSPECTIVES, SEPTEMBER 2022, CAPE TOWN, SOUTH AFRICA**

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# Preface

Prof. Dr. Mahmud Erol Kılıç  
*IRCICA Director General*

We are pleased to present the collection of articles resulting from the Third International Congress on "Islamic Civilization in Southern Africa: History, Contemporary State and Future Perspectives" to the attention of global scholarly community. The Congress was organized by IRCICA and the OIC General Secretariat in partnership with the National Awqaf Foundation of South Africa (Awqaf SA) and the University of Western Cape, in Cape Town, on 16-18 September 2022. Distinguished scholars and experts from around the world participated in this important academic event which comprised working sessions, panels and art exhibitions spread over three days. The Opening Ceremony was attended by the Minister of Economic Development of South Africa, Mr. Ebrahim Patel; the Mayor of Cape Town, Mr. Geordin Gwyn Hill-Lewis; the former Western Cape Premier, Ambassador Ebrahim Rasool; the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Western Cape, Prof. Annesh Singh, and many dignitaries from diplomatic, academic and media circles. A special feature of the Congress was the commemorative meetings and book launch sessions dedicated to the Muslim leaders of Southern Africa namely Shaykh Abu-Bakr Effendi (d. 1880), the Islamic scholar appointed by the Ottoman State to Southern Africa in 1863; Imam Abdullah Haron, who struggled for the cause of the Muslim community and died in 1969 under the Apartheid regime, and other personalities who devoted their lives to Islamic causes in Africa in different periods of history.

The aims of the Congress were to generate information and raise awareness about the history and cultural heritage of Islam in Southern Africa; encourage academic interest in this subject within and outside the region; throw light on unexplored aspects of history and culture relevant for academic studies; and highlight the history of cultural

relations between Southern Africa and other regions around the world. It is my sincere belief that the outcomes achieved by the Congress will continue to contribute to these objectives and the present publication is another step in this direction. The remarkable thematic diversity of the papers collected in this Book of Proceedings accomplished the desired results of the Congress and is expected to stimulate further interest for studies in this field. Another remarkable aspect of the Congress was the systematic international cooperation invested in its organization. IRCICA and Awqaf SA have jointly instituted a tradition of serial International Congresses on "Islamic Civilization in Southern Africa". In this context, the First Congress was held in cooperation with Johannesburg University, in Johannesburg on 1-3 September 2006 and its proceedings were published in 2009. The second Congress was organized by the two institutions jointly with the University of Kwazulu-Natal (UKZN) and the International Peace College South Africa (IPSA) in Durban on 4-6 March 2016; the resulting book was published in 2019. Awqaf SA and IRCICA also coordinated an international online conference on the same theme on 17 October 2020, as a prelude to the third Congress. Owing to this continuous collaboration, and with the contributions of the participating universities, cultural and media institutions, scholars and researchers, the project reached its present phase with growing momentum. Furthermore, institutional collaboration between Awqaf SA and IRCICA is not limited to the organization of congresses but also involves other joint projects. Following the third Congress, the two institutions collaborated in the publication of the book *The Crescent at the Cape: The True Story of Abu-Bakr Effendi, 1814-1880* by Dr. Shafiq Morton, who is a renowned historian, author and media editor in South Africa. The first edition of Dr. Morton's book was published in 2022 and launched during the Cape Town Congress. Its second edition was published in 2023.

On this occasion, I would like to underline the importance of these serial Congresses within the framework of activities realized by IRCICA across the globe. The scope of our Centre's activities covers 57 OIC Member States located in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and South

America, as well as Muslim communities and minorities living in non-OIC countries. In the context of Africa, congresses on the History of Islamic Civilization focus on four main regions: West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, and Southern Africa. For the first three regions, international congresses were held in Senegal (1996), Nigeria (2018) and Niger (2019) in West Africa; Chad (2019) in Central Africa; Uganda (2003) and Zanzibar (2013) in East Africa. Other congresses are planned for the coming years, to be held in different countries with local partners. These events cover a wide range of subjects, including the history of Islamic culture, education and sciences; eminent scholars, teachers and authors; educational institutions and Islamic studies; arts and architecture; economic developments and international relations. Similarly, the Cape Town Congress addressed various aspects of Islamic history, culture and development in the Southern African context, highlighting the role of its Muslim communities in the progress of Islamic civilization, and their relationships with other countries and peoples of the Muslim world. Academic presentations were followed by fruitful discussions, where recommendations were formulated for the development of research and information on these subjects. I would like to renew my sincere thanks and appreciation to Awqaf SA and the University of Cape Town for the excellent collaboration extended to IRCICA in the organization and follow-up of the Congress. Special thanks are due to the paper presenters and authors of the articles, as well as Prof. Abubakar Abdullah Senghore, Prof. Muhammed Haron, Prof. Sadık Ünay and the IRCICA staff for their editorial contributions. We are looking forward to continuous collaboration in the future.



## **Part I: Historical and Cultural Heritage**



# Hamidia Islamic Society and Civil Resistance in British South Africa (1906-1909)

Ebrahim Salie\*

## Introduction

Unlike Surendra Bhana,<sup>1</sup> Bala Pillay,<sup>2</sup> Maureen Swan,<sup>3</sup> and Surendra Bhana and Goolam Vahed,<sup>4</sup> in this article, the first attempt will be made, by using primary unprinted and printed sources, to analyse the formation of Hadje Ojer Ally's pro-Pan Islamism merchant class Hamidia Islamic Society (HIS) in 1906. Also we will show how the Holy Qur'an and, among others, Hadje Ojer Ally and Imam Abdul Kadir Bawazeer, as members of a Muslim organization (HIS), (i) effected a shift from the "politics of petitioning" to the "politics of *satyagraha*" (passive resistance), that is, constitutional reformist protest and civil disobedience not only bent on protecting commercial interests but also Islam; as Muslims, they were not only ostracized on the basis of colour and country but they were also excluded on the grounds of their religious identity, (ii) furnished the initial infrastructure and financing for the first organized Islamic resistance to British imperialism in the former Transvaal Boer Republic and passive resistance in South Africa, (iii) played a key role as devout Muslims, immensely contributing to the promotion of Muslim culture and Muslim-Hindu unity and fighting for the Muslim passive resistance prisoners' rights to pray and fast during the holy month of Ramadan in 1909 and, (iv) served as the backbone of the first passive resistance campaign against British pseudo-liberalism, discrimination, and oppression, against "Indians" and Islam at the southern tip of

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\* Independent South African historian and archival researcher.

1 Surendra Bhana, "The Tolstoy Farm: Gandhi's Experiment in 'Co-operative Commonwealth'", *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 7 no. 1 (1975): 88-100.

2 Bala Pillay, *British Indians in the Transvaal: Trade, Politics and Imperial Relations 1885-1906*, (London: Longmans, 1976).

3 Maureen Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1985).

4 Goolam Vahed, *The Making of a Political Reformer: Gandhi in South Africa, 1893-1914* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2005).

Africa in the early twentieth century since the establishment of his Hamidia Islamic Society in 1906 up until the struggle for the rights of Muslim passive resistance in 1909.

### Historical Context

Both indentured "Indians" and "voluntary"<sup>5</sup> "Indian" immigrants who arrived in British South Africa since 1860 were subjected to many injustices; they were derogatorily and wrongly referred to by whites as "Arabs,"<sup>6</sup> "Bombay Traders" (especially the Gujrati commercial elite), "coolies" (whether high-caste "Indians" or not), and viewed as an "Asian menace". They were held responsible for the spread of urban squalor, portrayed as a risk to public health, and perceived as a threat to white traders. Moreover, building restrictions and sanitation codes (such as laws relating to the subdivision and overcrowding of social and commercial property) were used against "Indians" in an attempt to curtail their economic advancement and restrict them to certain social spaces. For example, attempts were made to segregate them into "locations". They were also stripped of political rights, subjected to a permit system to control their freedom of movement, and had to observe implemented curfews in Durban and Pietermaritzburg municipalities; in addition, they were responsible for the payment of

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5 Defined as "passenger" Indians, who included males, females, children, Gujarati [Muslim] Bombay traders, mineral water manufacturers and the laboring poor (fruit and vegetable hawkers, butchers, shop assistant, shoemakers, priests etc.), and who paid their own way to the colonies of South Africa as opposed to the indentured who came under contracts to work in in Natal. See U. Dhupelia-Mesthrie, "The Passenger Indian as Worker: Indian immigrants in Cape Town in the Early Twentieth Century, *African Studies*, vol. 68, no.1, (2009):114 [111-134]. In fact, as for the place of origin of "passenger" Indians, the 1911 census shows that only 25,9 % were born in the Bombay Presidency, which suggests that many Cape Town Indians may have come directly from India. The census also shows Madras, Bengal, and Punjab as the other major places of origins. See Bhana, Surendra and Brain, Joy, *Setting Down Roots: Indian Migrants in South Africa, 1860-1911*, (Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1990), 126-127. Lastly, nearly all Tamil-speaking Hindus had migrated from Natal, presumably as free Indians, whereas most Gujarati-speakers had come direct from Surat. See C. M. Brand, "Solidarity Patterns in a Minority Group: A Study of the Indian Community in the Cape Peninsula" (MA. Thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1966), 93. In short, the dominating image of the "passenger" as a migrant of much resource, influence and investment is historically inaccurate.

6 Probably attributable to their mode of dress as well as their religious affiliation. See Maureen Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1985), 3. Hereafter, cited as "Gandhi: The South African Experience"

a compulsory 'poll tax' of £3 that was employed to encourage repatriation to India.

The ending of the South African War (1899–1902) spelled a deathblow to non-white freedom, accompanied by non-white disillusion with England's duty to spread openness, equality, and freedom.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, the introduction and implementation of restrictive immigration laws (which, amongst others, included fingerprinting as a form of identification) and the outbreak of the plague epidemic [the Bubonic Plague, (1901 & 1904)] became ideal opportunities for promoting white supremacy<sup>8</sup> and segregationist solutions to social problems such as urban racial segregation.<sup>9</sup>

Among the latter, the authorities imposed urban racial segregation, and this was accompanied by the dislocation of the Muslim community and the disastrous socio-economic consequences of the South African War (1899-1902);<sup>10</sup> the latter aggravated class, racial, and religious discrimination as well as ethnic classification<sup>11</sup> and opposition to the

7 André Odendaal, *Vukani Bantu! The Beginnings of Black Protest Politics in South Africa to 1912* (Cape Town, Johannesburg: David Philip, 1984), 37-39; Bill Nasson, *Abraham Esau's War: A Black South African War in the Cape, 1899-1902* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 186-189, and Diana Cammack, *The Rand at War, 1899-1902: The Witwatersrand and the Anglo-Boer War* (London: James Currey, 1990), 199-200.

8 The "sanitation syndrome" was more than a metaphor. It was a powerful agency for change because it was deeply embedded in the consciousness of Victorian society and provided a scientific rationalisation for the separation of the races and the assertion of white, British, dominance. See Van Heyningen, Elizabeth Boudina, "Public Health and Society in Cape Town 1880-1910", (Ph.D. dissertation, Department of History. University of Cape Town. 1989, ii.).

9 Maynard Swanson, "The Sanitation Syndrome: Bubonic Plague and Urban Native Policy in the Cape Colony, 1900-1909", *Journal of African History*, vol. XVIII no. 3 (1977): 387-410.

10 The war was fought essentially in the interests of mining capitalism. In the post-war period, thus, Britain attempted to create a modernized state compatible with the needs of mining capital. Therefore, the essential aim of Britain's reconstruction plans after the war, was not to engineer social changes in the interest of South Africa's non-white population, since the latter will stifle capitalist development, and weaken the consolidation of white supremacy. See Peter Warwick, *The Black People and the South African War 1899-1902* (Johannesburg: Ravan Press (Pty) Ltd., 1983), 182-184.

11 Thus, discriminatory legislation of the former Boer Republics, were largely maintained by the British and in some instances, reinforced and extended. The Imperial Government in London accepted the right of self-governing colonies to determine their own future, which included the right to be a "white man's country". See Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery: The Export of Indian Labour Overseas, 1830-1920* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 286. Thus, while the British

enfranchisement of non-whites by non-official, nominated local members of the Transvaal legislature. This was despite the fact that the imperial British government supported a class-based and colour-blind franchise, which would have given educated and "civilized" non-white British subjects the vote. Hence, Muslim immigrant "Indians", in particular, complained about the "half-educated white men [who] have no historical knowledge of the great coloured races of the world but [who] despise all alike, and [therefore] resent that [they] should accumulate capital, improve their status, or aspire to any rights of equality of treatment."<sup>12</sup>

In fact, the fate of "Indians" differed from region to region within the same colony. In Cape Town, for example, while "Indians enjoyed ordinary civil liberty", allowing Muslims "to keep their heads covered while attending sittings of the legislative Council as a mark of respect" a contentious issue was raised because "Mahommedans did not permit Christians to enter their mosque without taking their boots off, so why should [we] extend a privilege when it was not given to Christians?" However, a general motion was passed that allowed Muslims to keep their heads covered in the Cape Town House of Parliament.<sup>13</sup> The same controversy occurred in the Kimberley Court in 1895.<sup>14</sup>

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government sympathised with the determination of white settlers to prevent large scale influx of Asiatics with "alien" customs and cultures, the Colonial Office was reluctant to sanction legislation which was exclusionist on the specific grounds of race and colour. Edna Bradlow, "Prejudice, Minority Rights and the Survival of a Community: Indians in South Africa", *South African Historical Journal*, vol. 24 (1991): 204. However, ultimately, most decisions tipped in favour of the former for, firstly, "... the Home Government and the people of England did not have the will to redress the grievances of British Indians at whatever hands they may be suffering..." (*The Times*, 30 November 1906, quoted in Bala Pillay, *British Indians in the Transvaal: Trade, Race Relations and Imperial Policy in Republican and Colonial Transvaal 1885-1906* (London: Longman, 1976), 220 and, secondly, "... an alien race ["Asiatic immigrants"]... cannot be assimilated into social relationships with either the present white or black population, without disastrous and unthinkable consequences to civilization." See H. J. Crocker, "Notes on the Asian Question", *African Monthly*, vol. 3 no. 16, (1908): 349. Former Boer Republics, were largely maintained by the British and in some instances, reinforced and extended.

12 *Indian Opinion*, 18/2/1905, 02, col.3, "Indians in South Africa".

13 *Indian Opinion*, 3/6/1905, 347, cols.1-2, "Moslems in the cape House of parliament allowed to keep their heads covered."

14 Muslims ("Malay" and "Indian") of Kimberley (Griqualand -West, Diamond Fields) protests against resident magistrate, who ordered them to remove their fezzes in court. To them this was tantamount to "reforming the Moslems and teaching them European manners (*Diamond-Fields Advertiser*, 20/11/1895, p.5, col.7. "Letter to editor

Nevertheless, according to Hesham Neamatollah Effendi (d.1945), who was the then President of the Moslem Association of South Africa, the issue of removing the head covering in the Cape Parliament was confined to British South Africa; when Effendi visited the House of Lords and the House of Commons in England in 1904, he stated that, "I was never asked to remove my cap or even a suggestion to that effect."<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, in his January 1906 letter to the Colonial Secretary in Pretoria, Abdul Gani, chairperson of the British Indian Association [BIA], protested against the Draft Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance published in the Government Gazette dated the 22<sup>nd</sup> instant, as:

Section 2 sets the seal of approval on the part of the British Government on the insulting and false definition of the term "Asiatic" given by Law 3 of 1885<sup>16</sup>, which ignorantly includes the so-called Coolies, Arabs,

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by "A Moslem Priest"). Police officials at the resident court ordered Muslims, who refused to remove their fezzes in court, to remove their boots, "in order that some respect might be shown to the court." (*Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 23/11/1895, p.5, col.4, "Magistrate and Moslem"). Eventually, Muslims were, allowed to keep on their fezzes and boots, as a Hindu 'fire-worshipper', was allowed to keep his hat on." (*Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 30/11/1895, p.9, col.5, "Hats off in Court" (Letter to the editor by "The Truth").

15 *Cape Argus*, 19 May 1905,4, col.7, "Moslem Customs: Letter to the Editor by Neamatollah Effendi, President of Moslem Association of South Africa."

16 "Law 3 of 1885 as amended in 1886 is applicable to Asiatics, including "Coolies, Malays, Arabs, and Mahomedan subjects of the Turkish Empire", and as interpreted by the Supreme Court of the Transvaal, (1) confines as to residence those who come under it to locations or streets set specially apart for them, for a breach of which provision there is no sanction provided in the law and which is therefore nugatory in effect, (2) deprives them of burgher rights, (3) deprives them of right of ownership of fixed property except in locations and streets before referred to, and (4) requires those who may settle in the Transvaal for purposes of trade or otherwise to pay a fee of £3 and be registered within eight days of their arrival." See Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 5 [6 November 1905—3 November 1906], Doc.#407." Representation to Lord Elgin: Letter by M. K. Gandhi & H. O. Ally [members of the Transvaal Indian Delegation) to the Right Honourable The earl of Elgin, Colonial Office, London. 31 October 1906, 449-450 (pp.448-458)].

In fact, between 1885 and 1895, the Law 3 of 1885 practically remained a dead letter, although the Boer Government always threatened to enforce it. The question of the interpretation of Law 3 of 1885 was left to the courts of the *Zuid-Afrikaanshe Republiek* [Z.A.R.]. British "Indians" appealed to the British Government for protection. The British government, however, was satisfied with the amended version of Law 3 of 1885 and it included sanitary conditions to achieve its goals, as the latter were bent on the protection of public health, though it recognized that the law was still a contravention of the 14th Article of the London Convention. See I. E. Jaffer,

Malays, and Mahomedan subjects of the Turkish Dominion". Such a definition is degrading to the Asiatics, in that it takes note only of Coolies and perpetuates the use of the term as applied to all the inhabitants of Asia. The definition is false because there are hardly any Arabs and Mahomedan subjects of the Turkish Dominion, and does grave injustice to the Malays who have never yet been molested under Law 3 of 1885 and who have not suffered the misfortune in common with British Indians of being classed as competitors in trade with the Europeans.<sup>17</sup>

He echoed the same sentiment a few months later, in September 1906, with the launching of the Hamidia Islamic Society and the issuing of the "Gaal Resolution". We quote:

... in this country, the doors are open to the whites and Christians, even if they be foreign nationals. In their view, the whites are descended from Heaven and we, they think, have come from another place. This Bill is most objectionable. If it is passed, I solemnly declare that I will never get myself registered again and will be the first to go to gaol.<sup>18</sup>

A month later, in October 1906, the South African Moslem Association, under H. N. Effendi, criticized the Natal Immigration Authorities for subjecting Malays to the Immigration Act. Malays and Asiatics were separately classified in the Returns of the Immigration Restriction Department. Yet Hadje Abdullah Brown, an English convert to Islam, was subjected to restrictive immigration laws because he wore the "Mohammedan Fez."<sup>19</sup> This clearly indicates that

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"Muslims in Pretoria during the 19th Century" in *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Islamic Civilization in Southern Africa, Johannesburg, South Africa, 1-3 September 2006*, edited by Muhammad Haron and S. Essop Dangor, (Istanbul: Research Centre for Islamic History, Art, and Culture, 2009), 138 [pp.133-141]. Thus, it was in the enforcement of the infamous Law 3 of 1880, by the British, which showed up the true nature of imperialism and the "virtues" of liberal government.

- 17 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 5 [6 November 1905—3 November 1906] (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961). Doc.# 288. Letter of Abdul Gani, Chairperson of the British Indian Association to the Colonial Secretary, Pretoria, 314 (pp.313-316). *Indian Opinion*, 9/1/1906.
- 18 *Ibid.*, Vol.5 (6 November 1905—3 November 1906), Doc.#324, "Johannesburg Letter: Gaol Resolution", 359 (pp.356-362). *Indian Opinion*, 22/9/1906.
- 19 *The Cape Argus* (Weekly Edition), 5/10/1906,10, "S.A. Moslem Association". In fact, two years earlier, in 1904, at a meeting of the South African Moslem Association against constituting part of a "South African Citizens' Defence Committee" H. N. Effendi, focused more on the "the position of the Cape-born Moslems" vis-à-vis "any legislation in the Transvaal affecting the liberty of persons styled "Asiatics". In the

discrimination was also based on practicing a non-Christian religion. In fact, H. O. Ally, in his farewell letter to the editor of the *Indian Opinion* in 1907, said that he was leaving the British Transvaal Colony because he refused to submit to the Asiatic Registration Act, for "as a good Moslem, it is not possible to see Turkish Moslems insulted whilst Turkish Jews and Christians were exempted."<sup>20</sup>

To make matters worse, "Indians" were not permitted to "walk on footpaths, [despite the fact that] the Union Jack wafts over Bloemfontein [for] it affords no shelter to British "Indians" who [are] shunned like parrot[s] in East London."<sup>21</sup> In fact, according to H. J. Crocker: "Restrictive legislation... is primarily based on... the principle of maintaining here, ethnically uncorrupted, the claims of Western against Eastern civilization and upon the necessity for arresting the tide of Mohammedanism which threatens to sweep over the African continent as it swept over Western Asia in an earlier stage of world-development."<sup>22</sup> Most significantly, the Honourable Marharul Haque's reflection on the lot of British "Indian" Muslims in the Transvaal Colony in the Imperial Council in London in 1910 clearly showed how ill-fated legislation, especially after the South African War, 1899–1902, not only discriminated on the grounds of colour and ethnic nationality but also negatively impacted the Muslim faith. To quote:

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Transvaal he was styled an Asiatic "simply because he is a Mohammed and wears a red cap, or fez." But he "protested against being put on the same footing as those who really are Asiatic, [as] he his parents... and his great grand-parents, had been born in South Africa... [while] the Asiatics were born in Asia and lived in Asia for a greater part of their lives." Hence, "The Cape-born Moslems are no Asiatics, [and therefore], why should they live in a location? ... we are not Asiatics but Afrikanders; why should the law [Immigration] apply to us?" He argued further that Cape Moslems are styled Asiatics in Natal, and as such, "suffer under all the disabilities of the immigration laws that applied to the natives of Asia." He then used a few examples to illustrate his point: "Hadj Brown, an Englishman converted to Islam, was refused under the immigration laws a passage to Natal, when he wore his red fez. He was allowed a free passage, when he wore a hat! He (N. H. Effendi) himself fell prey to the wrath of Immigration laws of Natal, when he was "not allowed to go on to the ship, [to wish his friend Hadji Brown farewell], because he wore a fez." (*The Cape Argus* (Weekly Edition), 20/7/1904,<sup>11</sup> "A Moslem Meeting: No Asiatics").

20 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.7 (15 June 1907–12 December 1907), Doc.#91, "Ally's Letter", 122-123, and *Indian Opinion*, 10/8/1907, p.319, cols.1-2, "Mr. Ally's Letter to the Editor".

21 *Indian Opinion*, 31/12/1904,3, cols.1-3, and *ibid.*, 4, cols.1-2, "Yearly Balance Sheet".

22 H. J. Crocker, "Notes on the Asiatic Question: The Transvaal Standpoint", *African Monthly* 3, no.16, March 1908, 351[339-351and 452-462].

One of the most loudly-proclaimed reasons for the Boer War was the ill-treatment of the Indians by the Dutch government... [but] the lot of the Indian after the war is worst... The religion of Islam itself has been attacked. Our Hindu, Parsi, Christian, and Buddhist brethren, are ostracized on the ground of their colour and country only, *but we Musselmans have been excluded on the ground of our religion... This is an insult which no Mohammedan can brook without protest.* Our religion is not a philosophical abstraction nor is it a creed of idealism. It is a religion which enters the stern realities of every-day life. It pervades and models our very existence. If Islam is insulted in one corner of the globe, it sends a thrill of indignation into the hearts of all its votaries throughout the world. Have these [white] colonists counted the cost to the [British] Empire by their ill-fated legislation?<sup>23</sup> [my emphasis]

Thus, in the British Transvaal colony, whites discriminated against Muslim "Indians". For example, the exclusively white Potchefstroom Vigilance Association, at a general meeting held at the Royal Hotel in December 1904, passed a resolution that not only called for the boycotting of 'Indian' businesses and colonial firms to stop doing business with 'Indians', but also for "pressuring the Johannesburg Council to prevent [them] from erecting a mosque within yards of the market square."<sup>24</sup> Four months earlier, in August 1904, the Pretoria Mosque Committee of Hajie Habib objected vehemently to the British government's desire "to take over mosque property in Pretoria in its name as it was contrary to the Mohammedan religion to have any property for religious purposes held in the name of a non-Mahomedan."<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, Abdul Gani, who was the chairperson of the British Indian Association (B.I.A.), in a letter in January 1906 to the Colonial Secretary in Pretoria, protested against the Draft Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance, one that was published in the Government Gazette dated the 22nd instant. It stated that "Section 2 sets the seal of approval on the part of the British Government on the insulting and false definition of the term "Asian", given by Law 3 of 1885, which ignorantly includes the so-called Coolies, Arabs, Malays, and Mahomedan subjects of the Turkish Dominion". More significantly, it

23 Extract from a speech reflecting on the lot of the Muslims in the Transvaal Colony, made by the Honourable Marharul Haque in the Imperial Council in London. *Indian Opinion*, 14/5/1910, p. 161, cols.1-2, "A Mahomedan Protest: The Transvaal's Insult to Islam."

24 *The Indian Opinion*, 31/12/1904,4 col.3, and p.5, cols.1-3, "Potchefstroom Vigilantes."

25 *The Indian Opinion*, 27 /8/1904,4, cols.4-5, "Pretoria Mosque".

"does grave injustice to the Malays who have never yet been molested under Law 3 of 1885 and who have not suffered the misfortune in common with British Indians of being classed as competitors in trade with the Europeans."<sup>26</sup> Abdul Gani echoed the same sentiment a few months later, in September 1906, at the launching of the Hamidia Islamic Society and the issuing of the "Goal Resolution," when he said, "In this country, the doors are open to the whites and Christians, even if they be foreign nationals."<sup>27</sup> To summarize, European injustice manifested itself in the form of the draconian pass system, the literary tests for "Asians", the creation of "Coolie" locations, immigration restriction laws, and the compulsory finger-print registration for those of Asian or Oriental descent.

Thus, attempts to instill a sense of religiosity, particularly "Muslimness", were, therefore, accompanied by draconian British legislation and sanitary measures aimed at promoting Anglo-Saxon ideas about "class and civilization", scientific racism, and social Darwinism. It also, therefore, allowed them to draw on the discourse of an ancient religious and social tradition, which helped them ethnically mobilize themselves; but, at the same time, these assisted them in discussing, enacting, and defending their religiosity; in the case of Muslim Indians, they defended Islam.

Hence, invoking "Indianness" occurred by way of corresponding with their "mother country", which kept the idea of "home" alive; discussing, enacting, and defending cultural and religious performances brought from India in order to forge a common cultural ethos and identity; forging links with political leaders in India who championed their struggle against oppression in British South Africa; and attempting to construct an idea of "comradeship" and "collectivism" amongst "Indian" South Africans in order to build an alternative political platform. Hence, the founding of a newspaper, *The Indian Opinion*, in 1903 used Indian history, politics, and religious texts to constantly invoke images of the "Motherland", and these were

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26 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.5 [6 November 1905-3 November 1906] (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961). Doc.# 288. Letter of Abdul Gani, Chairperson of the British Indian Association to the Colonial Secretary, Pretoria, 314 (pp.313-316). *Indian Opinion*, 9/1/1906.

27 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* vol. 5 (6 November 1905-3 November 1906), Doc.#324, "Johannesburg Letter: Gaol Resolution", 359 (pp. 356-362). *Indian Opinion*, 22/9/1906.

used to show pride in India's ancient traditions, which, in turn, reinforced the popular imagination among them in South Africa.

Similarly, through the founding of the *African Chronicle* in 1908 by P. S. Aiyar, a South Indian journalist, important links with "home" were formed.<sup>28</sup> Alongside these, extensive coverage of religious practices and the interpretation of religious texts were stressed, thus re-establishing a sense of religious authenticity (denied to them by the British) in South Africa, and this reflected the close relationship that existed between religion and politics. In the same breath, religious figures were invited to South Africa "to keep India alive in people's minds", and to form ways of imagining "how to be "Indian" through discussions of religious observations. And lastly, invoking also assisted "Indian" Muslims to discuss, enact, and defend their religion. Hence, invoking "Indianness" did not only include ethnic mobilization but also the discussion, enactment, and defence of religiosity, in particular Islam. That new *modus operandi*, among others, facilitated the meshing of Hindu and Islamic scriptures by Mahatma Gandhi. The Qur'an, the Sufi tradition, and the Ramayana and the Bhakti tradition, as Gandhi understood them, conveyed images and symbols that made sense in the immediate context of "Indian" suffering in British South Africa.

Consequently, all the above-mentioned factors played no small role in the establishment of Hadje Ojer Ally's merchant-class Hamidia Islamic Society, and the commencement of the first passive resistance campaign in South Africa against British pseudo-liberalism, discrimination, and oppression. The strategy shifted from the "politics of petitioning" to the "politics of *satyagraha*", with prayer, fasting, spiritual purity, non-violence, and providential guidance as its essential constituents. Muslims, Hindus, Christians, and Parsees invoked a common "struggle narrative", bent upon the destruction of a "common evil". Hence, we will be critically analysing the formation of Hadje Ojer Ally's Hamidia Islamic Society in 1906 and the role played by Hadje Ojer Ally and his successor Imam Abdul Kadir Bawazeer therein up until 1909.

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28 Surendra Bhana and Vahed Goolam, *The Making of a Political Reformer: Gandhi in South Africa, 1893-1914* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2005), 15. Hereafter, cited as, "The Making of a Political Reformer".

## The Formation of the Hamidia Islamic Society in 1906

Initially, the Hamidia Islamic Society was formed by Hadje Ojer Ally as a benevolent society in order to assist the poor among Muslims and remove their special hardship through social regeneration. Its presence was a necessity in the sense that, at that juncture, there were no social welfare organizations in the Transvaal tending to the needs of Muslims. Also, much of the structure of Muslim society was dislocated by the ravages of the Bubonic Plague (1904), the government's deliberate policy of urban segregation, which forced "Asians" into urban ghettos, and by the outbreak of the South African War (1899–1922) the latter initially caused many "Asians", "Africans", and "Coloureds" to flee the Transvaal but who, in the aftermath of the war, were wrestling with the problem of re-integration into Transvaal society.<sup>29</sup> Its formation was also determined by "greatly helping" the Muslims, who were backward in education, and appealing to them to do their best to overcome this disadvantage.<sup>30</sup>

Nevertheless, the Hamidia Islamic Society soon became a pro-Pan-Islamic movement<sup>31</sup> that served as an important political platform for the commencement of the first passive resistance campaign in South Africa against British oppression. Under the chairmanship of Hadje Ojer Ally, the passive resistance movement's ideology was expounded, tactics were reviewed, and the commitment to resistance was constantly reaffirmed at all meetings convened by the Hamidia Islamic Society. The latter, therefore, played a crucial role in mobilizing every aspect of "Asian" society—be it the powerful merchant class (Gujerati

29 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 6 (5 November 1906-12 June 1907), (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1961). Doc.# 129, "[Letter of M. K. Gandhi and Hadje Ojeer Ally] to the Private Secretary of the Earl of Eglin, on 20 November 1906: The Petition", 129-130 [pp.126-133].

30 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 5 (6 November 1905-3 November 1906), Doc.# 278. "[Gandhi's] Speech at Hamidia Islamic Society, on 12 August 1906", 304 [pp.303-304], *Indian Opinion*, 25/8/1906.

31 The delegates on behalf of the British Indians in the Transvaal rejected a petition drawn up by Dr. William Godfrey, an "Indian" trained, Edinburgh University educated medical doctor, and signed by 437 Indians, accusing, amongst others, the Hamidia Islamic Society of being a "politico-religious body which has its object, recognition of the Sultan as both spiritual and political head of Moslems." See Fatima Meer, ed. *The South African Gandhi: An Abstract of the Speeches and Writings of M. K. Gandhi 1893-1914* (Durban: Institute for Black Research, University of Natal. 1995), 643.

Muslims), Hindu Tamils (mostly hawkers and workers), petty traders, Christian "Indians" (mostly Catholics), Muslim comrades world-wide, and Buddhist Chinese—which eventually led to the taking of the famous Forth Resolution (the "Passive Resistance Pledge") at the Empire Theatre on September 11, 1906, and ultimately to the commencement of the first passive resistance campaign in South Africa.

Thus, the Hamidia Islamic Society not only served as an important organizational base for first passive resistance, but also served as a social welfare organization that was determined to assist non-white refugees with "social regeneration" and integration into a post-South African War Transvaal society. Support from the local "Indian" community for the Hamidia Islamic Society, therefore, became axiomatic and inevitable. In fact, in October 1906, it was described as being in a flourishing condition with several hundred Muslim members. Its eventual gain in membership was largely attributed to the fact that it played a crucial role in mobilizing the merchant class (Gujerati Muslims), Hindu Tamils (mostly hawkers and workers), and petty traders against the August 1906 Transvaal Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance. The latter required all "Asiatics", eight years of age or older, to carry passes and be finger-printed. Any police officer could demand the passes and, failing to do so, make the carrier liable to a fine of £100,000 or three-months imprisonment. The Ordinance also prohibited the immigration of new "Asians" into the Transvaal, enforced trade and residential segregation, and severely jeopardized the rights of those who had lived in the Transvaal prior to the South African War (1899–1902).

### **Hadje Ojer Ally's Departure from the Transvaal British Colony**

Hadje Ojer Ally departed from the Transvaal for the following reasons: First, after the September 1906 meeting, he was faced with increasingly mutually exclusive demands, namely: from the largely Hindu Tamil-speaking community, who accused him of bolstering up the Ottoman Empire and Pan-Islamism; and from his own conscience and "goal-pledge", whereby he committed himself to ending injustice, even to the point of risking imprisonment, as he had lost confidence in human endeavour to eradicate injustice. But he did not fear going to prison, for, in a speech at a protest meeting at the Empire Theatre in Johannesburg on September 11, 1906, he made it very clear that, "In

Cape Town, I exercised the right to vote and other rights as well." He qualified for the municipal and political vote and, therefore, had freedom of political expression and "more opportunities than others to win rights and safeguard them"<sup>32</sup> but in the Transvaal Colony, he felt like he was "under police surveillance". Hence, "nowhere, except here in the Transvaal, have I seen such oppression of our people. [Therefore] we ["Indians"] will not take up rifles as they [Boers] did, but like them, we shall go to gaol."<sup>33</sup> Thus, to him, "liberal" Britain had deserted her subjects and had left them to the mercy of Boer oppression. He, like Mahatma Gandhi and the "Indian" intelligentsia, was "content with whites ruling the Transvaal colony, but do feel that we are entitled to all the other ordinary rights that a British subject should enjoy."<sup>34</sup>

### Imam Abdul Kadir Bawazeer and Moulvi Syed Ahmad Mukhtiar

Hadje Ojer Ally's departure from the Transvaal Colony in 1907 coincided with the emergence of several religious figures —around the same time the 'satyagraha campaign' began in earnest— who were key supporters of the passive resistance movement, namely: Hamidia Mosque's Imam Abdul Qadir Bawazeer, Assistant "Preacher" who succeeded him as chairperson of the Hamidia Islamic Society. Thus, Ally's departure from the Transvaal did not spell an end to the Hamidia Islamic Society.<sup>35</sup> On the contrary, the appointment of Imam Bawazeer clearly indicated that the duty of the imam of the attached

32 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.7 (15 June 1907—12 December 1907), Doc.#139, "Cape Town Indians", 173. *Indian Opinion*, 31/8/1907. To many "Indians" the Cape Colony "became their naturalized home... in which they had lived and hope to have lives in undisturbed quietness... until [the tabling of the Asiatic Registration Bill] and the discussion in parliament of more drastic measures of 'bazaars for the Indians' [in Cape Town] which brought an end to this laudable and humane broad-mindedness which silver-lined the greatness of the British nation..." (*Cape Times*, 25/5/1903, p.9, cols.7-9. "The Indian League -Meeting Last Night- Aliens Immigration Act: Proposal 'Bazaars: Vigorous Protests").

33 *Indian Opinion*, 22 /9/1906, 678, col.1. "The Mass Meeting: Telling Speeches: We'll Go to Gaol".

34 L. E. Neame, *"The Asiatic Danger" in the Colonies* (London: George Routledge & Sons, Ltd, 1907), "Appendix VI", 173-174. Hereafter cited as "The Asiatic Danger", and NLSA Cd—3308, Transvaal: Correspondence relating to legislation affecting Asiatics in the Transvaal, "Proceedings of interview between the Secretary of State and a deputation on behalf of British Indians resident in the Transvaal", 18 November 1906, 43-44.

35 Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience* (Johannesburg: Raven Press, 1985), 120.

Hamidia Mosque was not only to lead prayer meetings but also to lead the Muslim brethren against “earthly tyrants” and unjust legislation through intensifying the “righteous war” (*jihad*) started by Ally and M. K. Gandhi.<sup>36</sup>

Indeed, he, like Ally, regarded finger-print impressions of people as contrary to Islamic law (*shariah*)<sup>37</sup> and that going to prison was the “best course”. Thus, he worked with extraordinary courage to engage in a “righteous war”. Consequently, he believed, like Moulvi Syed Ahmad Mukhtiar, who was a member of the Habibia Moslem Society<sup>38</sup> and the Muzan Afghan Society founded both in Cape Town<sup>39</sup> and Surti

36 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.7 (15 June 1907—12 December 1907), Doc # 34. “Mass meeting at Pretoria”, 45 [pp.43-45], *Indian Opinion*, 6/7/1907.

37 *Rand Daily Mail*, 15/1/1908,7, col.7, ‘At the Court: Fifty Asiatics Dealt With’.

38 At the inauguration of the Habibia Moslem Society of Cape Town at the Chiappini Street Hall, in Cape Town, its chairperson, E. J. Gabrow, stated its aims, namely: (i) “wielding together the different nations professing Mohammadanism”; (ii) “elevating them in all essentials of life”; and (iii) “assisting those whom unpreventable misfortune had overtaken.” (*Cape Argus*, 7/1/1909,6, col.1. “A New Moslem Society”). Thus, at a large and influential meeting of the members of the Habibia Moslem Society of Cape Town held in their Hall in Pontac Street, Cape Town, presided over by A. L. Gabru, a resolution was passed by Molvi Ahmed Mukhtar, acting chief priest in the Transvaal, bent on, “protecting Indians against imprisonment, and other indignities [because] of our race and nationality... under the civilized system of government and under the British flag.” (*Cape Argus*, 10/2/1909, 3, col.4, “The Habibia Moslem Society of Cape Town”). In March, the next month, Ahmed Ally, vice-chairperson of the Habibia Moslem Society, extended his cordial greetings to the Hamidia Islamic Society of Johannesburg, and bid it to “be strong in the fight and not be discouraged in their struggle for the course of righteousness and justice, and for the dethronement of wrong.” (*Cape Argus*, 10/3/1909, 3, col.4. “The Habibia Moslem Society of Cape Town”). A few months later, in July 1909, they held a special meeting in Cape Town “for the purpose of protesting against the ill-treatment of British Indian Mahomedans in the Transvaal, and the sudden and unwarranted arrests of several well-known Mahomedan merchants who were to be appointed as delegates to England and India...” (*Indian Opinion*, 3/7/1909,238, col.1. “Cape Mahomedans: Supporting Transvaal Mahomedans”). They also appealed to the Imperial Government and the Indian Government “to give sympathetic consideration to the deputations that have proceeded, on behalf of the British Indians of the Transvaal, to England and India, and end the unfortunate struggle [waged] for the past two-and-a-half years, causing to hundreds of British Indian families untold suffering and great pecuniary loss.” (*Indian Opinion*, 31/7/1909, 337, col.1. “Cape Town Habibia Moslem Society”, and KAB: GH 23/115, ref.no. 168. Re: deputation of British Indian subjects which proceeded to England and India, 24 July 1909, folios 167-171.)

39 *The Indian Opinion*, 15/4/1909, 3, col. 5, “Islamism: An Educational Movement”.

Mosque in Johannesburg,<sup>40</sup> that “the duty of a priest was not merely to lead prayers but also to share fully the hardships of the people.” Hence, Imam Bawazeer and Moulvi Mukhtiar believed that “those running into the field of battle cannot listen to men who keep themselves at home.”<sup>41</sup> Consequently, both offered prayers in the mosques that God “should help us if we are right” and appealed to Muslims that “With Him [God] on one’s side, one will never suffer defeat.”<sup>42</sup>

Moreover, under Imam Bawazeer’s chairpersonship of the Hamidia Islamic Society, women were also drawn into the struggle and showed immense solidarity and support for their jailed husbands.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, unlike Ally, he was one of the few Muslim leaders who joined Mohandas K. Gandhi in the latter’s attempts at forging Hindu-Muslim unity; they did this by, for instance, reading from the Qur’an while simultaneously singing the Islamic version of Gandhi’s favourite composition, “Vaishnava Jana”, and by replacing “Vaishnava” with the word “Muslim”.<sup>44</sup> Thus, he, like M.K. Gandhi, believed that a passive resister, “by placing faith in God only, should give up the love for money and wealth.”<sup>45</sup>

He, therefore, sympathized with the families of prisoners for their suffering and imprisonment by the unjust Transvaal Government in July 1908. In fact, way before Ally departed for Cape Town in August 1907, he warned that the Asiatic Law Amendment Act “applies to all “Indians” but with double rigour to the Mahomedans in that it specially insults our religion and hurts the self-respect of Mahomedan “Indians” of the community. Therefore, he called for “a joint battle [by

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40 *The Indian Opinion*, 25/1/1908, 51, cols. 2-3, “Mohammedan Priest Ordered Out”, and *Rand Daily Mail*, 15/1/1908, 7, col.6, “Indian Law Breakers”.

41 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 7 (15 June 1907—12 December 1907), Doc.#68, “Ally’s mistake”, 91 [pp.89-91], *Indian Opinion*, 27 7/1907.

42 Mahatma Gandhi, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 7 (15 June 1907-12 December 1907) Doc.# 156. Johannesburg letter: Hamida Society, 191 [pp.190-194], *Indian Opinion*, 7/9/1907.

43 *Cape Argus*, 30/1/1908, 6, col.7, “Indian Women: Want to go to Goal with Their Husbands.”

44 Surendra Bhana and Goolam Vahed, *The Making of a Political Reformer: Gandhi in South Africa, 1893-1914*. (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2005), 87.

45 Sushila Nayar, *Mahatma Gandhi: Satyagraha at Work*, vol. 4 (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1989), 682.

Muslims and Hindus] to be waged against prejudice and oppression."<sup>46</sup> On July 21, 1908, a day after *satyagraha* began, Imam Bawazeer, in his capacity as chairperson of the Hamidia Islamic Society, was arrested and convicted for "hawk[ing] without a licence" [as] he could not bear to think that he was free while his brethren who were obliged to take out a licence were in goal." After his imprisonment, a meeting was held in an open space near the court. A few days later, it was resolved that all Indian shops were to be closed and all work to be suspended all over South Africa.<sup>47</sup> Fifty percent of "Indian" hawkers in the Transvaal traded in defiance of the law, without licenses. Many of them had yielded to Ally's call to reject Gandhi's compromise with General Jan C. Smuts, which according to Ally included, among others, voluntary registration, and therefore had not given "Indians" "honour and responsibility" and "victory of the truth", but "had ruined them [the Muslim traders]."<sup>48</sup>

### Ill-treatment and Reactions

Passive resistance prisoners were given a mielie-pap diet — a "native kaffir's diet" which was "unsuited to Indians".<sup>49</sup> Vegetables were served mostly with potatoes. No ghee was allowed at all. Prisoners were entitled to red meat twice a week. However, because "most of us were either vegetarians or could not take the meat as it was not religiously cut", they were obliged to have "one pound of vegetables", which "did not last long." Hence, the diet they were forced to accept "constipated some of us and gave diarrhea to the others."<sup>50</sup>

46 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.7 (15 June 1907—12 December 1907), Doc # 115, "Appeal to Indian Muslims, on 19 August 1907, Johannesburg", 145-146, *Indian Opinion*, 31/8/1907.

47 Ibid. vol. 8 (14 December 1907—22 July 1908). Doc.# 271. "Johannesburg Letter: Imam Saheb arrested, 21 July 1908", 474[pp.472-477], *Indian Opinion*, 25/7/1908.

48 Ibid., vol. 8 (14 December 1907—22 July 1908), Doc.# 85. Letter to General Smuts, Johannesburg, 22 February 1908, 163-165. [Enclosure] Draft Immigration Restriction Bill to amend act No. 15 of 1907, 165-166. *Indian Opinion*, 4/7/1908. and Ibid., vol. 9, *Indian Opinion*, 21/3/1908.

49 The diet of prisoners was proven to be "unsuitable and inadequate to sustain health", according to Dr. J. van Niekerk at the request of the British Indian Association. *The Indian Opinion*, 30 October 1909, 476, cols. 2-3, "The Diet Scale".

50 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 8 (14 December 1907—22 July 1908), Doc.# 92. "My gaol experience[-1]: The Meals, 184 [pp.183-184, *Indian Opinion*, 7/3/1908.

What is significant is that the prison's governor "professed helplessness by regulation" [while] being "quite willing to respect any religious objections." The dietary scale had been "fixed without due regard for the national habits of Asiatics [and therefore], [p]rison life was horrible and people's tastes [were] not respected." Moreover, Indian prisoners received only twelve ounces of beans, but whites received the same quantity of beans and eight ounces of bread. Therefore, "they received a greater variety of superior or more expensive food."<sup>51</sup> During the holy Month of Ramadan, the Muslim passive resistance prisoners were subjected to wilful religious humiliation by the Transvaal colony's prison authorities. The attorney-general of the Transvaal colony refused to grant any concessions for Muslim prisoners during their month of Ramadan. For example, they were refused facilities for observing the fast<sup>52</sup> and any food before sunrise, so as to uphold "one of the most important of their obligations."<sup>53</sup> Moreover, their porridge was mixed with *haram* (prohibited) animal fat, and they were also denied weekly visitations by the Muslim priest Moulvi Ahmed Khan, though accredited ministers of the Christian churches were allowed that privilege.<sup>54</sup>

Muslim passive resistance prisoners were given insufficient clothing and inadequate accommodation, and they were treated as common hard-labour convicts.<sup>55</sup> And lastly, they were restricted to one mat and one blanket, manhandled by the "native wardens" placed in charge of them, and left unprotected against the bitter winter, leading to many suffering from "semi-starvation."<sup>56</sup> Passive Resistance prisoners transferred to the Diep Kloof were brought in a manure cart and forced to walk barefoot and bareheaded for nearly 3.2 kilometres

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51 Ibid. vol.8 (14 December 1907—22 July 1908), Doc.# 105. "My gaol experiences [-II]: Change in diet", 209, 210 [pp.209-210], *Indian Opinion*, 21/3/1908.

52 *Indian Opinion*, 12/2/1910,53, col.3, "Indian Moslems in the Transvaal".

53 *Indian Opinion*, 18/12/1909,545, cols.2-3, "Political Prisoners and Their Fast".

54 *Indian Opinion*, 16/10/1909,447, col.1, & Ibid., 448, col.2, "Moulvi's Visits Prohibited".

55 L.W. Ritchie, *An Outline of the Case of the British Indians in Transvaal* (London: Temple, 1909), 6.

56 *Indian Opinion*, 10/7/1909, 298, col.3 and Ibid., 299, col.1, "Rigorous Imprisonment Indeed". For example, Dawood Mahomed was released from Volksrust jail a month before his term of six months' rigorous imprisonment had expired suffering from rheumatism, brought on and aggravated by the excessive cold prevailing in Drakensberg, where the jail was situated. (*The Indian Opinion*, 17/7/1909, 309, col.1, "Owing to ill-health.").

without being given any breakfast.<sup>57</sup> Thus, passive resistance prisoners, particularly at Diepkloof prison, saw their "gratuitously harsh treatment" as "an attempt by the authorities to unfairly break down [their] resistance."<sup>58</sup> Moreover, Muslim prisoners who had been imprisoned in Johannesburg jail were publicly made to stand in a naked condition for a prolonged period in the presence of others and forced to bathe naked in the open air. In addition, they were coerced "to, on occasion, use a latrine and to use water kept in a receptacle specially used for that purpose".

In a letter to the Attorney-General, the Muslim-dominated British Indian Association (B.I.A.) and the Hamidia Islamic Society complained that the "Fast of Ramadan" had been "unscrupulously observed", as "the diet scale for Indian prisoners in the Transvaal prison system hardly provides sufficient food to keep body and soul together", which had deeply stirred the Muslim community. They desired that "a better meal should be provided every evening for the compatriots" or "that friends outside the jails should be permitted to supply such extra food."<sup>59</sup> According to Imam Bawazeer, "most of the passive resisters have lost weight owing to insufficiency of food, and especially owing to a lack of ghee as opposed to fat, which was interpreted by my community to mean that the government intends to starve into submission the conscientious objectors to the anti-Asian legislation of the Transvaal Colony."<sup>60</sup>

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57 *Indian Opinion*, 5/3/1910, 8, col.1, Letter of A.M. Cachalia, Chairman of the British Indian Association to the editor.

58 *Indian Opinion*, 12/2/1910, 53, col.3, "Indian Moslems in the Transvaal". NLSA: Cd-5663. *Transvaal: Further Correspondence: Asiatics in the Transvaal*, Enclosure in No. 110, Acting Chairperson, Hamidia Islamic Society to the Private secretary to the governor, 23 December 1909,72; TAB: GOV 1194, ref.no. PS 15/1/104/09 Acting chairman: Hamidia Islamic Society: Asiatics: transmitting a copy of 3 resolutions passed 19 December at a meeting of the Hamidia Islamic Society relative to certain action of the government in connection with the fast of Ramadthan, 23/12/1909, and TAB: GOV 1234, ref/no.PS 15/1/9/10: Hamidia Islamic Society. Asiatics: Treatment of Mohamedan prisoners during the fast of Ramadhan, 1910.

59 *Indian Opinion*, 25/9/1909, 413, cols.3, and *Ibid.*, 414, col.1, "The Fast Ramadhan".

60 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.10 [5 August 1909—9 April 1910], (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1963). Doc.# 255. "Letter to Colonial Secretary, February 23, 1910", 426 [pp.425-427], *Indian Opinion*, 5/3/1910.

Furthermore, Abdul Gani's<sup>61</sup> appeal to the British government to "provide Muslim passive resisters with a small relief"<sup>62</sup> against anti-Indian legislation fell on deaf ears; this was because the British recognized and supported local authorities in the British Transvaal that regarded and legislated Asiatics as "foreign immigrants", "practitioners of "polytheism", and "followers of a false prophet(s) with a 'non-western culture'" in the Transvaal Colony, and thus faced severe discrimination. Hence, the necessity for continued, orchestrated massive urban upheaval campaigns, which took the form of passive resistance. However, by October 1908, the Volksrust goal was overflowing with Muslim prisoners. The Governor of the Transvaal, therefore, furnished special permission for them to observe the fast in the month of Ramadan.<sup>63</sup> Hence, prison authorities allowed Muslims to "keep a clock and a light in their cell". Also, light work had been given to Muslims, while the sick was totally exempted from work. And lastly, orders had been issued permitting the Parsees to wear their customary shirt and sacred thread as well as their own cap.<sup>64</sup> Prison life was, nevertheless, a heavy cross to bear. But, though passive resisters, like "Kazi and Imam Bawazeer, were ill all the time, they were not broken in spirit, [as] [t]hey were happy to bear this particular kind of hardship for the sake of the motherland."<sup>65</sup> In fact, Imam Bawazeer's conduct in prison was influenced by his Islamic principles as opposed to the display of outward hatred. However, his "just quietism" did not mean acquiescing; for, on his release from the Diepkloof Prison, he

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61 Abdul Gani was the chairperson of the British Indian Association [BIA] and a comrade in the struggle against unjust legislation in the Transvaal colony alongside Gandhi and Ally.

62 *Indian Opinion*, 2/10/1909, 430, col.3, "Governor Appealed to: Re-Fast Ramadan".

63 TAB: GOV 1194, ref.no. PS 15/1/88/09. From Secretary of State: Date 9 October 1909. Technical advisor of Transvaal government views on observance of fast incorrect. Special rules prescribed to enable Moslems to uphold the fast, 1909, and TAB:GOV 1194, ref.no. PS 15/1/89/09. From Ministers: 13 October 1909. Asiatics Question of granting facilities to Indian prisoners to observe the Fast, 1909.

64 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909) Doc.# 115. Prisoners' Condition, 10 October 1908, 197 (pp.196-199). *Indian Opinion*, 17/10/1908, and TAB:GOV1194, ref.no. PS 15/1/88/09. From Secretary of State: Date 9 October 1909.: Technical advisor of Transvaal government views on observance of fast incorrect. Special rules prescribed to enable Moslems to uphold the fast, 1909.

65 *Ibid.*, vol. 9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909) Doc.# 176. "My Second Experience in Gaol: Illness in Gaol", 13 December 1908, 290 [pp.289-293], *Indian Opinion*, 30/1/1909.

lashed out against the injustice he experienced while being incarcerated by giving a graphic report on police brutality and prisoner ill-treatment by wardens to his organization's political wing, the BIA.

Thus, to Imam Bawazeer and the other satyagrahis—who had been sentenced to four days' imprisonment—"imprisonment had meant no hardship whatsoever for them." As a result, when they were released, "[t]hey were ready for a second, longer term of imprisonment... [for] it is truly wonderful that the Imam of a mosque should spend even an hour in jail in defence of a fundamental right."<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, despite "the carrying of loads of gravel from one place to another" and being forced against their will "to eat mealie-pup for breakfast every day", they "remain[ed] full of courage and [were] not worried by [the prospect of] imprisonment,"<sup>67</sup> according to Imam Bawazeer. Consequently, a resolution was passed by Imam Bawazeer and Hamidia Islamic Society many months later, on March 14, 1909, congratulating the release of passive resisters who had gone to jail for the sake of their religion and the welfare of their brethren. It was, therefore, the wish of the Hamidia Islamic Society to "follow the noble example thus set, and to [continue] the passive resistance struggle at any cost, until the government shall have granted relief."<sup>68</sup>

### **Transvaal Conciliation Committee & Its Consequences**

The exceedingly torrid prison conditions did not deter Ally and the Muslim prisoners from continuing their struggle against the Asiatic Regulation Act, for they regarded the oppressive legislation as "an unmeaning and wanton insult to Islam, and therefore, the Mohammedans are specifically determined to agitate for [its] repeal." Ally, after he read out the English translation of a speech by E. I. Aswat, who was the acting chairperson of the BIA, welcomed those passive resisters on their release from prison. He also condemned the Transvaal commissioner's findings on the death of one of the passive resisters, Nagappan, in detention, and he elaborated on how imprisonment and the memory of those who died in detention only

66 Ibid. vol.9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909), Doc.# 14, "Johannesburg Letter: Mass Meeting on Thursday", 17,18 [pp.17-25], *Indian Opinion*, 1/8/1908.

67 Ibid. vol.9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909), Doc.# 14, "Johannesburg Letter: Conditions in Prison", 20 [pp. 17-25], *Indian Opinion*, 1/8/1908.

68 NLSA: Cd—5663 Transvaal: *Further Correspondence: Asiatics in the Transvaal*, Enclosure in No. 9, The Hamidia Islamic Society to the Private Secretary to the governor, 18 March 1909, 6.

intensified resistance to injustice. According to Ally, British Cape Province was increasingly becoming an illiberal and "closed society", and thus was no different from the other British colonies of Transvaal and Orange Free State. Thus, Ally and Hadje Habib, both of whom had returned to the Transvaal Colony, set up a "Conciliation Committee", the Transvaal British Indian Conciliation Committee, at a meeting held at the Hamidia Islamic Society's Hall in June 1909. The meeting was well attended by the businessmen and political figureheads from Standerton, Pretoria, Zeerust, Krugersdorp, and Johannesburg. The Committee's goals were not in contradiction to the cause of *satyagraha* but complemented it, and it, therefore, received M. K. Gandhi's blessings. In other words, it was formed in order to "interpose between the government and passive resisters" and to serve as a haven "for those who did not see eye to eye with the methods employed by the passive resisters [and] for those who have found themselves unable to participate in the goal-going and other programmes of the *satyagraha* campaigns." In essence, "[t]he Conciliation Committee was formed in order to bring about conciliation between the (Transvaal) Government and the passive resisters."<sup>69</sup>

Therefore, Ally and Hadje Habib (the appointed president) desired that the formation of that Conciliation Committee "will show the authorities that there is no division in the [Indian] community and that there is no difference of opinion" and therefore, it would "help the cause of *satyagrahis* [by] bringing about the end of the struggle itself and [by] securing the release of the prisoners still serving their terms of imprisonment. Hence, the resolution proposed by Ally to set up that committee was "passed unanimously."<sup>70</sup> Moreover, a deputation of the Conciliation Committee—consisting of Abdol Ganie, Ally, Habib Motan, S. V. Thomas, Adam Desai, Ally Mohamed Khamisa, Jusab Ebrahim Gardi, and George Godfrey was set up to meet General Jan Christiaan Smuts, deputy leader of the *Het Volk* ("The People") Party and Colonial Secretary of the Transvaal Colony, with the following demands: the repeal of the obnoxious Asiatic Registration Act, the granting of equality with Europeans *vis-à-vis* immigration rights; the non-applicability of thumb impressions to all educated "Asians", the non-allowance of all business partners to be present when applying for

69 *Indian Opinion*, 26/6/1909, 279, col.1, "Notes on the Transvaal Struggle".

70 Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909), Doc.# 228, "Johannesburg Letter: British Indian Conciliation Committee", 368 [pp.367-369], *Indian Opinion*, 26/6/1909.

a license; the allowance of registration to occur within the Transvaal; the provision for the right to appeal to the Supreme Court against a ruling made by the local magistrate and the issuing of temporary permits, and the non-allowance of those who did not possess a permit to be required to adduce proof of three years' "domicility."<sup>71</sup> In essence, the Committee aimed at, *inter alia*, repealing the Asiatic Registration Act and other measures affecting the Asian community, and by implication ending the passive resistance campaigns and securing the release of political prisoners, while, simultaneously, retaining unity in the struggle.

Meanwhile, another deputation to England, led by Ally and Gandhi, was appointed to add voice to the discussions on the union of South African colonies scheduled to start shortly in London. However, the deputation failed dismally, as General Jan Christiaan Smuts refused to make concessions on essential demands. He, for example, agreed not to enforce the Act but he rejected to repeal it. That meant that one of the Conciliation Committee's main aims of securing the release of prisoners still serving their terms of imprisonment was rendered unrealisable, as it could only be brought about if the Act was repealed. Also, concessions were only offered on less important demands. He also agreed that only in "deserving" cases would permission be granted to educated men to enter the Transvaal colony. However, that concession proved highly trivial, as Transvaal authorities could in an *ad hoc* fashion apply the immigration regulations pertaining to "Indians". That meant that the destiny of "deserving" "Asian" educated men remained largely in the hands of immigration officers. In summary, Smuts refused to amend highly discriminatory regulations.<sup>72</sup> The Conciliation Committee was, therefore, superfluous and was advised to dissolve. Nevertheless, that did not imply its end, for the second resolution proposed now had to call for a petition to the Colonial Secretary in London for acceptance of its demands, which,

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71 *Indian Opinion*, 26/6/1909, 279, cols.1-2, "Notes on the Transvaal Struggle".

72 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909) Doc.#228, "Johannesburg Letter: British Indian Conciliation Committee", 379-383, *Indian Opinion*, 26/6/1909; *Indian Opinion*, 3/7/1909, 285, col.3 and 286, col.1, "The Conciliation Committee and General Smuts", *Indian Opinion*, 5/6/1909, 250, col.1, "A Conciliation Committee".

upon failure, would oblige members to “court imprisonment” — in that case, the issue of people not going to gaol would not arise.<sup>73</sup>

Hence, a mass meeting convened and assembled at the Hamidia Islamic Mosque in Johannesburg in December 1909 “had disproved the allegation that the “Indian” community was weakening [for]... A community with heroes like [Imam] Bawazeer cannot be said to have accepted defeat... [t]he strength of the *satyagrahi* lies entirely in self-suffering.”<sup>74</sup> Furthermore, “the vast majority of the community is completely in sympathy with the struggle, and that as passive resisters, and therefore as servers of the Truth, [they] have nothing to conceal.”<sup>75</sup>

Consequently, Gandhi, in a letter to Professor G. K. Gokhale in December 1909, referred to Imam Bawazeer as a “cultured Mahomedan priest” who was imprisoned with “[s]ome of the bravest Indians representing all races in Diepkloof Goal.”<sup>76</sup> He, however, “returned almost a physical wreck<sup>77</sup>, though a tower of strength to the cause, [but] the whole Indian community in general suffers in [his] sufferings.”<sup>78</sup> Thus his bravery and self-sacrifice were poignantly described: “The Hamidia Society and the Indian community as a whole

73 Ibid. vol. 9 (23 July 1908—4 August 1909), Doc.#228, “Johannesburg Letter; British Indian Conciliation Committee”, 368 [pp.367-369], *Indian Opinion*, 12/6/1909. For information on Ally, together with approximately 800 “Whites” and “Indians”, wishing *bon voyage* to Hadje Habib and M. K. Gandhi on their deputation’s departure by the *Imperial Mail* for Cape Town *en route* to England, see, *Indian Opinion*, 5/6/1909, 278, col.3, “Departure of the Deputation”.

74 Mahatma Gandhi *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 10 [5 August 1909—9 April 1910], (New Delhi: Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1963). Doc.#179, “Speech at Johannesburg, 5 December 1909”, 345 [pp.345-347], *Indian Opinion*, 11/12/1909.

75 *Indian Opinion*, 11/12/1909, 13, col.2, “Johannesburg Mass Meeting: Welcome to Delegates”.

76 Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol. 10 (5 August 1909—9 April 1910). Doc.#182. Letter to G. K. Gokhale, 6 December 1909, 350 [349-351].

77 Imam Bawazeer had suffered very severely. When he was extremely feverish and when he was obliged to report himself sick, the medical officer suggested, without even examining him, that he was shirking work; but when he indignantly repudiated the suggestion, his temperature was taken by the officer, and it was found to be 104 degrees. That alarmed the officer and he was placed in the prison hospital. As a consequent, he had lost 22 lbs. in weight, and was too weak to walk about only with difficulty. See Mahatma Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.10 (5 August 1909—9 April 1910). Doc.# 255. Letter to Colonial Secretary, February 23, 1910”, 426 [pp.425-427), *Indian Opinion*, 5/3/1910.

78 Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.10 (5 August 1909—9 April 1910). Doc.# 252. “Imam Saheb”, 422, *Indian Opinion*, 19/2/1910.

see that Imam Saheb has much to be proud of. He is reduced to health and has been afflicted with something; despite this, he has courted repeated terms of imprisonment. So long as the community has such brave men, who can say we'll be defeated?"<sup>79</sup> In light of the above-mentioned, it becomes evident that their treatment in Transvaal prisons were bent on "cruelly intensifying their punishment"<sup>80</sup> and not, as Maureen Swan has pointed out, "a by-product of cultural misunderstanding". It, therefore, can be logically argued that these punitive prison measures were complemented by "the imposition of heavy fines on "Indians", the seizure of goods of "Indian" merchants, and the forceful deportation to India of many "Indians by the Transvaal government."<sup>81</sup> Consequently, many wives and children of passive resisters were left destitute, and, therefore, "they were obliged to hawk fruit and vegetables in the streets."

What made matters worse was the Imperial Parliament's sanctioning of the Transvaal Government's and, in particular, the Council of Pretoria's attempts to "put old laws and [oppressive] regulations into effect."<sup>82</sup> In fact, according to the Imperial Government, "the self-governing colonies in [South Africa] had a right to exclude whom they willed."<sup>83</sup> So, "British Indians" lost faith in the Imperial Government in London to ameliorate their fate. In the words of the Natal Indian Congress at a mass meeting convened at the market in Durban in order to express its solidarity with fellows in the Transvaal on the imprisonment and on the sentencing to hard labour of Imam Abdol Bawazeer, chairperson of the Hamidia Islamic Society: "We believe in imperial protection, but where have we found it? Where is the King? He whom we call Raja? ... We see people suffering, almost dying, yet we do hear the welcome approach of a helper. We must rely on ourselves, and in the circumstances, we feel justified in pursuing this course of passive resistance."<sup>84</sup> And indeed, the struggle continued for the Hamidia Islamic Society, as its leadership remained committed to resistance despite the fact that, by May 1909, the vast majority of

79 Gandhi, *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, vol.10 (5 August 1909—9 April 1910). Doc.# 253. "Parsee Rustomjee", 423, *Indian Opinion*, 19/2/1910.

80 *Indian Opinion*, 12/2/1910, 53, col.3, "Indian Moslems in the Transvaal".

81 *Indian Opinion*, 12/2/1910, 53, col.3, "Indian Moslems in the Transvaal".

82 *Indian Opinion*, 14/5/1910, 156, col.2, "The Position of the Coloured People: Worse than it was Twelve Months Ago".

83 *Cape Argus*, 6/1/1909, 5, col.5. "Mr. Gandhi's Views: Passively fighting for a principle".

84 *African Chronicle (Supplement)*, 25/7/1908, 3, vol.1, "Mass Meeting Protest against Imprisonment and Persecution".

"British Indians" in the Transvaal rejected the path of resistance.<sup>85</sup> The resistance movement was, however, far from collapsing, as thousands continued to attend mass rallies or receptions for returning comrades, and even pledged their support to passive resistance, long after they had ceased actively supporting it.<sup>86</sup> In fact, Hamidia Islamic Society's key figures continued to court imprisonment again and again. For example, in June 1909, Ebrahim Saleji Coovadia, treasurer of the Hamidia Islamic Society and the BIA, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour for declining to pay the fine imposed. In that same month, Omar Saleji, Hamidia Islamic Society's vice-chairperson, was also sentenced to three months' imprisonment, but without hard labour owing to his advanced age<sup>87</sup>, while Dawood Mohammed, after being released from Volksrust prison a month before his term of six months' rigorous imprisonment had expired, vowed to continue the struggle immediately after his recovery.<sup>88</sup> Thus, to conclude, Ally on his return to the Transvaal Colony, was willing to suspend the passive resistance campaigns and negotiate with the Transvaal State. For that reason, he became a co-founder of the Transvaal British Indian Conciliation Committee. However, the Transvaal governor's cosmetic and superficial amendments, which merely "papered over the cracks", forced him to choose imprisonment and passive resistance as the most acceptable responses.

## Conclusion

Discussing, enacting, and defending their religious customs and beliefs, in particular Islam, by indentured, immigrant, and colonial-born "Indians" against the backdrop of increasing anti-"Muslim" legislation, sanitary measures bent on promoting Anglo-Saxon ideas on "class and civilization", scientific racism, and social Darwinism — manifested in the government's deliberate policy of urban segregation which forced "Asians" into urban ghettos—the outbreak of the South African War (1899–1902) resulted in, amongst others, social erosion of communities, which contributed to the establishment of Ally's Sunni-dominated, pro-Pan-Islamist, Hamidia Islamic Society. The last-

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85 Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience*, 175.

86 Swan, *Gandhi: The South African Experience*, 178.

87 *Indian Opinion*, 26/6/1909, 279, col.2, "More Imprisonments".

88 *Indian Opinion*, 17/7/1909, 309, col.2, "Owing to Ill-Health".

mentioned initially served as a social welfare organization that was dedicated to assist non-white refugees with "social regeneration" and integrate into a post-South African War Transvaal society, but later commenced the first passive resistance campaign in South Africa against British oppression. A shift has now occurred from the "politics of petitioning" to the "politics of *satyagraha*". The latter took the form of reformist, non-violent protest, and civil disobedience bent on forcing a change or securing concessions that not only protected their commercial interests but also Islam as their religious traditions—"Indian" Muslims were not only ostracized on the basis of colour and country but were also excluded on the basis of their religion.

Under Hadje Ojer Ally's chairpersonship, the ideology of the passive resistance movement was expounded, tactics were reviewed, and the commitment to resistance was constantly reaffirmed at all meetings convened by the Hamidia Islamic Society. Hadje Ojer Ally, however, departed from the Transvaal to a more liberal Cape Town in August 1907, as the Hindu Tamil-speaking community, in particular, accused him of supporting the Ottoman Empire and Pan-Islamism. Hadje Ojer Ally's departure from the Transvaal did not spell an end to Hamidia Islamic Society. On the contrary, he was succeeded by Imam Bawazeer, who, like Moulvi Syed Ahmad Mukhtiar of Cape Town, in particular, clearly defined their duty as not only leading prayer meetings but also leading their brothers against "earthly tyrants" and unjust legislation through intensifying the righteous war (*jihad*) started by Hadje Ojer Ally and M. K. Gandhi. Also, like Hadje Ojer Ally, he regarded fingerprint impressions as contrary to Islamic law (*shariah*) and saw imprisonment as the "best course" against British injustice. Furthermore, unlike Hadje Ojer Ally, he was one of the few Muslim leaders who joined Mohandas K. Gandhi in the latter's attempts at forging Hindu-Muslim unity. Thus, he called for "a joint battle [by Muslims and Hindus] to be waged against prejudice and oppression against us." Hence, on July 21, 1908, a day after *satyagraha* began, he, as the new chairperson of the Hamidia Islamic Society, was arrested and convicted for "hawk[ing] without a licence".

In fact, imprisonment did not break their spirit of resistance, as they were ready for a second, longer term of imprisonment. Moreover, Imam 'Abdul Bawazeer's conduct in prison was influenced by his Islamic principles as opposed to the display of "outward hatred". But his "just quietism" did not mean acquiescing; for, on his release from

the Diepkloof Prison, he, as leader of the Hamidia Islamic Society, lashed out against the injustice he experienced while being incarcerated by giving a graphic report on police brutality and prisoner ill-treatment by wardens to his organization's political wing, the BIA. Furthermore, ill-treatment in prison did not deter Hadje Ojer Ally and other Muslim "Indians" from continuing their struggle against the Asiatic Regulation Act, for they regarded the oppressive legislation as "a wanton insult to Islam", and therefore, "the Mohammedans are specifically determined to agitate for [its] repeal." Thus, Hadje Ojer Ally's return to the Transvaal— as the illiberal Cape Province treated "Indians" "in the same way as kaffirs"— led to him co-founding the Transvaal British Indian Conciliation Committee, bent on complementing *satyagraha's* cause in order to bring about conciliation between the Transvaal government and the passive resisters.

The deputation of the Conciliation Committee, set up to meet General Jan Christiaan Smuts' *vis-à-vis* "Indian" grievances, failed dismally, as Smuts agreed not to enforce the Act but refused to repeal it. That meant that one of the Conciliation Committee's main aims of securing the release of "Indian" prisoners still serving their terms of imprisonment was rendered unrealizable. The Conciliation Committee was, therefore, superfluous and was advised to dissolve. That did not imply the end of the Hamidia Islamic Society, as subsequently, a mass meeting convened and assembled at its mosque in Johannesburg in December 1909 and at that meeting it disproved the allegation that resistance had weakened, for the attendees believed that "a community with heroes like Imam Bawazeer cannot be said to have accepted defeat".

Worse, the Imperial Government in London believed that the self-governing British colonies in South Africa had the right to exclude whomever they chose. Thus, it sanctioned the Council of Pretoria's attempts to implement its old oppressive laws and regulations. Consequently, "British Indians" lost faith in the Imperial Government in London to ameliorate their fate. Thus, despite the fact that, by May 1909, the vast majority of "British Indians" in the Transvaal rejected the path of resistance, the struggle, nevertheless, continued for the Hamidia Islamic Society, as its leadership remained committed to resistance. Two years earlier, in September 1907, it was Moulvi Mukhtiar who urged "Indians" to firmly hold onto the rope of God to achieve victory from oppression ultimately. Hence, Gandhi, in

February 1908, praised “the massive effort of Hamidia Islamic Society and a large number of Muslims who worked hard for [securing a] victory” through the crucial role they had played in initiating successful passive resistance campaigns against anti-Asian legislation in the Transvaal. The resistance movement, therefore, was far from collapsing, as thousands continued to attend mass rallies or receptions for returning comrades and even pledged their support to passive resistance, long after they had ceased actively supporting it.

The society, especially under the leadership of Iman Bawazeer, not only continued the passive resistance struggle but it also initiated the first organized Islamic resistance to British imperialism in the former Transvaal Boer Republic by, among others, (a) fighting for the right of Muslim passive resistance prisoners to pray and fast particularly during the month of Ramadan; (b) defending the legitimacy of Muslim marriages (The Case of Adam vs. the Registrar of Asiatics 1911; the Case of Fabian Jussat vs. Rex 1912; and the case of Hassan Mohamed, 1912); (c) condemning Britain’s neutrality in the massacre of Muslims during the Italian-Turkish conflict of 1911-12; and, (d) organizing a mass meeting against the decision of the Transvaal High Court to deport Salomi Bhyat, a “Cape [Worcester-born] Malay” married to an “Indian” in 1912.

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# The Cultural Heritage of Islam in Mozambique: The Case of 'Ajamī Manuscript Culture

Chapane Mutiua\*

## Introduction

Based on literature review, fieldwork, and archival research, this article has a twofold aim. On the one hand, it examines the history of 'ajamī manuscript culture in Mozambique and, on the other, it describes its social role as cultural heritage of Mozambique's Muslim communities. Through that, it offers a descriptive narrative that forms part of the complex puzzles of Mozambican identity(ies). The territory of nowadays Mozambique had been already connected with the South-East Asian region and the wider Indian Ocean prior to Islam. With the advent of Islam in seventh century AD, Arab and Persian traders who carried the then new faith and religion brought it to the East, Central, and Southern Africa through their trading networks. Mozambique served as the main hub of trade between the wider Indian Ocean and Southern Africa. The routes of trade became the routes of Islam. This long history of Islam in Mozambique, although rich in sources and diverse in cultural manifestation through the local communities, is poorly represented in the country's historiography. It is officially part of the country's protected cultural heritage.

The article argues that 'ajamī manuscript culture in Mozambique is one of the most neglected elements of cultural heritage not only in the general public sphere but also among Muslims. Cultural heritage in Mozambique is officially defined and legally protected by the Decree 10/88 of 22<sup>nd</sup> December.<sup>1</sup> According to this decree, cultural heritage is defined as a set of material (tangible) and immaterial (intangible) goods or values produced or incorporated into local culture throughout history, which play an important role for the definition of

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1 República Popular de Moçambique 1988, 13-14.

national or indigenous cultural identity.<sup>2</sup> Adding to this legal and foundational approach, the Mozambican government approved a political instrument in 1997 to guide the paths of cultural management in national level, the “Política Cultural e suas estratégias de implementação” – cultural policy and its strategies of implementation - which highlights in ‘point 1’, the principle through which the state promotes the development of culture and national personalities; and guarantees free expression of the traditions and values of Mozambican societies. The policy defines culture as a complex group of ways of being, behaviour and relationship (Republic of Mozambique 1997, ‘point 1’). The document considers that culture is at the centre of social and economic development (‘point 2.1.a’). Combining the Decree 18/88 of 22<sup>nd</sup> of December and the “cultural policy,” we can assume that ‘*ajamī* manuscripts and the culture in which they are produced should be included in the large mosaic of Mozambican cultural heritage.

However, research undertaken along the last ten years in the area of ‘*ajamī* manuscript suggests that the academic approach and political discourse in Mozambique marginalizes the practice and the products of ‘*ajamī* literacy. In relation to the abovementioned framework, this essay is organized in four sections. The first section introduces and describes the history of establishment and development of the use of Arabic alphabet by the Muslim communities of Mozambique. The second section approaches different typologies of ‘*ajamī* manuscripts, the textual genres and layouts. The third section approaches the issues of materiality in the context of the Mozambican ‘*ajamī* manuscript culture. The fourth section explores issues concerned with the safeguarding of the tangible and intangible components of the Mozambican ‘*ajamī* manuscript culture. The article closes with some concluding lines and recommendations for future research.

### **‘*Ajamī* Manuscripts in Mozambique**

The term ‘*ajamī* is rooted in an Arabic word (عجمي) meaning foreigner or non-Arabic. It has historically developed as the use of Arabic script for the register of non-Arabic languages worldwide. In Africa, ‘*ajamī* occurs in several Muslim societies such as Swahili, Hausa, Kanuri, Bambara, Malinké, Yoruba, Soninké, Koti, Makuwa, Afrikaans, and Fulfulde among others. The development of ‘*ajamī* literacy in Mozambique is the result of the diffusion of Islam and

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Islamic education in the region. As approached above, Islam arrived in Mozambique during the first century of its revelation to the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). According to Trimingham,<sup>3</sup> the expansion of Islam in East Africa developed through three stages. The first stage, he classifies as the stage of "quarantine Islam". During this phase, Islam was confined to the coastal and commercial entrepôts where the Arab and Persian Muslim traders were settled and engaged with trade rather than the spread of Islam. The quarantine Islam period in the eastern coast of Africa started in the first century AH corresponding to seventh century AD and lasted until the fifth century AH corresponding to twelfth/thirteenth century AD.

The second stage of the expansion of Islam was termed the "court Islam". During this phase, Islam was voluntarily received by the African rulers (mainly those of the coast but also in the hinterland), who were in constant contact with Arab and Persian Muslim traders. The court Islam in Mozambique must have lasted from the fifth century AH (twelfth/thirteenth century AD) to the second half of the nineteenth century AD. During this period, many Muslim city-states were founded or/and developed along the coast of Mozambique. The final and third stage was termed the "popular Islam". During this period which starts from the second half of nineteenth century AD, Islam was spread from the court to the ordinary people through the *tariqa* networks. It is important to highlight that the two earlier stages of the expansion of Islam were characterized by limitations in the context of Islamic education which was non-inclusive (of the masses) and elitist. However, the stage of "popular Islam" was characterized by the spread of Muslim schools which adopted a more inclusive approach. Another dividing line between the "court Islam" and the "popular Islam" is marked by the shift from Arabic language to Kiswahili\* as the language of teaching and learning in the Qur'anic schools. This is also an important moment for the development of 'ajamī manuscript culture in the Swahili coast. However, this does not mean that Swahili 'ajamī manuscript did not exist before the second half of nineteenth century AD.

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<sup>3</sup> J. S. Trimingham, *Islam in East Africa* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964).

\* While "Swahili" can refer to the people, the culture, and the language, "Kiswahili" refers to the language alone. When speaking the language, the language is called "Kiswahili". The prefix "ki" refers to a language with any language. For example, the Swahili name for the English language is "Kiingereza". (ed.n.)

In fact, the earliest Swahili '*ajamī* manuscripts were produced during the period of "court Islam". *Qasida Hamziyya* a Swahili rendition of *Qasida al-Burda* composed by the Egyptian poet al-Būṣīrī and *Chuo cha Herekali* or *Utendi wa Tambuka* (composed/produced in 1728) by Bwana Mungu b. Athumani, another Swahili rendition of the Arabic poems about the stories of the battle of Tabuk are considered the earliest Swahili '*ajamī* literary productions (Knappert 1968), and they mark the transition from Arabic language to Kiswahili as the literary language of East African Muslims. The occurrence of these earlier translations and adaptations of Arabic literature, most of them from *maghazi* traditions to Swahili suggest that by this period (early eighteenth century) Kiswahili which was already established as a *lingua franca* in the spheres of trade and politics, was gradually assuming important role in the arena of literature, religious mediation and education. In nineteenth century, with the massive spread of Islamic education through the *turuq* followed by the above-mentioned shift in literary and educational language to Kiswahili, '*ajamī* literacy practice enjoyed its highest peak in northern Mozambican Muslim societies. Such development was witnessed by the huge numbers of the nineteenth century '*ajamī* correspondence,<sup>4</sup> and the abundance of *tenzi* poems most of which were composed in this period. The '*ajamī* literacy practice was also very active from the second half of nineteenth century to the 1990s. During this period, the northern Mozambican Muslim intellectuals not only imported the Swahili texts circulating in the western Indian Ocean, but they also composed poems, prose texts, and educational works of their own. Examples of these texts can be found in *Utenzi wa Naby Musa*, *Utenzi wa Nazajina*, *Utenzi wa Kaisari*, *Utenzi wa Tambuka* and *Utenzi wa Khupula*. These poems were vividly performed in public and private ceremonies in the regions of Angoche, Moma, Moginqual, Mussoril, Mozambique Island, and Nacala. Other examples of expansion and appropriation of '*ajamī* literature in northern Mozambique can be found in the local composed *qasida* or translation of Swahili and Arabic *qasida* into Emakhuwa and Ekoti.

The massive acceptance of '*ajamī* literature favoured the growth of '*ajamī* literacy practice in the coastal regions of Cabo Delgado and Nampula and the hinterland province of Niassa, all of them with a

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4 Chapane Mutiua, "Ajami Literacy, Class and Portuguese Pre-Colonial Administration in Northern Mozambique", (MA Dissertation, University of Cape Town, 2014) and Liazzat Bonate, "Tradition and Transition: Islam and Chiefship in Northern Mozambique, ca. 1850-1975", (PhD. Dissertation, Cape Town: 2007).

large majority of Muslim population. As a consequence, many Islamic scholars who specialized in scribal works played important roles in the context of 'ajami as well as overall Islamic manuscript culture. Scribes had the role of copying the manuscripts which were previously produced both locally and abroad. Their works were ordered under commission of local intellectuals who owned Qur'anic schools (in the case of teaching materials) and performing groups (in the case of *tenzi* poem manuscripts). The raising of importance of the scribes introduced a competitive approach among them which was based on the beautifulness of their writing and calligraphy. Some of the scribes became famous.

In the area of Angoche, for instance, the names of Abubakar b. Muhammad, Muhammad b. Abdallah, Omar b. Abdallah, Muhammad b. Saddiq and Molide b. Muhomade became references in the area of copying the manuscripts. Other scribes were referenced in commission of writing correspondence, a tradition that was adopted even in the Portuguese colonial administration with the creation of the position of *lingoas dos estado* or state official translators.<sup>5</sup> While the scribes of correspondence were also requested to have some notions of Kiswahili and Arabic languages which were still in use, the scribes of *tenzi* literature were only requested to have a beautiful *hati* (calligraphy). The work of the scribes emphasized the important role of traditional Qur'anic schools, locally termed as *kioni* or *chuo*, where handwriting and beautiful *hati* were cultivated since the earlier stages of education. According to Sheikh Hussein b. Hussein,<sup>6</sup> the use of *lipau* (*lawh*) was fundamental for the development of handwriting technics which together with memorization were considered as important tools for the earlier levels of Qur'anic education in the region. In this sense, traditional Qur'anic education was intimately connected with the development of 'ajami literacy practice in northern Mozambique in two aspects. On the one hand, the development of handwriting abilities within the system of traditional Qur'anic education prompted the creation of a class of scribes who produced and reproduced the manuscripts. On the other hand, the development of recitation and memorization also created the class of performers and interpreters of

5 Chapane Mutiua, "Swahili Manuscripts from Northern Mozambique: Some Notes on Ajami Correspondence Letters", in *One Text, Many Forms – A Comparative View of the Variability of Swahili Manuscripts*, edited by Ridder H. Samsom and Clarissa Vierke, (Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures Universität Hamburg 2021), 31.

6 interviewed in Angoche in 2019.

*tenzi* literature; that assumed the role of 'popular literature' between the 1960's and the 1980's in northern Mozambican Muslim societies.

*Tenzi* literature and correspondence were the most popular and well-spread products of '*ajamī* literacy practice in northern Mozambique. As mentioned above, its highest peak concerning the production and usage lasted until the late 1980s. In early 1990s, with the massive arrival of TV entertainment systems to the region<sup>7</sup> as well as the rise of a new wave of conservative Islamic perspective among the *ulama* in the country,<sup>8</sup> contributed to the dropping down of the practice of '*ajamī* literacy which was accentuated by the shift from traditional Qur'anic education to the modern *madrrasah*.<sup>9</sup>

The spread of TV entertainment in northern Mozambique was dynamized by the returners from the German Democratic Republic who introduced the TV and Video Home Systems (VHS) into the tents. The VHS tents attracted the masses who saw on them the opportunity to see TV recorded programs and movies. The arrival of VHS coincided with the rapid spread of the new wave of more conservative approaches whereby the *ulama* preached against the performance of *tenzi* poetry, *dhikr* and the recitation of *qasida* in the traditional way it was made before. Adding to this, and as mentioned above, the transformations made in the system of Muslim education promoted the abandonment of the use of *lipau* and introduced the blackboards and exercise books in the 'modern *madrrasah*'. This move is considered as the 'choke knot' that blocked the social reproduction of '*ajamī* literacy practice.<sup>10</sup>

Apart from the desertion of the traditional methods and tools of Islamic education such as the use of *lipau*, Hussein b. Hussein (interviewed in Angoche in 2019) points out that one of the most negative impacts on the '*ajamī* literacy practice originates from degradation of the relationship between the learner and the teacher within the system of Islamic education. According to this local intellectual, children do not have the patience to follow what the teachers say because the moral value that surrounded the whole system was broken and the use of black boards do not promote the practice of

7 This was said during interviews in Angoche.

8 See Liazzat Bonate, "Islamic Education in Mozambique", *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa*, no 9, (2006-7): 53-57.

9 Ibid., 56, for more details about the change from traditional Qur'anic education to modern *madrrasah*.

10 Interviews with Chame b. Jamal, Angoche 2019, and Hussein b. Hussein, Angoche, 2019.

beautiful *hati*. In addition, the current system of Islamic education is centred on a foreign curriculum since the books in use are produced and sponsored by foreign organization.<sup>11</sup> Another innovation accused of negatively impacting the 'ajamī literacy practice by the supporters of traditional system of *kioni* is introduction of training and salary payment for the teachers of madrassas. The training of teachers of the *madrasahs* is made through foreign programs. Unlike the previous system where the teachers of the *kioni* or *chuo* were working for the community without any fixed salary, the teachers in the current system of Muslim education earn salaries sponsored by foreign organizations. The current system is accused of de-nationalization of the youth by ignoring the local and national culture (Sheikh Tahiri, Nampula, 2022).<sup>12</sup> The disregard of local and national culture includes the marginalization of the 'ajamī literacy practice as well as the 'ajamī literature, considered as the emblematic symbol of the local and transregional identity of East African Muslim communities.<sup>13</sup> In the next section, I approach 'ajamī manuscript culture and literature focusing on the definition and typological analysis.

### Typology of 'Ajamī Manuscripts in Mozambique

Manuscript culture is a complex concept that is better understood from the cultural studies approach that views culture as a methodological guide for history and memory.<sup>14</sup> Confino adds that the concept of culture viewed in this way provides sources for the study of history and through this it paves the paths for the understanding of individual and collective identities.<sup>15</sup> This approach helps to understand how 'ajamī manuscript culture contributes to the construction of Mozambican identity and represents the legacy of Mozambican Islamic culture. Confino assists our argument in approaching 'ajamī manuscript culture as part of cultural heritage. This argument is complemented by Stryker and Burke's approach on the concept of identity as an object of scientific disciplines such as

11 Sheikh Tahiri, Nampula, 2022; speech given during the "Atelier Filosófico" on 15th of August 2022.

12 Speech given during the "Atelier Filosófico" on 15th of August 2022.

13 Chapane Mutiua, "Bridging the Land to the Sea: *Tenzi* Literature, Oral Historiography and the Construction of Identities from Late 19th Century Angoche", (PhD. Dissertation, Universität Hamburg, 2022), 18.

14 Alon Confino, "Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method", *The American Historical Review* 102, no. 5 (Dec., 1997): 1386.

15 Ibid.

history, sociology, psychology, cultural and literary studies,<sup>16</sup> which highlights the connection between culture, history, literacy and identity. Muhammad Haron contributed to this debate by arguing that manuscripts (or written artefacts) “are important because they lock away aspects of the past which can shed light on the present and future.”<sup>17</sup> The link between the past, present and future, is also the main role of cultural heritage in whatever shape and origin. However, the studies on ‘*ajamī*’ literacy in African societies has expanded the scope of the scientific disciplines related and fed by this phenomenon.

The extension of the scope of ‘*ajamī*’ script in African societies and in Mozambique, particularly, is due to its multiple use in diversified fields of social, political and spiritual interests. Many scholars have raised interest in African ‘*ajamī*’ studies, most of them with focus on religious education, literature and chancellery or epistolary documentation.<sup>18</sup> In Mozambique ‘*ajamī*’ manuscripts were first revealed in an unpublished paper by Jan Knappert who had received what he then termed as “Swahili manuscript in Arabic script on Islamic theology,”<sup>19</sup> which was probably shared by Eugeniusz Rzewuski. Nancy Hafkin and Eugeniusz Rzewuski pioneered the studies of Swahili ‘*ajamī*’ literature in Mozambique that were later continued by Liazzat Bonate and Chapane Mutiua.<sup>20</sup> The emphasis of this earlier

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16 S. Stryker, & P. J. Burke, “The Past, Present, and Future of an Identity Theory”, *Social Psychology Quarterly* 63, no. 4, (2000): 284.

17 Mohammed Haron, “The Making, Preservation and Study of South African Ajami MSS and Texts”, *Sudanic Africa*, vol. 12, (2001): 3.

18 see Dmitry Bondarev, “Qur’anic Exegesis in Old Kanembu: Linguistic Precision for Better Interpretation”, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies*, vol. XV, no. 3 (2013): 56-83; Nikolai Dobranravin, “Classical Hausa Glosses in a Nineteenth Century Qur’anic Manuscript: A Case of ‘Translational Reading’ in Sudanic Africa”, *Journal of Qur’anic Studies*, vol. XV, no. 3 (2013): 84-122; Darya Ogorodnikova, “Ajami Annotations in Bilingual and Manuscripts from Mande Speaking Areas: Visual and Linguistic Features”, *Islamic Africa*, vol. 8, (2017): 111-143; Xavier Luffin, “On the Swahili Documents in Arabic Script from the Congo (19th Century)”, *Swahili Forum*, vol. 14, (2007): 17-26.

19 Jan Knappert, *The Discovery of an Unknown Swahili Manuscript in Arabic Script on Islamic Theology in Mozambique*, [1991], Unpublished notice.

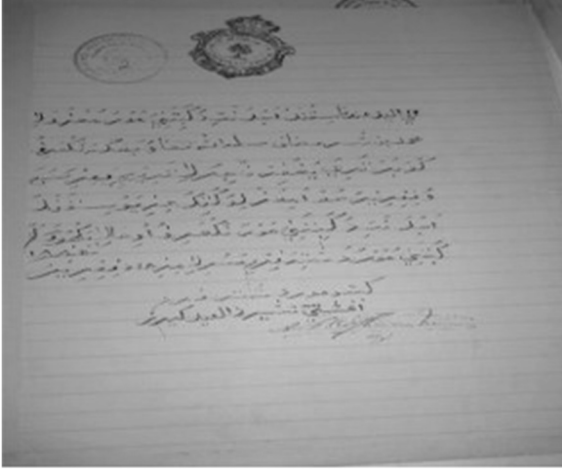
20 See Eugeniusz Rzewuski, “Asili ya Bangwana – origine des Mangwana. Enregistrement de la tradition orale relative a l’histoire de la communauté Musulmane de Kisangani”, *African Bulletin*, no. 21, Waszawa, (1974); Eugeniusz Rzewuski, Eugeniusz, “Origins of the Tungi Sultanate (Northern Mozambique) in the Light of Local Traditions”, in Stanislaw Pilaszewicz and Eugeniusz Rzewuski (eds.), *Unwritten Testimonies of the African Past: Proceedings of the International Symposium*

studies like in many other regions of Africa, was focused on the chancellery manuscripts, critical literary editions and the use of the content as historical sources. In the meantime, none of these studies have deepened the role of 'ajamī manuscripts of Mozambique as cultural heritage of Muslim communities. This article points to this direction by approaching Swahili 'ajamī manuscripts as both tangible and intangible cultural heritage of Muslim communities in Mozambique and as part of the *Moçambicanidade* or Mozambican identity. The 'ajamī manuscript culture in Mozambique comprises different genres of texts with different roles and functions in the society. The main genres of Mozambican 'ajamī manuscripts as mentioned above are the correspondence, poems and prose. These three categories or genres can also be classified according to the languages in which they are written. For instance, the correspondence exists in Kiswahili, Ekoti and Kimwani. The poems, exist in Kiswahili, Ekoti, Kimwani and Emakhuwa. Poetry and prose can also be divided into secular and religious categories.

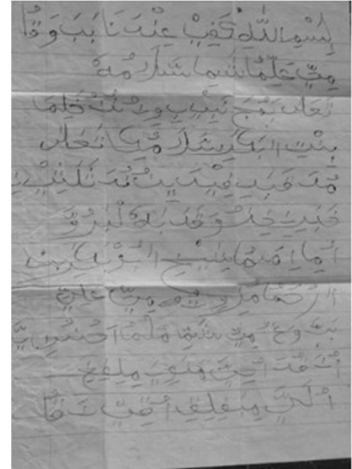
Most of the correspondence analysed in the context of this research were produced during the second half of nineteenth century and are currently held in the Arquivo Histórico de Moçambique/Mozambican Historical Archives (AHM). This collection is mainly in Swahili, Kimwani and some Ekoti, Emakhuwa and Portuguese loanwords. Below is an example of a nineteenth century 'ajamī correspondence. Muslim communities in northern Mozambique still used 'ajamī literacy for their interpersonal and long-distance correspondence at least until early 2000s. Some of these correspondences can be found in private collections and under the protection of family members.

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*held in Ojrzanón n. Warsaw on 07-08 November 1989, (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 1990): 193-213; and Eugeniusz Rzewuski, "Mothertongue/Fathertongue Convergence: Or Swahilization and Deswahilization in Mozambique", in James R. Dow and Thomas Stolz (orgs.), Aktes des 7 Essener Kolloquiums uber 'Minoritätensprachen/Sprachminoritäten', Universidade de Essen: Universitätsverlag, Bochum, (1991); Nancy Hafkin, Nancy, "Trade, Society, and Politics in Northern Mozambique, ca. 1753-1913", (PhD Dissertation, Boston: Boston University, 1973), Liazzat Bonate, "The Use of Arabic Script in Northern Mozambique", *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*, vol. 45, no. 1, (2008): 120-129; Chapane Mutiua, "Ajami Literacy, Class and Portuguese Pre-Colonial Administration in Northern Mozambique", (MA Diss. Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 2014) and Chapane Mutiua, "O Islão e o processo de literacia no norte de Moçambique entre os finais do século XIX e princípios do século XX", in Teresa Cruz e Silva and Isabel Maria Casimiro (eds.), *A ciência ao serviço do desenvolvimento? Experiências de países africanos falantes de língua oficial portuguesa*, Dakar: CODESRIA, (2015): 205-219.*



**Figure 1:** Letter from Agostinho Teixeira de Oliveira  
 Source: Arquivo Historico de Moçambique (AHM), Governo do distrito de Moçambique, Caixa (Box) 13, Maço (File) 4, 1863



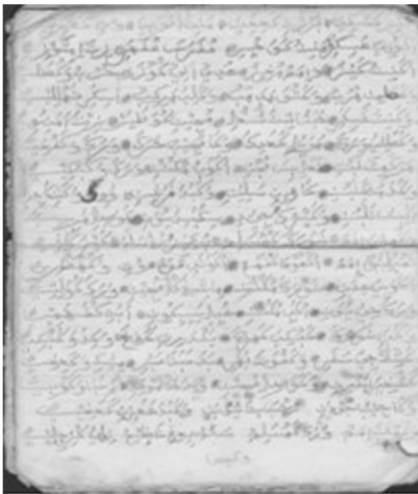
**Figure 2:** Letter from Seikh Abubakr b. Arham Mwinyi 'Ali  
 Source: Collection of Nunu Mahija binti 'Ali

The use of 'ajamī correspondence in Mozambique is also negatively impacted by the massification of mobile phones. Today, long-distance communication is facilitated both by text messages and voice calls. It seems consensual in local communities that the emergence of new communication technologies facilitates the communication system in local levels but it also undermines traditional ways of communication such as 'ajamī correspondence. One of the most popular genres of 'ajamī literature in Mozambique is the Swahili *tenzi* poetry. Developed from the translation and adaptation of Arabic traditional poetry that was inherited by Islam, *tenzi* poetry was widely spread in East Africa from the late eighteenth century. In northern Mozambique, the spread of *tenzi* poetry was also popularized by the emergence of Qadiriyya and Shadiliyya *туруq* (orders) in late nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup> Meanwhile, prior to the arrival of the two orders, 'ajamī literature was already spread to the local intellectual elite of northern Mozambique and it seems that it consisted mostly on the circulation of texts composed in northern Swahili coast. The available texts of *tenzi* poems composed in northern Mozambique sustain this argument.

For instance, *Utenzi wa Khupula*, a poem composed by Sheikh Yussuf b. Nura of Calukulo, in Angoche and talking about the

<sup>21</sup> Liazzat Bonate, "Tradition and Transition: Islam and Chiefship in Northern Mozambique, ca. 1850-1975", (PhD. Diss. Cape Town: UCT, 2007).

resistance of the Makhuwa-Swahili alliance in the former *Capitania-mor*<sup>22</sup> of Angoche was composed soon after the establishment of the *de facto* colonial administration in Angoche, in 1912. Another local composed *tenzi* poem is a version of *Utenzi wa Kaisari* which seems to have been composed after the end of the First World War. As mentioned above, according to the content or motif of composition, *tenzi* poems are classified into two categories: the religious and the secular. The two poems mentioned above are both secular and are also part of what José Arturo Saavedra Casco labels as “war poems” as they narrate about military confrontations.<sup>23</sup>



Utenzi wa Kaisari version from Mozambique Island



Utenzi wa Khupula, from Angoche

**Figure 3:** *Utenzi* Examples from Mozambique

Although these two poems seem to be the most popular in the regions of Angoche, Mozambique Island, Mussoril and Moma, the best known secular *tenzi* from or about Mozambique in the international context is *Utenzi vya vita ya Uhuru wa Msumbiji* (The Epic of the War for the Liberation of Mozambique) composed or published by Jumane Mayoka (1978). Mayoka is probably a Mozambican Makonde intellectual who was raised in southern Tanzania where the poem was

22 Captaincy – a administrative unit in the context of Portuguese colonial administration in Mozambique. The captaincy of Angoche included the current districts of Angoche, Moma, Moinqual and Mogovolas.

23 Saavedra Casco, *Utenzi, War Poems and the German Conquest of East Africa: Swahili Poetry as Historical Sources* (Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press, 2007).

published. Unfortunately, this poem is quite unknown in Mozambique historiography and we have never come across the text or manuscript of Mayoka's work which according to Saavedra Casco<sup>24</sup> can be found in Dar as-Salaam archives. Apart from the secular narrative *tenzi*, we also have the religious ones. Most of the religious *tenzi* found in northern Mozambique were composed in northern Swahili coast and some of them are the result of adaptation of Arabic *qasida* into Swahili narrative about the life and teachings of Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The most popular of these *tenzi* manuscripts are the *Utenzi wa Nazajina*, *Utenzi wa Tambuka* and *Utenzi wa Naby Musa*. *Utenzi wa Nazajina* and *Utenzi wa Naby Musa* are still in circulation within recitation and performance circles and several versions and copies were produced throughout the last seventy years.

In the meantime, the *Utenzi wa Tambuka* manuscript is considered as extinct by the local intellectuals. The latest manuscript of *Utenzi wa Tambuka* was reported in Tibane, in the district of Mozambique Island by Mussa "Na Tambuka" in 2013. According to him, the manuscript belonged to Emane Carsane who lived in Lunga, in the district of Mussoril. The book was inherited by his brother-in-law Hassane Yomwirana who performed with Musa "Na Tambuka". The manuscript disappeared soon after Hassane Yomwirana passed away. Worthy to highlight is the fact that *tambuka* in the concept presented by Musa "Na Tambuka" is a different text from the earlier *Utenzi wa Tambuka* or *Chuo cha Herekali* which circulated in the region in nineteenth



Utenzi in private archives in Angoche



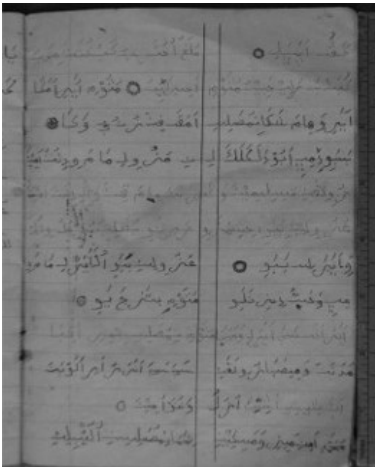
Utenzi wa Nazajina

**Figure 4:** Poems in Angoche's Private Archives

24 Ibid.

century AD. Musa's concept of *tambuka* which was shared by the latest declaimers of this "genre" is defined according to the style and the melody (*mahati*, in Ekoti and Emakhuwa) applied in the oral performance. The manuscript of *tambuka* described by Musa was written in the Arabic alphabet in Emakhuwa. Its motif of composition was based on different local stories and not the battle of Tabk which was the motif of the "original" Swahili *Utenzi wa Herekali*.

The fifth genre of 'ajamī manuscript that is worthy to mention apart from religious *tenzi*, secular *tenzi*, letter correspondence and prose mostly in the form of local *nasaba* is *qasida*. A well-known genre of elegiac poetry in the Muslim world, *qasida* appears in northern Mozambique in Arabic language but also in Kiswahili and Emakhuwa 'ajamī. Some of the *qasida* in Emakhuwa 'ajamī might have been translated from earlier Arabic or Swahili versions. However, the majority of them were locally composed. Below are some samples of *qasida* in Makhuwa 'ajamī.



**Figure 5:** A Qasida in Makhuwa Ajami  
Source: Collection from Raja Malua, Angoche.

### The Materiality of Manuscripts – The Tangible Component of 'Ajamī Manuscript Culture as Cultural Heritage

'Ajamī manuscript culture is viewed in this article as incorporating components of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. The tangible component in 'ajamī manuscript culture is constituted by the materiality of the manuscripts or written artefacts. The concept of

manuscript or written artefact used in this article is borrowed from the ideas of Jan Knappert and Graziano Krätli;<sup>25</sup> both consider the definition as basically framed by the technology used for its production. Krätli goes further by considering that a manuscript or written artefact is composed of two elements: the container and the content. Krätli emphasizes the role of the manuscript as a product of an 'individual act of writing' integrated in a broad cultural context and stresses the influential role of manuscripts on the culture in which they are produced.<sup>26</sup> Adding to this, Wimmer et al highlight<sup>27</sup> the role of manuscripts as containers of specific information and as cultural objects in their physical materiality.

In this sense, manuscript or written artefact of any type of script and in whatever language and genre has a double significance. On the one hand it represents the product of cultural practice, and on the other hand it plays a role as an agent of cultural conservation and transformation. Manuscripts viewed in these ways are part of both tangible and intangible cultural heritage. As an element of intangible cultural heritage, '*ajamī* manuscripts represent traces of the local intellectual history of a certain society in a given period while at the same time carrying information and knowledge from past, through present to future generations.

This means that '*ajamī* manuscripts are the agents of conservation, preservation and circulation of collective memory – the source and product of common cultural and historical references. As '*ajamī* literacy practices of whatever use (secular or religious) are framed in the context of Islam and Muslim education, they are a product and the core value of Islamic culture and thus, '*ajamī* manuscripts or written artefacts are among the most important and influential cultural heritage of each society in which they are produced. Muhammad Haron adds that "manuscripts are important because they contain

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25 Jan Knappert, "Swahili Literature in Arabic Script", *Manuscript of the Middle East*, vol. 4, (Leiden, 1989): 74, and Graziano Krätli, "What Makes a Manū Scriptus a Manuscript: Content Contained in Context", Paper Presented at the Training Workshop titled *Working with African Arabic-Script Manuscripts*, Northwestern Uni., Program of African Studies, (14-20 August 2017): 1-2.

26 Krätli (2017): 1-4.

27 Hanna Wimmer, Dmitry Bondarev, Janina Karolewski, and Vito Lorusso, "A Heuristic Tool for the Comparative Study of Manuscripts from Different Manuscript Cultures", 2015, [Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures– Occasional Paper No. 3, <https://doi.org/10.25592/uhhfdm.9800>], can be accessed [http://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/papers\\_e.html](http://www.manuscript-cultures.uni-hamburg.de/papers_e.html)

ideas of scholars who have seriously pondered over their subject matter but did not have the opportunity of making them readily available for students or readers."<sup>28</sup> Haron's approach highlights the importance of manuscripts as a medium for transmission of ideas and knowledge and as such they (manuscripts or written artefacts) become much more crucial for the study of the intellectual history of the society in which they are produced and/or circulated. The production of manuscripts is crucially determined by the content approached above and the material used. We have tried to highlight the relevance of the content which in the core argument of this study represents the intangible component of this type of cultural heritage. The material component (paper, ink, *lipau*, bamboo pen or *kalamu* in local languages of northern Mozambique) constitute what we consider as tangible components of the manuscript culture. However, Graziano Krätli highlights what he calls "the container" described as what contains the text of the manuscript (content).

In Krätli's approach it seems that the tangible element of the manuscript is limited to the paper, parchment, stones, wood, palm leaves or stretched animal skins in which the texts of manuscripts are written. However, the experience of research within the area of cultural studies highlights the centrality of cultural artefacts as the main results of the process of social construction.<sup>29</sup> Manuscript culture as a process of social construction embeds literacy practice and as such goes far beyond the container and the content. This is because cultural studies theory views literacy products such as 'ajamī manuscripts in twofold: on the one hand as cultural artefacts of a specific period and a specific culture,<sup>30</sup> and on the other hand as producers of identities and subjectivities in the context of power relations.<sup>31</sup> Borrowing Silva and Trindade<sup>32</sup> arguments, we need to consider the "intangible networks" created within the manuscript

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28 Muhammad Haron, "The Making, Preservation and Study of South African Ajami MSS and Texts", *Sudanic Africa*, vol. 12, (2001): 3.

29 Aleida Assmann, *Introduction to Cultural Studies: Topics, Concepts, Issues*, (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 2012).

30 Iole Maria Faviero Trindade, "Uma análise cultural de discursos sobre alfabetização e alfabetismo/letramento e suas representações", *Educação*, Santa Maria, vol. 32, no. 1, (2007): 43.

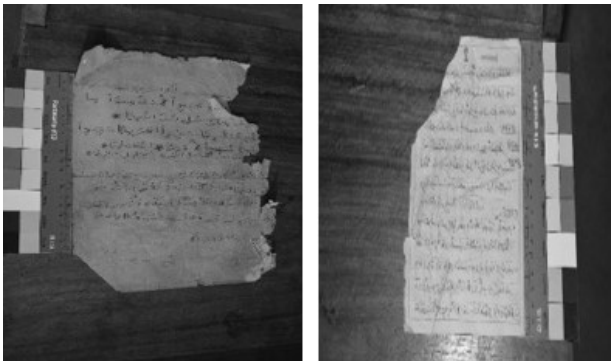
31 *Ibid.*, 42-43.

32 Iole Maria Faviero Trindade, "Uma análise cultural de discursos sobre alfabetização e alfabetismo/letramento e suas representações", *Educação*, Santa Maria, vol. 32, no. 1, (2007).

culture as part of intangible cultural heritage of Muslim societies in Mozambique and overall western Indian Ocean. This “intangible networks” are constructed through the circulation of manuscripts, ideas, and scholars and are crucial for the development of Islamic education, knowledge sharing and *'ajamī* literacy practice in Mozambique. Northern Mozambique *'ajamī* manuscripts as well as the manuscript culture in which they are produced play an important role in a society because “they lock away aspects of the past which can shed light on the present and future.”<sup>33</sup> As a social production which mediates the past, present and future aspiration of the society, *'ajamī* manuscripts represent intellectual cultural heritage which is important for the configuration of Mozambican Muslim identity.

### The Challenges of Safeguarding *'Ajamī* Manuscripts in Mozambique

Due to the reasons listed in in this study, such as the transformations within the system of Muslim education, the impact of new religious approaches and the massification of the use of new technologies (TVs, computers, smart phones), the *'ajamī* manuscript culture in northern Mozambique is facing a crisis which can be described by the interruption of the *'ajamī* literacy practice. The disruption of *'ajamī* literacy practice in northern Mozambique is explained by the lack of social reproduction of scribes, declaimers and composers of *'ajamī* literature. The misuse of the *'ajamī* manuscripts has led to its neglect and to the destruction of huge collections



**Figure 6:** Damaged Angoche Manuscripts Samples of Manuscripts

33 Muhammad Haron, “The Making, Preservation and Study of South African Ajami MSS and Texts”, *Sudanic Africa*, vol. 12 (2001): 3.

which were held by the families of local scholars. A great number of manuscripts were inherited by the young *ulama* who found them useless and considered most of them as out of the ambit of Islamic faith. While other manuscripts were inherited by the people who do not know how to use and conserve them, the remaining collections are thus in very bad conditions of conservation with a sentence to a silence and slow death.

## Conclusion

We have attempted to draw the main lines of the history of manuscript cultures in Mozambique. However, due to the limitations of the national historiography in the study of Islam and Islamic culture, the argument has focused on the northern Mozambican region where we have conducted research. The overlooking of Islam in the historiography of Mozambique is an inheritance of colonial impact and post-independent communist ideology. Its visible impact is the marginalization of Islamic culture.

'Ajamī manuscript culture is thus a victim how the national historiography was built since the colonial and post-colonial periods. One example of this process can be taken from the critical analysis of what is scholarly defined as Mozambican literature (*Literatura Moçambicana*) which is limited to literature in Latin script and in Portuguese language. The scope of this concept of Mozambican literature excludes the 'ajamī literature of Mozambique and as such neglects an important component of the national cultural heritage.

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# Handwritten *Mushafs* at the Cape: An Overview of the Early Years

Shaykh Fakhruddin Owaisi\*

## Introduction

In the era of the Prophet (SAW), the Holy Qur'an, revealed in Arabic, was transcribed over a period of 23 years. From that time onwards, *kuttab al-wahy* (transcribers of revelation), who employed the Arabic script, made use of various types of material that included wood, stones, skins, and parchments, to write the memorised verses and chapters. Among more than 20 transcribers who were involved in this important project, the most notable was Ali bin Abi-Talib (RA), who later on became the fourth Caliph of the Muslims, and transcribed at least two complete copies of the Holy Qur'an in his personal capacity.

Soon after the Prophet's (SAW) passing, the first Caliph Abu-Bakr (RA) ordered another Qur'anic scribe and reciter Zayd bin Thabit (RA) to compile all Quranic verses in one book. Thabit, along with a team of transcribers, placed these verses within their chapters as memorized. The Qur'an, as it is known to this day, appears in its revelatory order and not in a chronological order. This eventually resulted in one master-copy.

During third Caliph Uthman's (RA) reign, it was realized that there was a need to produce a canonized standard edition; one that was based on Thabit's compiled copy. Uthman (RA) methodically supervised the project. The spin-off of this major process resulted in the production of a few *mushafs*; ones that were subsequently sent to the main Muslim centres (such as Kufa, Cairo, Damascus, and elsewhere) where scribes continued making more copies and where reciters taught the art of recitation in in the rapidly changing Muslim world.

But as the countless *mushafs* –based on the standard Uthmanic copy– were meticulously transcribed by several established and emerging scribes,<sup>1</sup> the art of writing adopting with beautiful styles also

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1 Mustafa Al-Azami, *The Scribes of the Prophet* (London: White Thread Press, 2016).

developed.<sup>2</sup> So, each of these scribes competed with one another to ensure that they transcribed the Qur'anic text in attractive calligraphic handwriting or styles.

Since then, many individuals began to specialize in embellishing this art form across the growing Muslim world (from Al-Andalus to Baghdad). During each century, schools of calligraphy came into existence. And those who became known for their calligraphic hand exported their writings (including calligraphy associated with the Qur'an)<sup>3</sup> to beyond the Muslim heartlands. When the age of print appeared,<sup>4</sup> the art of printing and publishing gradually became the norm.

This article explores the history of the *mushafs* or transcriptions of the Qur'an that took place over a century and more within the Cape Muslim community; and it addresses, in particular, the existing handwritten manuscripts that were produced and circulated during the early historical period at the Cape (circa 1700s-1830s).

### Cape Muslims: Socio-Historical Backdrop

The first Muslims arrived in South Africa in the 1650s from the Malay Archipelago, that has since been regionally referred to as South-East Asia and in the era of the nation-states as Indonesia and Malaysia respectively. They landed at the Cape of Good Hope with the Dutch colonialists' – also known as VOC/DEIC – as servants, slaves, and political prisoners/exiles.<sup>5</sup>

Many important political and religious personalities from that sprawling region were thus exiled to the Cape; while information about selected personalities such as Shaykh Yusuf al-Makasari<sup>6</sup> and Imam Abdullah ibn Qadi Abdus-Salam (aka Tuan Guru)<sup>7</sup> have been explored,

2 J. R. Osborn, *Letters of Light: Arabic Script in Calligraphy, Print, and Digital Design* (Cambridge: Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2017).

3 "Calligraphy of the Qur'an", accessed September 2019, <https://www.bl.uk/sacred-texts/articles/calligraphy-of-the-quran>.

4 "The age of Early Printing: 1450–1550", <https://www.britannica.com/topic/publishing/The-age-of-early-printing-1450-1550>. See also J. Osborn, *Letters of Light*, Ch. 3.

5 Achmad Davids, *The Mosques of the Bo-Kaap: A Social History of Islam at the Cape* (Cape Town: The South African Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research, 1980).

6 Suleman Essop Dangor, *A Critical Biography of Shaykh Yusuf* (Durban: Centre for Research in Islamic Studies, 1982).

7 Shafiq Morton, *From the Spice Islands to Cape Town: The Life and Times of Tuan Guru* (Cape Town: AwqafSA, 2018).

many other individuals and their practices as Muslim leaders have been lacking.

The first popular personality about whom there is a wealth of information is Shaykh Yusuf al-Makasari;<sup>8</sup> the latter arrived here in 1694 and passed away in 1699. While many have written essays on him as indicated, Dangor and Sahib<sup>9</sup> –and others– completed their respective theses on him. Dangor went on to publish his thesis and since then produced more than two editions.

Nonetheless, during the early 20<sup>th</sup> century a monument was erected by Shah Mohamed, the South Asian philanthropist who settled at the Cape.<sup>10</sup> Prior to the building of the monument, the grave was regularly visited. Since he was recognized as a Sufi shaykh, the burial place became commonly known as the *kramat* (tomb); one of the plaques at the tomb read as follows: "In the ship Voetboeg, Saint Yusuf came from Ceylon to the Cape in 1694. He, his family and 49 followers were the first to recite the Holy Koran in South Africa."

No *mushaf* seems to have survived from the Shaykh and the entourage that accompanied him; it is however probable that they had one or more among them and it was taken back with those who returned to South-East Asia after the Shaykh's death in 1699. Another exile, who arrived around the same time as Shaykh Yusuf and who had married the Shaykh's daughter,<sup>11</sup> was the Rajah of Tambora. He is reported to have written the *mushaf* where he was stationed in Vergelegen –along with others– as an exile; and this copy was apparently gifted to the Governor Willem van der Stel by the Rajah.

It should be noted that the practice of Islam was formally banned in the Cape territories till 1804;<sup>12</sup> the vast majority of the Muslims

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8 Mohammed Haron, & A. Arby, *Evaluating Shaykh Yusuf Al-Makassari and Imam Abdullah Tidore's Ideational Teachings: Reinforcing Indonesia-South Africa's Relations* (Pretoria: Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia, 2022).

9 M. Sahib, "Shaykh Yusuf al-Maqassari's Literary Contributions: With Special Reference to his *Matalib al-Salikin*", (Unpublished DLitt Thesis, University of South Africa, 2019).

10 Shafiq Morton, *From the Spice Islands to Cape Town: The Life and Times of Tuan Guru* (Cape Town: AwqafSA, 2018).

11 Prof. Najma Moosa tried to dispute this marriage in her 2021 study. See Najma Moosa, *The Mystery of the Apostasy of Shaykh Yusuf of Makassar's Alleged Grandchildren: The Children of the Rajah of Tambora* (Cape Town: Shaykh Shahid Esau, 2021).

12 Achmad Davids, *The Mosques of the Bo-Kaap: A Social History of Islam at the Cape* (Cape Town: The South African Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research, 1980).

including those who acted as the community's Imams, remained slaves till the abolishment of slavery in 1834. They continued to remain an oppressed minority till the advent of democracy in 1994.

Let me stress that for anyone to transcribe the Qur'an in such circumstances from memory was no mean feat; it was, in fact, an extraordinary act. We wish to argue that it was an act of passive resistance against the colonial forces; their pressure supported by their missionaries to abandon Islam was countered by the Muslim leadership. For Muslims, it may be described as a fulfilment of the Qur'anic promise of the survival of the Holy Qur'an.

We will demonstrate, with examples, in this study that numerous *mushafs* or transcribed copies of the Qur'an (phrased differently: Qur'anic manuscripts) were produced by learned Cape Muslims. Other than the Rajah of Tambora was Tuan Guru, a notable Muslim scholar to whom a large compilation of manuscripts is attributed. His work inspired subsequent generations. In my fieldwork research, we stumbled across and located several handwritten manuscripts attributed to him; some have been preserved for more than 200 years! Local Muslim scholarship must still study this phenomenon in detail.

Since nothing specific was written in the area of Qur'anic manuscripts at the Cape, we decided to embark on this project and managed to complete gathering much hitherto un-accessed information. We present my findings in a chronological order; each *mushaf* is accompanied by brief descriptions; alongside these, attempts are made to identify their scribes, and the history of each ones' preservation.

Though we examined 19 manuscripts, 16 old (pre-1900) ones, and 3 recent ones (and this includes two copies from outside the Cape), we only focus for this essay on the earliest ones that were penned at the Cape. Permit us to make the confident claim that most of my findings have hitherto been undocumented, or mentioned in the written history books; as far as is known, there is no essay or publication that offer insights into their conditions or their whereabouts.

### **Cape Written *Mushafs*: My Journey of Discovery**

My journey in discovering these manuscripts was a very exciting one. We discovered the whereabouts of valuable manuscripts when we engaged in informal chats in bookshops and when we had random discussions on social media. Often, people guided me to individuals or

families who possessed these manuscripts. Subsequently, we had the honour of personally viewing and photographing most of these manuscripts. In some cases, the pictures were shared by the custodians (that is, the families/individuals).

### a. Rajah of Tambora: His *Mushaf*

The Rajah (King) of Tambora was one of the early Muslim political prisoners exiled to the Cape. He was the ruler of a small kingdom named Tambora on the Melayu archipelago island of Sumbawa; one that was situated east of the island of Lombok. His actual name was Sultan Abdul-Basir, and he was known to be a scholar of Islam as well. He was deposed and banished to the Cape by the Dutch colonialists on charges of conspiring in a rebellion against them.

The Rajah arrived in the Cape during February 1698. Initially, he was housed in a stable at the infamous Castle where slaves and criminals were kept. Upon the intervention of another renowned exile Shaykh Yusuf of Macassar (whose daughter the Rajah was to marry), he was moved to live on a farm in Vergelegen in the district of Stellenbosch.

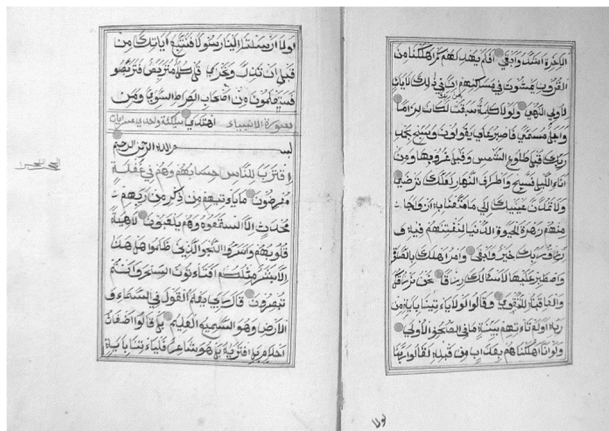


Figure 1: Rajah's *Mushaf*

It is there that he transcribed an entire copy of Qur'an from memory; this he then gifted to the Cape Governor; the latter was apparently kind to him. According to local historian Achmad Davids, this *mushaf* is "the first written in the Colony"<sup>13</sup> and "probably never

13 Achmad Davids, *The Mosques of the Bo-Kaap*, 40.

left Vergelegen." Yusuf da Costa and Achmat Davids stated that, "All traces of this Qur'an have been lost."<sup>14</sup>

The transcription by the Rajah was started in 1703. According to the visiting Dutch cleric Francois Valentyn, he met the Rajah at Vergelegen in 1705. There he conversed with him in Melayu. Valentyn's Travelogue stated that, "Abdul Basir was writing the Quran very neatly for presentation to the governor."<sup>15</sup> In February 1710, the Rajah was pardoned due to his old age and good behaviour. He was sent back to Malay Archipelago. Shortly thereafter, he was, however, exiled back to the Cape in 1713 and this was on charges of planning an insurrection. The conditions of his second banishment were not so favourable; and he eventually passed away at the Cape in 1719.

In our research, we did not find any mention of this *mushaf* among the historical records; and the search for it is still ongoing. In the mid-1990s, Maulana Muhammad Chothia of the Strand claimed that he had found it. In our interview with him, he informed that he was shopping in the Somerset West Mall (not far from where the Rajah was kept), when a European man approached him speaking in Dutch/Afrikaans.

The man (whose name he does not recall anymore) informed the Maulana that he got this manuscript from his father who wanted to dispose it in the Netherlands. As he was travelling to South Africa, he offered to take it there and hand it over to someone who will value it. When he saw Maulana dressed in Muslim garb, he decided to hand over the copy to him.

Maulana Chothia showed this copy to his teacher Maulana Yusuf Karaan (the erstwhile Mufti of the Muslim Judicial Council) who theorized that this might have been the handwritten *mushaf* of the Rajah of Tambora; the copy that was finally returned to the Cape community. The copy stayed with Maulana Yusuf Karaan and his sons, and it was eventually returned to Maulana Chothia at whose house we managed to view it.

Important for the record is that the manuscript is not complete for it only contains five *ajza* (parts) that were written on A4 size pages; this appeared in a clear Southeast Asian style script with black ink and with the beginnings of each chapter written in red. Each folio contained an average of 14 lines, and the different chapters' names and

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14 Yusuf Da Costa & Achmad Davids, *Pages from Cape Muslim History* (Poetermaritzburg: Shooter & Shuter, 1994), 117.

15 Referred to by Najma Moosa, *The Mystery of the Apostasy*, 68.

beginnings of the *ajza* (parts), '*ushrs* (tenths), and *thumuns* (eights) were also highlighted, demonstrating the depth of knowledge of the scribe. While verse (*ayah*) numbers were mentioned at the beginning of each chapter, they were not numbered in the text, but it was identified with a golden circle; this was per the tradition of that era. The text was neatly set in a beautifully drawn coloured square. The usage of these colours showed that the scribe had access to different types of ink; and she thus established him as a prestigious person.

Unfortunately, there was no signature of a manuscript's scribe. There is a watermark on some folios, but I was not able to decipher it. We also noticed some typos and errors in the text, including some missing verses on occasions. These were often corrected manually on the side of the text. This indicated that the scribe wrote it from memory. We also encountered Melayu words praising Allah in between two the chapters. This established that the manuscript was definitely written by someone from Southeast Asia. It was and still is difficult to indicate the timeline of its inscription. Cape historian Ebrahim Rhoda informed me that the paper used in this copy was sent to the archives for testing. It was established that it was quite old indeed, and that it was perhaps 200 years or more old.

In her seminal work on the children of the Rajah of Tambora, Najma Moosa made reference to the comments of Abdus-Salam Karaan (who safe-kept this copy for a while); the latter mentioned that according to specialists, the manuscript was written on 'Tre-Lune' watermarked paper produced in Genoa (Italy). This article was available throughout the Ottoman Empire since the 1600s.<sup>16</sup> If this is indeed the case, then this would be the oldest Qur'anic manuscript at the Cape. We hope the rest of the manuscript will be also found, so that we can have more clarity on the origins of this valuable manuscript.

## **b. Tuan Guru's *Mushaf***

Imam Abdullah bin Qadi Abdus-Salam al-Tidori, better known as Tuan Guru is rightfully considered a 'founding father' of the Cape Muslim community in particular and in South Africa at large. He was from the Tidore Islands in present day Indonesia and was exiled to the Cape in 1780 by the Dutch colonialists against whom he was fighting. He was freed from imprisonment in 1793, and he was immediately

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16 Najma Moosa, *The Mystery of the Apostasy*, 73.

recognized by the Muslim population of the Cape as a great religious leader.

Over the next fifteen years, he spearheaded the establishment of the first mosque, *madrrasah* and *maqbarah* (graveyard) for the Cape Muslims. Amongst his greatest achievements was the transcription of copies of the Qur'an. It is commonly believed that he transcribed the first of these while imprisoned on Robben Island from memory. Tuan Guru's descendants Luqman and Muttaqin Rakiép affirmed this in their essay entitled "Tuan Guru's Tangible Contributions and His Relevance in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century."<sup>17</sup> we quote them:

During incarceration, Tuan Guru did not bewail his dire situation in self-pity and hopelessness but set out to write from memory a mushaf (that is, a copy of the Qur'an). Since the Qur'an is regarded as Islam's foundational revelatory text, it was intended to be utilised by the emerging and pioneering Cape Muslim community. Prior to this, the Raja of Tambora, who was exiled to the Cape in 1697 and who married the daughter of Shaykh Yusuf al-Makassari, had also penned a *mushaf*... Since this copy was not put into circulation, it did not have any benefit for the Cape Muslims. It was the one that Tuan Guru scripted that contributed towards the Cape Muslims' transformation.<sup>18</sup>

Tuan Guru transcribed many other works from memory as well. Though he passed away in 1807, he left a rich legacy that sustained Islam at the Cape for generations. The *mushafs*, which he transcribed, and the works, which he wrote, became the catalyst of an Islamic educational and spiritual revival at the Cape of Good Hope. Cape Town journalist and history researcher, Shafiq Morton also highlighted this in his seminal work titled *From the Spice Islands to Cape Town: The Life and Times of Tuan Guru*:

For Tuan Guru, a religious leader, the Qur'an would have been his initial departure point. As a Hafiz ul-Quran (one who has memorised the Holy Book), he would have seen as his personal duty, the transmission and correct reading of its sacred text... his effort in transcribing the Qur'an is without doubt, a most prodigious one – and a most significant moment in our local history.<sup>19</sup>

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17 This appeared in the co-edited compendium titled *Evaluating Shaykh Yusuf Al-Makassari and Imam Abdullah Tidore's Ideational Teachings*; see Haron and Arby 2022.

18 Mohammed Haron & A. Arby, *Evaluating Shaykh Yusuf Al-Makassari*, 210.

19 Shafiq Morton, *From the Spice Islands to Cape Town*, 60.

He stated further:

Tuan Guru was the pioneer of our local *hifz* tradition, for the Rajah of Tambora's Qur'an, penned in 1703, and written at Vergelegen for Governor Adrian van Der Stel, was never circulated. We do not know exactly when Tuan Guru completed his first copy of the Qur'an, and the four others he transcribed.<sup>20</sup>

In our own research, we have learnt of six handwritten *mushafs* ascribed to Tuan Guru during the period when he was at the Cape of Good Hope. Only three of these survived, and the rest were lost. Here follows the details of my findings.

### b.1. *Mushaf* at the Auwal Mosque

This is the most renowned Cape Qur'anic manuscript; and many hail it as the "First Qur'an of South Africa." It is a complete copy, though the last page is seriously damaged. It was discovered in the ceiling of the Auwal Mosque in 1982; since then, this copy is proudly displayed.



Figure 2: Chapter One of Displayed *Mushaf* – Auwal Masjid

Though there is no signature on it, the neat and clear Southeast Asian style of handwriting is quite similar –as authenticated in many other documents of his– to the Tuan Guru copy. Oral tradition also confirmed that this is a *mushaf* that was written by Tuan Guru from memory. The manuscript contains clear indications of the beginnings of *ajza* and *maqras* (reading sections) as well *tajwid* (art the recitation

<sup>20</sup> Shafiq Morton, *From the Spice Islands to Cape Town*, 61.

of the Qur'an) rules; these are all highlighted in red symbols. In certain cases, variant *qira'at* (readings) were also indicated. All the chapter names with *ayah* numbers and Makki/Madani status were indicated. The sacred name of 'Allah' is always transcribed in red ink. All of this indicated that the scribe was a not an ordinary copyist but an extremely learned person.

There is also a watermark on the paper which indicates that the paper was produced in 1805 by J. Whatman of Kent, UK. This reveals that Tuan Guru transcribed this *mushaf* in the last couple of years of his life, and not while imprisoned on Robben Island as commonly believed. None of the existing Quranic manuscripts ascribed to Tuan Guru, can be confidently attributed to the time he spent in prison. Perhaps the one that he copied whilst on Robben Island was among those that have been lost; this I briefly discuss later on.

The manuscript we are discussing contained many errors and omissions which have been manually corrected on the margins; this was mostly done in the same handwriting; this confirmed that it was indeed written from memory. Some corrections were made in a different handwriting; and this indicated that the work may be attributed to later custodians of this manuscript. In Ganiem Harris' 1977 thesis,<sup>21</sup> he stated the following:

His major accomplishment was the writing of the Quran from memory. This phenomenal feat indicates that Tuan Guru was also a *hafiz*. Tuan Guru must have received a thorough Islamic education, and the area he originated from, Tedor, must have been a strong centre of Islamic activity. This Quran is still in the possession of one of his descendants.<sup>22</sup>

He indicated in the footnote that: "The Quran was in 1974 in the possession of Sheikh C. Abdurauf."<sup>23</sup>

## b.2. Jassiem Family Mushaf

This is another *mushaf* attributed to Tuan Guru, handed down amongst his descendants for generations. It was reportedly in the possession of his son Imam Abdur-Rauf aka Prince Abderoof (d.1863),

21 In 2019, the al-Jama'ah political party leader and MP M. Ganief Hendricks took his Parliamentary oath using this *mushaf*; this was a symbolic gesture of honouring this revered "founding" manuscript.

22 M. G. Harris, "British Policy Towards the Malays at the Cape of Good Hope: 1795-1850", (Unpublished Western Washington State College MA Thesis, 1977), 28.

23 Ibid, 67.

and inherited by his son Imam Abdullah Abderoof (d.1922); thereafter, it was passed to his son Imam Abubakar Abderoof (d.1932) and from him to his son Imam Abdul-Baqi Abderoof (d.1962). The latter handed it to his daughter *Hajjah* Aasieya Jassiem who passed away in 2019. The *mushaf* is currently preserved by her daughter *Muallimah* Fatemah Jassiem who founded *Madrasah Tanweer Al-Deen* in Woodstock, Cape Town.

This *mushaf* is quite well-preserved and contains the entire holy text, except for the first couple of pages; starting from verse 17 of *Surah al-Baqarah*. The names of Allah, the names of *surahs* and the beginnings of *ajza* are all in red ink. Like most pre-20<sup>th</sup> century Qur'ans, *ayah* ends are not numbered but marked by a black circle with red dot in its centre.

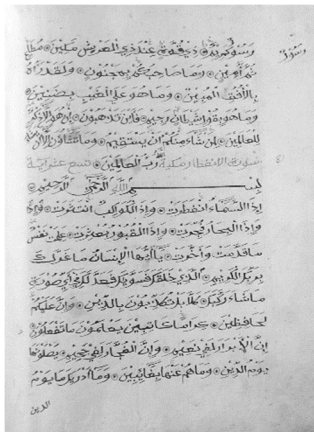


Figure 3: Jassiem Family *Mushaf*

We also noticed that this copy contains typos and omissions, many of which have been manually corrected on the sides. This, indicates that the *mushaf* was written from memory. The copy does not contain any signature or date of transcription, so one cannot be absolutely certain of its scribe. However, the type of paper used and the handwriting and style of transcription is extremely similar to that of the *Tuan Guru mushaf* in the *Auwal Mosque*.

Based on this, we are quite satisfied that this *mushaf* was indeed written by *Tuan Guru* and the oral tradition in the family confirms this as well. There is one issue, however, and that is that the watermark on the cover of this *mushaf* states: "C&S Wise 1810." This would be three

years after Tuan Guru passed away. It is quite possible, moreover, that this cover was bound on the manuscript after Tuan Guru's demise; for I also noticed that the actual folios of the manuscript do not contain this watermark. Old manuscripts have often been bound long after their transcriptions in order to preserve them.

Accompanying this *mushaf* were many papers, letters, and notes attributed to Tuan Guru and his immediate descendants. Among them was a small size notebook with some *surahs* written in it in a similar script as the above-mentioned *mushaf*. It seemed like a transcription of the whole Qur'an, but most of the text was missing. It is possible that this is an "unfinished *mushaf*" by Tuan Guru or that the rest of the manuscript got lost or damaged. I refer here the words of Tuan Guru's biographer, Shafiq Morton:

Without recourse to textual references, the act of writing down the Qur'an's 114 chapters and over 6000 verses, from memory alone, must have been a daunting prospect. Word-for-word, Tuan Guru must have sat for days pondering on what to pen; one diacritical mark capable of changing entire Arabic meanings. On a spiritual level, scholars extol the high-status Tuan Guru must have attained for his efforts... What Tuan Guru initiated at the Cape was a formalisation of Qur'anic memorization; a proud tradition that lights up the city's mosques today, and still exists within his descendants.<sup>24</sup>

### b.3. The Pocket-Size *Mushaf*

This handwritten *mushaf* is unique in being of "pocket-size". Its length is 10.5 centimetres, width is 7.5 centimetres and depth is 5 centimetres. It is in good condition and contains the entire text, with 13 lines on each page. The handwriting is beautiful and *surah* names and *ayah* ends are in red ink. I also did not notice any typos in this *mushaf*.

The *mushaf* is currently in the custody of dentist Qaasim Abduraouf, who received it from his father the renowned Qari Shaykh Abubakar Abduraouf, who received it from his father Shaykh Cassiem Abdooroft (d.2011), who received it from his older brother Imam Abduraouf Abdoorof (d.1964), the Imam of the Claremont Main Road Masjid. The latter was the son of Imam Muhammad Ameen Abdoorof (d.1936), the son of Imam Abdullah (d.1922), the son of Imam Abduraouf (d.1863), the son of the venerated Tuan Guru Imam Abdullah bin Qadi Abdus-Salam al-Tidori (d.1807).

<sup>24</sup> Shafiq Morton, *From the Spice Islands to Cape Town*, 60.

The manuscript does not contain the name of the scribe, and family are not certain about this either, but it is generally attributed to Tuan Guru, as it has been passed down with his relics for generations. According to my research however, this *mushaf* could not have been written by Tuan Guru, for the following reasons:

- a) The handwriting of this *mushaf* is completely different from the Tuan Guru copies that are preserved in the Auwal Mosque and the hands of the Jassiem family; the style adopted was more akin to the South Asian script.
- b) At the end of this *mushaf*, there is a supplicatory poem in the Urdu language. Tuan Guru was from Island of Tidore in the Melayu archipelago; and so far, there has been no concrete indication that he composed Urdu poetry.
- c) Most importantly, the last stanza of this poem contained a *Hijri* date that was scripted in Urdu: 1247; this corresponded to the Gregorian year 1831 and this is, at least, more than two decades after Tuan Guru's passing.



Figure 4: A Pocket-Size *Mushaf*

Based on the above, it is my opinion that this *mushaf* was most likely written by a South Asian Muslim scribe, and gifted to or acquired by Tuan Guru's son/grandson; since then, it was passed down and remains a valuable treasure in the Tuan Guru family.

#### b.4. Tuan Guru's Lost *Mushafs*

According to my research with the descendants of Tuan Guru, we were informed of three handwritten *mushafs* attributed to Tuan Guru that have been "lost."

The first of these was a large sized *mushaf*; this was in the possession of Shaykh Abubakar Abduraouf ibn Shaykh Cassiem. This copy was handed down with that family and it was wrapped in the original green coloured scarf of Tuan Guru. Shaykh Abubakar took this copy with him on a trip to Indonesia, to show it to Tuan Guru's current descendants in Tidore. Unfortunately, despite much searching, including newspaper announcements, it could not be traced. Now this was probably the copy that Muhammad Haron referred to in his 1995 paper on Islamic manuscripts in the Greater Cape Town; he mentioned that: "The Qur'an and the dagger of Abdullah Qadi Abdus-Salam are currently in the hands of Shaykh Cassiem Abderouf."

The second was a "Tuan Guru *mushaf*" which was in the family's possession, was the one that one of the older aunts owned. She had taken it with her on *hajj* during the 1960s for personal usage but this copy was, unfortunately, confiscated by a Saudi customs officer; and was never to be seen again.

We were also informed by a family member that another handwritten copy ascribed to Tuan Guru was displayed at a museum in Wale Street; this he recalled after having seen it on display years ago. Our assumption is that he may have been referring to the copy that is currently housed in the IZIKO Museum. Shafiq Morton referred to these copies when he wrote a couple of years when he stated: "The families once had five Qurans in their possession. One was lost in Indonesia several years ago. We do not know how many still exist today."<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, Tuan Guru's handwritten *mushafs* inspired generations of memorizers and scribes in Greater Cape; this is tangibly demonstrated in this ongoing research project.

### c. Imam Rajab Van Boughies' *Mushaf*

Imam Rajab van Boughies (aka Radjab van Java) was a scholar and *hafiz*; the appellation indicates that he is from the Bugis inhabiting the South Sulawesi Islands in present-day Indonesia. He was exiled to the Cape by the Dutch colonialists in the late 1700s. In the Cape, he befriended Tuan Guru and quickly became his assistant in religious activities, particularly at the Auwal Mosque. He died in 1806, before Tuan Guru. According to Da Costa & Davids, like Tuan Guru, Imam Rajab also wrote "several copies of the Qur'an."<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Shafiq Morton, *From the Spice Islands to Cape Town*, 60.

<sup>26</sup> Yusuf Da Costa & Achmad Davids, *Pages from Cape Muslim History*, 117.

In our research, we were able to locate one of those copies through a hint in Gamiem Harris' unpublished thesis at Washington State College (1977) entitled *British Policy towards the Malays at the Cape of Good Hope, 1795-1850*. Harris mistakenly refers to him as 'Jan van Bougies' though, confusing him with a contemporary of that name. I quote Harris:

Jan van Bougies was the only other person, besides Tuan Guru, in South Africa to have transcribed the Qur'an from memory. The last page of the Qur'an, written in Malayan (sic) with the Arabic script, indicated that this monumental task was completed on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of Jamaadiel Tanie in the year of 1278 A.H. of the Prophet (O.W.B.P) by Enche [Malay for Sir] Rajab Bougies (Jan Van Bougies) son of Jafar Abu Nya Yakiem. The Qur'an was passed on the Imam Mammam (sic) who was the successor of Jan Van Bougies.<sup>27</sup>

In a footnote, Harris mentioned that this Qur'an was passed on to his grandfather Hadji Muhamed Ganief Harris, and then to his father Imam Sulaiman Harris, and is "currently in the possession of my brother Imam Yasin Harris."<sup>28</sup>

We read this passage a couple of years after the passing of Imam Yasin Harris, and immediately contacted his daughter Soraya, to enquire about this copy. Initially, she and the rest of the family were unaware of it. However, after weeks of searching and enquiry, she finally located it among Imam Yasin's books; thereafter inviting me to view it.

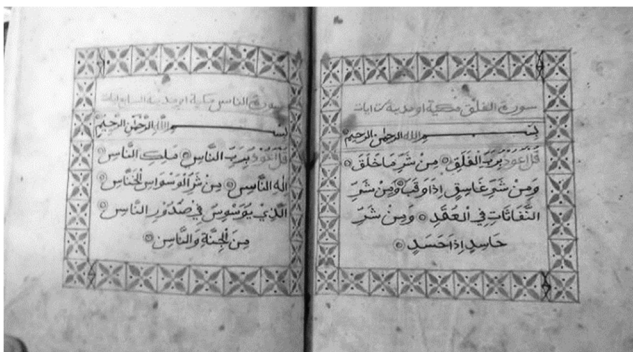


Figure 5: Imam Rajab's *Mushaf*

27 M. G. Harris, "British Policy Towards the Malays at the Cape of Good Hope: 1795-1850", (Unpublished Western Washington State College MA Thesis, 1977), 40.

28 Ibid, 68.

The copy is nicely bound and well preserved. It is a complete copy, written on wide A5 size pages, in a beautiful Southeast Asian script with black ink, with the name of Allah written in red. Each page contains an average of 11 lines, and the different *surah* names, their Makki and Madani status, and beginnings of *ajza* are also identified. *Ayah* numbers are mentioned at the beginning of each *surah*, and identified with two circles with a red dot in the centre. This method was common in most pre-20<sup>th</sup> century *mushafs*. The first and last folios are beautifully decorated, as per tradition. We discovered a few errors and typos in this copy.

The most distinctive feature of this Qur'an is that it contains a complete signature of the scribe, with date and place, in Melayu/Jawi in Arabic script. The date of the transcription 14<sup>th</sup> *Jamadi al-Thani* 1278 that corresponds with the 30<sup>th</sup> of September 1803. The time is stated is *waqt 'asar* (time of the late afternoon prayer). The place of transcription is referred to as "Nagri Kaap van Kampung Jali Jali,"<sup>29</sup> i.e., "Town of the Cape, village of the fishing nets." The latter is most probably referring to the Woodstock area where Muslim fishermen resided and fishing took place.

### Towards a Conclusion

As we came across various transcription of the Qur'an (technically known as *mushafs*), we were drawn to this area of Cape Muslim history; a subject that fascinated me as a scholar of the Qur'an in particular and Islamic studies in general. We explored a part of the history of the *mushafs* that took place from the early 18<sup>th</sup> century into the late 19<sup>th</sup> century within the Cape Muslim community. While the sacred text was used to instruct the emerging and developing community about the fundamentals of their faith, it also opened an avenue for some to embellish the transcriptions of these.

We thus visited many homes and places in the Cape to see which *mushaf* manuscripts were extant. In the process of locating some, we described and unpacked some of its technical details. A few scribes, who were informed about Qur'anic studies, used their time to transcribe from memory fairly clear readable texts.

29 An alternative translation of *Kampung Jali Jali* has been suggested as "where pearl barley is". According to online sources 'jali jali' may refer to this special crop grown in Southeast Asia. In this instance, it seems that it was also grown at the Cape of Good Hope. It is possible that Southeast Asian slaves/exiles brought the plant with them and cultivated it here. See <https://educalingo.com/en/dic-en/jobs-tears>.

In many instances, it took many months to undertake this painstaking task since the scribe tried his best not to make any mistakes. Nonetheless, these were produced over time and these were used in the home schools and reproduced by others to teach the doctrines of Islam at the Cape; a region that was controlled by colonists who literally outlawed Islam as a religion. Despite this challenging setting, the Cape Muslims were undeterred and thus left a legacy that continues to thrive to this day.

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# Botswana Muslims: Their Nation-Building and Humanitarian Contributions since Independence (1966)

Edwin Salim Saidoo \*

## Introduction

Botswana is more often described as a multi-cultural, multi-religious and democratic country. It also aspires to be an educated, informed, moral, tolerant, and inclusive society that provides equal opportunities for all. This aspiration is inscribed within the country's former Vision 2016, as well as in the new Vision 2036 documents. In the former Vision 2016, this was found in the 6<sup>th</sup> pillar of "A Moral and Tolerant Nation", while in the new Vision 2036, this notion is encapsulated within the 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar of "Human and Social Development". This pillar elaborates on the socio-economic development aspect in that: "By 2036 Botswana will be a moral, tolerant and inclusive society that provides opportunities for all. All members of society will contribute to the social upliftment and development of the family, community, and the nation at large."<sup>1</sup> The pillar continues to enshrine religious freedom, stating that: "Freedom of worship will continue to be guaranteed to promote tolerance, peace and social cohesion across all sections of our society."<sup>2</sup>

It is, therefore, from this pillar's aspect of socio-economic development and social cohesion that we wish to outline some of the nation-building humanitarian contributions made by Muslims in Botswana since the country attained independence in 1966, with the objective of countering the growing Islamophobia and apathy towards Muslims, more especially towards non-indigenous Muslims. It is a growing trend exhibited by those who stand accused of Islamophobia that they would jump at every opportunity to advance their ill-conceived perspectives of Muslims and Islam.

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1 Vision 2036 Presidential Task Team. 2016. *Vision 2036 Achieving Prosperity for All*. Presidential Task Team Report, Gaborone: Lentswe la Lesedi Pty Ltd.

2 Ibid.

The study does not seek to sanitize the faults of some of those who profess Islam as their faith, yet find themselves embroiled in practices contrary to Islamic ethics. An aware and sincere writer should undoubtedly concede that many individuals within the Botswana Muslim community have not been very exemplary with regard to following Islamic tenets and laws. This, however, should only point towards the deficiency of that particular individual's commitment and comprehension of his faith, as opposed to a deficiency on the faith itself. It should be noted that Muslims, as followers of Islam and its ethics, could possibly misrepresent Islam as much as any follower of other faiths could do so. One only needs to visit the local prison where one would meet individuals with a plethora of criminal offences, who subscribe to different faiths other than Islam, and yet their criminality is seldom associated with their faith, nor does their faith ever get the brunt of acrimony linked to that particular individual's criminality. The reality has been different with regard to Muslims and Islam.

In the context of Botswana, it is our belief that Islamophobia is borne out of the efforts made by Muslims during the developmental stages of the nation, and the contributions made towards the humanitarian needs of the Botswana society at large, as shall be seen in the next sections of this article. We seek to highlight the Islamic ethical perspectives of a moderate and honourable community aimed at ensuring all-rounded development towards humanity – *ummatun wasata*<sup>3</sup> – a concept derived from the Holy Qur'an. We thus hope to achieve a synergy and congruence of the Muslim community with the local population of Botswana.

It will be near impossible to summarize all the efforts, achievements and contributions of the local Muslim community towards the socio-economic development of the nation in this study. The article will, therefore, only attempt to briefly elucidate on those efforts which we managed to gather information on, utilizing the Insider/Outsider theory as the main lens through which the chapter will be written, and auto-ethnography will be employed as the method. We chose auto-ethnography as the method to allow ourselves some elasticity to include aspects of our own family's story into the study. Auto-ethnography is underscored as a method that combines the "purposes,

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3 Translated as "a just (and the best) moderate nation" – a notion that encourages Muslims to always strive to be better ambassadors of Islam and its ethics/ideologies of human development

techniques, and theories" of ethnography with those related to autobiography.<sup>4</sup>

The thesis will thus be dealt with through the following themes. First, the study will discuss the arrival of Muslims in Botswana and the challenges they faced. Second, it will present some of the Muslim NGOs, foundations, corporations, and personalities involved in Community Social Responsibility (CSR) projects. And then thirdly, the study will discuss the contribution of Botswana Muslims to various sectors of the society such as education, health, sports, agriculture, and community social responsibility projects, before concluding.

### **The Muslim's Arrival in Botswana and the Challenges They Faced**

There have been differing accounts on the arrival of Muslims in Botswana, with their arrival dates ranging from 1882 to 1896. What is certain is that their arrival was "towards the latter parts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century."<sup>5</sup> Amanze<sup>6</sup>, in his book *Islam in Botswana*, traces the Muslims' first arrival in Botswana back to 1886, while Best<sup>7</sup> indicates the first arrival to be in 1892. All those who have written on this topic assert that Islam was introduced to Botswana by East-Asian traders of Indian descent, who entered the country via South Africa.<sup>8</sup> The first known Muslim trader is said to be a certain gentleman by the name Bhana, who arrived sometime in 1882 and settled in Moshupa, a now fairly large village in the Southern District of Botswana<sup>9</sup>, from where the current State President hails.<sup>10</sup> Other traders followed suit from around 1884, each one inviting other members of his family to come along. Saidoo cites Parrat who holds the same notion that the Muslim's arrival was towards the latter parts of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>11</sup> Parratt notes, for example, a certain Vanu Vahed, who arrived shortly after Bhana,

4 J. Manning & T. E. Adams, "Popular Culture Studies and Autoethnography: An Essay on Method", *The Popular Culture Studies Journal* 3, no. 2 (2015): 187-222

5 Naseeruddin Chand, *Bechuanaland's Muslim Pioneers (c.1880-1960) Their Journeys and Legacies* (Gaborone: Botswana Muslim Association, 2018)

6 James Amanze, "Islam in Botswana during the Colonial Period, 1882-1966" in *Botswana Notes and Records*, no. 30 (1998): 67-78.

7 A. C. G. Best, "General Trading in Botswana 1890-1968", *Economic Geography* 46, (1970): 601.

8 James Amanze, "Islam in Botswana during the Colonial Period, 1882-1966", *Botswana Notes and Records* 30, (2000a): 67-78.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid., 69.

11 D. S. Parratt, "Muslims in Botswana", *African Studies*, vol. 48 (1989): 71-81.

and after having been in Botswana for some time, invited many of his nephews from his sisters' side and divided his businesses amongst them.<sup>12</sup> As a result of such arrivals, small clusters of Muslim families began to spring up around the country, forming small Muslim communities that would eventually grow to other parts of the country.<sup>13</sup>

It is clear from historical accounts that the arrival of Muslims into the then Bechuanaland Protectorate was not all glory and splendor. Their arrival was marked by challenges and repression from the Colonial Administration, which seems to have been threatened by the business acumen of the Asian traders. Chand (2018) argues that the Colonial Administration did not grant any trading licenses to Muslims/Asians to set up businesses in villages and towns believed to be more lucrative. This trade embargo for Asian traders was mainly for those towns and villages that were along the railway line that stretched from the Cape through to Rhodesia.<sup>14</sup> He notes that areas such as the "Lobatse Block and the Tuli Block were reserved only for the whites."<sup>15</sup> These were the areas at which train stations were set up. As a result, the early Muslim settlers were forced inland towards those areas thought to be barren and lacking resources. Chand asserts that:

... this discriminatory policy that was effectively instituted was not dissimilar to what took place in the Republic of Transvaal; by implication, it meant that the towns and large villages were out of bounds for the Asians. The policy thus restricted the Asians to the villages that were on western side; this was about 30 to 80 km away from the railway line that was in places like Moshupa, Molepolole, Thamaga and Mmankodi. There were, however, other villages closer to the railway line such as Otse and Ramotswa where Asians were allowed to reside. Furthermore, it was only after 1943 that they were permitted to trade in the larger towns with certain restrictive conditions in place.<sup>16</sup>

This embargo ended after a case that was lodged by Abbas Chand,

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12 Ibid.

13 James Amanze, "Islam in Botswana during the Colonial Period, 1882-1966" in *Botswana Notes and Records*, no. 30 (1998): 69; Muhammed Haron, "Gaborone Muslim Community: A Vignette into Their Lives", *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa* 92, no. 2 (2006).

14 Naseeruddin Chand, *Bechuanaland's Muslim Pioneers (c.1880-1960) Their Journeys and Legacies* (Gaborone: Botswana Muslim Association, 2018).

15 Ibid., 46.

16 Ibid., 46.

who had sent his brother Abdul Careem and Goolam Mohamed Patel to the High Commissioner in Cape Town, following the local Colonial Administration's refusal to grant him a trade license for a store he acquired in Lobatse. Chand (2018) reports that the High Commissioner, after hearing the presentation of the case from the two, concurred with its unfairness and thus granted them a letter of authority to present to the Imperial Reserve in Mafikeng in order to obtain the required license.<sup>17</sup> It is interesting to note that this shop is still operational to this date, trading under the name of Vazeer Stores.

These challenges, however, did not deter the Muslim traders or demoralize them, but rather gave them more resolve. They endeavored to highlight their religious ethics in the trades they were involved in. The pioneer Muslims exemplified fair trade in their businesses and became very endeared to the local indigenous communities. This made it easy for the locals to assist them with traversing the difficult terrains and bad road conditions that were found inland. Many of them set out into the deepest areas of the country, reaching the remotest villages and settlements of the Kalahari Desert.<sup>18</sup> They lived with the locals, learnt their ways, learnt their languages, and some eventually intermarried with the locals. It was through these interactions that the Muslim traders became aware of the most intricate needs of the society they lived in, and thus employed the interpersonal and entrepreneurial skills promulgated by their faith towards the upliftment of the local communities. It is due to this century-long history that their contribution towards the socio-economic development of the nation is very evident. The Muslim community has continued to grow as part of the general populace, and its interaction with other Botswana communities, likewise, grows daily. Many of them have since naturalized, with their progenies now known to be Batswana by birth, enjoying all the rights and privileges that are accorded to indigenous Batswana.

### **Muslim NGOs, Foundations, Corporates and Personalities involved in Community Social Responsibility (CSR) Projects**

Before delving into the nation-building contributions made by Muslims in Botswana, it is important to briefly look at the profiles of some of the Muslim NGOs involved in community social responsibility

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 54.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 45.

projects. Some of these NGOs and foundations date back to prior independence, but by virtue of their continued existence they have been profiled here.

#### ***a. Botswana Muslim Association (BMA)***

At inception in 1955, it was known as the Bechuanaland Muslim Association, but evolved into the Botswana Muslim Association (BMA) when the country also changed to Botswana following its independence in 1966. Its founding executive board was composed of a chairperson, a secretary, a treasurer, and a vice-treasurer. The first chairperson was Mr. Abdul-Raheem Chand, while Mr. Hoosein Sultan Ebrahim was its secretary, Mr. Goolam Ali Khan the treasurer, and Mr. Abdul-Gafaar Arbi, the vice-treasurer<sup>19</sup>. Haron (2006), however, identifies the first chairperson as being Mr. Arbi. Although these accounts seem to differ, the interviews of some community elders as well as oral history narrated to me by my grandfather, Sayed Sakur Saidoo, son of Sayed Saidoo Rasool<sup>20</sup>, the first chairperson of the BMA was indeed Mr. Abdul-Raheem Chand, as noted by Chand (2018).

Chand praises the establishment of the Botswana Muslim Association, noting the benefits that came with that. He asserts thus that:

The formation of the BMA was a wise one because: a) it was the Muslim community's identity marker in a predominantly non-Muslim society, and that b) it bolstered their position in this growing society, and c) promoted the nascent Muslim community's cohesiveness and togetherness that were vital for their socio-economic and cultural development.<sup>21</sup>

#### ***b. Al-Muslimah (Women's Affiliate of the BMA)***

Al-Muslimah is the women's affiliate of the Botswana Muslim Association. The group began its work in the early 1990s, and steadily became active in many social responsibility projects. It is made up of

19 Naseeruddin Chand, *Bechuanaland's Muslim Pioneers (c.1880-1960): Their Journeys and Legacies*, 7.

20 Noted as the one who almost always led the Muslims in prayers in the early periods of their arrival, especially during *eid* celebrations, and this was before the much younger Omar Khan was appointed in the 1920s, after being sent to a Muslim Theologian school in Zeerust seeing the need Muslims had towards a cleric. (see Amanze 2000a: 67-78)

21 Naseeruddin Chand, *Bechuanaland's Muslim Pioneers (c.1880-1960): Their Journeys and Legacies*, 17.

Muslim women, both the young and old. When profiling social welfare groups from among the Muslim community of Botswana, Haron (2006) notes that Al-Muslimah, as a women's group, faced some level of criticism from certain quarters of the community. He posits that "there have been conservative groups within the community who frowned upon Al-Muslimah and its activities."<sup>22</sup> Due to its significant projects in the society, the group gained popularity within government quarters, such that it even got the attention of the Third President, Festus Mogae, who officiated at the hand-over event of one of the orphanages completed by Al-Muslimah in one of the villages on the outskirts of the capital city, Gaborone.<sup>23</sup> Mrs. Arbie,<sup>24</sup> through an interview we conducted with her recently, informed me that she led the group for some time from its inception. She lamented the dormancy of the group and its operations, and cited challenges that were brought up by the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as lack of resources and funding in general.

### c. Ya-Seen Group

Although they were not officially affiliated to the Botswana Muslim Association, the Ya-Seen group enjoyed the full blessings of the BMA, and thus operated within the Muslim community freely. The group is made up of a modest number of males who stem from a variety of backgrounds, some being civil servants while others are corporate and professionals. Some of its work entails "assisting of Imams [and] *dawah* workers in and outside the country"<sup>25</sup>, as well as offering general assistance to the Muslim community. Although the group's activities seem to have died down in recent times, one of its biggest achievements, is the successful establishment of the Shashe-Mooke/Mandunyane Islamic Center, for which they sourced funds for its construction through a collection drive.<sup>26</sup>

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22 Muhammed Haron, "Gaborone Muslim Community: A Vignette into Their Lives", *Scriptura: International Journal of Bible, Religion and Theology in Southern Africa* (2006), 92(2): 200-217.

23 Ibid.

24 She remains one of the stalwarts in community service, who has dedicated most of her time to helping the poor and the vulnerable. She recently joined the Girl-Guides, although a non-Muslim organisation, she asserts that what interested her to it was its humanitarian principles.

25 Ibid., 219.

26 Ibid., 219.

#### ***d. The Muslim Youth Movement***

Like Al-Muslimah, the Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) is an official affiliate of the Botswana Muslim Association. It is run mainly by young Muslims. The MYM was founded around the 1970s with close affiliation to the MYM of neighboring South Africa. Fazlur-Rehman Moorad and Iqbal Khan, who were emerging and community-oriented active youth at the time, are credited with its formation.<sup>27</sup> Chand (2018) notes its sole objectives as being "to uphold Islamic values and build a dynamic Muslim society whose moral integrity is second to none."<sup>28</sup> The MYM is involved in a number of humanitarian activities. Since its inception it has continuously engaged in developmental, disaster-relief, and charitable community projects.

#### **Contribution towards the Socio-Economic Development of Botswana**

The local Muslim community of Botswana has contributed immensely to the socio-economic development of the country. As mentioned in the introduction, this paper only seeks to highlight some of these contributions. They will be itemized under four themes: education, health, sports, and miscellaneous community social responsibility projects.

##### ***a. Education***

The Muslim community has built a number of schools since independence, both as a collective and as individual efforts. Many of the schools have grown to become very important centres of knowledge around the country, others known to have been built by Muslims, but others remaining unknown. Known schools include Crescent School, Al-Nur School, and Al-Haq School. Unknown schools include Kang Primary School and Kacgae Primary School.

All these schools boast an alumnus that went on, and continues to occupy key leadership positions in the country. Muslims have also funded the education of many students at all levels (primary, secondary, and tertiary), especially those from the less fortunate, to study at some of these private schools and higher educational institutions.

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 219.

<sup>28</sup> Naseeruddin Chand, *Bechuanaland's Muslim Pioneers (c.1880-1960): Their Journeys and Legacies*, 26.

*The Crescent School (Lobatse – South East District)*

When the BMA was formed in 1955, their immediate priority was to set up a school for their children, seeing that the Muslim children were not permitted to attend schools either in the Bechuanaland Protectorate or the neighbouring countries. Consequently, they approached the British Resident Commissioner and advocated for a school. The British Government agreed on condition that the Asian community contributes financially to the project. The BMA raised £12500 (British pounds) and the Colonial Administration matched that amount. This means that the school was built at an estimated cost of £25,000. Formerly known as the Lobatse Indian School when it was established in 1961, it changed its name to Crescent School, shortly after that, fearing that the racial and discriminatory policies of the apartheid regime may spill-over into Bechuanaland if they retained the term *Indian* in the name of the school. Once independence was attained and a number of ministries were inaugurated, the Muslim community handed over the school to the ministry of local government, which took over the operation of the school from 1966. In January 1970, the Crescent School was amalgamated with the Lobatse English Medium School which had already been in existence, and thus it became a fully-fledged school that offered and continues to offer primary and secondary levels. The contribution of the school to the development of the country has been immense, as it has produced a number of leaders.

*Al-Nur School (Gaborone – South East District)*

Established in 1991 in Gaborone by the collective efforts of the Botswana Muslim Association and the Muslim community in general (Chand 2018), Al-Nur School started off using two or three porter cabins as classrooms. It has since grown into a big campus, offering pre-primary, primary, and secondary levels. It offers Islamic studies as well (Quran, *hadith*, *fiqh*, *seerah* and Arabic). The school remains under the jurisdiction of BMA, with a separate board that monitors and manages its progress.

*Al-Haq School (Molepolole – Kweneng District)*

Al-Haq School was established in 1989 in Molepolole. Although it is under the auspices of the Botswana Muslim Association and the Muslim community (Chand 2018), oral history suggests that its establishment can be attributed to the efforts of Mr. Sarfaraz Khan

through what was known as the Action Committee for Islamic Propagation. Mr. Khan remains the school's board chairperson and caretaker. From its humble beginnings, Al-Haq School has since grown tremendously over the years. It also offers Islamic studies as part of its curriculum.

*Kang Primary School (Kang – Kgalagadi District)*

The school was established around 1968 through the individual efforts of Osman Saidoo, assisted by his brothers Muhammad Saidoo and Sayed Sakur Saidoo, both of whom ran shops in Hukuntsi and Lokgwabe, respectively. Kang, Hukuntsi and Lokgwabe are some of the remote areas in the Kgalagadi, a region known for its sandy and tough terrain. Osman Saidoo was more popular as a lion hunter, trusted by even the wildlife department then. It is said that he was at one point awarded the Guinness World Record for the most lions shot (under supervision of the Wildlife department), in their efforts of curtailing human-wild animal conflict. He was actually a qualified carpenter and, in his spare time, used to help with making furniture for the community, especially those in leadership like chiefs, commissioners, and so on. He had a general trading store in Kang known as *Kang Trading Store*, and, while there, saw the need for a school. Osman is said to have approached the chief of the village at the time (Chief Motaung), and offered to build some classrooms if the village leadership could find a teacher. The chief agreed and requested the government for a teacher. Osman, together with his brother Muhammad, initially built two classrooms, and later added another classroom. They together with the Muslim traders in the region, covered the salary of the teacher for the first few years until the government took over the operation of the school in the latter years of the 1970s. Osman, as a carpenter jobbing expert, made furniture for the school using locally found trees like the Morukuru tree, which his sons and nephews cut from the surrounding bushes.

*Kacgae Primary School (Kacgae –Gantsi District)*

The primary school was also established in the latter years of the 1960s. Abdul-Hamid Saidoo, who had then settled at Lonetree along the Trans Kalahari route, was concerned by the nomadic lifestyle of the San in the area, who seemed to struggle with water. It is said that he wished to establish a settlement for them in order to cater to their needs. Abdul-Hamid got together with professors, Anthony (Tony)

Traill and Heins Jankie, who shared a similar concern.<sup>29</sup> Professor Traill seems to have been an academic and a linguist from Witwatersrand University of South Africa, who was doing research on the San of the Kalahari. His research focus at the time was on the documentation of the !Xhoo, a Southern Khoisan language. Heins Jankie was a cattle baron who had a number of ranches in the Gantsi Block. Abdul-Hamid Saidoo and Jankie travelled to Gaborone shortly after the inauguration of the new cabinet under the Presidency of Sir Seretse Khama, in order to request permission for a settlement to be established in their area and a school for the children. The District Commissioner of Gantsi, Mr Willie Babishi, is said to have written a supporting letter for them, which assisted in convincing Seretse and his cabinet to grant the required permission, and the government offered to dig a borehole for the new settlement. Thus, the settlement of Kacgae was established about 11 kilometers off the highway. Meanwhile, Traill travelled back to Wits to solicit funds for the school, while Saidoo and Jankie mobilized the San community to settle in the suggested area, as well as finding a suitable name for it and a chief.

### **b. Health Sector**

The Muslim community of Botswana has also contributed towards the health sector in different parts of the country, collectively and individually. Ibrahim<sup>30</sup> notes, in an interview, that owing to his grandfather Sultan Ibrahim being the only one who had a motor vehicle in the village of Thamaga at the time, he used to be awakened by the villagers in the middle of the night requesting him to take them to the hospital in Molepolole, many with health emergencies, especially maternity issues. Likewise, Arbie<sup>31</sup>, also in an interview, recalls similar

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29 From an interview conducted with one of Abdul-Hamid's surviving sons (Paul Abdul-Saidoo)

30 Ismael Ebrahim is one of the remaining encyclopaedias on the History of Muslims in Botswana. Born to one of the pioneer Muslims in Botswana, he grew up in Botswana and has been a very active participant in the development of country. He was for a long time a Setswana teacher, and later became Mayor of Lobatse, one of the significant towns with regard to the history of Muslims in Botswana. He is currently involved in archiving many historical documents in his possession on Botswana Muslims, and remains a humanitarian philanthropist and one of the remaining elders of the Muslim community.

31 Zaynul Arbie is a *daa'ee* (Islamic preacher) turned businessman who has dedicated his later years towards community work. He was instrumental in the foundation of

incidents with his father in the village of Mogobane. As a result of such incidents, the Muslim traders would get together in the different villages and agree to put up health posts/clinics in their respective villages, a tradition that has continued to this day. This is evident by the many clinics and hospital wings donated by Muslims. As an example, Muslim Traders in Ramotswa put up an outpatient and maternity wing at the Bamalete Lutheran Hospital around 1970 when the hospital was built. This wing remains operational and has grown to be one of the best maternity wings in the country. In a similar vein, Muslim traders in Kanye also put up a maternity wing and a private ward at the Seventh-Day Adventist Hospital in Kanye. This also remains operational to this day. The Chand family also, together with the Muslim traders of Thamaga, put up a clinic in Thamaga that remains operational. It should be noted that the Muslims would put up these health posts/clinics/hospital wings, and then donate them, through the Government of Botswana, where the Ministry of Health would take over the operations.

### **Corporate/Individual Efforts within the Health Sector**

#### **AS Dada Foundation**

The AS Dada Foundation was founded by Mr. Abdul-Satar Dada, one of the elite and philanthropic members of the Muslim community. He is one of the longest serving presidents of the Botswana Muslim Association. Mr. Dada is also a reputable member of the ruling party, the Botswana Democratic Party, and due to his business acumen and success in entrepreneurship, he has served the party as its treasurer for many years, serving the party in this portfolio through at least three presidents. The foundation has engaged in enumerable corporate social responsibility efforts, with health at the top of its priorities. Its many contributions are listed below.

1. Bontleng Clinic, built in Gaborone at a total cost of approximately BWP 1,200,000.00. The project was completed in May 2008 and handed over to the Government of Botswana.
2. Boswelakoko Clinic, built in Molepolole at a total cost of approximately BWP 1,900,000.00. The project was completed in September 2010 and handed over to the government.

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the Tlokweng Welfare Center, and is currently engaged in cementing the foundations of an Islamic Center in the Letlhakeng area. He is also an off-spring of one of the pioneers and having grown up around Batswana, he has demonstrated his deep love for the community through his numerous community social responsibility projects.

3. Ebrahim & Mariam Dada Clinic and Joosub Dada Clinic, both built in Kanye at a combined cost of approximately BWP 2,000,000.00. The projects were completed and handed over to the Government of Botswana in February 2011.
4. A.S. Dada Clinic, built in Kumakwane at a total cost of approximately BWP 6,800,000.00. The project was completed and handed over to the government in January 2021.
5. Selolwane Ward Clinic, built in Tutume at a cost of BWP 300,000.00 and completed in April 2016.
6. Kanye/Lotlhakane – currently under construction; total expected cost, approximately. BWP 2,700,000.00.

### **c. Sports**

With regard to sports, the Muslim community has, over the years, actively participated in the development of sports in the country. In 1977, members of the Muslim community represented the majority of the funders who got together to fund the construction of Lobatse Stadium. Among the many individuals who have made contributions to sports, Mr. Ismael Bhamjee is worthy of singling out with regard to his rigorous efforts towards the development of sports in Botswana. He held a number of key leadership positions in sports from the late early 90s until his untimely passing in 2021. Mr. Bhamjee served as the Botswana Football Association president from 1991 to 1995 and 1997 to 2000. He also served as the president of the Council of Southern Africa Football Federations (COSAFA) as well as president of the Botswana National Olympic Committee. In this latter portfolio, he represented Botswana at many Olympics events. He was also a CAF executive member, as well as a FIFA executive member. It should be noted that Mr. Bhamjee is the only Botswana ever to be an executive member of FIFA to date. He also helped the South African Football Association to get their organization back together after the apartheid boycott. Outside football, the Botswana Badminton Association (BBA) was formed under his chairmanship in the early 1990s. BBA is affiliated to the Botswana National Sports Commission, Africa Badminton Federation, and the International Badminton Federation.

Apart from Mr. Bhamjee, the Asmal Group is also worth mentioning, as it had also actively participated in the development of sports in Botswana, evidenced by its sponsorship of one of the Botswana Premier League teams, which at the time was called the Lobtrans Gunners, named after the company brand. The team changed

its name to Extension Gunners at the collapse of the company, which was liquidated under a cloud of controversy in early 2008.

#### ***d. Miscellaneous Community Social Responsibility Projects***

Members of the Muslim community have generally been very active in charity work since their arrival in the country, engaging in many humanitarian efforts, either collectively as a community, or as individual families. The Saidoo family, for example, was popular for digging boreholes in many villages of the Kgalagadi, some which are still functional to this day since the 1920s. Likewise, the Chand Family continues to dig boreholes in needy areas. The AS Dada Foundation has an ongoing monthly food hamper contribution to the Tsogang Trust, a local trust that houses orphans and other less fortunate members of the society. The Foundation distributes wheelchairs annually, at an estimated annual value of BWP 250,000.00. It also distributes blankets in winter at an estimated value of BWP 300,000.00 per year, as well as sweet hampers for kids, every Christmas holiday as a way of showing and nurturing the spirit of tolerance. The Muslim Youth Movement (MYM) has also, from time to time, actively responded to government campaigns. It has, since its inception, initiated annual winter blanket drives, flood relief hampers, and regular Ramadan hampers. In the period between 2018 and 2019, MYM constructed at least ten (10) houses/structures for flood victims in Gweta, all for a cumulative cost of about BWP 750,000.00.

The social responsibility ethic that is engraved in the Islamic creed was very evident during the recent Covid-19 pandemic when a Muslim group, known as Sisters Who Care, headed by the Chand family in collaboration with many others (i.e. the Arbie family, the Tajbhais, the Sardars and many others) held daily distribution drives, where they would distribute freshly prepared food and medications to many individuals who were under isolation. This was after realizing that many people were getting isolated far from their families, with no one to care for them. The MYM also distributed more than 2000 food hampers, sanitizers, and soap during Covid-19 lockdowns, amounting to about BWP 1,000,000.00.

#### **Conclusion**

It should be noted that although the contributions of Muslims to the socio-economic development of the country are evidently immense across many sectors of the nation, not every contribution was

mentioned in this article. Many individuals and corporates have chosen to keep a lot of their contributions anonymous, in accordance with the Islamic ethics of safeguarding humanitarian efforts from insincerity, boastfulness and pride. Everything that a Muslim does has to be done in sincerity to please the Almighty God, the Creator, and Muslims take confidentiality as the overarching sign of sincerity. This, however, does not infer that every effort done openly is insincere, as mentioned in the following verse of the Quran: "If ye disclose (acts of) charity, even so it is well, but if ye conceal them, and make them reach those (really) in need, that is best for you: It will remove from you some of your (stains of) evil. And Allah is well acquainted with what ye do."<sup>32</sup>

This verse, thus, permits that charity can be done openly. Many Muslims, however, prefer to keep their charitable and humanitarian efforts confidential and anonymous. This is commensurate with the Islamic traditions as found in the Quranic verse above where it is stated that keeping it concealed is best, as well as in a number of other prophetic advice from the Prophet Muhammad (SAW). The Prophet (SAW) is quoted as saying: "Charity given in secret extinguishes the wrath of the Lord."<sup>33</sup>

Another narration from Prophet Muhammad (SAW), cited with regard to giving charity in secret, is one in which he is recorded as having said: "Allah shades seven people on the day when there is no shade but His. He mentioned among them: a man who gives in charity so secretly that his left hand does not know what his right hand has given." [Al-Bukhari and Muslim]<sup>34</sup>

As a result, we find that many nation-building contributions that the Muslims of Botswana have made, remain hidden in the archives and kept in trunks, old suitcases and cupboards. This has resulted in the younger generation of the citizenry drifting further and further away from these institutional realities, due to this ignorance. The end result is that some people are beginning to see Islam as unbecoming to be regarded as part of the fiber of Botswana society.

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32 Quran 2: 271.

33 Narrated in Al-Tabarani, retrieved from <https://www.islamweb.net/en/fatwa/281323/giving-secret-charity-is-better-unless-superior-benefit-achieved-by-giving-in-public>.

34 Ibid.

The time has come, therefore, for these contributions to be put on record, in a manner that will educate the younger generation about the deep history of peaceful co-existence of Muslims and the local communities, and the enormous contributions they have made and continue to make in Botswana society. A recommendation is also made at this juncture that the Muslim community collectively works towards opening an archive at the Department of National Archives and Records Services in order for the community to deposit the many archives they have in their possession, to allow researchers and the public at large to access them.

In conclusion, it should be noted that it remains a concern that in spite of the huge and very evident humanitarian efforts that the Muslim community has been involved in over the years, the poverty-stricken population from the Muslim community itself remains on the periphery. This concern is noted in the BMA's 2022 AGM report, where the *zakah* committee laments the depletion of the Zakah Fund, and appeals to the community to "give priority to local needs". The report cites that:

The Zakah Fund is quickly running out as there are many people in the community who distribute their *zakah* outside the country, or just do not give *zakah*. As a result, the *zakah* committee is unable to assist small businesses and start-ups due to lack of funds. Our request is for the community members to first give a portion of their *zakah* to the local fund and then to others.<sup>35</sup>

One would thus urge the Muslim philanthropists of Botswana to turn their focus towards the poor from amongst the Muslim community itself. Some lone elements of the local indigenous Muslim community have recently made some disgruntled calls over issues of Zakah distributions, although these calls are marred mostly by bias, and racially inclined voices, and seem mostly baseless and lacking any evidential truth. The calls, nevertheless, still need to be paid attention to.

As a way forward, this study recommends that a formal *waqf* (endowment) system that is independent of the organizational structures of the Muslim NGOs be introduced. The *waqf* would make an equitable focus on the less fortunate from amongst both the Muslim and non-Muslim communities. A formal *waqf* system would ensure

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<sup>35</sup> Gaborone Management Committee.

sustainability and continuity, as well as highlight the role played by Muslims with regard to community development and thus bridging the gap between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities, which would help in minimizing the ever-growing trend of Islamophobia, especially among the young generation.

*Zakah* should also be administered in an empowering fashion, as opposed to the current manner, which could breed some form of a dependency-syndrome (i.e., instead of dividing minimal amounts of *zakah* to a large number of recipients, divide empowering amounts to a few), with the objective of producing *zakah* givers as opposed to recipients.

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# Traversing the *Chuo* Trajectory among the Yao Muslims during the Colonial and Post-Colonial Zimbabwean Era

Iliyasa Yasini\*

## Introduction

The Yao community is one of the largest ethnic Muslim communities in Southern Africa. With their roots in Northern Mozambique, the Yao are found in southern Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa. The spread of the Yao within the region can be attributed to various factors, the major one being the search for employment in farms and mines that were opened up within the region at the dawn of colonialism. A key characteristic of the Yao is that they have maintained religio-cultural identity that has blurred the line between being Yao and being Muslim. For many Yao people, Islam is synonymous with their ethnicity. One of the factors that have contributed to the maintenance of identity among Yao Muslims is a system of traditional religious education which they have held onto tightly since their adoption of Islam.

The traditional institution of religious learning among the Yao, referred to as the *chuo*, has played a major role in the Islamisation of Yao culture such that it is difficult to distinguish which practices belonged to the Yao (culturally) and which ones were peculiarly Islamic. In present-day Zimbabwe, a mosque is generally referred to by non-Muslim Zimbabweans, in general, as a Yao church or *chechi ye machawa*, in the vernacular Shona language. *Chuo* is derived, as it is, from the Kiswahili word *chuo* which means an Islamic school. In comparison to the modern-day learning *madrassahs*, which are text-centred, *chuo* learning systems are student-centred. One's behaviour and capacity to grasp the primary texts and their interpretation would then render a student qualified.

This article looks at the contribution, development, stagnancy and possible decline of the *chuo* educational system among the Yao Muslims of Zimbabwe during the past 50 years. Additionally, it

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suggests ways of reviving and re-establishing the *chuo* learning system and methods of negotiating the sustainable mechanism of the *chuo* learning system among communities. The study further focuses on the history of the Yao and their coming into Zimbabwe, the establishment of *chuo* traditional *madaris* and their impact, the challenges they faced in the post-independence era and possible means of sustaining the *chuo* and integrating the system into the modern Islamic educational systems among the Zimbabwean Muslims.

### Key Issues within the *Chuo* Learning System

#### *Resistance to Send Children to Mission Schools by the Yao*

The history of the Yao shows that, apart from being established as Muslims at least two centuries before the arrival of the British colonizers and missionaries, they could also read and write, in contrast to the report filed by David Livingstone.<sup>1</sup> Panjwani explains how “the education prevalent in Malawi before the coming of the Christian missionaries was Arabic and Kiswahili”<sup>2</sup> which was to later revert to English as a result of the education system brought by the missionaries. This lends support to the oral anecdotal historical narratives of an ‘*ajamī*’ tradition among the Yao.<sup>3</sup> ‘*Ajamī*’ refers to an African vernacular but written in the Arabic script. Due to colonisation and the missionary venture, the once learned Muslims were forced to learn English, which brought in a new dimension to the conditions that they were given. They resisted this education system which demanded that they give up their religion and embrace Christianity. In his further exposition, Panjwani states that the missionaries reached a consensus of no-education-before baptism after their first attempt to Christianize the Muslims of Chief Mponda. The mission at Cape Maclear, from 1875 to 1881, managed to convert only one Muslim for the entire period of 6 years. According to Lamba<sup>4</sup>

The religious roots of western education in Malawi created a problem based on bigotry. The situation was relatively simple. If you were

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- 1 Abbas Saidi Mdoka & Che Amnah Binti Bahari, “The Arrival of Islam in Malawi”, *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture* 7, no. 2 (2019): 39-47.
  - 2 I. A. Panjwani, “Muslims in Malawi” in *Malawi’s Muslims, Historical Perspectives*, edited by David S. Bone (Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere 2000), 69-88.
  - 3 *Ibid.*, 191.
  - 4 I. C. Lamba, “The Plight of Secular Education for African Muslims in Malawi: A Historical Perspective up to 1961”, *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 31, no. 1 (1999): 2.

Christian then access to education was yours: those people from non-Christian backgrounds attending school were enrolled on the expectation that they would eventually convert to Christianity which was considered to represent religious, moral and cultural excellence. The missions tended to operate on one important assumption: that any literacy imparted through Koranic schools should be strongly condemned as coming from the wrong source, the evil Muslim 'slave traders'. A collision course was thus charted from the start which, in effect, would stand in the way of Muslim educational opportunities and perpetuate under-development among Muslims.

As a result of this colonial and Christian missionary policy on education, the Yao feared the Christianisation of their children in missionary schools which would lead them to consume pork. They preferred, instead, sending their children to Islamic schools.

### ***The Parent-Teacher Relationship***

The parent-teacher relationship was based on the trust a parent had in the *sheikh* and the would-be teacher of a child. In most cases, the pupils were boys, while in some cases a few girls enjoyed such a privilege. A parent would discuss with a *sheikh* the possibility of registering a child in the *chuo* with conditions agreed upon between the two parties. A *sheikh* represented two key roles within the community, which were, that of a leader of the community in spiritual and religious affairs and secondly, an instructor in Islamic studies. Therefore, the relationship between him and a parent was based on the trust they had built as a religious leader and as an adept teacher.

A child was placed in *chuo* to study basic Arabic reading and writing. This formed the skill the Yao Muslims had when it comes to literacy. After completion of the basic Arabic reading and writing, they were introduced to Islamic etiquette where a student was taught what was expected of him in terms of his studies and behaviour. In the post-independence Zimbabwe, some students would go to secular schools while others would stay with the *sheikh* for Islamic studies. Others would come after completion of their ordinary level secular studies to pursue studies in Islam. The ethical guidance would then build a strong teacher-student relationship throughout the tenure of studies. The teacher monitored the behaviour and progress of an individual student any display of moral decadence in the student, would prevent him from qualifying.

### ***The Use of Bau/Ubua Writing Boards***

Slates made of wood were used as writing boards where students would write part of what they studied from the Qur'an until they mastered the reading. After completion, they would erase it and use it again in the next lesson until they completed. This helped develop the students' writing skills of the Arabic language and their mastery of the Qur'an.

### ***Completion of Juz' 'Amma / Kupamba 'Amma***

When one completed the last part of the Qur'an, commonly known as *juz' 'amma* (the thirtieth), he or she was expected to have also completed some basic texts on hadith, *fiqh* (jurisprudence), *seerah* (life of Prophet Muhammad (SAW)) and some of the basics. He was then conferred the title of *mwalimu* (in Arabic *mu'allim*), a scholar. A celebration was made with a *jalsa*, a gathering where parents and community leaders witnessed the student reciting a chapter from the Qur'an from memory. The chapter, *surah*, that was recited was known as *an naba'*, the glad tidings. Although he was still a student, he was given responsibilities of leading prayers, including the Friday congregational prayer; conducting other communal activities such as funeral and marriage rites. He becomes a public figure and the community monitors his behaviour while other *sheikhs* were assigned to monitor and teach him other texts. The journey to an advanced level will have begun.

The student was then introduced to other religious texts including the *tafsir*, exegesis of the Qur'an, dealing with real life *fiqh* issues, critical thinking and community building skills until he was assuredly capable of leading the community. A prospective *sheikh* was then sent to two other *sheikhs* who administered some tests before he was confirmed as a *sheikh*. A similar *jalsa* was organized but with the *khirqah* conferred on the prospective *sheikh* and a *silsilah* (a chain of teachers where the knowledge has been acquired from) was handed over to him. One then became a *sheikh* and could lead a community.

### ***Some Challenges Faced by Chuo***

Despite the *Chuo* system of learning having positively benefitted communities, the *sheikhs* had to fend for themselves to survive the demands of modern times, particularly with the high cost of living in Zimbabwe. This was unlike in rural villages where money is not mostly

used. Besides, in the rural areas, students would work in the *sheikh's* field as a form of payment for his pedagogical services. As Komba states: "Quranic schools were not associated with upward social mobility or economic gains unlike western education which is seen as a way out of poverty."<sup>5</sup> As such, interest in traditional *chuo* learning declined considerably as students and *sheikhs* preferred to work for an income that was sustainable.

The other challenge faced within the *chuo* learning system was the emergence of contemporary *madaris* (Islamic schools). This contributed to a decline in the social fabric as new systems of learning were not compatible with the cultural and social inclinations of Yao Muslims. Contemporary *madrasahs* were introduced by the Salafi scholars who came with a relatively new monolithic view of Islam which they claimed to be the 'true' Islam. Such scholars treat anything other than their views as un-Islamic, heresy or polytheistic. The development and growth of these notions contributed to the decline of the *chuo* system of learning – a system that was more Sufi-oriented, communitarian, traditional, and organic.

## Proposal

Given the richness of traditional *chuo* learning methods, its contribution to the wellbeing of society, but cognizant of the changing times, with modern technology and methods of learning, this study proposes an integration of the *chuo* learning methods and the modern Islamic learning methods. To integrate, therefore, will involve forming, coordinating, and blending the two systems of learning into one functional or unified whole. Thus, this will involve absorbing, assimilating, cooperating, and embodying both traditional and modern Islamic into one.

As Bakar notes, "Islam looks upon knowledge as the central means to salvation of the soul and to the attainment of human happiness and prosperity in this life as well as in the hereafter."<sup>6</sup> The famous hadith compiler, Imam al-Tirmidhī (d. A.H. 279/892 C.E.) narrates that "the person in quest of knowledge is on the path of Allah (SWT) until he

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5 S. C. Komba, "The Beginnings and Development of Islam and Quranic Schools in East Africa", *Journal of Philosophy, Culture and Religion* 5 (2015).

6 Osman Bakar, *The History and Philosophy of Islamic Science* (Cambridge: Islamic Texts Society, 2012), 1.

returns."<sup>7</sup> Literally, the acquisition of knowledge in Islam refers to passing along the heritage of Islamic traditional texts - the Qur'an and *sunnah* and other secondary and interpretative texts. On the other hand, Islamic religious knowledge gathering was not merely aimed at the correct performance of Islamic rituals (*al 'ibadat*), but also at the acquisition of a specific ethical conduct such as personal and communal reform, also in "normal daily life".<sup>8</sup> The *chuo* learning system is therefore central to this kind of knowledge acquisition.

## Conclusion

The integration of traditional Islamic knowledge and modern knowledge methods is one of the key issues affecting the Muslims when it comes to the question of Islam and modernity. Sayyid Hossein Nasr argues that

... a conscious and intellectual defence must be made of the Islamic tradition. Moreover, a thorough intellectual criticism must be made of the modern world and its shortcomings. Muslims cannot hope to follow the same path as the West without reaching the same impasse or even a worse one, because of the rapidity of the tempo of change today. The Muslim intelligentsia must face all these changes mentioned here and many others, with confidence in themselves. They must cease to live in a state of psychological and cultural sense of inferiority.<sup>9</sup>

It is important that education should contribute to the protection of identity, customs and religion while adapting to modern methods. However, to attain that, there should be dialogue among Muslim educators and intellectuals to ensure that knowledge produces free and independent thinking among the Muslims.

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# Mesangs and Matriliney: The Issue of Muslim Genealogy in South Africa

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## Introduction

Muslim genealogy in South Africa is a topic that is largely underdiscussed, although the concept is prided in the Cape as one's *asal* has great importance in terms of heritage, status, and marital compatibility. In this article, we will discuss some features of the genealogy of the Muslim community, particularly around the Mother City (that is, Cape Town), and the use of formal versus informal archives in researching a colonised community.

Genealogical preservation is a practice that existed in the Prophet's (SAW) time. Prophet Muhammad (SAW) stated that those who were most honoured in the time of ignorance are most honoured after Islam.<sup>1</sup> One of the most famous Muslim genealogists was the Prophet's (SAW) successor, Abu Bakr (RA), who was able to identify where each of the tribesmen fitted within the tribe. There are also verses in the Qur'an which affirm the practice of calling one by the name of one's father.<sup>2</sup> It also speaks about mankind being created in tribes and nations by using the verb *ta'arafu*, which, according to Ibn Kathir, means "so-and-so the son of so-and-so, from the tribe of so-and-so", which directly refers to genealogy.<sup>3</sup> Jubayr ibn Mut'im, however, reports that the Prophet (SAW) said: "He who calls to tribalism is not one of us."<sup>4</sup> From this, we can understand that although lineage is important, it should not take precedence over the kinship of shared faith.

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1 Imam Nawawi, *Riyad as-Salihin*, Hadith 69, (Tughra Books, 2014).

2 Holy Qur'an 33:5.

3 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir*, Holy Qur'an 49:13, (Darussalam Publications, 2000).

4 Abu Dawud, *Sunan*, 5121 (Darussalam Publishers, 2008).

## The Tapestry of Lineage: Tracing Roots in the Fluid Body of the Cape Muslim Community

To be able to understand Muslim genealogy in South Africa, we first need to understand that there are distinctive cultural groups within the greater South African Muslim community. The largest group is the Malay or Cape Muslim community. Another large community of Muslims is the Indian merchant class community, which is divided into different sub-communities based on place of origin and language. Some examples of these sub-communities include the Memon, Kokni, Surti, and Kanamia communities. There are many other Muslim communities in South Africa such as those predominantly in Kwa-Zulu Natal of indentured labourer extracts as well as Zanzibaris, or rather descendants of East African slaves, who were freed and settled in the same area.

The Malay community, on which most genealogical research can be done in South Africa, can be understood as a fluid body formed largely out of slavery with the guidance of political exiles who assisted in consolidating a Muslim community at the Cape. Indeed, these slaves had diverse origins such as South and Southeast Asia, East Africa, West Africa, and even South America. According to John Edwin Mason, these slaves suffered social death during the middle passage from their place of origin to the Cape where they were stripped of identity, given new arbitrary names as well as a toponym as their slave reference.<sup>5</sup> An example is Imam Hasanullah bin Fadhl being reduced to Jan van Bougies.<sup>6</sup>

Although statistics show that a majority of the slaves came from Africa and the Indian subcontinent, most of the exiles were from Southeast Asia; and, for that reason, we see the culture, language, and traditions of these exiles pervading amongst this new community of Muslims. Slaves had been sent to the Cape since its founding as a halfway house. Indeed, the exiles too followed shortly after, but it is only during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century that a community of Muslims, enslaved and free, truly started forming. This can possibly be attributed to the *da'wah* work of political exile, Said Alawi, as well as

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5 John Edwin Mason, *Social Death and Resurrection: Slavery and Emancipation in South Africa* (University of Virginia Press, 2003).

6 WCARS: MOOC 6/9/41 8705

Imam Abdullah<sup>7</sup> of Tidore who also compiled literature during his exile at the Cape and used it to teach in the first known *madrasah* in Dorp Street out of a house belonging to a freed slave named Coridon of Ceylon.<sup>8</sup>

These freed slaves were part of a large group of citizens at the Cape called free blacks, sometimes inclusive of exiles, free-borns, and others. During that same period that Alawi and Tuan Guru were doing their missionary work, Free Blacks had Muslim names or came from areas largely populated by Muslims; and it was, therefore, assumed that they were Muslims. As a result, they began to exhibit signs of kinship that were being constructed amongst themselves. These include witnesses or testators on behalf of each other's wills, slave purchases and manumissions, notarial business applications such as registering boats for fishing in the harbour and others.

We see certain individuals like Frans van Bengal, Litjon van Bali, Akier van Batavia, and others appearing in more and more of these types of documents.<sup>9</sup> Part of the culture that emerges out of the slave lodge is matriliney. Robert Shell gives a detailed report of family units that appear within the lodge's records, recognized by their mothers in terms of uterine descent.<sup>10</sup> Hans Heese also references occasions of female line ancestry such as the issue of Sophia van Adriana van Maria van Adriana van Maria Blom.<sup>11</sup> These can be attributed to various factors such as rape, illegality of slave marriage, and matrilineal cultures in Southeast Asia and parts of Africa.<sup>12</sup>

In terms of evidence of matriliney taking place within the contemporary Muslim community, there are multiple examples. One of the *imams* of the Nurul Islam Mosque in Buitengracht Street, Imam Amien Bassadien, was referred to in the community as Imam Amien Ria, his mother being Ria Fischer. Another is a *mu'allim* who lived in

7 Michael F. Laffan "The Sayyid in the Slippers: An Indian Ocean Itinerary and Visions of Arab Sainthood, 1737-1929", *Archipel* 86, no. 1 (2013): 191-227.

8 Shafiq Morton, *From the Spice Islands to Cape Town: The Life and Times of Tuan Guru* (National Awqaf Foundation of South Africa, 2018).

9 WCARS: NCD 2/1 2

10 Robert Shell, "Tender Ties: Women and the Slave Household, 1652-1834" in *Collected Seminar Papers, Institute of Commonwealth Studies*, vol. 42, (1992): 1-33.

11 Hans F. Heese and Delia A. Robertson. *Cape Melting Pot: The Role and Status of the Mixed Population at the Cape, 1652-1795* (DA Robertson, 2011).

12 Liazzat J. K. Bonate, "Islam and Matriliney along the Indian Ocean Rim: Revisiting the Old 'Paradox' by Comparing the Minangkabau, Kerala and Coastal Northern Mozambique", *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies* 48, no. 3 (2017): 436-451.

Rose Street and eventually settled in Kensington, Hadjie Hassiem, who was referred to by the granddaughter of one of his students as Hassiem Mu'illa; he was the son of *Motjie* Mu'illa Sahibo.<sup>13</sup> There is also archival documentation of this, such as the death notice of Salie Gajaar, father of Imam Rejaldien Salie of Kalk Bay, where both parents' names are given but his mother's name, Gajaar, is taken as the surname.<sup>14</sup>

Finally, in the Mowbray Muslim Cemetery, the tombstone of one Mogamat Sakela corresponds to a death certificate of Gamat Salie, whereupon genealogical investigation determined his mother to be Sakela Salie. These cases consolidate the fact that to be known by the name of one's mother was a common feature in the Cape Muslim community despite the father being known. This suggests that the practice is a descendent feature of Cape slave culture.

### **Archives Unveiled: Navigating Formal and Informal Sources in South African Muslim Genealogy**

To tackle genealogical validation and discovery, we first need to understand the resources needed for this. In this sphere, the definition of the *archive* is needed. An archive is simply a space where historical information is stored for retrieval. The concept of the archives has its own connotations within a post-apartheid South Africa, where one thinks of colonial documentation written with a European bias against local history. It is for this reason that we should consider the social movement of decolonisation as a lens in terms of psychological freedom and look towards a second concept, *informal archives*. These include oral histories, cemeteries, family diaries, and religious *kitab*s. Of course, the first port of call is that of oral history retrieval. The custom of oral tradition is prevalent in all cultures around the world and mostly involves the transmission of stories, hymns for the preservation of religious knowledge as well as genealogical accounts.

With regard to the practice of transmission of genealogical accounts in South Africa, it often takes the form of storytelling where, within the story, the ancestors are mentioned, either by birth name, terms of endearment or a feature of reference. The matriarch of the Bassadien family of Loader Street, for example, was referred to as Hatta. Her actual name was Hajera Boomgaard and her father was referred to as 'Die Hollander' since he was of European extraction and embraced

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13 Private verbal correspondence with Hagera Khan, Boomgaard family history.

14 WCARS: MOOC 6/9/329 1264.

Islam, thereby becoming a Malay.<sup>15</sup> We can see how skin colour and racial origin became features of reference in storytelling and genealogical accounts.

Second to the telling of oral histories, tombstones are great sources of information. From 1840 to 1950, there was a trend of elaborate tombstones written in Jawi, Arabic, Arabic-Afrikaans, and English. Until the 1920s, most tombstones were made from a slate called *blousteen* which was mined from the quarries around the Cape. These types of tombstones are found in many of the old Malay cemeteries, from Tana Baru to Uitenhage. We do see tombstones from the 1890s onwards chipped from white marble, though these generally belonged to influential people, hence indicating higher status.

Through transcription, dates, names, titles, and places of origin can be reflected. A tombstone that encompasses all the above is that of Jawi or *mesang*, of Imam Hasanullah in the Tana Baru cemetery in Bo Kaap. It follows a typical formula for tombstones in the Malay cemeteries which opens with an invocation of God's name, testifying his oneness and the finality of His Prophet (RA). It then gives the name of the owner of the grave, which in this case is Muhammad, son of Fadhl from the land of Boné (in Indonesia). What is interesting is that it states that he came to the Cape and was known here as Imam Hasanullah. This indicates that, although he had an Arabic birth name, he was referred to by a *laqab*, which reflected a quality that he may have had. Hasanullah, in this case, means 'Goodness of Allah', suggesting that he was viewed as a source of goodness from God by his community. The tombstone inscribes a date of the third of Dhu al-Qa'dah 1263 Hijri and that his age was one hundred and twelve. So, from just one stone we can extract all that information which would otherwise take hours of archival digging through different sources in order to compile a basic biography.

The old tombstones of the merchant class Indian community are evidently different from those of the Malay community as they tend to be written in Urdu and sometimes Gujarati, as seen in the Stellenbosch Muslim Cemetery. The tombstone of Kamal al-Din Bazan in the Klip Road Cemetery lists information like that of Imam Hasanullah, though it goes a step further by including the name of his village and district in the Kokan region of India. This is especially useful from a

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15 Private verbal correspondence with Hagera Khan, Boomgaard family history.

genealogical perspective as it allows one to trace back to a specific village where others may bear the surname.

An additional source of genealogical information is the *kitab* which refers to a book of religious instruction, containing litanies and prayer manuals or even guidelines on how to perform different kinds of healing, whether within the perceived guidelines of Islamic law or not. It is in these *kitabs* that three types of genealogical information are usually obtained - that of the scribe, the student, and the teacher. Oftentimes, the scribe and the student may be the same person.

One also finds that these *kitabs* may have been passed down in families and the next owners would then inscribe their own names as well. What is most valuable is that the names are written according to Islamic practice, which is the individual being named after their father, such as Muhammad bin Ahmad. From the *kitab* collection of the Hassiem family of Kensington, one was most fascinating as the scribe had included his ancestry up to the sixth generation, which according to research done at the Western Cape Archives and Records Centre (WCARS) was verified up to the fourth generation before the scribe.

Finally, the largest amount of information is obtained from the state archives. The most relevant of these is the one just mentioned WCARS, since it contains the earliest archival information in the country, encompassing the Dutch and British colonial periods as well as the apartheid period. There are various sources at the WCARS, of which the most useful is the Master's Office of the Orphan Chambers (MOOC). This contains wills, liquidation and distribution accounts, estate files, and death notices. The death notices are the most useful documents in terms of genealogical research as they link individuals directly to their children and parents. The death notice also gives the age, date of death and last marriage as well as usual address which can be used to determine if the individual is indeed the one being traced.

Then, the Indian immigration file, IRC, is a treasure trove of information for the merchant class Indians who came after 1904 as it contains all immigration-related information as well as passport photographs of various members of the family, the village they came from, all the ships taken and ports embarked from, who their kin is that they are in contact with in South Africa as well as other useful information which aids in researching individuals.

Regarding the Indian indentured labourers who were taken to Durban, shipping lists were transcribed by the University of Kwa-Zulu Natal and have been digitised for open access. Many of the entries in these lists include the village that the individuals came from. In the case of Dannalee, a Muslim indentured labourer, a descendant bearing the surname managed to trace the ancestral village and lineage by making use of these shipping lists.<sup>16</sup> Under the British administration, births, deaths, and marriages were only officially registered from 1895 onwards; and so, before this date, there is little record of these events taking place.<sup>17</sup>

Prior to 1895, most record keeping was done through the church in terms of baptisms, marriages, and burial registers which, of course, did not affect the Muslim community. There is evidence to show that Muslims were keeping their own record of these events like the diary of Imam Saban of Simonstown who documented births, deaths, marriages, and other events in the Muslim community from 1904 to 1928, though there is evidence of him recording information prior to 1895.

It is disconcerting, however, that many of these kinds of books are inaccessible to the community or researchers because they have been either destroyed, lost, weathered, or kept hidden. It is also important to scrutinised sources prior to 1895. There is evidence that death notices date back to around 1834. Thereafter, the wills indicate kinship from the late 17th century onwards although this is largely for the European and wealthier Free Black communities. Census records are also great sources of information. These include the J source *Opgaafrollen*, or tax census, which was mostly institutionalized under the Dutch period and focused on Europeans though during the British period in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century more Free Blacks were included. These census records also had a focus on Free Black men, with a few of them listing women separately or as wives of their listed husbands.<sup>18</sup>

The RDG source holds municipal information and a few census records as well. Other documents, like the Slave Office (SO) documents, Colonial Office (CO) and Notarial Protocols (NCD) provide quite a bit of insight into slave and Free Black relationships. These records include lists of slaves and their children, information on Free

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16 Faieza Dannalee Online Correspondence, 1 March 2020.

17 WCARS: HAWC 1/3/9/5/1.

18 WCARS: J41.

Blacks who requested to emancipate or purchase their enslaved relatives, or Free Blacks who requested to leave the colony with relatives. These last few sources can be considered the final scraps of genealogical data collection after all the previous sources are consulted, considering the difficulty in finding a slave or Free Black ancestor in one's tracing.

The issues facing Muslim genealogical research are many. From an oral history perspective, myths and legends find their way into the truth to make slave histories, illegitimacy, and poverty more palatable. As a result, when dealing with archival information and oral history, the genealogist must take into account the discrepancies between the two. For example, when oral history filters down that the forefather of a specific family was a Javanese prince, the genealogist should then look at it from the perspective of the forefather possibly having just been a Javanese slave or a slave from Southeast Asia, for that matter. Another issue that arises is the case of tombstones. Take the case of the tombstone of Imam Sahibo. It features his name written as Imam Shu'aib bin Abd al-Sattar. However, on his death certificate, his name is recorded as Sahibo Satarodien.<sup>19</sup> Satarodien and Abdol Satar are separate individuals in the history of the Cape.

Lastly, in terms of using colonial archival information, apart from the simple lack of documentation, one is to be especially wary of spelling, pronunciation, colonial names, and missing, damaged or destroyed information. In terms of spelling, for example, names such as Muhammad could be written as Gamat, Mogamat, Mamat or other configurations which highlight the difficulty of looking for an individual with a specific name since he or she may be referred to in different documents with these different spellings or pronunciations. Also, names like Muhammad Ishaq may sometimes be referred to as simply Mogamat in documents, although in oral history they may be referred to by the second name.<sup>20</sup> All these issues highlight the technical difficulties with Muslim genealogy in South Africa.

Muslim genealogy in South Africa is largely based on research done in formal colonial archives due to the hegemonic nature of colonialism. However, by utilizing informal archival sources and techniques, we can see how it becomes easier to decipher the origins of the increasingly fluid Muslim community of South Africa as well as

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<sup>19</sup> WCARS: HAWC 1/3/9/5/4 1504.

<sup>20</sup> WCARS: MOOC 6/9/560 3579.

understanding the effect that other genealogical features such as matriliney have on Cape Muslim society.

## Conclusion

In conclusion, this exploration into Muslim genealogy in South Africa sheds light on the intricacies of a community shaped by diverse origins, historical challenges, and cultural influences. The importance of genealogy within the Muslim community is deeply rooted in Islamic traditions, with the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) himself recognizing the significance of honouring lineage without succumbing to tribalism.

The Cape Muslim community, consisting of various cultural groups, presents a unique and complex genealogical history forged through slavery, political exile, and the establishment of a distinct Muslim identity. This article delved into the impact of matriliney, evident in cultural practices and even contemporary nomenclature, emphasizing that the mother's name often played a significant role in individual identification.

The research methodology outlined in the article underscores the necessity of a multidimensional approach to genealogical validation. Beyond formal colonial archives, the study advocates for the inclusion of informal archives such as oral histories, tombstones, and *kitab*s. These sources offer valuable insights, revealing stories that might not be captured in official documents and highlighting the fluidity of the community's identity.

Nevertheless, the study acknowledges the challenges inherent in genealogical research, from discrepancies between oral history and archival records to issues of spelling, pronunciation, and missing information. By embracing a decolonial perspective and drawing on both formal and informal archives, researchers can navigate these challenges, contributing to a more nuanced understanding of Muslim genealogy in South Africa. Ultimately, this study not only enriches our understanding of the Cape Muslim community's history but also serves as a testament to the resilience and adaptability of a community shaped by diverse cultural and historical forces.

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### **Vocabulary List**

*Asal*: From Arabic أصل meaning root, ancestry, referring to lineage.

*Imam*: From Arabic إمام meaning leader, referring to a Muslim religious leader.

*Motjie*: Possibly from Dutch *Mondje*, literally small mouth, referring to a concubine, or Malay *Makcik*, meaning aunt.

*Laqab*: From Arabic لقب, meaning title or nickname.

*Blousteen*: Afrikaans for blue stone, refers to the type a specific type of shale found in the Cape.

# Towards Understanding the Emergence of Afro-Muslim Culture in South Africa

Thembisa Fakude\*

## Introduction

There have been tensions in South Africa between established Muslim communities, mainly those of Indian and Malay dissents, and the emerging Muslim communities, particularly the black South African Muslims. These tensions have manifested themselves in various ways and, at some point, culminated into a march by black Muslims to the Union Buildings in Pretoria. According to the organizers, the march was meant to highlight racism within Muslim communities in South Africa and to bring that to the attention of the government. The continued tensions and accusations of marginalization of black Muslims also led to the formation of a black progressive organization, South African Black Muslim Conference (SABMC).<sup>1</sup> Among other objectives, SABMC was set up to establish platforms that will deal with problems that are specific to black Muslims, including concerns of racism and marginalization. Responding in support of SABMC in 2019, Thandile Kona, the President of Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa, argued that black Muslims have been on the receiving end of exploitation, paternalism, toxic charity that breeds dependence, patronizing attitudes and, in some cases, outright racism. These have left deep seated psychological damage in the families and communities of black Muslims.

This article examines the emergence of Afro-Muslim culture in the townships of South Africa where Afro-Muslim culture is largely driven by the second-generation black Muslim youth, most of whom were educated in Muslim *madrasahs* and a majority are women. It argues that multicultural identities have often led to contradictions and tensions within Muslim communities in South Africa. South African black Muslims have faced pushbacks and rejections from the

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1 Ashraf Dockrat, "The South African Black Muslim Conference 2019: Prospects and Problems", *RIMA* 7, no.8 (2019):17.

traditional Muslims which has led to the emergence of parallel Muslim communities in the townships, insisting on their own identities. Although the expectation is that, ideally, a shared religion should create a reasonably common shared identity between emerging Muslims and established Muslims, the result in South Africa has been the opposite. Although limited in its scope, the research on which this study is based concentrated mainly on Muslims in Johannesburg, Gauteng. The critical argument posited is that widespread accusations of racism made by black Muslim communities in South Africa birthed Afro-Muslim culture.

The black Muslim youth, particularly in the townships, are taking sociopolitical and economic challenges faced by black Muslims in general to a different level. They have embraced the national intra-Muslim social challenges as a new urgency and a struggle they must pursue. Core to their struggle are matters of marginalization, racism and economic disparities within the Muslim community. Instead of the usual lamentations of discrimination at usual platforms, including black mosques in the townships, black Muslim youth are finding more platforms and voices to articulate their concerns.

They are also introducing new cultural characteristics to what it means to be black and Muslim. Whereas in the past, there were semblances of similarities between established and the emerging Muslim communities, cultural definitions and identities, particularly in terms of dress codes, food and mosque decorations, are being redefined by black Muslim youth. They are redefining all traits which characterized their culture and identity. Women, who have been in the forefront in this regard, are embracing new forms of dress codes which, for example, fuse traditional Muslim fashion style with African fashion architecture.

Mosque interior and exterior decorations in some townships are also embracing a different look. African infused art is steadily becoming a new form of art decoration for mosques. Two mosques that have particularly demonstrated this trend are Mvelinqangi Jumuah Masjid in Winterveld, Pretoria and Mkhabele Jumuah Masjid in Monsterlus in Limpopo. Both mosques have colorful African drawings adorning their walls.

## **The Historical Background and the Emergence of Black Muslims in the Townships**

There are various strands through which Islam spread into various black communities in South Africa. Established Muslim communities had a tremendous impact in the establishment of black Muslim communities, not only in terms of sponsoring infrastructure but also with regard to intellectual investment in the communities. The Islamic Propagation Centre International (IPCI), for instance, which was established in Durban, Kwa-Zulu Natal by Sheikh Ahmad Deedat and his colleagues, was very instrumental in providing Islamic education and intellectual investment in black communities. In places such as Durban, there have been other influential communities, including the Zanzibari community, that facilitated the growth of Islam. There were other Muslims from African countries who settled in South Africa who were also influential in the introduction of Islam in the townships.

When South Africa became a democracy in 1994, there were many Muslims from other African countries who came to the country and played an important role in propagating Islam. Moreover, there were other South Africans who reverted to Islam while in exile and on their return brought Islam into the country. Importantly, during apartheid there were sizeable economic migrants, particularly from countries such as Malawi who also facilitated the spread of Islam. What further facilitated the numerical growth of Muslims within the black Muslim communities was the Iranian Revolution and the subsequent ousting of Mohammed Reza, the Shah of Iran in 1979. Following the revolution, Iran broke ties with South Africa and this contributed to the growing militancy of South African Muslims in the anti-apartheid struggle.<sup>2</sup> However, in spite of common affront on apartheid by all Muslims, the relationship between emerging and established Muslim communities has remained strained. The reversion to Islam of many Africans has also not facilitated the coming together of these two communities, instead it has exposed certain fault lines within and between both communities.

Undoubtedly, apartheid discriminatory laws are to be blamed for racial discrimination at all levels in South Africa. Given that both emerging and established Muslim communities were victims of apartheid, it is puzzling that there are growing racial tensions between

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2 H. E. Chehabi, "South Africa and Iran in the Apartheid Era", *Journal of Southern African Studies* 42, no. 4 (2016): 687-709

these communities. At the same time, efforts to convert more black people to Islam continue unabated and have, in fact, gained momentum in some parts. Muslims, with limited economic resources, constitute between 5% to 10% of the population of Cape Town. In the field of philanthropy, Muslims of Indian extraction make indelible contributions to various aspects of community life both within and outside of their community.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in spite of the tensions, they have been instrumental in facilitating the growth of Islam in black communities. This is a contradiction that deserves more time outside this article.

### **Attempting to Understand the Rejection of Established Muslim Culture by Black Muslim Communities**

The various strands through which black people in townships embraced Islam enabled establishment of a different kind of Islam in the townships. The scarcity of mosques, for instance, led Muslims of various persuasions to form a particular brand of Islam. Muslims were compelled to mingle and pray together and this led to cross pollination of Islamic interpretations, something most of those within established Muslim communities never had a chance to experience. One mosque in some parts of Soweto, for example, was a host of various *madhabs* or interpretations of Islam, a melting pot of Islamic understanding, tolerance and connectivity. Second, the racially charged politics of South Africa, marginalization of black Muslims, and racism added to the mix of this new interpretation of Islam. These realities gave birth to a new form of Islam and culture and a rejection of established Muslim cultures. There was, therefore, a birth of a new Islamic revolution.

The continuing racial tensions between black Muslims and established Muslim communities introduced a new form of activism. There was suddenly a new political urgency, a struggle to be waged. Racism remains a dominant political discourse at most black African Muslim platforms, such as the SABMC gatherings in 2019 and 2022. The racial polarization of the Muslim community in South Africa poses a new threat to Muslim cohesion. It also exposes Muslim

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3 S. Khan, A. K. Gabralla, and A. F. M. Ebrahim; "The South African Muslim Community and Its Role in Responding to International Disasters", *Indian Diaspora* (International Studies and Religion and Society Series), vol. 24 (2015): 199-226.

communities to other opportunistic external factors which may take advantage of Muslim disunity.

### **Towards Understanding the Afro-Muslim Culture in the Townships of South Africa**

Notwithstanding the ongoing challenges, Islam has endured in the townships. There is a new form of Islam that has emerged in the black townships over the years. It is led largely by the second generation of young black Muslims. They have forged trends in the black townships that have gained momentum in recent years. These young black Muslims are redefining what it means to be black and Muslim in South Africa. Their struggle is, basically, a continuation of the struggle that was started by the generation before. The difference is that, whereas the previous generation preoccupied itself mainly with racism within the established Muslim communities, the new Afro-Muslim generation seeks to address racism and the entire black Muslim culture. Amongst some of the developments visible within this culture is the rise in the use of names and, quite prevalently, a reversion to African names. When most black Muslims embraced Islam, they changed their original names and embraced Arabic names. Nelisiwe Msomi, a young black Muslim woman, has an Arabic name which "she was given in school." However, she prefers her Zulu name, Nelisiwe, which means *satisfied* in Zulu. "I'm not ashamed of it but when I say my name is *Nelisiwe*, I'm affirming that Black Muslims in South Africa do exist and fight against erasure."<sup>4</sup> It is intended to emphasize the new identity.

The other phenomenon which is redefining what it means to be African is the manner in which Afro-Muslim culture has dealt with the dress code. Whereas in the beginning, the black Muslims were wearing Indian and Arab thobes in the townships as a way of identifying themselves as Muslims, current generation of Afro-Muslims is changing that culture. Colorful, African infused fashion has become fashionable in most black Muslim communities. What has added to the confidence in this regard is that, as most African Muslims start travelling to other Muslim countries are learning more about Islam and many are realizing that it is acceptable to adorn African clothing, if it is modest. Subsequently, there has been a sudden change from

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4 Stefanie Jason, "Meet the Women Championing South Africa's Black Muslim Pride", 2018, *okayafrica*, <https://www.okayafrica.com/meet-the-women-championing-south-africas-black-muslim-pride/>

traditional Muslim fashion to Afro-Muslim wardrobe. Afro-Muslim women are infusing African styling in their clothes. There were times when wearing anything African was seen as wrong. When Zahara, a sister of Nelisiwe Msomi, one of the black Muslim activists, wore traditional beadwork on top of her hijab at an event, she was severely denounced by her school head.<sup>5</sup>

There is also emergence of African influenced *nasheeds* and poetry performed in local vernacular languages. It is an interesting phenomenon led largely by young black Muslims. Nasheed is a type of music popular in the Islamic world, sang with instruments, according to a particular style. It borrows its style from Islamic traditions. It is a new form of art that is redefining what it means to be black and Muslim. Food is an important trait in defining any culture. Most Muslim functions are dominated by Indian cuisine even within black Muslim communities; it is not unusual to find Indian cuisine. Part of the cultural redefinition by Afro-Muslims is the insistence on local African cuisine during African Muslim functions. During the last conference of the SAMBC, there was at some point in the preparations, a discussion on whether it was appropriate to even have biryani and other Indian cuisine as part of the menu whilst pushing forward a black Muslim agenda at the conference. There were some who suggested that the conference ambiance must reflect an African agenda, including the conference cuisine.

The Afro-Muslim culture is entrenching a new Muslim identity in the black Muslim communities. Unlike the first generation of black Muslims who borrowed much from the established Muslims in defining themselves, the Afro-Muslim culture is rejecting established cultural practices. They instead prefer to be defined as Muslims of African dissent devoid of the culture of established Muslim communities. Most Afro-Muslims had to navigate the complications of being African and Muslims at the same time when they grew up. Moreover, they also experienced discrimination of some form which has arguably led them to take to strong positions regarding the established culture. They had to deal with the phenomenon of being a majority within a minority. That is, although they came from majority black communities, they have to constantly endure being treated as a minority within the Muslim communities. Moreover, pressures of being youth whilst at the same time seeking to maintain Islamic

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

identity is also a contributing factor to the momentum of Afro-Muslim culture. Moreover, the need to integrate in the overall culture, particularly within the townships, has encouraged the Afro-Muslim culture; it is an attempt to find a space within the overall black popular culture. Afro Muslim Culture is a defiant and revolutionary culture trying to absolve itself from racially toxic environments of an established Muslim environment.

## Conclusion

The Afro-Muslims come from marginalized black families. They are also victims of national economic marginalization and products of South African political makeup; they are angry, impatient and detest racism. Afro-Muslim culture is, in a way, an attempt to get out of the subserviency of being a majority within a minority. Speaking to *okayafrika* publication, one of the young black activists, Teshepang Mamogale, argues "I am definitely part of this movement." It is a consciousness shift in which there is a deep sense of Black Muslim pride. Tshepang is part of the young black Muslims forming part of what this article refers to as Afro-Muslim culture. There is certainly a sense that, by maintaining the status quo inherited from the first-generation of Muslims, it is a perpetuation of neo-colonization.

Afro Muslims are raising important questions and arguments. One pertinent question they are posing, for example, is whether it is anti-Islam to be part of the popular black cultures. Furthermore, and importantly through this process of rejection, discovery and redefinition, they are finding answers for themselves in the absence and intervention of the black Muslim leadership.

Finally, throughout the world, Islam has metamorphosized, embracing local cultures resulting in homegrown Islam and way of life. Afro-Muslim culture is therefore not a new phenomenon, it has happened in other parts of the world. What makes South Africa unique are reasons that have led to this phenomenon. Afro-Muslim culture is a creation of a parallel society borne out of marginalization and discrimination by established Muslim communities. This is manifested in the language of Afro-Muslim culture. Afro-Muslim culture seeks to Africanize Islam by influencing a new culture for black Muslims by black Muslims.

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# Curating the Islamic Heritage of Cape Town

Ezgi Güner\*

Museums have played key role in reframing South African heritage as multicultural since the 1990s. In contrast to the colonial and apartheid museology that celebrated the white settler history and culture in South Africa, while exoticizing and freezing in time the non-white Others, the post-apartheid democracy dedicated itself to creating space for the neglected heritage of racialised and marginalised communities. Reconfiguring the new nation as the "rainbow nation", therefore, entailed renegotiating heritage and memory in the museum space.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, the post-apartheid nation-building went hand in hand with the proliferation of monuments, memorials, museums, commemoration and heritage sites. The dominant framework defining the new South Africa's public memory has been grounded in a positive teleology of history, progressing from racial oppression and dispossession to struggle for liberation, reconciliation, democracy, and freedom.

Two exhibitions marked this new memory-work already in 1994, the year South Africa had its first democratic election. These were the "300 Years: The Making of Cape Muslim Culture" exhibition at the Castle of Good Hope and the opening exhibition of the District Six Museum, "Streets: Retracing District Six." Both exhibitions resulted from community activism. The "Cape Muslim Culture" exhibition was organised by the Sheikh Yusuf Tricentenary Commemoration Committee (SYTCC) in collaboration with the William Fehr Collection at the Castle.<sup>2</sup> This was the first example of a cooperation between a

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- 1 Duane Jethro, *Heritage Formation and the Senses in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Aesthetics of Power* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), Witz et al. *Unsettled History: Making South African Public Pasts* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017), Murray et al. *Desire Lines: Space, Memory and Identity in the Post-Apartheid City* (London: Routledge, 2017), Annie E. Coombes, *History After Apartheid: Visual Culture and Public Memory in a Democratic South Africa* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003).
- 2 Kerry Ward, "The '300 Years: The Making of Cape Muslim Culture' Exhibition, Cape Town, April 1994: Liberating the Castle?", *Social Dynamics* 21, no.1 (1995): 96-131.

state museum and a community organisation in South Africa.<sup>3</sup> In addition to commemorating the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the banishment of Sheikh Yusuf of Makassar to the Cape Colony and hence the introduction of Islam in South Africa, the exhibition aimed to transform the communities' relationship with the Castle which stood as the icon of colonial conquest, domination and legacy.

The exhibition served to bring in visitors who have historically been alienated from the Castle, yet who now had the opportunity to reclaim it as a space where their own histories, cultures and identities were honoured. The main curatorial strategy to ensure community participation was the incorporation of the craftspeople such as a blacksmith, tailor, fez maker, etc. into the exhibition by establishing stalls for them to practice their craft for the duration of the exhibition.<sup>4</sup> Skilled artisanship is of paramount importance to the Muslim heritage of Cape Town. Overall, the exhibition marked an important moment in South African history not only for its pioneering experimentation with community engagement in public museum, but also by integrating Muslim identity and history into the new national heritage and public memory.

The District Six Museum Foundation was established in 1989 as part of the "Hands Off District Six" campaign.<sup>5</sup> The campaign aimed to preserve the memory of District Six which was declared a white group area in 1966, resulting in the forced removal of about 55,000-65,000 inhabitants of mixed ethnic and religious background.<sup>6</sup> Unlike the "Cape Muslim Culture" exhibition which reclaimed the Castle erected by the coloniser, the District Six Museum reclaimed an area that originally belonged to the community itself but was lost to the white supremacist urban policies of the apartheid regime. It did so initially by making an installation out of the street signs that have survived the demolition of District Six.

Since then, the museum collection as well as its impact grew significantly. The museum not only contributed to the strengthening of a sense of community among the displaced inhabitants, but also

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3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Retrieved from <https://www.districtsix.co.za/affiliations/> on July 27, 2023.

6 Annie E. Coombes, *History After Apartheid*; Ciraj Rassool, "Memory and the Politics of History in the District Six Museum", in *Desire Lines: Space, Memory and Identity in The Post-Apartheid City* Eds. N. Murray, N. Shepherd, & M. Hall (London: Routledge, 2007).

played key role in the process of land restitution.<sup>7</sup> As Cirraaj Rassool points out, the recovery and restoration of memory went hand in hand with the recovery and restoration of land. The memory-work of the District Six Museum therefore challenges and confronts the dominant discourses on national memory, heritage, and identity.<sup>8</sup> This independent community museum, in representing the multi-ethnic, multi-religious, multi-linguistic composition of District Six, also provides important insight into the Muslim heritage of the Cape and interreligious coexistence.

Museums continue to play critical role with regards to the memory and identity formation in post-apartheid South Africa. The end of apartheid led to the state disinvestment in legally imposed racial identities and hence to a search for new identities on national and community scales, including the reconfiguration of South African Muslim identities.<sup>9</sup> The expansion of community-based exhibitions on the Islamic heritage of Cape Town over the last decades reveals the importance of museums as sites of negotiation and contestation around Muslim identities. Particularly important are the genealogical reconfigurations of the Muslim identity in museum narratives. By tracing the genealogy of Islam in the Cape to the Indonesian archipelago and India, most museums inevitably contribute to the broader silencing of the long histories of African Muslim presence in the Cape and to the marginalisation of the contributions of Black South African Muslims to the Islamic cultural heritage.<sup>10</sup>

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7 Ibid.

8 Ciraj Rassool, "Memory and the Politics of History in the District Six Museum", in *Desire Lines: Space, Memory and Identity in The Post-Apartheid City* (London: Routledge, 2007).

9 Shaun Jacobs, "Islam, Race and Cape Town", *POMEPS Studies* 44, (2021) (Racial Formations in Africa and the Middle East: A Transregional Approach). <https://pomeps.org/islam-race-and-cape-town>; Shamil Jappie, "From the Madrasah to the Museum: The Social Life of the "Kietaabs" of Cape Town", *History in Africa* 38, (2011): 369-399; Golaam Vahed & Shamil Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in Post-Apartheid South Africa", in *State of the Nation: South Africa 2004-2005* Eds. John Daniel, Roger Southall, and J. Luthman (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2005), 252-86.

10 Golaam Vahed, "Muslims in Post-Apartheid South Africa: Race, Community, and Identity", *Social Identities* 27, no.1 (2021): 44-58; Shaun Jacobs, "Islam, Race and Cape Town"; T. F. Sitoto, "Scripting Black African Muslim Presence in South African Islam: A Quest for Self-Understanding beyond the Moment of Conversion", *Islamic Africa* 9, no. 2 (2018): 163-178; T. Nkuna, *On Being Black & Being Muslim in South*

Recently, three new exhibitions focusing on Islamic heritage have opened in Cape Town. Two of them are located in Bo-Kaap. "From the Cradle to the Grave" exhibition is situated within the Bo-Kaap Cultural Hub and the "Effendi Room" exhibition is hosted by the Iziko Bo-Kaap Museum. The third one, "The Cape Heritage Museum" is established in the Castle of Good Hope, like the "300 Years: The Making of Cape Muslim Culture" exhibition three decades ago.

Situated at the skirts of the Table Mountain, Bo-Kaap was historically a mixed area which thrived as a working-class neighbourhood with the settlement of increasing numbers of freed slaves after the abolition of slavery in 1834.<sup>11</sup> In the first half of the twentieth century, Bo-Kaap faced the risk of demolition due to its official designation as a slum area.<sup>12</sup> The mobilisation for preserving the historical architecture of the neighbourhood against this risk eventually led to its declaration as a "Malay Group Area" in 1957 and as a national monument in 1966. In other words, unlike the black and coloured communities who were uprooted from District Six after it was declared a white group area, the residents of Bo-Kaap who were classified as Malay were not subjected to wholesale forced removals in the same way. With the establishment of the Bo-Kaap Museum to preserve the Malay identity and culture in 1978 and later with the painting of the neighbourhood houses with bright colours, Bo-Kaap gradually became a tourist attraction. Today, its residents face the risk of displacement due to gentrification.

With its numerous mosques, Muslim cemetery, and shrines, Bo-Kaap is rich in its Islamic material culture. Therefore, it is not a coincidence that exhibitions representing Islamic heritage in the Cape often originate from Bo-Kaap. These contemporary heritage-making processes are not completely disconnected from the early efforts of cultural preservation either. Masjid Boorhaanol Islam was the only mosque that was declared a national monument in 1966 and the same year, its imam, Abdurahmaan Bassier initiated a community

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*Africa*, (Unpublished M.A. Thesis: University of the Witwatersrand, 2016); see the contributions of Fakude, Langa, and Gqamane in this volume.

- 11 Mishkah Collier, "A Study on the Evolution of the Built Fabric of the Bo-Kaap", in J. Kruth & S. Rugare, (Eds.) *Urban Histories in Practice: Morphologies and Memory* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2022), 51-67.
- 12 Nico Kotze, "A Community in Trouble? The Impact of Gentrification on the Bo-Kaap, Cape Town", *Urbani Izziv* 24, no. 2 (2013): 124-132.

organisation.<sup>13</sup> Today, the Boorhaanol Islam Movement continues to support the education of children and the social welfare of the community. Deeply implicated in the heritagisation of Bo-Kaap early on, the organisation later founded the Bo-Kaap Cultural Hub in 2017<sup>14</sup> where an exhibition dedicated to the Cape Muslim cultural history was opened in 2019 to help sustain the soup kitchen.

Curated by a community activist, "From the Cradle to the Grave" exhibition begins with a brief history of Islam in the Cape by introducing the early historical figures like Sheikh Yusuf as the founding father of Islam, and Tuan Guru, who founded the first *madrasah*. The museum narrative follows a biographical chronology from birth to schooling, and marriage to death, each represented by an installation that introduces local customs, material culture, and vocabulary. For instance, the naming ceremony, *Doekmal* (*Doopmal*) is recreated with a baby toy covered in the traditional scarf, while the installation on *Mouloud* ceremony introduces visitors to how women prepare *rampies* in the mosque by cutting orange leaves and mixing them with fragrant oils.

A few hundred meters away from this community-based cultural centre and exhibition is the Iziko Bo-Kaap Museum which has historically had a controversial relationship with the community. A product of the racialised cultural politics of the apartheid era, the Bo-Kaap Museum previously had an Orientalising gaze on the Malay identity and culture. Under its new curatorship, the museum has been trying to cast off this infamous colonial legacy by becoming more inclusive and collaborative. Despite the efforts to rebuild the community's trust, the Bo-Kaap Museum continues to appeal to international tourists more than the local community members. One of the recent institutional efforts to restructure the museum is the "Effendi Room" exhibition that opened in 2018 to honour the former owners of the building, Mahmud Fakhri Effendi and his family. The building is one of the two remaining examples of the unique eighteenth-century urban Cape vernacular architecture.<sup>15</sup> This is probably why the Effendis' home that was expropriated by the state was later transformed into a museum in 1978.

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13 Achmat Davids, *The Mosques of Bo-Kaap: A Social History of Islam at the Cape* (Cape Town: Cape: South African Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research, 1980).

14 Conversation with Bo-Kaap-based community activist, Mohammad Groenewald.

15 Mishkah Collier, "A Study on the Evolution of the Built Fabric of the Bo-Kaap".

The exhibition introduces visitors to the family history through photographs and artefacts loaned by the descendants of Mahmud Fakih Effendi. Studying the correspondences between Cape Town and Istanbul, Gençoğlu showed that Mahmud Fakih Effendi, who taught at the Arabic school on Castle Street, received his salary from the Ottoman state between 1894 and 1914.<sup>16</sup> This is why all the objects borrowed from the family archive such as a coffee grinder with the Sultan's signature and the Iznik coffee cups display the Ottoman material culture. Other objects such as the photograph of the Imperial Ottoman School established by Ataoullah Effendi in Kimberley<sup>17</sup> or the Hamidian medals awarded to Cape Muslims in return for their donations to the construction of the Hejaz Railway contextualise the historical connections between South Africa and the Ottoman Empire. The exhibition also makes a genealogical argument. More than a professional contract, Mahmud Fakih Effendi's relationship to the Ottoman Empire becomes a hereditary one. While the textual information states that "although he was born in the Cape, his Ottoman roots were strong", the collection becomes the proof of his Ottoman lineage and identity.

Finally, "The Cape Heritage Museum" in the Castle of Good Hope sprang from the "Cape Malay Art Exhibition" that was opened in 2018 on Wale Street, across from the Bo-Kaap Museum. The temporary exhibition represented the Cape Malay history and culture through the artwork and artefacts collected by Igshaan Higgins, one of the leading members of the community and a lawyer by profession, over the past two decades. Opening its doors on the Heritage Day, the exhibition charged a reduced fee for the residents of Bo-Kaap and District Six as well as those who identified as slave descendants.

As Mr. Higgins' collection moved from this gallery to the Castle, its name was first changed to the "Cape Muslim and Slave Heritage Museum." On the one hand, the shift from "Malay" to "Muslim" (which have historically been used interchangeably) not only made the museum more inclusive, but also confronted the legacy of apartheid racial classification. On the other hand, the emphasis on slave heritage

16 Halim Gençoğlu, "The Forgotten Efendi: Ottoman Muslim Theologian, Mahmud Fakih Emin Efendi, and the Real Story of the Bo-Kaap Museum, c.1894-1978", *New Contree: A Journal of Historical and Human Sciences for Southern Africa* 73, (2015): 162–180.

17 see R. C. H. Shell, "Madresahs and Moravians. Muslim Educational Institutions in the Cape Colony, 1792-1910", *New Contree* 51, (2006): 101-113.

is particularly striking given the fact that slave histories have only recently been integrated into the canonical heritage in South Africa.<sup>18</sup>

The fragility of this integration is proven by a second name change. As this semi-permanent exhibition's contract with the Castle kept extending, the museum removed the specifications such as "Muslim" and "Slave" from its title for the sake of inclusivity. However, "The Cape Heritage Museum" continues to emphasise the slave heritage and Muslim cultures of the Cape. The exhibition begins by narrating the history of interracial encounters between European sailors, indigenous inhabitants, and enslaved Southeast and South Asians, therefore challenging the deeply entrenched ideas about racial purity. After paying tribute to the early Muslim figures in the Cape, the exhibition focuses on the cultural heritage of Cape Muslims in District Six and Bo-Kaap, as well as the racist politics of the apartheid and the struggle against them. As such, the museum is referred to as the "antipode of the William Fehr Collection", which symbolises the colonial legacy of the Castle.<sup>19</sup>

Altogether, the cases discussed above reveal local communities and grassroots organisations as crucial actors in the production of national heritage in post-apartheid South Africa in addition to the state's centralising and the market's commodifying tendencies.<sup>20</sup> As this discussion made evident, genealogies of belonging and identity are fundamental to museum narratives around Islamic heritage. While the "From the Cradle to the Grave" exhibition begins its historical narrative from the arrival of the founding fathers of Islam to the Cape, "The Cape Heritage Museum" traces the Cape history back to the racial miscegenation in the seventeenth century. As opposed to the former's emphasis on the royal descent, Islamic erudition, and anti-colonial politics of Muslim spiritual ancestors, the latter traces genealogical

18 Kerry Ward & Nigel Worden, "Commemorating, Suppressing and Invoking Cape Slavery", in *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Memory in South Africa*, Eds. S. Nuttall & C. Coetzee (Cape Town: Oxford University Press, 1998), 201-17; Nigel Worden, "The Changing Politics of Slave Heritage in the Western Cape, South Africa", *The Journal of African History* 50, no.1 (2009): 23-40.

19 Igshaan Higgins & C. T. Gilfellan, "Cape Muslim and Slave Heritage Museum at the Castle: South Africa's Preferred Heritage Destination", *Samantics*, (2022): 15-17.

20 Jethro 2020; David Chidester, *Wild Religion: Tracking the Sacred in South Africa* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012); Ciraj Rassool, "Memory and the Politics of History in the District Six Museum", in *Desire Lines: Space, Memory and Identity in The Post-Apartheid City* Eds. Murray, N., Shepherd, N., & Hall, M. (London: Routledge, 2007).

lineage to enslaved and indigenous ancestors and reclaims slave heritage.

This also poses a contrast to the "Effendi Room" exhibition, which deals with the genealogical reconfiguration of the Effendi family and hence the reconstruction of Ottoman heritage within the broader Islamic heritage of Cape Town. Consequently, museums and exhibitions are vital to the contemporary formation of Cape Muslim identity and heritage as well as genealogical constructions and contestations around royal, imperial, or slave ancestry/descent. However, with these curatorial memory practices, the cases discussed in this article fail to acknowledge the long histories and rich cultural contributions of Black African Muslims to South African Islam, reinforcing it as a Malay and Indian religion.<sup>21</sup>

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21 Goolam Vahed & Shamil Jeppie, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in Post-Apartheid South Africa", in *State of the Nation: South Africa 2004-2005*, Eds. John Daniel, Roger Southall, and J. Luthman (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2005), 252-86.

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## **Part II: Muslim Communities and Social Groups**



# Socio-Cultural Profile of the Muslim Community in Malawi

Alfred Jana Matiki\*

## Introduction

Malawi, like many post-independence African countries, is characterized by the co-existence of a number of religious communities. Constitutionally, Malawi is a democratic secular state that guarantees all its citizens freedom of conscience, religion, belief, and thought and prohibits discrimination based on religion. These constitutional provisions are based on the recognition of human dignity and the equality of all human beings. In practice, however, these provisions have not always offered equal space and recognition to all religions to allow their adherents flourish unabated within the law.

According to the 2018 *Malawi Population and Housing Census*,<sup>1</sup> the total population of Malawi was estimated at 17.6 million. The census revealed that 77.3% of the population are Christians, while 13.8% professed to be Muslims. In terms of Christian denominations, the population includes Roman Catholics at 17.2% of the total population, Church of Central African Presbyterians (CCAP) at 14.2%, Seventh-day Adventists/Baptists/ Apostolic at 9.4%, Anglicans at 2.3%, and Pentecostals at 7.6%. Another 26.6% were categorized under 'other Christians.' Those who did not identify with any religious affiliation constituted 2.1%, and 5.6% represented other religious groups, including Hindus, Baha'is, Rastafarians, Jews, and Sikhs.

It should be noted, however, that the Muslim Association of Malawi (MAM) and other Muslim organizations in the country have always disputed the census figures pertaining to the number of Muslims. The 2008 *Census Report* showed that Muslims constituted 13% of the total population. MAM refuted this figure and estimated that the Muslim population lies between 30% and 40%. Muslims generally point to

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1 National Statistical Office [NSO] 2019.

some inconsistencies in the figures reported by various studies and agencies as a basis for refuting the census figures.<sup>2</sup>

While the 2008 and 2018 censuses put the Muslim population at 13% and 13.8% respectively, the *World Christian Encyclopedia*<sup>3</sup> notes that in the year 2000, Muslims constituted 17% of the total population of 10 million. The *Malawi Religion Project*,<sup>4</sup> run by the University of Pennsylvania, estimated the Muslim population at 25.6%. A 1977 survey estimated the population at over 25% of the population.<sup>5</sup> An extreme position on this is reported by Muslim Population website which claims that "until a few years ago, Malawi was a Muslim country" and that "... the Muslim Association of Malawi claims that the Muslims are the majority, with a community of 4.8 million." It is not clear when this estimate was made, but by today's population figures, this would represent about 30%.

There is also a more fundamental ideological reason for Muslims to refute the census figures. Muslims opine that the low population figures reported by the NSO are suspicious and represent a conspiracy in the Christian-dominated government to suppress the Muslim voice by undermining its demographic might and significance in the scheme of national life<sup>6</sup> amplifies this point by noting that:

It is also evident that the above statistical results are capable of creating a situation of major and minority religions in the nation. The 2008 census dispute is an indication of Muslims' keen awareness of this and its implications on the religion's strategic influence on national affairs.

There are other compounding reasons why statistics on religion tend to be inaccurate. Malawi's birth registration system has generally been optional and does not record religious affiliations. This difficulty has also been exacerbated by the fact that generally Malawians, like most Africans, are syncretic as they mix beliefs when it is convenient to them. Accurate statistics on Muslims have also been affected by the

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2 Also see Luous Ndekha, "Ambivalence in Interreligious Relations in Malawi: Is an African Model of Interreligious Dialogue Possible?", *Journal of Theology for Southern African*, (2015): 152.

3 D. B. Barret, *World Christian Encyclopedia, Comparative Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World* (Oxford: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).

4 *Malawi Religion Project* 2010.

5 Ibrahim Panjwani, "Muslims in Malawi", *Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1979): 156-169.

6 Salmin Omar Idruss, "Islam in Malawi in Brief". Unpublished Manuscript, 2002; Ndekha 2015: 3.

fact that Muslims have generally been looked down upon; this has been to such an extent that some individuals do not want to self-identify as Muslims. Using Zimbabwe as an example, Dodo<sup>7</sup> notes that "this stigmatization has been popularized by Pentecostalism which labels other religionists as satanic and inhumane." In Malawi, Muslims have generally been labeled as illiterate and backward.<sup>8</sup> Such characterization may have prevented some of them from identifying themselves to the census enumerators as Muslims and consequently distorting the census figures.

According to the 2018 census, there are two majority-Muslim districts in Malawi, Mangochi (72.6%) and Machinga (66.9%). These neighboring districts at the southern end of Lake Malawi account for more than half of all Muslims in the country. Most other Muslims are scattered in predominantly 'Christian' districts such as Salima, Nkhotakota, Dedza, Chiradzulu, Zomba, Blantyre, and Mulanje. Whatever the real demographic profile, Muslims in Malawi continue to work and mark their presence in the religious, political, and socio-economic fabric of the country. These are some of the areas that this article highlights. Using data collected through unstructured interviews with key informants and analysis of archival material, in general, it seeks to profile the Muslim community in Malawi with particular focus on its role in the socio-political and educational arena of national life. It also attempts to identify some of the intra-religious challenges that are slowly ebbing away its efforts to overturn the demographics in its favor. The next section briefly discusses the arrival of Islam in Malawi in order to provide a background against which the other issues should be understood.

### Arrival of Islam in Malawi

Islam's arrival date in Malawi is a matter of controversy among historians. Although they agree that Islam predates Christianity in Malawi, they do not agree on the exact year that Islam arrived in Malawi. While some scholars trace its arrival to the 15<sup>th</sup> century,<sup>9</sup>

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7 Obediah Dodo, "Inter-Religious Conflicts: A Review of Zimbabwe's Religious Landscape, Post-Independence." *Ilorin Journal of Religious Studies* 7, no. 2 (2017): 126.

8 Alfred Matiki, "Problems of Islamic Education in Malawi", *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs*, vol. 12 no. 1 (1991): 127-134.

9 Abbas Saidi Mdoka & Che Amnah Binti Bahari, "The Arrival of Islam in Malawi", *Journal of Islamic Studies and Culture* 7, no. 2 (2019): 39-47.

others believe that Islam arrived in Malawi in the 1800s.<sup>10</sup> Mdoka and Bahari<sup>11</sup> argue that Islam arrived in Malawi two centuries before the arrival of the Scottish missionary explorer, David Livingstone. They claim that there is evidence which show trade interactions between the Yao, who are today predominantly Muslim, and Arab traders as early as 1616.

Further, the Yao demonstrated certain Muslim traits in their cultural practices, such as circumcision of boys. Sicard<sup>12</sup> also adds that the presence of such place names as Malindi, Mandazi, and Pemba are further evidence of the long-standing presence of Islam in Malawi. However, Brenner<sup>13</sup> observes that the Yao, who comprise the largest Muslim group in Malawi, converted to Islam in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Thus, even though they may have made contact with the Arab traders in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, they did not convert to Islam until much later.

What seems not to be in dispute is that Islam was introduced in Malawi by Arab traders from the Swahili coast of East Africa who made contact with the Yao of present day Mangochi and the Chewa of Nkhotakota. Although the traders' primary reason for being in Malawi was to sell various goods, they brought with them writing boards for the teaching of the Qur'an and Swahili language. Many Malawians reverted to Islam because of the literacy in Swahili that these *mua'llim* traders offered.<sup>14</sup> The role of these traders in the spread of Islam in Malawi is aptly summarized by Sicard<sup>15</sup> as follows:

Foremost among these teachers at the end of the nineteenth century was Shaykh Abdallah b. Haji Mkwanda and his pupil Shaykh Thabit b. Muhammad Ngaunje. They travelled extensively in the country, teaching the Qur'an, instructing people in Islamic beliefs and practices and encouraging literacy in Arabic and Swahili in Arabic script. They

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10 David Bone, "The Muslim Minority in Malawi and Western Education", *Journal: Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 6, no. 2 (1985): 412-419; S. V. Sicard, "The Arrival of Islam in Malawi and the Muslim Contribution to Development", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no.2 (2000): 291-311.

11 Ibid.

12 S. V. Sicard, "The Arrival of Islam in Malawi and the Muslim Contribution to Development", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no.2 (2000): 291-311.

13 Louis Brenner, *Muslim Identity and Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1993).

14 David Bone, "The Muslim Minority in Malawi and Western Education", *Journal: Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 6, no. 2 (1985): 412-419.

15 S. V. Sicard, "The Arrival of Islam in Malawi and the Muslim Contribution to Development", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no.2 (2000): 296.

are said to have disseminated commentaries and other literature dealing with the observance of customs connected with marriage, eating and drinking, the mode of killing animals, the efficacy of charms and the making of medicines and encouraged the building of mosques.

When Christian missionaries and western secular education arrived in Malawi towards the end of the nineteenth century, Islam and Islamic education were already firmly established. For instance, by 1891, Mponda, one of the earliest centres of Islam in Malawi, had 12 *madrasahs*, each with its own *mua'llim*. Many young men were trained by these *mua'llims* and received certificates of competence which enabled them to establish their own *madrasahs* or to seek further education on the East African coast. Through this kind of set up, the educational system attracted many people, as competence in Islamic studies became a popular avenue to status within the Muslim communities.<sup>16</sup> Much of what was taught in the *madrasahs* was very elementary. Pupils were taught Islamic practices, including the ability to transliterate and recite the Qur'an. Although elementary, the system provided a spiritual and moral orientation for the Muslims in their lives and gave them a distinct identity. This identity was accentuated by the adoption of Arabic names, dress code, dietary restrictions, and an incorporation of Arabic and Swahili words into their verbal rapporteur.

The demographic structure of Muslims in Malawi has been shaped along political, ethnic and racial lines. This was perpetuated by some of the laws and policies dating from as far back as the colonial era. There is a clear distinction, for instance, among indigenous Malawian Muslims and Malawian Muslims of Asian descent, particularly those from the Indian sub-continent who although profess the same religion live in distinctly separate worlds. The Muslims of Asian descent, collectively called *Indians* in Malawi, are involved in various businesses – retail, wholesale, manufacturing – and are among economically well-off Malawians. Locally, the *Indians* are the main source of charitable donations to various Muslim causes either through the Islamic Zakat Fund, family foundations or charity trusts. They have and continue to contribute towards the building of mosques, *madrasahs*, and schools. For instance, one of the most successful girl's teacher's college, Maryam Girls Teachers College and Malawi's first Islamic University,

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16 David Bone, "The Muslim Minority in Malawi and Western Education", *Journal: Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 6, no. 2 (1985): 412–419.

Iqra'a University, were established by Bilal Charity Trust, an NGO belonging to a group of Muslims of Asian descent. Sicard rightly points out,<sup>17</sup> however, that these Muslims are not, on the whole, involved in traditional *dawah* activities.

There is generally a master-servant relationship between Malawians of Asian origin and the local Muslims, a cause for resentment among the middle-class local Muslims. It is also significant to state that in spite of their long history in Malawi, *Indians* have failed to culturally integrate with the local Muslims or Malawians in general. They keep aloof from the indigenous Muslims, clinging together instead. Inter-marriages between the two races are almost non-existent. The *Indians* are, as a result, often labelled as foreigners even though many of them were born in the country. Among the indigenous Muslims, the majority are ethnically Yao, who dominate all the districts where Muslims are in majority, except in Nkhotakota most of whose Muslims are ethnically Chewa. As noted earlier, the Chewa of Nkhotakota and the Yao of Mangochi were the first contacts for the Muslim traders because of their own strong trading contacts with Swahili-Arabs. Sicard<sup>18</sup> reports that Makanjira III Binali was probably the first Yao chief to adopt Islam around 1870. Because of the power of tribal chiefs at the time, Makanjira III was able to make Islam the *de facto* official religion of his subjects. Insoll<sup>19</sup> has characterized the Yao as the most important source of Islam in Malawi. Because politics in Malawi is polarized along regional and ethnic lines, the Muslims also find themselves supporting political parties that are dominant in their regions or led by someone from their own ethnic group. The former ruling political party, the United Democratic Front (UDF), founded by Bakili Muluzi, has its strong base in the Eastern Region of Malawi precisely because its founder is both a Muslim and ethnically Yao.

### Muslim Organizations in Malawi

According to many scholars,<sup>20</sup> the 1970s witnessed the start of an Islamic revival among Muslims in Malawi. This revival was

17 S. V. Sicard, "The Arrival of Islam in Malawi and the Muslim Contribution to Development".

18 Ibid.

19 Timothy Insoll, *The Archaeology of Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa* (illustrated ed.). (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

20 Klaus Fiedler, *Conflicted Power in Malawian Christianity: Essays Missionary and Evangelical from Malawi* (illustrated ed.), (Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2015). David S. Bone,

spearheaded by organizations that were already operating in the country and others that came from the Middle East to engage in missionary work. After 1994, when Malawi changed to a multiparty democracy, Malawi witnessed a further proliferation of Muslim organizations engaged in various activities, particularly designed to uplift the Muslim's socio-economic status.

Through these organizations, most of which are registered as NGOs, Muslims in Malawi have been able to establish Islamic centers, which run *madrasahs*. The centers also act as community centers where Muslims in general gather for various functions including prayers. Other activities involve the collection and distribution of *zakat*, providing bursaries to needy students, constructing and maintaining mosques, running radio and tv stations, undertaking relief work during natural disasters, running health clinics, among many other functions. Much of the work in Malawi has been done by and through the Muslim Association of Malawi and its affiliates, especially the reform-minded Muslim Students Association of Malawi. MAM, according to Sicard,<sup>21</sup> was founded in the 1950s and evolved from the Board of Muslim Education which had been set up a decade earlier. Over the years, MAM has been the main channel of communication for Muslims. It has spearheaded many changes, providing social services, and educational facilities, promoting more orthodox Islamic practices. It has offices in most districts where it manages Islamic Centres and Islamic Information Bureaus. These bureaus are open to the general public and provide information on any aspect of Islam. One of MAM's flagship projects was the establishment of Blantyre Islamic Mission (BIM) in Blantyre. It is a secondary school that provides both Islamic and secular education. It trains *mua'llims* and provides in-service courses to serving Islamic teachers.

MAM's major weakness is its dependence on donor money. It has no viable investments to generate its own income in spite of massive capital injection that Muslim donors have made over the years. It has generally been argued that the problem lies with the fact that those running the institution have high qualifications in Islamic studies but very low qualifications in secular education. Implicit in this argument

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"Modernists and Marginalization", *Malawi's Muslims, Historical Perspectives*, edited by David S. Bone, (Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000): 69.

21 S. V. Sicard, "The Arrival of Islam in Malawi and the Muslim Contribution to Development", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no. 2 (2000): 291-311.

is that while Islamic education helps to produce Muslim teachers and good scholars of Islam, it fails to produce administrators that can function in a modern society. There have been calls, therefore, for the amendment of the MAM constitution so that the principal officers in this organization should be well endowed in both Islamic and secular education.

In recent years, MAM's influence on Muslims in Malawi has waned considerably, giving rise to many Muslim organizations that no longer look up to MAM as the *mother body*. Some of the organizations formed have been a direct reaction to this problem. For instance, a few years ago a group of young Muslims with secular college degrees formed their own organization, Muslim Alumni Society (MUAS) to challenge the *status quo*. More recently, a rival organization with some degree of national appeal was formed; it is called the Qadria Muslim Association of Malawi (QMAM). Although on paper QMAM is ideologically different from MAM, it rose out of frustration with the leadership of the latter. QMAM, which has its own internal wrangles, is fighting to have this *status quo* changed so that it becomes the main communication channel for all Muslims in Malawi.

MAM's loss of influence is also evident in the lack of coordination between the various Muslim organizations in the country; each works independently of the other. There is quite a great deal of duplication in the activities that many Muslim organizations undertake in the country. There was an attempt to form an umbrella organization, the Muslim Council of Malawi, to coordinate the work of all Muslim organizations in Malawi. After one meeting, more than ten years ago, nothing has been done or heard of. Previously, this coordination of activities would have been undertaken by MAM.

### **Education among the Muslims**

With respect to secular education, Muslims in Malawi continue to lag behind. Historically, Muslims lost out on secular education, which was introduced by Christian missionaries, for professing their religion. There were principally two reasons for this loss. First, the majority of Muslims in Malawi are members of the Yao ethnic group who adopted Islam as a natural reaction to the disintegrating influence of the teachings of Christianity which tended to destroy the power of the tribal chiefs. As a result, chiefdom and adherence to Islamic

practices became very important among the Yao. McCracken<sup>22</sup> makes the point that the colonial authorities in the country saw Islam as the greatest ideological threat to their rule. These anti-Muslim sentiments had their origins in Western Christendom. Flint<sup>23</sup> points out that

for centuries Western Christendom had regarded the ideology of Islam with abhorrence and the power of Muslim peoples with apprehension. For centuries European commentators on Islam had adopted the bitter tone for the polemic, denouncing the central figure of the Muslim faith as imposter, sensualist, arch-intriguer and man of blood.

Thus, in collaboration with the Christian missionaries, the colonial government attempted to keep the Muslims under wraps by indirectly denying them access to secular education which became "the main reward used by missionaries to lure Africans into the Christian sphere."<sup>24</sup> Bone<sup>25</sup> has shown that the Muslims'

identification with the religion and their consequent rejection of western education (for long dominated by the Christian missions) has been one of the main factors which, through colonial and post-independence times, inhibited their full participation in the socio-economic life of the nation.

Second, the demands of Western education as offered by the Christian missionaries were in diametrical conflict with Islamic principles. It should be noted here that when the Christian missionaries introduced Western education in Malawi, their primary aim was evangelization and converting people to Christianity. Thus, Muslims refused to send their children to these schools. As Sicard<sup>26</sup> states, Qur'an schools offered the only acceptable form of education to Muslims during the early years of the British Protectorate.

Due to persistent Muslim demands for government schools, the colonial government eventually intervened and started to establish schools that were intended to cater for Muslim children as well as

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22 John McCracken, *A History of Malawi, 1859-1966* (illustrated ed.) (London: Boydell & Brewer Limited, 2012).

23 John Flint, *The Cambridge History of Africa* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 482.

24 Nunn Nathan, "Religious Conversion in Colonial Africa", *American Economic Review: Papers and Proceedings* (American Economic Association, 2010), 100.

25 David S. Bone, "Modernists and Marginalization", *Malawi's Muslims, Historical Perspectives*, edited by David S. Bone, (Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000), 69.

26 S. V. Sicard, "The Arrival of Islam in Malawi and the Muslim Contribution to Development", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no.2 (2000): 291-311.

allowing Muslims to establish their own schools. In 1928, the government set up three schools to cater primarily for Muslim children. Unfortunately, the Education Ordinance of 1927 had made religious instruction mandatory for all government schools. The Muslims in Malawi, therefore, continued to shun Western education for fear of compromising their religious convictions. This problem was further exacerbated by the Muslim leaders' concern with religious-cultural issues rather than socio-economic development of the community. Issues of education, unemployment, poverty, underrepresentation of Muslims in elected bodies hardly figured in their agenda, in part because of the oppressive one-party system that prevailed before 1994.

More than 45 years after Malawi attained independence, Muslim areas continue to lag behind in education and, therefore, cannot produce the socio-political leadership that is required to uplift the state of the Muslims. There are relatively very few Muslim students in the country's universities. Attendance in primary schools lags far behind the national average in the Muslim districts of Mangochi and Machinga. The 2018 Malawi Population and Housing Census noted, for example, that Mangochi and Machinga, the Muslim majority districts, had the lowest literacy rates of 53% and 57%, respectively.<sup>27</sup> Although there are today a few Muslims with respectable positions in education, the civil service, and the private sector, the educational backwardness of Muslims has had a telling effect on their overall representation in these sectors of national life and has exacerbated their continued stigmatization as the uneducated who cannot "earn more lucrative jobs other than labourers, cooks, domestic servants and other poorly paid employment."<sup>28</sup>

More and more Muslim organizations have realized this major problem and are now tailoring their programmes towards the empowerment of Muslims through education. Some of them have established primary and secondary schools that offer secular education. The oldest among such schools is the BIM. The school has produced many Muslim teachers, most of whom have been employed by MAM to teach in various Muslim schools. Some of the more successful students have been awarded scholarships to undertake

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<sup>27</sup> NSO 2019.

<sup>28</sup> Ibrahim Panjwani, "Muslims in Malawi", *Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 1, no. 2 (1979): 156-169.

advanced studies in North Africa and the Middle East.<sup>29</sup> In recent years, however, the school has experienced very poor results in the national secondary school examinations because of poor management and resourcing. In 2022, BIM had one of the worst results in the national Malawi School Certificate Examinations (O' Levels). The provision of bursaries and scholarships has also ensured that more Muslims stay and complete their education. There are currently a few Muslim medical doctors, university professors, and accountants who are products of such assistance. The proliferation of private universities since the liberalization of the education space in Malawi has seen the establishment of Malawi's first Islamic University. The university grew out of the International College of Business and Management (ICBM) which was opened in 2002, initially called IZF College of Business. In 2022, the university rolled out its first-degree programs after obtaining approvals from the National Council for Higher Education (NCHE). The six approved programs are in medical sciences, business/commerce, and social sciences. A majority of the students are Muslims on scholarships from IZF and Bilal Trust. Recently, a fundraising initiative was launched towards the establishment of another tertiary Islamic institution in Mangochi.

### **Socio-Economic and Political Participation**

As noted above, Malawi is neither a Muslim country in terms of its statehood nor is it one in terms of the demographic position of Muslims. Muslims are not politically in power even though they are free to profess their faith. Therefore, they practice their religion without the benefit of a political hegemony. As a result, Muslims have to accept the political, economic, legal, educational and social values of the state regardless of whether such values and standards are in conformity with the principles of Islam.<sup>30</sup>

Malawi has undergone many changes since independence in 1964. The major breakthrough for Muslims was probably the election in 1994 of a Muslim, Bakili Muluzi, as Malawi's first democratically elected president. He was re-elected in June 1999 for his second and last term.

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29 Alfred Matiki, "Problems of Islamic Education in Malawi", *Journal Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 12, no. 1 (1991): 127-134.

30 Alfred Jana Matiki, "The Social and Educational Marginalization of Muslim Youth in Malawi", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 19, no. 2 (1999): 249-259.

Sicard<sup>31</sup> considers Muluzi's ascension to power as the "culmination of Muslim contribution over centuries to the development of Malawi." Muluzi and his parliament brought many changes which entrenched various freedoms. He brought into political leadership quite a number of Muslims, who, in their own unique ways, have helped improve the status of Muslims in Malawi. One good example of such individuals is Cassim Chilumpha, a Muslim who served in Muluzi's cabinet for 10 years and then became the state Vice President during President Mutharika's first term of office.

It was during Muluzi's reign that Radio Islam was established and has grown quite considerably over the years.<sup>32</sup> Quite a good number of Muslims entered parliament and ascended to other positions of power within government and in the private sector. The number of Islamic organizations involved in various social and educational activities increased considerably. As Kol<sup>33</sup> noted in his travels in southern Malawi, the countryside is presently dotted with mosques, another legacy of the Muluzi era. *Eid ul-Fitr* became a national holiday in Muluzi's time. In general, Muslims had a more pronounced presence during Muluzi's era. Kol<sup>34</sup> further notes:

Muslims, after a long period of being socially, economically and politically marginalized in their national environment, now finally have the feeling they really are part of society. The visibility of this religious minority within the physical organization of the state plays an important role in this feeling.

### Internal Disagreements

Muslims generally present a united front against anything they perceive to be an affront on their beliefs. For instance, they have always stood together in the face of some government and private schools' policy that does not allow Muslim girls to wear the Islamic head scarf, *hijab*. When a catholic priest disparaged Muslims, they stood together and diplomatically confronted the catholic establishment. They fought together to force the Ministry of Education

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31 S. V. Sicard, "The Arrival of Islam in Malawi and the Muslim Contribution to Development", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no. 2 (2000): 291.

32 see <http://radioislam.org.mw>

33 Willemijn Van Kol, "Ummah in Zomba: Transnational Influences on Reformist Muslims in Malawi", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 28, no. 3 (2008): 435-452.

34 *Ibid* 2008:435.

to change the school subject *Bible Knowledge* to *Religious Studies* which includes a module on Islam.

They vehemently opposed government's plan to establish an embassy in Jerusalem. They are, through MAM, a significant member of the powerful quasi-religious group called the Public Affairs Committee which works to keep the government in check. Because of all this and many other efforts to defend their beliefs, Muslims in Malawi have been characterized as a "vocal and powerful community."<sup>35</sup>

In spite of this outward unity, Islamic organizations are in perpetual disagreements over ideological differences as well as governance challenges. On the ideological front, there are differences on the status of *thuhr* prayers vis-à-vis *jumu'ah* prayers, funeral rites, sighting of the new moon to end the month of Ramadhan, commemoration of the Prophet's (SAW) birthday, dress code, and many others. Friday's *jumu'ah* prayers have been a subject of intra group conflict between the older generation and the younger generation, represented by MAM and what Bone<sup>36</sup> calls modernists. The latter take the orthodox view that the *jumu'ah* prayers replace *thuhr* prayers on Fridays. The former, however, see the *jumu'ah* as an additional prayer to the *thuhr*. They, therefore, pray the *thuhr* prayer immediately after the *jumu'ah*. This has generally created unnecessary tensions within the ranks of Muslims. This year, MAM pulled out of the National Hilal committee because it has, over the years, been at loggerheads with Muslims of Asian origin who also sit on the committee. While MAM believes in the local sighting of the moon, *Indian* Muslims in the committee prefer to follow sightings from their own kind, either in Malawi or South Africa. The call to commemorate the Prophet's (SAW) birthday through a national holiday has also split Muslims along racial lines. While sections of *Indian* Muslims organize functions on the occasion and have attempted to convince government to declare the day a national holiday, indigenous Muslims, through MAM, have trashed the proposal as an unacceptable innovation.

On governance issues, the conflicts flare up very often into verbal and physical tensions around issues of leadership, transparency,

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35 Owen J. M. Kalinga, *Historical Dictionary of Malawi* (revised ed.), (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2012), 201.

36 David S. Bone, "Modernists and Marginalization", *Malawi's Muslims, Historical Perspectives*, edited by David S. Bone, (Blantyre: CLAIM-Kachere, 2000).

accountability, and access to resources. Both MAM and QMAM are mired in leadership challenges after their leaders changed their constitutions to allow them stay in office for twenty years. It was noted earlier that MAM's authority has over time waned. These internal wranglings have been the main cause. As Gilliat-Ray<sup>37</sup> underlines, "... in these contexts, religious specialists face the challenge of maintaining authority in a situation where religious professionals from other faith traditions also claim authenticity and authority."

The formation of QMAM to challenge the dominance of MAM as the only representative for Malawi Muslims is a telling example of this internal conflict. In a recent spat between MAM and QMAM, the newly elected chairperson of the latter announced that his organization will engage the leadership of the former "in an effort to reclaim ownership of its mosques that were obtained by MAM before seeking legal action."<sup>38</sup> In the same speech, the leader of QMAM appealed to the government to recognize and invite his organization to national events, in which Muslims are currently represented by MAM. This, in many ways, mirrors what De Juan<sup>39</sup> highlights, "Within single communities, factions of religious elites compete for material and dogmatic supremacy. Such intra-religious conflicts can motivate religious elites to search for support from political allies to prevail over their religious rivals."

## Conclusion

The self-perception of Malawian Muslims has changed considerably through the work of MAM and other Muslim organizations. Previously, many Muslims, particularly the youth, were reluctant to identify themselves as Muslims in public because Islam was generally misunderstood and usually stigmatized as a religion of a backward people. Today, after all these tribulations, the Muslims are asserting their identity and professing their beliefs publicly. One hopes that Muslim organizations in Malawi can consolidate some of these gains and propel the Muslim community further.

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37 S. Gilliat-Ray, "Religious Specialists" in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, edited by Neil J. Smelser, Paul B. Baltes (London: Pergamon, 2001).

38 Eamon Piringu, ZBS News online, 8/20/22.

39 Alexander De Juan, "The Role of Intra-Religious Conflicts", *Intrastate Wars, Terrorism and Political Violence* 27, no. 4 (2015).

These gains, however, are in danger of being undermined by continued in-fighting over ideological differences as well as leadership styles and governance challenges. These conflicts have the danger of undermining the position of Muslims in national affairs. As De Juan<sup>40</sup> underscores, processes within religious communities can be crucial in influencing the role that religions play in state affairs.

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

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# Malawian Yawo Muslim Migrant Women: Home and Belonging, Negotiating Identity in South Africa

Joseph Y. Mbalaka \*

## Introduction

The Yawo, who make up a large part of Malawi's<sup>1</sup> Muslim population, have a long tradition of migrating from their homeland to other areas. The history of Yawo immigrants in South Africa dates back to the late 1800s when migrants worked in the Kimberly and Witwatersrand diamond and gold mines in what later became South Africa. The historical link between Malawi and South Africa dates back to the first gold and diamond mines. Chipembere characterizes the discovery of gold in South Africa as "Malawi's Growing Links with South Africa".<sup>2</sup> According to Black, along with Christian proselytization, gold was one of the most significant factors in the early colonization of Zimbabwe, Zambia and Malawi.<sup>3</sup> The discovery of gold in South Africa changed the political and economic history of Malawi. As a result, it was South African funds that supported the colonial government of Nyasaland in the 1890s.

Cecil John Rhodes, the British-South African entrepreneur who founded De Beers Consolidated Mines in Kimberley in 1889, did not waste any time in further increasing his power by encouraging his agents to sign treaties with chiefs everywhere. In doing so, he found a capable ally in Harry Johnston, another advocate of a greater British Africa. Johnston, the British consul in Mozambique, was specifically

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1 It was known as Nyasaland before independence in 1964.

2 Henry B. Masauko Chipembere, "Malawi's Growing Links with South Africa - A Necessity or a Virtue?", *Africa Today* 18, no. 2 (1971): 27.

3 Colin Black, *The Lands and Peoples of Rhodesia and Nyasaland* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1961), vii.

fascinated by modern Malawi.<sup>4</sup> His party had been sent from Britain to set up British rule over Malawi, financed by a donation of £ 2,000 from Rhodes, then Prime Minister of the Cape Province in South Africa.

Rhodes then backed the tax-decoupled administration of the new British territory of Nyasaland (now Malawi) with £ 10,000 per year.<sup>5</sup> Other scholars suggest that Rhodes has set aside a budget of £ 17,500 per year to run the government of Nyasaland.<sup>6</sup> Through these "growing links", news of South Africa's enormous and tremendous fortune was speedily disseminated across Malawi. A substantial number of Malawians started travelling to South Africa in search of work.<sup>7</sup> In spite of the firmly controlled migrant labour system, many Yawo found work in mining and other industries. Others reached Durban, the second industrial centre with a strong Muslim presence, where some Muslims from Malawi took refuge in the Zanzibari community (first in Kings Rest and then in Clairwood and Chatsworth - former Indian townships). The scholars suggest that the Indian Muslim community supported Zanzibari's position and favoured their attribution to the Asian population; this is a classification process known as "other Asiatics", after which they should be treated as Indians for the same reasons.<sup>8</sup> According to Vawda, this was tolerated by the authorities because Islam was deemed an "Indian" religion.<sup>9</sup>

Apart from the Yawo migrants who came to work in the mines and the others who went to Durban to settle among the Zanzibari, it must be understood that there was once a migratory flow consisting of Makhuwa and Yawo, who were "liberated" from slavery in the 1870s and settled as indentured labourers in Natal, then settled at the Bluff in Durban and began attracting more Yawo and Makhuwa. They were

4 A. E. Afigbo et.al, *The Making of Modern Africa, Volume 1: The Nineteenth Century* (Hong Kong: Longman, 1986), 289.

5 Henry Chipembere, "Malawi's Growing Links with South Africa", 27.

6 I. C. Lamba, *Contradiction in Post-War Education Policy Formulation and Application in Colonial Malawi 1945- 1961: A Historical Study of the Dynamics of Colonial Survival*, (Zomba: Kachere Series, 2010), 188.

7 Henry Chipembere, "Malawi's Growing Links with South Africa", 28.

8 David B. Barrett and Harley Carl Schreck (eds.), *Unreached Peoples: Clarifying the Task, Volume 3 Of Ad 2000 Series*, (MARC, 1987), 140.

9 Shahid Vawda, *Identities, Livelihoods and Transnational Migration: Muslim Malawians in Durban, South Africa*, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/02582470902804464> [accessed 24 November, 2015].

known as Zanzibari after 400 "freed" slaves were established in Durban after the Sultan of Zanzibar had signed a treaty in 1873 agreeing to stop the slave trade in areas under his jurisdiction. Some merchants continued trading. The British "freed" some of these slaves from raiders.<sup>10</sup> All "freed" slaves were considered people who came only from Zanzibar. However, the term "Zanzibari" is a wrong designation as these slaves were brought not only from Zanzibar but also from Northern Mozambique (Portuguese East Africa) and Malawi. They were mainly Muslims with a small number of Christians who easily assimilated into the Zulu culture of the Umlazi area.<sup>11</sup> Following the 1994 political dispensation, there was another wave of Yawo migrants to South Africa and throughout 1990s, Malawian women joined their male counterparts in the migration process in what is known as the 'feminization' of migration. The vast majority are young, semi-educated, some school dropouts, illiterate and unskilled in search of a better life in South Africa. Several Yawo women from Malawi were spotted in South Africa during this time and Yawo migrants has become increasingly incorporated into the Zanzibari population. The Zulu refer to the Yawo who live in Durban as Amazizimbane (Zanzibaris) in this regard. The Yawo newcomers blend in well with the Shafi order's Zanzibari community. The Shafi jurisprudential school is an important aspect of Makhuwa and Yawo's identity in Durban. It contributes to the community spirit of the Makuwa and Yawo peoples of South Africa.

### Methodology and Findings

Historically, more than any other ethnic groups, the Yawo have been the bearers of Islam to the people of southern Africa. They were carriers of Black Muslim identity in southern Africa before other African Muslims started coming to South Africa. The author of this study was struck by the large-scale immigration and it is an interesting study to see how the Yawo spread Islamic and Yawo identity.

Yawo's contribution to spreading Islam is not well documented and deserves future research. For example, the Yawo first brought Islam to the eastern region of Zambia among the Chewa people when they

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10 Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed (eds.), *Chatsworth: The Making of a South African Township* (Scottsville: University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, 2013), 84.

11 Michael Mumisa, "Islam and Proselytism in South Africa and Malawi", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 22, no. 2 (2001): 280.

searched for ivory in that area.<sup>12</sup> By 1923, Saidi Kazembe, a Muslim Yawo from Nkhotakota in central Malawi, founded the Masala Mosque in the town of Ndola.<sup>13</sup> In addition, Mundivenga argues that the Yawo of Mangochi and Machinga are some of the Malawians who carried Islam to Zimbabwe in 1900 when they arrived to work and remain in the country.<sup>14</sup> Although Zimbabwe's Muslim presence dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century, many Zimbabweans became attracted to Muslims in the 1960s.<sup>15</sup> The Yawo Muslims continued to advance into Botswana.<sup>16</sup> They first arrived in Francistown in the 1950s, where South African mining companies employed workers from the rest of Africa. Many Malawians have settled for good in the county without returning to Malawi.<sup>17</sup>

Some Yawo Muslims went to Swaziland. Islam in Swaziland started to spread in 1963 with the initial Malawian workers in asbestos mine. The Malawian practice of Islam attracted and fascinated adherents, and soon the Malawian-Swazi communities took shape in a few small towns. Subsequently, the new faith was acknowledged as a religion by King Swazi in 1972.<sup>18</sup>

The migration of Yawo women is placed in the context of the long tradition of Yawo immigration from their original homeland and the wider history of migration to South Africa after apartheid. Hence, this study took a qualitative approach, using unstructured interviews with 30 Yawo Muslim immigrant women to analyze their experiences and uncover the aspects and dynamics that drive women's migration from Malawi. As Portelli points out, oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they thought they were doing, and "what they think they did now."<sup>19</sup>

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12 John Henze, *Some Basics of Religious Education in Zambia* (Mission Press, 2007), 9.

13 *Ibid.*, 80.

14 Ephraim C. Mandivenga, "The Role of Islam in Southern Africa", in *Religions and Politics in Southern Africa*, ed. Carl Fredrik Hallencreutz and Mai Palmberg, (Uppsala: The Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1991), 76.

15 Ingvar Svanberg and David Westerlund (eds.), *Islam Outside the Arab World* (London, New York: 1999), 114.

16 James N. Amanze, "Islam in Botswana During the Colonial Period 1882- 1966", *Botswana Notes and Records*, vol. 30, no. 1(1998): 68.

17 Ingvar Svanberg, and David Westerlund (eds.), *Islam Outside the Arab World* (London: 1999), 113.

18 *Ibid.* Svanberg, 115.

19 Alessandro Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History", *History Workshop Journal*, vol. 12 (1981): 99.

This article attaches the importance of documenting the history from “below”, a theoretical approach that identifies or pinpoints ordinary people (Muslim Yawo women) as subjects in Durban between 1994 and 2017. Oral narratives collected from Yawo Muslim women will add new perspectives on Malawian migrant women in South Africa, particularly in KwaZulu-Natal. There is little work as envisaged here because most of the works existing in Muslim migrants have to do with men mainly after the end of apartheid. This study will make an important contribution to our understanding of Malawian migrants in South Africa. Findings indicate that rampant corruption, nepotism, tribalism, marginalization, poor service delivery, high divorce rates, high illiteracy rate, poor infrastructure (schools), natural disasters and hunger are among the common factors in Malawi which force people to immigrate and seek solace in the host country. Furthermore, in-depth interview revealed that in the process of creating a new life in South Africa, the Yawo women make a significant contribution to the Malawi economy through remittances. They also participate in the civic life of their communities in very public ways and are pushing for a change in the image of Islam as an “Indian” religion in KwaZulu-Natal. As Ummati points out, with a few notable exceptions, Islam has remained the domain of Indian Muslims in the country, with the Malawian *muadhdhin* in every mosque and the small Zanzibari society in Durban. The impression, however, prevailed that Islam was an Indian religion.<sup>20</sup>

### **The Yawo: Origins, Early History of Migration, and Settlement in Malawi**

The Yao have a long history of migration and a long-distance commercial tradition. It is believed that they had contact with the Arabs of Mozambique and Kilwa from 1000 AD. They acted as “intermediaries” for trade along Lake Malawi.<sup>21</sup> According to Agnew and Stubbs, the Yawo entered Malawi from East Africa, where they had long traded with associated Arabs. They constitute “the southernmost outpost of the Islamic world in Africa”.<sup>22</sup> All Yawo in Malawi,

20 N. Ummati, *House of Ummah: In Quest of Leadership in Empowering the Ummah* (Durban, 2013), 212.

21 Brian M. Fagan (ed.), *A Short History of Zambia: From the Earliest Times until A.D. 1900* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 130-131.

22 Swanzie Agnew and Michel Stubbs, *Malawi in Maps* (London: University of London Press, 1972), 14.

Mozambique, and Tanzania are probably followers of Islam, although there are Yawo Christians. However, under Yawo, those who converted to Christianity lost their Yawo identity. In other words, Yawo and Muslim are considered synonyms.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the Yawo identity equates to an Islamic identity within this ethnic group. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, they were considered the greatest long-distance traders in East and Central Africa. These trading expeditions to the east coast made them arguably the richest Africans in east-central Africa. They were jealous of their Makhuwa neighbours and independent of the Arabs moving inland from Kilwa.<sup>24</sup> However, the Yawo adopted some of the culture and education of the Arabs and Swahili long before the arrival of Europeans in this part of Africa.<sup>25</sup>

In the past, perhaps due to their economic superiority, the Yawo were given labels, some of which were stereotypical, even pejorative. The Yawo used to be called "Ajawa" and "Achawa"/"Machawa."<sup>26</sup> The name Achawa comes from (*anolya achawa*) in the eMakhuwa language, which means people who "eat their own food", unlike the Makhuwa who had to struggle for food and went hunting to get it.<sup>27</sup> It lingers to the present. Fatima Muhammad, a Yawo woman who lived with the Makhuwa at Chatsworth, Bayview, said that she was called "Machawa" by the Makhuwa, who are part of the Zanzibari community. According to Fatima, a respondent "the Makhuwa in Chatsworth refer to the Yawo by a derogatory name Achawa/Machawa instead of the proper name Yawo, but the Yawo in Chatsworth are among the people who are still called Amazizimbane (Zanzibari)."<sup>28</sup> Fatima wonders why they still call them "Machawa".<sup>29</sup> Abdallah states that the correct spelling and enunciation of the tribe's territory is Yawo (*Kuyaawo*) and that

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23 Interview with Habiba Ashima (Marianhill, 12 July, 2015).

24 Bethwell A. Ogot (ed.), *Zaman: A Survey of East African History* (Nairobi: Longman, 1974), 236.

25 B. R. Raphael, *A History of Malawi* (Limbe: Popular Publications-MontFort Press, 1980), 40.

26 Judith Listowel, *The Other Livingstone* (Sussex: Julian Friedmann Publishers, 1974), 179.

27 Edward A. Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa: Changing Patterns of International Trade in East Central Africa to the Later Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California, 1975), 8.

28 Interview with Fatima Muhammad (Chatsworth, 16 August, 2015).

29 Interview with Fatima Muhammad (Chatsworth, 16 August, 2015).

their ethnic group is Wayawo, meaning the people of Yawo, so it should be said.<sup>30</sup>

Historically, the Yawo developed as a community of different clans with different designations around the Mwembe district in northern Mozambique.<sup>31</sup> Within the Mwembe region is a hill called Yawo, "treeless and grass grown (grassy)".<sup>32</sup> The Yawo people originate from the "Yawo" hill, from which the Yawo tribe was born, and it is the birthplace of all the Yawo people (*wandu wakuyaawo*).<sup>33</sup> They were people who "eat their own food" (*wakulya yaawo*).<sup>34</sup> Scholars suggest that the Yawo departed Yawoland in Mwembe in the 9th century.<sup>35</sup> In time, some have spread eastward, others westward; some to the north, others to the south. From Lake Malawi, they spread to Kilwa near the Indian Ocean.<sup>36</sup> They had been reaching parts of what we now call Malawi since the 1730s when they were long-distance traders, and that is through southern Malawi, particularly Mlanje (Mulanje) in the Chiyawo language, the place where they took leave and separated and went on business to Beira and Quelimane.<sup>37</sup> By 1780, the Yao had entered parts of northern Malawi from Kilwa.<sup>38</sup> Subsequently, there was a rapid migration of the Yawo between 1820 and 1850. For example, the Mangochi Yawo settled as early as the 1820s.<sup>39</sup>

The history of Yawo migration is rooted in the popular memory of Muslim communities. Asiya, one of the respondents, mentioned the importance of migrating to the Yawo and how it is still remembered today. She says:

I belong to the ethnic group Yawo and my grandfather was a village headman. He told us that before our birth, they went to Tanzania (*Unguja*), Johannesburg (*Joni*), Salisbury (*kuwalale*) and Zambia

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30 Yohannah Abdallah, *The Yaos Chiikal Cha Wayao* (Zomba: Government Printers, 1919), 8.

31 W. H. J. Rangeley, "The Yao", *Nyasaland Journal* 16, no. 1 (1963): 8.

32 Yohanna Abdallah, *The Yaos*, 7.

33 *Ibid.*, 7.

34 Alpers, *Ivory and Slaves in East Central Africa*, 8.

35 Molefi Kete Asante and Ama Mazama (eds), *Encyclopedia of African Religion* (California: Sage, 2009), 734.

36 Yohanna Abdallah, *The Yaos*, 7.

37 Bridglal Pachai, *Malawi: The History of the Nation* (Hong Kong: Longman, 1967), 53.

38 John McCracken, *Politics and Christianity in Malawi 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in Northern Province* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), 3

39 P. A. Cole-King, *Mangochi, The Mountain the People and the Fort* (Limbe: Montfort Press, 1982), 3.

(*kundola*) before a large number of Yawo went to South Africa. South Africa appears to be the centre of modern time's economy. At that time, countries such as Zambia and Zimbabwe were also known for their wealth of minerals such as copper and gold. Previously, Kilwa was the centre of the economy of East and Southern Africa.

The Yawo people have a penchant for travel and are considered "real" Yawo to be a man who landed on a commercial expedition on the east coast (Kilwa).<sup>40</sup> As Abdallah pointed out, the journey is central to Yawo's identity.<sup>41</sup> Among the Yawo, long-distance trade had become a masculine rite of passage.<sup>42</sup> Therefore, the men had to travel long distances to Kilwa. Today South Africa is the contemporary Kilwa, where men and women accumulate wealth. This was explained by Ajinga, another respondent:

Everything changed. Since 1994, many Yawo women from Malawi have been living in South Africa. Being a "real" Yawo female means travelling to countries like South Africa. Even in the villages, children play with minuscule vans and buses made from the clay soil that represents travelers embarking on *Joni's* journey, and anyone who has no intention of going to *Joni* is looked on with contempt. The Yawo of Mangochi, Balaka, Zomba and Machinga in the south are Muslims from Malawi who immigrated in large numbers to South Africa.<sup>43</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the Yawo who had made contact with the east coast, particularly Kilwa, which had become the centre of East African civilization at that time, assimilated Islamic culture and education. Later in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, "they carried the fires of Islam to Lake Nyasa and caused it to burn along its southern and eastern shores."<sup>44</sup>

### **Influence of Islam on the Yawo**

Iliffe believes that mobility and interaction have created cultural change. Long-experienced in trade, the Yao were most receptive to coastal culture; their chiefs in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century embraced Islam and

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40 Suleman Dangor, *Africa's Islamic Heritage: Muslim Regimes in East and West Africa* (Durban: Islamic Dawah Movement of Southern Africa, 2005), 15.

41 Yohanna Abdallah, *The Yaos*, 28.

42 Elizabeth Isichei, *A History of African Societies to 1870* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 440.

43 Interview with Amatullah.

44 Oliver Ransford, *Livingstone's Lake: The Drama of Nyasa* (London: John Murray, 1966), 41.

built coastal-style capitals.<sup>45</sup> Murray in 1932 commented that the Yawo are intelligent and quickly learn a trade or craft.<sup>46</sup> They became Muslims and gradually began to embrace the Arab and Swahili way of life.<sup>47</sup> Subsequently, after the introduction of Western education by Christian missionaries in the 1860s, the Yawo boycotted it for fear of Western influences that would have clouded Islamic identity.<sup>48</sup>

Due to the Yawo's refusal of proselytization and Christianity, they soon experienced cultural isolation in Malawi. Christianity was the only root of Western education at the time. As a result, the Yawo were prevented from participating and integrating into the colonial structure as secretaries, interpreters, etc.<sup>49</sup> The Yawo people were also closely circumspect by the colonial administration because they were not only an obstacle to British autonomy, hence to the *Pax Britannica*, but also hostile to Christianity, the main means or mediator of Western civilization.<sup>50</sup> This kind of prejudice and stereotypes forced the Yawo to depart Malawi in search of a new life in new areas of southern Africa.

Consequently, discrimination against the Yawo, who are Muslims, has continued from colonial times to modern times. Matiki notes that there was prejudice and bigotry against Muslims due to their individuality as Muslims (social identity through dress, food and religious rituals).<sup>51</sup> According to Dehnert, it appears that the clash between the two religions comes from David Livingstone as Christianity was not present before he came to Malawi.<sup>52</sup> Islam was in the country at the time Livingstone and Bishop Frederick Mackenzie fought against Yawo in Magomero in 1861.<sup>53</sup>

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45 John Iliffe, *Africans: The History of a Continent*, 184.

46 S. S. Murray, *A Handbook of Nyasaland* (Zomba: The Government Printer, 1922), 47.

47 Andrew Roberts, *History of Zambia* (London: Heinemann, 1976), 110-111.

48 Issac C. Lamba, *Contradictions in Post-War Education Policy Formulation and Application in Colonial Malawi 1945-1961: A Historical Study of the Dynamics of Colonial Survival* (Zomba: Kachere, 2010), 157.

49 Risto Marjoma, "'The Martial Spirit' Yao Soldiers in British Service in Nyasaland (Malawi), 1895-1939", *The Journal of African History*, vol. 44, no. 3 (2003): 416-17.

50 Kalinga, "The Production of History in Malawi in the 1960s", 527.

51 Kelly Dehnert, "Christin-Muslim Relations in Malawi, Africa 1860s-2007", [http://www.muslimpopulation.com/pdf/malawi\\_Christian\\_Muslim%2orelation](http://www.muslimpopulation.com/pdf/malawi_Christian_Muslim%2orelation). (Accessed on 17 November, 2015]

52 Ibid.

53 Cecil Northcott, *David Livingstone: His Triumph, Decline and Fall* (London, 1973), 81.

In this context, Muslims are still considered a minority in the country. For example, the 2018 census indicated that Muslims in the country were 2.4 million (13.8%).<sup>54</sup> On the other hand, Kalinga in 2012 approximated that between 12% and 17% of Malawians adhere to Islam.<sup>55</sup> In 2016, Strohbahn wrote that Muslims were around 15%.<sup>56</sup> While the *Hutchinson Encyclopedia* in 1990 noted that Christians were 75% and Muslims 20%. However, the 2018 census shows that Muslims make up 13.8%. So, between 2008 (13.0%) and 2018 (13.8%); the number of Muslims in Malawi increased by only 0.8%. Habiba, a respondent, believes that the Muslim population cannot stagnate for ten years. She bases her argument on the fact that it is impossible for the Muslim population to increase by only 0.8% between 2008 and 2018. She notes that:

The politics of numbers are used in Malawi to marginalize Muslims in many areas of life. Muslims are considered a minority in Malawi, which encourages government officials not to place Muslims in senior positions. Unemployment is high among us and that is why many Yawo men and women engage in small businesses and travel to different countries in order to seek a better life. We had chosen to come to the South Africa because it is a wealthy country. If the Yawo had not been creative enough, they would have been the poorest people in Malawi. However, travelling to different regions has made them quite an enterprising tribe. Well-built houses can be found in Yawo villages.<sup>57</sup>

Consequently, exclusion and discrimination against the Yawo by government officials in Malawi continue into modern times. For example, in September 2013, the then president of Malawi reportedly lamented the tendency of some schools to deny Muslim students the opportunity to attend prayers on Fridays. President Dr. Joyce Banda is a Yawo herself, but Christians said "there is no point in refusing children to go and pray at lunchtime if the teachers themselves are not in the classroom."<sup>58</sup> Asiyatu Lipenga further complained on the same

54 Main Report, "2018 Malawi Population Census" (Zomba: National Statistical Office May 2019), 18.

55 Owen J. M. Kalinga, *Historical Dictionary of Malawi* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2012), 200

56 Ulf Strohbahn, *The Zionist Churches in Malawi: History-Theory-Anthropology* (Mzuzu: Mzuni Press, 2016), 451.

57 Interview with Habiba Ashima, (Pinetown, 22 July 2019).

58 Nyasa Times, "Muslims Tell Malawi Pres. Banda they are being discriminated against", <http://www.nyasatimes.com/2013/09/14/muslims-tell-malawi-pres-banda-they-are-being-discriminated-against/> [accessed on 17 November, 2015].

occasion, stating that "a number of Muslim students who did well in the Malawi School Certificate Examination in 2012 were not selected to enter university. Muslims were concerned because of the thousands of Muslim children who qualified to enter the University of Malawi (Unima), only twenty-five were accepted."<sup>59</sup>

Amina Upile, a respondent, spoke mainly about the negative consequences of being a Muslim in Malawi:

My parents had no formal education because everything was negative for a Muslim at the time. It was difficult to go to a Christian school. Muslims were forced to change their names and convert to Christianity. Amina could be called Mary. My parents chose to remain ignorant rather than abandon their faith and change their name. In missionary school, they didn't want to eat pork. My parents did not want to give up their faith. They did not embrace western education and remained in the folds of Arab alphabets that were no longer used in Malawi after colonialism. In this context, the children of many Muslim parents had the same problem in the period following independence. Many of us have experienced the said discrimination and marginalization in Malawi's education system. The Yawo are smart people but the system has let us down and we end up being unskilled laborers working for lower wages in South Africa.<sup>60</sup>

There is a tinge of anger and regret in Amina's memory. A high rate of illiteracy among Muslim women in Malawi is an important factor worth mentioning. According to respondents, Muslims are marginalized in many influential sectors of society due to their lack of secular education, which is key to employment. The high rate of illiteracy among Yawo women has forced many of them to seek economic opportunities in South Africa.

It should be noted that the first educational system introduced in Malawi was the Arabic alphabet. Reading and writing were done using the Arabic alphabet, while the language of instruction was Kiswahili, a mixture of Arabic and African dialects from the east coast of Africa which was the *lingua franca* of Malawi before the colonial period.<sup>61</sup> Thus, Arabic and Swahili, the *lingua franca* of East Africa was used in Malawi for easy communication.<sup>62</sup>

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59 Nyasa Times, "Muslims tell Malawi Pres. Banda they are being discriminated against".

60 Interview with Amina Upile (Malukazi, 20 September, 2015).

61 Murray, *A Handbook of Nyasaland*, 49.

62 Raphael, *A Short History of Malawi*, 40.

Yawo chiefs wanted education for themselves and their people. Above all, they wanted to be able to communicate, more or less on an equal footing, with their commercial partners on the coast.<sup>63</sup> Accordingly, the Yawo were largely Islamized. The perpetuation of this belief was clearly hostile to British influence. Schools had been established in almost every village to teach young people to read and write Swahili in Arabic script, with regular prayers throughout the day.<sup>64</sup> When the British colonized Malawi, the new government adopted the English language and Western education system introduced by Christian missionaries, replacing Islamic education based on Arabic and Kiswahili, and most Muslims chose to not secularly educate their children for fear of converting to Christianity.

The primary means of all Christian missions in their evangelization was the creation of networks of village schools where children of all ages could receive basic education in reading and arithmetic, as well as religious education leading to baptism and church membership. This was the beginning of Western education in tropical Africa (as we know it now). The first instructors were, of course, European missionaries, but the more gifted students who came out of the system were trained as catechists.<sup>65</sup> Education and Christianity tended to influence and depend on each other. Education had helped spread the gospel, just as the gospel had made education so popular that in some cases it became a requirement for enrollment.<sup>66</sup> Village schools often served as village churches; village teachers were often also village evangelists. The demand for literacy –the central attraction of the early education system– was in part the necessity for access to the Bible.<sup>67</sup> For this reason, the Yawo refused to embrace secular education. What can be seen from above is that Muslims in Malawi have been deprived of the opportunity to acquire Western education due to the association of education with Christianity. Conscious guidelines have been developed to alienate them. These policies have contributed to the high rate of

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63 Raphael, *A Short History of Malawi*, 40.

64 Mary Tew, *Peoples of the Nyasa Region* (London, 1950), 17.

65 Roland Oliver & Anthony Atmore, *Africa Since 1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1967), 157

66 Roy J. R. Hauya, *Education in Malawi: The Question of Curriculum* (Blantyre: Dzuka Education Foundation Series, 1977), 2.

67 John Kenneth McCracken, *Christianity and Politics in Malawi, 1875-1940: The Impact of the Livingstonia Mission in Northern Region of Nyasaland* (Cambridge University Press, 1977), 120-21.

illiteracy among Muslims in Malawi, many of whom are now scattered across South Africa in search of manual jobs.

### Reasons for Immigration

Many factors push people to leave one region or country and migrate to another region or country. Many people in Africa migrate for social, economic, environmental, or political reasons. The respondents in this article do not immigrate to South Africa due to armed conflict or political unrest; rather, they are driven by factors such as poverty (corruption, nepotism, tribalism in government cycles), social unrest, and economic hardship. They leave their country to find a better quality of life.

Another often overlooked factor is Malawi's high divorce rate over the past decade. Divorced women who want their independence and authority seek employment in South Africa. Studies show that Malawi has one of the highest divorce rates in Africa. Divorce rates are particularly high in several districts in the south of the country. In Balaka, for example, two-thirds of all first marriages end with an annulment.<sup>68</sup> Sheikh Muhammad Uthman, reportedly said that the high rate of divorce among couples in Malawi is of concern. Gender-based violence has been identified as one of the challenges leading to divorce in the country.<sup>69</sup> In Yawo culture a woman can divorce a man if he is so violent, vulgar, and discourteous and this is called *kupeleka cheswela*.<sup>70</sup>

### Why Durban?

Yawo women are attracted to Durban's racial, religious, and cultural diversity, and especially Durban's large Muslim population. The strong and visible presence of Islam is a major attraction that entices Malawian Muslim women.<sup>71</sup> According to several respondents, they do not feel out of place when, for example, they are dressed in

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68 Robert E. Emery (ed.), *Cultural Sociology of Divorce: An Encyclopedia*, Volume 1 (Los Angeles: Sage, 2013), 739.

69 Xenophobia violence in democratic South Africa/South African history Online, <http://www.sahistory.org.za/article/xenophobic-violence-democratic-south-africa> [accessed on 23 November, /2015].

70 Interview with Ajangale Mbamba (Overport, 20 September, 2015).

71 Goolam Vahed, "Changing Islamic Traditions and Emerging Identities in South Africa", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no. 1 (2000): 44.

*hijab* (veil). It is fascinating to see Yawo Muslim women wear the veil on the streets of Durban.

The reasons for Yawo's migration to Durban are economic. They use networks based on religious and ethnic identities. Respondents prefer to work for Muslim Indians and whites rather than being employed by indigenous people. The interaction between Malawian women and Indian women is described as cordial, and many Malawian women have even learned to prepare Indian cuisine popularly known as *biryani*. However, many respondents mentioned problems with Indian, Pakistani, Bengali and Egyptian hosts, as domestic workers are overworked without leave, receive no medical care and earn low wages. Sometimes they receive expired canned food, old spoiled food, or old clothes from their employees. As Asiya Mwamadi says, many Malawians are no longer interested in working in people's homes because domestic workers are exploited, overworked and underpaid. They want to free themselves from the shackles of abuse and the false accusations of some employers.

Many domestic workers have been accused of stealing property that has gone missing from the employer's homes without a shred of concrete evidence or charges. Some women have started growing different types of vegetables which they sell to both Malawians and South Africans. Many Yawo women have become sellers of clothes, fruits and vegetables. Others cook Malawian white rice (*kilombera*) with tilapia (*makumba*) and sell it to both South African and Malawian customers.<sup>72</sup>

### **Cultural Exchanges in South Africa**

The arrival of foreigners after 1994 means that South Africa is going through a transition from isolation from the continent to a new life based on diverse African enlightenments such as attire, artwork, food, beliefs, standards, languages, philosophy, customs, music, dance and drama. The types of clothing people wear and the type of food they eat show a new diversity. Socialization and interaction are two-way procedures that lead to heterogeneity. Heckel noted that the food of the Yawo is simple and nutritious; the food is mainly vegetarian and this is the standard dish called *ugali*. It is prepared by slowly pouring flour into a pot of boiling water, which should be stirred constantly until "so that the water is absorbed as it sinks." What remains is a

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<sup>72</sup> Interview with Asiya Mwamadi (Lindelani, 20 September, 2015).

pudding-like mass: the *ugali*. This un-spiced staple dish requires some spiced dish with sauce or gravy. Spicy dishes are beans, peas, spinach and the like, and sometimes venison or poultry stew.<sup>73</sup> Asiya Mwamadi, a respondent said that while we are assimilating into the Zulu culture, it is interesting to note that some Zulu women can now eat that type of food. They can even eat our thick porridge-also known as *pap* (*ugali*) as many South Africans eat what they call *uphuthu*. This is also made with maize meal, just like *ugali*, but *uphuthu* is cooked in a crumbly way and is usually eaten with *inkomazi* (sour milk), beans, spinach, pumpkin leaves, meat or other types of gravy soup.

When we deal with material culture, it is observed that Yawo women have introduced certain types of clothes in South Africa. One of them is what they call *chitenje*, a piece of cotton fabric that is wrapped around the waist, and they make different designs that they call "African attire". In recent years, it has not been common for Zulu women to wear *chitenje* or have been dressed in African clothing. Fatima, a respondent, says that the Zulus began wearing the *chitenje* material instead of what they wore, known as *ibhayi* in isiZulu.

The Makhuwa of Chatsworth calls it *kisambi*. For Zulu women, African clothing is sewn by foreign nations. On the other hand, Malawian women have been initiated into the non-material culture, which includes the language, standards, and Zulu morals that are compatible with the teachings of Islam. Furthermore, Fatima says it is wonderful to see different cultures assimilate in Durban. This is what we want, warm and friendly relations between us.

All thirty respondents noted that some religious practices have changed since their arrival in South Africa. Women are no longer accommodated in mosques. South African mosques are seen as symbols of men worshipping God and women praying in their homes. However, some Yawo women leave their homes on Friday and pray at the Muhammadayah Mosque on Sparks Road, Overpot, Jumuah Masjid Gray (Yusufu Dadoo) Street in central Durban, and Pine Town Mosques. Amina, one of the respondents, said she could not explain to her Zulu Muslim friends why there are mosques in Malawi that welcome women and we have a few such mosques in South Africa. What she has observed is that Muslim reverts struggle to find Muslim colleagues. A mosque is a good place to meet and socialize with

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73 Benno Heckel, *The YaoTribe: Their Culture and Education* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 11.

different people. Praying in the mosque is part of the Yawo norm, but sadly they are changing in South Africa. Things are different now; they cannot go to nearby mosques to pray because there are few mosques in Durban that accept women.

It has also been noted that the Yawo lost initiation ceremonies once they settled in Durban. Ancient traditions die because they are scattered and live among the Zulus and Indians who have different customs and cultures. While some tribes in South Africa, such as the Xhosa, circumcised their children in the bush, just as the Yawo did in Malawi, the Yawo in South Africa never take their boys to circumcise in the bush. The Yawo favour taking their children to a doctor who has experience with the operation.

In a circumcision ceremony (*jando*), all the boys were taken into the bush near a river, where village elders built a bush hut called *ndagala*. The children spent nearly a month in this bush hut and received instruction on how to respect their elders. The first lessons given to boys were based on agriculture (*kulima alimeje*) and taught them how to grow crops to overcome hunger. This took the form of *jando* songs (*msyungu*), used figuratively and later interpreted by the elders to give an appropriate meaning to *msyungu*. This agricultural lesson is called *msyungu wandanda* (the first lesson in the lives of the Yawo people). In the Yawo culture, an uncircumcised man is considered a boy. To be a true Yawo, you must go through this *unyago* passage (initiations).

The respondents also indicated that not only do boys attend an initiation school; the girls also have their own school called *msondo*. *Jando* for boys is what is known as circumcision while *msondo* is the only school where girls are taught how to respect their parents. All these initiations are called *unyago* in Chiyawo, which means initiation ceremony. Today these ceremonies are in decline as the Yawo are now scattered across South Africa but have noticed that the Xhosa have a similar circumcision ceremony just like the Yawo.

Also, Amina Upile says that another initiation that is disappearing among them is *litiwo*. This was an initiation ceremony mainly for women who were pregnant for the first time. A woman was given instructions on how to take care of herself during her pregnancy and what to expect on the day of delivery. Those were happy times when women from different villages gathered in one place and offered advice and support to a pregnant woman. At that time, it was taboo to listen to programs on the radio about labour pains. The children learned that

a child comes from heaven or is bought from a store and not from a mother's womb. In today's world, it is no longer taboo to listen to the radio and watch television shows that deal with prenatal issues.<sup>74</sup> Heckel is of the opinion that the initiation festivities (*unyago*) are the most important part of Yawo culture. Their celebration represents a veritable fountain of life; their non-celebration would mean the extinction of the tribe.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, Yawo women believe that being Yawo should not completely lose Yawo culture just because they are in South Africa.

As already noted above, there are a series of religious and cultural practices which are diminishing among the Yawo. However, the thirty respondents showed that they still maintain some traditions. For example, everyone agreed to still put together Islamic songs and sing in their language as *kaswida*. In free time and during festivals, especially during the wedding ceremony, Yawo sings and dances a religious dance known as *sikiri*.

### **Xenophobia and Violence**

Some South Africans have long portrayed an inappropriate fear or hatred of black Africans. But Amina, a respondent, thinks it started in the 1990s, after the end of apartheid when most locals flocked to different towns in South Africa to work. They noted with bitterness that many unskilled jobs were filled by foreigners from neighboring countries.<sup>76</sup> Habiba, another respondent, witnessed intense violence against foreigners that began on May 11, 2008, and in April 2015. She was afraid to wear a *hijab* (veil) and walk around the city, but she continued to wear a *hijab*. Her Malawian friends stopped wearing *hijab* because of xenophobia.

According to respondents, xenophobia in South Africa is very complex. It can be seen in different forms such as victimization by various government officials. For example, the police search them at Park Station in Johannesburg and along the streets of Durban. They are for all people with dark skin. It's not just the police who harass foreigners, and the Home Office has a number of officers who disrespect black foreigners. In many cases, landlords also harass their foreign tenants by charging excessive prices. It will also be noted that

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74 Interview with Amina Upile.

75 Benno Heckel, *The Yao Tribe*, 19.

76 Interview with Amina Upile.

labour exploitation and unfair treatment of foreign black workers in terms of labour law requirements where they are denied paid leave or preference for foreigners to be unregistered workers.

South Africans have labelled African foreigners in the country as *Amakwerekwere*. When Yawo migrant women talk to their friends on a bus, South Africans will look at them with red eyes. They will think that "outsiders" are babbling or chatting in a reckless or confused way. For South Africans, the Chiyawo language is a dopey conversation or sound. They do not know that Chiyawo has been spoken in Chatsworth for many years by their brothers and sisters who are called *Amazizimbane*. Respondents feel that historians should write more about the Yawo's contributions to South Africa's socio-economic issues from the time their grandfathers came to this country in the 1800s. The contemporary South Africans need to learn that Chiyawo will be a minority language around Chatsworth, Bayview in Durban.

### **Organizations: Malawian Diasporic Identity**

Although migrant women maintain or create multiple attachment networks with their country of origin when moving in a new country, women in other scenarios endure family isolation and loneliness. The memories of the participants offer light on the current issue confronting Yawo Muslim women relocating to South Africa, and their experiences show how they navigate and overcome significant barriers of belonging and identity in the new country. These immigrant women have evolved some strategies to manage and remain true to their Islamic faith in the face of a range of challenges, including abuse, family isolation, and loneliness. They are arranging Islamic education programs to enhance community understanding of how to deal with exploitative bosses and abusive husbands in order to cope with isolation and mental illness. There is a Malawian diasporic identity. They keep in touch with other Malawians through *dawah* outreach (preaching), which helps them cope with their high levels of familial isolation. Women participate in these projects to discuss themes such as "women and health" or "gender-based violence". "Females Working Together" is another initiative that has gained hold in Durban to combat loneliness. Both individually and collectively, women must collaborate. A woman's quality of life may vary if she works alone. A woman's life and the lives of other women may change, though, when

she works with another woman. Her children's lives, as well as that of her family, friends, and other loved ones, are subject to change.

In light of the foregoing, it can be seen that these immigrant women employ a variety of techniques to navigate their new lives and stay true to their Islamic faith, such as maintaining contact with other Malawians through *dawah* outreach. They contact with one another and travel to the funeral to console the bereaved family. The Yawo wear their traditional attire during *eids* and wedding days. During the festivities, they make sure to remember to always wear the *hijab*. Their identity includes it. The *hijab*, for Yawo women, represents black Muslims in Durban. Since there aren't many Zulu Muslim women in Durban, it serves as a way to identify foreign Muslims.

The participants' experiences also demonstrate that they have created cultural groups, family counseling, and business development programs in Durban, where they have adapted and feel at home in the new environment. Their engagement in cultural groups aids with stress management. When problems are tough to solve, people's stress levels rise. When they are separated from their family, the majority of people endure stress on a regular basis. On the other hand, if people are unable to control their stress levels, stress can have a major negative impact on both physical and mental health. To cope with stress, some women engage in various Islamic activities such as *dawah*.

Many women today are independent of men. Divorced women want to be independent when seeking employment in South Africa. These women want to demonstrate their power and authority by travelling to South Africa. Women have lived in certain societies that have been slow and reluctant to recognize and appreciate the essential role that women play alongside men. For example, Malawi is an agricultural country and many families are farmers. Women, along with their husbands, play a greater role in the cultivation of crops. After harvesting the crops, they sell some and keep the rest for their families. The money from the sale of the crops is used by her husband, who pays for a trip to South Africa. Unfortunately, when the husbands find work in South Africa, some men forget their wives in Malawi. These men spend a lot of time in South Africa without supporting anyone at home. The women of these unstable families are those who leave and immigrate to South Africa to follow their husbands or go with friends without their husbands' permission.

Some respondents believe that South Africa is also their new home and they feel a sense of belonging to South Africa as they negotiate multiple identities. On the whole, they have children born in South Africa who do not have birth certificates or identity papers. However, this means that the family is located in South Africa. These Yawo only visit their parents and relatives in Malawi. They visit Malawi once a year and sometimes do not return home for two or three years, depending on the availability of transport. Everyone said they miss their elders in Malawi, especially eating Malawi's most delicious fish *chambo* (tilapia shirana).

### **Conclusion**

This oral history article attempted to examine the migration and settlement of Yawo women in South Africa, with particular emphasis on how they negotiated their identity in South Africa. It was based on interviews with thirty Muslim Yawo women. The Yawo make up the majority of Muslims in Malawi and have a long tradition of migrating from their birthplace to other territories, including South Africa. Their movement and settlement in South Africa have been contextualized within the broader background of post-apartheid migration to South Africa and the xenophobic experiences of many migrant groups in recent years.

Some of the topics discussed were their reasons for migrating to South Africa, their involvement in civic engagement, experiences of xenophobia, and how the Yawos viewed their future in South Africa. An important aspect of this study was how women negotiate their identity in different contexts – with Indian Muslims and black South Africans, with whom they come into daily contact in different situations. The complex and complicated triangular relationship between Malawian women, local indigenous peoples, and Indians are an important aspect of this study. It took another perspective because there was little work that dealt with Yawo women since most of the existing works for Muslim migrants have to do with men mainly after apartheid.

Examining the migration and settlement of Yawo women, ethnic/racial relationships, religious/cultural traditions and practices, identity, xenophobia and its impact will significantly contribute to our understanding of Malawian migrant women in South Africa. Also the Yawo women's contribution to proselytizing Islam in Southern Africa

(through *dawah* works) is not well documented and deserves future research. Additionally, the working hypothesis of this research is that in the process of creating a new life in South Africa, Malawian women contribute significantly to the economy of Malawi (through remittances) and participate in the civic life of their communities through very public channels, and are persuading KwaZulu-Natal to change the image of Islam as an "Indian" religion.

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# Building the Self-Worth of the Cape Muslims

Mogamat Faadiel Arnold\*

## The Secular Schooling System

Adolescence is not a psychological developmental stage but it is an economic-political-social-educational construct; one that traps the youth in schools. This construct breaks the youth's self-worth and it makes them 'obedient' citizens; ones that will accept adult authority for unquestionable conscription military training with the idea of protecting state powers. Schools primarily are 'holding grounds' to ensure a high unemployment figure; the purpose is to keep the employed in debt due to exorbitant school fees and parents enslaved with international wage gaps and salary structures that are at a low standard set by the international elite.

Schools deprive the youth from family, religious, and cultural connections, and they strip them from practical, self-sustainable, and survival skills; on top of that, they impose western cultural practices. These are then accepted through prescriptive, theoretical curricula, and examinations to provide that are in sync with the existing labour market.

New minds with new potentials are crammed into old Eurocentric markets. Adolescence may be viewed as a western cultural illness that is caused by the overstimulation of the reptilian; that is, the rear brain in response to the fears that arise from prescriptive education, and external assessments through pass-fail examination results; a system that forces class structures on normal individuals in a school-based social construct that also retards legal sexual expression through youth marriages.<sup>1</sup> The Prophet Muhammad's (SAW) advice to teenagers to marry has been ignored by westernized communities including many Muslims.

The outcome that are observed is the increase in youth unemployment, physical and psychological illnesses, crime, drug addiction, depression, rape, and stress; developments that continue into adulthood. For these reasons, the author resigned from state

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1 <http://bo-kaap-helper.blogspot.com/2021/11/the-farce-of-adolescence-argus.html>.

education system as a teacher in 1990 for discovering that the underlying cause of all forms of child abuse was prescriptive schooling.

Interesting to observe is that indigenous communities' youth, their cultural marriages after initiation, and their training in male-female skills for the tribe's sustainability allows them to be 'whole brained.' If westerners do not reach them to influence their minds with the evolving modern technology that financially benefits the elite, then they would be out of reach of these negative influences.

### **The Early Cape Muslims and the Schooling System**

The early Cape Muslims were barred from schools beyond Standard 2 [that is, Grade 4]; and by their own volition, later, refused colonial schooling. Because the Muslim youth were early learners of crafts, they were able to earn and marry young. This created a unique self-sustainable lifestyle in the Bo-Kaap; a development that impressed colonialists. The Muslims' dress code, their string faith, their sense of endurance in hardship, their sense of humour, their foods, their *madrasahs*, their *hafith* children, their home language, and their produced books written in the Arabic script served as a protection from total assimilation; these, in fact, created for them a natural resistance against total colonial control.

Their refusal to submit to colonial education allowed them to become highly skilled; as a result, the colonists employed those from the Bo-Kaap community (that is, the Cape Muslims) to make their clothes, cook their foods, and build for them homes; this permitted the Bo-Kaap Muslims to become business-minded individuals. Later, they were able to afford to buy property from the Dutch who were in control of developments at the Cape. The Bo-Kaap craftsmen were the ones who built these homes and embellished them. The colonists feared the Cape Muslims' *ratieb* practices<sup>2</sup> and their ability to skillfully work with good and bad *jinn*.<sup>3</sup>

The modernized Cape Muslims, who observed the colonial educational protocols, became the kind that the British created throughout their colonies; this was, however, not the case in Cabo de Goede Hoop. Here they became "an influential class of Muslims that will be culturally British/Western and morally Muslim – for

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2 Special spiritual practices that spiritually-oriented men perform with sharp knives and skewers to demonstrate that they are immune to pain.

3 Unseen creatures that Allah created.

continuance of the western culture over time. This would reduce anti-colonial uprising due to internal westernized Muslim class reluctance."<sup>4</sup> Some of the Muslim academics have become exactly that type of Muslims; ones who do not even recite or write the *salaawat*<sup>5</sup> on the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) when they address their contemporaries – “it is not academic protocol.”

This atheistic academic style has been attractive to westernized Muslims; they are the ones who actually believe that the west is more advanced than the Muslims. Hence, they must be imitated. Ibn Khaldun made the observation that the conquered imitates the conqueror, believing that there is power in their systems.<sup>6</sup> They thus work hard to Islamize the western segregated subjects into Islamic Science, Islamic Economics, Islamic Psychology, Islamic Art, Islamic Philosophy, and Islamic Esoterism. This thus proves their blind dependence on western science as a superior system.

The early Cape Muslims' faith-commitment caused the state to support the Muslims' faith in the old Cape; this was through diplomatic arrangements. Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Sheikh Effendi was handpicked and sent – under the auspices of the Ottoman Empire – to the Cape; he was sent “because the Cape Muslims were insignificantly small in their calculation to pose a threat to the British government.”<sup>7</sup> Prior to their rule, the controlling Dutch promulgated a Van Dieman Placaat in 1657, 23 August; important to note was that it protected the ‘Freedom of Muslim Craftsmen’ and ‘women’s faith’ and this was in anticipation of the Mardykens’ [Free Muslims] arrival during 1658; they came to build the houses for the Dutch in Bo-Kaap.<sup>8</sup>

The building of nine mosques in Bo-Kaap from 1794 to 1899 with voluntary labour of the Cape Muslim craftsmen and the financing of the general Muslim community, especially Indian Muslim businessmen; since they also impressed the colonialists, the Muslims' feat in the Bo-Kaap during the years of slavery proved in my

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4 Mogamed Ajam, “The Raison d’être of Muslim Mission Schools in Cape Town and the Environment from 1860-1980 - Origin of Islam-based Schools in Cape Town”, (PhD. Diss. University of Cape Town, 1986), 20. [Ed. M. F. Arnold (Cape Town: CRA-FADDS, 2019)].

5 That is praises of the Prophet.

6 *An Arab Philosophy of History: Selections from the Prolegomena of Ibn Khaldun of Tunis (1332-1406)*, Translated and Arranged by Charles Issawi, (London, Murray, 1969), 53.

7 *Ibid.*, 19.

8 *Ibid.*, 12.

assessment that the Bo-Kaap communities were not descendants of slaves; they were, however, the craftsmen/women and political exiles of the time.<sup>9</sup> The Bo-Kaap is a white, council narrative creative for tourist attraction in post-apartheid; this was something the Afrikaners never claimed; the reason for this was because they knew the truth. The culture of the early Cape Muslims could not have developed so powerfully if they were slaves; and this may further be argued that slavery was only abolished in 1843 at the Cape.

The heritage value the early Bo-Kaap Muslims established at the Cape is today supporting the Muslims and non-Muslims of Greater Cape Town. During 2022, the Cape Town City Council planned monthly markets in Bo-Kaap; this was at no cost for Muslim traders. And full security and event costs of the council to attract tourism to Bo-Kaap; this may be considered another protection from Allah (SWT) for the Islam at the Cape. Allah (SWT) has given the Muslims of Bo-Kaap and the Cape in general security of their faith and culture by non-Muslim rulers since 1658 - by creating needs in the government and colonists, which they can only get from Muslims.

The accreditation of ICRA's HLL-University's four-year course: Holistic Methodologist - in Matric and Beyond Subjects,<sup>10</sup> as a completed South African Qualification; this, for me, is Allah's protection and it grants this protection to the Bo-Kaap in particular and Cape Muslims in general. The Muslim Judicial Council's collaboration with the Western Cape Education Department to receive SEMIS numbers for children who do *hifth*<sup>11</sup> was another hallmark in 'The Protection of Muslims in the Cape' by Allah's (SWT) Command.<sup>12</sup>

To the international communities, the 2% Muslims receiving the respect of 98% of the non-Muslims population in South Africa, with state support, is, plainly put, a miracle. The peaceful transition from Apartheid to Democracy, without a revolution of the masses is the great miracle of South Africa. The amount of international Muslim financial aid that Mandela received allowed South Africans to dictate

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9 Achmat Davids, *Mosques of the Bo-Kaap* (Cape Town: Institute of Arabic and Islamic Research SA, 1980).

10 <http://bo-kaap-helper.blogspot.com/2020/09/786-centre-for-research-and-activity.html>

11 Someone who memorized the Qur'an.

12 <https://wcedonline.westerncape.gov.za/news/ground-breaking-mou-between-wced-and-muslim-judicial-council>

its own terms to the world.<sup>13</sup> SA Quality Assurance went out of their colonial framework to accredit the four-year ICRA course.

Let us list 'The Protections from Allah' for the Bo-Kaap Muslims in particular; and hence, the Cape Muslims in general:

- a) The Bo-Kaap Muslims' ancestors were not slaves but 'First Muslim settlers 1658,' who under the 'protection' of the Dutch built the Bo-Kaap houses for the Dutch;
- b) The defense of Muslim interests in parliament by Mr. de Roubaix after he negotiated with the Bo-Kaap Businessmen to defend 'Muslim rights' in parliament in return for their request of Muslim *ratieb jama'as* to lower the sounding of the *ratieb* practices;
- c) The Coming of Sheikh Abubakr Effendi under the Ottoman Empire support during British Rule;
- d) The declaration of Bo-Kaap as a strictly 'Malay Quarter' by the Apartheid Government, so that the government ministers could come and fit on their suits and dresses made in Bo-Kaap;
- e) The large crane oil filter burst, and its engine burned out preventing it from entering Bo-Kaap, and granting success to the small demonstrating Muslims to stop it - even though they were baton charged by police;
- f) The national ANC government overriding the provincial Democratic Alliance (DA) government in declaring Bo-Kaap Heritage sites;
- g) In the 1970's, the mosques were in the way of Apartheid government to break the Bo-Kaap in half with a bridge to Sea Point; like they did in District Six, thus protecting Bo-Kaap residents again from the Apartheid machinery;<sup>14</sup>
- h) The large fires on Signal Hill and Devils Peak that jumped over the *awliyas'* respective graves<sup>15</sup> were clear signs of Islam power of faith - even after death;
- i) Speaking our unique Bo-Kaaps has been a bastion against total assimilation into the western culture - because our forefathers did not read Dutch and English script, thus the British Missionaries failed in Christianizing the people of Bo-Kaap, through their literature; and
- j) South African Muslims are the only Muslims in the world with 'free expression' radio & TV stations.

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<sup>13</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcQIEIRLU1Y>

<sup>14</sup> Ajam 1986/Arnold 2019.

<sup>15</sup> Spiritually inspired individuals who passed away and buried at these locations.

### The Bo-Kaaps: The Cape Muslims' Afrikaans Vernacular

Today, Afrikaans as a language of a minority is dying; the Afrikaaners are now coming to the Cape Muslims so that they can maintain their Departments of Afrikaans at the established universities. They did so hope to gain funding for research that would include "Bo-Kaaps". But be careful, they have used the Cape Muslim language to discredit them and their faith (or *din*) through the secular media. So, the media depict the Cape Muslims as *skollies*,<sup>16</sup> terrorists, and even bank robbers with *masjids* located in the Bo-Kaap.

Then, there are those who use the area as their background film shoots that they present at international film festivals. They give these awards to entrench their negative narrative about the Cape Muslims using their language and the predominantly Muslim areas for their anti-Islamic agendas. From among them are those who publish the Cape Muslims' works; publications or projects that entrench their perception of the Cape Muslims. One can watch *District Six*, *Dickie van nie Bo-Kaap*, *Tracker*, and *Barakat* that portray Muslims in a particular manner.

This cohort of individuals is reaching out to all contributors including me; it is commendable because for too long did academia marginalize those on the ground; they do the actual work, while the academia theorized in conferences that marginalized the ongoing sincere community works. For me, faith (*iman*) is the community's guiding instrument. In the old days, the Indians (Muslims and Hindus) provided the finance, while the Cape Muslims – also referred to as the Cape Malays – offered their craftsmanship. Presently, the Muslims again are able to show how everyone can work together for everyone's progress and transformation.

In real terms, the Cape Muslims are united by the use of Bo-Kaaps; the language that is spoken and that differs from other Afrikaans vernaculars. We call it Bo-Kaaps because of the many Bo-Kaap *masajids* and imams who influenced the way that community uses the language. Bo-Kaap is a locale or port where all the Cape Muslim leaders have set foot, settled, and taught for generations. Their diction and topics influenced the way the Cape Muslims spoke and continues to speak. Here we refer to select examples, they are: "broeders", which Imams use in sermons (*khutbas*) in the earlier days are still used in

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<sup>16</sup> That is, gangsters.

organizations, social gatherings, and amongst *skollies* (such as: my broe) and the white youth (such as: bre).

Bo-Kaaps was created through shortening and lengthening words, combining languages, using Qur'anic concepts, adding words to form a rhyme scheme, and replacing letters with others that sound the same. It was influenced by Qur'anic Arabic recital rules and by mixing different languages in one sentence. This is what I call the computer language because it accelerates the sentence production. Consider the fact that standard language takes longer when constructing a single sentence; one in which time Bo-Kaaps create ten sentences via seven different languages squeezed into one sentence.

Bo-Kaaps<sup>17</sup> is a warm, real language that communicates with consideration of the listener. It does the duty of a language - it is respectful, relaxing, warm, humorous, reflective, humble, adaptive, clear to its purpose, ethical, religious, holistic, integrative, comfortable, creative, deep, yet lighthearted, tongue-in-cheek, non-confrontational, inviting, sociable, non-discriminatory and loving. It is thus not, a *straat-taal*,<sup>18</sup> creole, *skollie taal*,<sup>19</sup> loaned language, colloquial, and *baster* as the elite attempts to marginalize the masses.

All languages communities speak is constantly evolving. The notion of a "pure" language is a myth. Standardization of a language is a deliberate elitist socio-political construct; the enfranchised use to marginalize the masses.<sup>20</sup> Ensuring that only the enfranchised will attain the certification for management and top jobs. The tool they use is examinations. Under 'Fake News' of "adolescence", teachers, professors, and parents are indoctrinated to send their children to school and university. At this point, I turn to the institution that I had set up.

### Bo-Kaap's ICRA

At ICRA, we removed examinations and we test every step of the way until all understand the learning exposure. ICRA students are trained to self-assess, undertake group evaluation, record, and monitor their masterclass progress; this is, however, under the guided facilitation of the resident Holistic Methodologist. The challenges are,

17 M. F. Arnold, "'Bo-Kaaps' The Language of Colonial Resistance", ICRA FADDS 2022.

18 Street language.

19 Gangster language.

20 Noam Chomsky, "The Concept of Language",  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdUbIlwHRkY>.

moreover, not graded. All students learn the highest level of the exposure in a simplified, learner-centred way. This relates perfectly to how our Imams used Arabic letters to sound the lessons of *din* in *mushafs*,<sup>21</sup> in the language of the student, making the student feel at home in the learning process is not the conventional colonial way where the child must learn through the teacher's language. This breaks the self-worth of the student and perpetuates the decline of education over the years.

At ICRA's HLL-University,<sup>22</sup> the students are assisted in mastering a 511 pp. *Senior Holistic Learning Manual* that contains many subjects written in matric and at university. It also has a high-level poetry book with all conventional subject's purpose and value. HLL-University trains its students to tutor any subject to others, holistically. The aim is making them distinguishably and holistically aware of life's phenomena [ILM].

Students are taught the miracles or rather the signs (*ayat*) of Allah (SWT), and God's forces in the human body, world, and cosmos, not the subjects. ICRA thus teaches the *tawheed* of phenomena through Qur'anic references. English and Afrikaans are taught in relation to Qur'anic vocabulary, raising its actual value. Self-testing and evaluation of personal quality of work is essential at ICRA, based on the reality that Allah (SWT) tells us that every individual's faith is connected to him/her as a personal witness to the self-relating to it or rejecting it.<sup>23</sup>

HLL teaches self-responsibility and hence improves self-worth and independence with inherent trust and awareness of Allah (SWT). It follows the focus of Independent Indigenous people - self-reliance in faith, who survived COVID 19 and dependent city folk died in thousands and now many are disabled by dependence on vaccines.

ICRA's HLL-University practicals are, for example, self-generating water, electricity prototypes, sustainable gardening, and toy-making to give as charity. This ensures creativity and community service simultaneously. All youth must first finish the matric and subjects beyond the Holistic Methodologist course; this should be done before they can attempt the adult degrees.<sup>24</sup>

21 Copies of the Qur'an.

22 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hdUbIlwHRkY>

23 Surah 17:13.

24 <http://bo-kaap-helper.blogspot.com/2020/09/786-centre-for-research-and-activity.html>

The institution's adult students, who registered for Total Health, are expected to study all forms of medicine and treatments and holistically integrate them; the idea is to construct a manual that can advise medics and patients on healing techniques. ICRA's fees are low so that everyone can become scholars and the rich can sponsor more than one student in the family or neighborhood. In this way, ICRA equalizes the playing fields for individual and communal development. ICRA, however, practices "deschooling", professionally and holistically.

All students are ICRA HLL-University students and junior students (primary learners) are taught accelerated reading, writing, mathematical, engineering, and creative skills; this is in preparation for the HLL-University courses. The full ICRA project is focused on NODEBT YOUTH,<sup>25</sup> which was published in the *Leadership Magazine* in 2004.<sup>26</sup> Students earn while they learn; it aims at solving the unemployment problem simultaneously while the diction, learning, and skills cultures are enhanced and upgraded.

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25 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JQplVloXrbw>

26 [http://bo-kaap-helper.blogspot.com/2019/09/change-economic-and-educational\\_28.html](http://bo-kaap-helper.blogspot.com/2019/09/change-economic-and-educational_28.html)



# Deaf Community: A Marginalized Community among South Africa's Muslims?

Cassiem De Wet\*

*"What counts in life is not the mere fact that we have lived. It is what difference we have made to the lives of others that will determine the significance of the life we had."*

Nelson Mandela

## Introduction

South Africa's deaf community<sup>1</sup> currently stands at four million people and counts for approximately 6% of the country's population. While many advances have been made in terms of recognizing their rights much of these changes have only reached the level of 'policy development' with poor implementation.<sup>2</sup> The South African Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) published a report on the education of young learners who are deaf and hard of hearing. In many cases, the identification of impaired hearing in a child takes place at such a late stage that they have already become disillusioned and dropped out of

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- 1 DeafSA, formerly known as the South Africa National Council for the Deaf (SANCD), was founded in 1929, as a result of the need to provide services to the deaf community on a national level. DeafSA is registered in terms of the Non-Profit Organizations Act. Since 1994, DeafSA has been embarking on the transformation process alongside many other South African organizations in this new era of democracy. See <https://static.pmg.org.za/docs/2007/070216memorandum.htm>.
- 2 DeafSA, 2006. Also note that in the PMG report the following was documented: One of the highlights of this transformation was the change in the name of the organization from SANCD to DeafSA, as well as the constitutional change, which resulted in the Deaf majority members serving on all the organization's management structures. This transformation is one of the biggest milestones in the history of DeafSA, as it meant that the philosophy of self-representation was achieved and it enabled DeafSA to be accepted as an ordinary member of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). See <https://static.pmg.org.za/docs/2007/070216memorandum.htm>.

school with large gaps in their learning process that are always difficult to repair. This article offers a synopsis of the developments in this sector. While the study zooms in on this community several studies appeared over the years without focusing on those who are deaf among the Muslim community; so, the study may be considered as one of the few texts that cover the subject and will hopefully stimulate others to undertake further studies.

### **Deaf Education**

Training in deaf education has only in the past ten years (circa 2011-2022) become available in South Africa. DeafSA undertakes, "to promote the interests of the deaf and hard of hearing effectively on a national level in Southern Africa." On top of this, DeafSA co-ordinates and facilitates "the process of providing all kinds of services for the purpose of integrating the one million deaf South Africans into mainstream society."<sup>3</sup> Most principals, who have headed schools for the deaf for many years, are, therefore, not specifically trained in deaf education methodology although they have had many years of experience in the field. Principals, in their quest to find answers for their learners, have largely followed international trends in deaf education over the years. They have not managed to sustain one particular trend in their schools for longer than the moment and they challenged by the next new trend that emerged. In addition to principals and teachers having no training and support or a clear direction regarding deaf education methodology, it is clear why these learners were unable to reach a high educational level.

### **SASL: A Medium of Instruction**

The belief amongst principals and teachers is that learning 'sign language' at an early age will hinder the child's ability to develop speech. There is, however, overwhelming evidence to prove the exact opposite being true: that early exposure to 'a sign language' will facilitate better development of a spoken language later on. Though 'sign language' is not recognized as a subject in school, it has been admitted as one of the country's official languages.<sup>4</sup> Since the 'spoken

3 <https://static.pmg.org.za/docs/2007/070216memorandum.htm>

4 [www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2023-05-03-sign-language-recognised-as-12th-official-language-in-south-africa/](http://www.timeslive.co.za/news/south-africa/2023-05-03-sign-language-recognised-as-12th-official-language-in-south-africa/) See Kgaugeto Masweneng's report that confirmed the adoption of it as the country's 12th language. She made reference to

language' is viewed as a barrier to deaf learners, the 'sign language' was not granted the necessary attentions within the South African educational system. The barrier to spoken language is acknowledged in the Department of Education's White Paper.<sup>5</sup> By 2003, the Language Policy Framework was cognizant of the South African Sign Language(s).<sup>6</sup> Where 'sign language' is not recognized as a teaching language, deafness becomes a 'communication disorder' rather than a medical disorder. Persisting on the use of 'spoken language,' as a teaching language with the same negative result, has proven to influence the academic progress of deaf learners. Due to their exclusion from 'equal education opportunities' for many years, one out of three deaf persons is functionally illiterate.<sup>7</sup>

### **Deaf Muslim Children: Schooling and the Question of Indoctrination**

All schools for the deaf are Christian based. That being the case, the deaf Muslim children have no option but to attend these schools. As a consequence, they are indoctrinated with their parents being able to communicate with them and not possessing the educational skills to impart the basics of Muslim education.

South Africa and this missionary-minded approach also reached the South African Deaf community in the 1860s in the form of the Irish Dominican nuns and, later, the Dutch Reformed Church. The first school for the Deaf in South Africa was established in Cape Town in 1863 by the Irish Dominican Order under the leadership of Bishop Grimley and was known as the Dominican Grimley Institute for the Deaf.

Historically, many missionaries were sent to South Africa and they were the ones that engage in the dissemination of Christian education. Alongside this, the missionary-minded approach that was adopted also

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an official who stated the following: "The committee acknowledged that SASL is not a universal language (different countries have their own sign language and regions have dialects), but submits that, in South Africa, it is in the promotion and development of SASL that the various dialects are also recognized." And also see National Assembly's press release: [www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/na-approves-south-african-sign-language-12th-official-language](http://www.parliament.gov.za/press-releases/na-approves-south-african-sign-language-12th-official-language).

5 Department of Education's White Paper 6 (2001).

6 See South Africa's National Language Framework 13 Feb. 2003; see note 1.3.6. Online: [www.dac.gov.za/sites/default/files/LPD\\_Language%20Policy%20Framework\\_English\\_o.pdf](http://www.dac.gov.za/sites/default/files/LPD_Language%20Policy%20Framework_English_o.pdf)

7 DeafSA, 2006.

affected the South African deaf community. Here one is going way back to the 1860s when the Irish Dominican nuns and, later, the Dutch Reformed Church preachers imparted their doctrines to the emerging deaf groups. Important to record was the fact that the first school for the deaf in South Africa was established in Cape Town in 1863; this was initiated by the Irish Dominican Order. They were then under the leadership of Bishop Grimley; the educational structure was known as the Dominican Grimley Institute for the Deaf.<sup>8</sup> The indoctrination, before the establishment of Al-Waagah, may have caused some of our Muslim brothers and sisters to pass on without the correct *aqidah* as they were taught that 'Jesus was God.' Anyone, who displayed weak faith and who had no Muslim education, would easily fall prey to these ideas. It was for this reason that movements within the Muslim community was underway to provide these children with the necessary Muslim education.

### **Muslim Education and Al-Waagah**

In its 27 years of existence, Al-Waagah faced significant challenges in providing education for deaf students from the Cape Flats area, who attended the madrasah every Sunday for two hours of Islamic studies. Despite the dedication to fostering learning, the institution grappled with obstacles that hindered the teaching process. Among these challenges were the lack of resources for learning sign language and the absence of textbooks and curricula tailored for the deaf. The students also required assistance with social issues, compounded by the low educational level within the deaf community and the inherent problems associated with understanding deaf culture. Moreover, the institution struggled with the financial burden of providing transport for 50 students, highlighting the pressing need for sustainable solutions. Additionally, the communication barrier posed a formidable challenge, as the staff often lacked understanding or were unable to effectively communicate regarding *aqidah*, further complicating the educational mission of Al-Waagah. Despite these hurdles, the institution remained steadfast in its commitment to providing an inclusive educational environment for all students.

In response to the challenges hindering proper teachings at Al-Waagah's *madrasah*, the institution's committee implemented strategic

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<sup>8</sup> Years later the following school was set up in Hammanskraal:  
[www.cso.za.org/Member-Schools/Hammanskraal/Dominican-School-for-the-Deaf](http://www.cso.za.org/Member-Schools/Hammanskraal/Dominican-School-for-the-Deaf)

solutions. Teachers learned sign language, aided by a hard-of-hearing assistant for interpretation, fostering improved communication. Deaf culture understanding became a priority, enhancing the overall learning environment. To address literacy challenges, the curriculum and notes were simplified in plain English. A designated time was allocated for addressing social issues, providing crucial support. The committee successfully secured a no-cost transport service for the 50 students, alleviating financial burdens. Additionally, efforts were made to present Islamic concepts in a clear and straightforward manner, ensuring comprehensive understanding. These initiatives reflected the institution's commitment to overcoming obstacles and creating an inclusive educational space for all students.

As a result of these challenges, the progress in imparting Islamic studies was extremely slow; at the bottom of this was the clear barrier of communication between the deaf learner that abided by a deaf culture and the teachers who had to learn about that culture and the sign language. In these circumstances, the importance in providing Muslim education as well as secular education was critical.

### **Al-Waagah: Its History**

According to Al-Waagah website, the founding members established it during 1995. Since then, it paid attention to the teachings of Islam to the deaf who resided within the greater Cape metropole. It was originally known as 'the Oasis for the Deaf.' Since then, Al Waagah, as it is known today, achieved various goals. It had humble beginnings at Masjid al-Salam in St. Athans, Athlone where it operated from a house. It played a pivotal role filling several gaps socially and educationally. These were constructed to provide the deaf individuals the necessary support in order that they overcome the barriers that they encountered; all of this was to attain their full potential in challenging circumstances. According to the statistics, there are approximately 43 schools in South Africa for the deaf and those who are hard of hearing. On the whole, few have the capacity to provide comprehensive support; this is especially the case in very impoverished areas.

Al-Waagah Institute for the Deaf, as it is known, is a home for the deaf community. The institution opened its doors to all, irrespective of their religious tradition, social backgrounds or nationalities. While its concentration was on Muslim education initially, the committee observed that their meaningful interaction using the sign language

opened up other opportunities for them outside their environment. For this reason, it also extended assistance to others by offering legal services, applying for social grants, supporting individuals from other African countries, and alleviating those who lapsed into poverty. As it helped others, it observed that no social or support structures existed; communication was a major handicap, and there was a need for an advocacy group. Since the name was changed to 'Al-Waagah Islamic Institute for the Deaf' during 2016, it has a *madrasah* as a division of the umbrella body. It focused more on advocacy for the deaf by addressing, among others, social issues. These were done through awareness campaigns, fundraisers, and establishing partnerships with other institutes such as the Deaf Federation of South Africa (DeafSA) and the Muslim Judicial Council. Sign language workshops created awareness around the need to break down the education barrier between the hearing and deaf communities. Al-Waagah went on a historical and momentous pilgrimage (*umrah*) with a group of 120 *muta'mirin* during 2019; from among those who embarked on this journey, 60 were deaf adults. This was an epic experience for the hearing and deaf *muta'mirin* as they were afforded a few experiences normal groups would not have experienced. On this journey, they had the privilege of visiting the Prophet's (SAW) *masjid* all on their own; and this trip was organized so that the deaf could strengthen their *aqidah*.

During the Covid-19 lockdown period (June 2019), the committee took a decision to change the name to 'Al-Waagah Institute for the Deaf.' It dropped the descriptive word 'Islamic' in order that it be viewed as an institute for all deaf individuals; so, while it adopted an Islamic ethos, its mission slightly changed to bridging the 'communication gap'. Furthermore, Al-Waagah established a Montessori Preschool in July 2022 that offered inclusive education for hearing and deaf children and also set up a Skills Training and ABET center for the deaf as well as the surrounding community that includes, inter alia, computer lab, sewing, and carpentry. On the other hand, Al-Waagah works to increase the knowledge of sign language amongst the community; and raises awareness and presents sign language and interpreter courses. The Institute now consists of a few divisions including religious studies, education academy, skills development and training and social development.

It's commendable that Islamic education for adults, especially those in the deaf community, is a priority and that efforts are being made to focus on key areas like *tawhid*, *fiqh*, and Quranic recitation in sign language. Ensuring equal access to education for the deaf community is an important step towards promoting inclusivity and empowering individuals to be self-reliant. The need for training teachers who can effectively communicate and educate using sign language is crucial. Specialized training programs can be developed to equip educators with the necessary skills to teach Islamic subjects to the deaf community. Additionally, creating awareness about the importance of inclusive education within the broader community can help break down barriers and foster understanding. Furthermore, improving access to education for the deaf community involves addressing infrastructure and resource challenges. This might include creating educational materials in sign language, developing online resources, and ensuring that physical spaces are conducive to learning for individuals with hearing impairments.

In terms of social responsibility, efforts can be made to bridge communication gaps between the hearing and deaf communities. This involves promoting awareness and understanding of the unique challenges faced by the deaf, and encouraging initiatives that promote inclusivity in various aspects of life, such as family matters, marriage, counselling, legal proceedings, and social services. Collaboration with relevant government agencies and non-governmental organizations can also play a crucial role in advocating for policies that support the education and overall well-being of the deaf community. This might include initiatives to improve accessibility to services, promote employment opportunities, and enhance the overall quality of life for individuals with hearing impairments.

By addressing these challenges and promoting inclusivity in education and society, we could contribute to creating an environment where individuals with hearing impairments can lead independent and fulfilling lives, enjoying the same freedoms as their hearing counterparts.

### **Three Institutional Projects**

#### **(a) Montessori School**

Due to the time constraints at the *madrasah* level and the need to have intervention at the grassroots level, the committee opened The

Oasis Montessori Preschool that offers inclusive education for hearing and deaf learners. The model is based on the belief that placing children in the same space as hearing children provides them with equal access to learning opportunities. It also increases the awareness and practice of sign language, helping to shift the narrative from the marginalized to the mainstream.

The concept of Montessori appeals to the institute as an alternative to the failed mainstream education because of its philosophy. More and more students with a diversity of unique behavior and learning needs are enrolling in Montessori classrooms in independent and public Montessori schools. The approach focuses on independence, hands-on learning, and a thoughtfully prepared environment that allows the child to grow in all the main developmental areas and has less focus on spoken language allowing the directress and deaf assistant to use both languages as teaching languages. South African sign language will also be taught as a subject increasing the number of hearing learners, who will be able to communicate with the deaf; this will thus eradicate the language barrier which is the handicap of the deaf. Hearing learners will automatically assist deaf learners with their acquisition of the spoken language which, according to evidence, develops later.

The Oasis Montessori School will serve as a shining example of the innovation and benevolence of the Muslim community by being the first of its kind. The committee established a partnership with Quality Montessori Trust; the latter's mission is to establish and/or assist about 300 Montessori preschools in Western Cape. And the committee plans to roll out inclusive education for deaf learners in all of the schools that will make quality education accessible to all deaf learners. Besides the *madrrasah* classes on Sundays, which will continue, the committee intends to introduce Muslim education (such as Islamic studies) as a subject in the Montessori School. The course aims to introduce the basic belief system of Islam; and education, at an early age, would thus bring equal access to deaf learners.

### **(b) South African Sign Language Workshops**

Communication with the deaf is our main focus as this would lead to the inclusivity and quality education for them. Over the last 4 years, the institute presented South African Sign Language (SASL) to the community. The purpose is to further break down the barriers in

communication. Through SASL workshops, those who attend are empowered; amidst this, their attitude and interaction with the deaf changed.

These courses are, however, specifically aimed at people in the service industries, community leaders as well as Muslim theologians. The institute is currently busy with interpreters' courses to have more trained interpreters in the community. One of the institutions that is targeted is the *masjid* where, among others, lectures take place, marriage ceremonies are conducted, and the Friday sermons are delivered. *Masajid* and the Muslim communities must become more inclusive by accommodating the needs of the disability sector.

### **(c) Skills Training and Education Workshops**

It is planned to establish a skills training center or partnerships with skills providers or both –depending on resources available– in 2023. Many of the youth, who left school already, and adult deaf are disempowered due to their level of education prompting the need for skills development. The institute's mission is to assist these learners/students to become economically independent and confident individuals. At present, the committee rented a space to the Lower Limb Foundation; the latter offers training to interns to assist diabetics to avoid amputations of their lower limbs due to lack of blood circulation and poor care of their feet. This project has synergy with the institute's skills development program. In addition, the Al-Waagah plans a computer lab, a carpentry shop, industrial kitchen and a CMT facility for training and mentoring the deaf and the community and creating employment. These facilities have to be self-sustainable through learnerships and production of products for the retail and other markets.

### **Proactive Approach**

Creating an inclusive deaf community requires a proactive approach that goes beyond mere accommodation to actively foster a sense of belonging and equal participation. First and foremost, it is essential to prioritize accessibility in all aspects of community life. This includes providing sign language interpreters, captioning services, and accessible infrastructure to ensure that deaf individuals can seamlessly engage in social, educational, and recreational activities. Beyond physical accessibility, fostering an inclusive deaf community involves raising awareness and promoting cultural

competence among the broader population. This can be achieved through educational programs, workshops, and initiatives that dispel myths and misconceptions about deafness, promoting understanding and acceptance.

Moreover, proactive efforts should extend to empowering deaf individuals within the community. This entails creating opportunities for skill development, education, and employment, recognizing and leveraging the unique strengths and talents within the deaf community. Encouraging leadership roles, representation, and involvement in decision-making processes will contribute to the creation of a community where deaf individuals not only feel included but actively contribute to the shaping of their own narrative. By fostering a culture of collaboration, understanding, and empowerment, a proactive approach can pave the way for a truly inclusive deaf community where diversity is celebrated, and barriers to full participation are dismantled.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, we tried to shed light on the challenges faced by South Africa's deaf community, particularly within the Muslim context, emphasizing its historical trajectory and lack of attention to sign language education. Al-Waagah Institute for the Deaf emerges as a beacon of hope, grappling with multifaceted issues to provide inclusive education and bridge communication gaps. The evolution of Al-Waagah, from its inception as 'the Oasis for the Deaf' to its current multifaceted initiatives, reflects a commitment to addressing the unique needs of the deaf community. The institution's proactive strategies, such as the Montessori School, Sign Language Workshops, and Skills Training initiatives, underscore its dedication to fostering inclusivity, breaking down communication barriers, and empowering the deaf.

The establishment of the Oasis Montessori Preschool signifies a departure from traditional educational models, aiming to create an environment where both deaf and hearing learners coexist, fostering reciprocal learning and communication. Importantly, this endeavour is steeped in the Islamic ethos of inclusivity and compassion. The provision of SASL workshops, targeting diverse professionals and community leaders, underlines the institute's strategic efforts to raise awareness and foster inclusivity. The impending launch of a skills

training center further demonstrates Al-Waagah's dedication to addressing economic disparities within the deaf community, guided by the inherent Islamic principles of social justice, aiming for self-sufficiency and seamless integration into society.

Beyond Al-Waagah's transformative journey, the broader message encapsulates a call for a paradigm shift in how we perceive education and societal norms, emphasizing the core Islamic principles of equity and compassion. It urges us to rethink and reshape our approaches, ensuring they cater to the diverse needs of all individuals, irrespective of their hearing abilities.

In essence, the example of Al-Waagah encourages us to be more understanding, innovative, and collaborative in our efforts to create a society that genuinely embraces and empowers every individual, contributing to a more inclusive future. By highlighting the challenges and initiatives, we also aim to inspire further research and collective efforts towards achieving true inclusivity for the deaf community in South Africa.

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# Islam in the Townships

Sheikh V. T. Langa\*

## Introduction

The term township has no formal definition but is commonly understood to refer to the underdeveloped, usually (but not only) urban and residential areas; these were the ones which, during Apartheid, were reserved for non-whites (Africans, Coloureds, and Indians) who lived near or worked in areas that were designated 'white only' under the Black Communities Development Act (Section 33) and Proclamation R293 of 1962, Proclamation R154 of 1983 and GN R1886 of 1990 in Trust Areas, National Homelands and the Independent States.<sup>1</sup> A study by the World Bank Group on the Economics of Township describes township as a dormitory town built at a distance from economic activity as well as from white residential areas, with rows of uniform houses, historically lacking services and infrastructure such as tarred roads, sanitation, water, or electricity. Jürgens<sup>2</sup> asserts that township is a term that emerged to identify 'non-white' neighbourhoods alone and was thus a core spatial concept of the apartheid era.

The history of the townships can be traced back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century when black people were still mainly engaged in agricultural activity, with little desire to settle in the towns. In that era, conflicts over resources focused primarily on rights, access, and ownership of agricultural and pastoral land. European settlers of the previous century entrenched their claims to land mainly through conquest but also used localized truces and alliances with the relevant chiefs and tribes. The discovery of gold and diamonds changed all that because it introduced a need for labour on a new scale. At the same time, settlements started to expand on the outskirts of the towns, in an unplanned way. At this stage, racial segregation was not enforced.

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- 1 Li Pernegger and Susanna Godehart, "Townships in the South African Geographic Landscape – Physical and Social Legacies and Challenges", Training for Township Renewal Initiative (Pretoria: National Treasury's NDP Unit, DPLG, 2007, October).
- 2 Ulrich Jürgens et al., "Townships in South African Cities – Literature Review and Research Perspectives", *Habitat International* 39 (2013): 256–60.

So began the influx of African people to the cities - to the diamond fields in Kimberley and the gold mines in Johannesburg, in particular. With this, came a new policy imperative: 'influx control,' a term that became central to the urbanisation policy under apartheid. From the start, however, the rationale was clear: black people, men and women alike, were in the cities as labourers. As far as possible, they were not to become permanent residents or 'citizens' of the cities, nor were they to bring their families with them. Although passed laws had existed in various forms in South Africa for some time, they became the critical instrument of influx control. To leave the reserves, black people had to get documentation in the form of a reference book (or pass) that stipulated their place of work and permitted them to be in an urban area.<sup>3</sup> This study focuses on the arrival and growth of Islam in the townships against the discriminatory policies of the apartheid regime. It focuses on the following townships: Soweto (Gauteng), New Brighton (Eastern Cape), Inanda (KwaZulu Natal), and Gugulethu (Western Cape).

## Township's Muslims: Selected Stories

### Western Cape

The first person who was regarded as a Muslim in Greater Cape Town's Langa Township was Mr. Edries Tan. Mr. Tan, however, was unable to convince his entire family to join this religion. One of his wives, for example, did not join Islam. Abrahams<sup>4</sup> states that although Mr. Tan was himself from that community, he did not associate much with them. She pointed out that, "the African Muslims, whom he considers to be poor conformers to Islamic dictates... have firm friends among the elite in Cape Muslim business." Thus, in spite of Mr. Tan being identified as the first Muslim, Islam's spread in Langa was attributed to Imam Dawood Zimasile Lobi. Zimasile Clinton Lobi was born in 1922 in Eastern Cape's King Williams Town; this is a small town that was also known as Qonce and herein lies the village of Zwelitsha. Zimasile Clinton's father was Bomoyi and his mother was Bella. Both parents were teachers in a town known as Ngcobo; and this

3 A *World Bank Study: Economics of South African Townships*, ed. Sandeep Mahajan, (Washington: World Bank Group, 2014). See: <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-1-4648-0301-7>.

4 Zainoul-Goesn Abrahams, "The Spread and Growth of Islam in Langa, Nyanga and Gugulethu (Cape Town) (unpublished Religious Studies B.A. Honors Thesis, Cape Town: University of Cape Town, 1981).

was in a place called Clerk Bury that was part of the former Transkei. Zimasile Clinton Lobi was the second of three children. He had three children of his own with a woman named Nontsikelelo and another seven children with another woman, Rahmat, whom he married.<sup>5</sup>

Zimasile Clinton became a Muslim when Islam was presented to him by Mr. Sharmiel Kula of Greater Cape Town's Nyanga East. Kula was a neighbour to Zimasile's mother-in-law and he had been a student/friend of Imam Abdullah Haron (d.1969). After joining Islam with his family, they were all given Arabic names as their new identity marker. Although changing the name or adopting an Arabic name is not compulsory, it is advisable for Muslims, especially those living in a non-Muslim state such as South Africa.

The awarding of new names has been resisted, especially in places such as Eastern Cape's Port Elizabeth (now known as Gqeberha), where new converts do not have Arabic names but are fully recognised as Muslims. Zimasile was to be called Dawood and his wife, Rahmat with the children having their names in Arabic, including Mhuntsu Ibrahim Lobi; the latter was interviewed for this study to obtain a detailed background of Islam in Langa.

Ibrahim recalled how they learned Islam from Muslims coming from outside Langa; he said that, "Muslims in those days of our family joining Islam were only allowed to be in the townships from 14:00 until 16:00, and they used not to miss the time, which means they were coming every weekend to teach people in Langa about Islam. We were not the only family or people anymore, because Islam was growing by the day. These Muslims used to come to the townships with some parcels of food, clothes, etc."

### Eastern Cape

In the Eastern Cape Province, Sesanti provides details about the coming of Islam in the province. The first Africans in Kwa-Nobuhle to embrace Islam did so in the early 1970s. Their awareness of Islam came through their contact with Indian and Malay Muslim businessmen residing in the town. These were men who entered the *House of Islam* with their wives. The wives' conversion to Islam was due more to convenience than to conviction. They embraced Islam to retain family cohesion. The mid-70s saw young African men in Kwa-Nobuhle embracing Islam. This was a group of African young men who,

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5 Interview with Lobi 2007.

influenced by the black consciousness philosophy, rejected white values, along with Christianity, which they associated with the apartheid government.

### **KZN (Inanda)**

Apart from the groups that are mentioned above, the South African Muslim community has a distinct Muslim group that is made up of black individuals who are called Zanzibaris. The term *Zanzibari* is a misnomer since these former slaves were brought into South Africa, not only from Zanzibar but also from northern Mozambique, Portuguese East Africa, Tanzania, Comoros, Malawi, and possibly Somalia. They are primarily Muslims and descendants of former slaves who were brought to Natal between 1873 and 1880 to alleviate labour shortages.<sup>6</sup>

Zanzibaris' origins in Natal date back to the 1870s when close to 500 'liberated' slaves landed in the then Colony of Natal. After completing their terms of indentured labour, they settled at King's Rest on the Bluff. The original liberated slaves were not from Zanzibar but were of Makhuwa extraction from Northern Mozambique. Zanzibar was the port from which they were shipped to Natal. Over the years, this group has come to include Yao-speaking Malawians, and some Swahilis, as well as local Zulus with whom the original Zanzibaris have intermarried. Mumisa<sup>7</sup> writes that, initially, the Zanzibaris were classified as 'coloured' but, in February 1961, they were reclassified as 'Other Asiatic' since they had developed a close affinity with the Indian Muslim community and their settlement at Kings rest on the Bluff in Durban had enabled them to live as a community and maintain their Muslim identity along with the Indian Muslims. It was because of this reason that, after the imposition of the Group Areas Act, the Zanzibaris were moved to the Indian Township of Chatsworth in 1961. The Zanzibaris generally follow the Shafee school of Islamic jurisprudence.

The discovery of gold in South Africa in 1896 created a demand for labour to work in the mines. As a result, many labourers were brought in from different parts of Southern Africa to work in the mines. Amongst these were immigrants from Mozambique and Malawi, many

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6 Michael Mumisa, "Islam and Proselytism in South Africa and Malawi", *Journal of Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 22, no. 2 (2002): 275-298.

7 Ibid.

of whom were Muslims. In the 1900s, the Witwatersrand Labour Organisation (WNLA), popularly known as Wenela, was given wide powers by a treaty, including the sole right to recruit in the provinces of Mozambique, south of latitude 22°S. This area had been one of the principal sources of labour before the South African wars of 1899–1902.<sup>8</sup> To encapsulate, it is remarkable that despite the influx of numerous Muslim Africans arriving in South Africa through diverse means and periods, a distinctive indigenous Black Muslim community failed to emerge. Instead, they assimilated with either the Cape Malays or Indian Muslims. This was based on racial segregation in the country and only a particular race was identified as Muslim, which included mainly Indians and Malays. Consequently, Zanzibaris felt that for them to survive as Muslims, they would have to live in predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods. Only the Zanzibaris constituted a distinct black Muslim community, but they did not reach out to other black South Africans.

The history of early Muslims among the locals can be explored from Mumisa's assertion<sup>9</sup> that "Malawian Muslims who have settled in South Africa in large numbers even from the apartheid era and have intermarried with the South African women who have converted to Islam and their children are invariably Muslims. The immigrants from Malawi are mainly Muslim men and an interesting example of such marriages between the Malawians and South African women is in Venda and Louis Trichardt where almost 60% of the population in some areas is Muslim because of marriages to Malawians.' The emigrant Muslims who came to the country started inter-marrying with the local populations wherever they settled. A typical case is that of Shaykh Abbas Phiri who came to South Africa and married a local Zulu woman by the name of Amina, who was known as maMsomi. He met maMsomi in Port Shepstone where he was working, and together they had six children. His wife passed away in 1984.

Unlike the Zanzibaris, with whom he lived for a while at Kings Rest, Shaykh Abbas Phiri opted to set up a home in Inanda, one of the townships around KwaZulu Natal. It was from his home in Inanda that he began to convert the local people to Islam. With the support of Indian Muslim traders, who provided him with the facility, paid him a monthly salary and provided him with food parcels to distribute to

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8 Interview with Msusa 2020.

9 Michael Mumisa, "Islam and Proselytism in South Africa and Malawi".

the poor, he was able to devote a considerable amount of energy to the *da'wah* mission of Islam.<sup>10</sup> When Shaykh Phiri moved to Inanda in the late 1940s, he settled on Hafejees' land where they (that is, the Hafejees) had a *jama'at khana* (prayer room) in the basement of his business building. He did not approve of where the *jama'at khana* was and preferred to travel to other towns for his Jum'u'ah *salah* (Friday prayers). Subsequently, he moved into one of the houses where he was the only Muslim and established a *jama'at khana* and a madrasa. He started his *da'wah* work on those premises. Many of the people he converted to Islam have passed on but those who are still alive include the following: Shaykh Swaleh Blose, who built a mosque in Inanda; Salim Ngwane, who has a *jama'at khana* in his home in Inanda, and a *da'wah* centre in Matata where he was born; Shaykh Cassim Shelembe of KwaMashu who is doing *da'wah*; Mr. Salem Yusuf Ncalane, a well-known businessman; and Bilal Zizi, the Imam of KwaMashu Mosque.<sup>11</sup>

Another case of an immigrant Muslim, who impacted significantly on the local community, is that of Mr. Abdullah Hamisa who was among the first group of Zanzibaris who came to South Africa in the early 1900s and took residence in the area called Unguja, popularly known as Stonetown. He stayed in Durban's Bluff area, and he used to work in the mines. After his resignation, he moved to Newcastle in the township called Gardens where he was adopted by the Khoza family and took their surname. He got married under Muslim rites to a local lady, named Gogo Magasela, who embraced Islam, and with whom he had seven children.<sup>12</sup>

### Soweto

Islam was introduced in Soweto after the establishment of the township in 1905 when economic immigrants came to Johannesburg to work in the mines and were forcibly moved to Soweto because of the Group Areas Act. Those who were moved included black Muslim immigrants from Zanzibar, Mozambique, and Malawi. Even though these immigrants were Muslims, many of them kept their Islamic faith a secret because they wanted to fit into society.

Even those who used to attend the mosques would do so secretly and some resorted to taking their spouses' surnames so as not to be

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Interview with Phiri 2020.

<sup>12</sup> Interview Hamisa, 2020.

identified as foreigners by the authorities. Speakers of isiZulu routinely referred to these immigrants as AmaShangan since they mistook their language for Shangaan. Those who kept Islam attended their prayers in Kliptown but mainly during the month of fasting. These immigrants kept Islam to themselves for a long time and some of their spouses did not know that they were actually Muslims.<sup>13</sup>

This article will profile three of such individuals who settled in Soweto. These include Shaykh Mustafa Muhammad, the Hassan family, and Mr. Ali Mababwa Hammad Papelo.

- Shaykh Mustafa Muhammad was originally from Mangochi in Malawi. His family does not know exactly when he came to South Africa. He stayed in Sophiatown and married a local lady by the name of Fatima Muhammad whom he met in the same area. She embraced Islam and they had four children, three boys and one girl. Shaykh Mustafa Muhammad served as a *mu'addhin* (caller to prayer) and *imam* in various places such as Sophiatown and Maraisburg.
- Later, because of the Group Areas Act of 1950, he was moved to Soweto in Meadowlands where he served as a *mu'addhin* at the Kliptown mosque and, later, Noordgesig. Most of the people who were moved from Sophiatown were allocated houses in Meadowlands and those from Alexandra were moved to Diepkloof (Zone 4:6). The Kliptown residents were spread across Soweto, and some went to Protea South and others to Diepkloof. There were many Muslims from Malawi who stayed in Soweto, but the interviewee admitted that she has lost contact with most of them.<sup>14</sup>
- Another Soweto based immigrant was Abdullah Hassan and his family. Abdullah Hassan was from Zanzibar and lived in Chatsworth, Durban. He came to Johannesburg to work in the factories in the early 1940s and married a local lady by the name of Fatima Zwane with whom he had five children. Mr. Abdullah settled in Alexandra on arrival in Johannesburg but was later moved to Diepkloof when Soweto was established. He and his family used to attend madrasah in Noordgesig, then later, by Sayyid Ali's house in Rockville, Soweto.<sup>15</sup>
- Mr. Ali Mababwa Hammad Papelo was born in Mozambique, in the province of Inhambane at a place called Sahalini. He was the firstborn child of Imam Hatib of the Sahalini mosque who himself was the son of Imam Amad of the Sahalini mosque. Imam Amad was the son of Shaykh Sahl Maulid al Maghrebi, the founder and builder of the Sahalini mosque and community. Shaykh Sahl arrived on the

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<sup>13</sup> Interview with Papelo, 2020.

<sup>14</sup> Interview with Muhammed 2020.

<sup>15</sup> Interview with Hassan, 2020.

Mozambican coast in early 1800 from Zanzibar; a place he left because of civil wars. Shaykh Sahl grew up in Sudan but ended up on the Mozambican coast because the ship he was travelling on had mechanical problems and it got stuck. In Zanzibar, he was a teacher and *da'wah* worker under the authority of the Sultan of Maghreb. While in Mozambique, he was known for healing people using amulets (*ta'widh*) that were written on pieces of paper. The locals called him Papelo, which is Portuguese word meaning 'people of the paper.' This is the surname that his grandson used when he came to South Africa. Shaykh Papelo's grandfather, then travelled to South Africa, seeking greener pastures in the early 1940s. He spent most of his time working in South Africa but never contributed much to the Muslim community in Soweto because of the type of politics prevalent at the time. He chose to engage in a lot of Islamic work within the coloured communities of Kliptown, Eldorado Park, and later in Noordgesig. Ali Mabawa married a local Swazi woman by the name of Maggie Mavimbela, who embraced Islam. Their surviving son was born in 1950 when they were living in Kliptown. In 1962, they were moved to Diepkloof.<sup>16</sup>

The coming of Malawians to South Africa can be traced to the following incidents. First, is the arrival of the Zanzibaris in 1873, who asserts that some of those who were regarded as Zanzibaris were actually Malawians. The second one is related to the discovery of gold where labourers were recruited from neighbouring countries to work in the mines. Shahid Vawda<sup>17</sup> notes that, under apartheid,

the tight control of African continental migration, mainly from Malawi, Botswana, and Mozambique, ensured that their singular major contribution to South Africa was their labour, and hence to the growth of an industrial economy. Under a highly controlled migration system during the segregation and apartheid periods (circa 1924-1986) foreign migrants' public presence was hidden away in the single-sex mining compounds and hostels, invisible to the South African public. That system of controlled migrations and exploited labour no longer exists. Some of these forced labour migrants may well have been Muslims, but precisely because they were hidden behind mining compounds, their religion and practices have not been visible and examined.

The third era is the post-1994 period when South Africa witnessed a democratic dispensation. Mumisa<sup>18</sup> states that after 1994, an influx

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<sup>16</sup> Interview with Papelo, 2020.

<sup>17</sup> Shahid Vawda, "Migration and Muslim Identities: Malawians and Senegalese Muslims in Durban, South Africa", *Journal for the Study of Religion* 30, no. 2 (2017): 38.

<sup>18</sup> Mumisa 2002.

of Muslims from various states such as Ethiopia, Morocco, Eritrea, Nigeria, Tanzania, Ghana, and Senegal came to South Africa and most of them settled in Muslim neighbourhoods.

According to Thapelo Abu Bakar Ahmed, who is a second-generation Malawian and currently a Johannesburg city councillor,<sup>19</sup> the immigrants arrived in Protea South after being moved from Kliptown in 1978. This was after Kliptown blacks were moved to Soweto and coloureds were moved to Eldorado Park. Most of these Muslims came from a place called Mangochi, in Malawi's Southern Region; they belonged to the Yao tribe.<sup>20</sup>

In the same vein, Vahed and Jeppie<sup>21</sup> assert that Islam's presence in Soweto was "strengthened from the late 1970s with the arrival of economic migrants from Malawi and Mozambique." This assertion is supported by Fakude<sup>22</sup> who states that "Muslim pioneers in the townships came from Malawi and Mozambique. These people came to South Africa primarily seeking a better life and to obtain official South African residency; *da'wah* was a secondary function. Most of these foreigners married in the townships and started families there. Xenophobia, at the early stages of their arrival in the townships, made the task of *da'wah* for some of them difficult." The idea that the early Muslims in Soweto were immigrants is further consolidated by Ghoolam Moatse,<sup>23</sup> who states that when he started *da'wah* work in Dobsonville Soweto, he met a family by the surname Muhammad. It happened that the husband of the lady was a Malawian Muslim who used to work in the mosque in Roodepoort. Upon his death, the family moved back to Soweto and that is when they lost contact with Muslims and Islam.

### Building and Establishing Islam

After the conversion of various individuals to Islam in the above-

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19 He, being a member of Al Jamaah Political Party, was a brief period the Executive Mayor of the City of Johannesburg during early 2023.

20 Interview with Ahmad 2020.

21 Goolam Vahed and Shamil Jeppe, "Multiple Communities: Muslims in Post-apartheid South Africa" in *The State of the Nation: South Africa 2003-2004*, eds. John Daniel, Roger Southall, and Jessica Lutchman, (Cape Town: HSRC Press, 2004), 252-286.

22 Ebrahim Fakude, "Muslims in the Townships of South Africa", *Annual Review of Islam in South Africa*, vol. 5 (2002): 47-49.

23 Interview with Moatse 2020.

mentioned townships, the next step was to ensure that they create structures and vehicles to build, spread, and maintain Islam in their respective areas. A number of organisations and movements were established in the townships to undertake such work and these included the following:

### **Dobsonville Muslim Association**

On 13 June 1976, the Dobsonville Muslim Association was formed whose aim and objectives were, inter alia, as contained in the constitution:

- Teach the religion of Islam and cultivate, amongst Muslims, knowledge and love for the religious ideals, traditions, and principles of Islam.
- To propagate the religion of Islam
- To assist the indigent and suffering Muslims, and non-Muslims if possible.
- To provide facilities for the education of Muslim children and adults.

Some of the committee members were Mr. Ghoolam Moatse as chairman, Mr. Ismail Seanne, Brother Cassiem, Dr. Lefakane, and Saleem Sithole. The organisation was helped by Mr. M. A. Laher who led the Islamic Missionary Society and Dr. Shouket Thokan of the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa. They would assist with Islamic literature and food for the needy, and they would organize various Islamic programmes. Mr. Ghoolam Moatse further mentioned that unfortunately most of those who became Muslims in the early 70s have passed on and their off-spring did not continue with Islam.

### **Soweto Muslim Association**

Soweto Muslim Association was established in 1978. It was founded by Sayed Ali Zhanghe, Adam Ali Koko, Walid Ndebele, Muhammed Ali Mvelani, Faizel Morris, Babu Magudielo, Babu Chauke, and Haroon Mbombi.

Alhaji Malik Arafat states that the journey to *tasawwuf* (Sufi path) came about after they organised themselves as black Muslims at a convention where the Southern African Islamic Council was established in 1980 at Sayed Alli's house in Rockville Soweto; and it was attended by delegates from various townships around the Transvaal (now Gauteng). The formation of the organisation allowed them to meet various dignitaries and 'ulama (scholars) from different parts of the world; the two scholars who made an impact on them were

Shaykh 'Umar and later followed by the arrival of Sheikh Abdul Qadir As-Sufi, who, through his command of the English language and his intelligence, had a great impact on the indigenous Muslims; this later paved way for the establishment of Murabitun.<sup>24</sup>

### **Muslim Council of South Africa (MUCOSA)**

According to Mqetshwa, the Muslim Council of South Africa (MUCOSA) was established in 2005 in Verulam, Durban after extensive consultations for a period of, at least, two years across all the provinces except Mpumalanga. The aims and objectives of the organisation were to:

1. find a coherent, moral, vibrant Muslim society where every individual contributes to the common good according to his/her share of knowledge, and position of power;
2. present Islam to the people of SA, taking African context into account and making use of other experiences, along the lines of the Quran and Sunnah;
3. involve South African Muslims in the reconstruction of the new South Africa;
4. work towards uniting Muslims into one body, or, at least, coordinating the efforts of the different Muslim formations towards serving one objective: the prosperity of Islam in the country;
5. work towards founding common grounds with the people of other faiths for the betterment of the new South Africa;
6. empower Muslim women economically, educationally, and socially to enable them to contribute to the development of the general Muslim community;
7. promote the economic, educational, and social well-being of Muslims in general and emerging Muslims in particular.

### **Soweto Muslim Shura Council**

In 2008, the late Imam Ibrahim called a meeting of all those who had studied Islam in Soweto and those who were leading various Islamic centres. The meeting was motivated by the concerns that he had for the progress of Islam in the area. He pointed out the ills that had befallen the community such as the high rate of divorce, the number of people leaving Islam, the lack of care for the elderly members of the community, in-fighting in most of the mosques and

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<sup>24</sup> Vincent T. Langa, "History and Growth of Islam in Soweto", (Unpublished MA Dissertation, University of South Africa, 2021).

centres in Soweto, embezzlement of funds by certain individuals who were falsely claiming to lead the community and lack of representation of the black Muslims at the national and international level. He attributed all these ills to the lack of a single vision and leadership and urged that an organization should be established in Soweto to oversee the affairs of the community. Thus, after lengthy deliberations and discussions, it was agreed that a leadership structure ought to be created which will lead the community.<sup>25</sup> From that *shura*, other *shura* structures were established in various parts and these included the following: Gauteng Muslim Shura Council, Tshwane Shura Council, Western Cape Town Shura Council.

### The Post-Apartheid Era: The Township Muslims

Islam in the townships in the post-Apartheid era is as complex as it is in other established Muslim communities, with different organisations, strands, and individuals playing various important roles. There is hardly any strand (*Sufi*, *Shi'as*, *Tablighis*, *Ikhwanis* and *Salafis*) that claims presence within the township Islamic set-up. There are mosques in almost every township, each having produced local *ulamas*. Even though the community has developed and evolved on an individual level, this development must still be extended to the communal level in light of the various problems facing Muslims such as high levels of unemployment and divorce in the community, among other challenges. That being the case, there are factors that have affected the growth of Muslims in the townships; and there are several factors that one can identify. Only three of these factors will be highlighted in this study. These include consistency and continuity, internal conflicts, and the environment.

### Consistency and Continuity

There seems to be a lack of consistency and continuity as far as Islam is concerned in the townships. The lack of growth can be looked at from three angles.

- a) **Communal Level:** Most of the Muslim communities that were established in the early days of Islam in South Africa are no longer there. The Muslim community of KwaLanga under Imaam Dawood Lobi had 250 families. The Muslim Association in Soweto oversaw a similar number of Muslims in the area. In both cases, there is currently no single trait of Islam.

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

- b) **Family Level:** One of the biggest challenges to Islam and Muslims within the townships is the issue of divorce. Many Muslims, together with some members of their families seem to leave Islam when they get divorced. This is particularly common among women who reverted to Islam on their marriage to Muslim men.
- c) **Offspring:** Many of the children from Muslim families, upon reaching puberty, leave Islam and become either Christians or they become religious less.

### **Internal Conflicts**

The conflicts within the township Muslim communities come in different forms and are generally a result of sectarianism, masjid squabbles, and organisation disagreements.

### **Environment**

The township population is largely Christian in nature. Many Muslims find themselves surrounded by strong, well-organised and established Christian communities. This status of minority has negatively affected the growth of Islam as Muslims have failed to exert any significant social influence among themselves, let alone on the larger community.

### **Conclusion**

Using archival material and field interviews with key Muslim community leaders and family members of departed leaders, the study has traced the growth of Islam within some townships in South Africa. The study has noted that the growth of Islam in the townships was spearheaded by black Muslim immigrants who flooded parts of South Africa to work in the mines. Through the work of individuals and organizations, Islam was able to flourish in the townships. The study has noted, however, that these gains have not always been sustained because of various challenges facing the Muslim communities in the townships. Such challenges include the fact that Muslims remain a minority in these townships against well-organized Christian establishments. Internal conflicts within Muslim families and Islamic organizations also seem to have exacerbated the problems.

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# Muslim Women's Presence in Religious and Educational Spheres in South Africa

Sindile Amina Ngubane\*

## Background to Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa

In the 7th century CE, Islam entered Africa. The spread of Islam in North Africa is linked to a state-building process, taking Islam to Morocco and Spain in the west and India in the east, while its spread has taken a different path in other parts of Africa. The spread in African dates back to 615 CE, when there was the first Muslim migration to Abyssinia, now named Ethiopia.<sup>1</sup> Further, the task of spreading Islam to other countries was left in the hands of the successors of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

Islam's history in sub-Saharan Africa mainly comes from the works of Arab geographers and historians such as al-Bakr, al-Zuhri, Ibn Batuta, and others. Historical research of important trade centres such as the Sudanese cities of Kumbi Saleh, Awdagust, Jenne, and Kilwa allows for historical reconstruction.<sup>2</sup> Trade and commerce are one cause of the appearance of new types of material culture and play a role in the development of literacy.<sup>3</sup> According to Doi,<sup>4</sup> Islam spread into sub-Saharan region of West Africa and Islamic beliefs became prevalent in the Dya'ogo dynasty of the Kingdom of Tekrur as early as 850 CE, making its inhabitants the first people of African descent to embrace Islam. Muslim Arab historians referred to Bilad al-Tekrur as 'The Land of the Black Muslims.'

During the reign of War Jabi (the first ruler of Tekrur), Islam was firmly established in Tekrur and *sharia* was enforced. This created a

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1 Hussein Ahmed, "The Historiography of Islam in Ethiopia", *Journal of Islamic Studies* 3, no. 1 (1992): 15-46.

2 Nehemia Levtzion & Abdin Chande, "Islam: Islam in Sub-Saharan Africa", *Encyclopaedia of Religion*, retrieved Feb 24, 2021 from <http://www.encyclopedia.com>.

3 Department of the Arts of Africa, Oceania, and the Americas, "Trade and the Spread of Islam in Africa," in *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2000), retrieved from [http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tsis/hd\\_tsis.htm](http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/tsis/hd_tsis.htm)

4 Ibid.

unified religious law for the community. Certain noteworthy sultanates gained prominence when *sharia* law was fully implemented. These included those of Ghana, Mali, Songhay, and the Kanem Sultanates. Islam impacted the lives, languages, culture, religion, and so many other sectors of these sultanates and gave them a more universal belief.

Islam's rise brought along with it a rise in literacy and literature which allowed its adherents, such as the Hausa people, to continue to read and write. This Islamic knowledge helped the people in recording their history and other people's histories.<sup>5</sup> During this time, women played an important role towards Islam's spread, and they continue to do so.

### Approach and Methodology

The research method employed in this article is based on ethnography and qualitative research. Employing the qualitative method allowed the researcher to investigate her own personal experiences.<sup>6</sup> Through the analysis of historical and current perspectives on the influence of Muslim women, the study is exploratory and utilizes the appreciative inquiry (AI). The article reflects, through AI, the different juxtaposed contexts of historical roles of Muslim women to provide multiple understandings and re-conceptualize their positions and perception in society.<sup>7</sup>

AI and ethnography are concerned with unearthing ways people appreciate and negotiate their present realities.<sup>8</sup> This article attempts to explore, stimulate, provoke, and reformulate existing beliefs about Muslim women's influence in society through AI. The ethnography was used to show how Muslim women, from Islamic history and from different backgrounds and experiences, are appreciated differently. According to Ellis and Bochner,<sup>9</sup> ethnography is basically a dialogue of

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5 Sabi'u Ibrahim Fago and Yusufu Bala Usman, "Issues in the Impact of Islam on Hausa Land in the 21st Century", *The Nigerian Academic Forum* 19, no. 2 (November, 2010): 1-5.

6 David Silverman, *Doing Qualitative Research* (London: Sage, 2013).

7 J. Norris, R. D. Sawyer & D. E. Lund, (Eds.), *Duo-Ethnography: Dialogic Methods for Social, Health, and Educational Research* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2012).

8 Jan Reed, *Appreciative Inquiry: Research for Change* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2007).

9 C. Ellis, and A. P. Bochner, "Autoethnography, Personal Narrative, Reflexivity: Researcher as Subject", in *The SAGE Book of Qualitative Research*, edited by N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln, (2nd Edition), (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000): 733-768.

reflection. The voices are clearly expressed, and an individual story has a disjunctive framework, and that causes new insights on the perceptions.

### **Muslim Women's Presence and Influence in Historical Islam**

Islam emerged as guidance for all humanity and allows women to live an honourable life. From being bought and sold in markets, women were elevated by Islam to the level of respect. The Companions witnessed the Prophet's (SAW) warm behaviour towards his daughters and convinced them that it was, in fact, possible to show females such affection.<sup>10</sup> The Prophet (SAW) taught his companions that there was no difference between men and women in their worth based on gender. Both men and women have the same duty to restrain themselves and encourage others to do good. Islam placed paradise *under women's feet*. When women became mothers, they became the reason why fathers would enter paradise, and such an integral part of a husband's faith that without honouring his wife, his faith remained incomplete.

During the Islamic era, women were able to practice as physicians and treat both men and women whenever needed. In North Africa, Aslamiyya bint Rufayda has been credited for being the first nurse in that region. She treated the wounded and the dying during the Battle of Badr on 13th March 624 CE. With these acquired roles, women in Islam attained high status and made their mark on the world stage; they should no longer be left behind when the pioneers of Islam are mentioned.<sup>11</sup>

From the lofty position that Islam bestowed on women, they have contributed to the legacy of Islam by being scholars, jurists, rulers, benefactresses, warriors, and businesswomen. The Prophet's (SAW) household was a source of emulation for all his Companions. His wife, Khadija (RA), who was more than his confidante and companion, a prosperous businesswoman and trader, assisted him personally and financially when he was granted prophethood. Aisha bint Abu Bakr (RA) conveyed expanses of knowledge from him, became a great jurist and scholar. Umm Salama's counsel was embraced by the Prophet (SAW) himself at the time of the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah; Hafsa (RA),

10 M. F. Abdelgelil, N. Abd Wahid, F. Yusof, A. M. Yunus, and A. F. Hasan, "The Administrative and Political Work of Women in the Light of the Verses of the Holy Quran", *International Journal of Civil Engineering and Technology* 9, no. 11 (2018): 2732–2738.

11 A. M. al-Bagwi, *Ma'alimul Tanzil fi Tafsir Al-Qur'an* (Riyadh: Dar Taibah, 1997).

daughter of Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA), was the first person to be entrusted with the written Qur'an after the death of her father.<sup>12</sup>

Women's role in the preservation of authentic *hadith* has been noteworthy as well. According to research, most of the major compilers of *ahadith* from the early period of Islam received many of their submissions from women. Ibn Hajar studied from 53 female teachers; Al-Sakhawi had *ijazas* from 68 female teachers; and Al-Suyuti studied from 33 female teachers, comprising a quarter of his *shuyukh*. While many people may be familiar with the historic accomplishments of Muslim women in modern times (whether heads of state, scholars, or activists), the pivotal role that they played in the pre-modern Muslim world is under appreciated.

By sharing a handful of biographies of a few of these personalities from Muslim history, it is this article's intention to help dispel certain problematic stereotypes (among both Muslims and non-Muslims) about the historical role of women in Muslim societies and spark further interest and inquiry into women's history in the medieval and early modern Muslim world (and in pre-modern history) as shared by al-Bagwi.<sup>13</sup>

### **Women's Presence and Influence on Islam: The Case of Nigeria**

Following the conquest of North Africa by Muslim Arab conquerors in the 7<sup>th</sup> century CE, Islam spread throughout West Africa via merchants, traders, scholars, and missionaries primarily through peaceful means, whereby African rulers either tolerated the religion or converted to it themselves. So, Islam spread throughout and encompassed the Sahara Desert. Islam also arrived in East Africa through the Arabs, crossing the Red Sea from the Arabian Peninsula and eventually expanding along the Swahili Coast. It is important to note that the spread of Islam throughout Africa was influenced by more than just the passing on of religious ideas. As noted by UNESCO: "Unlike many other religions and beliefs, Islam is not only a religion but a comprehensive way of life, catering for all aspects of human existence. Islam provides guidance in a broad range of areas from daily life to national and international affairs."<sup>14</sup> This is because the *shariah* requires that humankind should be concerned with society in all

12 Abdelgelil, Abd Wahid and Yusof, et al. 2018.

13 Al-Bagwi, 1997.

14 I. Hrbek, (ed), *UNESCO General History of Africa*, Vol. III, Abridged Edition, (University of California Press, 1992), 20.

aspects of life and the Muslim women played a central role in its formulation.

Historically speaking, Muslim women left a rich intellectual legacy that has, of late, been recorded and captured in published texts. One such woman was Sutayta al-Mahamili being a mathematician who lived during the second half of the tenth century. She excelled in many areas, including Arabic literature, hadith, and jurisprudence. Her work significantly improved the efficacy of mathematicians' approach to solving mathematical problems. She is well known among such historians as Ibn al-Jawzi, Ibn al-Khatib Baghdadi, and Ibn Kathir. Another female Muslim trailblazer was Amina, the Queen of Zazzua, a Nigerian kingdom in the sixteenth century. At sixteen, her mother named her as successor. Amina learned military skills and emerged as the leader of the Zazzua cavalry. Under her reign of 34 years, she expanded the territory to its largest size ever.

Other notable researchers have catalogued many accounts of women scholars whose contributions are now forgotten. They caution against the underestimation of the focus on the submissiveness of women in Muslims society. Adamu,<sup>15</sup> for instance, shows that in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa, Muslim women have been involved in women's movements to advocate for their issues and other global challenges. The backbone of their struggles has been survival; to make a living out of poverty. The movements have also brought about positive results. Adamu argues that since pre-colonial and colonial period, women in most parts of Nigeria have been involved in women's movements to create women's awareness and to fight oppression at both national and local community levels.<sup>16</sup> The Yan'Taruh Movement of Nana Asma'u, the daughter of the Sokoto Caliphate's founder, and the Aba Women's Resistance Movement in southern Nigeria are some of the standout examples of such advocacy.

Notable Muslim women in Nigeria, such as Balkisu Yusuf, Ayesha Imam, Amina Mama, Saudatu Mahdi, and many more scholars who are not at the helm of government affairs, have demonstrated their activism through the establishment of women's organizations and the advocacy of women's issues.<sup>17</sup> Carly (2015) mentioned that Alidou

15 Rasida Oyoru Adamu, "Assessment of the Factors for Low Political Participation in Politics of Women in Selected Local Governments of Kwara State, Nigeria" (Unpublished PhD Diss., Kwara State University-Nigeria, 2018).

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

described how African Muslim women would create an 'alternative vision' of their reality that articulates the religious and secular aspects of their lives. Social media and other media technologies have afforded Muslim women in that part of the world a voice that is louder than the controlling discourses. These developments are significant as they provide Muslim women with increasingly educated opportunities to become active, modern media producers, economic influencers, and social influencers. They use the media, schools, and public places to redefine their lack of agency. The media and schools, in particular, are the ultimate outlet for human rights discourse that the women utilize. As Alidou explained, they have been using various media to demand justice and reclaim their right.<sup>18</sup>

In Nigeria, government policies that are anchored on women include the Better Life Programme for Rural Women, the Federal Government Technical Colleges for Women and the 30% allocation of elected political office to women at all levels. Women's organizations, both professional and non-professional, have emerged. Some are responsible for addressing the immediate identifiable challenges for women within a restricted societal environment.<sup>19</sup> Women's activism, in sub-Saharan Africa, affects a wide variety of fields. There are physicians, engineers, lawyers, chemists, housewives, broadcast journalists, professors, clerical workers, businesswomen, schoolteachers, and religious scholars who are pursuing the promotion of women's rights.

Despite the impact of Muslim Women's activism through their organizations, there is the ultimate need of joining voices of all women to address the global challenges affecting their life directly or indirectly at both community and national levels. Thus, more Islamic advocacy groups should be established in the areas of anticorruption, girl child education, religious status, economics, law, politics, and social media.

### **Muslim Women in South Africa and Their Influence on Education**

The political involvement of some sections of the Muslim community in the anti-Apartheid struggle had a significant impact on

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18 Carly Crane, "Muslim Women, Activism, and New Media in Kenya." (2012). Retrieved Feb 25, 2021 from <https://bcrw.barnard.edu/muslim-women-activism-and-new-media-in-kenya/>.

19 Ibid.

how they viewed a range of issues from employment, human rights, politics, and education. The 1980s saw the growth of strong women's organisations like the United Women's Organisation, the Natal Organisation of Women, and the Federation of Transvaal Women.<sup>20</sup> The roles played by key Muslim women such as Fatima Seedat, Feroza Adams, Rahima Moos, Zainab Asvat, Fatima Meer, Amina Cachalia, and Zuleika Mayat, just to mention a few, have always been noted. The increased role of women as political actors generated new political debates about the transformation of political organisations so that they might consider women's interests and facilitate women's participation, but also paving the way to education and rights of faith.

In terms of influence on education, the impact of Feroza Adams, Rahima Moosa, and Zainab Asvat will forever be remembered and cannot go without mention. For example, Feroza Adams, born on 16 August 1961 in Johannesburg, got involved in the political and cultural life of the city from 1976 while she was a student at Nirvana High School. She became actively engrossed in student politics while she was studying at the University of Witwatersrand. During this time, she played an active part in community organisations and organisations of the Indian Congress. She was a member of the Afro-Asian Students' Organisation. After being awarded a post-graduate diploma in education, Feroza worked as a classroom teacher for five years. She laid the foundation for women's participation and access to tertiary education through her political activism.<sup>21</sup>

In South Africa today, many Muslim women are positive about going to university. They also believe that women should no longer be relegated to certain professions such as teaching, medicine, and nursing, but should be given the same opportunities as men to pursue fields like economics, politics, and engineering. More Muslim women are employed at South Africa's tertiary institutions than previously.<sup>22</sup> They also make up a significant group of education workers at the over seventy Muslim private schools that have been established in the last decade, and at the madrasahs (religious schools that most Muslim children attend in the afternoons). It is becoming more common to

20 Saheed Badmus Suraju, "An Analysis of Women Leadership in Islam", *Ad-Dirayah International Journal of Islamic Studies* 1, No. 2 (2013): 1-21.

21 Karin Ask, and Marit Tjomsland, (Eds.), *Women and Islamization: Contemporary Dimensions of Discourse on Gender Relations* (New York: Berg, 1998).

22 Abdulkader Tayob, "Islam and Democracy in South Africa", *Focus: Helen Suzman Newsletter*, Vol. 62, (2011): 20-24.

find Muslim women who hold advanced graduate degrees in such fields as engineering, accounting, political commentary, law, or psychology. Several Muslim women hold executive positions in financial institutions and have established their own successful practices. It is also worth noting that working women who combine their professional careers with family obligations succeed often.<sup>23</sup>

Traditionalist women remain within the home, and this contradicts the role women are expected to play; that is, playing the role as obedient wives and caring mothers. Employment would prevent them from fulfilling their noble role of serving others. However, they do not object to women teaching in Muslim private schools and are also neutral about female physicians working at home. Although the number of educated women has increased, and that they occupy positions in scientific and practical life and have achieved some material independence, they continue to be assigned to an inferior social status within the family.<sup>24</sup>

### **South Africa's Muslim Women: Case Study of Mama Nkumane**

Muslim women's status in contemporary society is a result of a historical legacy greatly burdened with traditional social systems, and the remnants of a slave society that promoted obedience to leaders. It is also represented by the power or sovereignty held by one group at the expense of another group. The fact is that Muslim women (and men) are between two different types of Islam: one that is far from the essence, and the second is that they are alien to the other in that they switch between Islamic and Western values instead of holding on to Islam's values as captured in both the Holy Quran and the tradition.

These models are present in our contemporary society, which have shaken the concept of the supposed example of representing religious awareness. Now when one turns the focus to South Africa and scan the Muslim community's historical past, it would be observed that most South African mosques did not permit women to fulfil their Muslim obligatory daily rituals (that is, *salat*). This was especially the case in the north and north-eastern part of the country, when compared these regions to the Western Cape, a different story unfolded. It took a woman to donate land for the first mosque to be built at the Cape in

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> D. Reetz, "The Tablighi Madrasasin Lenasia and Azadville: Local Players in a Global Islamic Field" in *Muslim Schools and Education in Europe and South Africa*, edited by Tayob A. K., Niehaus I., Weisse W., (Munster: Waxmann, 2011), 85-104.

1794. The Cape has a much more 'liberal' tradition, with Muslim women visiting the cemetery and joining prayers in the mosque. There are women who are campaigning to have female attendants in mosques and other places of worship. With the support of male champions of women's rights, the family congregation is yet another measure they have implemented to curb men from objectifying women.

The theological councils are only composed of men and women are questioning some of their decisions as unfair towards them. Another development worth highlighting is that several women counsellors have been used by theological councils to advise families in marital problems; this has been the case with the Cape-based Muslim Judicial Council that have been more open. Women also demanded and were finally successful in being able to have an input in the drafting of the Muslim Marriage Bill.<sup>25</sup>

Islam did not keep women off the road for fear of men being too easily swayed by her charm and femininity. In fact, the Muslims have been forced to adopt a policy of specialization because they lacked legitimacy in their country of origin before the revelation. While traditional Islam is still strong in South Africa, Muslim women have gained rights that they have never had previously. They are making their way to embrace new opportunities afforded to them under the umbrella of social redress.

### **The Case of Mama Zainab Nkumane**

*Marhoomah*<sup>26</sup> Zainab (nee Maelekane) was born and bred in Louis Trichardt, a village in a province now called Limpopo in South Africa. As a former Anglican Church missionary volunteer, she was sent to study nursing, comparative religion, and how to spread the gospel of Christianity. She embraced Islam in the early 1970s as she was studying nursing at the Baragwanath Hospital (now called Chris Hani Baragwanath Hospital). Mama Zainab had a wonderful character; she was kind and steady which made it possible for people to approach her. Her kindness could not be mistaken for a weakness as she would quickly correct a deed that she perceived to contravene the rules of the Almighty Allah (SWT). Zainab was a mother, teacher, nurturer, and therapist to many.

25 Auweis Rafudeen, "A Parallel Mode of Being: The Sanusiyyah and Intellectual Subversion in Cape Town (c. 1800-1840).", *Journal for the Study of Religion* 18, no.1, (2005): 77-95 and vol. 18, no. 2, (2005): 23-38.

26 Meaning someone who passed away.

When the Soweto uprisings began in 1975, Mama Zainab had to flee Johannesburg with her husband, Baba Dawud Nkumane, and sought refuge in the then Bophuthatswana homeland. As they sought protection in Mabopane, as a qualified nurse, she sought employment in the local hospitals. Unfortunately, she was refused by all hospitals with her *hijab* being cited as the major hindrance. After failing to get a nursing job, she used her skills to address the religious and educational gaps in her community. She saw the high levels of illiteracy and lack of exposure to Islam. Just before 1980, she started offering classes under a tree in her home. She would provide the children with a meal when they got back from school, assist them with homework, and give them Islamic knowledge before they went home.

She epitomized the Islamic call to 'love your neighbour, more than you love yourself' by ensuring that she visited every home, checking on their wellbeing and calling them to Islam. She adopted the gospel methods she learned from church and used them to invite people to Islam. The Nkumane household was the first indigenous Muslim home in the 70s in Winterveldt. Her children remember her as someone who was never alone; she always surrounded herself with fellow women. She played a mediator role when there were disagreements in the community. Whenever couples approached her for marital advice, she ensured to preserve the families and encourage them to let Allah's presence permeate their homes.

She used the teaching that divorce should be the last resort to resolve marital problems. So, it was through her community work that families were preserved, women led-businesses were created to support communities and the concept of *hudud* was practiced when there was a need to implement communal justice. Zainab did not acquire Islamic knowledge from any formal institution but her love for Allah (SWT) made her learn by reading different books and implementing the little knowledge she had. She firmly believed that one can practice Islam even if one only knew one Quranic chapter.

She reminisced about how she would give the *tafseer* of *surah Al-Fatiha* in different ways and show how it influenced her actions and pursuit of Allah's favours. Through her vision for Islam to grow in her home area of Winterveldt, her son, Kulungile Raheem Nkumane, has established the Umvelinqangi Islamic Centre which provides services to all community members regardless of religious belief. *Umvelinqangi* is an isiZulu word meaning Allah, The Creator of All Creation.

As a legacy of Zainab Nkumane, Umvelinqangi Islamic Centres are being built in different areas in South Africa to spread humanity to all and pray that Allah guides them to Islam. Although she did not have high qualifications in the study of Islam, her love and submission to Allah have contributed to Islam's spread in her area and beyond. She taught the Quran to many and enabled them to study Islam further and call others to Islam.

## Conclusion

The study adopted the appreciative model of moving beyond qualifications and stature but recognizing the great work African Muslim women have done to develop their communities religiously and educationally. The study noted that the status of women in premodern Islam was not identical to that of the Quranic ideals, but rather conformed to prevailing socio-cultural norms. As a result, the status of women in modern, reformist Muslim communities has become a major issue.

Since the mid-nineteenth century, women have questioned the economic, legal, and social restrictions on them, particularly regarding education, seclusion, slavery, and concubinage. Women have published works to support reform, the establishment of schools for girls where they can study, oppose, and be involved in student and nationalist movements. Nationalist movements and critics of new states during the post-World War II period believed women and gender issues were integral to social development.

State policies allowed groups of women to enter previously male-dominated occupations and professions. Although these policies often caused a popular and religious backlash, they have been successfully implemented in South Africa due to the previous advocacy work of such women as Mama Zainab, among others. But also due to the influences from abroad that helped shape the thinking of the Muslims.

It is critical to reiterate that in Islam, men and women are equal in God's sight for they perform the same duties and these include worship, prayer, faith, charity, fasting, and *hajj*. The position of women rose quite considerably in the modern-day period. While debates on how females should be involved in the public sphere continue to rage on, Muslim women play a vital role in either preserving or reforming tradition because of their roles as the familial,

social, and cultural guardians of society. The role of women in society has influenced national identity.

Although many countries have promoted education over the past several decades as a means of economic growth, the percentage of girls enrolled in schools in developing countries remains low. One critical lesson from Mama Zainab is that one does not need to have formal Islamic education or qualifications to spread Islam's message in community. Attempts to conserve men's jobs have added some impetus to conservative calls for women to adhere to traditional roles as housewives and mothers, but economic necessity has led women to undertake whatever work they can find. War and labour migration has caused an increase in female-headed households.

Regardless of the popular belief that Islam's message can only be preached by males, a woman (within the expected boundaries) can call people to Islam too. Women, today, are active participants in social service projects, relief efforts, charitable associations, and economic, educational, health, and political projects in South Africa and in many other parts of the world. Some even are leading Muslim NGOs underlining the fact that they have the relevant qualifications to participate publicly in social life like any other individual. There is wisdom and strength in integrating religion, education, and welfare to model the principles of Islam.

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<https://ballandalus.wordpress.com/2016/03/09/20-influential-medieval-early-modern-muslim-women/>

# Are Security Think Tanks Benevolent? Islamophobia and the Construction of Muslims as Extremists

Mohamed Natheem Hendricks\*

## Introduction

Raeesah Cassim Cachalia and Albertus Schoeman, researchers associated with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), warned that 'transnational extremist groups' are increasing their presence globally and suggest that South Africa is not excluded. They continued to state that South Africa "has a history of violent extremism stemming from domestic grievances that remain prevalent."<sup>1</sup>

In advocating for the establishment of a dedicated US military command in Africa, namely AFRICOM, Greg Mills, the former Director of the South African Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA) and the current Director of the Brenthurst Foundation (BF) suggests that 'Muslim terrorism' in Africa is a significant security concern; and he, accordingly, argues that "Muslim support for terrorists must be confronted directly" and the fact that Muslims are giving "sanctuary to terrorists" cannot be ignored.<sup>2</sup>

After acknowledging that the worsening socio-economic conditions in Algeria before its 1991/1992 municipal elections were a significant factor in the popular uprisings within a narrative of terrorism and locates the primary blame for the political violence on Muslim formations.<sup>3</sup>

These are the voices of expertise, housed within South African research institutes - better known as think tanks, which construct Muslims as extremists and fundamentalists and/or associate them

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1 Cassim Chachalia and Schoeman, "Violent Extremism in South Africa: Assessing the Current Threat".

2 Greg Mills and Jeffrey Herbst, "Africa, Terrorism and AFRICOM", *RUSI Journal* 152, no. 2 (2007): 44.

3 Anneli Botha, "Terrorism in the Maghreb: The Transnationalisation of Domestic Terrorism", in *Monograph 144* Tshwane (Pretoria): Institute for Security Studies, (2008): 29.

with terrorism. Their 'expert' representations create images and discourses of Islam that are both damaging and harmful to Muslims. But these are not isolated voices. On the contrary, Western representations of Muslims and Islam are often stereotypically negative within popular assumptions and academic understandings of Islam are frequently associated with "Islamic terrorism," "violence," "extremism," "evil" and the aberrant "Other."<sup>4 5 6 7 8</sup>

This article focuses on security research institutes (think tanks) with the aim to determine the significance of their policy advice. Think tanks are often presented as producers of credible expertise that is derived from systematic investigations and research. In assessing their policy advice on Muslim terrorism and extremism, the article concludes that think tanks are not benevolent institutions. Instead, they are political actors promoting ideologically motivated ideas that seek to influence the security policy agenda and implementation processes in Africa and South Africa. We show, furthermore, that South African-based security think tanks and experts, which investigate terrorism and extremism, are proxies for epistemic networks that are funded and rooted in the Global North.

In their proxy role, local think tanks manufacture terrorism knowledge and expertise that are consistent with Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilisation* thesis; one that constructs Islam and the West as natural antagonists. For increased credibility of their ideas, the article confirms that these think tanks have formed a local node within a global epistemic network, which, on its part, has incorporated some local experts. Conceptually, the essay problematises the notions of 'extremism' and 'moderation;' and it cautions that differentiating between such categories was often used as an imperial strategy to divide and rule colonised people.

South African-based think tanks are key actors in the construction of Islamophobia as they often collude in representing African and

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4 Tim Jon Semmerling, "Those 'Evil' Muslims! Orientalist Fears in the Narrative of the War on Terror," *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 28, no.2 (2008).

5 Bruce B. Lawrence, *Shattering the Myth: Islam beyond Violence* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000).

6 Tariq Ali, *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity* (London: Verso, 2002).

7 L. Jackson, "Images of Islam in the US Media and their Educational Implications," *Educational Studies: A Journal of the American Studies Association* 46, no 1 (2010).

8 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

South African Muslims as involved in terror, terrorism and extremism, and accordingly construct them as the 'Enemy.' Methodologically, the study draws on Critical Theory; and it shows that the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), CiPS, SAIIA, and the BF as well as their team of experts share, defend, and propagate an imported discourse that constructs Muslims in negative terms. But the questions are: What are think tanks? and are they important political actors?

### Policy Research Institutes: Think Tanks

As public policy research institutions, think tanks are often presented as autonomous institutions that are established as non-profit organisations (NPOs) involved in meticulous, thorough, and systematic investigations on issues related to public policy concerns to produce "credible expertise."<sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> Such an association with formal research allows think tanks to represent themselves as scientific establishments, and providers of reliable advice to policy-makers and permit them to propagate and advocate their perspectives with authority and conviction.

The assumption that think tanks is pursuing and searching for the "truth" have, however, not been left unchallenged. Peter Vale and Johnathan Carter dispute the assertion that think tanks are scientific establishments conducting serious research.<sup>11</sup> While they accept that think tanks produce knowledge that resembles scholarly conventions, they maintain that "the search for truth – said to be the purpose of all serious scholarship – is of little concern within the think tank community."<sup>12</sup> Other scholars have pointed out that some think tanks are active participants in the "war of ideas" pursuing "ideological agendas."<sup>13</sup> Supporting the perspective that think tanks are active contributors in the battle over policy ideas, Abelson suggests that policy research institutes are advocates and implementers of those

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9 Ivan Krastev, "Think Tanks: Making and Faking Influence", *South European and Black Sea Studies* 1, no. 2 (2001).

10 Diane Stone, "Think Tanks Transnationalisation and Non-Profit Analysis, Advice and Advocacy", *Global Society* 14, no 2 (2000).

11 Peter Vale, and Jeremy Carter, "Opinion: But Do They Think?", *Mail and Guardian*, March 2, 2008.

12 Ibid.

13 Andrew Rich, *Think Tanks, Public Policy and Politics of Expertise* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 1-2.

policies that are compatible with their ideological stances and those shared by their financial supporters or funders.<sup>14</sup>

Questioning the scholarly credibility of think tanks, Andrew Rich states that while, think tanks have been conceived of as '*independent, non-interest-based, non-profit organizations that produce and principally rely on expertise and ideas to obtain support and to influence the policymaking process,*' there is a difference between their operational and political activities. Operationally, think tanks conduct and disseminate research and ideas, whereas politically, they aggressively seek credibility and political access to advocate and promote their ideas, and political agenda.<sup>15</sup>

The suggestion above that think tanks pursue the interest of those who fund them is not extraordinary. Instead, think tanks are dependent on donor funding and thus vulnerable to pressures from institutions that fund them. Diane Stone points out that funders utilise think tanks to "achieve indirect societal impact on public opinion and policy agenda."<sup>16</sup> And since think tanks are, at times, financially vulnerable, they are "often hesitant to overtly pass judgement on policies their donors support."<sup>17</sup> Drawing on Julia Hearn, Natheem Hendricks confirms that funders from the Global North have enticed Africa-based think tanks to facilitate and promote the introduction of policy agendas which are consistent with the North's primary goals in Africa.<sup>18</sup>

It is noteworthy to realise that funding is integral to strategies on how states conduct their foreign relations.<sup>19</sup> The United States, in particular, has used the development agency, USAID, to construct US hegemony in international relations.<sup>20</sup> This became more pronounced

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14 Donald Abelson, "From Policy Research to Political Advocacy: the Changing Role of Think Tanks in American Politics," *Global Society* 14, no 2 (2000): 220.

15 Rich, "Think Tanks, Public Policy and Politics of Expertise", 11.

16 Dianne Stone, "Recycling Bins, Garbage Cans or Think Thanks? Three Myths Regarding Policy Analysis Institutes", *Public Administration* 85, no. 2 (2007): 259-278.

17 Abelson, "From Policy Research to Political Advocacy: The Changing Role of Think Tanks in American Politics", 231.

18 Mohamed Natheem Hendricks, *Manufacturing Terrorism in Africa: The Securitisation of South African Muslims* (Gateway East: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2020).

19 Alice Hills, "Trojan Horses? USAID, Counter-Terrorism and Africa's Police", *Third World Quarterly* 27, no. 4 (2006).

20 Inderjeet Parmar, "American Foundations and the Development of International Knowledge Networks", *Global Networks* 2, no. 1 (2002).

during the age of the 'War on Terror' when the US constructed a link between its security needs and the provision of foreign assistance.<sup>21</sup> Condoleezza Rice, the former US Secretary of State, confirms this link by stating that the US's "security interests", its "development goals" and its "democratic ideals" are interrelated.<sup>22</sup> Rice, accordingly, maintained that USAID "would be required to work more closely with the [US] State Department."<sup>23</sup> In other words, the "development agency," USAID is an extension of or a proxy for the US State Department. We turn to four South African-based International Relations think tanks to locate them historically and to gain an understanding of their funding partnerships.

### South African-based International Relations Think Tanks

The think tanks that have been selected have presented themselves as institutions that identify current and future security "threats"; and they, accordingly, are uniquely qualified to describe the nature of the threat as well as advise on how to neutralize the identified threat. These think tanks have all focussed on terrorism as a significant threat to Africa and South Africa and have associated Muslims with terrorism. What follows immediately is a brief historic description of the selected think tank.

SAIIA was established in 1934; and it regards itself as South Africa's premier research institute on international relations.<sup>24</sup> SAIIA and the British Royal Institute of International Affairs share a common origin which is discussed elsewhere and it will not be repeated here. However, it is important to mention that SAIIA became the local constructor of knowledge that privileged British interests.<sup>25</sup>

ISS was founded in 1991 under the name, the Institute for Defence Politics. ISS claims that it conducts "independent and authoritative research and provides expert policy advice and delivers practical and technical assistance to African states."<sup>26</sup> According to its co-founder,

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21 Jude Howell, & Jeremy Lind, "Changing Donor Policy and Practice in Civil Society in the post 9/11 Aid Context", *Third World Quarterly* 30, no. 7 (2009).

22 Howell, & Lind, "Changing Donor Policy and Practice in Civil Society in the post 9/11 Aid Context", 1285.

23 Hills, "Trojan horses? USAID, counter-terrorism and Africa's police," 629.

24 SAIIA, <http://www.saiia.org.za/about>

25 Hendricks, *Manufacturing Terrorism in Africa: The Securitisation of South African Muslims*, 2020.

26 Institute for Security Studies (ISS), <http://www.issafrica/about-us/how-we-work>.

Jakkie Cilliers, ISS has its roots in the May 1990 meeting between 'concerned' South African security specialists and analysts [linked to the apartheid regime] and the African National Congress's (ANC) liberation army, Umkonto we Sizwe.<sup>27</sup> ISS claims its primary purpose as an institute is to enhance human security.<sup>28</sup> Initially, ISS focused its energies on security policy concerns during South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy but this focus changed in 1996 to include policy concerns across the African continent.<sup>29</sup> Jakkie Cilliers has had an intimate relationship with the South African apartheid military.

Cilliers's membership in the apartheid's State Security Council might suggest that the purpose of ISS' establishment should be questioned since the State Security Council came into existence in 1972; it was set up as an advisory body to the South African Cabinet, and it changed under the PW Botha Presidency to become central in setting security policy for the apartheid regime which were often rubber-stamped by cabinet.<sup>30</sup> Amongst the issues, the Security Council focused on were policies related to counter-insurgency and military incursions into neighbouring African states.

A question that arises following Cilliers' celebrated military history which culminated in him becoming an integral member of the apartheid security establishment and then setting up ISS is: Why abandon the inner security community of the apartheid state and offer to strengthen the capacity of the enemy (i.e., the ANC)? Was this a strategic move?

CiPS was established in 1999 and it was an institute within the School of Social Science at the University of Pretoria. CiPS claims that it aims to conduct and disseminate research related to international relations to strengthen the capacity of state and non-state

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27 Center for Security Studies, "An Interview with Jakkie Cilliers. Director of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS)", Accessed 30 September 2016, <http://csseth.ch/content/specialinterest/gess/cis/centr-for-security-studies/en/services/digital-library/article/article.html/1805220>

28 ISS, <http://www.issafrica/about-us/how-we-work>.

29 Center for Security Studies, "An Interview with Jakkie Cilliers. Director of ISS".

30 Mac Maharaj, "State Security Council (SSC)", in O' Malley, *Theater of Hope*, hosted by Nelson Mandela Foundation, <https://omalley.nelsonmandela.org/omalley/index.php/site/q/03lv03445/04lv03446/05lv03508.htm>.

institutions.<sup>31</sup> It was founded while the Institute for Strategic Studies at the University of Pretoria (ISSUP) was still very active and operational within the School of Social Sciences. Hendricks proposes that: “[...] even though CiPS and ISSUP were formally two institutions [...] CiPS was strategically established due to the close association the ISSUP has had with the apartheid establishment.”<sup>32</sup>

ISSUP was established in 1974 and became the primary institution to advise the apartheid government on how to respond to security matters such as the ‘1973 Durban strikes’ and the ‘liberation of Mozambique and Angola’ in 1975 (these countries adopting a socialist development path and offering the military wings of the ANC and Pan Africanist Congress opportunities to establish their military bases in the two countries), and the ‘1976 student uprisings.’ Due to the ISSUP’s pivotal security role played during the Cold War and being closely aligned with the politics of apartheid, and its security made it irrelevant in the new South African political dispensation. An alternative entity had to be created which gave rise to the CiPS in 1999.<sup>33</sup>

BF was launched in 2004 by the Oppenheimer family. The foundation claims that it was established to introduce “new ideas and innovative action for strengthening Africa’s economic performance”. The Oppenheimer family has been an active and dominant participant in the African diamond trade; and the roots of the family’s wealth can be traced to Cecil John Rhodes. The latter “dedicated his life to promoting the interests of the British Empire.”<sup>34</sup> <sup>35</sup> As mentioned earlier, Greg Mills, former Director of SAIIA, became BF’s founding Director.

The think tanks, identified above, are funded by local corporations, private individuals, foreign governments, and charitable organisations. But they are primarily funded by Western governments and governmental agencies such as USAID, and the Oppenheimer Family.<sup>36</sup> Earlier we suggested that funding is not value-free. Indeed, Hendricks states that “USAID [...] actively and intentionally use[s]

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31 Hendricks, *Manufacturing Terrorism in Africa*, 88-89.

32 Ibid., 89.

33 Ibid., 90.

34 Brenthurst Foundation, <https://www.facebook.com/thebrenthurstfoundation>.

35 Hendricks, *Manufacturing Terrorism in Africa*, 86-88.

36 Ibid.

foreign aid to construct US hegemony."<sup>37</sup> At this juncture, we proceed to present instances of Islamophobia, evident in think tanks' construction of Muslims as terrorists and extremists.

### **Islamophobia: Constructing Muslims as 'Extremists'**

Islamophobia in South Africa is not a natural reaction to an unfamiliar, or strange group of people. Instead, it will become evident that South African-based think tanks are pivotal actors in the construction of local Islamophobia. Indeed, think tanks are often complicit in the representation of African and South African Muslims and Islam as sources of terror and terrorism. It will also become apparent that these think tanks systematically manufacture terrorism knowledge and expertise in support of the so-called 'Global War on Terror' in a way that mimics Western discourses on Islamophobia.

Here it will be shown how think tanks construct Islam and Muslims in support of a hegemonic discourse that defines Muslims as a "scapegoat" –real or invented– and excluding this scapegoat from the resources/rights/definition of a constructed "we". This is Islamophobia that "operates by constructing a static 'Muslim' identity, which is attributed in negative terms and generalized for all Muslims."<sup>38</sup>

In contributing to a discourse that constructs Islam negatively and thus promotes Islamophobia, think tanks have applied zoomorphism and orientalism to Muslims. Greg Mills, on his part, speculates that due to the large number of Muslims in Africa, the African continent has the "potential to become a breeding ground for new terrorist threats", as it was a "cancer growing in the middle of nowhere."<sup>39</sup>

A key strategy used by South African-based think tanks to construct Muslims as a security threat was to associate them with terrorism. Associating Muslims with terrorism is not only pejorative, but it also constructs them as the 'enemy' of the liberal Western world during the era of the Global War on Terror.<sup>40</sup> It will become evident that they apply this strategy because in 2001, the former US President, George W. Bush made it clear that the United States will "call together freedom

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37 Ibid.

38 Farid Hafez, "Schools of Thought in Islamophobia Studies: Prejudice, Racism, and Decoloniality", in *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 4, no. 2 (2018).

39 Gregg Mills, "Africa's new strategic significance, in *The Washington Quarterly*, 27, no 4 (2004): 158.

40 Lisa Stampnitzly, *Disciplining Terror: How Experts Inverted 'Terrorism'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

loving people to fight terrorism" and to "conduct a war against terrorism."<sup>41</sup> This declaration was not an innocent pronouncement. On the contrary, these words constructed 'terrorism' as an existential threat that must be annihilated, immediately.

Equating and/or associating Islam with terrorism is consistent with Huntington's thesis as he argues that "relations between states and groups from different civilizations will be... antagonistic" and that the civilisations of Islam and the West would be the primary antagonists in future.<sup>42</sup> Huntington's thesis depicts Islam as hostile to liberal Western values and maintain that Islamic extremism would be the greatest threat to global peace. His, theorisation of a future conflict between Islam and the West is not unprecedented. Instead, Western construction of the exotic and the Oriental 'Other' preceded his thesis. Huntington's thesis can thus be understood as a continuation of a process Said defined as "Orientalism".<sup>43</sup>

Jacky Cilliers, the co-founding director of the South African ISS in 2003, located the roots of contemporary African terrorism in the Afghanistan Mujahideen, the international group credited with liberating Afghanistan in the 1980s from Soviet Union occupation. <sup>44</sup> Cilliers argued that these Muslim "liberators" "became the 'terrorists' – Islamic terrorists – targeting the "United States, Israel and [...] their allies" in Africa.<sup>45</sup>

In this assertion, however, Cilliers fails to explain why these particular countries have become the targets of Muslim terrorism in Africa.<sup>46</sup> By now, it is obvious that associating 'terrorism' with Muslims and Islam is a political act that carries significant negative consequences – including being annihilated.

The political move that draws a link between Mujahideen and African terrorism seems to have been influential among the think tank

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41 George W. Bush, "Address to the Joint Session of Congress and the American People", in *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, 25(2), 37, Weekly Comp Pres, Doc, 1347, September 20, 2000, Downloaded from HeinOnline, <http://heinonline.org> on February 24, 2016.

42 Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?", *Foreign Affairs* 72, no 3 (1973); and Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996), 183.

43 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).

44 Jacky Cilliers, "Terrorism and Africa", *Security Review* 12, no 4, (2003).

45 *Ibid.*, 94.

46 *Ibid.*, 94.

community which is evident in other local think-tank experts repeating Cilliers's assertion that African 'terrorism' has US and Israeli interests as its primary targets in Africa. So, justifying the establishment of AFRICOM as a counter-terrorist opportunity to fight international terrorism, another instance provided by Botha and Solomon is that "African countries [...] lack the resources to prevent acts of terrorism, making it a 'suitable' playing field, although the primary target [for terrorism in Africa] might be the United States, Israel and the Western world." (emphasis are mine)<sup>47 48</sup>

In equating and associating African Muslims with violence and terrorism, South African think tank have manufactured the idea that being Muslim is a sufficient justification to be associated with terrorism and danger. To construct the argument that Muslims are potentially terrorists and/or supporters of terrorism, attention is drawn to the large numbers of Muslims in Africa: Greg Mills speculates that "40 per cent of Africa's 700 million people are Muslim, [which highlights] the danger posed by the pathology of violent, fundamentalist Islam to Western interest(s)" which he reinforces with the statement that "[t]here is no doubt that alienated and radicalized, Africa's 250 million Muslims could make the continent ungovernable' as Africa's Muslims represent a condition 'that give(s) rise to domestic [African] terror'".<sup>49 50 51</sup> This ideologically motivated perspective is echoed by Botha and Solomon who maintain that due to Africa's huge Muslim population it "presents fertile ground for the growth and spread of violence and terrorism associated with Islam."<sup>52</sup>

But why has terrorism been elevated on Africa's security agenda? It was the US former President, George W. Bush's directive "for a 'crusade' against [Islamist] terrorism which set the tone for Western security priorities post-9/11: 'Either you are with us [US], or you are with

47 Gregg Mills, & Jeffrey Herbst, "Africa, Terrorism and AFRICOM," *RUSI Journal* 152, no 2 (2007): 40.

48 A. Botha, & H. Solomon, "Terrorism in Africa", *Centre for International Policy Studies*, (2005): 3. Accessed 5 December 2008, [www.cips.up.ac.za/files/pdf/uafspublications/TERRORISM%2520in%2520AFRICA.pdf](http://www.cips.up.ac.za/files/pdf/uafspublications/TERRORISM%2520in%2520AFRICA.pdf).

49 Jeffrey Hurbst & Gregg Mills, "Africa and the War on Terror", *RUSI Journal* 148, no. 5 (2003): 14.

50 *Ibid.*, 13.

51 Gregg Mills, "Africa's New Strategic Significance", *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no 4 (2004): 161.

52 Botha & Solomon, "Terrorism in Africa", *Centre for International Policy Studies*, 3.

the terrorists.”<sup>53</sup> <sup>54</sup> Consistent with the wishes and sentiment of the US, as expressed by G. W. Bush, terrorism was elevated as the most critical security issue and the introduction of new anti-terrorism laws and regulation.

Numerous South African think tanks have contributed to express their eagerness to construct the contemporary terrorism discourse, as this study has shown. Annette Hübschele, an ISS senior researcher, has also participated in the construction of the terrorism discourse by maintaining that South Africa’s anti-terrorism legislation, the Protection of Constitutional Democracy against Terrorist and Related Activities Act, 2004 (Act 33 of 2004) is inadequate as a deterrent against terrorists and their supporters.<sup>55</sup> She states that the Act is “by far the most liberal and least restrictive anti-terror law” when compared to similar legislation elsewhere.<sup>56</sup>

A few months before the 2010 soccer World Cup, Solomon claimed that “local Islamic extremists are planning an attack on the World Cup.”<sup>57</sup> No evidence was offered to substantiate this claim, other than the suggestion that he has relied on knowledge that emanates from Western security intelligence agencies. The theme of ‘Islamic extremism,’ raised by Solomon above, is one that is frequently drawn on to vilify Muslims to facilitate the process of Islamophobia but this theme is also used as a strategy to divide and re-engineer an Islam that is submissive to Western interests.<sup>58</sup>

The RAND Corporation, a prominent and highly ideological US security think tanks, is not only at the centre of the terrorism studies network, it has also played a leadership and pivotal role in developing

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53 Zühal Y. Gündü, “The European Union at 50: Xenophobia, Islamophobia and the Rise of the Radical Right”, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 30, no 1 (2010): 36.

54 George W. Bush, “Address to the Joint Session of Congress and the American People”, *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy* 25, no 2 (2001): 37, Weekly Comp Pres, Doc, 1347 (September 20, 2001), Downloaded from HeinOnline, <http://heinonline.org> on February 24, 2016.

55 Annette Hübschele, “South Africa’s Anti-Terror Law: Among the Least Restrictive?”, *African Security Review* 14, no 4 (2005).

56 *Ibid.*, 107.

57 Hussein Solomon, “Expert Firm on 2010 Terror”, *Sunday Tribune*, October 18, 2009.

58 Jonny Burnette & Dave Whyte, “Embedded Expertise and the New Terrorism”, *Journal of Crime, Conflict and Media* 1, no 4 (2005): 13-14.

strategies to re-engineer Islam.<sup>59 60</sup> In a RAND report, Cheryl Bernard states that the conflict internal to Islam has severe “costs and economic, social, political, and security implications for the rest of the world.”<sup>61</sup> As a consequence of this internal conflict, Bernard confirms that the West is exploring ways of “influence[ing] the outcome of this struggle”. Bernard identifies four ideological groups within Islam which include the fundamentalists/ extremists, traditionalists, modernists, and secularists; and she proposes that the West supports the ‘Islamic’ modernists.<sup>62 63</sup> Here we note a repeat of the colonial practice of divide and rule.

### **Critiquing ‘Extremism’**

The categories presented by Cheryl Bernard might be a useful analytical construct to discuss division within Islam.<sup>64</sup> However, these analytical categories are social constructs and do not provide the tools to explore how social actors within the Muslim community construct their own social reality. Instead, analysts using concepts such as fundamentalists, extremists, and moderates as analytical constructs, reveal more about the value and assumptions these analysts hold of social reality. Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins problematise and challenge the psychological theorising of extremism and moderation as analytical categories that delineate psychological profiles. They posit that these analytical categories are highly ideological, value-laden, and that the assumptions underpinning such categorisation constrain the explanatory potential of the analytical frame.<sup>65</sup>

Conversely, conceptualising extremism and moderation as categories of social practice allows one to explore the behaviour of actors from “their own terms of reference and the identity construction that these support and/or constrain.”<sup>66</sup> In such

59 Hendricks, “Manufacturing Terrorism in Africa: The Securitisation of South African Muslims”, (2020).

60 Cheryl Bernard, “Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources and Strategies”, (Santa Monica, CA: Rand Corporation, 2003).

61 Bernard, “Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources and Strategies”, ix.

62 Ibid., x.

63 Ibid., xi.

64 Bernard, “Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources and Strategies”.

65 Nick Hopkins & Vered Kahani-Hopkins, “Reconceptualising ‘Extremism’ and ‘Moderation’: From Categories of Analysis to Categories of Practice in the Construction of Identities”, *British Journal Social Psychology* 48, (2009).

66 Hopkins, & Kahani-Hopkins, “Reconceptualising ‘Extremism’ and ‘Moderation’”, 101.

reconceptualization, extremism, and moderation have multiple meanings which reflect the different contexts within which these categories have been used. While extremism is viewed as counter normative and thus alien in Islam by some, others, conceive of extremism as “two but opposite forms.”<sup>67</sup> For example, the illegitimate use of violence to achieve political aims can be a manifestation of extremism. Similarly, rejecting political involvement and focusing exclusively on religious devotion is another manifestation of extremism.

However, within the context of exploring membership of a community, extremism is not rejected in Islam. Instead, extreme and moderate perspectives within the community are viewed as diverse perspectives, open for deliberation and debate. Debate in this sense is celebrated and regarded as crucial for the effective functioning of the community. “Such debates are inevitable, even essential, for they are part of the intellectual process by which [Muslim] identify and eliminate errors as a whole.”<sup>68</sup>

### South African Think Tanks and Epistemic Networks

South African-based security think-tanks have drawn their insights from epistemic networks that have their roots in Terrorism Studies and counterinsurgency because they have aligned themselves with the contemporary hegemonic conception of terrorism.<sup>69</sup> This conception occurred under the guidance of an ‘invisible college’ which was nurtured by the US government.<sup>70</sup>

Brian Jenkins, a former head of the Terrorism programme at the RAND Corporation, confirmed that “[an] informal, international network of scholars and government officials with interest or responsibilities in the area of terrorism [... a] ‘college-without-campus’ has emerged”.<sup>71</sup> The terrorism epistemic network was initiated in the 1970s by US to focus on the ‘terrorism problem’.<sup>72</sup> As RAND Corporation was charged to lead the network, it became the centre of

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67 Ibid., 108.

68 Ibid., 110.

69 Hendricks, *Manufacturing Terrorism in Africa*, (2020).

70 Stampnitzky, *Disciplining Terror: How Experts Invented ‘Terrorism,’* 49.

71 Ibid., 42.

72 Ibid., 27.

'terrorism studies' and under the RAND's guidance was adopted within the academy and became formally known as Terrorism Studies.<sup>73</sup>

Critical scholars have questioned the quality of the knowledge on terrorism produced by members of the invisible terrorism college because its experts operate as a "closed and circular research systems [... relying] on each other's work which [is] synthesized and functioned in a constantly reinforcing feedback loop."<sup>74 75</sup> The inner circle of the terrorism community formed the core of the 'epistemic community' which had the authority to determine 'research agendas,' recruit 'new members,' secure 'funding opportunities,' sponsor 'conferences,' maintain 'informal contact,' and establish databases.<sup>76</sup> As the RAND Corporation has imposed their authority on the epistemic network, knowledge produced in and disseminated by this network remained politically invested.<sup>77</sup>

To ensure that the core members exercise ideological control over the network, RAND became instrumental in the founding of the University of St. Andrews's Centre for Study of Terrorism and Political Violence (CSTPV).<sup>78</sup> Furthermore, RAND collaborated with CSTPV to establish the "RAND-St. Andrews database of international terrorism incidents, recognised as authoritative on international terrorism."<sup>79</sup> Moreover, CSTPV and RAND have central roles in academic publishing on terrorism with them occupying editorial positions on the publications: *Terrorism and Political Violence* and *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* which are both regarded as leading academic journals that focus on terrorism and political violence.<sup>80</sup>

As it is becoming evident, the RAND is effectively controlling the construction, the substance and content of terrorism knowledge and is in a powerful position to provides the conceptual frame/s, idioms, and ideological agendas within which terrorism are theorised as linked.

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73 Ibid., 28.

74 Burnette & White, "Embedded Expertise and the New Terrorism", (2005).

75 Magnus Ranstorp, "Mapping Terrorism Studies after 9/11: An Academic Field of Old Problems and New Prospects", in *Critical Terrorism Studies*, eds. Richard Jackson, Marie Breem & Jeroen Gunning, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 22.

76 Ibid., 49.

77 Burnette, & White, "Embedded Expertise and the New Terrorism", 8.

78 CSTPV, "About the Centre. access 18 December 2017, <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~cstpv/about.html>.

79 Burnette & White, "Embedded Expertise and the New Terrorism", 8-9.

80 Ibid., 9.

These conceptual frames and agendas can then be transported and circulated within the African security policy discourses. Hendricks has shown that an informal transnational *epistemic community* that focuses on African terrorism has been operational under the leadership of the Institute for Security Studies (ISS).<sup>81</sup>

Botha confirmed that she is a member of the 'Global Counterterrorism Forum' (GCTF)—a forum that aims to “use the information [shared in the network] towards understanding and also developing strategies to counter the terrorism phenomenon.”<sup>82</sup> She further stated that the “GCTF is an international forum of 29 countries and the European Union and indicated that even though the GCTF is an international forum, its political agenda is set and led by ‘the US, Canada, a few Scandinavian countries and a few European countries.’”<sup>83</sup>

Hussein Solomon is active in a transnational epistemic network concerned with “Radical Islam and Terrorism in Africa.”<sup>84</sup> He is a research associate of the think tank Research on Islam and Muslims in Africa (RIMA) where primary responsibility is to focus on issues associated with ‘Islamic radicalism/extremism/terrorism’ in Africa.

### Concluding Remarks

This article confirms that South African-based security think tanks are actively constructing ideological knowledge that is harmful to Muslims and Islam, ensure that US and Western interests are being served. A key strategy being utilised by think tanks is to represent Muslims in negative terms by associating them with terrorism and extremisms. Ignoring the fact that, the notion terrorism is pejorative and reserved for one's ‘enemy’ or that the concept, extremism, as a psychological category, is unhelpful as an analytical category.

The presentation has shown that field, ‘Terrorism Studies’ has been invented and nurture by the US; they ensured that they maintain control over the knowledge produced in this field. Through its proxy, RAND Corporation is at the head of publishing in the field but it also ensures the formation of epistemic networks to maintain the agenda that promotes Western interests. South African think tanks, whose roots can either be found within the apartheid security establishment or in British imperialism, have been co-opted to collaborate with

81 Hendricks, *Manufacturing Terrorism in Africa*, 123.

82 Botha, “Interview”, July 11, 2014.

83 Botha, “Interview”, July 11, 2014.

84 Hendricks, *Manufacturing Terrorism in Africa*, 126.

Western epistemic networks; and they also act as conveyor belts to transfer the epistemic community's knowledge locally and across Africa. Recruiting Muslim academics to security think tanks in South Africa is part of a plan to nurture collaboration in a particular narrative of terrorism that remains supportive to Western interests.

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# Challenging the Pirates of the Intellect: Resisting Islamophobia in South Africa, Building Peace

Quraysha Ismail Sooliman \*

## Introduction

We are living in an age of disinformation, extreme anger, surveillance and injustice. This is tangible even in South Africa. It is a phase of modern life that contains within it the establishing of binaries in order to make alternate choices or reasoning impossible. It is here in this black and white box of the intellect that 'secular' dictatorships are pitted against Islamic/black identities. Establishing binaries is political. Limiting reasoning and critique is crucial to the creation of a forced consensus that is needed to fuel war and intensify fear. It is a tool to garner support and avert accountability, and it can only be achieved by disinformation and mistruths. Political opponents capitalise on these simplistic distractions where language and specific forms of vocabulary are used for impact, indoctrination and retention. In his research on the role of the South African media in contributing to the securitisation project, Hendricks<sup>1</sup> found that,

the newspapers have performed their 'critical ideological work' (Hall 1983 cited in Wood 1998, 403) of presenting Western motives, about the 'War on Terror', as being 'noble', while portraying Islamic motives as evil, dangerous and as detrimental to societal stability and progress. This ideological work of uncritical acceptance of the superiority/inferiority dichotomy is essential to strengthening Western hegemony in South Africa and the construction of the 'Other' as the threat.

The language is used diligently to promote disinformation and fear. In any analysis or discussion of rebellion, resistance or violent aggression where the individual is subsequently identified as Muslim,

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1 Natheem Hendricks, "Writing Insecurity: Representations of Muslims in South Africa's Print Media Between 2001 and 2014" *Politikon* 47, no. 1 (2020): 99-103.

all Muslims are held responsible for the aggression and expected to apologise for the behaviour of the perpetrator. All Muslims and Islam are put on trial and this happens almost immediately through the words and images used. It is what the masses are made to hear first, and this is also how propagandist media outlets package their stories. An astute viewer cannot miss the deliberate slant in stories and the operational aspect of the *us vs. them* binary in all that unfolds. The language usage generates specific reactions, thought patterns, responses and perceptions. It establishes double-standards that become operationalised and internalised in the political system, the media, education and some institutions and think tanks. Perceptions and responses are shaped, formed and often cultivated through very specific mechanisms of interaction, learning or communication. Thus, although perceptions may have a certain element of truth or verifiable detail, *promoting* a biased view often excludes other perspectives. Consider here how Muslim perpetrators are described in comparison to white individuals who perpetuate crimes based on a far-right white supremacist ideology or belief system. According to Abbas<sup>2</sup>

[t]he most striking of all dissimulation is the view that radicalisation is caused by ideology derived from an interpretation of religion, while far-right terrorism is explained as a mental health issue or caused by an individual with psychopath tendencies.

The existence of these double standards supports the indoctrination and dumbing of citizens, which is what is needed for Islamophobia. Considering the shared, lived experiences of repression that black persons and Muslims are subjected to through the system of white supremacist ideology, it is necessary to consider the nature and extent of Islamophobia in South Africa which is a majority-black country. Can it be that a population that has been violently dehumanised and cruelly repressed on the basis of an ideology that has socially engineered the high-status White subject as an antithesis to a low-status, dangerous, and inferior Other, the black subject, employ the same or similar discriminatory tactics against a people who follow a different belief system? Essentially, what needs to be asked is, have South Africans forgotten their history, their oppressors, and the ideology that justified this oppression? Islamophobia, like racism, racial capitalism,

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2 Tahir Abbas, "Islamophobia and Radicalisation in an Age of Disinformation" Middle East Eye, 27 December 2017, accessed on 8 August 2022, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/fr/node/68218>

settler colonialism, and Afrophobia are all constructed according to the tools of white-supremacist ideology and are all inherently violent and exploitative. In South Africa, there have been examples of Islamophobic occurrences in government institutions such as the Security Cluster, Home Affairs, and Education whilst the judiciary has largely taken a counter approach to these behaviours. This article analyses the development and occurrence of Islamophobia in South Africa through a global and local lens to determine the extent of Islamophobia in South Africa and to gauge the mindset of South Africans almost thirty years after their political transition.

### Islamophobia Defined

Today it is understood that common discourse on Islamophobia describes Islamophobia as a form of racism or discrimination that is manifested through racist discourse.<sup>3</sup> It can be argued that the research usually considers actual incidences of harm manifested against Muslims through acts of prejudice, antagonism, discrimination, intimidation, and profiling including the belittling of their culture, knowledge, and belief systems. We argue that Islamophobia is racism. To conceptualise Islamophobia as racism we must avoid reductionist explanations. Racism is not limited to colour, though colour became a symbol that reinforced the notion of the 'Other' together with a very targeted focus on religion in a post-9/11 geo-political context. 'Colour' and 'religion' became the trigger to reignite global socio-political antagonisms<sup>4</sup> directly associated with Islam and Muslims. In this manner, Islamophobia as a racist ideology was promoted "by conflating politics, histories, societies and cultures of the Middle East into a unified and negative conception of an essentialized Islam", which was considered to be incompatible and irreconcilable with Euro-Americanness.<sup>5</sup>

3 Stephen Goeman, "Islamophobia Is a Racism" 10 June 2013. *HUFFPOST*. Accessed on 8 August 2022.

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/stephen-goeman/islamophobia-is-a-racism\\_b\\_2428792.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/stephen-goeman/islamophobia-is-a-racism_b_2428792.html); S. Poynting, S & V. Mason, "The Resistible Rise of Islamophobia: Anti-Muslim Racism in the UK and Australia before 11 September 2001", *Journal of Sociology* (2007): 43-61.

4 Mehdi Semati, "Islamophobia, Culture and Race in the Age of Empire", *Cultural Studies* 24, no. 2, (2010): 256.

5 *Ibid.*, 257.

Colour which is a central pathology of racism, has now been used to widen the pathologies of racism and to develop identification strategies to inflict intentional prejudice, bias and discrimination in an Anglo-American world where "multi-culturalism and diversity operate to conceal white supremacy."<sup>6</sup> Within this global hierarchy, dominated by a western-centric world system, humans are organised as those who are above the line and thus have a socially recognised humanity, whilst those below the line are considered as sub-human or non-human. Muslims and black people are considered as those below the line. European lives are those with a socially recognisable humanity.

Grosfoguel and Mielants argue that Islamophobia is "the subalternization and inferiorization of Islam produced by the Christian-centric religious hierarchy of the world-system since the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century".<sup>7</sup> The 'Othering' of Muslims after the fall of Islamic Spain in 1492 developed in a parallel stratum to the 'Othering' of African people during colonisation. As territories and people were conquered, occupied and enslaved, European populations, specifically white people became privileged, laying the foundations for a global racial and ethnic hierarchy that has dominated the heterarchical world system till today.<sup>8</sup> Religious identity provided a signifier for determining 'Otherness' and Jews and Arabs were conceived as a "people with the wrong religion" whilst Africans were identified as a "people without religion". Africans had no soul and were thus considered as savage or sub-human because they had no understanding and displayed no evidence of a belief in God as per the European conception of a deity.<sup>9</sup> And because the savage had no ability to think or rationalise, he was devoid of intellect and spirituality; and considered less than human. Thus, within European thought, there existed a category for *people of colour* and a *religion* other than Christianity as "less than human" which justified the differential treatment they were subjected to.<sup>10</sup>

6 Ramón Grosfoguel & Eric Mielants, "The Long-Durée Entanglement between Islamophobia and Racism in the Modern/Colonial Capitalist/Patriarchal World-System: An introduction", *Human Architecture: Journal of the Sociology of Self-Knowledge* 5, no. 1, (2006): 1-3.

7 Ibid., 2.

8 Ibid., 2.

9 Ibid., 3.

10 C. W. Mills, "Kant's Untermenschen" in *Race and Racism in Modern Philosophy*, A.

Considering the above, the “Muslim religious identity constitutes today one of the most prominent markers of inferiority below the line of the human.”<sup>11</sup> When arguing that Islamophobia is racism, the origin of racism and its meaning is not limited only to a discrimination against a people of colour but can include cultural and epistemic racism. This form of racism is contingent on the belief that Islamophobia is an autonomous form of racism grounded in the devaluation of a non-European religion rather than racism based purely on skin colour. Discourses on humanity and in this instance on Islam and Muslims have become sedimented in the belief of Europeans which originated from a Christian myth in the Old Testament about Ham, the son of Noah. It is claimed that Ham “who was cursed for beholding the nakedness of his father was the original progenitor of the black races.”<sup>12</sup> The dark-skinned Moors and Moorish Muslims of Africa, in relation to this myth were seen as a sign of in-born evil.<sup>13</sup>

### Islamophobia is War

This long held enmity and prejudice towards Islam and Muslims can further be conceptualised as a form of war (symbolically and actually) between the Christian-centric west and Islam. Islamophobia is the continuation of a war declared a long time ago on Muslims and can be further understood in reference to Clausewitz’s definition of war as a “true chameleon.”<sup>14</sup> How war is waged is thus constantly changing and adapting to the various socio-political conditions. Clausewitz linked this description with three elements of warfare. The first being the intrinsic violence of war’s components, the second referred to the creativity of the strategists and the third affirms the rationality of the political decision-makers. With regards the “intrinsic violence of its components, the hatred and enmity which should be regarded as blind instinct,” Clausewitz attributes this to the populace.

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Valls [ed.] (Cornell Uni. Press, 2005), 3.

11 R. Grosfoguel, “What is Racism? Zone of Being and Zone of Non-Being in the Work of Frantz Fanon and Boaventura De Sousa Santos”, paper supplied by author.

12 D. J. Vitkus, “Early Modern Orientalism: Representations of Islam in Sixteenth-and Seventeenth-Century Europe” in *Western Views of Islam in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, D.R Blanks & M. Frassetto [eds] (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1999), 223-225.

13 *Ibid.*, 223-225.

14 C. von Clausewitz, *Vom Kriege*, (Werner Hahlweg, Bonn, 1980, 19th ed. 2003), 212, quoted in H. Munkler, “The Wars of the 21st Century”, *IRRC*, (849): 7.

If one follows this pattern carefully it is easy to recognise the manner in which a hatred of and enmity for Islam and Muslims is stirred through media and political institutions. The second element, the “play of probabilities and chance which makes it [war] a free activity of the soul”, Clausewitz attributes this to the generals (and in a contemporary reading it could easily be attributed to the Military Industrial Complex or similar). This second element can also be traced to the role of private security companies and elites linked to a state’s war machines in advocating for violence against mostly resource rich Muslim majority countries, often based on lies, rather than seeking consensus or a diplomatic approach. The justification for war is most often legitimised and approved because of the success of the first element of war which has the buy in of the public. The third element being the “subordinate nature of a political tool, whereby it belongs purely to reason,” categorises war and the initiating of war as an instrument for the government.<sup>15</sup> As mentioned previously, the state (government of the day) is central to the perpetuation of Islamophobia.

Islamophobia generates hostility towards Islam and a fear or dislike for almost all Muslims. It promotes a monolithic concept of Islam, Muslims and Islamic cultures. It manifests in all walks of life– in the work place, in education, in the public sphere or in the global war on terrorism. It manifests in the epistemological battleground and national agendas of states. Maintaining control of this narrative is possible only when the masses are gripped by fear of what is portrayed as a ‘real danger.’ The ‘real danger’ is the manufacturing of bogeymen through the conjuring of dark and evil imagery. This is similar to how the concept of *swart gevaar*<sup>16</sup> was reproduced during apartheid in South Africa.

### Manufacturing Fear in South Africa

Essentially, what *swart gevaar* entailed was the manufacturing of fear, hate and dislike of a category of people based on a particular trait. Islamophobia employs the same tactic and approach. Once people see each other as different, as inferior or superior, as part of their ingroup or as people who are ‘dangerous’ it becomes easy to manufacture consent on how these ‘different’ people should be treated or tolerated.

<sup>15</sup> von Clausewitz, 2003, 212.

<sup>16</sup> *Swart gevaar* (Afrikaans for “black danger”) was a term used during apartheid in South Africa to refer to the perceived “security threat” of the majority black African population to the white South African government.

The apartheid ideology (and Islamophobia) reproduced binaries that spoke to very specific categories. These were black/white, superior/inferior, saviour/savage, God-fearing/heathen, civilised/uncivilised, democratic/undemocratic and progressive/backward. These are some of the binaries that were secured and still function to discriminate against people. Religion was used to justify these categories and responses. Consider for instance how the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC) in 1921 initiated studies on the question of race which was framed as the 'native problem' where the DRC supported segregation.<sup>17</sup> We would like to bring your attention to the operational language. Colonial/racist tropes usually describe the victim/oppresed as a 'problem.' Hence, we are told of the black problem, the native problem, the Palestinian problem, the Muslim problem and the refugee problem. These are just some of the common descriptors that surely most people will be able to relate to. The DRC described segregation as 'separate development.' This suggested that there would be development for all, but separately. On paper it doesn't sound bad, in practise what it actually translated into was development for whites only. Neils van Rensburg, the DRC's national moderator, stated in 1986,

We were very much complicit [in propping up [A]partheid]. We provided the theological base for [A]partheid. And that's how ideology works... If you can give it a religious sanction, it becomes even stronger. And that's what we did.<sup>18</sup>

The *modus operandi* is always to instil fear. There needs to be a 'tangible' or 'visible' entity to scapegoat. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, states like the US needed to beat the drums of war to maintain the military industrial complex where specific groups or individuals

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17 EARS, "The Dutch Reformed Church and its Contribution to Apartheid", EARS, 7 December 2021, accessed 10 August 2022 <https://europeanacademyofreligionandsociety.com/news/the-dutch-reformed-church-and-its-contribution-to-apartheid/>

18 L. Kiewit, "NG Kerk is Repenting for Apartheid", *Mail & Guardian*, 18 April 2019, accessed 7 June 2022 <https://mg.co.za/article/2019-04-18-00-ng-kerk-is-repenting-for-apartheid/>

and families benefit.<sup>19</sup> War is money – lots of it.<sup>20</sup> For those who profiteer from death and destruction, peace is never an option nor desirable. Consider Clausewitz's comment that "War is a mere continuation of politics by other means... For political aims are the end and war is the means, and the means can never be conceived without the end."<sup>21</sup> According to Shivane,<sup>22</sup>

[b]ut when politics gets related to electoral agendas it lacks the moral fibre, corruption sets in eroding governance and all instruments of national security collapse. This has been a classic case of what has manifested in Afghanistan.

Significantly, all of the "never ending wars" of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as identified by Shivane are in Muslim majority countries. These are Operation Desert Storm (1991), Operation Iraqi Freedom (2003), Operation Enduring Freedom (Afghanistan 2001) and the Syrian Conflict (2011). This is not a coincidence.

Islam is presented as a threat to western values and freedoms; not as an opposition to western violence and exploitation. From these events it can be argued that Islamophobia in a post 9/11 context is the continuation of a war long declared on Muslims, "an act of force to compel our enemy to do our will."<sup>23</sup> This inherent enemy (read: Islam and Muslims), linked to the dark-skinned peoples and Muslims is the same logic applied to the narrative of today in the justifications motivated by western states for their foreign incursions into Muslim majority countries, and for their justifications in killing excessive numbers of civilians.

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19 Jodi Vittori, "A Mutual Extortion Racket: The Military Industrial Complex and US Foreign Policy", December 2019, accessed 7 June 2022 [https://ti-defence.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/US\\_Defense\\_Industry\\_Influence\\_Paper\\_v4\\_digital\\_single\\_Page.pdf](https://ti-defence.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/US_Defense_Industry_Influence_Paper_v4_digital_single_Page.pdf)

20 James Conachy, "Private Military Companies in Iraq: Profiting from Colonialism", 3 May 2004, *World Socialist Website*. Accessed 8 July 2022 <https://www.wsws.org/en/articles/2004/05/pmcs-mo3.pdf>

21 Jordan Lindell, "Clausewitz: War, Peace and Politics", 26 November 2009, *E-International Relations*, accessed 10 June 2022 <https://www.e-ir.info/2009/11/26/clausewitz-war-peace-and-politics/>

22 A. B. Shivane, Lt. General. "Never-Ending Wars of 21st Century" 2 September 2021 *CLAWS* Accessed 11 May 2022 <https://www.claws.in/never-ending-wars-of-21st-century/>

23 C. von Clausewitz, *On War* (Princeton University Press, 1976), 75.

In considering the persuasive power of a particular reading it is evident that power plays a foundational role in the formation of reality, especially by a practitioner of statecraft. This is how the pirates of the intellect operate. This is how Islamophobia operates on the global scale. The building up of fear, hatred and enmity serves the instigators (read: states) when justifications are needed. It is these emotions that secure for them legitimacy, especially on a governmental level. The state is absolved of responsibility and rarely held accountable for its actions – it is the *bogeyman, this demon* that needs to be punished or banished.

Considering the context of black lives in South Africa under slavery, colonialism, apartheid and now in coloniality, it should be evident that what the black majority of this country has experienced is based on a similar template to the way in which Islamophobia is structured and executed. Having experienced these harms and much more, the question is “How does Islamophobia manifest in South Africa and who are the drivers of this racist ideology?” In considering these questions we incorporate Sayyid’s<sup>24</sup> explanation of Islamophobia into our local context, where he states that

Islamophobia is a form of racialized governmentality. It is more than prejudice or ignorance; it is a series of interventions and classifications that affect the well-being of populations designated as Muslim... Islamophobia is a language game directed toward the undermining of a distinct Muslim identity... [where] Islamophobia as the regulation and disciplining of Muslims... is neither necessarily emotional (“hatred”) nor religious (“Muslims as infidels”) or cultural (“Muslims as outsiders”) but rather political.

### **Islamophobia and Afrophobia**

After the Christ Church attacks in New Zealand in 2019, the author wrote an opinion piece entitled *Afrophobia, Islamophobia and White Supremacy: Join the Dots*<sup>25</sup> arguing that white supremacy is intricately entwined with Islamophobia and Afrophobia. Both represent a fear of a specific Other, both perpetuate the dehumanisation of the Other.

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24 Salman Sayyid, “A Measure of Islamophobia”, *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 2, no. 1 (2014): 19.

25 Quraysha Ismail Sooliman, “Afrophobia, Islamophobia & White Supremacy: Join The Dots” 26 March 2019, *The Daily Vox*, accessed 19 June 2022.  
<https://www.thedailyvox.co.za/afrophobia-islamophobia-white-supremacy-join-the-dots/>

Dehumanisation and degradation are structurally and systemically instituted so that maximum propaganda and harm is leveraged at all levels of society and state – from the media to education, the judiciary, the police, state institutions and politicians, thought leaders/think tanks<sup>26</sup> and even the president.

Afrophobia is a perpetuation of the “non-existence” – the dehumanisation of the black person, where “blacks are forced into a condition of anonymity simply by the projected meanings of their skin color.” Blackness thus confines the black person to exist as “a monster.”<sup>27</sup> The same descriptor (monster) is applied to the Muslim. These descriptors are used to justify the dehumanisation of Muslims. Think about the Prison Industrial Complex, #BlackLives Matter and #ICan'tBreathe. Then consider the US soldier who admitted that he and his friends gang raped a 14-year-old Iraqi girl, then murdered her and her family because “he didn't think of Iraqi civilians as humans,”<sup>28</sup> and Donald Trump's persistent remarks about Muslims as “ubiquitously bad, locked in a dichotomy that pits ‘good’ Americans against ‘evil’ Muslims.” This promotes the “fifth cluster of Islamophobia.”<sup>29</sup> This type of Islamophobia references Muslims and Islam disparagingly in the public domain. Any black person with a lived experience of apartheid will tell you the same about the black experience in a system of white supremacy. Strategic analyses of media reports of blacks/Muslims when compared to white criminals has shown that when the offender is black/Muslim the headline reflects none of the human-interest features afforded to the white criminal. When there is a narrative that espouses the idea that Muslims have no humanity it is easy to peddle biases. These tactics undermine the identity of the group being targeted, affect their well being and is political.

We would like to reflect here for a moment on Bernard Lewis's claim of a “decaying Islamic civilization” trapped in a “medieval fanaticism” and the belief spread by contemporary European leaders that black

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26 Natheem Hendricks, “Writing Insecurity: Representations of Muslims in South Africa's Print Media Between 2001 and 2014” *Politikon* 47, no. 1 (2020): 99-113.

27 Lewis R. Gordon, *What Fanon Said: A Philosophical Introduction to His Life and Thought* (Fordham University Press, 2015).

28 Quraysha Ismail Sooliman, “*The Development and Rise of Islamic State and the Violence it Manifests: A Theoretical Perspective*”, Published Doctoral Thesis, 2018.

29 Salman Sayyid, “A Measure of Islamophobia”, *Islamophobia Studies Journal* 2, no. 1 (2014): 10-15.

people do not have a civilisation, they do not have a culture and they do not have a history. In 2007, French President Sarkozy said in a speech in Dakar, Senegal, “[t]he tragedy of Africa is that the African has not fully entered into history ... [t]hey have never really launched themselves into the future”<sup>30</sup> and in 2017 at the G20 summit, President Macron said that “[t]he problems Africa face[s] today... are civilisational... What are the problems?... Islamist terrorism.”<sup>31</sup> We pause here to ask, “What exactly is Islamist terrorism?”

White supremacy uses the same handbook for those it regards as inferior beings– black or Muslim. From Macron’s comments above it is clear – uncivilised Africans, violent Muslims. Based on this European world view, it is necessary to interrogate the South African perspective of the Muslim knowing that black people have been held in contempt and dehumanised by this world view for centuries.

### **Islamophobia in South Africa**

South Africa’s transition from apartheid to a democratic dispensation carried forward the memory of the harms resulting from discrimination and dehumanisation. For the majority black citizens, the Muslim identity has not been engaged with extensively and the greatest perceived threat is still conceived of as coming from white people. It is probably this history and the apartheid experience that has limited the extent of Islamophobia in South Africa and where it manifests, it has largely been contained, reversed by the courts or negated through the actions of the larger Muslim community (as was evident during the July 2021 UKZN unrest) and an identification with Muslim NGOs like Gift of the Givers.

### **Islamophobia in the Media**

However, the few incidences of Islamophobia need to be considered

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30 Quraysha Ismail Sooliman, “France’s Fear of the Black/Muslim Public Intellectual: The Case of Professor Tariq Ramadan” 18 April 2018 *The Daily Sabah* Accessed 20 June 2022 <https://www.dailysabah.com/op-ed/2018/04/18/frances-fear-of-blacks-and-muslims>

31 L. Dearden, “Emmanuel Macron Claims Africa Held Back by ‘Civilisational’ Problems and Women Having ‘Seven or Eight Children’”, 11 July 2017 *Independent* Accessed 15 May 2022 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/emmanuel-macron-africa-development-civilisation-problems-women-seven-eight-children-colonialism-french-president-france-a7835586.html>

so that the Muslim community is aware of the undercurrents and prepare themselves for any large-scale change in attitude, perspective or behaviour. My first real encounter with Islamophobia was in August 2013 when the University of Pretoria's lecturer Dr. Louise Mabile contributed her opinions on feminism to the Praag website which insulted and defamed many groups of peoples, including Muslims. According to Mabile,<sup>32</sup>

One of the strangest phenomena of our time is the widespread tendency of feminists to associate themselves with the non-West, Africa, non-white and the Muslim world (of all things!) and then also the Muslim world [of all things!].

Mabile, like Macron brings together the two templates– Afrophobia and Islamophobia. Media coverage ignored Mabile's attack on Islam and Islamic legislation. Mabile's comment constitutes a trend in certain academic writings which together with the mainstream western media<sup>33</sup> reinforce Islamophobic narratives. The language as usual characterises Islam, Islamic legislation and Muslims as being 'uncivilised, violent, authoritarian, primitive and savage.'<sup>34</sup>

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32 Gillian Schutte, "Racism and the Whiteness Default", 30 August 2013, *Mail@Guardian*, accessed on 20 Jun 2 2022 <https://mg.co.za/article/2013-08-30-the-whiteness-default/>

33 See Daily Maverick, "Farhad Ahmed Dockrat Responds", 15 May 2013. *Daily Maverick*, accessed on 17 June 2022. <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-05-15-farhad-ahmed-dockrat-responds/#.UuqzVRDa6m4>

34 Kate Connolly & Jack Shenker, "The Headscarf Martyr: Murder in German Court Sparks Egyptian Fury", 7 July 2009, *The Guardian*, accessed on 29 August 2022, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/jul/07/german-trial-hijab-murder-egypt>. This is the story of Marwa el-Sherbini the pregnant mother who was stabbed to death 18 times in a German courtroom, yet the story got little media coverage and when it was covered the story focused on security in the courtrooms and not the racist motivation behind the attack. See also D. Rushe, "Savage Killing of Iraqi Woman in California Investigated as Hate Crime", 23 March 2012, *The Guardian*, accessed on 25 June 2022. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/25/california-iraqi-mother-murder-hate-crime>, which is the story of the murder of Shaima Alawadi who was beaten to death in a hate crime in California <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/mar/25/california-iraqi-mother-murder-hate-crime>; M. Malick, "Full-Face Veils Aren't Barbaric – But Our Response Can Be" 17 September 2013. *The Guardian*, Accessed on 15 June 2022, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2013/sep/17/full-face-veil-not-barbaric-debate-muslim-women>; Marry Anne Perkins, *Christendom and European*

Some South African mainstream media outlets and certain think tanks have been complicit in adopting Islamophobic narratives.<sup>35</sup> Stories about Muslims or violence perpetrated by persons identified as Muslims for instance like the Westgate Mall siege in Nairobi which took place on the 21 September 2013 usually do not explain that terrorism or acts of terror do not occur in a vacuum. Socio-political and geo-political contexts, theft of resources, exploitation and manipulation of a people by foreign powers and illegitimacy of the governing party/person are some of the factors that contribute to resistance and rebellion, but never interrogated by the journalists. Likewise, the article by South African journalist De Wet Potgieter entitled, "Al-Qaeda: Alive and Well in South Africa"<sup>36</sup> which targeted the Dockrat family had to be retracted by the paper when after considerable demands for verification of facts from the Muslim public, the editor admitted that Potgieter had misled the readers by writing a false and unverified report that undermined the integrity and credibility of South African Muslims. In response to the fabricated article, Farhad Dockrat stated<sup>37</sup>

Potgieter's pro-right-wing Afrikaans bias is evident by his failure to distinguish that there was credible and overwhelming evidence of the Boeremag terrorist plot (with possession of explosives etc.) but not an iota of evidence of any illegal activity by any South African Muslim on South African soil, which has/had the potential of threatening either the South African state, or any other foreign state for that matter.

Yet Potgieter wrote the false report that implicated all South African Muslims and the Daily Maverick printed it. It is noteworthy though that the state security agencies did not get drawn into the false news and refrained from perpetuating a false consensus about South African Muslims as a threat to the broader South African public. However, in

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*Identity: The Legacy of a Grand Narrative since 1789* (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2015), 238 <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110914610>

35 Natheem Hendricks, "Writing Insecurity: Representations of Muslims in South Africa's Print Media Between 2001 and 2014", *Politikon* 47, no. 1, (2020): 99-113.

36 P. De Wet, "Al-Qaeda: Alive and Well in South Africa – Daily Maverick", 13 May 2013. *MuslimsinAfrica*, accessed on 20 July 2022.

<http://muslimsinAfrica.wordpress.com/2013/05/13/al-qaeda-alive-and-well-in-south-africa-daily-maverick/>

37 Daily Maverick, "Farhad Ahmed Dockrat Responds" 15 May 2013, *Daily Maverick*, accessed on 17 June 2022, <http://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2013-05-15-farhad-ahmed-dockrat-responds/#.UuqzVRDa6m4>

instances of an evidence-based crime, the state has responded to the matter as a crime and not from an Islamophobic agenda.

### Islamophobic Attitude to Muslim Women's Head-Gear

Essentially, incidences of Islamophobia related to the headscarf,<sup>38</sup> have been diffused through the South African courts or by individual heads of the institutions blamed for discriminatory actions towards Muslim women in a headscarf. In the case of Shaakira Yousuf's complaint to the Department of Home Affairs, director general of home affairs, Mkuseli Apleni explained that there were clear policies with regards asking women to remove their headgear and that the manner in which Yousuf had been treated was not appropriate.<sup>39</sup> With regards the criminal charges against Major Fatima Isaacs by the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) for refusing to remove her headscarf, the military court dropped charges against Isaacs in January 2020 but the SANDF did not amend its dress policy. As a result, Isaacs instituted a challenge against the SANDF at South Africa's Equality Court over regulations restricting religious wear and in 2021, the SANDF's "dress regulation was updated to allow the wearing of headscarves by Muslim (women) according to stipulations in the dress regulations."<sup>40</sup> In his research on the different experiences of religious discrimination, according to Osman<sup>41</sup> the potential of the courts to approve a headscarf ban is unlikely as

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38 F. Asmal-Motala, "Headscarves Raise Hackles", 20 January 2012, *Mail@Guardian*, accessed on 19 May 2022, <https://mg.co.za/article/2012-01-20-headscarves-raise-hackles/>; J. Etheridge, "Muslim Major Wins SANDF Headscarf Case ... and Now Equality Court Date Looms", 22 January 2020, *News24*, accessed 22 August 2022. <https://www.news24.com/news24/southafrica/news/muslim-major-wins-sandf-headscarf-caseand-now-equality-court-date-looms-20200122>; EWN. 2021. "South African Army Allows Hijab as Part of Uniform." 29 January 2021. EWN. Accessed on 4 May 2022 [https://ewn.co.za/2021/01/29/south-african-army-allows-hijab-as-part-of-uniform\\_](https://ewn.co.za/2021/01/29/south-african-army-allows-hijab-as-part-of-uniform_); A. Kassiem, "Axed Muslim Woman Keeps Headscarf - and Job", 14 August 2006, *IOL*, accessed 15 May 2022 <https://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/axed-muslim-woman-keeps-headscarf-and-job-289214>, where a social worker was dismissed from employment at a South African prison for wearing a headscarf but subsequently reinstated after mediation.

39 Asmal-Motala, 2012.

40 EWN, 2021.

41 Fatima Osman, "Legislative Prohibitions on Wearing a Headscarf: Are They Justified?", *PER / PELJ* 17, no. 4 (2014): 1318-1319.

South Africa does not ascribe to the strict interpretation of secularism or aspire to create a single national identity for all its citizens... the connection between banning the headscarf and the goals of preventing coercion, promoting equality and curbing religious extremism is weak... [and the] headscarf would not undermine the objectives of a uniform dress code or be difficult to administer. Schools and employers can easily prescribe the colour and type of headscarf and the manner in which it is worn.

### Islamophobic Behaviour and Attitudes in Academic Spaces

Academic institutions have shown a similar trend to that of the two government institutions discussed. Significantly both instances mentioned herein, apply to the two common trends, the headscarf of the Muslim women and the place of prayer of Muslims. The Western Cape Education Department allowed a Muslim pupil to wear her *hijab* after her school principal informed the parents that she would not be allowed to wear the headscarf. A spokesperson from the education department, Millicent Merton indicated that schools should take cognisance of the Constitution which allows for "headscarves and yarmulkes" and that "... religious and cultural diversity [should be taken] into account... the simplest approach would be for the school to adjust dress codes to meet these requirements."<sup>42</sup> In this instance, the government department stepped in to override the principal's decision. In the case of the forcible removal of the Muslim prayer facility at the Prinshof Campus, University of Pretoria,<sup>43</sup> after significant pushback from the Muslim constituency, the university agreed to work with key stakeholders to secure a suitable space to be used as a prayer facility. This was the outcome of a mediation process to which I have been privy to and has resulted in the securing of a room in the Tshwane District Hospital that would now accommodate the students, academics and members of the public. These are examples of where Islamophobic acts have been thwarted which contribute to social cohesion and peace-building.

42 Nation Nyoka, & James de Villiers, "Principal Instructed to Allow Muslim Pupil to Wear Hijab", 6 June 2017, *News24*, accessed on 6 June 2022, <https://www.news24.com/News24/principal-instructed-to-allow-muslim-pupil-to-wear-hijab-20170606>

43 Prega Govender, "Tuks Students Up in Arms Over Closure of Prayer Room Students Say Action Smacks of Islamophobia and Intolerance", 3 July 2022, *SundayTimes*, accessed on 3 August 2022. <https://www.timeslive.co.za/sunday-times/news/2022-07-03-tuks-students-up-in-arms-over-closure-of-prayer-room/>

## Islamophobia in Knowledge Production: Gatekeeping and Control A Personal Experience

Challenging the gatekeeping and control of knowledge production is also political. In 2019 after the Christ Church attacks, I submitted two articles to *The Conversation Africa*. The first, *#ChristChurch: To Hate or Not to Hate?*<sup>44</sup> was refused as it was not "African" enough yet *The Conversation Indonesia* referred it back to *The Conversation Africa* asking the editor to review it. Also, *The Conversation Africa* had published articles on the attacks. The second article that I submitted was *Afrophobia, Islamophobia and White Supremacy: Join the Dots*<sup>45</sup> after the editor Caroline Southey asked for 'more clarity' on the first article. The theoretical grounding and underpinnings of the articles were drawn from my PhD research and highlighted the discrepancies in which white terrorism/terrorists were represented in contrast to Muslim perpetrators. It questioned the use of language in identifying and describing white perpetrators in contrast to non-white/Muslim perpetrators and the intentional obscuring of the humanity and human essence of black/Muslim victims. Southey chose not to publish the articles.

*The Conversation Africa* claims academic rigour and journalistic flair, but academic rigor would mean that the editor would know that Islamophobia and dehumanisation are issues of relevance to African audiences and matter in terms of African content especially since 19 African countries are Muslim majority countries and in approximately eight African countries more than 20% of the population is Muslim. Also, both Macron and Mabilie combined 'African and Islam' in their disparaging remarks. Furthermore, the issue of racism is a living reality for Africans. And Islamophobia, is racism. Both articles were subsequently published in *The Daily Vox*, a more student-oriented publication, dispelling the claim of a "specialised" audience. This highlights the gatekeeping of knowledge that radically challenges stereotypes and distortions. The problem here is that the gatekeepers

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44 Quraysha Ismail Sooliman, "Christchurch. To hate or not to hate?", 2 April 2019, *The DailyVox*, accessed on 20 August 2022,

<https://www.thedailyvox.co.za/christchurch-to-hate-or-not-to-hate/>

45 Quraysha Ismail Sooliman, "Afrophobia, Islamophobia & White Supremacy: Join the Dots", 26 March 2019, *The Daily Vox*, accessed on 19 June 2022.

<https://www.thedailyvox.co.za/afrophobia-islamophobia-white-supremacy-join-the-dots/>

to academia and the dissemination of academic projects still exercise censorship in favour of a white supremacist agenda. What then occurs is aptly explained by Chomsky<sup>46</sup> when he said that

[t]he smart way to keep people passive and obedient is to strictly limit the spectrum of acceptable opinion but allow very lively debate within that spectrum—even encourage the more critical and dissident views. That gives people the sense that there's free thinking going on, while all the time the presuppositions of the system are being reinforced by the limits put on the range of the debate.

The ultimate resource that humans have is their creative potential which needs to be invigorated or nurtured, where people can be inspired to challenge stagnant ideologies and ideas to the extent that spaces of academia become spaces wherein the social order is critiqued. In the current global context, the ideas developed should confront neoliberal thought and implementation because “the power of neoliberalism lies in its saturation of social practices and consciousness, making it difficult to think otherwise.”<sup>47</sup> For this reason, epistemic decolonisation which includes active monitoring against any Islamophobic tendencies and occurrences requires political, social and cultural activism. I am of the opinion that *The Conversation Africa* refused to publish the articles because they challenged the normative approach to writing about Islam, Muslims and black people.

### Islamophobia in Relation to Mosques and the Call to Prayer

With regards the Islamophobic attitude to the building of mosques in certain neighbourhoods, and attacks on mosques<sup>48</sup>, these have been generally condemned by the governing party and judiciary. In the case of the Valhalla Mosque in Pretoria, the mayor of Tshwane, Kgosi Ramokgopa pledged his full support to the project whilst the largely white neighbourhood objected. According to Dadi Patel, Islamophobia in South Africa and in the Valhalla, case reflected “the conflation of

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46 Noam Chomsky, “Selections”, <https://chomsky.info/commongood01/>, *The Common Good*, accessed on 8 June 2022.

47 Pauline Lipman, *The New Political Economy of Urban Education: Neoliberalism, Race and the Right to the City* (Routledge 2011).

48 Faisal Edroos, “Islamophobia to Blame’ for Cape Town Mosque Attacks” 12 January 2017, *AlJazeera*, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/1/12/islamophobia-to-blame-for-cape-town-mosque-attacks>, accessed 2 September 2022.

race and religion and global terrorism narratives."<sup>49</sup> Significantly, in April 2017, the Western Cape High Court ruled in favour of the Knysna Muslim Council's project to build Knysna's first mosque after a resident body, 22 Rawson Street Corporate objected. In his judgement on the case, Judge Dlodlo wrote that:

The founding papers make it appear that the stance adopted by the applicants (the opposition to the mosque project) is somehow ascribed to their almost obvious opposition to the coming into existence of the Islamic Centre, in this particular town. The applicants need to bear in mind that the advent of democracy brought along rights to every sector of the community. These rights are enshrined in the Constitution. The applicants may not be seen to engage in a stance calculated to deny the Muslim community of Knysna freedom of religion and assemble.<sup>50</sup>

These official responses mitigate the desire to ground Islamophobia in South Africa largely due to the realisation that discrimination against Muslims is not acceptable because "religious diversity should be celebrated and protected to avoid the injustices of the past."<sup>51</sup>

But, two recent incidences have raised some concern and have been closely monitored. The first is the instance of noise pollution in relation to religion which is a sensitive issue and the second relates to reported cases in which Muslim women who wear headscarves have been denied gun licenses. With regards 'noise pollution' where the loud call to prayer, and even the unamplified call to prayer by Muslims is singled out (whilst Church Bells and prayer chants from Hindu temples are never questioned), Judge S. B. Mngadi, who sat on the Highcourt of Kwa Zulu Natal ruled in favour of Ellaurie on the 21 of August 2020. In *Ellaurie v Madrasah Taleemuddeen Islamic Institute and*

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49 Aaisha Dadi-Patel, "#ValhallaMosque: When White Supremacy is Threatened by Prayer", 19 April 2016, *The Daily Vox*, accessed 2 September 2022, <https://www.thedailyvox.co.za/islamophobia-valhalla-mosque-white-supremacy-racism/>, see also in G. Tlhabye, "Mosque Row: Fury at Statements by Commission Member", 19 August 2016, *Pressreader*, accessed 2 September 2022, <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/pretoria-news/20160819/281762743664751> which a CRL commissioner compared the mosque to a brothel.

50 Yaseen Kippie, "Knysna Mosque Judgement a "Landmark Victory", 5 April 2017, *VOCFM*, accessed 2 September 2022,

<https://www.vocfm.co.za/knysna-mosque-judgement-landmark-victory/>

51 Najma Moosa, "How Loud Is Too Loud? Competing Rights to Religious Freedom and Property and the Muslim Call to Prayer (Adhan or Azan) in South Africa", *Religions* 12, no. 5 (2021): 6.

Another the judge found that the sound of the unamplified *adhan* which emanated from a mosque located on the premises of Madrasah Taleemuddeen should not be audible within the house situated on a nearby property belonging to Mr. Ellaurie, a Hindu neighbour.<sup>52</sup> In his case against the Madrassah, Mr. Ellaurie argued that the Madrassah had turned “a [once] diverse, peaceful residential suburb” into “a Muslim enclave” and thus wanted both the call to prayer to be muffled and he also wanted the Madrassah to shut down its operations in the area. He argued that its property be sold to the state or to a non-Muslim entity. The complainant also stated that he considered the religion of Islam “offensive” and its “manifestations undeserving of Constitutional protection.”<sup>53</sup> Ellaurie’s statements clearly indicate an intense dislike and enmity for Islam and Muslims.

The judge ruled in favour of reducing the volume but did not grant the order for the Madrassah to be shut down.<sup>54</sup> Moosa states that the judgement is not sound because “Judge Mngadi ignored precedent, set a poor precedent by ignoring property law, and misapplied constitutional law.”<sup>55</sup> This case seems to have served as a springboard for Islamophobia in an attempt to gentrify the Bo-Kaap. The Imam of the Nural Huda mosque (established in the Bo-Kaap in 1958, and declared a heritage site since 2019) was informed on the same day of the judgment in the Ellaurie case that a complaint had been lodged against the call to prayer emanating from the Nurul Huda Mosque. A complaint had also been lodged against the Jamia Masjid established in 1850 which was also declared a heritage site since 2019. These complaints constitute the first such complaints in the history of the Bo-Kaap and materialised within two months of each other.<sup>56</sup> In 2019, noise complaints were lodged against the 100-year-old Zeenatul Islam Mosque in Muir Street in District Six. The mayor of Cape Town (2018-2021), Alderman Dan Plato, said “the city had never criminalised and would never criminalise the call to prayer... The city has never silenced a single mosque in Cape Town, nor does the streets by-law allow for

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52 Ibid.

53 Azra Hoosen, “Isipingo Mosque Azaan Ban: Lawyers Take Case to Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA)”, 23 September 2022, *AlQalam*, accessed 10 September 2022, <https://alqalam.co.za/isipingo-mosque-azaan-ban-lawyers-take-case-to-supreme-court-of-appeal-sca/>

54 N. Moosa, (2021), 6.

55 Ibid.

56 Ibid.

this.<sup>57</sup> Determining the tide of Islamophobia will be possible based on the developments around the Ellaurie appeal and the complaints lodged against these mosques. On the 19th of September 2022, the Isipingo Appeal Case (Ellaurie) was argued in the Supreme Court of Appeal (SCA) and on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of November 2022, the SCA overturned the High Court's decision. Significantly, it clarified the numerous instances of Islamophobia in Ellaurie's application. It was a landmark judgement by the judiciary.<sup>58</sup>

### Islamophobia to Muslim Females

The final case study for this article considers the denying of gun licenses to Muslim women wearing a headscarf. This is a significant occurrence considering the history of gun ownership in South Africa. In tracing this phenomenon to the early nineteenth century it was evident that gun control was intricately linked with colonialism and then later apartheid. Legal restrictions on gun ownership differentiated between those individuals who were citizens and those who were not.<sup>59</sup> In 1873 the colonialists determined to confiscate the amaHlubi tribe's rifles which sparked an open rebellion that resulted in the persecution of the tribe and its leader Langalibalele. Then in 1878 the Peace Preservation Act which was about firearm prohibition was legislated under the guise of "common sense gun control" again targeting the native populace.<sup>60</sup> John Tengo Jabavu, a nineteen-year-old Mfengo wrote a series of letters in the press, condemning the tyrannical effort to disarm the black population. In his letters he stated that,

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- 57 Janine Moodley, "New by-Laws Does not Criminalise the Muslim Call to Prayer: Cape Town Mayor", 8 October 2021, *IOL*, accessed on 2 September 2022, <https://www.iol.co.za/the-post/news/new-by-laws-does-not-criminalise-the-muslim-call-to-prayer-cape-town-mayor-5cb6fd61-3c68-4fe7-9dod-dcfae9c4e9c7>
- 58 Charlene Somduth, "Play on, says Supreme Court of Appeal", 30 November 2021, *Pressreader*, accessed 2 September 2022, <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/post-south-africa/20221130/281479280432285>; Supreme Court of Appeal. "Media Summary of Judgement delivered in the Supreme Court of Appeal", 24 November 2022, *SCAP*, accessed 12 December 2022, <https://www.supremecourtofappeal.org.za/images/sca2022-16oms.pdf>
- 59 William Kelleher Storey, *Guns, Race, and Power in Colonial South Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- 60 Gideon Joubert, "Gun Rights in South Africa – A Brief History", 13 July 2020, *Paratus*, accessed 12 September 2022, <https://paratus.info/2020/07/13/gun-rights-in-south-africa/>

From the very outset the natives knew that it has been the intention of the present government to disarm every black man, merely because he is black, to gain popularity from a section of the colonists, whose aim is to reduce the natives to non-entity for its own selfish ends. Let the press, politicians and constituencies guard against this despotism.<sup>61</sup>

Similar incidents continued, such as the War of the Gun of 1880-1881 against the Basotho, and the erosion of gun rights of the black population from 1948 onwards during apartheid. All of these indicate a pattern and an end goal – domination and subjugation of a people considered inferior.<sup>62</sup> Although it is not in the scope of this paper to cover this entire history, I will add that gun ownership rights changed in 1994 but the Firearms Control Act of 2000, has reversed the progress made in terms of rights and firearm ownership whereby once again, the black majority are those most affected and impacted. The history of racism and gun ownership should inform current legislation, but there seems to be an amnesia in certain authorities. In recent months there has been an increase in Muslim women seeking legal assistance because they have been denied gun licenses on the grounds that they wore a headscarf.<sup>63</sup> The singling out of Muslim women and the headscarf is problematic and suggests an Islamophobic undercurrent. It is regrettable in a country where those perpetuating the harm have experienced a similar injustice in their history. This will have to be monitored in order to ascertain the extent and shift in Islamophobic trends in the security sector in South Africa.

## Conclusion

It would be prudent to acknowledge that Islamophobia and Afrophobia have been developed from the same racist templates that serve very specific political end goals. In order to succeed, these identities are dehumanised and citizens are indoctrinated using fear tactics. These identities are then projected as evil and dangerous so

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 Mwangi Githahu, "Woman Claims Her Gun Licence Application was Denied due to Her Headscarf", 3 March 2021, *IOL*, accessed on 20 July 2022, <https://www.iol.co.za/capeargus/news/woman-claims-her-gun-licence-application-was-denied-due-to-her-headscarf-3e0d9951-b3e8-4ae7-83e7-70b43c9fa4e1>; Umamah Bakhaira, "Muslim Women Denied Firearm Licenses in South Africa Due To Their Headscarf", 22 May 2022, *RadioIslam*, accessed on 15 July 2022, <https://radioislam.org.za/a/muslim-women-denied-firearm-licenses-in-south-africa-due-to-their-headscarf/>

that any action, irrespective of the evidence or approach is justified and made legitimate. The antagonism towards Muslims and black people has a long and brutal history. In the South African context efforts have been made to be inclusive and to oppose dominant western-centric narratives and identities. However, the gun license prohibitions on Muslim females should raise serious concerns for the Muslim community. The gatekeeping of knowledge and slanting of stories about Muslims in the mainstream media is also of significant concern and warrants that Muslim bodies create media desks where qualified scholars monitor and respond to media biases about Muslims. This should not be a one man or one organisation task. The monitoring of such developments is necessary because Muslims are active, contributing, law-abiding and caring citizens of this country. It is this activism and conscious monitoring by the Muslim community that will mitigate against the pirates of the intellect. By working to resist Islamophobia, South Africans are in fact, building peace and fostering social cohesion.

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## **Part III: Institutions of Education**



# **The Role of the Student Organizations in Nigeria and South Africa in the Preservation of Islamic Cultural Values among the Muslim Youth: A Comparative Analysis**

Shu'aibu Shehu Aliyu\*

## **Introduction**

Nigeria is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society with diverse ethnic groupings that cut across religious lines. Nigeria came into existence as a united country following the British control of different polities that were existing in different parts of the country. The northern Nigeria region is predominantly populated by Muslims, and has been home to one of the largest Islamic polities in West Africa. These include, the Sokoto Caliphate and Kanem Borno Islamic State that survived for over one thousand years. The northern region has Hausa, Fulani and Kanuri as the dominant ethnic groups, with hundreds of smaller ethnic groups who are largely followers of Christianity or animism; while the southern part of the country is populated by the Muslims and the Christians on equal ratio basis. The dominant tribes in the southern part consist of Yoruba and Igbo ethnic groups. There are other smaller pockets of ethnic groups mostly considered as minorities, who also are largely Christians and animists with a fraction constituting the Muslims.

With the colonial conquest of the country and subsequent establishment of British administration, the Nigerian Muslims witnessed a monumental setback in the role Islam played in the socio-economic and political lives which until hitherto were under an Islamic political system. The truncation of Islamic principles and ideals and replacing it with British cannon law had created series of engagement and consultation within the Muslim community on how to survive under a non-Islamic system. The Islamic system has its preserved intellectual heritage, which largely put emphasis on developing the character and the minds of an ideal Islamic society to be free from all vices. It was presumed that on the eve of colonial rule there were

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thousands of Qur'anic and *ilm* schools existing in the Nigerian area.<sup>1</sup> However, the Christian missions who pervaded the education sector, made frantic efforts to exploit the situation to their own advantage, especially in places where the Muslims were the minority. It has been argued that at the early period of British invasion, Christianity advanced through contact, trade, persuasion, intimidation, and compulsion, but its potent weapon was western education.<sup>2</sup> These affected parts of South Western Nigeria, where the population of the Muslims is quite significant. The Christian Evangelists started converting the children of the Muslims in their schools. This condition posed terrible experience and challenge to the Muslims which forced many Muslim communities across the country to withdraw their children from western education schools, to the extent that the schools were regarded as infidels' schools (*kuffar madarash*). To buttress this point, this has played a key role in the huge gap and disparity in western education that existed between the Christian dominated areas and the Muslim population until today.

Efforts to counter this appalling trend led to the formation of a formidable organization called Muslim Students Society (MSS) principally to protect and preserve the sanctity and values of Islam and the Muslim *ummah* against the intrusion of the Christian missions. It also aimed to prevent eventual conversion of Muslim youth into Christianity, especially the gullible Muslim children who were enrolled in Euro-Christian schools.

### Islam in Nigeria During the Colonial Period

The history of Islam in the Nigerian area dated back to the 9<sup>th</sup> or

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- 1 For detailed analysis of the impact of western education (Christian) on Qur'anic and Islamic education, see, A. B. Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1974); E. P. T. Crompton, *Christianity in Northern Nigeria*, (London: Geoffrey Chapman Books, 1975); S. F. Graham, *Government and Mission Education in Northern Nigeria 1900-1919* (Ibadan University Press, 1966); J. F. A. Ajayi, *Christian Missions in Nigeria 1841-1891: The Making of a New Elite*, (London: Longman, 1965); and J. F. A. Ajayi, and I. Espie I. (Eds), *A Thousand Years of West African History*, (Ibadan: Oxford University Press, 1965). And also see S. S. Abubakar, "Religion and Politics" in I. Suleiman, and S. Abdulkarim (Eds), *On the Political Future of Nigeria*, (Zaria, Hudahuda Publishing Company, 1988).
  - 2 A. Ozigi, and L. Ocho, *Education in Northern Nigeria* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), 14.

11<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>3</sup> It has fostered robust intellectual and scholastic tradition based on the teaching of the Qur'an, Arabic knowledge and Islamic jurisprudence. This laid the foundation for the transformation of the religion against what was then perceived as the prevalence of syncretic practices, which became pervasive at the courts of the Kings of Hausa land and at ordinary lives of Muslims. In this context, the Sokoto Caliphate was established that pervaded the entire region of present-day West Africa, alongside the Kanem Borno or the Safewa Dynasty. Prior to the British invasion of Nigeria, Qur'anic and Islamic education were highly entrenched and had served as the mediums of communication and administration throughout the history of these two empires. Thus, the core North had a predominantly Muslim population and its long history of contact with Islam had significantly shaped its socio-economic and political framework long before its contact with Europe. The colonial conquest and indeed, the introduction of Christianity, western education and colonial state structures by the missionaries threatened an established social order that derived legitimacy from long contact with the Islamic world.<sup>4</sup>

The British invasion of West Africa had a traumatic experience in the history of the Sokoto Caliphate. This marked the onset of ideological conflicts between Islam and western ideologies dominated and shaped by Christianity. Despite the pledge of the conquerors that they would not tamper with the religion of Islam<sup>5</sup>, the principles of Islamic religion were relegated to the background. Equally, the Islamic system of education was suppressed and, in its place, western and Christian system of education was introduced.<sup>6</sup> Furthermore, the graduates of the latter schools became government employees (educated elites), while those who memorized the Qur'an and communicated effectively in Arabic were regarded as illiterates.<sup>7</sup> This created a sense of dichotomy and deepened conflicts in the two opposing systems. It should be noted that, the British colonial state

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3 J. S. Trimingham, *A History of Islam in West Africa* (London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 27-29 provides a vivid account on how Islam spread in West Africa around the 11th century and became a state religion with the conversion of the ruling class into Islam by the Arab traders.

4 A. B. Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, 17.

5 S. B. Abdulkarim, *Religion and Development: The Muslim Students Society of Nigeria and Its Contributions to National Development* (ABU Press, 2014), 22.

6 *Ibid.*, 22.

7 *Ibid.*, 24.

deliberately refused to intervene in the provision of education during the first few decades of the British colonial administration.<sup>8</sup> The educational delivery was left at the discretion of the Christian missionaries who manipulated the then prevalent conditions to advance Christianity, especially to convert the Muslim youth into Christian religion. Indeed, discrimination was rampant between Christian and Muslim children and coupled with the indoctrination of the Muslim youth in schools dominated by the Euro-Christian culture.<sup>9</sup> There were reports replete with antecedent of abuses and breach of Muslim students' right to practicing their religion freely and in the manner enshrined in the religion.<sup>10</sup> This scenario was the front burner that became the source of agitations by the students who were then studying in Christian oriented schools in Nigeria, to begin seeking for equal rights and privileges with their counterparts-the Christian folks, which ultimately led to the formation of Muslim Students Society in Nigeria. Though, prelude to the formation of the MSSN, the Muslim community formed *Ansar-ud-Din* (helpers of Islam) and *Zumrat al-Islameen* (Islam Group) to counter the propaganda perpetuated by the missions against the Muslim students.<sup>11</sup>

### Formation of the MSSN

The Muslim Students Society of Nigeria, popularly abbreviated to MSSN, emerged consequent to the massive challenge the Muslim students were grappling with at the early decades of the colonial period. At that time, the education sector was dominated by the Christian Evangelist missions. Consequently, they enjoyed colonial government support and thus, constituted the bulk of the educational planners, policy makers and school administrators. Thus, western education was deployed as a potent weapon for the Christianization of the Muslim population.<sup>12</sup> The Muslim youth were left with no alternative other than to attend mission-oriented schools. Also, the Muslim youth were forced to cover their faith in the mostly Christian Missionary schools, to avoid being persecuted by the school

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8 Ibid., 25.

9 Ibid., 22.

10 A. B. Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria* and A. Ozigi and L. Ocho, *Education in Northern Nigeria*, 6.

11 S. B. Abdulkarim, *Religion and Development*, 20.

12 A. B. Fafunwa, *History of Education in Nigeria*, 73 and S. B. Abdulkarim, *Religion and Development*, 241.

authorities.<sup>13</sup> To preserve the pristine teaching and values of Islam, a group of young Muslim students from the following schools assembled: Methodist Boys High School, Kings College and Queens College Lagos, in the southwestern Nigeria. The determination and foresight of those young students laid the foundation for the formation of MSSN on 18 April 1954<sup>14</sup>, but it was officially launched on 30 May, 1954 at Ansaruddeen Primary School's Hall, Alakoro, Lagos Island.<sup>15</sup> The launching of the Society was graced by eminent personalities and prominent Islamic *ulama* (scholars).

From the onset, the Muslim Student Society confined its activities and program to Lagos and its environs. However, within one year, the society extended its activities to outside Lagos.<sup>16</sup> For instance, it formed branches in Abeokuta, Ibadan, Ilesha, Ijebu-Ode and Ikorodu. Then gradually, within a short period of time, it spread to the northern parts of the country and established branches in almost all the educational institutions in Nigeria. Hence, it became a formidable force as a vanguard of Islamic revivalism throughout Nigeria and beyond.

The executive body and structure of the organization was constituted during its maiden conference held in 1955. During the conference, Brother Abdul Lateef Adegbite and Brother Abdul Rasheed Sahid became the first National President and National Secretary-General respectively.<sup>17</sup> The objectives of the society were clearly spelt out as to bring together all Muslim Students throughout Nigeria; ensure a clear understanding of fundamental principles of Islam; encourage the study and understanding of the Holy Qur'an; constitute a composite and missionary force for the propagation of Islam throughout the world, amongst others.<sup>18</sup> The primary objective of the society was to ensure that the Muslim students pursued western education without necessarily compromising their cherished faith-Islam. They also focused on motivating fellow students to live according to the dictate of Islamic principles and values. To also ensure that female students were accorded the opportunity to wear Islamic dress, and to tackle the problem of making schools schedules (exam

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13 Ibid., 11 and Ibid., 7.

14 Ibid., 69 and Ibid., 10.

15 Ibid., 10 and Ibid., 42.

16 Ibid., 20 and Ibid., 48.

17 Ibid., 22 and Ibid., 49.

18 Ibid., 23 and Ibid., 52.

time table and calendar) to conform to daily routine of the Islamic activities.<sup>19</sup>

The greatest challenge confronting the Muslim students of the western oriented schools then was that they must embrace western education at the expense of Islamic tenets, and they must even profess or convert to the religion of Christianity.<sup>20</sup> Not only western education, even to access health care facilities in most parts of Nigeria, Muslim Students must change their identities outrightly. This informed the decision of highly committed students who were then attending missionary schools around Lagos to come together to counter the onslaughts of the de-Islamization process. The Muslim students who established the MSS were primarily concerned with the emancipation of the Muslim students in educational institutions from the oppression and the de-Islamization that was then the main preoccupation of the missionary schools.

Also, at the formative stage, the society made frantic efforts to mobilize the entire Muslim students across different strata of the educational system beyond the confines of geographical background and ethnic diversity to come together, articulate common issues and confront an obvious rival/enemy. These included students from primary, secondary schools, higher institutions, and universities. The society focused its attention and devoted its energy towards raising the consciousness of every Muslim youth who was privileged to attend any formal western school in the country, to realize the benefits of being a good ambassador of Islam.

### **Growth and Development of the MSSN**

The Muslim Student society recorded tremendous expansion within few decades of its formation. Consequently, the period was classified as a decade of crusade, consolidation, propagation, reformation, rejuvenation; and, finally, the decade of reintegration and consolidation of the society.<sup>21</sup> However, discussing these milestones in the history of the society in greater details is outside the scope of this article. But a cursory examination of these milestones is imperative, especially as it relates to success and progress recorded by the society within the period of its existence. The first two decades of the society

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 72 and Ibid., 215.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 72 and Ibid., 220.

<sup>21</sup> S. B. Abdulkarim, *Religion and Development*.

witnessed a massive crusade to fight the onslaught towards surviving the stormy waters of Christian Evangelism and colonial rule in a predominantly Muslim community.<sup>22</sup> The Muslim students suffered persecution and were forced with the choices of living as Muslim or to outrightly succumb to Christianity. It also witnessed a colossal campaign to mobilize all and sundry to join a struggle popularly known as "Operation Join the MSSN". These geared towards a remarkable success such as, general inclusion of MSSN in key government activities and policy decisions.<sup>23</sup>

While the other decades saw the rapid expansion and commitment of the MSSN leadership, which led to the creation of various policies and programmes, such as the organization of seminars and conferences, specifically to sensitize and mobilize the Nigerian Muslim students on the imperative to join and become committed members of the society.<sup>24</sup> The society was also able to establish contacts and partnerships with international organizations that had similar objectives. Similarly, to develop the capacity of its members in every field of human endeavors, the society initiated Islamic Vacation Course (IVC), an event that holds annually until today.<sup>25</sup> One of the significant milestones of the MSSN was the creation of the Islamic Trust of Nigeria. The Trust was conceived to serve as a conglomerate of series of Islamic activities and the rallying point for MSSN and the Ummah.<sup>26</sup> The Trust was established in 1978, to serve as an accomplished institute, with headquarters based in Zaria. The Trust comprises a mosque, a model school, a library and conference facilities.<sup>27</sup> To further strengthen its activities and to achieve the purposes of its establishment, Hudahuda Publishing Company and Ijazah Enterprises were incorporated as revenue generating outfits for the Trust.<sup>28</sup> Thus, the Ummah were regarded as the elders of the society. Subsequently, a Leadership Training Program (LTP) and Essay Writing Competition (EWC) were instituted by MSSN for the students

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22 Ibid., 53.

23 Ibid., 56.

24 Ibid., 60.

25 Ibid., 65.

26 Interview with Mallam Aminu Daneji and Mallam Sulaiman Abdulkarim, The Ummah constitutes the members of the society who graduates from higher institution and still want to continue participating in MSSN activities.

27 S. B. Abdulkarim, *Religion and Development*, 52.

28 Ibid., 128.

of primary and higher institutions, a programme that is being coordinated largely by the Ummah.<sup>29</sup>

The MSSN impacted tremendously on the larger society. It laid a solid foundation for the emergence of many organizations with similar leanings, which augment and support the activities of the MSSN. These include, International Islamic Federation of Student Organization (IIFSO), Muslim Sisters Organization (MSO), Federation of Muslim Women Association in Nigeria (FOMWAN), National Council of Muslim Youth Organizations (NOCOMYO), World Assembly of Muslim Youth (WAMY), Muslim Copers Association of Nigeria (MCAN), Muslim World League, Nigerian Medical Students Association, Nigerian Lawyers Forum etc.<sup>30</sup> The formation of the *Jama'atul Nasril Islam* (Society for the Help of Islam) by the former premier of Northern Region, Sir Ahmadu Bello, Sardauna Sokoto greatly complimented the activities of the MSSN.

### External Linkages of the MSSN

The golden period of the MSSN hinged on the intellectual and ideological inspiration the society derived from other scholars and events outside the country. The most prominent was, the paradigm and ideology championed by Maulana Abu Ala-Maududi, and Abu-Hasan Ali Nadwi from Pakistan and India respectively (*Jama'ati al-Islami al-Muslimeen* and *Nadwatul Ulama*).<sup>31</sup> Maulana Maududi encouraged Muslim students to be Islamic in colleges and universities of the Muslim countries.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, the book written by Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam* became a major reading material by the members of the society.<sup>33</sup> Likewise, the books of Abu-Hasan al-Ndawi such as *Saviors of the Islamic Spirits*, *Islam and the World*, *The Rise and Decline of the Muslim and its Effect on Mankind* were important books that inspired the MSSN.<sup>34</sup> The influence "Society of the Muslim Brotherhood" (*Ikwan al-Muslimin*) of Egypt, especially the writings of

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 115-116.

<sup>31</sup> Interview with late Dr. Ashiru Sani Daura, who was MSSN President of the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria branch from 1977 to 1978, the interview was conducted on 15 June 2020.

<sup>32</sup> S. B. Abdulkarim, *Religion and Development*, 81.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Dr. Ashiru Daura.

<sup>34</sup> Interview with Mallam Mustapha Chinade, and Mallam Aminu Daneji, on 21 April, 2022, were committed members of the MSSN at its formative stage.

Hasan Banna and Sayyid Qutub's *Milestone: Muslim at Cross Road (Mu'allim fi Tariq)*.<sup>35</sup> The book was very significant towards motivating and shaping the thinking of the members of the society, especially in the 1970s to agitate for a complete implementation and resuscitation of the *shariah* legal system in Nigeria.<sup>36</sup> Available evidence indicates that the members of the Society at higher institutions in Nigeria performed *ittikafi* for weeks to properly graph and conceptualize the books of Abu-Ala Maududi, *Towards Understanding Islam* and Sayyid Qutub's *Milestone*. These two books were very critical towards shaping the thinking and ideological base of the society, especially on important matters that deal with the engagement with the authorities.<sup>37</sup> The period coincided with the influx of members of the brotherhood in Nigeria who took up teaching appointments in schools, following their expulsion from Egypt.<sup>38</sup> Other international scholars who influenced the thoughts of the MSSN included, Sheikh Abdulqadir al-Sufi, *al-Murabitun* movement (*Harakatul Islamiyya*), the founder of *Dirqawi-Shadhili*, *Qadiri Tariqa* movement.<sup>39</sup> Other ideologies that found their way into the MSSN and had significant appeals included *salafiyya* and *neo-salafiyya* movements, which received stronghold and appeal.<sup>40</sup>

The activities of Maryam Jameela, also in inspiring the thoughts of the MSSN, cannot be overemphasized. The African Event Magazine by Mala Mullah Adam, Crescent International from Canada found its way to the hands of the MSSN and became an important medium and instrument for discussion and analysis. It makes the MSSN to be fully

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35 Interview with late Dr. Ashiru Daura.

36 Interview with Late Dr. Ashiru Daura.

37 Interview with Mallam Musa Salihi.

38 Interview with Dr. Usman Bugaje, pioneer leaders and astute thinkers of the MSSN who was also a President of the ABU, Zaria branch from 1974-75.

39 Interview with Mallam Musa Salihi Muhammad, on 4/05/2022, many members of MSSN were initiated to the *Dirqawi* order and *Murabitun* world movement. Sheikh Abdulkadir al-Sufi was born into a Christian family in Lan Stewart, Dallas, Scotland in 1930 and died in 2021. He converted to Islam in 1967. He authored many books, and he was responsible for the setting up of many prominent mosques, these include, Ihsan Mosque in Norwich, England, Granada, and in Cape Town, South Africa.

40 There were many members of the MSSN who after their expulsion from ABU, Zaria found admission in the University of Madina and Makka. These include, Dr. Bashir Shehu Galadanci, Professor Muhammad Babangida among others, they diffused the ideological paradigm of the Salafiyya movement.

informed and provides them with the focus and direction on crucial international matters relating to happenings in other parts of the Muslim world. Other important global events that shaped and influenced the MSSN includes:

1. The influence of the Iranian revolution, which became a model that could be copied and adopted in Nigeria, the course was championed by the MSSN,
2. The influence of the South African Apartheid was a booster for MSSN, coupled with the pamphlets and video debates of Sheikh Ahmad Deedat from Durban that flooded Nigerian markets in schools and colleges. The MSSN provoke the Christians to debate, based on the teachings of Deedat.
3. The Pakistan Islamic Revolution, especially the system of economy adopted at independence,
4. The Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC), has become a contentious issue in Nigeria,
5. The Arab Petrol Dollar crisis,
6. Libya Jihad's fund and the Syrian covenant of Umar.<sup>41</sup>

These constituted important international historical events that molded the growth and development of the MSSN in a monumental way.<sup>42</sup>

The activities and mentorship the MSSN received from the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood members who took up teaching appointments in the early 1970s in Nigeria, significantly strengthened the intellectual capacity of the MSSN to engage in rigorous engagements on matters that are germane towards the flight of the Muslim students and Islam in general.<sup>43</sup> They also enhanced and reinforced towards making Islam as the only way of life amongst Muslim student in higher institutions. The growing influence of the MSSN threatened and startled the Nigerian establishment, which applied secularism as the *modus operandi* in its system of governance and daily activities.<sup>44</sup>

To curtail the activities and growing influence of the MSSN in the Nigerian Universities, it was alleged that cultism was deliberately diffused to Ahmadu Bello University, the foremost University, situated in predominantly Muslim community in northern Nigeria.<sup>45</sup> The Kguys became the hallmark of the university cultism. The main

41 For details on these issues, see S. B. Abdulkarim, *Religion and Development*, 238-245.

42 S. B. Abdulkarim, *Religion and Development*, 254.

43 Interview with late Dr Ashiru Sani Daura.

44 S. B. Abdulkarim, *Religion and Development*, 125.

45 *Ibid.*, 116.

activity of the cult was the celebration of annual drinking of palm wine.<sup>46</sup> This provoked the MSSN and eventually led to open confrontation with the members of the Kguys. Coupled with the widespread of Marxist ideologies, which promotes free thinking and non-existence of religion and oneness of Allah. The pervasion of socialism in educational institutions across the globe was a common phenomenon, occasioned by the Bolshevik revolution in the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>47</sup> The danger of the Marxian ideology, which became the main doctrine sweeping the Nigerian higher institution students, was and still is transforming the thinking and perceptions of the intelligentsia on the illusion of Marxism, under the pretext of false promises of changing the current world order for the better.

The open confrontation brought about the expulsion of the executives of the MSSN, a situation that became the most difficult period of the society. Members of the society who were helped out, later found admission in the University of Madinah. After graduation they returned and constituted the bulk of the *Yan Madinah* who professed different interpretations of the Islam.

The 1979 Iranian Revolution also played a key role in the growth and shaping the activities of the society. Thus, the MSSN saw the Iranian revolution as a model that could be duplicated in Nigeria. This heightened the fraternity between the MSSN and the leaders of the Iranian revolution. Consequently, the Iranian government invited the MSSN to one year anniversary of the Khomeini revolution.<sup>48</sup> In this regard, Sheikh Ibrahim al-Zakzaki represented the MSSN at the occasion. After his return from Iran, Sheikh Al-Zakzaki established an Islamic Movement in Nigeria (IMN)-the organization that had confronted several arms of the state security agencies.<sup>49</sup> He was detained on many occasions.

### Islam in South Africa

The history of Islam in South Africa dates back to the mid-seventeenth century. The migration of two dominant tribes was instrumental to the diffusion of Islam to the western Cape Town. These include the Malays and Indians, who were generally referred to as the

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46 *Ibid.*, 118.

47 *Ibid.*, 118.

48 *Ibid.*, 124.

49 *Ibid.*

“Cape Malay” or “Cape Colored”.<sup>50</sup> The Muslim population of South Africa is rather of diverse ethnic and racial origins. These are classified into Whites, Coloured, Asiatic, and lastly the Bantu.<sup>51</sup> Available evidence indicates that, the Dutch Colonialism was contributory to the spread of Islam into the Cape coast, probably in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. As stated earlier, the demography of the Muslims is geographically diverse. These included, the indentured labourers, slaves, convicts, political prisoners or exiles, and soldiers. The majority were predominantly drawn from Africa, East Indian Archepelego, and Ceylon.<sup>52</sup>

In South Africa, the Muslims suffered persecution and were subsequently denied their fundamental rights to practice the tenets and principles of the religion. The general perspective and assumption were because of the integration of the Muslim with other faith.<sup>53</sup> But it should be noted that the only religion allowed to be practiced in the Cape colony was the Dutch Reformed Church; thus, no other religion was allowed to exercise instructions or to be propagated publicly or in private other than the Reformed Protestant Church.<sup>54</sup> Also, Muslims were not permitted to conduct religious gatherings publicly. To make matters worse, the Muslims were prohibited to perform circumcision<sup>55</sup> in addition to being banned from establishing mosques or schools, until towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In this regard, only the Awwal Masjid was permitted to be established in 1779, while the Dorp Street Madrasah was built in 1793.<sup>56</sup> Subsequently, the Dutch significantly suppressed public expression of Islam. Consequently, it effected the practices of the religion of Islam in many respects, especially within the university campuses in South Africa. This informed the decision of young vibrant brothers and sisters to

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50 E. C. Mandivenga, “The Cape Muslims and the Indian Muslims of South Africa: A Comparative Analysis”, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no. 2 (2000): 347-352.

51 For details see, W. J. Angle, “Muslims in South Africa: Origins, Development, and Present Economic Status”, *Journal of Institute of Muslim Minority Affairs* 3, no.2 (1981), 222-255. It was published online, 20-March, 2007.

52 See, S. Dangor, “The Expression of Islam in South Africa”, *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 17, no.1 (1997), 141-151.

53 *Ibid.*, 147.

54 *Ibid.*, 151.

55 *Ibid.*, 151.

56 *Ibid.*, 141.

assemble and establish Youth Muslim Students Association in Cape town in 1969.<sup>57</sup>

### **The Formation of the Muslim Students Association in South Africa**

The circumstances highlighted above, occasioned the formation of the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) in 1945, primarily to press for the guarantee and practice of the principles of Islam. The Council therefore became the guardian and vanguard of Islam in the Cape colony. However, over the years, the activities of the Council became waned and thus, the members were accused of being romantic with and becoming a stooge of the authorities, as they were unable to serve more as the frontline of the religion. This provided fertile ground for the emergence of radical organizations to champion the course for the inclusion of religious-cultural purposes among the Muslim community.<sup>58</sup> The monopoly of the traditional *ulama* was viewed as counterproductive and conservative towards participation of the Muslims in politics. Thus, the politicization of the Muslim organizations was seen as a process of the emancipation of the Muslim *ummah*.<sup>59</sup> In this regard, study circles in Natal and the Western Cape were established to promote the teaching of the Holy Qur'an and understanding of its contextual meaning.<sup>60</sup> The return of few students from Pakistan and India opened another vista for the revitalization of the struggle to reposition Islamic religion in the region, especially the presence of Sheikh Ebrahim Moosa and Farid Esack who later became prominent figures in the Muslim resistance in the 1970s.<sup>61</sup>

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57 Interview with Professor Suleiman Dangor in Radio International on his book that captures the history of the Muslim Students Association in South Africa from its inception to the early 2000.

58 Ursula Günther, "Islam in South Africa: Muslim Contributions to the South African Tradition, Process, and the Challenges of Contextual Reading of Islam", *Online Resources of the Arab Scholarship and Expertise for Peace and Stability in the Middle East*, posted 19th, July, 2018.

59 Ibid.

60 It was believed that with the death of Imam Haroun in 1969 this effort received was brought to an abrupt end.

61 Ursula Günther, "Islam in South Africa: Muslim Contributions to the South African Tradition, Process, and the Challenges of Contextual Reading of Islam", *Online Resources of the Arab Scholarship and Expertise for Peace and Stability in the Middle East*, posted 19th, July, 2018.

The Muslim Students Association of the United States, which was formed in 1963 served as the precursor to the South African chapter that was formally established and launched in January, 1974 in the Cape Town region. Thus, the international and global events had significantly influenced the formation of the Muslim Student Association in South Africa. According to Professor Dangor, Sheikh Hanif Hendricks was the anchor and drive towards the formation of the MSA in South Africa, particularly following the conference he attended in Tripoli. He suggested that a national body of the MSA be established.<sup>62</sup> Another important development at international arena that played an outstanding role in the thinking of the pioneer members of the MSA, comprised the teachings and writings of Muslim brotherhood of Egypt, and *Jama'at ul Islami* of Pakistan, the Iranian Revolution, the World Muslim League, the Israel/Palestinian Crisis and so forth. This corresponds remarkably with the Muslim Students Society in Nigeria. Thus, the MSA came to serve as a spiritual beacon for Muslim students throughout South African higher educational institutions, which was subsequently able to establish branches in all universities in South Africa. The MSA was established with a commitment geared towards generating developing strong Muslim individuals by organizing programs that focused more on social, intellectual and political developments of the Muslim *ummah* within the university campuses.<sup>63</sup>

It is important to note that the external stimulus that evoked and shaped the thoughts and philosophy of the Muslim Students Society in Nigeria, to a large extent also influenced the Muslim organizations' constructive engagement in South Africa. These include the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the writings and teachings of the Society of the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, especially Hasan Banna and Sayyid Qutub and also the writings of Abu al-ala Maududi of *Jama'ati Islami* of Pakistan.<sup>64</sup> The writings of these scholars became the main texts of reading and reflections on weekly and periodical lessons. Thus, the younger generations then drew many inspirations and became highly motivated from the teachings contained in the texts. It has emboldened

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62 Interview with Professor Suleiman Dangor's Book on the history of the Muslim Students Association of South Africa, he granted to Radio International on the history of the MSA, 25th January, 2022.

63 From same interview with Prof. Suleiman Dangor.

64 From same interview with Prof. Suleiman Dangor.

their commitments to become active members of the society/ association in both Nigeria and South Africa.

## Conclusion

One important aspect that could be discerned from the foregoing discussion is the relatedness of the two Muslim students' organizations in Nigeria and South Africa. Just like the MSSN, the MSA was established as an antithesis to Euro-Christian domination in western-type schools. Similarly, both organizations were considerably shaped by external influences. Specifically, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the ideas and works of scholars such as Hasan Banna, Sayyid Qutub, Ali Hasan Nadawi, Abu Ala Maududi, Abdulkadir al-Sufi and lastly Ahmad Deedat. These scholars had significant impact on the activities of the organizations. The organizations have also contributed in the revival of Islam and preservation of Islamic values among the Muslim populations in the two countries. There are, however, certain points of departure between the two organizations. Unlike in the case of MSSN, for example, the Iranian Revolution did not have much influence on the MSA to the extent that a Shi'i splinter group was founded by some of its members. Moreover, the MSA drew inspirations not only from North America, the Middle East and India, but also from a Muslim students' organization in the USA. Essentially, the differences between these two organizations, notwithstanding, the similarities among them points to one significant fact. That the Muslim youths, all over the continent, have their 'moral economy', which is based on Islamic principles; and this serves as the premise which informs them about what is just and unjust. They have their own agency which guides how they organize themselves and how they justify their efforts to subdue the wrong and defend what they consider legitimate.

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# Reforming Muslim Institutions of Higher Learning in Southern Africa: A Plea for Transdisciplinarity

Hamza M. Njozi\*

## Introduction

The current growth rate of knowledge and automation is unprecedented in the entire span of human history. Scientists are now capable of gazing at the deep galaxies located billions of light years away as well as to observe infinitely minute microbes in the human body. They have developed the knowledge to edit the human genome and clone a human being. However, quite paradoxically, instead of beneficence to humanity, those spectacular achievements are ushering the human race and planet earth to the brink of extinction. The world is, therefore, thrown into the whirlwind of Post-Normal Times, defined as a transitional period [or a temporal no man's land] when the old orthodoxies are phasing out, but the new orthodoxies have yet to take over. This specific period is dominated by three interlocking characteristics: complexity, chaos, and, contradictions. The ever-rapid changes serve but to accentuate the chaotic and contradictory nature of the complexity. In their magisterial work, Sardar et al.<sup>1</sup> have argued that the ground-breaking technological innovations currently underway in areas such as artificial intelligence, brain mapping, apps for crime, the end of disciplines, and the 3D printed body, to mention a few, have profound and very far-reaching implications to the Muslims. And yet, futures literacy has so far received little attention in Muslim institutions of higher learning. The central preoccupation of this essay, therefore, is two-fold: (a) to show why the current crises in ecology, health, morality, economics, etc. are directly or indirectly related to the philosophical underpinnings which have dominated

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1 Ziauddin Sardar, Jordi Serra & Jordan Scott, *Muslim Societies in Postnormal Times: Foresight for Trends, Emerging Issues and Scenarios* (London: IIIT, 2019).

scientific investigations for the past three centuries; (b) to discuss the great promise of Transdisciplinarity as a potent corrective by looking at its philosophical foundations and its methodology. It is hoped that the intrinsic merits of transdisciplinarity, as a theoretical springboard for teaching and research, may receive careful consideration from Muslim institutions in Southern Africa.

### **The Drivers of Doom: The Philosophical Postulates**

Three interlocking philosophical axioms have jointly functioned, like the yeast, which has set our world today fermenting in multiple crises. The first postulate is ontological – that matter is the definitive, ultimate reality in the universe [or multiverse in the post-James Webb era]. The second postulate is epistemological – that everything in the universe is ultimately knowable without reference to any supreme power because the universe is a natural order which does not stand in need of a supernatural being for it to operate. The third postulate is methodological – that it is by experience, gained through observation and experimentation that human beings can unceasingly continue to unlock the profound mysteries of the universe.

At a philosophical level, the above principles gave a powerful stimulus to the materialist bent of mind which eventually generated the current crises. Quite unsurprisingly, the central focus of scientific investigation was on the external, outer observations of reality. Spiritual aspects of reality were undervalued, and, at any rate, non-material factors are scarcely amenable to measurement and quantification. In a spirited essay, written 91 years ago, Belloc observed that one of the weaknesses of “the Modern Scientific Spirit” was:

the exclusion from consciousness of all that is not measurable by known and divisible units; because the scientific method can only deal with results recorded in known and divisible units. Thus, the physical scientist tends through habit to a state of mind in which qualities not so measurable seem negligible or imaginary; hence the loss of the sense of beauty – the loss of all that is qualitative; the loss of distinction and of hierarchy in sensation.<sup>2</sup>

However, according to Belloc,<sup>3</sup> the most serious methodological flaw

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<sup>2</sup> Hilaire Belloc, *Essays of a Catholic* (Charlotte, North Carolina: TAN Books, 1931/2012), 206.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 182-183.

of the scientific method "is the substitution of Numerical Synthesis for Integration," the tendency to draw universal conclusions on the basis of a very limited number of ascertained truths, like concluding that "a diamond is therefore the same thing as a lump of coal" simply because they both contained atoms of carbon! Or as Calder<sup>4</sup> observed:

A human germ cell is not very different in appearance from that of a rabbit, a guinea pig or chimpanzee, or from the germ cell of spinach. But each of these cells carries a vast amount of special information, dictating what will grow out of it – a spinach cell does not produce a George Bernard Shaw!

The doctrine of the self-sufficiency of human beings implies a rejection of a supreme, absolute being who is not bound by natural laws. This principle cannot but open up the floodgates of value relativism. As Asad<sup>5</sup> correctly observed:

For, unless we presume that an absolute, planning Will is at the root of all creation, there is no sense in our presuming that any of our aims and actions could be intrinsically right or wrong, moral or immoral. In the absence of a belief in such a planning Will, all our concepts of morality must of necessity become vague and more and more subject to expediency that is, subject to the question of whether or not an aim or an action is useful... to the person concerned or to the community to which he belongs.

### **The Lure and Attractions of the Scientific Method**

The proponents of the scientific method endorsed and fiercely defended the necessity of maintaining scientific value relativism. Before reviewing some of the enormities generated by such endorsement, it is worth considering how it came to pass that so many first-class minds and other scholars of goodwill were attracted to it.

Scientism according to the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* is the tendency to regard science "as the one and only way we have to describe reality or to state the truth" and its corresponding "insistence that whatever falls outside the scope of science is not knowledge."<sup>6</sup> The position of the refined scientific method, however, is remarkably

4 Peter Ritchie Calder, "Man and the Cosmos" in Harry S. Ashmore. Ed. *Britannica Perspectives*. Vol. I, (Chicago: William Benton, 1968), 191.

5 Muhammad Asad, *The Principles of State and Government in Islam* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), 7.

6 Eric C. Martin, "Science and Ideology" in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Accessed at [iep.utm.edu/sci-ideo/#H6](http://iep.utm.edu/sci-ideo/#H6). 2022.

subtle. It does not trash other claims to knowledge. It merely underlines the fact that by its very nature, the scientific method cannot determine in absolute terms, whether any human action or purpose is just or unjust, good or bad, right or wrong, except relatively. It is helpless in this regard because the scientific method cannot produce conclusive scientific evidence for or against the existence of God, no more than it can provide such evidence for or against the existence of any purpose.

Scientific value relativism is defended on the ground that it is logically untenable to derive the ought-to-be from the is. As Arnold Brecht<sup>7</sup> notes:

... writers on ethical and legal questions derived their doctrines of what ought to be, or what ought to be done, from the factual data on what is. Human beings are, therefore they ought to be; they ought not to be killed. They have a natural impulse to preserve their lives; therefore, they ought to have the right of self-defense. They are born equal; therefore, they ought to be treated as equal... But the fact alone that human beings exist does not logically justify the inference that they ought to exist, any more than the fact that there are mosquitoes or man-eating sharks logically justifies their continued existence.

Despite the above nuanced subtlety of the scientific method, they all agree that to talk about reality *ex cathedra*, that knowledge must be intersubjectively verifiable through observation, measurement and replication. The above claim that the scientific method endorses scientific value relativism because it cannot produce conclusive scientific evidence for or against the existence of God is intellectually appealing for two reasons: (a) it is correct in abstract terms; and (b) it creates a strong impression of objectivity. However, that claim is impractical in reality, and the generated sense of confidence in its objectivity is misplaced.

If someone were to ask, "Is it proper to go to a public meeting stark naked?" In theory there are three possible answers. "Yes", "No", or "I do not know". However, in practice, if one has to attend that meeting, the options available to them remain only two, "Yes" or "No". In decision making, "I do not know" must be converted to either an affirmation or a negation. The same rule applies to the question, "Does God exist?". In abstract terms this interrogative sentence carries three

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7 Arnold Brecht, *Political Theory: The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Political Thought* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970), 126.

logical possibilities, but in the imperative mode of "Worship Almighty God!" the practical response shall take a disjunctive either/or.

Human beings are endowed with self-consciousness which demands answers to fundamental questions about this universe and about the meaning and purpose of human life. Such questions include figuring out "Who we are and why we are here... How was the world created? Is there any will or meaning behind what happens? Is there a life after death? How can we answer these questions? And most important, how ought we to live?"<sup>8</sup>

From a Marxist standpoint some of the vitally important questions include, "What is the essential nature of the world around us? Or, to put it differently, what is the relationship between nature and spirit, between matter and consciousness? What is man and what is his place in the world? Is he capable of knowing and transforming the world and, if so, how is it to be done?"<sup>9</sup> As Malik has correctly pointed out, human beings from time immemorial have harboured this stubborn, ineradicable urge to hold some opinion or other, right or wrong about themselves and about this universe because: "It is his most vital intellectual and practical need that he must profess some belief or some religion so as to be able, on the one hand, to satisfy his curiosity about himself and this creation, and on the other, to determine his attitude in response to its creatures – things, animals, men, even his own self."<sup>10</sup>

It should be quite evident therefore, that the three postulates of the scientific method constituted a theoretical standpoint from which scientists mounted their research, even though the scientific method cannot produce conclusive scientific evidence in support of any of the three intellectual props. In order to investigate the world, they needed to have an opinion, an assumption about the object they were setting out to look at. It also follows therefore, that "unless our opinion or belief is true and is in accord with the reality regarding the Creation and man's position in it, our attitude or behaviour towards its objects, towards each other and even towards our own self cannot be correct."<sup>11</sup>

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8 Jostein Gaarder, *Sophie's World* (London: Phoenix House, 1996), 12.

9 G. A. Kozlov, *The Fundamentals of Marxist-Leninist Philosophy* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1977), 16.

10 Mohammad Hussain Malik, *The Mission of Jesus: Divine Principles of World Order* (Nairobi: The Islamic Foundation, 1993), 2.

11 *Ibid.*

Unfortunately, the basic assumptions which have dominated the world of science for the past three centuries were seriously flawed, and have as a result catapulted humanity into a myriad of crises. Again, Belloc sounded a warning bugle which seemed alarmist in his day: "This is my thesis, and very important it is. The Modern Scientific Spirit being the enemy of truth, is the enemy of right living and of human happiness, and if it is not tackled, humbled and set right, will lead us to misery."<sup>12</sup>

### **The Limiting Background Assumptions of Science: The Intervention of the Galileo Commission Report**

In 2019 the Scientific and Medical Network, a worldwide professional community and membership organization came up with a very comprehensive, ground-breaking Galileo Commission Report titled, *Beyond a Materialist Worldview: Towards and Expanded Science*, written by Walach<sup>13</sup> on behalf of the Network.

In this section an attempt is made to show in an abbreviated form how the limiting background assumptions of science are not only causing misery to mankind, but are also unnecessarily restricting the horizon of human knowledge as observed in the above-mentioned Report.

### **The Crisis of Meaning**

Perhaps the most immediate negative result is the deliberate exclusion or devaluation of concerns of profound interest and relevance to human beings such as spiritual experiences, the value, purpose and meaning of human life. A human being bereft of all types of inner self-introspection, and active conscious free-will, descends into a spiritually dead biological robot. This state of affairs emanates from the unquestioned doctrine that values and meaning are nothing but mental constructions which are purely imaginary because they are not material entities. Consequently, people often do experience a serious lack of any meaning in their lives. And as Walach<sup>14</sup> notes:

Values worth striving for very often suggest themselves by advertising and public opinion, to be material in nature or comparatively mundane,

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<sup>12</sup> Belloc, *Essays of a Catholic*, 180.

<sup>13</sup> Harald Walach, *Beyond a Materialist Worldview: Towards an Expanded Science* (The Scientific and Medical Network, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> Walach, *Beyond a Materialist Worldview*, 15.

such as a well-paid job, a nice house, a career with the chance to increase power and income. How these goals have to be achieved, with long working hours, little rest, multi-tasking and often at the cost of intimate relationships, is a mode prone to produce burn-out and depression and a kind of existential ennui.

The obvious culprit here is the scientific arrogance that there is no knowledge worth acquiring outside science and its mechanistic methods.

### **Replication Crisis**

Likewise, the methodological demand that to be reliable, scientific evidence must be inter-subjectively verifiable upon replication by others has triggered off a replication crisis in some disciplines such as psychology and medicine, no matter how meticulous the care taken in controlling the experiments. This crisis is indicative of the invalidity of the background assumption of the separateness and separability of complex human systems and subsystems.

It is now becoming increasingly clear that the neurotic insistence of breaking down entities into separate elements is itself driven by the presupposition that matter is the basic, dominant, and definitive feature of reality. Practical experience, however, suggests that the efficacy of medication, for example, is context-sensitive. It can be very effective in one situation and not in the other.

### **The Ecological Crisis**

Various ecosystems of planet earth are at different levels of degradation towards a catastrophic falling apart. They include the climate system ruptured by global warming, disruption of "the food chain of some animals, for instance due to decreasing numbers of insects, reduction of biological diversity due to extinction of species, or the strain on the marine ecosystem due to overfishing or pollution."<sup>15</sup>

If the balance sheet of ecological and other costs are included in the economic calculus they will show "that we are actually on the decline globally, ecologically as well as economically."<sup>16</sup> Again, we are learning through chastisement the unsuitability of universalizing the analytical

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 14.

method which encourages compartmentalized thinking even on complex entities.

### The Crisis of Health

The World Health Organization [WHO] has recently identified depression as the second most important disabling disease worldwide from 2020 onwards. "The same is true for other psychological disorders such as alcoholism or anxiety disorders. These psychological or behavioural problems are likely to represent an indirect reflection of the lack of meaning and of a modern lifestyle geared towards gaining material wealth and societal prestige, while neglecting other factors such as relationships and meaning."<sup>17</sup>

Likewise, the compartmentalization of knowledge into a series of independent silos, each of which operates without reference to what others think and do, has often led to a situation where a gain in one area becomes a tinderbox which sparks off enormous loss in another area. *The Galileo Commission Report* gives several examples. One example is that while the preventive use of antibiotics in mass-animal food production has remarkably improved productivity in animal husbandry, it has also generated a huge health crisis to human beings by making antibiotics ineffective in treatment of bacterial infections.

This is again a result of disregarding the complex, but mutual network interdependencies. Other examples are related to the *mortality* versus the *incidence* of cancer. While overall, in terms of *mortality* rates, cancer is either stagnant or actually declining, the *incidence* of cancer is on the rise.<sup>18</sup> The reasons for this rise are varied, nevertheless, as the Report notes:

But some are also due to direct or indirect consequences of our lifestyle of living and the shadow side of scientific progress understood in a narrow way. For instance, the increase in black skin cancer due to more ultraviolet radiation is not due to the fact that people are more outdoors, but rather due to a thinning of the ozone layer that was attacked by fluoride-carbon-hydrogen combinations until they were banned by the Montreal Protocol in 1987. We are still suffering the consequences 30 years later and for some years to come.

It is also likely that "some cancers are induced by modern

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>18</sup> World Health Organization, *Cancer Prevention and Control in the Context of An Integrated Approach* (Geneva: WHO, 2017), as quoted by Walach, 2019.

inventions, from herbicides and pesticides to non-ionising or ionising radiation." For similar reasons other two big killer diseases, namely, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes are also on the rise.

### **The Descent into Post-Normal Times**

All the major defining features which distinguish human beings from other creatures are rapidly tumbling down under the pressures and spell of automation and artificial intelligence [AI]. According to Brecht<sup>19</sup> if there is one characteristic in which all human beings are alike is "their ability to choose to be good or evil in any moment of their lives... It may well be possible to prove empirically that all human beings make some distinction between good and evil and that all feel they have – always or generally – a choice between being either good or evil in their thoughts, and often in their action as well, although the yardsticks they use may be different."

Freedom of choice is universally considered as an unchangeable, and inalienable human value which is also intrinsically tied up with morality and justice. And as such it is universally recognized as a basic human right. In a quintessential summary of his analysis of the Qur'anic verse 33:72, Abdullah<sup>20</sup> notes that:

The verse itself and the context in which it exists prove the distinguished nature of human beings as possessors of free will. In fact, freedom of choice, according to the verse, is the main boundary distinguishing human beings from the rest of creation. Therefore, this ability to choose freely, the right of freedom of belief in this world, is seen as tantamount to constituting what a human being actually is.

It is this foundational feature of humanity which is now under attack, as illustrated in the following section.

### **The Age of Robots**

In their blood-stirring book, Sardar and others<sup>21</sup> have sounded caution to Muslims about a wide range of ongoing techno-scientific research on issues which have enormous implications for the future of Muslims and humanity in general. And they have invited Muslims, with an unmistakable sense of urgency, to reflect on them and take

19 Arnold Brecht, *Political Theory: The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Political Thought* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1970), 311.

20 Arif Kemil Abdullah, *The Qur'an and Normative Religious Pluralism: A Thematic Study of the Qur'an* (London: IIIT, 2014), 62.

21 Sardar, *Muslim Societies in Postnormal Times*, 2019.

appropriate steps in mitigation. We look at a couple of them, beginning with robots.

In the coming few years automation and AI will become the dominant feature of normal life on planet earth. Robots will be used in business, in warfare, in medication, in factories and industries, and entertainment. Saudi Arabia was the first country to grant citizenship to a female robot, Sophia in 2017. And there is a very real possibility that through in-built formulas for self-repair or self-creation, AI may acquire a level of autonomy which would render human intervention superfluous.

The use of robots in warfare, for example, has very serious implications, when the decision to kill human beings or to destroy a city is done mechanically without the benefit of human judgment and discretion or without remorse if done unjustly. This possibility is very scary indeed to all thinking people, as noted by Sardar, et al.<sup>22</sup>:

Just before his death in March 2018, the celebrated British physicist Stephen Hawking declared that humanity was entering "an increasing dangerous period in our history". He was concerned about the possible perilous outcomes of super smart artificial intelligence (AI). What would happen, Hawking asked, if AI transcends our own intelligence, and machines proceed to improve themselves at an exponential rate? What will become of us then?

### **Stuxnet, the Game Changer!**

In cyberspace, the internet was originally supposed to democratize access to, and exchange of, information whether vital or trivial to all who were interested, particularly to the voiceless. The underlining idea was that information is power. One's decision could not be better than the information upon which it is based.

The immediate tension was between public and private/confidential communication, especially when governments began using this platform. The solution was to put security safeguards to protect private communication, which attracted hackers who attempted to break into the system to get information and put it in the public domain. How did the Stuxnet virus change the game?<sup>23</sup>

Stuxnet changed the game by taking cyberattacks from the stealing of information into the weaponization of code. Code now not only broke

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<sup>22</sup> 2019: vii.

<sup>23</sup> Sardar et al., *Muslim Societies in Postnormal Times*, 139.

down safeguards, but could affect machines in the real world. Now code can be used not to steal and reveal secret data, but in effect change it, dumping the geopolitical system into a pit of chaos and mayhem. The line between cyberspace and reality has been broken and now code weapons could result in real destruction and possible death. The interconnected state of the world puts all at risk of this new tactic of war and threat to society.

The implications of this new type of cyber warfare are chilling. For example, as noted by Sardar and others, the weaponized code could be directed to millions of computers around the world and due to the increased automation and AI, the code may be manipulated by other users and command it to churn out fake news or denying access to any outside communication.

### Mapping the Brain

Discussing the gulf that lies between the brain and the mind, a leading member of the Council of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Peter Ritchie Cald<sup>24</sup> wrote:

There remains the mystery which lies between "brain" and "mind," between the "information" received and stored (as in a computer) and the conscious capacity not only to exercise logic – relating number to number and fact to fact – but to have imaginative insight. Imagination is not just memorizing and building up a picture of something observed by a self-generated insight, a conceptual idea. A machine can assemble facts in an infallible memory, but it has not got that quality which cannot be quantified called "will."

Yes, a machine "has not got that quality... called "will," but as Sardar and others<sup>25</sup> are alerting us, scientists have so far been able to identify what parts of the brain can, if stimulated, release which types of emotional feelings, such as anger, anxiety, fear, pain, sadness, or cheerfulness. Scientists have also managed to relay the electronic signals generated by the brain into the computer. This brain-computer interface enables electronic brain signals to be converted into actions on a computer. This breakthrough has given rise to the production of many toys which are operated by brain electrical currents.

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<sup>24</sup> Ritchie P. Calder, "Man and the Cosmos" in Harry S. Ashmore, Ed. *Britannica Perspectives*, vol. I. (Chicago: William Benton, 1968), 210.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* 208.

Brain mapping has, at least, the following three very negative implications to Muslim societies according to Sardar et al.<sup>26</sup>:

- There is also the dark possibility for mind control in this technology... Extremists could also use mind computer interfaces to literally brainwash societies or reprogram them with extremist outlooks.
- Brain-computer interfacing could also be used in warfare: a number of killing devices could be activated by the simple use of one's mind. This combined with the ability to regulate aggression and memory suppression could turn human soldiers into remorseless killing machines.
- Mapping of the brain raises a multitude of questions for Muslim societies concerning theological and societal issues. Uploading of the mind can produce the illusion of immortality while also changing the definition of spiritual transcendence, raising a host of theological and moral conundrums.

### **End of Freedom of Choice?**

In his insightful analysis about how freedom of choice will become increasingly limited with each passing generation, Quigley in his book *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time* argued that there are three basic prerequisites for political democracy to thrive.<sup>27</sup> First, people should be relatively equal in factual power. Second, people should have relatively equal access to information needed to make a government's decision, and third, people should have a political will to accept majority rule.

With the rise of specialist armies which use sophisticated weapons instead of the old-age armies of citizen-soldiers who mobilized their own private weapons, the first foundation collapsed. The second foundation collapsed under the triple stresses of secrecy, security concerns and the expansion of automation. The collapse of the two prerequisites rendered the third foundation superfluous. Quigley<sup>28</sup> was quite prophetic in his estimation of what would come to pass:

One great danger in regard to the second of these basic foundations (availability of information necessary for decision-making) is the impact upon it of the expansion of rationalization. While this has led to automatic and mechanical storage and retrieval of information, it has also led to efforts to establish automatic electronic decision-making on

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 168.

<sup>27</sup> Carroll Quigley, *Tragedy and Hope: A History of the World in Our Time* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1966), 865.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 866.

the basis of the growing volume and complexity of such information. *This renunciation of the basic feature of being human – judgement and decision-making – is very dangerous* and is a renunciation of the very faculty which gave man his success in the evolutionary struggle with other living creatures. If this whole process of human evolution is now to be abandoned in favor of some other, unconscious and mechanical, method of decision-making, in which the individual's flexibility and awareness are to be subordinated to a rigid group process, *then man yield to those forms of life, such as the social insects, which have already carried this method to a high degree of perfection.* [My emphasis].

What Carroll Quigley could not even imagine at that point in time, was that within seventy years human beings will cross that line and descend even lower than *the social insects*. His fear was that human beings would *in effect*, degenerate into social insects as a consequence of automation, not that human beings would come to perfect automation to make people robotic! The question is: What should be done?

### **A Plea for Transdisciplinarity [TD]**

It is quite apparent from the foregoing that the central point of dispute is neither with science as an intellectual exercise nor with its empirical findings, but solely with its extremely limiting philosophical assumptions. It is the implicit background philosophical assumptions – like the cemented conviction that scientific knowledge worth its name must always be quantitative and not qualitative because it must be justified by proof, which means empirically repeated evidence anywhere and everywhere – which have generated the current crises.

For by adopting materialism as the exclusive theoretical framework for understanding reality, encouraged scientists to set aside as inconsequential the vital subjective dimension of human experience. This orientation severely weakened and perverted the understanding of ourselves as human beings and our role in the universe. Transdisciplinarity rejects the belief that matter is either the only or the basic feature of reality or the idea that mind constitutes nothing but an expression of the derivative activities of the physical brain. What are the guiding principles of transdisciplinarity?

### **The Principles of Transdisciplinarity**

For ease of reference, we reproduce here below without the Preamble, 6 of the 14 principles of TD adopted at the World Congress<sup>29</sup>

#### **Article 2:**

The recognition of the existence of different levels of reality governed by different types of logic is inherent in the transdisciplinary attitude. Any attempt to reduce reality to a single level governed by a single form of logic does not lie within the scope of transdisciplinarity.

#### **Article 4:**

The keystone of transdisciplinarity is the semantic and practical unification of the meanings that traverse and lie beyond different disciplines. It presupposes an open-minded rationality by re-examining the concepts of "definition" and "objectivity". An excess of formalism, rigidity of definitions and a claim to total objectivity, entailing the exclusion of the subject, can only have a life-negating effect.

#### **Article 5:**

The transdisciplinary vision is resolutely open insofar as it goes beyond the field of the exact sciences and demands their dialogue and their reconciliation with the humanities and the social sciences as well as with art, literature, poetry and spiritual experience.

#### **Article 8:**

The dignity of the human being is of both planetary and cosmic dimensions. The appearance of human beings on Earth is one of the stages in the history of the Universe. The recognition of the Earth as our home is one of the imperatives of transdisciplinarity. Every human being is entitled to a nationality, but as an inhabitant of the Earth is also a transnational being. The acknowledgement by international law of this twofold belonging, to a nation and to the Earth, is one of the goals of transdisciplinary research.

#### **Article 13:**

The transdisciplinary ethic rejects any attitude that refuses dialogue and discussion, regardless of whether the origin of this

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<sup>29</sup> World Congress of Transdisciplinarity, *The Charter of Transdisciplinarity*, 1994.

attitude is ideological, scientific, religious, economic, political or philosophical. Shared knowledge should lead to a shared understanding based on an absolute *respect* for the collective and individual Otherness united by our common life on one and the same Earth.

**Article 14:**

*Rigor, opening and tolerance* are the fundamental characteristics of the transdisciplinary attitude and vision. *Rigor* in argument, taking into account of all existing data, is the best defense against possible distortions. *Opening* involves an acceptance of the unknown, the unexpected and the unpredictable. *Tolerance* implies acknowledging the right to ideas and truths opposed to our own.

Transdisciplinarity, according to Nicolescu subscribes<sup>30</sup> to the following three axioms:

1. The ontological postulate: There are in Nature and in our knowledge of Nature, different levels of Reality of the Object and different levels of Reality of the Subject.
2. The logical postulate: The passage from one level of Reality to another is insured by the logic of the included middle.
3. The epistemological postulate: The structure of the total levels of Reality is a complex structure: every level is what it is because all the levels exist at the same time.

To illustrate the orientational comparative distinction between disciplinary and transdisciplinary perspectives, Nicolescu<sup>31</sup> has used the table below:

Disciplinary Education (DE)	Transdisciplinary Education (TE)
<i>IN VITRO</i>	<i>IN VIVO</i>
One level of Reality	Several levels of Reality
External World - Object	Correspondence between external world (Object) and internal world (Subject)
Accumulation of Knowledge	Understanding
Analytic Intelligence	New Type of Intelligence – Harmony between Mind, Feelings and Body

30 Basarab Nicolescu, "The Need for Transdisciplinarity in Higher Education in a Globalized World", in Basarab Nicolescu and Atila Ertas, eds. *Transdisciplinary Theory & Practice* (US: The Atlas Publishing, 2013), 20.

31 *Ibid.*, 19.

Disciplinary Education (DE)	Transdisciplinary Education (TE)
Binary Logic	Included Middle Logic
(Absolute Truth / Absolute Falseness)	(Relative Truth)
Oriented towards Power and Possession	Oriented towards Astonishment and Sharing
Exclusion of Values	Inclusion of Values

**Table 1:** Comparison between disciplinary education (DE) and transdisciplinary education (TE)

On the eve of the twenty-first century, the International Commission on Education for the twenty-first Century chaired by Jacques Delors, in cooperation with UNESCO, came up with the famous Delors Report<sup>32</sup> which strongly underlined the need for developing a new kind of education based on four major pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be. Transdisciplinarity, which is now encouraged in many parts of the world, holds great promise in this regard. It is encouraging to note that with each passing year from the last quarter of the twentieth century, integration of knowledge has been gaining more and more currency in academia.

In Tanzania, the current TCU *Handbook for Standards and Guidelines for University Education in Tanzania* under Standard 1.3 on Institutional Growth, Guideline 1.3.2 states: "Every University shall promote inter-, multi-, and transdisciplinarity of academic units, programmes, research and other institutional activities for ensuring enhanced productivity, competitiveness, and relevance to the society and the national development agenda."<sup>33</sup>

### Towards a Conclusion

We have good cause to hope that transdisciplinarity may also be encouraged in other countries in the region. In the East African region under the guidance of Professor Muhammad Hassan Biraima, a Visiting Scholar at Islamic University in Uganda [IUIU], young scholars from Umma University, Sumait University, MUM and IUIU

<sup>32</sup> Jacques Delors, *Learning: The Treasure Within. Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century* (Paris: UNESCO Publishing, 1996).

<sup>33</sup> *Handbook for Standards and Guidelines for University Education in Tanzania* (Dar es Salaam: TCU, 2019), 26.

are bracing themselves to grapple with the rigorous methodology of transdisciplinarity from the Qur'anic perspective.

It is quite evident from the above principles that there are some differences in orientation and emphasis between IOK from an Islamic perspective and IOK grounded in transdisciplinarity. However, the common denominator to both is the rejection of the positivist axioms of knowledge. Transdisciplinarity has done so by pressing into service the insights from quantum physics, while Muslims have done this on the basis of the teachings of Islam.

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# The Role of International Peace College South Africa (IPSA) in the Preservation of Islam's Universal Message of Wasatiyyah within the Paradigm of Maqasid in South Africa

Dawood Terblanche \*

## Introduction

The International Peace College South Africa (IPSA) has four fully accredited and registered programmes extending across its undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. These programmes are: a one-year intensive Higher Certificate in Islamic Studies (HCIS), a three-years Bachelor's Degree in Islamic Studies, a one-year Honours Degree in Islamic Studies and two-years Masters in Applied Islamic Thought. The IPSA vision is "to build IPSA as a centre of excellence in Islamic Tertiary Education and Research."

This vision is underpinned by a mission statement that differentiates IPSA from other traditional Islamic institutions in South Africa. It can be summarised as:

- To revitalise and synthesise the intellectual and spiritual dynamism of the Muslim community.
- To advocate the Islamic objective social cohesion based on the principle of relevance to context and distinctive integration.
- To nurture an environment that fosters intercultural understanding, pluralism and civilizational dialogue.
- To prepare students and academics to play a catalytic role in the creation of a just social order on earth based on peace and dignity for all humanity through ethical leadership.

Being a Muslim tertiary educational institution, IPSA promotes Islamic values through the framework of *wasatiyyah*, contextual relevance, and community enrichment programmes. Founded on the basis of around 350 years of Islam at the Cape, IPSA believes that the genre of *fiqh al-waqi'*, combined with scholarship, promotes a moral, balanced, and just society within the 21<sup>st</sup> century on the Southern tip of Africa. Central to IPSA's programmes is the notion of social

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\* IPSA Principal.

transformation; this acts as a key driver within the curriculum design as well as its outcomes in order to produce ethical leadership among its cohort of students for positive change.

IPSA's establishment, as a tertiary institution, supports three main values: Knowledge, Virtue and Civilisation.<sup>1</sup> Knowledge is central and key in the transformation process. It not only transforms the self but also improves the quality of life, social cohesion in a plural society and promotes the notion of justice. These underlying principles of *maqasid al-shariah* guides the *khalifah fi al-'ard* (the representative of the Almighty upon earth) towards universal principles of humanity.

- **Virtue:** The interdisciplinary courses across the undergraduate and postgraduate courses add to a multi-faceted graduate who is able to be a complete devoted worshipper of the Almighty, mother, father, Islamic activist and a professional within his/her discipline of specialised knowledge of study. This unique combination creates a virtuous student of din.
- **Civilisation:** The establishment of IPSA was to promote Islamic civilisation where scholarship, stewardship, servant leadership, research and publications are outcomes of its programmes and attributes of a graduate. The student develops into global citizen where he/she advocates for a world view of Islam where *islah* (restoration), co-existence, justice, reform (of the self), transformation (of society) and ethical leadership and social activism is encouraged.

IPSA's postgraduate programme aims to bring together students from diverse fields of undergraduate studies where Islamic values, culture and Islamic civilisation is studied. These courses engage with the historical legacy of Islam, its legal, philosophical, philological and exegetical frameworks. The honours programme in particular is rooted in the intellectual infrastructure of Islam where the *maqasid* of Islamic framework is at the core.

### Methods and Examples

In Islam's preservation at the Cape, it is always believed that the discursive discourses within Islam's historical legacy must be relevant. Thus, emphasis is placed on the philosophical framework of *fiqh al-waqi'* (the jurisprudence of reality). Students engage on a scholarly level unpacking questions on the "now, its reality and the why", and responding to how the Islamic legacy should be applied in the modern world. In remaining committed to the relevance of Islam in the 21<sup>st</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> [www.ipsa-edu.org](http://www.ipsa-edu.org)

century, students are immersed into the *maqasid al-shariah* approach to study it. This intellectual paradigm and methodology are rooted in Islam's grand objectives where the preservation of religion (*din*), life (*nafs*), lineage (*nasb*), intellect (*'aql*), and property (*mal*) is at the centre.

Islamic law's legacy (*turath al-fiqh*) cannot be separated from *fiqh al-waqi'*. A distinction in navigating these discourses is the ability to draw a clear separation between the immutable and variable. Often, some scholars fail to understand that the compilation of *fiqh* and the codification of laws were influenced by time and space. Al-Qaradawi argues that modern scholars must be able to understand the wisdom behind the laws and that the solution for contemporary *fiqh* cannot be absent from the principal values of the *turath al-Islami*. The universality of Islam is further rooted in the scope of *usul al-fiqh*, the notion of *taysir* (ease), the concept of *wasatiyyah* (moderation) and the fundamental building blocks of *ijtihad*, and *fatwa*. Students throughout the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes are introduced to these concepts and orientations within the scope of the institution's vision and purpose. The Prophet (SAW) is reported to have encouraged his followers to embrace the easier option.

IPSA is fully aware that it operates and functions within a Muslim minority country. The challenges faced by Muslims today can be attributed to the willingness and flexibility to move between the various schools of thought (*madhahib*) in certain areas. The example of the MMB discourse is cited as an example. Qaradawi asserts that a scholar cannot be confined to one particular school of thought.<sup>2</sup> Critical discourses in the study of *maqasid al-shariah*, *fiqh al-watan*, *fiqh al-waqi'* and *fiqh al-aqalliyat* are important intellectual traditional scholarship which has influenced the codification of Islamic law over centuries in and through different schools of thought. The *tajdid* (renewal) of (*usul al-fiqh*) Islamic jurisprudence must be taken into consideration to balance between the dictates of Islamic tradition and the *waqi'* (true reality). These discourses are the products of two renowned scholars who begin to address Muslims in the West. Taha Jabir al-Alwani authored a book titled, *Towards a Fiqh for Minorities*:

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2 Yasmin M. H. Safian, "The Contribution of Yusuf Qaradawi to the Development of Fiqh", *Electronic Journal of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law (EJIMEL)*, vol. 4 (2016): 49.

*Some Basic Reflections*<sup>3</sup> and Yusuf al-Qaradawi *Fiqh of Minorities*<sup>4</sup>; both appeared during 2003. They have designed *fiqh* for minorities as a solution to help Muslims appropriate Islamic teachings in a country they call home, without compromising their Muslim identity.

Tariq Ramadan and Mohamed Mestiri hold a slightly different view to that of Qaradawi and al-Wani on the discourse of *fiqh* for minorities. They argue that this may isolate Muslims and risk their integrating into "cultural mosaic of Western democracies."<sup>5</sup> This is felt in Whyte's remarks<sup>6</sup> when he asserts that, "Critics of minority *fiqh* reveal several contention points relating to its lack of applicability in certain social and political contexts; exploitation of legal maxims relating to easing hardship for Muslims; and its overly integrationist mentality." At this symposium the contextual relevance of Muslims in South Africa was discussed and the role they should be playing in the future. The terminologies and discourses of *fiqh* of minorities and *fiqh* of citizenship gained popularity at this symposium (and later) began to make its presence in IPSA curriculum. The curriculum design and programmes were orientated towards balancing the rich Islamic tradition of scholarship with the critical discourses facing Muslims in the west without compromising their identity.

The postgraduate programme at IPSA in particular is research based. Students' research must be contemporary and relevant with an overarching infusion of *maqasid* at the centre of dissertation. At IPSA's inaugural postgraduate graduation, Distinguished Professor Aslam Fataar addressed the graduates saying, "... the Honours course plays an important role. The curriculum encourages rigorously research-based interrogation of critical issues that confront us. Researching these matters throws new light on old problems or provide entirely new ways of understanding specific matters. The two research courses of the programme are central: The Research Methods and Research Project courses provide the students immersion into an applied intellectual methodology, which inform their research. I found the topics that were researched by each of the thirty-two graduating

3 Taha Jabir Al-Alwani, *Towards a Fiqh for Minorities: Some Basic Reflections* (London-Washington: The International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2010).

4 Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *Fiqh of Muslim Minorities: Contentious Issues & Recommended Solutions* (Cairo: Al-Falah for Translation Publishing Distribution, 2003).

5 Shaheen Whyte, "Whither Minority Jurisprudence? The Case of Fiqh Al-Aqalliyat in Australia", *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies* 2, issue 3, (2017): 56.

6 Ibid.

students very encouraging. One group of topics centred on *shariah*-compliant tourism, the *halal* industry, *zakah* and poverty alleviation, sustainable development, and partner maintenance (*nafaqah*), which were all researched from an explicit *maqasid* perspective.

A second group of topics focused on the institutional functioning of *masajid*, *madaris*, welfare organisations and schools. Important in this research was the students' ability to develop improvement type models or frameworks to inform the optimal functioning of our institutions. A third group of projects focused on critical ethical matters and the need to better align Muslim practices to the challenges associated with inequality and poverty. What is striking was the focus on gender, and women's empowerment. The students have been carefully researching this phenomenon and proposed ways to address this scourge in society. A comment on gender-based violence as a way of augmenting the research on this topic by IPSA students could be offered. We must now place the conferring of women's dignity at the centre of our restorative behaviour. A *maqasid* approach would argue this is a moment of confoundment. IPSA students' research on women and gender is a prime example of a critical traditional approach to the study crucial matters in the community.

Such research opens up critical conversations, empower people with alternative perspectives and emboldens them to act with courage to confront problems. The external examiner suggested that IPSA should find a way of making the students' research visible either in an IPSA-based journal or any other appropriate publication, which must be made available to the Muslim community. In conclusion, we believe the IPSA BAHIS programme and its first cohort of graduates are a *hadiyyah* (a gift) to our community. We must treasure this gift and make sure that IPSA is strengthened to build on this contribution to Islam in Cape Town and beyond."<sup>7</sup>

Most recently, IPSA held a symposium titled, "The Concourt Ruling on Muslim Marriages: Implications and Challenges." This symposium discussed the Constitutional Court decision of 28 June 2022. After the main speakers presented their papers, the Honours students presented a draft Muslim marriage contract that would serve as a Muslim marriage contract while government amend the Marriage and Divorce Act. The scope of this Marriage Contract aligned itself to constitutional imperatives, objectives of Islamic law, and a multi-disciplinary MPL

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<sup>7</sup> [www.ipsa-edu.org/annual-report-2019](http://www.ipsa-edu.org/annual-report-2019).

articulation. *Wasatiyyah's* balanced intellectual methodology, in which the students approached their assignment, incorporated variables of contemporary Islam law values. The contract incorporates the ceding of divorce (*tafwid*) and divorce through compensation (*khul'*) as Islamic legal paradigms under Muslim personal law. Also, the value and worth of the wife in supporting her husband in the subsistence of the marriage is mentioned in the contract. IPSA will soon make the contract available to the public.

### Conclusion

The Muslim world today is facing unprecedented challenges and Islam has largely been an untapped well of ideas and approaches that can potentially address them. Although Islam is the religion of approximately one quarter of the world's population, contemporary Muslim contributions have fallen well behind its historical legacy. Moreover, core Islamic values that include unity of humanity and creation, seeking knowledge, and establishing justice, welfare and peace, have found limited expression in modern academic disciplines and their application.

IPSA strives to emphasise the importance of a future orientation over a historical orientation, holism over simplicity, moral values over literalism, multidimensionality over binarism, reconstruction over deconstruction, and purposes over rules. IPSA'S programmes are rooted in the rich intellectual tradition and legacy of Islam.

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# The Role of *Awqaf* in Educational Systems in Islamic Civilization

Alparslan Açıkgenç\*

## Introduction

Educational systems stand out as paramount institutions within a civilization, shaping its very essence. A robust and efficient educational system is the cornerstone of any thriving civilization. This significance is exemplified in the early days of Islam, where, following the revelation, the foremost directive was to "teach" (*tabligh*), echoing the initial command of the first revelation urging the Prophet (SAW) to "read in the Name of your Lord Who created."<sup>1</sup> Numerous verses further underscore the importance of imparting knowledge.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, instruction commenced at the inception of Islam within the city-state of Mecca.<sup>3</sup> The Prophet (SAW) proclaimed, "I have been raised

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1 Chapter 96 al-'Alaq, 1.

2 Translations of the verses are taken from Muhammad Hamidullah, "Educational System in the time of the Prophet", *Islamic Culture*, 13 (1939), 29.

"(Abraham and Ishmael prayed): Our Lord! And raise up in their midst a messenger from among them who shall recite unto them Thy revelations and shall instruct them in Scripture and in Wisdom and shall make them grow. Lo! You, only You, are the Mighty, Wise." (2/al-Baqarah, 129).

"He it is Who hath sent among the unlettered ones a messenger of their own, to recite unto them His revelations and to make them grow, and to teach them the Scripture and Wisdom, though heretofore they were in error manifest" (62/al-Jum'ah, 2). "Allah verily hath shown grace to the believers by sending unto them a messenger of their own who recites unto them His revelations, and causes them to grow, and teaches them the Scripture and Wisdom, though heretofore they were in error manifest." (3/al 'Imrân, 164).

3 For this term see Muhammad Hamidullah, "The City State of Makka", *Islamic Culture* XII, No. 3.

"Suffa, which means 'shade' in the dictionary, became the name of the place built at the entrance of Masjid al-Nabawi for the shelter of the Companions who did not have houses and relatives to stay in Medina. The community that stayed here, consisting mostly of Muhajirs, was called 'Ashâb al-Suffa' or 'Ahl al-Suffa'. The

up as a teacher (mu'allim)."<sup>4</sup> Additionally, historical records reveal that during the second covenant of Aqabah, when individuals from Madina embraced Islam, "they asked the Prophet to send along with them a teacher who could teach them the Qur'an and instruct them in Islam and the religious rites. Naturally, teaching at this stage meant only the explanation of the rudiments of the faith and the rituals connected therewith."<sup>5</sup>

At this stage, the house of the companion of the Prophet, Arqam ibn Abi al-Arqam al-Makhzumi (c. 597-675) is known to have been used as the first formal Islamic educational institution situated near the Safa Hill in Makkah. We can see this in the fact that the Prophet taught the Qur'an in this house called "Dar al-Arqam" because it was safer for them to do their collective prayers together and learn more about the new religion as they were persecuted by the polytheists. In fact, Abdullah ibn Mas'ud stated that they could not pray at the Ka'ba until 'Umar ibn al-Khattâb became Muslim.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the sources indicate that Muslims in Mecca gathered in this house to learn the Qur'an from their teacher, the Prophet (SAW) and also, they were secretly bringing those who were interested in learning the new message, and many such people accepted Islam.

We do not think that the Arqam House is the foundation of the educational system in Islamic civilization. The actual model of Islamic education is the School of Suffa established in Medina by the Prophet (SAW). This is clearly stated by al-Tabari also as even an Orientalist, Pedersen attests: "The plan was, therefore, an exact reproduction of

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Ashâb-i Suffa were also called '*adyâf al-Islâm*' (guests of Muslims) because their needs were met by the Messenger of Allah and the rich Companions, and '*awfâd*' because they belonged to various tribes." This information about the Suffa is given by Mustafa Baktır, "Suffe", *DIA*, (2009), 37: 469-470. Please note that *DIA* is the abbreviation for the Turkish Encyclopedia of Islam (*Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslam Ansiklopedisi*) published by the Türkiye Religious Foundation. It is available for open access at: <https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/> (Note: I used mainly [www.DeepL.com/Translator](http://www.DeepL.com/Translator) (free version) in translating Turkish passages and revised it wherever I found necessary)

- 4 Ibn Abdul Barr, *Ilm*, 25 as cited by Muhammad Hamidullah, "Educational System", op. cit., 29.
- 5 Hamidullah, "Educational System", op. cit., 30.
- 6 Ibn Hisham, *al-Sirat al-Nabawiyyah*, ed. Muhammad Ali al-Qutb and Muhammad al-Dâlibalta (Beirut: al-Matba'at al-'Asriyyah, 1418/1998), 1: 25; for English translation see Alfred Guillaume, *The Life of Muhammad* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1990), 155.

that of the mosque in Medina."<sup>7</sup> This model is explained very well by Muhammad Hamidullah as quoted above. There are references for this in many earlier works in *hadith*, *sira* (pl. *siyar*, namely the biographies of the Prophet) and history books. Pedersen refers to all the functions of *masjids* in Islamic civilization except its educational function.

On the other hand, besides Hamidullah, Tibawi also confirms that the *masjid* in Medina was the center of education in early Islam relying on classical sources: "The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) used to sit in the mosque of Madina surrounded by his followers and he used to instruct them by repeating what he said three times until they memorized it — such instructions being extended also to women."<sup>8</sup> The interesting point here is that when those who are sufficiently instructed at the Suffa School they were graduated and then sent to other parts of the Arabian Peninsula to teach others.

The need to sustain such educational activities became more palpable in later times as the graduates of the Suffa School were sent to other parts of the Hijaz region. As Professor Hamidullah states,

Suffah was not the only school in Madinah. Ibn Hanbal records that at a certain time, a batch of 70 students attended the lectures of a certain teacher in Madinah and worked there till morning. There were at least nine mosques in Madinah even in the time of the Prophet (SAW), and no doubt, each one of them served simultaneously as a school. The people inhabiting the locality sent their children to these local mosques. Quba is not far from Madinah. The people sometimes went there and personally supervised the school in the mosque of that place. There are general dicta of the Prophet regarding those who studied in the mosque schools. He also enjoined upon people to learn from their neighbours.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, this system developed further and spread all the new areas where Muslims added to the original lands of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula. "The conversion to the new faith necessitated a very extensive educational service embracing the million square miles under the Muslim sway in the time of the Prophet. Teachers were sent from Madinah to important centers, and the provincial governors were

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7 J. Pedersen, "Masjid", *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., 6: 648. The reference to Tabari is his *History* as cited in the Bibliography *Ta'rikh al-Rusul wa'l-Muluk*. This was expressly emphasized in al-Tabari, i, 2489, 4 ff.

8 A. L. Tibawi, "Muslim Education in the Golden Age of the Caliphate", *Islamic Culture*, xviii, no. 3 (1954), 418. He refers to Bukhari, I, 36, 37, 48 and Abu Da'ud, Sunan, II; 125.

9 Hamidullah, "Educational System", 32.

made responsible for the organization and control of local schools" from Yemen in the south to all areas in the North.<sup>10</sup>

Our purpose in this article is not to present the history of the educational system in Islamic civilization.<sup>11</sup> We are rather tracing the historical roots of the financial resources of this system. We would like to argue that as this system developed right at the time of the Prophet (SAW), its need for financial support increased. We shall now trace very briefly how synchronously the *waqf* system emerged to give support to the educational institutions.

### A Brief History of the *Waqf* in Support of Education

We know from many hadith sources that the Prophet (SAW), in fact, personally took care of the livelihood of the members of the Bench, known as Ahl al-Suffah. These resident scholars, as we may call them today, were not allowed to work, so they had no job to support themselves. As a result, the Prophet (SAW) would divide them among the companions in order to feed them in the evening and take the remaining ones to his own house. This practice continued until the financial situation of the Muslims improved.<sup>12</sup> We also have reports that the Prophet used to send "all of the alms brought to him to the people of Suffa and share the gifts with them."<sup>13</sup>

Moreover, Baktır states that the Prophet (SAW) also put their needs before the needs of his family members.

When it was time to harvest the dates, everyone would bring bunches of dates according to their means, hang them in the masjid, and the Ahl al-Suffah would feed themselves with them. In the meantime, some people complained that they were tired of eating dates all the time.<sup>14</sup> Those who were able-bodied among the Suffa residents used to provide for their needs by carrying water to the mosque during the day and selling the wood they brought from the mountain, and at night they would engage in the recitation of the Qur'an and learning.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 36.

<sup>11</sup> For a good history of educational system see the following work, although it does not pay sufficient attention to the Prophetic period: A. Shalaby, *History of Muslim Education* (Beyrut: Dar Al-Kashshaf, 1954). For the expanded and developed Arabic edition by the same author see *Tarikh al-Tarbiyat al-Islamiyyah* (Beirut: Dar al-Kashshaf, 1954).

<sup>12</sup> See Bukhari, "Mawaqit al-ṣalat", 41; Ibn Sa'd, I, 255.

<sup>13</sup> *Musnad*, II, 515; al-Bukhari, "Riqaq", 17, cited by Mustafa Baktır, op. cit., 37: 469.

<sup>14</sup> *Musnad*, III, 487.

<sup>15</sup> Muslim, "Imara", 147; *Musnad*, III, 270.

Nevertheless, the Suffa residents lived a life of asceticism in the face of financial hardship.<sup>16</sup>

Just as the Qur'an is the ultimate source of many ideas and institutions in Islamic civilization, the idea of *awqaf* is also ultimately derived from it. But there is no expression in the Qur'an that directly evokes the concept and institution of *waqf*. However, if we look into many verses, we see that they advise spending in the way of Allah, spending for the poor, needy and orphans, helping each other in good deeds and piety. It is this advice which led to the practice of *waqf* in Muslim societies.<sup>17</sup> There are many examples in the sayings and practices of the Prophet (SAW) and his companions that constitute the basis for the institution of *waqf*. In the narrations on the subject, words from the roots of charity and *habs* are mostly used in the sense of *waqf*. The Messenger of Allah (swt) stated that a person's deeds would cease upon his death, and that there were three exceptions to this, the first of which was to leave behind a permanent charity (*ṣadaqah al-jariyah*).<sup>18</sup>

We may cite more such examples as given in the article cited in the next footnote: It is narrated that the Prophet (SAW) left no property other than a riding animal, his weapon, and the lands he had endowed.<sup>19</sup> 'Umar, following the advice of the Messenger of Allah, "Keep the original and donate the income", donated a valuable piece of land that he received as a booty in Khaybar for the needy on the condition that it would not be sold, donated or inherited.<sup>20</sup> Uthman, again with the guidance of the Messenger of Allah, bought the well of Ruma in Medina and allocated it for the benefit of all Muslims,<sup>21</sup> and Khalid ibn al-Walid donated his war implements and horses. Walid endowed his tools of war and horses,<sup>22</sup> Khalid b. al-Walid endowed a

16 Baktır, op. cit., 37: 469-470.

17 Most scholars seem to associate the following verses with the establishment of *waqf*: "You cannot attain true goodness unless you spend in the way of Allah out of what you love" (Al-Imran, 3/92) and the verse that refers to the mosques belonging to Allah and that only those who possess certain qualifications can build them (al-Tawbah, 9/18-19; see also al-Jin 72/18).

18 This brief history is translated and summarized mainly on the basis of the article "Vakıf" in Turkish by Hacı Mehmet Günay, *DİA*, q.v. and see Muslim, "Waşıyyah", 14.

19 See Ibid, citing Bukhari, "Waşaya", 1.

20 Bukhari, "Waşaya", 22, 28-29.

21 al-Tirmidhi, "Menaḳıb", 18.

22 al-Bukhari, "Zakat", 49.

piece of land and a water spring in Yenbu, and other Companions endowed their properties such as houses and lands.

In the later periods of Islamic history, *waqf* practices gradually increased in Muslim societies. Since the early periods, this institution has been dealt with in the *fiqh* literature with its various aspects and types, a detailed legal doctrine has emerged around its establishment, functioning and provisions, and a rich literature has emerged with the research conducted in this field both in the Islamic world and in the West.<sup>23</sup>

This informal endowment procedure continued for the first century of hijra uninterrupted until the beginning of the second century leading gradually to the institutionalizing of the endowment system. According to Shalabi, the Abbasid Caliph al-Ma'mun (reigned 813–833) is the first ruler that established endowments for education in the formal sense. He shows that there were no specific sources of expenditure as an institution for the spread of knowledge and culture. When there was a need to establish special places for the protection of knowledge and the spread of culture, the idea of providing a foundation for these institutions also emerged. Al-Ma'mun was the first person to come up with this idea for its realization. He did not wish to leave the future of Bayt al-Ḥikma, which he established for science and education, to the generosity of the caliphs and princes. Whether the next caliph was generous or stingy, he wanted to ensure that the institution would continue its vigor and vitality without interruption. He provided the ulama with ample financial means. They provided for their needs from the revenues of the fixed *waqf*, which covered the necessary expenses of this cultural institution through its endowment.<sup>24</sup>

This idea of Caliph al-Ma'mun spread among the caliphs and statesmen after him. This procedure became standard in the history of *waqf*, and when an educational institution or a madrasah was built, it became a necessity to establish a foundation that would provide a fixed income for it. The amount that would be sufficient for the expenses of the institution and response to the needed expenses would be met from here. In time, this tendency developed. So much so that foundations

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23 See, for example, Muhyid al-Din Atiyya, 33 [1417/1996], 187-198, cited by Hacı Mehmet Günay, "Vakıf", *DİA*.

24 See Shalaby, *History of Muslim Education*, 210, see the complete section B. Endowments, Chapter V.

with abundant income were allocated to the pillars and poles of some masjids, as well as to those who sat in masjids and devoted themselves to the service of knowledge. Their income was spent on the person who lived there for the purpose of education and training.<sup>25</sup>

Now that we have given this brief on the progress of the *waqf* systems, we can skip the later developments and try to see in the Turkish system of education what kind of function the *waqfs* performed in educational institutions.

### **Turkish Experience with the *Waqf* Institution in the Educational System<sup>26</sup>**

When we discuss the experience of different Muslim nations with regard to educational systems in relation to the *waqf* institutions, we should note that there are Islamic principles that do not change from one nation to another and that it is these principles that make their experience Islamic. The differences are in details that Islam allows. This way, Islam does not destroy local cultures but instead preserves local identities. In the same way, the roots of Islamic education in Turkey goes back to the educational system established by the Prophet (SAW) in the first century of Islam at the School of Suffa. Of course, circumstances change and more knowledge also accumulates in the society, as a result the system will also develop and show some progress in all respects. To give an example, we may refer again to the *waqf* institution which has become by now an integral part of educational institutions. This way, the *waqf* institution and educational systems became parallel organizations co-existing as a part of Islamic civilization. In this section, however, I would like to concentrate on the transformation of this integral system and try to show how both institutions, to our dismay, are separated in the Ottoman-Turkish experience.

All the way from the beginning, Muslim societies paid the highest regard to the pursuit of knowledge (*ilm*) as required by Islamic principles of learning. Education, on the other hand, was somehow regarded as a religious duty which belonged to the community rather

25 Ibid, 211 ff. See also See A. L. Tibawi, "Muslim Education in the Golden Age of the Caliphate", *Islamic Culture* xviii, no. 3 (1954), 418-38. A. L. Tibawi, "Origin and Character of "al-madrasah", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 25, No. 1/3 (1962), 225-238.

26 This section is based on my previous book: *Islamic Thought and Education in the Ottoman Period* (Saarbrücken: LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2017).

than the state. For this reason, in the early period, there were only two forms of teaching; regular Qur'an schools, or *maktab* (*mekteb*); and higher schools of learning, *madrakah* (*medrese*). Both institutions were financed privately by donations or *waqf*, pious foundations throughout the Muslim world. Turkish people inherited this system from the Ottoman educational tradition through the Seljuk Turks of Anatolia; a system which was established right from the very beginning days of Islam. *Madrakah* (*medrese*), in the sense of university, is the touchstone of this tradition.

That is why as soon as the Ottomans were able to perceive themselves as a self-sustained state, they established a *medrese*; the first one being the Iznik Medrese, founded by Orhan Gazi in 1331. The chief scholar of this first *medrese* was the well-known philosopher, Dawud al-Qaysari, who was himself educated in a similar institution in classical learning of Islam. Therefore, the Ottoman intellectual history made a beginning as a continuation of the same tradition that reached them from the Abbasids, through the Seljuks. But with the general course of Ottoman history, this system was gradually transformed into an Ottoman milieu. As more *medreses* were opened according to the needs of the society, new terminology concerning the intellectual system emerged.

The complete form of the Ottoman intellectual training began, as is the case today, from elementary school, called *mekteb-i sibyan*, or simply *mekteb* and continued with middle school, called *medrese-i ibtidaiye*. What may be characterized today as higher education began at *tetimme medrese* and continued at *medrese-i semaniye*, or *sahn-i seman*, which can be classified as the true university. In the later periods this system was modified and some other types of higher educational institutions were added. But the more radical changes were introduced after the 18<sup>th</sup> century with which we are concerned in this study. These changes were not only formal, which means a change involved in the status of *waqf* in relation to the educational institution, but they were concerned with the contents of education as well.<sup>27</sup>

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27 Ismail Hakki Uzunçarşılı, *Osmanlı Tarihi* (Ankara: Turk Tarih Kurumu, 1983), vol. 2: 583-5. See also Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), vol. 1: 132-4. Also see Halil İnalcık, *The Ottoman Empire: The Classical Age 1300-1600*, trans. by Norman Itzkowitz and Colin Imber (New Rochelle, New York: Orpheus Publishing Inc., 1973).

We also need to briefly address the curriculum, as it reveals the significance of *waqf* in Islamic education. The separation of *awqaf* from schools resulted in a shift towards a more secular curriculum, neglecting Islamic subjects. This shift contributed to the cultivation of scholars with a more secular mindset. Early education in elementary school focused on essential skills such as reading and writing, primarily to enable students to read the Qur'an. Alongside these skills, fundamental subjects like mathematics, the basics of Islam, and general courses on religion and morality were included. As students progressed in their education, they encountered additional subjects, including Arabic, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, logic, philosophy (*kalam*), Qur'anic exegesis, *hadith*, and *fiqh* (Islamic law, jurisprudence, and ethics). It is noteworthy that natural and medical sciences were typically not part of the curriculum at medreses; instead, they were taught at specialized universities. These universities were established, particularly during and after the time of Suleiman the Magnificent.<sup>28</sup>

After the eighteenth century, new engineering schools were established, introducing new dynamics to Ottoman intellectual life and giving rise to conflicts due to differing educational philosophies. Consequently, three distinct types of intellectuals emerged within society. Firstly, individuals educated in the *medrese* system tended to focus on legalistic or theological studies. Secondly, those trained in mystic lodges adopted an ascetic mindset. Lastly, individuals educated in the newly established universities developed secularist perspectives, often downplaying traditional learning. The intellectual landscape of later Ottoman thought was primarily shaped by the ongoing struggle between these three mentalities.

The initial stages of the transformation from classical Islamic intellectualism to what is recognized today as 'modernization' or, more radically, 'Westernization,' are evident in a period referred to in Ottoman history as the 'Lale Devri' (The Tulip Period). Grand Vezir Damad İbrahim Paşa (1718-1730) initiated the construction of a lavish pleasure palace named *Sa'dabat* (Place of Happiness) for the sultan and his entourage. It was built at one of the most beautiful places in Istanbul, on the right tip of the Golden Horn. İbrahim Paşa is also the

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28 I. H. Uzunçarşılı. *Osmanlı Tarihi*, op. cit., vol. 2: 586-7. See also Stanford J. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire*, op. cit., vol. 1: 132-4. Also see Inalcik, *The Ottoman Empire*, op. cit.

first Ottoman official to realize after the terrible defeats at the Western military fronts that Europe was now more advanced in certain fields of knowledge that the Ottomans lacked. He thus began a series of reforms and new organizations. He implemented diplomatic measures, sending permanent ambassadors to major European capitals. This marked the beginning of the infiltration of European lifestyles and culture into Ottoman society.

Utilizing sketches of Fontainebleau brought from Paris by Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet as reference models, the main building was enveloped by opulent pavilions, statues, baths, gardens, and fountains — all meticulously designed to replicate the lavish lifestyle of the French king and his entourage. The sultan's emulation of this lifestyle set a precedent that extended to ministers and members of the ruling class. In various ways, they endeavored to mimic their sovereign, a crucial aspect of maintaining their privileged positions in Ottoman society. Across the capital, private constructions mirroring *Sa'dabat* Palace sprang up, including palaces, pavilions, gardens, and fountains. İbrahim Paşa's own palace went up in Kandilli, on the Anatolian shore of the Bosphorus.

Plots of land along the Bosphorus and the Golden Horn were distributed by the sultan to relatives and members of the ruling class, turning those areas into residential centers for the wealthy. In the gardens surrounding the palaces and pavilions, the Ottomans of the time competed with one another in designing lavish and extravagant gardens, ornate fountains, and especially cultivating tulips. Interest in this bulb was so pervasive that the age came to be known as the Tulip Period (*Lale Devri*). Rare strains of tulips were among the most coveted possessions and were used as a means of securing high offices. Horticultural secrets were most carefully guarded. The Sultan, members of the ruling class, wealthy subjects, resident diplomats, and foreigners shared this interest, and fortunes were spent on tulips as well as garden parties and festivals where entertainment was provided by poets, musicians, and dancers. At night turtles carrying candles on their backs walked around the tulip beds. Singing birds and parrots provided a further diversion. In the summertime, exhibitions of fireworks, cannonry, and naval warfare were arranged by the imperial navy.

Along with a new appreciation of the out-of-doors, echoed in the works of the famous court poet Nedim, there was an open assertion of

joys to be derived from the senses and from nature. The general loosening of upper-class behavior found its counterpart among the lower classes in the increased number of coffeehouses and taverns that became centers of popular entertainment.<sup>29</sup>

Beyond the construction of palaces and lavish entertainments, the Tulip Period heralded the onset of Western lifestyle influence. Significant transformations occurred, including the restoration of governmental and ministerial edifices, as well as mosques and medreses. Ministers, following the example set by the Grand Vizier, undertook initiatives to construct new mosques, *medreses*, and fountains. This period also witnessed a noteworthy shift in Ottoman intellectual pursuits, transitioning from classical learning to a focus on the emerging scientific knowledge from Europe.

Perhaps the most important intellectual achievement of this period was the translation of the great Arabic and Persian works of the past into Ottoman Turkish, sponsored primarily by Damad İbrahim Paşa. These works were mainly on history, philosophy, and astronomy as well as on the more traditional subjects, such as *fiqh*, *kalam* and Qur'anic commentaries. The summarized developments I have outlined are highly significant, as they contributed to elements of secularization, particularly when the *waqf* institution was entirely severed from the educational system.

Yirmisekiz Çelebi Mehmet was sent to Paris by Damat İbrahim "to visit the fortresses, factories and works of French civilization generally and report on those which might be applicable" in the Ottoman Empire. He wrote the vizier not only about such things but also about what he saw in the streets and hospitals, zoos, and gardens, with particular attention to the French military; training grounds and those aspects of French society and ways of doing that differed most markedly from those of the Ottomans, such as the position and status of women, the manner in which the king and other high officials passed through the streets of Paris, and, most important, the wide use of the printing press.<sup>30</sup>

Printing press was already available for the non-Muslim subjects of the Ottomans, and works in Hebrew, Greek, Armenian, and Latin had been printed. Together with Sait Mehmet Paşa, the son of Damad İbrahim Paşa, İbrahim Müteferrika (1674-1745), who was familiar with

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<sup>29</sup> Shaw, *op. cit.*, 234.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid*, 235.

this new invention, initiated the establishment of the first Turkish printing press in İstanbul. This helped in turn, transmit many of the artefacts and ideas of the West into the empire. The scribes, who feared losing their jobs and position in the ruling class, at first strongly, opposed this new invention. But the *shaykh al-Islam* issued a compromising *fatwa*, allowing the printing of all books except the traditional religious books.

Müteferrika was thus free to print whatever he wanted on history, languages, mathematics, geography, and the sciences. But with the insistence of İbrahim Paşa, the very first works printed were maps of the Sea of Marmara and of the Black Sea (1720-1725). Then until the death of İbrahim Müteferrika in 1745, 16 works (in 20 volumes) were printed. Six of these were on the exact sciences, and the rest were on history and geography. In addition to inaugurating the printing press İbrahim Paşa also suggested constructing a paper factory which was established in Yalova in 1746, thus initiating another significant development for the circulation of ideas more rapidly.

It is not difficult to infer that in the minds of the Ottoman thinkers who read these newly published works, a new idea was gradually emerging; they could survive only if they "borrowed not only the military sciences but also the geographic knowledge and governmental techniques developed in the modern world."<sup>31</sup> This is clearly manifest in the publication of Katip Çelebi's *Cihannuma* which "used a Latin work by Edmund Pourchot (1651-1734) as a basis for discussing the theories of Descartes on vortexes and those of Galileo on physics, magnetism, and the compass. In 1732 he brought together translations of several English and Latin works under the title *Fuyuzat-i Miknatisiye* (The Enlightenment of Magnetism), adding information on the use of the compass."<sup>32</sup>

The influence of the press in opening Ottoman eyes to the modern world cannot be underestimated. The establishment of the press proved how it could facilitate the revival of learning among Muslims by producing more copies to make them easily available for those who look for them by making them cheap enough to buy. This would enable the Muslims to regain their former role as leaders of learning throughout the world. This is perhaps the most outstanding legacy of

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 237.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

the Tulip Period in the history of Islamic education in the 18<sup>th</sup> century Ottoman history.

The developments in the 19th century laid the groundwork for the subsequent Republican era in the 20th century. As outlined earlier, the 18th-century changes initiated alterations in the educational system, particularly evident in the engineering field. The traditional *medrese* system did not include technical subjects just as natural science. As a result –as early as 1734–a school of engineering was established in Istanbul. But the most comprehensive of such schools would come later after the disaster of the Treaty of Karlowitz, signed in Austria (present-day Sremski Karlovci, Serbia), on 26 January 1699. This treaty ended the Great Turkish War of 1683–1697 against the Holy League. It marks the end of Ottoman control in much of Central Europe; as the Ottomans lost the war they experienced first major territorial losses, reversing centuries of expansion.<sup>33</sup> This was a big shock for the Ottomans, and it required an in-depth analysis of the situation.

Since this development was a result of the military occasion, it required a military evaluation and analysis in order to find a remedy for it. This mental disposition directed their attention toward European technology at that time instead of analyzing and evaluating their own social, educational and scientific prospects. They came to the conclusion that they needed engineers and technical personnel like the Europeans. Finally, the sultan decided to open better engineering schools in order to train military personnel in 1776. These were called Imperial Naval Engineering School (*Mühendishane-i Bahr-i Hümayun*) and Imperial Land Engineering School (*Mühendishane-i Berr-i Hümayun*).

These military schools had mostly French Officers and European textbooks, most of which were translated into Ottoman Turkish. Such new schools with totally different backgrounds brought a dilemma to the Ottoman educational system, for there were two types of intellectuals: one with a traditional Islamic mind and the other with a new Muslim mind filled with a variety of Western perspectives of world conceptions. This dilemma always introduced a clash in Turkish society as well as the educational field. In order to lessen the gap

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33 For more information on this war see Colin Heywood and Ivan Parvev, eds., *The Treaties of Carlowitz (1699): Antecedents, Course and Consequences* (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2020).

between the two approaches, Sultan Mahmud II (1801-1839) introduced wholesale reforms in the Ottoman educational system.

We must notice that this development concerning the establishment of new schools and implementation of new reforms introduced something very significant: the educational institution is no longer sponsored by a *waqf*, but rather it is both funded and governed now by the government. Consequently, these newly established schools are unable to engage in any scientific activities without government approval. This indicates a gradual erosion of independence for educational institutions.

The most significant step taken in this period was the move towards compulsory education of children. Although Sultan Mahmud issued an imperial statement emphasizing the significance of education for all, he did not start his reforms from the mandatory education but rather from the top of the educational system moving gradually as the need arose towards the bottom units. This is reasonable considering the need of his time to train officers, government clerks, doctors, engineers and administrators for both the army and the civil bureaucracy. We thus see a notable number of higher schools established during the reign of Sultan Mahmud II. Schools of medicine, an Imperial School of Music and the Military Academy (*Harbiye*), School of Law (*Mekteb-i Ma'arif-i Adliye*), School of Natural Sciences (*Mekteb-i Ulum-u Fenniye*) and School of Literary Sciences (*Mekteb-i Ulum-u Edebiyye*).<sup>34</sup>

But these newly established higher institutions of learning had absolutely no relationship whatsoever with the traditional education system in lower levels. In fact, elementary and middle education schools had almost no changes at this early period of modernization. As a result, students coming from traditional schools had difficulty understanding the subjects at higher institutions. Therefore, eventually, the new higher schools gradually began to develop their own elementary and secondary schools. At first, the need was felt more at the higher elementary level; as a result, the so-called *Rushdiyye Schools* (adult elementary schools) were established. For some time, these fulfilled the need of the newly established higher schools. The early

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34 See Osman Ergin, *Türkiye Maarif Tarihi*, 3 vols. (Istanbul: Eser Neşriyet, 1977). Mahmud Sana'i provides an overall view of these developments in the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed. article "Ma'ârif".

elementary schools, called *mekteb-i sibyan* continued to give traditional education of Qur'an and Islamic knowledge.

The period right after Sultan Mahmud II is known in Ottoman history as the period of wholesale reforms called *Tanzimat* (1839-1876). The reforms introduced during the *Tanzimat* Period brought irreversible changes to the Ottoman educational system. Perhaps the most significant departure from traditional Islamic education is the new outlook that education is merely a religious and, thus a community effort. This new outlook emphasizes the fact that the state is intimately concerned with education. As a result, a new department was established in the government in 1845 in order to control and administer education.

At first, this department was called the Provisional Board of Education (*Muwaqqat Ma'arif Meclisi*), which was later named the Ministry of Public Schools (*Mekatib-i Umumiyye Nezareti*). Thus, the first Ministry of Education was also established in the Muslim world. This new state body introduced a set of regulations in 1846 to reorganize the entire educational system. But they were not implemented. However, the same idea of reorganization came into effect in 1857 again with a new scheme with elementary school called *Mekteb-i Sibyan* for children of ages 7-10 with four grades; and secondary school called *Rushdiye* (*Rüşdiye* in Turkish) as before with six grades for children between ages 11-16. After the *Rushdiye* a student would choose any higher school.

Finally, in 1869 the first Ottoman Education Law was issued with a comprehensive reorganization of the state school system. This law allowed private schools; as a result, many foreign schools and non-Muslim educational institutions were opened. But the Ottoman law did not allow mixed education of Muslims and non-Muslims. The public schools, on the other hand, were designed as *Sibyaniyye* (elementary school), *Rushdiye* (lower middle school), *Idadiyye* (higher middle school) and *Sultaniyye* (high school). Then came the institutions of higher learning such as technical, engineering, and military schools. The first modern university organized in Western fashion in the Muslim world came into existence at this time with its Ottoman-Arabic name *Dar al-Funun* (1900). The Ottoman Education Law made education mandatory for boys between ages 7-11 and for girls between ages 6-10. However, new *Rushdiyes* were established for girls also if they

wanted to continue with higher education. As a result, education became more widespread throughout the community.

After the *Tanzimat* Period during Sultan Abdulhamid II, the number of schools increased remarkably, and thus the rate of literacy tripled. More schools were established with this modern approach in other provinces such as Damascus, Baghdad and Lebanon. The sultan further opened new schools of finance, fine arts, commerce, engineering, veterinary services, police, and schools for the blind and deaf. After the rule of Sultan Abdulhamid II, the educational system experienced more reforms of secularization which paved the way for the official introduction of secularization during the Republican Era when the Ankara government introduced the Law of Unity of Education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*) in 1920.

This way, all educational institutions were put under the control of the Ministry of Education which closed all the traditional medreses, the number of which was estimated to be around 500, with about 18.000 students. In order not to attract negative impressions because medreses were considered to represent Islamic education for the common people, the government provisionally established new higher education schools called Faculty of Theology (Dar al Funun, İlahiyat Fakültesi) in Istanbul and 26 new secondary schools for training religious personnel such as *imams* and *muftis*.

However, when the new constitution was introduced in 1928, Islam was no longer the official religion of the state, which was defined to be secular. In the same year, the Arabic alphabet was replaced by the Latin alphabet used in educational systems as well. As a result of these new developments, all Islamic schools were closed once again. This was the period of religious subjugation, especially during the İnönü administration, when no religious education at all was allowed.

Finally, after 1950 when the Democrat Party came into power began to allow Islamic education by establishing the Islamic secondary schools and higher institutions of Islamic learning at the university level. It is this system which came to the present times with some slight changes.

### **Conclusion and the Function of the *Waqf***

It is clear that this systematic development in the educational system during the Ottoman period led to the gradual exclusion of the *waqf* system from education. We can clearly observe in this ill-

development two significant changes, among others, which critically indicate the role of *waqf* system in education: the educational system changes hands, from *waqf* it is transformed into the custody of the state; the main elements of the educational system lost their independence, they also fell into the control of the state.

From this, we can now refer to the vital functions of the *waqf* system in education in general, whether scientific, religious or intellectual and philosophical: the first one, *waqfs* ensure free thinking based on the financial independence of teachers and scholars as well as the students; the second one is the fact that education changed the mentality of the educated from an Islamic framework to a secular framework which resulted from the change of the curriculum. Some may argue that in the face of the significant scientific progress of Western civilization, a change in the curriculum from more religious education to scientific education was necessary. This is true, but the way the new curriculum was introduced was not a healthy one. It was not integration but rather a juxtaposition of the new subjects, and that is why they began to introduce duality in the minds of the students.

We may also observe that the struggle for excellence in Islamic education in the experience of Turkish people represents perhaps the same experience throughout the Muslim world. In this struggle, Muslims are left between an old system of Islamic education which is no longer able to cope with the requirements of our time, and a new Western educational system built on solid ground and a philosophy of its own worldview. If Muslims adopt this new educational system, they feel forced to accept with it its philosophical requirements at the same time. This necessarily brings the problem of philosophical secularism into the educational picture. There seems to be only one way left: to develop a new system of Islamic education for the future generations.

Unfortunately, many Muslim intellectuals and government policy makers in the Muslim world are not even aware of the fact that without a well-rounded philosophy of Islamic education it is not possible to establish a system of education; a philosophy of education that is built upon the worldview of Islam, namely the metaphysical vision of reality and truth. This explains the fact that there is a dire need for Muslim philosophers to work in this direction until we come up with a philosophical expression of reality and truth as depicted by the Qur'an and *hadith*. We are hoping that on this basis we shall be able to establish the Islamic philosophy of education. But now as we face these

problems, it is now time to pose this question also: how can we integrate the *waqf* system into education?

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# AWQAF SA: Personal Reflections on Its Formation

Zeinoul Cajee\*

## Introduction

To understand the founding of a *waqf* institution in South Africa such as the National Awqaf Foundation of South Africa (AWQAF SA), we need to delve into its evolution from 'an idea' to its 'implementation.' But before the idea of a dedicated *waqf* institution emerged, we also need to understand from whence the idea emerged. In order to understand this, we need to go to the early 1970s when the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa (MYMSA) was founded. A historical background, a rationale of its founding, its vision and values must be articulated. As we shall see, the MYMSA had a pivotal role in setting up AWQAF SA.

This short article explores the historical background, foundational values, and vision of MYMSA. Following this, the narrative delves into various institutions spawned by MYMSA. Subsequent sections discuss offshoots influenced by MYMSA and offer a cursory look at various waqfs in South Africa. The article further provides a historical overview of the founding, establishment, and continuation of AWQAF SA, outlining the *raison d'être* of its formation. Other aspects of AWQAF SA, including its vision & mission, the basic business model, investments, and its downstream projects are discussed in subsequent sections.

## Historical Background

As a pivotal part of the story, the MYM played a critical role in the development of Islamic thought in South Africa in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Motivated by the values and ideology of Islam as embodied in the Holy Qur'an and the life of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), the organization maintained a commitment to an Islam that is responsive and relevant to the South African socio-political context.

Responding to the call of the Qur'anic verse, "Let there arise out of you a group of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is

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\* CEO of AwqafSA.

right and forbidding what is evil; they are the ones to attain success,"<sup>1</sup> MYMSA's founding fathers gave it meanings. This was a group of youth who were committed and were willing to sacrifice for the betterment of all peoples' lives. In the then apartheid South Africa, the MYMSA and others heeded the call (giving meaning to the above quoted verse); this was in itself a revolutionary move.<sup>2</sup>

MYMSA's calling was articulated as follows:

- Islam is a complete code and comprehensive way of life;
- Implementing the Islamic value system; and
- Building institutions.

Fundamental to its calling was the recognition of the Muslims' conditions and their youth during an era when communism/atheism was rife; as far as can be assessed, there were hardly any organizations or institutions that seriously looked at the youth and community affairs apart from prevailing theological bodies that were concerned with '*halal* and *haram*' issues and passing *fatawa* on the consumption of food and other related issues. There was no message coming from mosques as many of the imams could hardly communicate in English. Where pre-Friday *khutbah bayans* were given, these were mainly in Urdu that the majority of youth did not understand. Kerk Street Mosque, Johannesburg is one example where this was evident. In Lenasia, at both Rainbow and Jaame Masjid, no *bayans* were given. Furthermore, internationally it seemed that Muslims were going nowhere – still suffering in the post-colonial nation-state era.

The founders of the MYM were determined to organize and galvanise the youth in the country to learn Islam as a comprehensive code of life from its original sources.<sup>3</sup> The Quran and *hadith* became essential reading and learning sources. Various international scholars viz. Prof. Moulana Fazlur Rahman Ansari, Dr. Ahmad Sakr, Dr. Ahmad Al Kadi, Hisham, Badran, Gamal Badawi, Hisham al-Talib, Ahmad Totonji, Jaffer Shaykh Idrees, Khurram Muraad, Khurshid Ahmad, Fatima Heeren, Mahmood Rashdaan, Yaqub Mirza, Abdul Rahman Sumayt, Fathi Osman, and Zaghoul El Naggar were amongst

1 Al Imran: Surah 3, Verse 104.

2 Anonymous, *Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa: Celebrating 40 Years of Activism*, (Durban: MYMSA Publication, 2012).

3 MYMSA: *Celebrating 40 Years of Activism* gives a thorough overview of MYMSA's projects and programs; the list of institutions, which it had set up, developed under its collective leadership's watch over more than 40 years.

the most notable scholars who brought "Islamic Movement" thinking to the youth leaders of South Africa. These scholars together with the founders shaped and motivated a core of young people from universities and the mainstream community to serve the *deen* actively in the promotion of *deeni* ideals.

Lamenting the paralysis Muslims found themselves in, Hafez Abu Bakr Mahomed, one of the founding fathers of the MYMSA stated:

Muslims have found themselves trapped within an educational and behavioral framework that can best be described as producing Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde personalities where what we do in the mosque is God's business and what we do outside is our business. It was this Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde division that bothered me about Muslims here and abroad. We lived split personalities. This was evident in universities, schools, *madrassas*, on the shop floor, in business houses and the mosques. Our educational system was dysfunctional and compartmentalized. It was stifling and unbearable. Either we were Muslims espousing our universal values or we were not. The elders, traditional structures and some, if not most, *ulama* were in their comfort zones. No help was forthcoming for our generation... It was time to break out. In the first quarter of 1970, as a third-year university law student, I convened a meeting of concerned Muslims at the Pine Street Madrassa. We were not there to form a Young Men's Muslim Association; we had assembled to form a movement that would break out from this paralysis and move continuously in the present, from stage to stage, from beacon to beacon, to clearly defined goals. It was the Muslim Youth Movement.<sup>4</sup>

Another founding father and veteran, Ustadh Ebrahim Jadwat, in his write-up mentioned several issues and the rationale for establishing the MYMSA: "The founding members of the MYM were inspired to act by several observations about the Islamic experience in South Africa. The first was our fervent belief that after 350 years in southern Africa, Islam/Muslims had made little impact on the indigenous and other non-Muslim communities in South Africa."<sup>5</sup> Apart from *da'wah*, he raised concerns about

- The fact that the Tabligh focused only on Muslims;

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4 MYMSA: *Celebrating 40 Years of Activism*, Hafez Advocate Abubaker Mahomed was MYMSA's president from 1970 until 1975; see pages 14-15.

5 Ebrahim Jadwat, "The Foundation Years of the MYMSA (est. 1970): Reflections - An Address Celebrating the Organization's 40th Anniversary", *BOLESWA* 4, no. 1 (2012): 178-186. Ebrahim Jadwat was MYMSA's President from 1975 to 1977.

- Islamic practice was based on rituals;
- Khutbahs and bayans were irrelevant to the modern world;
- Mundane hair-splitting issues preoccupied religious leadership;
- Understanding Quran was virtually absent with few exceptions e.g., Arabic Study Circle;
- Some bright minds turning to Marxism;
- Muslim women were invisible in social affairs, again with few exceptions such as the Women's Cultural Group in Durban;
- Lack of institutions catering for Muslim Youth;
- No tradition of scholarship;
- Absence of libraries and relevant literature; and
- Need for focus on revivalist ideas germinating in the Muslim world.

Jadwat explained: "The founding members wanted to develop and nurture visionary leadership for the Ummah, particularly in this country, so that Muslims would not have to rely on imported 'ulama who were not *au fait* with our challenges. We hoped that by presenting a dynamic version of Islam that focused on contemporary challenges, we could arrest the movement of people away from Islam to Marxism. Above all, we wanted to create institutions where Islamic values could be expressed and practiced as a way of life so that we could realize our vision of an Islamic alternative."

Among the founding fathers were also men like Mahmood Moosa, Dr. Shawkat Alli Thokan (1977-1979), Abdullah Osman, Ismail Kalla, Abdul Sattar Gani, and others who followed, conceived of a movement that would be more creative in developing institutions, opening Muslim minds, growing socially and politically conscious youth, implanting a sense of pride of being Muslim, promoting a change in the role of mosques, giving due recognition to the role of women in society, opening international contacts and relations.

Subsequent leaders Ahmed Saeed Moola (1979-1981), Muhammad Amra (1983-1987), Imam Rashied Omar (1987-1990), Tahir Fuzile Sitoto (1990-1996), Saiyed Salman Letlatsa (1996-1999), Na'eem Jeenah (1999-2006), and Thandile Kona also played significant roles. Directors or General Secretaries as they may be called, Yusuf Mohamedy, Fuad Hendricks, Rashied Omar and various project heads also contributed much to materialize some of the aims of the movement. The next section deals with institutions spawned by the MYMSA.

## Institutions

As part of its aim and mission to address concerns of the *ummah*, a number of institutions were initiated and spawned by the Muslim Youth Movement. Many of these were initially "Projects" and were headed by a dedicated member of the MYM who would report either at "plancom" meetings and/or at the Annual General Assembly of the MYM. Some then evolved into fully fledged organizations/institutions. Some survived with time and are still thriving. Others are unfortunately defunct. In this section, a list of is provided. More details may be available from other sources or directly from the respective organizations:

- South African National Zakah Fund (SANZAF)
- Association of Muslim Accountants and Lawyers (AMAL)
- Islamic Dawah Movement
- As-Salaam Educational Institute
- Islamic Medical Association
- Al Qalam
- Impress Printing Press
- The Voice – Radio Station (Defunct)
- Association of Muslim Social Scientists (Defunct)
- Jaame Ltd. (Defunct)
- Islamic Movement Broadcasting (IMBROC) (Defunct)
- Islamic Book Services (Defunct)
- Friday Khutbah (Defunct)
- Operation Qurbani
- Operation Winter-warm
- Conventions
- Youth Camps
- Islamic Tarbiyyah Programme (ITP)
- Human Resources Development Programme (HRDP), now rebranded as South African Leadership Academy (SALA)
- Libraries in Masajid

## Other Offshoots

- Africa Muslims Agency (AMA)
- South African Da'wah Network (SADN)
- Gift of the Givers/Waqful Waqifeen
- Muslim Students Association of SA
- Al Fajr Education Foundation/Al Fajr Youth Club (Defunct)

- National Awqaf Foundation of South Africa (AWQAF SA)
- Hikmah Publishers
- Junior Achievers
- Ummah Cooperative Fund (1973)

### **Waqfs In South Africa**

*Waqfs* have been founded since the early years of Islam in South Africa. In this section, a brief description of a selected few significant *waqfs* will be provided.

- a) 1794: The first notable waqf was that of Sara Van den Kaap in 1794. The famous Auwal Masjid located in the Bo-kaap, Cape Town, was built on the property gifted by her. Significantly the first waqf was dedicated by a woman.
- b) 1890: The Juma Masjid Trust was established in 1890 by a group of businessmen in the heart of the City of Durban. Today the property boasts rent producing shops, apartments and also once known as the largest mosque in the southern hemisphere: the Grey Street Mosque or Juma Masjid. The Trust is not only self-sufficient but also supports various other institutions, particularly the "Zanzibari" community.
- c) 1933: The Hajee Ahmed Mahomed Lockhat Wakuff (HAMLW) was established by its namesake and encouraged by his wife Ayesha. This waqf has grown exponentially owning commercial rent producing retail shops. The HAMLW has contributed to building several schools in KwaZulu-Natal, masjids, madrasahs, and several other humanitarian projects.
- d) 1934: The Waterval Islamic Institute was established with a large piece of land between Johannesburg and Pretoria in the Gauteng Province. This waqf was the subject of a family dispute over whether it was/was not a waqf. The court ruled, subject to verification of court records, that the property was indeed a waqf. Today this must be the largest and wealthiest waqf in South Africa. Managed by family as in the case of the Lockhat Waqf.
- e) 1989: The Rustenburg Mosque Plaza. This was a unique waqf project that involved community-based funding for the development of a shopping center around the mosque building. "Debentures" of R1000 each were "sold". This meant that the debenture holder gave a loan of R1000 to the mosque which then enabled the trustees to construct the shopping center. Debenture holders received a variable rate of return on their holdings. The mosque thus became self-sustainable not needing any further funding for salaries, wages and any other maintenance cost. In fact, the mosque has been involved in supporting neighboring communities with their masajid and schools.

- f) 1996: Nurul Islam Plaza. This was yet another example of creative mobilization of community funding for the mixed-use development of a shopping center cum offices. Shares linked to debentures were sold to the public who received a variable rate of return. The Nurul Islam Mosque, probably the largest in Lenasia, is self-sufficient.
- g) 2000/2001: National Awqaf Foundation of South Africa. This essay will delve into more detail about this institution up to its founding.
- h) Other: Most if not all Muslim schools and public Islamic infrastructure are effectively waqf buildings. Several families and organizations have also started establishing their own waqfs which are managed by their own trustees/mutawallis. A thorough study of all waqf properties needs to be done and is clearly beyond the scope of the present paper.

In the next section, a more detailed discussion on the establishment of the National Awqaf Foundation of South Africa follows.

### **National Awqaf Foundation of South Africa**

As indicated in the introduction in describing MYMSA's role, there were several initiatives within it to create other organizations/institutions. Way back in 1973, while we were students at the then University of Durban-Westville (UDW, rebranded as the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN), 15<sup>th</sup> of Shabaan 1393 (corresponding to 12 September 1973), considered a "big night," hostel students organized a bus to attend prayers at the Westville Masjid. A fiery Goolam Hoosen Vanker from the Islamic Propagation Centre gave a motivating and inspiring speech. That very night, during the usual "coffee club," a group of students decided to establish a "Ummah Cooperative Fund" (UCF). This project entailed collecting R1 per month from students who subscribed to its ideals. The project was ceded to the Muslim Students Association (MSA) in 1974 and became defunct.

Another project that was started by Hafez Abu Mahomed was the Muslim Development Fund (MDF). This project too did not materialize its ideals. Around 1975, Jaame Limited was launched as an Islamic finance company. Over its years of existence, it garnered over 8000 subscribers. 20% of its shareholding and linked debentures nominally valued at R48 per share/debenture were donated by subscribers for the benefit of the MYMSA at a variable rate of return. Unfortunately, this company was forced into voluntary liquidation around 1988-89 due to various reasons – a grave error in hindsight.

Anwar Ballim also wrote to MYMSA members during 1985, informing them of a decision taken at the MYMSA's General Assembly

to initiate an MYM Development Fund to finance Islamic Movement activities. The monies were to be invested in Jaame Ltd. The amounts requested from members at that time was R100 per annum.<sup>6</sup>

During 1984, Ebrahim Jadwat requested four members to fly to Jeddah to attend a seminar, literally blindfolded. This was to be done at their own expense: Iqbal Kolia, Suleman Lockhat, Abdul Sataar Gani, and myself took the responsibility to attend what we came to know as the first English language seminar on *waqf*. The seminar was organized by the Islamic Research and Training Institute of the Islamic Development Bank. "Management and Development of Awqaf Properties" was the seminar's theme.

It was for the first time that we were exposed to this amazing concept and institution of *waqf*. Several countries – including Bangladesh, Cyprus, Kenya, Malaysia, India, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, South Africa, Thailand, Turkey, and Uganda were represented and provided case studies of their countries involvement in the *waqf* sector. The lecturers included some of the best brains and internationally renowned personalities and covered some essential topics.

They included, among others, Dr. Muhammad Nejatullah Siddiqi who wrote *Sources of Islamic Jurisprudence*, Sh. Dr Hassan Abdullah Al-Amin who penned *Waqf in Islamic Jurisprudence*, Dr. Sherafat Ali Hashmi who prepared *Management of Waqf: Past & Present*, Dr. Muhammad Abdul Mannan who published *The Institution of Waqf: Its Religious and Socio-Economic Roles and Implications*, and Dr. Mohammad Anas Al Zarqa who circulated *Some Modern Means for the Financing and Investment of Awqaf Projects*.

Subsequent to our arrival back home, a number of seminars were held in Johannesburg's Lenasia, Durban, and Cape Town; these were undertaken under the auspices of the Association of Muslim Accountants and Lawyers (AMAL). But little was done to implement the *waqf* system on a community wide basis.

Perhaps I should mention that I did a brief study on Community Development Corporations (CDC) in the USA.<sup>7</sup> By 1998, more than 3000 CDCs were established in that country and these are quite

6 Letter addressed to MYM members by Anwar Ballim (National Finance Coordinator), dated 29 May 1985/9 Ramadaan 1405.

7 See Z. A. Cajee, *Towards Community Empowerment – The Implementation of a Community Development Corporation in South Africa* (Pretoria: Vista University Press, 1999).

widespread in local communities; these were, in turn, widely supported by enabling legislation like the Community Reinvestment Act where banks were required to fund these Corporations. This led me to write a book titled *Towards Community Empowerment – The Implementation of a Community Development Corporation in South Africa*.

A model for a CDC for Lenasia was presented to a few key business people in Lenasia with help of *marhum* Moosajee Dhorat. This model was also discussed with Yusuf Patel, Iqbal Kolia, and Ebrahim Khalil Hassen at the time. Unfortunately, this did not materialize.

The South African National Zakah Fund (SANZAF) in association with the Islamic Development Bank held a seminar on *Awqaf & Zakah* in Durban during 1-4 September 2000; the seminar was well attended. It was at this seminar that I remember having a discussion with Shaykh Faaik Gamielien and Fuad Hendricks wherein the idea sparked the imperative of establishing a *waqf* institution.

Soon after the aforementioned seminar, another was organized by the Murabitun a month or two later at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Convention Centre in Pretoria. This seminar was titled "*Awqaf, Zakah & Dinar*". The person accompanying me to this particular seminar was our venerable leader and mentor *marhum* Dr. Shawkat Alli Thokan. It was while driving to the conference on the second day that I suggested to him that it was time that we should establish a *waqf* institution. He immediately gave a positive nod and we discussed it further. Since he was already heading the South African National Zakah Fund, it would have been ideally suited to have such an institution housed within SANZAF. He, in turn, suggested that I prepare a concept document, which I duly did in the days that followed. (A copy of the abovementioned CDC book was also given to Dr. Shawkat).

After weeks of discussion and deliberation, Shawkat arranged a public presentation under the auspices of the Islamic Research Centre which he was also running. The presentation on the establishment of an *awqaf* institution was done at the Suliman Nana Memorial Centre, Crosby, Johannesburg on the 27 Ramadan 1421 (23/24 December 2000). With much enthusiasm, applause, and some skepticism, the scene was set. But this would entail a range of tasks and a team of people to start implementing the idea. The following Monday a meeting was held at the Wonder Flooring offices in Johannesburg with Dr. Shawkat and Br. Akhtar Thokan, both of whom pledged support

for the initiative. Dr. Ram Saloojee, who attended the 27 Ramadan 1421 presentation, referred to above, immediately endorsed the idea, and agreed to serve as a trustee/*mutawallee*.

### Implementation

The real work began; from idea to implementation. A detailed implementation plan was drawn up.<sup>8</sup> A steering committee was set up. Dr. Ismail Munshi, Moulana Fazel Ahmed, Dr. Shawkat and myself met literally every monday evening to look at documents that have been prepared and to discuss future strategy. Sr. Faaizah Mohamed and Saadia Thokan assisted with minute taking. The discussion even went to SANZAF to check whether "NAFSA" (the acronym first used for the National Awqaf Foundation of South Africa) would be housed under their umbrella.

Why re-invent the wheel? SANZAF had the necessary infrastructure and personally not inclined to set up another infrastructure. After deliberations held with SANZAF at the Suliman Nana Memorial Centre in Crosby, Johannesburg, we were informed that SANZAF declined. We will have to go it alone.

Dr. Shawkat advised that we should do presentations to the Thokan and Kalla families which we duly did. Each of these families were requested and committed an amount of R10,000.00 as seed funding plus giving one of their family members to join the Steering Committee as potential trustees. Another family, the Ghoor family of Vryburg was also approached. Thus, the first R30,000.00 was in the coffers of NAFSA. Incidentally, this money was hardly used initially as some income producing activities were launched during 2002 which raised further operational funds, and much of our initial costs were sponsored such as printing and stationery and office rental. No salaries were incurred as the fledgling organization was run by volunteers.

The first inaugural meeting of *mutawallees* was held at the home of Dr. Shawkat Alli Thokan in Parktown, Johannesburg. In attendance were Mia Ahmed Loonat, Ml. Fazel Ahmed, Dr. Shawkat Alli Thokan, Dr. Ismail Munshi, Rafik Bhayat, Akhtar Thokan, Dr. Ram Saloojee, Mr. Suliman Ghoor, and myself. An initial two-page constitution was signed off for the opening of a bank account.

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8 Ibid.

## Stakeholder Meetings and Consultations

What followed was a series of stakeholder meetings with community leaders, *ulama* bodies, business professionals, and community activists in the run up to the establishment of the organization. Stakeholders were important for buy-in and endorsement purposes.

Various NGOs were contacted around the country and brief presentations made to solicit support for the idea. This was part of a detailed implementation plan that was chalked out by our Steering Committee comprising of Dr. Shawkat, Dr. Ismail Munshi, Rafik Bhayat, and Zeinoul Cajee.

## Conclusion

The founding of the National Awqaf Foundation of South Africa (AWQAF SA) was a historic moment in the NGO landscape of South Africa, and I might add, in the landscape of Muslim minority communities globally. For the first time, a dedicated community-based NGO was established and evolved to proliferate the idea of the divine and prophetic *waqf* system, not only in South Africa but also with a global outreach.

The founding entailed a whole series of steps from idea to implementation which was no easy task, given that our team worked tirelessly in the ensuing years purely on a voluntary basis for the pleasure of Allah. In a future article, a much more detailed discussion will be provided on the various steps, critical success factors, *waqf* model, activities and projects, growth, public support, investments, partnerships, international relations, participation in international conferences and webinars, and much more.

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# Multiplexity: Providing a Research Paradigm for Muslim Researchers

Abdullah Bayat\*

## Introduction

In this article, we discuss issues of theoretical paradigm and how a Muslim researcher, who wants to incorporate his/her faith, may wish to formulate this paradigm. This is at a deeper level than just discussing methodology. Paradigm issues consist of both ontological and epistemological assumptions as well as commitments that impact on a researcher's methodological choices as she/he progresses in the study.

When doing research, a researcher always makes assumptions about several issues when setting out to do research. Gathering information to answer a question is already embedded in many assumptions. Even asking simple question like, "How do Muslims conduct research about the social world in the context of the hegemony of western civilisation?", involves assumptions about the world, knowledge, and the words or concepts used in the research question.

Each of these words has its assumptions; we, for example, assume that all Muslims are the same and that there is one hegemonic Western civilisation. Some terms or concepts are embedded in a lot more assumptions than others. We contend that all knowledge claims and subsequent research rest on assumptions and beliefs that are taken as given before any research takes place. We contend that Muslims can call upon their faith commitments and assumptions about the world and knowledge when conducting research. If all research requires the researcher to make certain assumptions, why not include Islamic truths (from an *aqīdah* (creed/faith) perspective as the assumptions when doing one's research?

Many assumptions in research studies are conventions and can be replaced with alternative ones. However, adopting alternative assumptions requires courage and a willingness to think outside the Western conceptual paradigm. For example, in entrepreneurship

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research, the dominant assumption is that a human being is a rational person, a *homo economicus*. This assumes that human beings are agents who are consistently rational and narrowly self-interested; for they pursue their subjectively defined ends optimally.

While *homo economicus* is a general supposition within a Western society, we –as Muslims– could assume a human being to be *homo religious*; in other words, he/she is a human being who seeks meaning through his/her belief in God. If this is indeed the case, then this may change one's set of assumptions; these would then affect the research project in entrepreneurship as well as many other societal fields. Kuhn<sup>1</sup> has referred to the collection of commitments, assumptions, and beliefs of a researcher as 'a paradigm', and Creswell and Clark<sup>2</sup> have called it 'a worldview.' Paradigms are disciplinary matrixes.<sup>3</sup> However, they cannot be judged objectively. Orman says: "According to Kuhn, in deciding between different paradigms, people can give good reasons for favouring one paradigm over another. It is just that those reasons cannot be codified into an algorithmic scientific method, that would decide the point objectively and conclusively."<sup>4</sup>

In other words, paradigms cannot be objectively judged. Paradigms cannot be compared and judged definitively; so, one cannot say this paradigm is correct and the other paradigm is incorrect. They are acceptable (to the researcher) claims made before the researcher embarks on making further knowledge claims. This is what it is to be a human being whose knowledge is, of course, limited. What can be done in research is to bare and state one's paradigmatic assumptions upfront. Brown & Dueñas<sup>5</sup> highlight the importance of researchers delineating their paradigmatic assumptions since it will "improve the rigor of their projects" and improve communication of their research project's findings. Also, it makes it possible to see when doing a review

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1 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 3rd edition, 1996).

2 J. W. Creswell, and V. L. P. Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (London: Sage Publications, 2017).

3 Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

4 T. F. Orman, "Paradigm as a Central Concept in Thomas Kuhn's Thought", *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 6, no. 10 (2016): 51.

5 Megan E. L. Brown, and Angelique N. Dueñas, "A Medical Science Educator's Guide to Selecting a Research Paradigm: Building a Basis for Better Research", *Medical Science Educator* 30, no. 1 (2020): 545.

of multiple studies whether they share the same paradigm; otherwise, this review would be incorrect since the comparison would not be like with like.

### What is a Paradigm?

Let's clarify what we mean by a paradigm. Kuhn used the term paradigm, to refer implicitly "to a collection of ideas within a particular social domain that are taken for granted from which researchers proceed to do their research." A paradigm is thus a delimited number of assumptions taken for granted when trying to generate more knowledge about an area of knowledge. It is a set of fundamental theoretical assumptions or beliefs that guide the direction of inquiry. A theory is a set of statements that, when articulated together about a particular area of knowledge, form a tentative picture of how things work in that area of knowledge. The term "worldview", can be used as a synonym for the term paradigm.<sup>6</sup>

What Kuhn meant when reviewing the 'history of science' was that as a human being, whenever one searches for knowledge, then one does not come with a clean slate; one has to make assumptions and commitments before one continues further in gathering knowledge. This understanding has profound consequences for searching and for generating knowledge. Generally, in management-related research, research studies have been conducted from a positivist perspective; and even where students and researchers have used interpretivism, it has tacitly been taken as producing findings that are considered universally true.

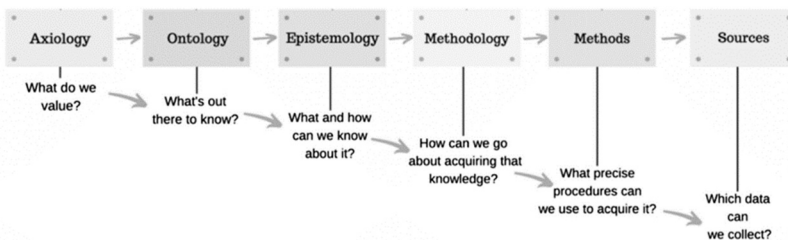


Figure 1: Key Components of a Paradigm<sup>7</sup>

- 6 J. W. Creswell, and V. L. P. Clark, *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research* (London: Sage Publications, 2017) and M. Q. Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 3rd edition. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002).
- 7 Megan E. L. Brown, and Angeliqne N. Dueñas, "A Medical Science Educator's Guide to Selecting a Research Paradigm: Building a Basis for Better Research", *Medical Science Educator* 30, no. 1 (2020): 545.

## **Axiology, Ontology, Epistemology, Methodology, Methods and Sources**

In Figure 1, the various components that make up a paradigm are shown. When a researcher answers the above questions, the researcher then is able to upfront his/her paradigm. The answers must be carefully thought out; if not, then the researcher would otherwise operate with unstated assumptions.

### **Axiology**

By paying attention to axiology, we attempt to answer the question of what we value. Axiology involves ethical considerations and “asks what ought to be” within a field of research. Axiology includes ethics (what is good) and aesthetics (what is beautiful). Asking what ‘ought to be’ is axiological.

For those adopting materialism, human values would be minimized in the research process. Those following the idealism paradigm acknowledge the role of their values in their research and aim to be reflective about their findings since they are aware that their values influence their interpretations of the data collected as well as other research decisions. What are the values Muslims have regarding the researcher, and what is considered good research for a Muslim? In terms of a Muslim axiological stance, it would be to incorporate faith commitments into all the assumptions that underpin the research study. These assumptions include that the true value lies in what God values and that the ideal society would be the society sketched by God in the Quran. Regarding the researcher’s research activities, honesty, transparency, beneficence, non-maleficence, and wisdom would be the required values.

### **Ontology**

Ontology is concerned with what exists or what is out there. It is concerned with the nature of what exists and what is real. Ontological beliefs have an impact on research activities. Disciplines or areas in disciplines have implicit ontological assumptions. So, because different disciplines and sub-disciplines have ontological positions, Muslims must be careful when engaging with these disciplines. Once an ontological position is taken, whether passively or actively, this has implications for all the subsequent research steps one takes.

There have been three broad ontological positions taken over the centuries: materialism, idealism and multiplexity.<sup>8</sup> Of course, within these three categories, there are various permutations. Materialism gives rise to the view that only material things exist and that material is characterised by cause and effect. People who subscribe to materialism tend to adopt ontological realism as their ontological position. Ontological realism posits that there is a real world independent of human beings. On the other hand, idealism suggests that our mental reality mediates our understanding of the world. They subscribe to ontological subjectivism. An example of strongly adhering to idealism is George Berkeley's theory that the world is what we see it to be.<sup>9</sup> Currently, versions of materialism that result in a realist ontology dominate researchers' ontological positions with regard to the natural world. With regard to the social world, it gets a bit more complicated. Within social research, there is a tussle between those who favour straight forward ontological realism and those who favour socially constructed social worlds that suggest a subjectivist ontology. However, in management research practice, researchers tend to adopt an ontological realist position.

An Islamic multiplex approach to ontology affirms the material world but adds additional dimensions. Three dimensions are offered: the material, the non-material (invisible realities), and the divine level of existence. The divine realm where only God exists is beyond our perception. The non-material dimension includes abstract ideas but extends to the world of jinn, angels, heaven, etc. In terms of the human being, a multiplex ontology derived from Islamic scripture affirms the existence of a body, soul and mind.

## Epistemology

Epistemology is concerned with knowledge and how one gets to know something. Awareness of one's epistemology is important. The three traditions of epistemology are positivist, idealist, and multiplex. Positivist epistemology is also known as empiricism. Working within this epistemological tradition one accepts as knowledge only the information that comes from the senses. Knowledge is grounded in experience. Knowledge is value-free and exists independently of the

8 Şentürk et al., *Comparative Theories and Methods Between Uniplexity and Multiplexity* (İstanbul: Ibn Haldun University Press, 2020).

9 Jr. Reid, "Immaterialism", *The Routledge Companion to Eighteenth Century Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 2014), 119-142.

observer. Theories derived from the usage of positivist epistemology aim at explaining, describing and predicting events by uncovering universal laws behind the observed phenomena. The idealist epistemology asserts that all knowledge comes from reason. This is rationalism. By using our reason alone, we can obtain knowledge that is true, not through our senses. All knowledge is grounded in reason because sense perception can mislead us. Whereas rationalism gives us knowledge via *a priori* (i.e., before looking at the world), empiricism gives us knowledge *a posteriori* (after looking at the world).

The multiplex epistemological perspective has various levels. It accepts that knowledge can be sourced via sound sense, through sound reason, and through reported true knowledge (revelation). The latter refers to knowledge handed down to us from the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in the form of the Quran and the *sunnah* (prophetic practice). In the Islamic multiplex paradigm, there are also subjective sources of knowledge: an individual may rely on his dreams, intuition (*hads*), inspiration (*ilhām*) and spiritual unveiling (*kashf*)<sup>10</sup> provided it does not contradict the Quran and the *sunnah*.

### Methodology

Methodology is the study of the methods applied to an area of study. Methods are procedures or techniques. Methodology is the systematic study of these techniques and procedures. Positivist methodology aims to uncover universal laws. With positivism, the aim is "to discover and document universal laws of human behavior" and "to learn about how the world works so that people can control or predict events."<sup>11</sup> The core of the positivist scientific method is to form questions or hypotheses and then to obtain knowledge through observations and experiments to support or disprove these hypotheses or answer the questions. Relationships between variables are assumed to form the hypothesis and then data is collected to test the hypothesis. Idealist methodology is based on the assumption that nature and society can be studied in the same manner. The idealist research methodology aims to understand (*verstehen*), i.e. how people experience and make sense of their social world. It focuses on how people conserve, experience, interpret and construct the social world. Researchers who

10 *Kashf* is a disputed source of subjective knowledge within the Islamic paradigm.

11 W. L. Neuman, *Social Research Methods—Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (Boston: A and B, Pearson Education, 5th edition, 2003): 71.

use this method follow an inductive approach, and the interpretivist methodology uses qualitative methods such as observations, discourse analysis and interviews. It uses a specific-to-general approach which is the inductive approach.

A multiplex methodology upholds that because there are various levels of existence and knowledge, there are various methodologies for studying these levels. Thus, each level will have a methodology. Thus, positive methods are suitable for studying the material world, and interpretivist methods are suitable for the immaterial and abstract world. Taşköprüzade (1495-1561)<sup>12</sup> includes reasoning and purification of the self in the Islamic multiplex methodology. A multiplex approach results in a plural methodology. It embraces positivist methods, idealist methods as well as additional methods.

Taşköprüzade argues that there are two main methods to acquire knowledge. The first method is called *nazar* and the second method is called *tasfiyah* (or *tazkiyyah* the term which we will use in this essay). *Nazar* means thinking and reasoning and *tazkiyyah* means self-purification. Furthermore, there are two types of *nazar*: pure reasoning and religious reasoning. *Nazar*'s two types are both acceptable forms of methodology that provide understandable and acceptable knowledge to all – a type of objective knowledge. *Tazkiyyah*, on the other hand, is a methodology that is subjectivised. So, we have three Islamic multiplex methodologies: pure reasoning, religious reasoning, and purification of the self, in addition to utilising positivist methodologies.

### Quantitative Methodology versus Qualitative Research Approaches

Quantitative purists' articulate assumptions that are consistent with positivism where researchers believe that social observations should be treated as entities in much the same way that physical scientists treat physical phenomena. Interpretivists, on the other hand, utilise a qualitative methodology and tend to reject the positivist assumption. In short, quantitative methodology is associated with positivism and the qualitative research methodology is associated with interpretivism. Multiplex methodologies would use a mixed methods' approach and would accept both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

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12 Cited in Şentürk *et al* 2020.

## Methods

Multiplex methodologies include pure reasoning, religious reasoning, and purification of the self in addition to utilising positivist methodologies. The method of employing pure reasoning is analysing particular events and realising general conclusions. The method of religious reasoning is returning to religious texts to receive guidance on how to use one's reason guided by religious thought. The method of using religious texts involves using *kalam* (Muslim scholastic philosophy) and *usul al-fiqh* (the principles of jurisprudence), and *maqasid al-shariah* (the objectives of Islamic worldview). The methods of purification of the self includes practices such as *muhasabah* (self-assessment), *muraqabah* (awareness of God), and *mushahadah* (hyper-awareness of God's active involvement in the world), amongst a plethora of other methods or exercises.

## Sources

In terms of sources, using a multiplex approach means that sources range from religious texts to interviewing respondents.

## Shortcomings of Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches

### Positivism: Its Shortcomings

Regarding axiology, which is the values of the research process, positivism aims at objectivity and so aims to exclude individuals' subjective experiences and values – be they the experiences or the values of research participants or the researchers. The highest value in positivism is to be objective. Ontologically, a researcher adopting a positivist paradigm operates on the assumption that a single tangible reality exists which can be understood, identified, and measured. The positivist approach emphasises engaging in research in settings where variables can be controlled and manipulated. Adopting a positivism paradigm, researchers use hypothesis testing that builds on verifying *a priori* hypotheses and experimentation by operationalizing variables and measures.<sup>13</sup> This is a narrow method and is ideally suited for natural science research.

Epistemologically, positivists contend that knowledge can and must be developed objectively, without the values of the researchers or participants influencing its development. The main critique of

13 Y. S. Park, L. Konge, and A. R. Artino, "The Positivism Paradigm of Research", *Academic Medicine* 95, no. 5 (2020): 690-694.

positivism related to social science is the impossibility of separating the subject from the object in the social sciences. Another shortcoming of positivism is that it neglects the intentional dimension of action. Also, it calls for a value-free application of science that is not achievable in practice. Using positivism without solely depending upon it is possible for a Muslim researcher. It can be used in a reflective manner, and results must be explained within the limits of the paradigm. In addition, it should be noted that it is not ideally suited for social science and social research because it focuses on trying to isolate variables, whereas the social world is complex. Positivism has a role in social science for Muslims but within limits.

### **Interpretivism and Its Shortcomings**

The axiological approach within interpretivism reflects the values of the researcher. Researchers operating in this paradigm are encouraged to reflect on their values and the role it plays in the research findings they produce. Therefore, interpretive knowledge is imbued with the researcher's values, both their local and political values. Ontologically, researchers subscribing to interpretivism hold a relativist ontology. A relativist ontology is a belief that reality is a subjective experience<sup>14</sup> and that what exists is generated by our thoughts leading to multiple realities. The epistemological perspective of interpretivism is that all knowledge is grounded in our particular experiences. Thus, knowledge is subjective and bound to the contexts in which a person enacts his/her life and is thus relativist.<sup>15</sup> Interpretivism denies that knowledge is simply out there to be identified and collected.

Stemming from their subjectivist epistemology, an interpretivist perspective holds that humans construct knowledge as they interpret their experiences of and in the world.<sup>16</sup> From an interpretivist perspective, one searches for the meanings one attaches to a situation.

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14 N. K. Denzin, and Y. S. Lincoln, "The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research", *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Sage: Thousand Oaks CA, 2005), 1-33.

15 Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; and J. C. Greene, "Knowledge Accumulation: Three Views on the Nature and Role of Knowledge in Social Science", *Qualitative Educational Research: Readings in Reflexive Methodology and Transformative Practice* (2010): 63-77.

16 Denzin & Lincoln, 2005.

Pascale<sup>17</sup> said, "In order to understand a situation, researchers must understand the *meanings* (italics in the original) the situation holds for the participants, not just their behaviours." Schwandt<sup>18</sup> adds: "From an interpretivist point of view, what distinguishes human (social) action from the movement of physical objects is that the former is inherently meaningful. Thus, to understand a particular social action the inquirer must grasp the meanings that constitute that action." Greene<sup>19</sup> suggests that interpretive knowledge perspectives are "context-specific working hypotheses" rather than providing absolute or even probabilistic propositions or universal hypotheses. The interpretive approach' shortcomings are that researchers subscribing to this epistemological perspective are denying that humans can gain knowledge of the absolute truth and objective reality. It supports relativism, and as such, there is no place for universalism which undermines universal standards of ethics and law.

### **Multiplex Theory and Human Action**

What is human action from an Islamic perspective? Within the multiplex paradigm, human action derives from an interplay of various external and internal processes. Firstly, we require an ontology of what it means to be human from an Islamic perspective. According to Şentürk,<sup>20</sup> the human being, according to *fiqh* and *tasawwuf* is free, self-reflexive, and relational. Human action is caused by reason or passion, which originate in the heart. An Islamic multiplex human ontology of the self-offers an alternative model (to positivism and interpretivism) to explain human action based on the following premises:

- d) Human ontology is multiplex and action is jointly produced by body, mind and soul.
- e) The completion and perfection of a human being take place not only in the body and mind but also in the heart (soul) and manifest in behaviours.

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17 C. M. Pascale, *Cartographies of Knowledge: Exploring Qualitative Epistemologies* (Sage Publications, 2011), 23.

18 T. A. Schwandt, "Three Epistemological Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructionism", *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (London: SAGE Publishing, 2000), 296.

19 Greene, 2010, 68.

20 Şentürk, 2022.

- f) The self is multiplex and can be described as ruling appetitive, critical and content depending on the moral development of the person.

In the Islamic tradition, human actions are studied in *fiqh* and *tasawwuf*. *Fiqh* studies the outer dimension of human action, while *tasawwuf* studies the internal dynamics of human action and interaction.

### What is the Cause of Our Actions?

From the positivist paradigm, humans do not have free will. Positivists assume that all human behaviour is motivated by self-interest maximisation and that human action is a product of mere physical or neurological processes. In terms of the idealist paradigm, actions are a result of intentions, mind and consciousness. From a multiplex paradigm, actions are jointly produced by the body-mind-soul nexus. Actions are *jāmi* (comprehensive) in that they are connected to all levels of existence.<sup>21</sup> From a multiplex perspective, the source of action is from one's *khawātir*, which are thoughts that have their origin either from Allah, the *ghayb* (the unseen including angels), *shaytan* (the devil), the body, or society.

### Writing the Ontological and Epistemological Section of the Research Proposal

With his idea of the incommensurability of paradigms, Kuhn stated that different paradigms are often incomparable because paradigms are competitive and have irreconcilable explanations of reality. However, others have called for integrating multiple paradigms such as Schultz and Hatch<sup>22</sup> who call for an interplay strategy between paradigms. Şentürk<sup>23</sup> and Sorokin<sup>24</sup> suggest that different paradigms can operate at different levels of existence. For Sorokin,<sup>25</sup> this is the

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<sup>21</sup> Şentürk, 2022.

<sup>22</sup> Majken Schultz and Mary Jo Hatch, "Living with Multiple Paradigms: The Case of Paradigm Interplay in Organizational Culture Studies", *Academy of Management Review* 21, no. 2 (April 1996): 529.

<sup>23</sup> Şentürk 2022.

<sup>24</sup> The foundational idea of integralism is that the reality that is the subject matter of the social sciences contains empirical-sensory, rational-mindful, and superrational-supersensory components. See P. A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics*, vol. 4. (New York: American Book Company, 1941), 741-746.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

integralism paradigm; and for Şentürk et al,<sup>26</sup> it is the multiplex paradigm. Thus, from an Islamic multiplex paradigm –because of the advantages of positivism– it ought to be used within research into the natural world. Similarly, because of its advantages, interpretivism is more suited to the social sciences. For the other realms of the multiplex ontology, there are epistemological means of knowing it. Nevertheless, positivism can never be 100% accurate due to the sheer rawness of the natural world and human beings' limited capacity. So, positivism can be used but with healthy scepticism that Allah knows best. Interpretivism must also be utilised in the social world, but also requires an acknowledgement that this is our understanding within the current assumptions and commitments. It is not the final word on the matter, but it would provide a deeper understanding of things.

### **From Western Social Sciences to Societal Sciences: *Fiqh* as a Muslim Societal Science**

Western social sciences are based on European experience. Muslims have a rich legacy and have developed their own societal civilization. The subject of *fiqh* is 'aml: human action. *Fiqh*<sup>27</sup> is a discipline for explaining and regulating social life in Muslim societies and their relation with other societies. Although *fiqh* has been associated with Islamic law, it should be conceptualised as a societal science that is connected to law, but it is not just law. It has four layers: (1) *al-fiqh al-akbar* (2) *usūl al-fiqh*, (3) *furu al-fiqh* (branches of *fiqh* or *fiqh al-zahir*), (4) *fiqh al-batin* (inner *fiqh* which equates to *tazkiyah*).

The ontological and epistemological foundation of *fiqh* is provided by the disciplinary layer called *al-fiqh al-akbar* (the greater or greatest knowledge) or known as *kalām*, *aqāid*, or *usūl al-din*. The three fundamental ontological foundations of the social worldview laid down by *al-fiqh al-akbar* are *tawhid* (divine unity), *nubuwwah* (prophecy), and

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<sup>26</sup> Şentürk 2022.

<sup>27</sup> According to Şentürk: "Calling *fiqh* 'Islamic law' — which we take for granted today— is a recent phenomenon dating back to the 19th century. The term 'Islamic law' first emerged in Europe in the works of Orientalists. Later the usage was adopted by Muslim intellectuals and scholars without sufficient scrutiny. Conventionally, Muslim intellectuals still equate *fiqh* with 'Islamic law', even though it is evident that *fiqh* is more than Islamic law in content, methods, and the domain of application." See Recep Şentürk, "Intellectual Dependency: Late Ottoman Intellectuals between *Fiqh* and Social Science", *Die Welt des Islams* 47, no. 3 (2007): 293.

*ma'ād* (resurrection). Once this worldview is established and accepted, social issues are addressed using *usūl al-fiqh* as a methodology for interpreting Islamic texts to derive and extrapolate societal norms. *Usūl al-fiqh* employs the epistemological sources of *fiqh* and uses them to lay down the rules to be followed in order to obtain moral and legal rulings. *Furu al-fiqh* is the social and normative science that deals with the external, observable and objective aspects of behaviour.<sup>28</sup> I contend that *Fiqh* is a discipline for explaining and regulating social life in Muslim societies and their relation with other societies. The ontological and epistemological foundation of *fiqh* is provided by the discipline called *al-fiqh al-akbar* or *kalām*. Once this worldview is established and accepted, social issues are addressed using *usūl al-fiqh* as a methodology. *Usūl al-fiqh* employs the epistemological sources of *fiqh* and uses them to lay down the rules to be followed in order to obtain moral and legal rulings.

### Applying the *Fiqh* Paradigm to Entrepreneurship Research

In this section, we will apply the *fiqh* paradigm to doing research in entrepreneurship. As a Muslim researcher, the author would affirm his belief that there is one God; that He communicated with humanity via prophets (s) and that the main message was that each of us would be accountable to God on the Day of Resurrection. How does this ontological commitment affect our research subjects if they have varying beliefs? I would take their beliefs into consideration since recent entrepreneurship research has called for studying the role of religion in entrepreneurial activities.<sup>29</sup>

Since we believe that ontological commitments have an impact on one's actions, we would ask our subjects about their ontological commitments and also ask them how it impacts their entrepreneurial behaviour. Our beliefs affect our behaviour, so our Islamic beliefs about accountability would impact on our moral conduct. We would have to be transparent, honest, and clear in our dealings with my interviewees. We would have to do non-hypocritical self-introspection to uncover our theoretical assumptions about entrepreneurship since it is a concept produced by western culture and history.

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<sup>28</sup> Şentürk et al, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> B. R. Smith, J. S. McMullen, and M. S. Cardon, "Toward a Theological Turn in Entrepreneurship: How Religion Could Enable Transformative Research in our Field", *Journal of Business Venturing* 36, no. 5 (2021): 106-139.

### **Axiological Commitments Using *Fiqh***

As a Muslim researcher researching entrepreneurship, we would draw on *al-fiqh al-akbar* for our ethical commitment and value judgements. Our belief and responsibility to our God, prophets and resurrection would guide what we value. So, we would not value *ribā* (usury) transactions or entrepreneurial ventures that work within a *ribā* framework or in entrepreneurial ventures dealing with wine or pig farming; the main reason being that these are all prohibited by the Islamic scripture.

### **Ontological commitments using the *Fiqh* paradigm**

We would adopt a multi-layered view of existence, affirming the material, non-material and divine levels of existence. In our commitments, we would affirm ontological and epistemological acceptance of God.

### **Epistemological Sources Using the *Fiqh* Paradigm**

In our research on entrepreneurship, we would rely on all the following sources of knowledge: sense perception, reason, reported knowledge and divine revelation.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

Even within the Western canon, there is a dispute about the definition of the concept of entrepreneurship. Various paradigms and definitions are proposed. So which paradigm or perspective within the Western canon will we use and must we find a comparable Islamic concept or can we use the existing western concept and place the term Islamic or Muslim before it? Before the coming of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), traders were called *samsara*.

When the prophet Muhammad (SAW) came, he replaced it with the concept *tujjār*. What is *samāsirsā*? It is the plural of *simsār*. Ibn Al-Athir said in *al-Nihāyah* that *simsār* is the one that is responsible for something and is responsible for its protection. It is a name that comes between the seller and the purchaser in between to ensure that the sale goes through. Thus, *samsara* is both selling and purchasing. Abū Sulayman al Khatābi said that *simsār* was originally a non-Arab word since many who engaged in buying and selling were non-Arabs the word was incorporated into Arabic, but then the prophet Muhammad

(SAW) changed the concept to *tijārah* which the narrator said was a better concept.

Why would the prophet Muhammad (SAW) change the concept of *samāsirah* to *tijārah*? I think an argument could be made that the Prophet (SAW) wanted to ensure that the ontological and epistemological of the Islamic worldview prevails. Should one then also replace entrepreneurship with a new concept? If yes, what would it be? This is something that researchers (Muslim and otherwise) can undertake within the broad umbrella of decoloniality.

### Methodological Choices for Our Research Study

Our methodological choices would include pure reasoning (empirical, quantitative, qualitative methods) as well as religious reasoning (*kalam* and *fiqh* methodologies) in addition to the purification of self (*tasfiya/tazkiya*). Each of these would be used for different ontological and epistemological levels. Specifically, we would use *usul al-fiqh* as a methodology to analyse reported knowledge and divine revelation. It would include both textual analysis tools to study the revealed texts as well as collecting data from respondents and organisations. If one adopts an integrated multiplex paradigm then how does one assert that one's findings from one's study are superior to findings that come from another study with different ontological and epistemological foundations?

We think the answer lies in the fact that one can never have 100% objective facts as shown by philosophers such as Husserl and Ghazali. One should encourage what Bakhtin<sup>30</sup> calls the dialogic of *heteroglossia* so that one broadens our perspective of the social world. Through *heteroglossia*, multiple interpretations inform and enrich each other.

What are Islamic ontological foundations? Islamic scriptures affirm that there exist multiple realms of existence and experience. The divine world, the unseen world, the world of the mind, and the world of sense-perception experience. Epistemologically in Islam, we affirm multiple sources of knowledge, including revelation (revealed book-the Quran and the prophetic *sunnah*), sense-perception, rational thought, dreams, intuition, and *kashf* (divine illumination).

A key question is whether our ontological perspectives are objective or subjective, or both. Firstly, one can only operate subjectively as a scholar with varying degrees of objectivity. We see objectivity and

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30 Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981).

subjectivity as a continuum and not as binaries. In my ontology, in relation to the divine realm, we believe God is both transcendent and immanent. Transcendent in terms of Him being *wājib al wujūd* (having necessary existence) but immanent in His knowledge. So, Allah is beyond this world but also aware of everything in this world.

In terms of knowledge, there are both objective and subjective pieces of knowledge. Here we mean that objective is not in an absolute sense, for that belongs to Allah, but objective as can be provided through the mind and sense-perception. So, dreams, *kashf*, *ilhām*, and *hads* are all subjective (and are acceptable as long as they do not contradict the Quran and Sunnah). Whereas knowledge of the world is objective in a way that humans can agree that there are two hydrogen molecules and one oxygen molecule in H<sub>2</sub>O. This does not mean this is completely objective (outside of human conception or in the eyes of God). Axiologically or ethically, the greatest good is to be a slave and worshipper of Allah at the level of *ihsān* and to combine this with generosity toward humanity by dealing with them with *ihsān* (a spiritual state where one acts as if one is in Allah's presence). Methodologically, this is an important aspect of what we covered in this article. Methodologically, we, however, would have a pluralist approach. Data collection would be influenced by our ontological and epistemological commitments.

## Conclusion

Muslim researchers have to see whether they are going to do research as a practice separated from their religious beliefs or whether they want to integrate their religious beliefs into their research practices since their research practices can be considered *`aml salih*. One can lead a double life and practice one's research separately from one's faith commitments, or one can try and bring the two together. This means taking an uncharted road and this can be challenging if not scary. But Şentürk<sup>31</sup> has provided several resources to undertake this journey. We have tried to simplify his ideas and provide an example relating to entrepreneurship research of how a Muslim could apply a *fiqh* paradigm; this is but one example of a multiplex approach.

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<sup>31</sup> Şentürk et al 2021 and Şentürk 2022.

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# Foreign Loanwords in the Cape Muslim Vernacular: Their Afrikaans Pronunciation's Origins

Mogamat Alexander\*

## Introduction: Cape Muslim Afrikaans

Today, across the Southern African linguistic spectrum, there are several Afrikaans-speaking social/geographical groups who speak different varieties of Afrikaans; this includes Oosgrensafrikaans, Gariepafrikaans, Griekwa-Afrikaans, and Kaapse-Afrikaans. Each of these communities have their unique pronunciations of Afrikaans. This begs the question: why the different pronunciations?<sup>1</sup>

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1 Terms used: (a) The term Cape refers to Cape Town, South Africa. (b) The term Cape Muslim: This all-embracing descriptive term is used to also incorporate a large segment of Cape Muslims of Indian descent whose forebears arrived in the Cape in the 1880s and 1890s. They settled and resided amidst the Cape Malays for generations, and adopted the Cape Malay brand of Afrikaans awash with Malay words such as *tamaaf*, *kanala*, *pwasa*, *boeka*, *trawie*, *labaring*, *bacha*, etc. Hence the preferred term "Cape Muslim vernacular" over "Cape Malay vernacular." (c) The term Cape Muslim vernacular is used and not Cape Muslim Afrikaans since English-speaking Cape Muslims use the heritage loanwords as well. The term non-Cape Muslim refers to non-Muslims as well as Muslims who live outside the Western Cape who do not speak this version of Afrikaans. There are, however, Cape Malays who moved to certain provinces outside the Western Cape as well as outside the country (that is, Zimbabwe and Botswana); they still speak this version of Afrikaans. (d) The term Malay as a label or marker that refers to people of the Melayu world (*Dunia Melayu* or *Orang Melayu*), and they include the Malay ethnic, cultural and linguistic groups, (e) The local term Malay: Locally (according to some historians), the term Malay refers to the Melayu language spoken by the earlier Southeast Asian enslaved labour migrants, and royal exiles, popularly known as the Orang Cayeng amongst locals (high-ranking political state prisoners), including many Melayu Muslim scholars such as Shaykh Yusuf that were banished to the Cape by the Dutch VOC – this Dutch trading company colonised many Melayu archipelago islands; from the mid-1600s, it managed to colonize the Cape. This is also how the Dutch unintentionally spread Islam to this southern tip of Africa. Those earlier Melayu Muslim scholars would later play a leading role in the establishment, growth, and consolidation of Islam at the Cape. (f) The term Cape Malays: Later the term Malay in the Cape evolved to include people of diverse origins and backgrounds. Those who

Before we answer this question, we first have to ask a few others: What precisely is Afrikaans? Is it the first varieties of the Dutch language created on the African continent awash with many local non-Dutch words, and different pronunciations of the Dutch words? Did the first creole that evolved into a spoken language later become known as [low] Cape Dutch? Or is it the Graeae breakaway language (the "purified" version of the earlier spoken, low Cape Dutch), created by Afrikaner nationalist, known as the "Genootskap van Regte Afrikaners" (GRA, Association of True Afrikaners), with grammar and spelling rules, and with new and different pronunciations of words? Now something worth noting is the fact that the Cape Muslim Afrikaans (as well as other non-European varieties of Afrikaans) were deliberately excluded during the initial<sup>2</sup> standardization process of Afrikaans.<sup>3</sup>

In this article, we will refer to the evolved first varieties of the Dutch language created on the African continent and awash with many local non-Dutch words, and with its local pronunciations as 'first Afrikaans', and the breakaway "purified" (later created) version by the GRA as 'standard Afrikaans.' The Afrikaans spoken by Cape Muslims

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follow Islam that was introduced in the Cape by those earlier Melayu spiritual leaders, and who adopted the Melayu lifestyle, culture, social customs, traditions, and cuisine use the Melayu terms, and 'laagoes'; they are, by and large, Sunni Muslims affiliated to the Shafi school of jurisprudence and they follow many other Melayu spiritual practices, customs, and traditions that were left behind by their earlier Melayu spiritual leaders. These people make up the bulk of the Cape Muslims and are culturally Malay. There are, however, many Cape Muslims of Malay *asal* (descent) who can trace their lineage directly back to Southeast Asia; the Rakiep and Abderouf family at the Cape are among those whose lineage go back via Imam Abdullah ibn Qadi Abdussalam (aka Tuan Guru). (g) Since independence both Malaysia and Indonesia (as well as Brunei) have opted to use the descriptive word 'Bahasa' to distinguish their use within different geographical contexts; so, one refers to Bahasa Malaysia as compared to Bahasa Indonesia. In this article, reference is made to word Melayu that was employed during the earlier periods; however, when turning to the post-colonial and post-independence period, a switch is made; by then, the descriptive term Bahasa is used for the contemporary period. And the same applies to (h) the spelling as well as the use of the term; instead of employing the term Melayu that has since been out of circulation, the term Malay or Cape Malay has been used.

- 2 There are, however, accepted Malay and non-European words in the standard Afrikaans language today.
- 3 Gerda Odendaal, "Moet Afrikaans Geherstandaardiseer Word? Should Afrikaans be Restandardised?", *Tydskrif vir Geesteswetenskappe*, Jaargang 54, no. 4 (2014).

with its Malay pronunciation of certain standard Afrikaans words and letters is a version of the first Afrikaans they inherited from their Malay forebears. It is the evolved low Cape Dutch used by earlier Cape Malays. This is evident if one compares the pronunciations of words by Cape Muslims today and the way it was written in earlier Arabic-Afrikaans texts, more especially during the late 1800s. Words were written the way it was pronounced at the time.

Today this inherited version of Afrikaans is usually considered a wrongly pronounced version of the later created standard Afrikaans language by those ignorant about the history of the Cape Muslims, the Arabic-Afrikaans texts and the evolution of non-standard Afrikaans varieties.

Though the first Afrikaans spelling and grammar rules were published in 1917, the Arabic-Afrikaans texts were written long before this, (since the mid-1840s according to Achmat Davids<sup>4</sup> and other scholars). The first Afrikaans newspaper "Die Afrikaanse Patriot" was published in 1876; in there, we still see the old Afrikaans spellings.

Due to the earlier Malay language influence, the Afrikaans spoken by Cape Muslims contains many peculiar English, Arabic, and Malay loanwords. There are also many words absorbed from other languages spoken across the Melayu archipelago, as well as many locally self-created words that are parochial words; these they inherited from their African-born Malay forefathers. Although the Cape Muslims speak Afrikaans, they read in English. Due to this, they know all the English names of different things; and, at times, they did not always know the Afrikaans equivalent and this contributes to the code-switching between Afrikaans and English in the Cape Muslim vernacular.

It is not only the myriad foreign loanwords in the Cape Muslim Afrikaans that make their version of Afrikaans different from others; it is essentially also a different linguistic culture. Their Afrikaans is linked to their Islamic culture, customs, tradition, and even their cuisine. Their unique Afrikaans idiomatic expressions, Islamic exclamations, family titles, and parochial words, for example, are used and understood exclusively by them.

It is not surprising that many non-Cape Muslim standard Afrikaans speakers cannot always understand or speak Cape Muslim Afrikaans. The opposite is also equally true; many Cape Muslims, in turn, are

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4 Achmat Davids, *The Afrikaans of the Cape Muslims*, eds. H. Willemsse and S. Dangor, (Pretoria: Protea, 2011).

unable to speak the standard Afrikaans language properly and fluently since it is not their mother tongue. This inherited version of Afrikaans used by Cape Muslims also differs from the Afrikaans they use when speaking with a non-Cape Muslim. They instinctively know that the non-Cape Muslims might not understand the convolution of foreign words and expressions in their vernacular.

Since standard Afrikaans was made compulsory in schools, one cannot deny a measure of influence on the older Cape Muslim first Afrikaans vernacular. Despite this, Cape Muslims have uncompromisingly maintained their version of Afrikaans in the face of the standard Afrikaans language as a distinct living variety, not because of ignorance but out of habit.

### The Malay Influence on Cape Muslim Afrikaans

Locally, the ethnic or cultural term Malay is derived from the Melayu language that was spoken by the Southeast Asians; many of whom were banished to the Cape by the Dutch (VOC) colonists during the slave trade period. They were shipped to the Cape from different regions in the Melayu archipelago and spoke different languages, but the common dominant language was Melayu (that is, Malay).

The Melayu language was also the local medium of instruction in Cape mosques and *madrasahs*, more especially, after the arrival of Imam Abdullah Ibn Qadi<sup>5</sup> Abdus Salaam (also known as Tuan Guru) who was banished to the Cape in 1780.

Around the mid-1800s, the Malay language was gradually replaced by Cape Dutch. As the last Malay speakers died out, so did the Malay language, but those earlier Malay speakers had left behind an indelible influence on the surviving language culture of the Cape Muslims.

For example, remnants of the Malay words remain part of the contemporary Cape Muslims' everyday vocabulary. Words such as *tamaaf* (excuse me, I'm sorry), *kanala* (please), *trama kasie* (thank you), *kierie slam* (send my regards), *pwasa* (to fast), *boeka* (Ramadan evening supper at the break of fast), *labarang* (feast, festival, or celebration, with particular reference to the two traditional Eid celebrations), *soembaing* (to pray), *bacha* (to recite/read), *pujis* (supplications), *maningal* (passed away) and *toelies* (to write) are among these words.

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5 Spelt as Kadi in some manuscripts; see Gerda Odendaal, "Moet Afrikaans Geherstandaardiseer Word? Should Afrikaans be Restandardised?".

Due to the dominant influence of Afrikaans, the spelling of some of these words had undergone changes over time; yet, the words remained relatively intelligible since they retained their semantic integrity.

### **The Cape Muslims' Inherited Pronunciation of Afrikaans**

A foreign/second language speaker almost always pronounces a language different from the original mother tongue native speaker. If one looks at the earlier Arabic-Afrikaans texts, it appears that the earlier Cape Malays pronounced certain letters and words in the earlier Cape Dutch language; they did so in line with the way these were pronounced in the Melayu language. It is these inherited pronunciations that the Cape Muslims use to this day; hence, the difference between the Cape Muslim and standard Afrikaans pronunciations.

The following examples clearly illustrate this:

#### **a) The standard Afrikaans Word *Jy* (You)**

The Cape Muslims' pronunciation of the Afrikaans word *jy* is pronounced as the English word *jay* [dʒəi] while the standard Afrikaans pronunciation is *jij* (the Dutch pronunciation). [Eng. *Yay*]. The Cape Muslims got their *jay* for *jy* pronunciation from their Melayu archipelago forebears.

The Bahasa Indonesian letter *j* is pronounced like the English letter *j* (as in *Jack*); for example, the Bahasa Indonesian word *jalang* is pronounced as *jahlang* [dʒalaŋ].

The standard Afrikaans pronunciation of the letter *j* is pronounced like the English letter *y*. For example, the Afrikaans word *Japan* is pronounced *Yapan*.

Also, in the earlier Arabic-Afrikaans writings, the Arabic letter ج (jīm) was used for the letter *j*, instead of the letter ي (yā); hence, the inherited *jay* pronunciation for the standard Afrikaans word *jy*. (In standard Afrikaans, the letter *j* is pronounced with like Arabic letter ي [yā]).

#### **b) The Cape Malay *tjie* (*chi*) [tʃi] Pronunciation and the Standard Afrikaans *kie* for the *tjie* Pronunciation**

The Bahasa Indonesian letter *c* is pronounced as *ch*, therefore *ci* is pronounced as the English *chi* sound. In standard Afrikaans, this *ci* sound is written as *tjie* but pronounced *kie*.

For example, the Bahasa Indonesian word, *buncis* is pronounced *bunchis* (English – beans), and *karcis* as *karchis*. This is how Cape Muslims pronounce these words and other *tjie* (*chi*) word endings; these are thus the inherited pronunciation of words with *tjie* endings. Cape Muslims also apply to other Afrikaans words to this day. They, for example, pronounce *hondjie* as *honchi*, *waentjie* as *waenchi*, *stertjie* as *sterchi*, and *bietjie* as *biechi*.

Now when shifting to standard Afrikaans pronunciations of words with the *tjie* word endings, one notes *hondjie* is pronounced *hondkie*, *waentjie* as *waenkie*, *stertjie* as *sterkie*, and *bietjie* as *biekie*. Also, the Malay word  *baca* is pronounced as *bacha*. Cape Muslims continue to pronounce the word as *bacha* (to recite).

### c) The Cape Malay *oe* Pronunciation and the Standard Afrikaans *oo* Pronunciation

As mentioned earlier, the Dutch loanword in the Malay language *bunci* is pronounced as *bunchi*. The standard Afrikaans pronunciation is, however, *boonkie*. Note the *oo* pronunciation in standard Afrikaans; and in the Malay language it is, however, pronounced as the Afrikaans *oe* sounds. One also noticed that the standard Afrikaans word *soos* was spelt as *soes* in some earlier Arabic-Afrikaans texts.

Cape Muslims retained the *oe* pronunciation of their forebears over the standard Afrikaans pronunciation *oo*. This *oe* for *oo* is used for many other *oo* words in standard Afrikaans. For example, *rook* is pronounced as *roek*, *loop* as *loep*, *doop* as *doep*, and *koop* as *koep*.

### d) The Cape Malay *ie* Pronunciation and the Standard Afrikaans *ee* Pronunciation

In the earlier Arabic writings, we have observed that many words that are now spelt and pronounced as *ee* were spelt as *ie*. The standard Afrikaans word *weet* was, however, spelt as *wiet*; *eet* as *iet*; and *vergeet* as *vigiet*. Cape Muslims thus pronounce many standard Afrikaans words that contain *ee* as *ie* to this day. There are many similar examples.

It appears that most of the “Kaaps” (that is, Cape) pronunciations can be traced back to the Malay pronunciation of the earlier spoken low Cape Dutch words. This is another typical example of the low Cape Dutch influences.

Now, below is an excerpt from an election pamphlet of 1884 written in Arabic-Afrikaans. Number 2 is the transcription from the actual pamphlet.

1. Dutch: Hij gaat zijn best doen... (He will do his utmost...)
2. Earlier Cape Muslim Afrikaans: Hy gaat syn best doen...
3. Cape Muslim Afrikaans today: Hy gat sy bes doen... (*gaat pronounced faster today*)
4. Standard Afrikaans: Hy gaan sy bes doen...



Figure 1: Arabic-Afrikaans Election Pamphlet 1884 – Voting Poster

The first half of the pamphlet is in Arabic-Afrikaans, and it reads:

“vote vir mister Ohlsson  
hy gaat syn be doen vir die  
kolonial syn werksmissie.”

The bottom half is in Arabic, with the same message.

All the Muslims in the Cape area is given 4 votes for Mr. Ohlsson because.... will leave working in the Cape and benefitting the people of Cape Town. Please (go ahead).

Until about the 1970s, children were taught by elders to say, “*segen en geluk op onse nabie Mogammad*” ... (peace and blessing on our prophet Muhammad...)



Figure 2: The first Afrikaans Newspaper

Above is a page from the first Afrikaans newspaper *Die Afrikaanse Patriot* that was published in 1876. Notice the general spelling and also the word: *gaat*. Also, observe how the author expresses his displeasure against the young Afrikaners who find the English language attractive.

### Foreign Loanwords in the Malay Language

As mentioned earlier, before the Malays were brought to the Cape, many foreign loanwords crept into their language, and these words eventually became part of the Cape Muslim vernacular today. Locally these words are just seen as Malay words.

Examples of foreign loanwords that ended up in Cape Muslim vernacular via the Malay language.

#### a) Chinese Loanwords

*koemkwat* 'kumquat' (< *gām gwāt*) and *loekwat* 'loquat' (< *lòuh gwāt*).  
*koemkwat* (kumquat) from *gam* (gold) and *gwat* (another word for tangerines)

Malay – *cincao*; Cape Malay - *tschin-tschou* (< *chhi<sup>n</sup>-chháu*) – a type of jelly fish

6 Malay – *əncik*; Cape Malay - *intji* (< Chinese - *ńg-chek*) – Uncle, Mr.

## b) Tamil Loanwords

*Katel* - bedstead (< *kaṭṭil*) [a covered movable frame in which the body of the deceased is placed while it is being transported to the cemetery]

*Kerriekos* - stewed meat with curry (< Tamil *kari* 'sauce' + Afrikaans *kos* 'food'),

*Nartji* - a citrus fruit (< *nārattai*),

*Rijsbrênsie* - a yellow rice dish (< Afrikaans *rys* 'rice' + Tamil *birinči* 'a yellow rice dish'),

*saroet-seroet* - a filter-less cigar (< *curuṭṭu*)

*Soema* - for nothing, just for fun, without any reason, just because (< *cummā*).<sup>7</sup>

This word was brought to the Cape by Malays and originally pronounced as *tjoema*.

## c) Sanskrit Words

*Agama*: religion [*Malay* – *agama*] < *Sanskrit* – *āgama*; - 'traditional doctrine, sacred teaching'

*Bacha*: Locally, to recite in Arabic [*Malay* - *baca* (to "read")] < *Sanskrit* – *vaca*; - "words, talk"

*Guru*: Master, Teacher [*Malay* - *guru*] < *Sanskrit* – *guru*; - "teacher"

*Kapas*: Cotton wool swabs for the ghusl of the deceased [*Malay* - *kapas* "cotton"] < *Sanskrit* – *karpāsa*; - 'cotton'

*Poejies*: Recitations, glorifying Allah [*Malay* – *puji*] < *Sanskrit* - *pūja* – "worship, respect, homage of superiors or adoration of the Gods"

## d) Words in the Cape Muslim Vernacular of North Indian Origin

*Aknie* (< *Akhni*); *Barishap* "Fennel" (< *Baḍīsep*); *Dhania* 'Coriander' (< *Dhaniyā*); *Faloeda* (< *Fālūda*); *Djira* "Cumin" (< *Jīrā*); *Meti* 'Fenugreek' (< *Methī*); *Masala* (< *Masālā*); *Roetie* (< *Roṭī*); *Samoosa*.<sup>8</sup>

6 T. Hoogervorst, "Kanala, tamaaf, tramkassie, en stuur krieslam." *Wacana* 22, no. 1 (2021):22–57. <http://wacana.ui.ac.id/index.php/wjhi/article/view/953>.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

### e) Portuguese Words

Portuguese influence on Malay was profound. Portuguese was the trading language in the Indonesian archipelago, it was a lingua franca traders used back in the 1500s.

*Soembreloe* is derived from the Portuguese *sombreiro* (hat) which led to the Afrikaans *sambreel* (umbrella).

*Poer-poer* in *Hy poer-poer nou al so lank* (He is dillydallying for so long now) derives from the Malay *poera-poera* (*poera* = do nothing)

*Soldaat* (soldier) from Malay *soldadoe* derived from old Portuguese *soldado*.

The exclamation *Basta!* was taken into Afrikaans from Portuguese.

*Rondawel* – round building (Portuguese *rondavallo* = wheel)

*Tamaai* (big) derives from the Portuguese *tamanho*.

*Kakkerlak*, from the Portuguese *carcalacca*.

*Tronk* (prison) from the Portuguese *tronco*, (referring to the tree trunk to which prisoners were chained)

The Afrikaans conjunction *almiskie/almaskie* originates from the Portuguese *por mais que*.

*Poncho* (Portuguese name for apparel covering head and top part of body, *poncho*),

*Albino*, a person without colour pigmentation from the Portuguese *Albino*.<sup>9</sup>

### f) Dutch Loanwords

After the Portuguese, Indonesia was colonised by the Dutch for about 350 years (1595-1945). As a result, over the centuries, many Dutch words were absorbed into Bahasa Indonesia, but are pronounced differently. One can only conjecture that when these Indonesians' forbears were brought to the Cape as slaves and exiles (especially in later years), they arrived with their pronunciation of the Dutch loanwords already present in their language. Since Afrikaans is also derived from the Dutch language, there are many common Afrikaans and Bahasa words. For example,

Mal. *Amok* – Afr. *Amok*; Mal. *Asbak* – Afr. *Asbak*; Mal. *Diktator* – Afr. *Diktator*;

Mal. *Diploma* – Afr. *Diploma*; Mal. *Dokter* – Afr. *Dokter*

9 B. J. H. Picard, "The Portuguese Influence on Afrikaans with Particular Reference to Military Language", *Scientia Militaria, South African Journal of Military Studies* 18, no 3 (1988): 6-13.

Words with different spelling:

Mal. *Banyak* – Afr. *Baie*; Mal. *Apel* – Afr. *Appel*; Mal. *Almanak* – Afr. *Almanak/Kalender*; Mal. *Bagasi* – Afr. *Bagasie*; Mal. *Definisi* – Afr. *Definisie*; Mal. *Diskriminasi* – Afr. *Diskriminasie*; Mal. *Demokrasi* – Afr. *Demokrasie*;

### Accepted Malay Loanwords in the Standard Afrikaans

*Amok, amper, baadjie, baba, baklei, gekko, ghantang, ghoem, ghoema, ghoen, ghoeroe, kapok, katel, katjeepering, kramat, maai, maaifoedie, moesoek, moses, nonna, nooi, orangoetang, paaie, panga, pê, pondok, sambok, sambreel, tamaai en toering.*

Also, *atjar, blatjang, bobotie, borrie, froetang, piesang, sago, sambal en sosatie*.<sup>10</sup>

### g) Arabic Loanwords

There are also many Arabic loanwords in Bahasa, but they are pronounced somewhat differently from the original Arabic; and it is these loanwords with their peculiar Bahasa pronunciation that the Cape Muslims inherited.

A few examples are: *waktu* (Arabic – *waqt* [time]), *surat* (Arabic – *surah* [chapter]), *umat* (Arabic – *ummah* [Muslim community]), *malaikat* (Arabic – *malaikah* [angels]), *taubat* (Arabic – *taubah* [repent]), *niyat* (Arabic – *niyyah* [intention]), and *selamat* (Arabic – *salāmāt* [safe]).

With this, we notice that it was those earlier Malays who brought the first Arabic words to the Cape.

Self-generated Afrikaans words used by Cape Muslims today, inherited from their African born Malay forebears:

*Chaya, Ge-aate, Goejajies, Koples, Slamse Skool, Kers op Steek, Tawetjie, Mème, Ouman-jongetjie, Kanala jobbies, werksloon, maaksloon, geleerte,*

*akeltjies, karienkels, metejale, 7 aande, 40 aande, 100 aande, jaargetal, etc.*

<sup>10</sup> Helena Liebenberg, "Enkele Oosterse Woorde in Afrikaans", [https://www.taaloord.co.za/Enkele\\_Oosterse\\_woorde\\_in\\_Afrikaans.pdf](https://www.taaloord.co.za/Enkele_Oosterse_woorde_in_Afrikaans.pdf)

From the list, we can observe that these are Afrikaans words; but these words are, however, not found in a standard Afrikaans dictionary.<sup>11</sup>

**h) Typical Malay loanwords in the Cape Muslim vernacular with their etymologies.**

*Ajaips*: Misfortune [Malay- *Ajaib* – a miracle, strange, remarkable]

*Ajami*, *Ajami* script: The writing of non-Arab languages in the Arabic script [Malay- *ajami* (adj.) [n. *Ajam*] < Arabic - *'ajamī* (adj)]

*Asli*: original, genuine, authentic [Malay - *asli*] < Arabic - *aṣlī*

*Ghielap*: lightning [Malay - *kilap/kilat*]

*Ghuntu*: thunder [Malay - *guntur*]

*Obat*: medicine, a substance that promotes healing (remedy), [Batavian – *obat*]

*Kramat*: A shrine/grave or mausoleum of a Muslim spiritual person [Malay-*Keramat*] < Arabic – *Karaama*

*Koefija*: fez [Malay - *kopiah*] < Arabic - *kūfiyya*

*Toelies*: Local meaning; to write in Arabic. [Malay - *tulis* “to write”]

Technically, it can be said that the Cape Muslim vernacular is a mixture of Afrikaans, English, Arabic, Malay, Chinese, Tamil, Sanskrit, Portuguese, Dutch, and words from other languages spoken in the Malay Archipelago as well as many self-created words.

**i) Words in the Cape Muslim's Common Parlance**

*Agirah* (the afterlife); *algamdu lillah* (praise be to Allah); *astaghfir allah* (I seek forgiveness from Allah); *batcha* (to recite/read); *dunya* (the world); *bismiellah* (In the Name of Allah); *insha Allah* (may Allah accept), *kanala* (please); *masha Allah* (as Allah has willed); *mathalan* (for example); *nikka* (the wedding ceremony); *Ramadan* (the month of fasting); *sadjie* (the preparation and serving of food at an event); *salaam* (peace [a greeting]); *subgaanallah* (Glory to Allah); *tamaaf* (excuse me, I'm sorry); *trama kasie* (thank you); *yawmul qiyaamah* (The

<sup>11</sup> All the foreign loanwords in the Cape Muslim's Afrikaans have now been captured in a book titled, *Dictionary of Loanwords in the Cape Muslim Vernacular*, (Cape Town, Self-Publication of Mogamat Alexander, 2022).

Day of Resurrection, Day of Reckoning, Day of Judgment); etc. These are conventionally accepted words in the Cape Muslim Afrikaans only.

As mentioned earlier; a result of the many foreign loanwords, self-created words, and the Cape Muslims' different language culture; the Cape Muslim vernacular is not always understandable to other non-Cape Muslim Afrikaans speakers. It also differs from their fellow non-Cape Muslim "Kaaps" speakers. ("Kaaps" meaning "Kaapse Afrikaans"-[Cape Town Afrikaans]).

### *A Typical Conversation in Cape Muslim Afrikaans*

We invited a Cape Muslim to attend a function and we spoke in Cape Muslim Afrikaans but he declined the invitation saying...

"Nee man, ek sal nie kan gaan nie; ek gaan na 'n gaajat; dis mos amie Yusie se honderd dae; hy het mos in die pwasa gamaningal, in soeboeg se waktoe; dit was nogal die oggend net na Layla Tul Qadr; hy het net klaar gesouwe toe bang die bilal; hy gaan neem toe abdas en gaan maak sy salaah en in sy sujood kry hy sy ajjal..."

This conversation ends with "Ek wil nou nie **gielaaf** maak of **fietna** nie, maar **Galatie** se kinders..."

### *The Same Conversation in Standard Afrikaans*

"Nee man, ek sal nie kan gaan nie, ek gaan 'n roudiens, dit is mos oom Yusie se honderd dae, (*na sy dood*). Het hy mos tydens die vas afgesterf, gedurende die oggend gebedstyd, dit was nogal die oggend na Layla Tul Qadr, (*'n spesiale aand gedurende die maand van vas*).

Hy is net klaar sy oggend ontbyt geniet, toe gaan die oproep tot gebed af. Hy het sy ablusie geneem, en gaan bid toe sy oggend gebed, in sy prostrasie posisie sterf hy toe.

Ek wil nou nie skinder of moeilikheid maak nie, maar Galatie se kinders..."

Most non-Cape Muslims are blissfully unaware of the presence or existence of this peculiar version of Afrikaans as a language variety since it is only used when Cape Muslims communicate with each other, but when they encounter a non-Cape Muslim Afrikaans speaker, they are able to code-switch automatically using the standard words for the purpose of mutual understanding. This process is almost mechanical

and extraordinary. During a typical conversation, the Cape Muslims are usually not consciously aware that so many foreign loanwords are being passed between them that are exclusive to their understanding.

With time, the spelling of the countless Malay loanwords had changed largely due to the emerging influence of the spelling rules and written conventions of standard classroom Afrikaans. For example:

- Baca* as *Bacha* (to recite/read)
- Buka* as *Boeka* (Ramadan evening supper at the break of fast)
- Puasa* as *Pwasa* (to fast)
- Pujis* as *Poejies* (supplications)
- Selamat* as *Slamat* (congratulations)
- Sembahyang* as *Soembaiang* (to pray)
- Subuh* as *Soeboeg* (the dawn prayer)
- Terima Kasie* as *Trama kasie* (thank you)

### ***Another Factor that Contributed to the [Mis]Pronunciation of Some Words***

Public education in South Africa was not made compulsory for people of colour for several generations with the result that children left school during their primary school years, whilst others did not attend school at all due to poverty and other socio-economic reasons. Owing to that earlier generation's poor reading ability (of the Roman script), it is, therefore, little wonder that many words were learned from hearsay and not from textbook reading. (Many could however read and write the Arabic script, due to religious requirements, hence the creation and production of the Arabic-Afrikaans texts).

The mispronunciation of words was also evident in the Arabic-Afrikaans writings (written Afrikaans using the Arabic/Jawi scripts), and even more so in the earlier writings. This could also be attributed to social interaction, through orality, ("other people say it like this"), mishearing, and spelling pronunciations, so even if one person mispronounces a word it is transmitted down the line for want of anyone with better knowledge. This also applies to the self-created parochial Afrikaans words, the inherited Malay words, and Arabic words.

For example:

- Ajoemat* – (a Malay word – *Azimat*) [talisman, amulet]
- Aragam* – (an Arabic word – *Al Margoom*) [the deceased]

*Ayda* – (an Arabic word – *Iddat*) [the period of seclusion for the wife whose husband has just passed on, or the period of seclusion for the wife after divorce]

*Jieke* – (an Arabic word – *Thikr*) [supplications]

*Manie* – (Malay word *Mandi*) [the Islamic full-body ritual purification]

*Maningal* – (a Malay word – *Meninggal*) also, *Gamaningal* (the *ga* prefix denotes past tense) [passed on]

*Masiet* – (an Arabic word – *Masjid*) [mosque]

*Nifka* – (an Arabic word – *Nafaqah*) [the Islamic legal term for the financial support a husband must provide for his wife, Islamically the husband is responsible to pay for his wife's housing, food and clothing]

*Saaba* – (an Arabic word – *Sabr*) [to have patients]

*Soembaiang* – (a Malay word – *Sembahyang*) [to pray]

*Trawie* – (an Arabic word – *Tarawih*) [special Ramadan night prayer].

Due to the dominant influence of standard classroom Afrikaans, many of these foreign loanwords are used with Afrikaans prefixes or suffixes. For example, *gemanie*, *gesoembaiang*, *gamaningal*, *abdaskamer*, and *korrebaanvleis*.

### ***Other Cape Malay Mispronunciations Spotted in the Earlier Arabic-Afrikaans Texts***

As mentioned previously, certain Afrikaans letters are missing in the Arabic alphabet. For example, the Afrikaans *ge* sound: we have noticed, in earlier Arabic-Afrikaans texts, writers used the Arabic letter *ga* with a vowel which gives *ga* for the *ge* sound.

Many previous-generation (those born during the early 1900s) Cape Malays made use of the *ga* pronunciation in their speech, "ek het jou gasê", and "gaan was jou gaseg." However, due to the march of knowledge of the current standard classroom Afrikaans language, Muslims no longer pronounce these words in this fashion.

The only remaining *ga* prefix used to this day, is the word *ganiemand* (nobody): *hier is ganieman nie (geen iemand/niemand)*.

Other spellings and [mis]pronunciations in the Arabic Afrikaans texts: many double syllables were written as single syllables. The word

"geloof" was written as a contracted "gloef" for "geloof", or "gloewe" for the plural "gelowe."

Further misspellings: For unknown reasons some writers used the Arabic letter *laam* (l) instead of *daal* (d) as in the word 'dat' which was spelled as *lat*. It might be that the word was pronounced that way. Also, *hooghe* for *hoë*, the Arabic letter *jeem* instead of *yaa*; *jouw* for *jou*. One also finds that the Afrikaans letter *s* was added to make an Arabic word plural e.g., *malaikats*, *kietaabs*, (its diminutive form: *kietaabies*), *waktoes*, and *niyats*.

### Other Malay Word Suffix Pronunciations

Many Malay word endings had changed from *an* to *ang*.

For example:

*Taun* to *Twang* (a Malay title of respect given to a man, equivalent to sir or mister)

*Lambaran* to *Labarang* (feast, festival, or celebration, with particular reference to the two traditional Eid celebrations)

*Jamban* to *Jamang* (toilet)

*Kafan* to *kafang* (linen pieces the dead person is shrouded in)

*Jalan* to *Jalang* (to go or a walk)

*Sopan* to *Sopang* (pious, humble, dignified, graceful, polite)

*Rotan* to *Rotang* (cane)

*Kemparan* to *Kaparang* (wooden clogs), etc.

Since the late 1960s, the pronunciation of many Afrikaans, English, and Arabic words had gravitated closer to the conventional articulated norms and standards of correctness, but the persistence of certain mispronounced Malay words remains to the present day. Given the examples above, the additional Malay loanwords in the Cape Muslim vernacular became the "adapted" Malay words. Hence the different spellings and modified pronunciations; these should therefore not be confused with contemporary Bahasa Indonesia. Despite the evolved spelling and somewhat different pronunciations, the words are still relatively intelligible. The abundance of Arabic loanwords in their vocabulary are essentially derivatives of their religious teachings, more specifically from their childhood *madrasah* days and mosques. Due of the many Arabic loanwords in Cape Muslim Afrikaans, it is easy for the Cape Muslim to understand the Friday *khutbas* which contains many Arabic words.

## The Language Culture of the Cape Muslims

It is not only the unique pronunciations of words and all the foreign loanwords in the Cape Muslim vernacular that makes their version of Afrikaans different to other versions; it is a completely different language culture.

### a) Typical Afrikaans Idiomatic Expressions with Unique Meanings to Cape Muslims Only

And no other Afrikaans speaking community uses or understand the meanings behind these idiomatic expressions.

*Hy is al lankal wafat doenya.*

"He left this world long ago." (He died long ago.)

"Wafat" is the Malay word for "pass away, to die" and *dunya* is the Arabic word for "this world".

*Het jy niyyat gemaak al?*

Literally, it means, "Have you made your intention?" the rest is naturally to be inferred or understood to mean, "Have you made your intention to perform the *hajj*?"

The Arabic word *niyyah* means "intention." The *niyyah* for *hajj* or pilgrimage can be explained as the determination in one's heart to execute the act of pilgrimage to Makkah for the sake of Allah. The statement refers to someone who has made his/her intention to perform the pilgrimage.

*Wanneer gaan jy jou skuld inbetaal?*

"When are you going to fast in the days you missed?"

When a Muslim person skips a few days of fasting for various reasons, that person is obligated to "pay those days in" before the resumption of the following year's fasting period.

*Wanneer gaan jy begin jou voete nat maak.*

Literal meaning: "When are you going to wet your feet?"

A slur directed at someone's reluctance to perform ablution in preparation to carry out the obligatory prayer. The reluctance usually stems from the disinclination to remove one's socks and shoes because the wetting of the feet is a component of the ablution.

*Wanneer gaan jy begin jou kop op die grond sit?*

Literal meaning: "When are you going to begin to put your head on the ground?"

A slur directed at Muslims who are negligent in performing their obligatory prayers. Sunni Muslims worship by placing their forehead and the bridge of their nose on the ground.

### **b) Typical Arabic Exclamations in Their Language Culture**

*Algamdu Lillah*: Praise be to God (used to express gratefulness for something one is happy with, also used as a sigh of relief after a stressful moment or period).

*Allahu Akbar*: God is most great (used when seeing or witnessing something great).

*Astaghfierullah*: I seek the forgiveness of Allah (when seeing something wrong).

*Inna lillahi wa Inna ilayhi rajioon*: Truly, to Allah we belong and truly, to Him we shall return. (Said when they receive the news of someone's death)

*Insha Allah*: God willing (is used when one makes an intention or promises to do something, or when someone else promises to do something).

*La goula wa la quwwata illa Billah*: There is no power and no strength except with Allah, (A person's admission that he/she is unable to do anything without the help and support of Allah). There are many more similar exclamations.

*Masha Allah*: What Allah has willed (when witnessing something beautiful).

*Subganallah*: Glory be to God. (Used locally when astonished about something.)

### **c) Family Names or Honorific Kinship Titles Given to Family Members**

*Oemie*: mother/grandmother

*Bieja/boeja*: Father

*Abee*: my father

*Amie*: paternal uncle

*Amatie*: paternal aunt

*Galatie*: maternal aunt

*Oegtie*: eldest sister

*Agoeja*, *Aboeja*: grandfather, and many other similar family names/kinship titles of endearment. These family names of respect are used exclusively by Cape Muslims.

#### d) Special Terms in the Cape Muslims' Language Culture

Greeting terms: *Assalamu-alaikum* (May peace be upon you). Shortened version sometimes used *Salaam* (Peace). Answer to both greetings: *Wa'alaykum-salaam* (And may peace be upon you too). The correct answer is *Wa'alaykumusalaam* (one word).

Full greeting: *Assalamu alaikum wa-rahma tullāhi wa barakātuh* (May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you). Full answer: *Wa'alaykumu salām wa-rahma tullāhi wa barakātuh* (May the peace, mercy and blessings of Allah be upon you too).

Saying thank you; Arabic version *Shukran* (Thank you). Answer to *shukran*: *Afwan* (You are welcome) or *la shukran* (no, thank you).

Another way of saying thank you in Arabic is *jazakallah* (May Allah reward you). Or *jazakallah ghair* – (May Allah reward you with goodness). Answer to the previous phrase would be *shukran* (thank you).

Malay version of saying thank you is *trama kasie* (thank you). This statement is derived from two Malay words *tarima* – (I accept) and *kasi* (your care or kindness), in full it means "I accept your care or kindness."

The answer to *trama kasie* is *trama kasie vir Alla*. The meaning behind this answer is "Do not thank me, thank Allah" (I am only the means, [of the blessings of Allah]) *Nee trama kasie* (no thank you).

Saying goodbye; *Fi amānillah* (may you be in the protection of Allah). Answer is *shukran*.

Send my regards; *Sê ma / laat weet ma baie kiere slam by die huis*. (send/convey my greetings to your family at home.). Derived from the Malay word *kirim salam* (greetings).

Saying please; *kanala* derived from two Malay words *karna* (for the sake of) and *Allah*. "Do me a favour *kanala*", "Do me a favour for the sake of Allah".

Excuse me or I'm sorry; *maaf* (I'm sorry/excuse me). Previous generations used the word *boeta maaf*, *Boeta* meaning big (a big *maaf*). The word *boeta* was later reduced to *ta* and the word became *tamaaf*. Both terms *maaf* and *tamaaf* are used.

How are you; *hoe vaa nog* (a shortened version of "hoe vaar dit nog").

Answer – *alagamdu lillah* (all thanks and praise to Allah). Previous generation added the word *fris* (*fris alagamdu lillah*). *Fris* meaning *fris en gesond*, *Alagamdu Lillah*.

The term *alagamdu lillah* is also said after a meal or on receiving good news.

Other terms regularly used by Cape Muslims are found in the many varieties of Cape Malay dishes, desserts, beverages, savouries, biscuit names unique to Cape Malays, and various religious terms.

### Typical Statements in the Cape Muslims' Linguistic Culture

Hy is  n baie *gasad* persoon. (He is a very *envious* person)

Hy is vol *kibr*. (He is so full of *pride*)

Ek wil nou nie die *sabab* wees van... nie (I do not want to be the *cause, reason* of...)

S  *mathalan*... (say for *example*)

Het jy jou les *faam gemaak*? (Have you *rehearsed/memorized* your lesson?)

Ek wil nou nie *gielaaf* maak nie, maar... (I do not want to make *trouble*, but...)

Ek wil nou nie *fietna* nie. (I do not want to *gossip*.)

Jy is  n groot *munaafiek*. (You are a big *hypocrite*).

### Conclusion

The Cape Muslim vernacular is a unified dialect; all speakers use the same words, terms, expressions, and exclamations regardless of age, social class, or region in the Cape. This vernacular is part of their unique Cape Muslim culture and is directly related to their customs, traditions, and even their Cape Malay cuisine.

Islam is an integral part of the Cape Muslims' customs, culture, tradition, lifestyle, dress code as well as their language culture. For example, the way they express themselves, the regularity/frequency of Islamic terms they use daily such as *insha Allah*, *masha Allah*, *algamdu lillah*, *inna lillaahi*, and many other similar words contribute to the distinctive nature of their cultural vernacular.

In the final analysis, it is evident, therefore, that the Cape Muslims received their version of Afrikaans from their Melayu archipelago forebears. This, moreover, is not a wrongly pronounced version of the later created standard Afrikaans language, and they are, furthermore, linguistically different from other non-Cape Muslim Afrikaans users due to the unique language culture.

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## **Part IV: Economy and Media**



# Neoliberal Globalization and Post-Colonial Narratives of Development in Southern Africa

Sadık Ünay\*

## Introduction

The historical transformation of the dominant global development paradigm from national developmentalism and structuralism to the modernization theory and neoliberalism in the post-war period has been the focus of intense academic enquiry. Similarly, negative intellectual attitudes towards the developmental potential and capacity of Africa which might be defined as 'Afro-pessimism' continued to influence political science, economics and development studies works on the Continent under the impact of persistent colonial narratives. Despite attaining formal independence after the decolonization process; many African countries including those in Southern Africa struggled to establish democratic, participative and sustainable compacts that supported comprehensive structural transformation and socio-economic development for decades. This study aims to contribute to the contextualization of Southern African initiatives within the general framework of the transforming global development paradigm and stimulate debates on the construction of post-colonial narratives that focus on specific governance issues, rather than ideological presuppositions. To this end, historical stages of change in the dominant development paradigm in the post-war era supported by the Anglo-Saxon academia and international economic agencies is highlighted with reference to structuralism and national developmentalism.

Afterwards, the rise of the modernization theory and dependency/world system perspectives as alternative frameworks of explaining socio-economic change within the modern international system is briefly summarized. The intellectual and material dynamics leading to the ascendancy of neoliberalism as the orthodox paradigm of development and macro-economic management after the 1980s were underlined to attract attention into the impact of neoliberal globalization into Southern Africa. In the second part of the study, the

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peculiar transformation trajectory of Southern Africa in the post-war period was analyzed in detail by looking at the vagaries of the decolonization process, as well as structural problems enduring afterwards. The relatively successful decade of development after decolonization, the negative impact of the international oil crises, and deficiencies of the structural adjustment packages imposed into the regional players by the IMF were briefly stressed. Finally, certain positive examples of development were indicated from the region and the main tenets of a sustainable post-colonial narrative of development were put forward.

### **Transformation of Global Development Paradigm: Structuralism-Modernization-Neoliberalism**

As opposed to conventional wisdom, the development of theoretical and philosophical knowledge concerning sophisticated human affairs is not cumulative and progressive. On the contrary, the evolution of theoretical-philosophical currents broadly follows the course of historical developments back and forth in a cyclical fashion as aptly observed by great thinkers like Ibn Khaldoun.<sup>1</sup> Thus, when established structures associated with a peculiar world order corresponding to an historical epoch fall apart and give way to emerging structures and new problems during transitional periods, pressure is created for theoretical frameworks to follow suit in order to respond to new challenges through adaptation or self-reconstruction.<sup>2</sup> From the prism of ideational-material interactions in the context of systemic transformation, the aftermath of the Second World War became a critical period during which the construction of a somewhat 'illiberal' policy framework was initiated to facilitate the speedy reconstruction of the global economic order. This, in conjunction with the dawn of the decolonization process, heralded an era in which the undisputed dominance of economic liberalism as the mainstream development doctrine since industrial revolution was undermined, paving the way

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- 1 R. Cox, "Political Economy and World Order: Problems of Power and Knowledge at the Turn of the Millennium", in Stubbs, R. and Underhill, G. R. (eds.) *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
  - 2 S. Strange, *The Retreat of the State: The Diffusion of Power in the World Economy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and P.G. Cerny, "Political Globalization and the Competition State", in Stubbs, R. and Underhill, G. R. (eds.) *Political Economy and the Changing Global Order*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

for the unfolding of an 'embedded liberal compromise'. In other words, a 'form of multilateralism that is compatible with the requirements of domestic stability' in the industrialized West<sup>3</sup>, and national developmentalism in the newly industrializing countries (NICs).

The neo-Keynesian consensus, which provided the ideational basis of economic policy making in the post-war order, left a firm imprint on development as a concept and development studies as an academic discipline. The presumption that states had the natural right, and even responsibility, to get actively involved in economic processes unfolding in the markets to promote growth and welfare through employment led to arguments depicting the 'shadow of Keynes'<sup>4</sup> over development thinking. This was understandable given that the first systematic formulations of development theory came from economists unequivocally committed to comprehensive state intervention, including various forms of development planning, in a broadly social-democratic framework. Through ambitious post-war reconstruction programs across Europe and development plans in the Third World, a 'positivist orthodoxy'<sup>5</sup> equating development theory with technically sophisticated instruments of development economics gradually came to prominence.

The institutional and regulatory framework created by the Bretton Woods financial and trading regime facilitated the consolidation of this quasi-orthodoxy by allowing national policy makers to pursue proactive and restrictive macroeconomic policies so as to maximize growth and realize the ideal of full employment. Not only were significant restrictions on international capital movements tolerated to isolate national markets from international pressure and facilitate domestic determination of interest rates, taxation and public spending; but also, adoption of planning regimes was encouraged in Western Europe and the developing world. Hence, the taken-for-granted propositions of development theory over the course of its post-war evolution became the following: "The goal of development is growth; the agent of development is the state; and the means of development are macroeconomic policy instruments".<sup>6</sup> In the main, the fundamental tenet of the structuralist approach in development

3 J. G. Ruggie, "International Regimes, Transactions and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Post-war Economic Order", *International Organization*, 36, (1982).

4 P.W. Preston, *Development Theory: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).

5 P.W. Preston, *Theories of Development* (London: Routledge, 1982).

6 C. Leys, *The Rise and Fall of Development Theory* (Oxford: James Currey, 1996), 7.

economics regarding state-market relations was that market structures and institutions in less developed societies were 'less perfect' than their counterparts in the industrialized North.<sup>7</sup>

As the emerging markets were deemed inefficient in allocating goods and services the presence of strong, rational and interventionist state apparatuses were justified to help, support, and 'stand in' for the markets to promote higher economic growth and equitable distribution. However, in stark contrast to its neoliberal successor, the structuralist school adopted a flexible approach to specific policy instruments required to attain higher growth and inclusive development and refrained from offering standardized policy prescriptions. Yet the disappointing performance record of planned development regimes in several developing countries, notably India, ensured that the initial optimism about the prospects of scientific-positivist approach to structural transformation was short-lived.<sup>8</sup> Therefore galvanization of a new orthodoxy in development thinking and macro-economic governance was impeded for some time.

The resulting analytical vacuum in development studies was temporarily and partly filled in by the modernization theory which surfaced as a defensive and normative response to neo-Keynesian approaches and national developmentalism. Led by prominent American political scientists focusing on the trajectory of decolonization<sup>9</sup>, modernization theory sought to shift the balance back in favour of free enterprise and respect for the power and authority of the industrialized West. The collection of writings around modernization projected a universal and linear process that required strong institutional controls to overcome tensions between progressive

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7 H. B. Chenery, *Redistribution with Growth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974); G. Myrdal, *Economic Theory and the Underdeveloped Regions* (London: Duckworth, 1957); P. Rosenstein-Rodan, "Problems of Industrialization in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe", *Economic Journal*, 53, (1943); R. Prebisch, *The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems* (New York: United Nations, 1950); H. Singer, "Distribution of Gains Between Investing and Borrowing Countries", *American Economic Review*, 40, (1950); J. Tinbergen, *The Design of Development* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1958).

8 C. Colclough and J. Manor, *States or Markets: Neoliberalism and the Development Policy Debate* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), 2.

9 Samuel Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); L. Pye, and S. Verba, (eds.) *Political Culture and Political Development*, (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1965).

change and 'pre-modern' socio-economic factors.<sup>10</sup> Moreover, it was argued that political, social and economic processes of modernization will proceed simultaneously in decolonized spaces producing liberal democracies and capitalist markets. However, the absence of affirmative empirical evidence confirming a linear pattern of change and convergence among developing nations in different regions hampered the attempts of modernization theorists to construct a market-friendly development orthodoxy. Given the authoritarian overtones of structuralist models prioritizing stability rather than social justice or participatory development, the analytical contribution of modernization theory to comparative political economy was conceivable despite its inherent contradictions.<sup>11</sup>

Consequently, the central problematic of post-war development theory, namely how to reconcile the need for state intervention to promote structural transformation with the creation of efficient market economies remained unresolved up until the rise of neoliberalism as a more systematic and uncompromising analytical perspective committed to safeguarding allocative discipline at the expense of social and distributive priorities. In the meantime, major problems associated with the dependency and world system schools, which have been the locus of critical developmental research in the post-war era, facilitated the rise of neoliberalism to prominence. Analysts of development and comparative political economy concentrating on East Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America proved exceptionally receptive towards alternative analytical frameworks, including neoliberalism, because of manifest limitations observed in the explanatory power of these perspectives. Despite their rightful emphasis on the roles of international economic structures in shaping the capitalist world system, analyses rooted in dependency and world system approaches proved unsatisfactory in analysing sophisticated political, socio-cultural, and institutional factors in the developing world. Moreover, their assessments on larger, more complex political economies proved not as elaborate and conclusive as their conclusions regarding small-scale primary goods exporters in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean.

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10 P. Cammack, 'Political Development Theory and the Development of Democracy', *Democratization*, 1 (3), (1994); P. Cammack, *Capitalism and Democracy in the Third World*, (London: Leicester University Press, 1997)).

11 Colclough and Manor, *States or Markets*.

Taking advantage of the need for a comprehensive development paradigm and overwhelming support of Western governments, Anglo-Saxon academia and the international financial institutions the neoliberal paradigm managed to become the new development/governance orthodoxy in a short period of time. The pioneering figures of neoliberalism proved quite radical and revisionist with respect to their diagnoses on major development problems and proposed solutions; consistently emphasizing the primacy of economic growth at the expense of social and distributional objectives. In policy terms, the neoliberal credo singled out pervasive and excessive government intervention in market structures as the fundamental reason of sluggish growth performance in developed and developing countries. In relation to that inflated public sectors, market-distorting bureaucratic controls, inefficient public spending, fiscal indiscipline and overemphasis on capital formation were blamed as principal impediments to development.

The neoliberal conception of market efficiency was intimately linked to a negative view of state activism in the socio-economic realm; so much so that governments were invariably seen as a major part of development problems due to their inefficient, corrupt and parasitic structures.<sup>12</sup> Universal policy proposals which resulted from this distrustful conception of political authority included programs to decrease state involvement through privatization, limited public spending, elimination of controls on exchange and interest rates; while strengthening market forces through deregulation and liberalization. In view of the projected costs of economic interventionism such as rent-seeking and price distortions versus market imperfections like monopolies and asymmetrical information, the neoliberal paradigm preferred imperfect markets to imperfect states.<sup>13</sup>

Politically, on the other hand, the ascendancy of neoliberalism as the dominant global governance paradigm paved the way for a process through which the traditional conception of the state as the 'guardian of public interest' was systematically undermined. Various forms of neoliberal political economy characterized the state as an organization

12 P. T. Bauer, "Remembrance of Studies Past: Retracing First Steps", in G. Meier, and D. Seers, (eds.) *Pioneers in Development*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 27.

13 D. Lal, *The Poverty of Development Economics* (London: Institute of Economic Affairs, 1983); I. M. D. Little, *Economic Development: Theory, Policy and International Relations* (New York: Basic Books, 1982); P. T. Bauer, *Equality, the Third World and Economic Delusion* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981).

tightly controlled by particular interest groups, politico-bureaucratic factions and distributional coalitions trying to maximize their narrowly defined gains. Thus, standard policy recommendations included in the Stabilization and Structural Adjustment Programs conducted by the IMF and the World Bank through a neoliberal overtone pushed for reduced state intervention across a plethora of areas without considering the potential societal hazards of 'deregulation'. Wholesale liberalization programs were justified with the slogan of 'getting prices right',<sup>14</sup> indicating revitalized market dynamism against politically motivated resource allocation.

In its essence, the neoliberal development paradigm was inherently based on a normative acceptance and idealization of Anglo-Saxon economic institutions, modes of regulation, societal positioning. Despite the diversity of various capitalist models mentioned in the political economy literature, the neoliberal orthodoxy produced politically correct and technically sophisticated policy packages for decision makers across the developing world.<sup>15</sup> The main source of attraction for the neoliberal view concerned its exceptional ability to justify and legitimize processes of economic globalization with the explicit support of major industrialized states, multinational corporations, international financial institutions and organic intellectuals. Therefore, fundamental factors underlying the undisputed dominance of neoliberalism in mainstream development and governance theory were essentially material, rather than ideational.<sup>16</sup> The historical prelude to the actual ascendancy of neoliberalism was marked by a series of profound developments in the global political economy including the collapse of the original Bretton Woods system and the fixed exchange rate mechanism, ensuing international oil-shocks and crises of dirigiste regimes. All of these developments prompted a profound questioning of the relative weight

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14 H. J. Chang, *The Political Economy of Industrial Policy* (London: Macmillan, 1994).

15 M. Albert, *Capitalism Against Capitalism* (London: Whurr, 1994); S. Berger and R. Dore, *Global Capitalism and National Diversity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996); C. Crouch and W. Streek, *Political Economy of Modern Capitalism* (London: Sage, 1997); P. Katzenstein, *Small States in World Markets: Industrial Policy in Europe* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985); J. Zysman, *Governments, Markets and Growth: Financial Systems and the Politics of Industrial Change* (Oxford: Martin Robertson, 1983); D. Coates, *Models of Capitalism: Growth and Stability in the Modern Era* (London: Routledge, 2000).

16 Leys, *The Rise and Fall of Development Theory*, 19.

of states and markets in generating inclusive development for large communities.

The preponderance of mainstream Anglo-Saxon academics and international agencies in shaping the global public opinion, in turn, ensured the speedy consolidation of this perspective as the rationale-providing framework of economic activity. Embedded in a systemic effort to revitalize industrialized countries and reshape global regulatory frameworks, the neoliberal paradigm progressively nourished a mystified and linear conception of globalization. Consequently, the main policy priorities of the post-war political economy were effectively reversed: State-managed stabilization policies to prevent economic recession or depression were replaced by internationally managed policies of restructuring under the aegis of the IMF and the World Bank; redistributive taxation aimed at greater income equality was abandoned in favour of fiscal reform that rewards entrepreneurship and accentuates real inequality. In the same vein, all kinds of price regulations have been dropped; public control over financial and labour markets were systematically minimized; and social security legislation has been restructured to promote rather than balance market forces.<sup>17</sup>

### **Post-Colonial Development Performance in Southern Africa**

If an objective assessment is needed, in the *longue durée* of African economic history, the measurable period in recent times has been disappointing through most global comparative parameters. Africa has done badly in terms of its developmental performance, not just over the last half century, but since the beginning of measurement of economic growth after the industrial revolution.<sup>18</sup> The colonial period was at best mediocre for most of the exploited African societies, and formal independence did not change their futile socio-economic trajectory in a radical manner. Continuity of disappointing initiatives at modernization and endogenous development was reflected not only in the inability of many African countries to overcome the legacy of resource dependency and isolation to small extractive enclaves.

But it was also reflected in the futility of major attempts to change the dire faith of the concerned communities and achieve equitable

17 J. A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy* (London: Unwin, 1970), 415.

18 S. Johnson, J. D. Ostry and A. Subramanian, 'The Prospects for Sustained Growth in Africa: Benchmarking the Constraints', *NBER Working Paper* No. 13120, (2007).

integration to global networks. During the first decades of formal independence, majority of African states achieved considerable growth impetus, despite the pressures of political transition which frequently fuelled domestic crises. Physical infrastructures began to be improved, particularly in the areas of health, education and communication as new universities, agricultural research centres, national transport networks and local government structures were established to facilitate development.<sup>19</sup> In terms of comparative figures, up till the mid-1970s the overall development performance in Africa was not much worse than that of the world average and better than that of South Asia and even the industrialized Western world.<sup>20</sup>

Despite the general weakness of the processes that led to institutional preparation for decolonization, the transition from colonial status to independence contributed to faster economic growth. Those countries which became independent earlier displayed stronger developmental performance than those that remained as colonies, despite widespread problems of political and economic governance. Removal of external controls and direct linkages to colonial metropolises had a positive impact on growth, so much so that the period between the 1950s and the mid-1970s was recorded as a time of relative optimism for transformation.<sup>21</sup> However there was no single developmental trajectory among the first generation of independent nations, while most of Southern Africa continued to remain under colonial or minority settler control throughout this period. Political regimes established by the rising domestic elites adopted different sets of policies and strategies in order to achieve fast economic growth and acquire societal legitimacy. For instance, Tanzania, Zambia, Uganda, Guinea and Ghana adopted broadly similar trajectories based on socialist one-party rule and direct public ownership of large scale enterprises.

In contrast to these cases, Kenya and Côte d'Ivoire which had been much favored regional centres of the previous colonial era, adopted policy packages based on liberal and market-driven economic development. Both countries had a relatively substantial domestic

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19 F. Cheru, 'Developing Countries and the Right to Development: A Retrospective and Prospective African View', *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 7, (2016): 1271.

20 Giovanni Arrighi, 'The African Crisis: World Systemic and Regional Aspects', *New Left Review*, Vol. II, No.15, (May-June 2002).

21 K. Sylwester, 'Decolonization and Economic Growth: The Case of Africa', *Journal of Economic Development*, Vol. 30, No. 2, (2005).

farming bourgeoisie and sizeable urban middle classes, diversified economic structures, and pragmatic political leaders. Consequently, they were able to outpace the growth rates of not only their socialist neighbours, but also Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia. However, notwithstanding these successful examples, geostrategic rivalries in the tense Cold War environment frequently supported anti-democratic regimes plundering public resources in the newly independent African countries. Even the repressive Apartheid regime in South Africa was able to exploit the geopolitical tensions of regional dominance between the superpowers, to prolong its existence despite serious domestic resistance.<sup>22</sup> In the popular global discourse and academic writings, the negative developmental experiments of authoritarian regimes were underlined in vivid terms compared to relatively successful cases until the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This also became an intellectual factor feeding in Afro-pessimism.

The decades between 1975 and 1995 could be easily described as the “lost decades of Africa”, as most of the countries in the Continent had stagnant or declining incomes per capita at a time when significant changes took place in the global political economy. It was true that even the industrialized Western world struggled to trigger economic growth in the wake of the international oil crises, while stagflation and low consumer demand created problems for both the public and private actors. However, the developmental performance of African nations diverged sharply from global trends in this critical period due to several factors that will be underlined below: To start with, many commodity-exporting countries were trapped in resource dependent development patterns as they had borrowed heavily against future expectations of commodity sales. The failure to build diversified economic structures due to overvalued national currencies and scarcity of qualified human and physical infrastructure, declining demand for natural resources hit them badly. The initial response of the decision makers was to increase government debt ratios through uncontrolled international borrowing, which came to a halt with the international debt crisis in the early 1980s. Fiscal crises in the commodity producing countries and authoritarian regimes resorting to populist distribution programs gave birth to the of Stabilization and Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs).

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22 A. Lake, *The ‘Tar Baby’ Option: American Policy Toward Southern Rhodesia*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976).

As in many regions of the developing world, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank led the international debt restructuring and structural adjustment processes in Africa with strict conditionality criteria. The conditions of the standard programs implemented in several countries were designed to reduce the fiscal burden of the state structures and promote market friendly development, in the light of the rising Washington Consensus. Waves of neoliberal globalization were carried to the Continent through systematic policies of liberalization, privatization and deregulation which witnessed twenty-nine sub-Saharan African countries going through SAPs at the peak of structural adjustment in the late 1980s and early 1990s.<sup>23</sup>

While addressing some of the acute financial and macro-economic governance problems in that period through fiscal discipline and institutional reforms, structural adjustment packages undermined the long-term growth potentials of many recipients. As they attempted to reduce fiscal burdens, structural adjustment packages tried to limit public expenditures across the board and undermined state capacity in many areas. Although the East Asian tigers and developmental states were investing heavily in manufacturing industries, modern infrastructures and modern education institutions African countries continued to bleed capital and could not support industrialization.<sup>24</sup> A profound example of undermining growth capacity in the name of market efficiency came from the World Bank technocrats who called for the reduction of investment in tertiary education in Africa, as they underestimated the economic returns of education. Although this policy was heavily criticized and reversed in the early 1990s, its major effects were felt in several countries for the decades to come.<sup>25</sup>

However, stagnation and decline were not universal narratives for Africa during the lost decades of development as exemplary countries such as Botswana and Mauritius successfully managed to break the mould. Mauritius constructed a unique social pact including business and labour leaders to break path-dependency with sustainable growth and employment generation. A series of tripartite agreements in the 1970s and 1980s enabled the country to adjust more rapidly to external

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23 C. Lopes, 'Structural Adjustment Policies and Africa', *UNECA*, (25 November 2013).

24 *Ibid.*

25 K. Banya and J. Elu, 'The World Bank and Financing Higher Education in sub-Saharan Africa', *Higher Education*, Vol. 42, No. 1, (2001).

shocks and high levels of debt, while keeping social coalitions together through judicious use of side payments. The result of this neo-corporatist compact was swift transition from dependence on primary agricultural commodity exports to diversified labour intensive manufacturing and later service industries.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile compulsory arbitration of wages, building of trust by the pragmatic socialist administration, construction of cooperation clusters between big business and government created a coordinated form of capitalism that ensured sustained growth and social inequality.<sup>27</sup> Another counter-narrative of steady growth against Africa pessimism was Botswana's experience in the hands of a series of thoughtful, pragmatic leaders with a strong democratic political base. Similar to the case of Mauritius, the decision makers in Botswana constructed a steady and relationship of trust with the big bourgeoisie, which provided a firm basis for sustainable economic growth and inclusive development. State institutions acquired majority shares in the ownership of the rich diamond and other mineral mines, allowing their efficient management with joint ventures with strong multinational corporations. Consequently, Botswana excelled in Africa as a unique national case where the great national mineral wealth has (similarly to countries such as Chile and Norway) has been managed prudently with an effective balance between public and private interests.<sup>28</sup>

Growth potential and development impetus accelerated across Southern and other parts of Africa during the first decade of the new millennium, whereby the region was transformed into one of the fastest growing areas of the world. Despite high rates of population growth, there were net increases in per capita income and improvements on major development parameters across many countries. The entrance of China into the global networks of trade, development finance and direct investment with massive commodity needs had a profound impact on the development trajectory of African nations. As global demand for the commodities increased via the

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26 D. Brautigam, 'Institutions, Economic Reform and Democratic Consolidation in Mauritius', *Comparative Politics*, Vol. 30, No. 1, (1997): 56.

27 N. Nattrass and J. Seekings, 'State, Business and Growth in post-Apartheid South Africa', *IPPG Program Discussion Paper Series 34*, University of Manchester. Oxford Business Group, (2010).

28 J. Robinson, D. Acemoglu and S. Johnson, 'An African Success Story: Botswana', in D. Rodrik, ed., *Search of Prosperity: Analytical Narratives on Economic Growth*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

production boom in China public and private investments into modern infrastructure constituted the basis for the formation of dynamic endogenous markets. Massive current account surpluses enjoyed by Beijing in view of the export-based development strategy allowed the extension of large-scale credits for desperately needed infrastructure investments with long term maturity. Intensification of these investment credits in some countries were criticized for hampering national economic sovereignty and producing relations of neo-colonialism or dependency in due course. However, the positive impact of new transport, energy, communications, irrigation and manufacturing projects on endogenous market formation and socio-economic development was undeniable. On the other hand, simultaneous debt relief initiatives such as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative (HIPC) reinforced fiscal discipline and macro-economic stability, allowing many African governments to shift their attention from debt servicing to public services and infrastructure investments.

As far as the long-term developmental potential is concerned, democratic transitions into multiparty regimes also exerted a positive impact in terms of rational decision making and transparency. In this context, the collapse of the Apartheid regime in South Africa after the end of the Cold War and the constructive engagement with the regional neighbours in the democratic era became a stimulating factor for structural transformation. Rising multinationals in South Africa increased their foreign direct investment (FDI) and international trade capacity along with initiatives of economic and commercial diplomacy. Moreover, South Africa and Namibia constituted role models for political regimes aiming to construct modern governance structures characterized by improved accountability and institutional regulation. Legal and institutional reforms in many countries supported the positive atmosphere for the influx of direct and portfolio investments, as a result which most African countries continued their growth momentum after the global financial crisis in 2008.<sup>29</sup>

Nevertheless, most countries in the region experienced typical developing world symptoms in the immediate aftermath of the crisis due to declining commodity prices in international markets. Reduced export earnings and slow-down in the incoming direct investments

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29 V. Arora and A. Vamvakidis, 'The Implications of South African Economic Growth for the rest of Africa', *IMF Working Paper*, WP/05/58, (2005).

created a need for stimulus packages which triggered rising government expenditure and international borrowing via sovereign bonds. But there were positive initiatives in many countries to increase the relative contribution of local financing in order to reduce risks towards international fluctuations and improving accountability in governance. In addition to the developing country form of the crisis, South Africa also experienced the industrialized country form via a collapse in the domestic consumption and mortgage credit markets. As one of the most advanced national economies in the region, South Africa was caught in a vicious 'middle-income trap' whereby the policy makers faced difficulties to consistently increase levels of per capita income and average welfare measures.<sup>30</sup> At the same time, grave inequalities among the main social groups that make up the societal fabric in South Africa fuelled concerns for public security and stability.

While in the Eastern, Central and Western African states growing consumption dynamics have been largely driven by the middle classes, wealth and capital in South Africa continued to be limited to a small affluent class in South Africa. The developing and developed country symptoms of the post-global financial crisis era triggered a trajectory of distorted growth and growing socio-economic inequality in South Africa despite the robust standing in global platforms through groupings such as the BRICS and international human rights initiatives. Strong and innovative political leadership, as well as robust state-society interaction is required to repeat the development performance of the first decade of democratic government. Many African nations witnessed grave challenges in the twenty-first century due to pressures stemming from increasingly educated youth, expanding middle classes and democratic civil society movements for structural transformation. While some policy makers managed to respond to these challenges with pragmatic and consistent programs of change, some found it difficult to come to terms with them in a shifting global environment beyond primary commodities trade. Countries adopting strategies of inclusive development and industrialization are more likely to succeed in their efforts at

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30 H. Bhorat, A. Cassim and A. Hirsch, 'Policy Coordination and Growth Traps in a Middle-Income Country Setting: The Case of South Africa', in J. Page and P. Tarp, eds, *The Practice of Industrial Policy: Government Coordination in Africa and East Asia*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, (2017).

modernization with stability, while patrimonial rent-seeking regimes are likely to reproduce relations of dependency in the future.

### **Epilogue: Towards a Post-Colonial Development Narrative for Southern Africa**

It is hardly a well-kept secret that Africa as a Continent and Southern Africa as the focus of this study have long been described through a distorted perceptive lens and pessimistic narratives that grossly underestimated their developmental potential. The roots of contemporary pessimism, or skepticism about the prospects for successful structural transformation are obviously quite old and deeply rooted in the psyche triggered by the colonial legacy. Grave misperceptions are reflected to literature, cartography, anthropology, political science, economic history and development studies on actual risk levels, endemic conflicts, political instability and the variety of national experiments. Therefore, following our analyses on the evolution of development paradigm from national developmentalism to neoliberalism and the post-colonial development performance in Southern Africa, it is important to lay down the foundations of a novel narrative. And this narrative shall start with an apt reading of the radical changes that have been unfolding in the international system without falling into the trap of wishful thinking. In the last two decades the global political economic system has evolved into a more sophisticated and multipolar structure in which flexible alliances, state-business alliances, civil and intellectual networks, epistemic communities increased their influences. The withdrawal of the United States from its self-declared role of the 'stability providing hegemonic power' and emergence of participative modes of governance through international platforms such as the G-20 opened up new areas of manoeuvre to the emerging powers. South Africa was among the major emerging powers that skilfully benefited from this opportunity by taking up active roles in the BRICS group along with China, Russia, India and Brazil. The rise of the Global South via arguments of participative governance, egalitarian distribution and inclusive development posed a strong challenge against the Western dominated narratives of neoliberal globalization.

In the multipolar global system, the Global South is not only seen as a source of counter-veiling political and geostrategic power; but also as a hub of new investment opportunities, export destinations,

development experience and know-how accumulation. Relations of complex interdependence are redefining the international aid architecture and multilateralism, with increased participation from business and civil society groups.<sup>31</sup> Moreover, demographic changes brought about by the flourishing young and urban 'human capital' has the potential to geometrically increase the productive base of the Continent through better employment opportunities. Continuing discoveries of natural resources and associated challenges of good financial governance are accompanied by opportunities to 'leapfrog' in development through digital technologies.

Hence South African transformation pursuits are taking place amidst attempts at reconfiguring various aspects of the global governance regime in line with multipolarity. Despite its huge regional potential, engagements with the rest of the world would be more effective if they are articulated and managed in the context of a coherent positioning strategy between the global and rising powers. The new development narrative shall transcend historically rooted image factors and dragging issues; and focus on swift democratization, respect for the rule of law, transparent and good governance, employment friendly growth, and inclusive social change with respect to traditional structures. In this context equitable distribution of the material benefits that result from controlled global integration among different ethnic and religious groups will contribute to social harmony, while galvanizing sustainability of inclusive development efforts.

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<sup>31</sup> C. Lopes, A. Hamdok and A. Elhiraika, eds, *Macroeconomic Policy Framework for Africa's Structural Transformation*, (Cham: Palgrave MacMillan, 2017).

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# Muslim Entrepreneurs' Responses to Covid-19 Economic Adversity: A Qualitative Analysis

Rifat Hendricks\*

## Introduction

This article is part of a larger study on an intersectional representation of Muslim entrepreneurs in Cape Town who were faced with Covid-19 economic adversity and their responses to it. Our theoretical approach is that there is an iterative process between the entrepreneur and her environment; also stated as the interplay between agency and structure. The inter-subjective nature of this process forms a continual dialectic and discovery process. We frame the process squarely within the entrepreneur and her/his environment with a pro-social perspective. The environment determines how the entrepreneur thinks and acts, and the entrepreneur's actions influence the environment. There are limited studies on Muslim entrepreneurs in Cape Town and even less within the context of Covid-19. Muslim entrepreneurs have, driven by their Islamic faith-based principles, been applying unique approaches in their responses to Covid-19 – this study is localised within this context. One of the key themes identified was the concept of foraging which we discuss as one of the strategies applied by entrepreneurs faced with exogenous economic changes. We draw parallels with how Muslims within the historic Islamic model of *masjid*-centred economic activity were networking and foraging their environment for solutions to supply challenges, materials and products shortages, infrastructure and logistical impediments, innovation and change, etc. Muslim entrepreneurs applied the principles of effectuation, collaboration, togetherness and communal support.

Generally speaking, entrepreneurs in Cape Town (and elsewhere) are primarily domesticated and socialised in a post-modern social context that shapes their worldview within a uniplex perspective. Their perception of the reality of their world of business and trade is only what they can empirically perceive as real in the physical world – meaning both from a positivist as well as a humanist worldview. Most

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traditional Muslims, on the other hand, do not deny the world as perceived by the senses but maintain that there is more to the world than that which can be perceived by the senses which results in them having a different perspective on their personal and social reality and general existence.

Social science is the discipline produced by modernity and has reached most of the Islamic countries through the colonial powers. Social science, therefore, was developed with a uniplex Eurocentric view of reality and has slowly been replacing fiqh (Islamic jurisprudence) which was the social science for Muslims. Both fiqh and social science are concerned with human actions (a'mal) with fiqh playing a normative role. Social problems have been addressed and solved by fiqh in Muslim societies and by social sciences in Western societies. Western social science has conquered the domain of fiqh and attempted to perform its functions through Western glasses. However, since the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there has been an intense struggle and mutual interaction between these two scientific traditions within Muslim societies. There are two opposing theoretical worldviews in understanding social science: 'uniplex' and 'multiplex'. Uniplex means a single layer while multiplex means multiple layers. Some theories assume that reality has only a single layer, either material or non-material. In contrast, other theories see this dichotomy between materialism and idealism as a false dichotomy and view reality as multiplex, which includes both material and non-material levels.

### **Research Paradigm of the Study: Multiplexity**

Şentürk (6 May 2021, 14 May 2022)<sup>1</sup> argues that the Islamic intellectual tradition holds multiplexity as a social research paradigm that involves a multi-layered understanding of truth, reality and knowledge. He says that this Islamic worldview is different to post-modern and post-truth paradigms of positivism, interpretivism and critical theory in that multiplexity comprises a multiplex ontology, epistemology and methodology. Islamic traditions evolved in the pre-modern era and understands truth as existing in three realms of reality – the visible (material) world, the invisible world and the realm of the

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1 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vt4t-Brv9Y> (6 May 2021) as well as his presentation online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UpzPjuA7p5A> (14 May 2022).

divine. These are referred to in the Arabic philosophical terms as the '*alam al-mulk*, '*alam al-malakut* and the '*alam al-lahut* (*al-jabarut*).<sup>2</sup>

Şentürk furthermore argues that post-modern and post-truth paradigms deny the existence of truth and hold a uniplex worldview where reality is perceived only when it is empirically verifiable i.e. critical realism. Uniplexity is also different to the Islamic worldview in that it does not create a tradition upon which a civilisation is based (i.e. a uniplex conception of ontology, epistemology and methodology). When one conceptualises social theories of existence (ontology), approaches to knowledge (epistemology) and methodology there are implicit assumptions and philosophical underpinnings that are axiomatic. The historic Islamic tradition acknowledges these latent assumptions when it developed the three strata at which truth, reality and knowledge exist – the *maratib* or levels of being that includes both the physical as well as the meta-physical worlds.

Multiplex ontology, as detailed by Şentürk, is called *maratib al-wujud* (levels of being) which are divided into the three realms of reality: '*alam al-mulk*, '*alam al-malakut* and the '*alam al-lahut* (*al-jabarut*). The ontology of the existential world essentially speaks of nature, society and hermeneutics (language). Multiplex epistemology, Şentürk continues, is called *maratib al-'ilm* (the epistemological pluralism of knowledge in Islam) – and these different types of knowledge include *hissiyyat* (empirical knowledge), '*aqliyyat* (rational knowledge), *naqliyyat* (reported knowledge) and *kashfiyyat* (spiritual knowledge). Islam holds that knowledge of something is gained either through experiencing it empirically, or rationally deducing it, or having learned of it through reporting or finally knowing about something with conviction through spiritual experiences. Multiplex methodology is referred to as *maratib al-usul* (levels of method) which means the certainty of the truth is obtained through *haqq al-yaqin* (certainty by experience), '*ayn al-yaqin* (certainty by witnessing), or '*ilm al-yaqin* (certainty by knowledge).

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2 The '*alam al-mulk* refers to the material world; the '*alam al-malakut* refers to the non-material world and the '*alam al-lahut* / *al-jabarut* refers to the world of the divine existence.

There are also studies which look at Asian ontology where Naomi,<sup>3</sup> for instance, challenges conventional Eurocentric hegemony.<sup>4</sup> She argues that western epistemology has been developed for the academic world and is considered to be positivist and reductionist. On the other hand, she continues, that “non-western epistemologies such as African, Indigenous, Buddhist and Hindu ways of knowing are spirituality oriented in ways that value multiple possibilities, transpersonal aspects of human experience, and open-ended interpretations of meaning”.

And Liu<sup>5</sup> shares similar thoughts saying that Asian epistemology became “a good site for decolonial perspective[s] since it is grounded in knowledge of self and reality-based upon Asian spiritual intellectual traditions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Confucianism that are different from a Western Cartesian self and rationality”. Asian epistemology includes a contemplative epistemology. Contemplative epistemology is a form of knowing that comes from “meditative ways, including mindful states, profound silence and stillness, openness, intense focus and clarity, creating detachment with the contents of mind, and so on.”<sup>6</sup> This contemplative state can’t be reduced to reason or emotion.<sup>7</sup> Hence, it can hold both, while at the same time it is beyond. These epistemologies invoke “empathic ways of understanding, profound silence, unconditional love, deep awareness, the vastness of the way of our being, interconnectedness, and wisdom on a very subtle level of the transience of self and reality.”<sup>8</sup>

3 Sharin Shajahan Naomi, online:

<https://criticalinternationalization.net/2022/02/21/crafting-non-western-ways-for-writing/>. June, 2022.

4 W. D. Mignolo, “Epistemic Disobedience: Independent Thought and De-Colonial Freedom”, *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 26, no. 7–8 (2009): 1–23.

5 James H. Liu, “Asian Epistemologies and Contemporary Social Psychological Research”, *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2011): 213-226.

6 D. J. Haynes, “Contemplative Practice: Views from the Religion Classroom and Artist’s Studio”, *ARTS: Arts in Religious and Theological Studies*, vol. 20, (2009): 25-33.

7 J. N. Ferrer, *Revisioning Transpersonal Theory: A Participatory Vision of Human Spirituality* (State University of New York Press, 2002).

8 D. J. Haynes, “Contemplative Practice: Views from the Religion Classroom and Artist’s Studio”, *ARTS: Arts in Religious and Theological Studies*, vol. 20, (2009): 25-33 and A. Zajonc, “Love and Knowledge: Recovering the Heart of Learning through Contemplation”, presented at *Contemplative Practices and Education: Making Peace in Ourselves and in the World*, Teachers College, Columbia University, February 11-13, 2005, 2005. Online: <http://www.contemplativemind.org/admin/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/zajonc-love-andknowledge>. July.

Contemplation is often misunderstood as something separate from the world and critical consciousness. To Eurocentric scholars of the West, one's expressions are often considered to be more accurate and clearer on the basis of following "conventional positivist rules of linearity, categorization, separation, and syllogism."<sup>9</sup>

Our view on this is that future research may cast a wider net on the uniplicitous, duplicitous and multiplicitous frames and paradigms through which existence, knowledge and truth are viewed. And upon doing so, it may provide researchers some new tools to understand social phenomena at a deeper level. Having a uniplex research paradigm only allows for a linear perspective while duplex and multiplex paradigms allow for more circular perspectives. We share multiplexity as an approach given my personal bias growing up as a Muslim, but in this study, we attempt to step out of that bias and try and present a more objective view. Kuckertz and Brändle presented a structured literature review of the early empirical research on the Covid-19 crisis and entrepreneurship. A thematic analysis of 34 empirical studies were reviewed by them and concluded that the *uncertainty* construct, *resilience* construct and entrepreneurial *opportunity* construct are key when it comes to understanding entrepreneurship facing adverse situations.<sup>10</sup>

We have done an extensive literature review on the entrepreneurship phenomena and learnt several relevant constructs and ideas from the literature. For instance, the *uncertainty* construct, *creative destruction*, *opportunity recognition* and *opportunity creation* as well as the *resilience* and *resourcefulness* constructs. And these were some of the ideas from which we got our inspiration and how our philosophy is grounded within the current entrepreneurial literature.

But this literature review was primarily done on entrepreneurs in general and the entrepreneurship phenomena. Additional searches for Muslim entrepreneurs, on the other hand, yielded less success in finding publications and research articles – and even less on entrepreneurs during Covid-19. We searched the entrepreneurship literature through various search engines (including Google Scholar, and a few publication houses including Elsevier, Taylor and Francis as

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9 Naomi, *ibid.*, 2022.

10 Andreas Kuckertz and Leif Brändle, "Creative Reconstruction: A Structured Literature Review of the Early Empirical Research on the COVID-19 Crisis and Entrepreneurship", *Management Review Quarterly*, vol. 72, (2022): 281–307.

well as consulting with the senior librarian at the University of the Western Cape Library) to find research relevant to Muslim entrepreneurs in Cape Town during Covid-19. We could only find very limited articles – and the articles we found excluded one or more of the four main keywords of our study i.e. Muslim, entrepreneur, Covid-19 and Cape Town. The keyword searches we used were; ‘Muslim entrepreneurs’, ‘Cape Town’, ‘Western Cape’, ‘Muslim businesses’ and ‘Covid-19’. There were only three research articles that analyse Muslim entrepreneurs during the Covid-19 pandemic, but were not located in the unique Cape Town social and business context. Silalahi, et al (2020)<sup>11</sup> analyse Muslim investors during Covid-19, but is not located in Cape Town. And similarly, the research article of Utomo et al (2020)<sup>12</sup> studies Muslim enterprises during Covid-19, but not in Cape Town. And lastly, Yuliaty et al (2021)<sup>13</sup> writes about Muslim economic recovery during Covid-19 but again the study is located in North Sumatera Province, Indonesia and not in Cape Town. The other articles we found on Muslim entrepreneurs all had a different focus to the current study and were not particularly relevant.

### Theoretical Framing of the Study

The social and business environment determines how the entrepreneur thinks and acts, and the entrepreneur's actions influence the environment. Towards understanding this dialectic as a social interactive theoretical framework to analyse the entrepreneurship phenomena, Shepherd and Patzelt have, for instance, postulated a prosocial perspective in their book *Trailblazing in Entrepreneurship - Creating New Paths for Understanding the Field*.<sup>14</sup> They view a potential entrepreneurial opportunity as a process of social interaction between the entrepreneur and a community as opposed to an outcome of thinking on behalf of the entrepreneur. And they understand the

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- 11 "Psychology of Muslim Investors in Stock Investment During Covid-19 Pandemic", *Tazkia Islamic Finance and Business Review* 14, no. 1 (2020).
  - 12 "The Effect of Muslim Religiosity and Innovation Capability on Firm Survival: A Study on Small Enterprises during the Covid-19 Pandemic", *Iqtishadia* 13, no. 2 (2020): 179-196.
  - 13 "Economic Recovery in North Sumatera Province After the Covid-19 Pandemic, Through MSME Development and Increasing Muslim Friendly Tourism", *Journal of International Conference Proceedings (JICP)* 4, no. 3 (2021): 639-703
  - 14 Dean A. Shepherd and Holger Patzelt, *Trailblazing in Entrepreneurship - Creating New Paths for Understanding the Field* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

entrepreneurial phenomena through an interactive view of the entrepreneurial process. With this it is not only considering the entrepreneur's cognition but rather a collective cognition of the community, the entrepreneur and the opportunity. This iterative process involves relational capital, conducive conditions, inter-relationships between the entrepreneur and the community that he or she is interacting with.

They continue to analyse this interactive prosocial perspective of entrepreneurship by examining the micro-foundations of entrepreneurial activities, and also how compassionate and prosocial motivation of entrepreneurs can ease the suffering of others – I unpack this further on. Shepherd and Patzelt finally analyse entrepreneur's cognition and emotions (both positive and negative) calling it cognitively hot perspectives. This interactive perspective goes beyond only viewing the entrepreneur's cognition of the situation. And this prosocial interactive environment for the Muslim entrepreneurs were the communities centred around the economic activities of the different mosques. I discuss this in a further section below.

Another theory that entrepreneurs employed was the effectuation theory which holds that entrepreneurs are making use of what they have at their disposal, which resources they can access and what infrastructural support and utilisation they can rely on. Effectuation meant applying a few principles – one of which is that the entrepreneur's current set of skills are the deciding factor of which direction she/he is going to take – the pilot-in-the-plane principle.<sup>15</sup> And it is different to the conventional approach where goals are predetermined in spite of what resources are currently available to the entrepreneur – this is referred to as the bird-in-hand principle. Effectuation means randomly applying strategies in the business based on what is available. When there is an end goal and it is not reached because of a lack of skills/resources it sets the entrepreneur back emotionally and psychologically. Entrepreneurship carries uncertainty and risks and effectuation means going with the flow because of these unknown risks. In this way he/she plays it safe and avoids serious loss in the business. This is also applying the affordable-loss principle where the entrepreneur only spends consciously and prefers to grow organically at a slower pace. The patchwork-quilt principle is when

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15 Online: <https://www.entrepreneursera.com/effectuation-in-entrepreneurship/> July.

learning and growing happens through the establishment and strengthening of new partnerships.

### **The Impact of Covid-19 on Entrepreneurs**

Covid-19 pandemic is essentially a problem caused by an extrinsic health threat at a global scale. And this pandemic brought exogenous changes to life as we know it. A fair question to ask is how health and the possibility of being affected by the Covid-19 virus and its terminal health symptoms impacted entrepreneurial activities within the sample of participants interviewed for this study - and did entrepreneurship impact on their personal health? The health and well-being of the entrepreneur is necessary for her/him to continue expressing agency. And health problems appear to vary across regions and times, but Covid-19 brought personal health challenges to almost everyone. Entrepreneurs started to realize their own vulnerabilities and the fragile nature of the economies, entrepreneurial engagements and activities, business and job opportunities, etc. Covid-19 affected everyone across age, gender and economic status without discrimination.

The social interactive nature of entrepreneurship was threatened in that the pandemic forced a social distancing and limited interaction of everyone. Traditional interactions had to be re-examined and re-invented very quickly – a rethinking of conventions. And in that process innovative ideas became refined as entrepreneurs in several industries adapted and changed the way they were doing business. The new interactions with communities and environments like suppliers, staff, customers, colleagues, reviewers, editors, etc. moved online overnight during the national lockdown enforced by law in March 2020.<sup>16</sup> Many entrepreneurial ventures closed their doors while other business transactions and deals were essentially made without personal face-to-face contact. And there were a fair amount of trepidation, uncertainty and fear amongst the general population including entrepreneurs.

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<sup>16</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic started to spread with some significance across the world in the last quarter of 2019. The official start of COVID-19 in South Africa was with the declaration of the government on 15 March 2020 (with effect from 27 March 2020) to restrict the population with level-5 restrictions and a complete national lockdown of movements and economic activities.

## Discussion

Uniplexity reduces reality to one level and denies the existence of other realities – a reductionist perspective. This reality of existence is not extended into the other realms of reality as viewed by Islam. Entrepreneurial activities, most believe, have little or nothing to do with the meta-physical world. Many Muslim entrepreneurs, and especially those interviewed for this study understand their entrepreneurial activities as existing at three levels. Their realities are informed by three *maratib* (hierarchies). And this worldview is driven by the Islamic belief that all of our existence on earth are simultaneously physical and meta-physical. Muslims view their existence as body, mind and soul. Hence, a Covid-19 pandemic with its ensuing economic crisis is viewed by Muslims and Muslim entrepreneurs as the will of Allah (SWT) - in the Arabic terminology, it is the *taqdir* of the divine. This perspective differentiates the Muslim entrepreneurs from all others – and hence Muslim entrepreneurs have, driven by their Islamic faith-based principles, been applying unique approaches in their responses to Covid-19.

### Islamic Multiplex Ontology and Epistemology

Upon seeing the suffering of communities during Covid-19, Muslim entrepreneurs understood the proportioning of wealth and earnings different to general entrepreneurs steeped in a uniplex worldview. Multiplexity means that foraging for resources and networking to facilitate wealth and earnings is understood within the Islamic concept of *rizq* (divinely proportioned wealth). And this concept means that wealth, possessions and earnings are seen as that which are proportioned and predestined for every individual. In fact, the belief extends to the fact that every individual is born with his own *rizq* and nothing of it can be changed – not more and not less – and this is the principle by which Muslim entrepreneurs living through Covid-19 were inspired by. This Islamic faith-based belief is that one's *rizq* is always there and that even when one has nothing, one will still be sustained. It is a worldview that believes God is in total and complete charge of all the worldly affairs - a surrender and a submission to that will. Uniplexity is to de-godify the social paradigm and reducing reality to only that which can empirically be verified – the positivist-humanist perspectives. While multiplexity holds the opposite paradigm that

brings a godification of realities through the proposition that reality exists at multiple levels – including the realm of the divine.

The Islamic concept of *rizq* dominates this worldview and Muslim entrepreneurs operate and function within this paradigm. If the *rizq* is to be viewed through a uniplex paradigm, then it would only mean financial and material wealth. A multiplex ontology (that includes nature and our physical bodies, society and our relations as well as hermeneutics/ language) extends the concept of *rizq* into a more complete understanding with deeper and richer meanings.

For example, Muslim entrepreneurs interviewed for this study believe and understand that the multiplex conception of *rizq* also includes the proportionment of health and the illnesses decreed for the individual; and the proportionment and favours of the individual's biological-, physiological- and genetic make-up; as well as the gifts of the body's organs and its specialised functions that form a part of *rizq*; and so do the body's digestive system, cardio-vascular system, musculo-skeletal system, endocrine system, etc.; and that *rizq* also includes the electromagnetic energy fields around all of existence – without which there is an imbalance and the individual is unwell; that even the emotions granted unto the individual are a part of the *rizq*; multiplex conception of *rizq* includes accepting the 5-senses as a part of proportioned wealth; and so do family relations, social relation and business relations – the interactions and benefits derived from these relationships are written as the *rizq* of the individual - a multiplex ontology (that indeed includes nature and our physical bodies, society and our relations as well as hermeneutics/ language) and that extends the concept of *rizq* into a more complete understanding with deeper and richer meanings.

A multiplex epistemology extends the concept of *rizq* as the knowledge one receives when the divine permits and allows the knowledge to be known, and the talents, skills and insights of the individual are all proportioned and form part of *rizq*; careers are a part of *rizq*; intellectual and rational abilities as well as the spiritual states all form part of *rizq*. The concept of *rizq* has very rich and deep meanings and especially so with entrepreneurs' expressions of their activities and decision-making during the Covid-19 economic crisis. Holding onto these faith-based beliefs within its multiplexity strengthened the temerity and patience of Muslim entrepreneurs during very trying and adverse economic pressure. They could

overcome barriers and challenges with hope, patience and faith – it is ultimately understanding that *rizq* is given by the divine power as a favour and no-one has a say in that. Muslims believe that Allah shares with all of existence from His storehouses that never runs empty. Multiplexity adds a spiritual dimension to the understanding of reality, knowledge and truth that uniplexity doesn't have. When Muslims extend *rizq* to include such comprehensive understandings, they are inspired by several Qur'anic verses where Allah (swt) repeatedly proclaims that He is the One who provides sustenance to all of creation; examples are: "There is no animal on the earth, but that its sustenance lies with Allah..." (11:6)<sup>17</sup>, "It is Allah who created you and then He provided for you..." (30:40)<sup>18</sup>, "... Allah provided unto whomever He wishes without reckoning." (3:37)<sup>19</sup>

### **Masjid-Centred Economic Activities**

The Islamic tradition historically has a *masjid*-centred society that includes all social, economic and religious functions and activities being centred around the mosques. The Islamic civilisation having a multiplex ontology and understanding reality to have three levels of being makes sense to have all these activities centred around a place of worship. It is a civilizational design that encourages social cohesion, unity and a strengthening of the concept of 'ummah (brotherhood). Social connections happen every day when the community meets for daily prayer rituals. This context was the impetus for the establishment of the world's first two universities<sup>20</sup> and tertiary educational institutions that conferred degrees – and it was made possible by the plethora of religious-, educational-, commercial- and

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17 Holy Qur'an, chapter 11:6 (translated in <https://quran.com/>): "There is no moving creature on earth whose provision is not guaranteed by Allah. And He knows where it lives and where it is laid to rest. All is 'written' in a perfect Record."

18 Holy Qur'an, chapter 30:40 (translated in <https://quran.com/>): "It is Allah Who created you, then gives you provisions, then will cause you to die, and then will bring you back to life. Can any of your associate-gods do any of this? Glorified and Exalted is He above what they associate with Him 'in worship."

19 Holy Qur'an, chapter 3:37 (translated in <https://quran.com/>): "So her Lord accepted her graciously and blessed her with a pleasant upbringing—entrusting her to the care of Zachariah. Whenever Zachariah visited her in the sanctuary, he found her supplied with provisions. He exclaimed, "O Mary! Where did this come from?" She replied, "It is from Allah. Surely Allah provides for whoever He wills without limit."

20 The first university of the world was the University of al-Qarawiyyin in Morocco, established in 859 CE followed by the al-Azhar University established in 970 CE.

economic activities as well as health and medical care that were centred around the *masjid*. In fact, the mosque of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) in Madinah was also the seat of government where foreign dignitaries were hosted and his mosque acted as the centre. Furthermore, there is a spirituality infused in everything that Muslim entrepreneurs (and others) do when they are taught that one always implores the Lord for help in all of one's affairs. When a community's worldview concurs in this way, the solidarity and natural support of each other is a given. This is what makes the Muslim entrepreneur different to general entrepreneurs steeped in a uniplex worldview where Western conception of entrepreneurship is the exact opposite to this.

Covid-19 protocols and restrictions brought a curve ball to Muslim entrepreneurs in Cape Town especially when the mosques were closed to prevent the spread of the Covid-19 virus. Suddenly entrepreneurs did not have the benefits of interacting with a community every day, couldn't practice the *foraging* of their environment in search for solutions to their supply challenges, materials and products shortages, infrastructure and logistical impediments, innovation and change, etc. But the resource that was ever constant for entrepreneurs was the communities of *masjid* relations that the *masjid*-centred social and business environments brought about. These communities of networks, contacts, business relations, etc. were indispensable to navigating their Covid-19 entrepreneurial journeys successfully. Muslim entrepreneurs applied the principles of effectuation, collaboration, togetherness and communal support by tapping into these relationships.

Turning to the pro-social theoretical framework detailed earlier that tie in with the *resourcefulness*, *opportunity* and *resilience* constructs expounded in the existing literature is that the resources required for an entrepreneur to survive adverse economic conditions can be found in the business communities and networks around him/her. And with the sample of participants interviewed those resources were found in the *masjid*-centred communities they frequented. They could forage the communities of Muslims who meet multiple times every day and interact with each other. The multiplex worldview of Muslim entrepreneurs as detailed in this article presents new perspectives on understanding the entrepreneurship phenomena – a *masjid*-centred religious community that represents the ideal networking opportunity

to any entrepreneur is a novel idea in the entrepreneurship literature. The data collected and the quotations below substantiate these hypotheses. Furthermore, the effectuation theory of entrepreneurs making use of the resources they can find in the environment ties in with the foraging-networking theme identified from an abductive data analysis of the data. The foraging construct is a new concept in the entrepreneurship and management literature especially when understood within the Islamic multiplex ontology where it connotes the foraging of their environment to find their *rizq*.

To illustrate the Islamic multiplex conception of *rizq*, a number of participants upon the question of how they have coped during Covid-19 would, for instance, refer to themselves as having; "... a strong *iman* [belief] that Allah gives *rizq* [proportioned wealth] to everyone, never mind what..." meaning that the seemingly worldly affairs of business and entrepreneurship are understood as being a part of the divinely ordained concept of *rizq* (multiplexity). Similar comments would include (in the Afrikaans language); (1) "Allah kyk agter ons in die dunya... altyd", meaning: God takes care and looks after us in this worldly [existence]; (2) "...ons glo waarlikwaar in wat Allah vir ons geskryf het", meaning: We earnestly believe in that which the divine has predestined and predetermined for us; (3) "Ek question nie Allah se taqdir nie. Anders sal nie verstaan nie", meaning: I don't question the will and predestination of the Lord. Others won't understand at all; (4) "ons imaan is altyd sterk...", meaning: Our belief in God's (will) is strong and unshakable.

Many participants with their comments indicated directly and indirectly that those with a uniplex worldview cannot understand their belief of direct divine intervention in the worldly affairs. And their reality in the material world is influenced by the non-material world and the world of the divine. Numerous comments from the data collected refer to the reliability and support they have as Muslims from those frequenting the *masjid* – examples: (1) "we can always rely on our brothers at the *masjid* – whatever we need, we can find around the *masjid*"; (2) "When we come to the house of Allah (SWT), then He takes care of all our affairs."

The Islamic multiplex ontological frame anchored the Muslim entrepreneurs in that their faith and belief in Allah (SWT) as the provider and sustainer of all material and physical needs carried them through Covid-19 and its challenges. Not even Covid-19 and the

unprecedented changes could deprive them from this belief. It was the intrinsic belief in the concept of *rizq* that existed before Covid-19 and that continued through the pandemic period. Examples that illustrate this fortitude include: (1) "Allah is greater than Covid-19, He will take care of us"; (2) "Allah always provides our *rizq*, even if the slave commits sins and transgresses the laws of Allah." This strong belief was their insurance policy even though the business environment has changed in all ways; there were suddenly no interactions, no engagements and no (face-to-face) business but their *rizq*, they believed, was always there – divinely ordained.

The concept of *rizq* meant that there is always the assurance from Allah (swt) that wealth and earnings are proportioned for the individual – all that the Muslim entrepreneur had to do was make the effort to search for it. And even though the external Covid-19 pandemic impacted on their reality, it didn't take them away from having the *yaqin* (certitude in belief) that they will be sustained. Looking for their *rizq* in effect meant *foraging* their environment to find their *rizq* i.e. *rizq*-foraging. And this also meant continuously interacting with the environment of Muslim communities centred around the *masajid*. Foraging hasn't stopped with the new circumstances brought about by Covid-19, rather it actually continued. Entrepreneurs now had to only consider the new situation and reconfigure their abilities in using the resources, infrastructures and the networks of connections they already have. One of the greatest resources they could forage and rely on was exactly their faith and belief in the concept of divinely proportioned wealth (*rizq*).

We found that entrepreneurs could rely on their faith – and it is the effectuation principle of faith and belief in *rizq*-foraging that has prevented them from being hopeless in a dire situation. Their faith drives them and they are content in the knowledge that their *rizq* is always there. This is something that entrepreneurs steeped in a uniplex worldview can never claim. I also found that foraging the Muslim communities around the *masajid* also meant partnering with those who are around the entrepreneur – the patchwork-quilt principle of learning and growing through new partnerships. Foraging meant asking within the circles of the community for a solution to any problem the entrepreneur is faced with. Should he/she need a supplier of a product or service, require assistance with logistics or transportation, need certain equipment, tools or vehicle to complete a

job or simply require capital to be invested, the community of Muslims frequenting the *masjid* are multi-skilled with an array of resources, talents, experiences and specialisations and the entrepreneur, more often than not, would find what he/she needs. Many are professionals and able to offer assistance of different kinds. It is up to the entrepreneur to simply ask or look for the opportunities and solutions. In this way foraging benefits the entrepreneur and contributes to her/his success and progress.

Many were suffering and felt the economic pinch with lockdown – Covid-19 and the health concerns it brought made most people realize that communities were in it together. And that one can only get through the health and economic crisis when, as communities, they pull together resources and find workable solutions to the challenges – it was a time of directing the communal wisdom towards finding creative answers and different ways of doing business. For Muslim entrepreneurs that communal wisdom was to be found in their Islamic multiplex ontology. Entrepreneurs by nature solve problems by offering products, services and advice – and entrepreneurs being problem solvers displayed a heightened concern to alleviate suffering and extend care to others. Entrepreneurs understandably focused their energies towards alleviating the suffering of those around them – those who are part of the family, group, staff, community members, neighbours, etc. These were the alleviation of suffering inside and outside the circles of business communities around them and a strong sense of community citizenship that increased social responsibility and care for the suffering of others.

## Conclusion and Recommendations

We have explained the Islamic multiplex ontology and compared it with uniplexity; pulled it through to entrepreneurs in Cape Town; spoke of the theoretical framework of the prosocial perspectives as well as the effectuation theory; mentioned the extrinsic health threat of Covid-19 and the heightened concern of entrepreneurs to alleviate the suffering they saw around them; following which we brought as an example the Islamic multiplex conception of *rizq* that is dominating the Islamic worldview; and then pulled through this concept of *rizq* into a multiplex ontological and epistemological frame; having done that, we then explained how the Islamic civilizational design of *masjid*-centred social, economic and religious activities have been the strength

of Muslim societies across history. The model of multiplexity expounded here allows researchers to rethink and review the social research paradigm they have used to understand social phenomena. It has the potential for a wide application across many of the disciplines of the social sciences. Societies' actions are complex and with a multiplex ontology one can start to understand how people of different traditions and cultures engage their realities in more meaningful ways. A multiplex perspective also allows for a model of care and compassion focussing on the social anomalies faced by society – a model that leans itself to the alleviation of poverty and other social problems. A uniplex view of the world is linear, self-critical, self-centred and seeks to appease the self. Based on these we recommend that, with the Eurocentric uniplexity on the one hand and the Islamic multiplexity on the other, researchers could reframe their approaches – and in doing so, for example, consider the African context where entrepreneurs interviewed for this study, for example, can start to analyse the entrepreneurial phenomena through a social research paradigm akin to African cultures and traditions. This study primarily focused on a Muslim business community that works and lives within an African context under a modern constitutional dispensation. The influence and impact that an African social research paradigm has on the entrepreneurship phenomena may lead to more circular perspectives.

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# Examining the Challenges and Possibilities for Implementation of Islamic Principles of Economic Development in South Africa

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## Introduction

In this article, we intend to explore the challenges and possibilities for implementation of Islamic principles of economic development in South Africa. This requires an identification, analysis, and contextualization of the 'Islamic principles' of economic development that can be gleaned from the pronouncements of the Quran and *hadith* on property, power and social relations, wealth and resources, economic trust, economic activities, trade and business, the role and nature of money, debt, usury, *zakat*, and charity. For this purpose, we refer to both the primary and secondary sources of knowledge in Islam (i.e. Quran and *hadith*) and the research and literature that tap into these sources to identify the key principles and core values that underpin Islamic views on development, poverty reduction, human rights and that attempt to define these concepts from an Islamic point of view and present a framework of the tools and approaches that are provided by Islam to address these issues.<sup>1</sup> From this base, we will examine the systemic, structural, and institutional challenges to the realization of these principles in South Africa and explore the possibilities for the application of these principles.

Our point of entry in engaging with the subject is that the concept of development in Islam has three dimensions, namely, individual self-development (*rushd*), the physical development of the earth (*isti'mar*) and the development of human collectivity.<sup>2</sup> This conceptualisation of development suggests that from an Islamic perspective, human, social, political, and economic development are inseparable. It also infers that

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- 1 "An Islamic Perspective on Human Development", accessed on 1 July 2022, <https://islamic-relief.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Human-Development-in-Islam.pdf>.
- 2 Hossein Askari, Zamir Iqbal, and Abbas Mirakhor, *An Introduction to Islamic Economics: Theory and Application* (Singapore: John Wiley & Sons. 2015).

the development of the self and the development of society are interrelated and complementary. In other words, development is both a catalyst and a product of a coordinate between agency and structure.

Accordingly, the key argument that we seek to present in this article is that the economic, social, political, and human (i.e., moral and cultural) aspects of development are so interwoven that attempts to draw a demarcation line between them may lead to obfuscation and falsification of social reality. The view of human, social, political, and economic development as discrete is derived from a bordered and gated pedagogy that tend to study psychology, sociology, and politics as separate rather than interlinked subjects. In this kind of bundocks pedagogy, whereas the psychologist and the sociologist tend to respectively speak of or focus on human development and social development, the political scientist and the economist are likely to speak of and focus on political development and economic development, respectively. On the contrary, the Islamic concept is that development is a goal-based, value-oriented endeavour that is devoted to the optimisation of the role of human beings in all dimensions of life. This suggests a comprehensive framework which includes moral, norms, values, spiritual, and material aspects.

### **Dominant Discourse on Economic Development**

The dominant economic development discourse that emerged after the Second World War focused on the contrast between the low living standards and low level of development in the formerly colonised and new states of the Global South and the high levels of living standards and development in the former colonizing countries of the Global North, Canada, United States, Western Europe, the then Soviet Union, apartheid South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand.<sup>3</sup> Consequently, development was used not only to describe a change in a country's economy involving qualitative as well as quantitative improvements but specifically to the process through which simple, low-income national economies are transformed into modern industrial economies or to how primitive and poor economies can evolve into sophisticated and relatively prosperous ones.<sup>4</sup> Essentially, this framework equated

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3 A. O. Krueger, "Economic Development", Accessed on 15 July 2022, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/economic-development>.

4 Ibid.

development with modernization and the growth and development of the economy and suggests a one-size fits all.

Inherent in this modernizing framework of development is the idea that all countries of the world must follow the same route to development that was followed by the countries of the Global North towards their development. Such an assumption ignores the fact that though the countries of the Global North may have been undeveloped, they were not underdeveloped and that the countries of the Global South were not always underdeveloped but were systematically kept underdeveloped through slavery, colonialization, racial-capitalism, neo-colonialism, structural adjustment programmes, the imposition of market fundamentalism and a minimalist state. There were also internal factors such as misgovernance, ineptitude, and dysfunctional governments that are emasculated and jailed by the encroachment of the interests and dictates of the social, political and corporate elites and the regimes and regiments of capital on the interest, welfare and wellbeing of people and the environment. This dominant approach glosses over the social, political, cultural, moral, and spiritual elements and specificities that shape the systemic, structural, institutional arrangements that impact the tangible and intangible aspects in different social environments. It utilizes per capita income as the criterion of what a developing country is and its equation of economic development with per capita incomes rise. The indicators of growth rate of national income, per capita consumption, per capita income, physical quality of life index, human development index, industrial progress, and capital formation are used in a way that rebuffs the perspectives and insights of diverse religious, cultural and spiritual communities. The main preoccupation of the dominant economic development discourse is either embellishing or minimizing the role of either the state or the corporates or finding a balance between the role of the state and the corporates. In the official lexicon of the dominant discourse, the demands, dictates and prescriptions of the corporates and related institutions are referred to as the market.

Thus, the dominant market fundamentalism advocates that the role of the state should merely be to create an enabling environment for the corporates and let the market forces take care of the development of the economy. The result is that social development and the welfare and wellbeing of labour, society, and the environment are left at the mercy of the so-called trickle-down economic growth. In short, the dominant

economic development discourse relies on the self-acting device of the market system in dealing with the reality of society in economic life. In this way, it completely ignores the fact that before the dominance of the doctrine of the invisible and self-regulating hand of the market in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, markets were isolated and regulated by other social institutions.<sup>5</sup> However, the reality is that economic actions of individuals are always part and parcel of networks of social relations so much that all economies, including capitalist economies, are embedded, or enmeshed in social relations to the extent that the economy cannot be a separate, autonomous sphere vis-a-vis society as a whole.<sup>6</sup>

Implied in this framework is a policy trajectory that de-links economic policy from social policy and treats social development and social security as luxuries that can only be pursued and achieved after the achievement of high levels of economic growth. This view of the economy overstates and essentialises the activities, processes, protocols and agendas of the corporates and governments at the price of underplaying and rebuffing that of households, communities, formal, informal, precarious, unpaid, and reserved labour. Thus, the development discourse is centred on statism and economism. While the former refers to the idea that human emancipation can only be achieved through one or other form of state power, the latter refers to the doctrine that posits that the economy is the only real liberator of humanity.<sup>7</sup>

Economism and statism postulate that economic growth is the supreme mover of development, that only the market forces, the state and political parties can bring about development. In other words, the dominant discourse seeks to hegemonize the idea that only the economy can liberate humanity, that only the state can drive the

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5 Kurtuluş Gemici, "Karl Polanyi and the Antinomies of Embeddedness", *Socio-Economic Review* 6, no. 1 (2008): 5-33.

6 Nuno Miguel Cardoso Machado, "Karl Polanyi and the New Economic Sociology: Notes on the Concept of (Dis)embeddedness", *RCCS Annual Review* [Online], 3 (2011), accessed on 28 August 2022: <http://journals.openedition.org/rccsar/309>.

7 Michael Neocosmos, "Development, Social Citizenship and Human Rights: Rethinking the Political Core of an Emancipatory Project in Africa", *Africa Development* XXXII, no. 4, (2007): 35-70 and M. Bofelo, "New Visions of Politics and Popular Rebellion Against the Empire", Unpublished Paper - Durban University of Technology and Umtapo Centre Paper. 9 July 2020.

economy to progress.<sup>8</sup> What is missing in the development discourse centred on statism and economism is the role of civil society and human agency in rolling back the structures that breed poverty, unemployment, inequality and in promoting human, social, political, and economic development.<sup>9</sup> This results in turning people into consumers of rights and services constructed for them by the state and the market rather than creators of these rights and services. The idea of the state and the market as providers and people as recipients does not only de-activate civic agency, it also de-politicises and demobilizes people and orients them to depend on the big brothers: the state and the market. It also takes the power of the state and the corporations as an inevitable, unavoidable god-ordained reality. This results in people doubting their ability to build power beyond the state and the market. This is tantamount to development without freedom and development without transformation.

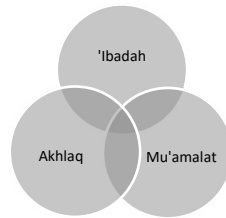
### Philosophical Foundations of Development in Islam

At the centre of the general message of the Quran is the notion of the interconnection between the corporeal, physical, and material world, on one hand, and the transcendent, spiritual, and divine realm, on the other, and the intersection between personal life and socio-political and economic affairs. Implicit in this worldview is the idea that beliefs (*aqidah*), deeds of worship (*ibadah*), morals (*akhlaq*), and social and economic dealings and relations (*mu'amalat*) are interlaced. Therefore, as already indicated, Islam advocates an integrated, holistic, and comprehensive approach to development that facilitates the symbiotic relationship between human development (i.e., the physical, intellectual, emotional, psychological, spiritual, and moral development of the human being), social development, political development, and economic development. This is reflected in the thematic arrangement, organisation and grouping of the text of the Quran in a manner that indicates step-by-step gradation in Islamic teachings.

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8 Ibid

9 Bofelo 2020.



Basically, the text of the Quran is grouped and organised around the following themes:

- Essence and attributes of Allah, the Supreme Creator, the Eternal Energy, and Source of all life, Eternal Effulgent Light: *Al-Nur*.
- The relationship between the creator and creation
- The religious and spiritual history of humanity
- The rise and fall of nations and the lessons and signs entailed therein
- External and internal challenges and issues of the Muslim community
- The social organization of the Muslim community
- Revelation, its meaning, and how human beings receive it.
- Eschatology, the end of life, the hereafter and hope for humanity
- Mystical and spiritual realities.

In the main, the philosophical foundations of development in Islam are the concepts of *tawhid uluhiya*, *tawhid rububiya*, *khilafah*, *tazkiya an-nas*, and *al-falah tawhid uluhiya* refers to the belief in the oneness and unity of God, Almighty Allah, and that all resources should be regarded as blessings (*barakat*) from the owner, cherisher, nourisher, and sustainer of the universes (*rabb al-alamin*). The resources at one's disposal should be treated as a trust (*amanat*) from Allah to be utilized in conformity with an Islamic economic morality as enshrined in the Quran and exemplified in the personality and the life of the Prophet (SAW).

*Tawhid rububiya* refers to the fact that almighty Allah alone determines sustenance and nourishment. Human beings should not only rely on their individual and collective efforts for the achievement of developmental goals, but also on the help from God. The concept of *khilafah* refers to the fact that believers are vicegerents and representatives of Almighty Allah on earth and should illustrate a model for other human beings to follow. *Tazkiya an-nas* denotes that the human being as an agent of change and development requires

growth and purification. To attain these, believers should engage in constant remembrance and awareness of the divine (*dhikrullah*), introspective reflection (*imarah*), spiritual development and education and training (*tarbiyyah*).<sup>10</sup>

The concept of *al-falah* refers to the fact that life on earth contributes to the achievement of the afterlife and should therefore be lived with guidance (*hidaya*) and help (*nasr*) of God. Thus, for Muslims, development is more than the sum of simple technology, simple economics, and simple management. This is informed by the Islamic view that the human being is more than the senses and is not just a product of evolutionary and revolutionary processes of history, or a mere cog in the system.<sup>11</sup> Sheikh 'Atiyya Saqr articulates this position poignantly when he declares that development is an innate trend to change into a better form towards both material and moral perfection.<sup>12</sup>

Saqr observes that it is through this understanding and practice of integrated development that Islam established a great and strong order. This has been attested by Muslim scholars such as the late Professor Sayed Ali Ashraf (editor of *Muslim Education Quarterly*) who asserted that the principles and efforts of Islamic development greatly contributed to the development of human civilization in all fields. Furthermore, Saqr outlines the following traits of Islamic teachings as providing the basis for a conceptual framework of development:

- Islam calls for the adoption of the best in all matters.<sup>13</sup>
- Islam encourages its followers to aspire for lofty goals and high aims.<sup>14</sup>
- Islam glorifies strength in both material and spiritual matters.<sup>15</sup>

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10 Mphutlane Bofelo, *Islamic Perspective of Leadership and Development* (Durban: Self-published. 2017).

11 Ibid.

12 'Atiyya Saqr, "Islam and Development", Accessed on 20 July 2022, [https://www.irfi.org/articles/articles\\_501\\_550/islam\\_and\\_development.htm](https://www.irfi.org/articles/articles_501_550/islam_and_development.htm)

13 See sura Al-Zumar (39:17-18).

14 The Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said: "Indeed, the believer is never satisfied doing good until he reaches Paradise." (Tirmidhi, *Riyad as-Salihin*, Book 12, Hadith 11)

15 The Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said: "The strong believer is better and more lovable to Allah than the weak believer, and there is good in everyone, (but) cherish that which gives you benefit (in the hereafter) and seek help from Allah and do not lose heart." (Muslim, *Sahih*, Book 46, Hadith 52)

- Islam warns against adhering to the old principles if they are corrupt.<sup>16</sup>
- Islam accepts using modern means within the context of the fixed principles.<sup>17</sup>
- Islam encourages Muslims to seek and acquire knowledge, which is the basis of development, and which benefits the individual and the society in the framework of the religion. Islam orders Muslims to work and apply knowledge in all fields, such as agriculture, industry, and commerce.<sup>18</sup>
- Islam acknowledges material development in the framework of religion.
- Islam calls for eternal spiritual development because it prevents the material development from deviation and accompanies human beings in this worldly life and in the hereafter.<sup>19</sup>

### The Fundamental Economic Principles of Islam

The fundamental principles of Islam call for an economic system that guarantees social and economic justice, equitable distribution of wealth, human freedom, social welfare, accountability, responsibility, mutual trust, equity, and equal opportunity. Accordingly, the fundamental principles of Islamic economy are multi-faceted ownership, economic freedom within a certain limit, and social justice. Therefore, Islam does not essentialise or embellish one form of ownership at the price of jettisoning other forms of ownership. It rather advocates for a dialectic, symbiotic, dynamic, and just balance of private, cooperative, collective, communal, social, and public forms of ownership, control, production, distribution and consumption of wealth, knowledge, goods, and services. The litmus test in Islam is that all these forms of ownership, control, production, distribution, and

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16 "And similarly, We sent not a warner before you to any town (people) but the luxurious ones among them said, 'We found our fathers following a certain way and religion, and we will indeed follow their footsteps.' (The warner) said, 'Even if I bring you better guidance than that which you found your fathers following?'" (Az-Zukhruf, 43:23-24)

17 The Prophet (SAW) is reported to have said: "Allah will raise for this community at the end of every hundred years the one who will renovate its religion for it." (*Sunan Abi Dawud*, Book 39, Hadith 1)

18 Allah Almighty says: "It is only those who have knowledge among His slaves that fear Allah." (Fatir, 35:28)

19 Allah Almighty says "Wealth and children are the adornment of the life of this world. But the good righteous deeds, that last, are better with your Lord for rewards and better in respect of hope." (Al-Kahf 18:46)

consumption must be based on ethical, just, fair, and equitable principles, processes, and practices.

It must be informed and measured by the individual goal to be like Prophet Muhammed (SAW), to become *insan al-kamilah* (the human being par excellence) and the collective goal to become an *ummatan wasatan* – i.e the community of balance, steadiness, equilibrium, evenness, and moderation; a community in the centre of the action. The intended outcome and performance indicator is the reclamation of *fitra* (innate, original, and natural state of decency, purity, and goodwill). The indices of *fitra* are *aqidah* (faith and belief), *ibadah* (acts of subservience and submission to Allah based on Allah's law [*shariah*]), and *akhlaq* (ethics, and etiquettes, character, conduct and personality). Psychological elements related to *fitra* are the *nafs* (self), the *qalb* (the heart), the *aql* (intellect) and the *ruh* (spirit). Therefore, in Islam, the distillation, refinement and development of the self, the heart, the intellect, and the spirit are the goal and measure of human, social, political, and economic development.

As Aydin<sup>20</sup> observes, the Islamic economic paradigm differs from the secular capitalist paradigm in terms of its emphasis on morality and spirituality. Consequently, the Human Development Index (HDI) used by the UN and related institutions does not capture human development from an Islamic perspective. The broad consensus among Muslim scholars and academics is that the fundamental goal of development is to achieve *falah*, that is, the creation of an environment that enables people to enjoy spiritual, moral, and socio-economic well-being in this world and success in the Hereafter.

Thus, the goal and measure of development in Islam is the removal of sources of human deprivation in multiple dimensions, as opposed to the dominant view of development as equivalent to economic growth. The multidimensional index of development in Islam is centred on the consensus of scholars that the objectives of Islamic ethics and law (*maqasid al-shariah*) points to five essential dimensions of human development namely, spiritual (faith), human (life), educational (intellect), social (posterity) and economic (wealth). Based on this, the scholars have deduced from the text of the Quran the

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20 Necati Aydın, "Islamic vs. Conventional Human Development Index: Empirical Evidence from Ten Muslim Countries", *International Journal of Social Economics* 44, no.12, (December 2017): 1562-1583.

fundamental principles that should inform the human development index as illustrated below:

PRINCIPLE	ISLAMIC SOURCE
Human Dignity	"We have bestowed dignity on the progeny of Adam [...] and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of Our creation." (al-Isra, 17:70) "Every child is born in 'fitrah' – the natural Adamic spiritual state of purity." (Sahih Muslim: Book 46, Hadith 40)
Tawhid/Holistic and Integrated Worldview	"Oh humankind! We created you from a single pair, male and female, and made you into nations and tribes, that you may know one another." (al-Hujurat, 49:13).
Justice	"Be just, for this is closest to God-consciousness." (al-Ma'idah, 5:8) "We sent our messengers with clear signs and sent down with them the Book and the Balance (of right and wrong) to establish justice among the people." (al-Hadid, 57:25) "There are seven categories of people whom God will shelter under His shadows on the Day when there will be no shadow except His. [One is] the just leader." (Sahih al-Bukhari 660, Book 10, Hadith 54)
Freedom	"We worship none but Allah and we associate no partner with Allah, and none of us must be slaves of one another other than Allah." (Al-Imran, 3:64)
Equality	"A man who fills his stomach while his neighbour is hungry is not a believer." (Bukhari, al-Adab al-Mufrad, 112)
Sustainability	"Allah is the Creator of all things, and He is the guardian over all things." (Az Zumar, 39:62) "He raised the heavens and established the balance. So, you would not transgress the balance. Give just weight- do not skimp the balance." (Ar Rahman, 55: 7-9) "It is He who appointed you, khalifs on earth." (Al An'am, 6: 165)
Social Solidarity	"Jibril enjoined me incessantly with the care of my neighbours, to the extent that I thought that God would grant my neighbours the right to inherit me." (Bukhari 6015, Muslim 2625)

The fact that *adl* (justice) and *rahma* (compassion) are the attributes of Allah which permeate the thematic concerns and general

message of the Quran and the *hadith*, provide credence for the view held by most scholars that *adl* and *rahma* are the overarching and supreme attributes from which all the principles, indicators and measures of human development, and by extension, socio-economic and political development flows. The notion of human beings as vicegerents of Allah on earth and therefore the custodians of the earth and its resources implies that human beings are agents and instruments for the dispersion of justice and compassion on earth. The most important qualities that the Quran and *hadith* emphasize that human beings must imbue themselves with and manifest to fulfil their custodianship are *ikhlas* (i.e., the purity of faith and the sincerity of intentions and actions) and *ihsan* (excellence). This suggests a development matrix as follows:

<i>Adl</i> (Justice)	Established through welfare and relief, inclusion, empowerment, support and protection of the subaltern and the development of the capabilities, endowments, assets, and resources that allow everyone to reach and unleash their Allah-given human potentialities.
<i>Rahma</i> (Mercy)	Demonstrated through humanitarian acts and policies and programmes aimed at the protection and well-being of every life.
<i>Amana</i> (Custodianship)	Expressed and demonstrated through responsible, accountable, transparent, and sustainable use of natural, financial, material, and human resources.
<i>Ikhlas</i> (Sincerity)	Manifested in fair, consistent, just, open, and transparent practices and processes in providing service to fellow humanity.
<i>Ihsan</i> (Excellence)	Demonstrated in good behaviour and excellent institutional principles, processes, and practices used in service of humanity.

### Exploring Possibilities within the Azanian/South African Context

In the sections above, we have contrasted the Islamic holistic and integrated development paradigm and its multidimensional development index with the state-centric, market-oriented and modernizing economic development trajectory, its entrapment in economism and statism and its embellishing of materialist measure of development at the cost of underplaying the intangible indices of development and the spiritual, moral, and ethical dimensions. Based on this, we propose the following as key programmatic, strategic, and tactical interventions towards practical realization of the Islamic principles of (economic) development in South Africa/Azania: a.) regenerating the critical and borderless pedagogy of Islam, b.) embodying Islamic worldview and integrated worldview, c.) tapping

into 'total activism' and solidarity economy, d.) re-embedding the economy and venturing out of the state-market boxes.

### **Regeneration of the Critical and Borderless Pedagogy of Islam**

My meditations on the critical pedagogy of Islam are informed by my own experience of a critical Islamic pedagogy as a student at As-Salaam Educational Institute, taught by the likes of the late Shaykh Mahdi Hendriks, Shaykh Adiel Davids, and Moulana Shaheed, and as an activist of the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa, participating in its Islamic Tarbiyya Programmes, Halaqa and other activities. I also draw on the pioneering work of the Association of Muslim Scientists and the International Institute of Islamic Thought in stimulating the regeneration of Islamic knowledge and Muslim thought. I want to emphasize that advocating for a critical, borderless pedagogy in Islam is actually calling for the return to or the regeneration of the pedagogy of early Muslim education and Muslim thought. This is precisely because early Muslim education and Muslim thought was not confined to one space. They took place across a variety of spaces and applied various modes of delivery. Importantly, early Muslim education had an inter-disciplinary curriculum, and applied the discursive and critical methodology of *ijtihad* which is centred around the fusion of meditation (i.e., contemplation and reflection) and action (i.e., practice).

The best place to start in articulating this position is to briefly define critical pedagogy and borderless pedagogy and provide a conceptual framework of Muslim education and Muslim thought. Critical pedagogy is simply defined as a philosophy of teaching that exhorts educators to encourage and inspire learners to critique structures of power and oppression. Furthermore, critical pedagogy encourages educators to use their own enlightenment to encourage students to question injustices and inequities that exist in families, schools, and societies. Accordingly, critical pedagogies are centred around critical theory that is anchored on: a.) an interrogation of how ideology emerges to dominate society, b.) ideology-critique – critical reflection to expose a socially dominant ideology, c.) an observation, critique and exposition of social practices that reproduce the dominant ideology, d.) self-knowledge – knowledge of own beliefs, including irrational beliefs and misunderstandings, e.) self-emancipation.

Borderless pedagogy refers to practices and developments that dispel and dissolve the geographic and conceptual borders of higher education to link all spaces of generation and dissemination of education – broadly defined – and all spaces of struggle and activism for a more humane, just, equal, and peaceful society. The key concepts that inform the Muslim concept and philosophy of education – and, indeed, the Muslim view of society, politics, economics, culture, and everything – is the concept of *fitra*. This simply refers to the fact that the purpose of human life is submitting to the will of Allah, to live with dignity and integrity in the world or rather to maintain the intrinsic dignity and worth that human beings are born with. For a human being to live with dignity and integrity and fulfil his or her life-purpose, it is necessary that there is a balance among mind, body, soul, and spirit.

Therefore, from an Islamic perspective, the different types of *ilm*/knowledge are aimed at creating that balance that is required for human beings to maintain *fitra* and fulfil their purpose in life. This informs the Islamic concept of an integrated, holistic, and comprehensive education, learning and teaching that is aimed at intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual development, and that empowers individuals to participate fully, meaningfully and with dignity, integrity, and sound ethics in religion-spiritual, socioeconomic, political, and cultural life.

Accordingly, the Muslim philosophy of education is centred on the goal of developing the individual to act as Allah's vicegerent to fulfil the purpose of human existence. Therefore, the ideal Islamic pedagogy is centred on the use of a variety of methods that are directed at developing and enhancing the variety of faculties, aptitudes, capabilities, competencies, proficiencies, skills, abilities, and talents required for intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual development, and that are needed for active and meaningful participation in religious, cultural, social, political, and economic life. Importantly, Islam emphasises the role of human agency or self-transformation.

Based on this conceptual framework, the role of a *murabbi* (teacher/coach/mentor and trainer) in Islamic education is not merely that of a facilitator but that of a role-model, guide and doer who illustrates and shows to students, through conversations and stories (discourse and narratives), practical exercises/experiments what he or

she has explored, experimented, and experienced, and what he or she lives. In emulating the Prophet (SAW) a *murabbi* is an embodied thinker who engages in a continuous, cyclical, and reciprocal process of reflection and action wherein reflection elicits informed action and action elicits further reflections. What makes teachers, mentors, coaches, and guides embodied thinkers is that they preach what they practice, and practice what they preach. Their teachings are reflected in their lives and relate to the lived experiences of their students as much as their lives articulate their teachings. The Prophet (SAW) was an embodied thinker in this sense because he fused reflection and action.

The Prophet (SAW) was neither an ascetic recluse nor an intellectual tower. His experience of thinking was not absolutely or solely mental and nor purely physical. He learnt and experienced life mentally and physically and communicated his message through words and actions. Though the Prophet (SAW) was unlettered, he was a thinker, and though he was a thinker he was a pragmatic actor and not a cerebral cogitator. Sufiyan ibn Unayn (RA) effectively summarised the pedagogy of the Prophet (SAW) when he declared that "The first step in knowledge is to listen, then to be quiet, then to preserve it, then to put it in practice, then to spread it."

The most important aspect of the pedagogy of the Prophet (SAW) is that he emphasized understanding the Quran, verse by verse, in terms of its meanings rather than mere memorization. The Prophet (SAW) also encouraged his companions to ponder on the meaning, significance, and relevance of the text of the Quran, the word of Allah in their lives. Furthermore, the prophet taught his companions to appreciate messages in context, placing significance on the intent and essence of a message or text rather than merely on content. This is illustrated by his response to the companions who had responded differently to his command not to pray their *isha* until they reached a specific place. The Prophet (SAW) answered that both groups were correct. The group that prayed before *isha* based on their calculation that they would still reach their destination on time, acted based on their understanding of the intent of the Prophet's (SAW) command. The group that did not pray followed the command of the Prophet (SAW) to the letter. Both were correct in certain respects. The lesson from this story is that Muslims must eschew rigidity and dogmatism in their

thinking and that Muslim thought must appreciate and embrace that there is nuance and dynamism in life and in human experience.

This pedagogy of Prophet Muhammed (SAW) that involves encouraging reflection and action, pondering on deeper meaning, focussing on intent and essence than merely on content, and using questions, stories and allegories to instigate thinking and learning resonates with the Quran's use of stories, questions, deductions, and metaphors; motivation and discipline, reward, and punishment to teach humanity about Allah's word and about what earns one the pleasure or wrath of Allah. Contemporary traditions of recitation and memorization contradicts this living, dynamic and critical pedagogy applied by the Prophet (SAW) and enshrined in the Quran, which openly calls itself a book for those with discerning minds and exhorts Muslims to read it with understanding. The curriculum of early primary learning in early Muslim society consisted of arithmetic, swimming, horse riding, and poetry, with the Quran being taught in households by parents. After compilation of the Quran, higher learning took place in *halaqa* – learning circles. During the Umayyad period, palace schools were established to orient and prepare the princes and princesses while public education mainly constituted adult education. The importance of the role and impact of a *murabbi* (teacher) was such that people travelled the world to search for and listen to the lectures of teachers. It was only later that *madrasahs* were founded by individuals through donations for special Islamic subjects such as *hifz*. This restricted curriculum marked a decline from the pure intellectualism that resulted from active and critical discussions of early Islamic thought and Islamic pedagogy through the methodology of *ijtihad*. Importantly, this curriculum often centred on textual study and memorisation rather than on critical reflection and interrogation of text and context and was centred on the western idea of a binary between reason and tradition and not on the Islamic concept of *ijtihad*. As a matter of fact, the so-called closure of the doors of *ijtihad* spelled disaster for Islamic thought and caused a crisis in Islamic education as we will highlight later.

Before delving into this crisis and our proposition of the regeneration of *ijtihad* and the recultivation of a critical, borderless pedagogy in Islamic education, it is important to provide a brief history of Islamic scholastic theology and Islamic philosophy. Although Islamic schools were established in the Muslim heartlands

and beyond during the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the pursuit of Islamic education began in the 7<sup>th</sup> century in mosques, houses, literary salons, bookshops, courts, and palaces. This was not restricted to religious or Islamic studies but included the study of mathematics, logic, the creative arts, astronomy, medicine, and philosophy. Overall, the Muslims pursued knowledge with the purpose of simultaneously learning the word of Allah and the world of Allah.

Consequently, the culture of learning was not driven by qualifications, monetary gains, or social standing. It was pursued with the purpose of learning the world for one to participate fully and meaningfully in religious, cultural, social, political, and economic life to attain success in both the here-now and the hereafter. The interest in and commitment to learning and teaching and the acquisition, generation, and dissemination of knowledge, on what is currently compartmentalised into moral, cultural, and religious studies, humanities and natural sciences was pursued without establishing fixed and rigid hierarchies on knowledge. This was informed by the notion that essentially knowledge falls into two categories, beneficial knowledge and destructive knowledge. In line with the Quran and the *sunnah* of the Prophet (SAW) and the rightly guided companions, in the early Muslim community, learning was highly valued irrespective of whether it was gained through Islamic or non-Islamic sources. Ironically, this learning culture of Muslims wherein every space, experience and human activity was both terrain of learning, exploration, experimentation, and a terrain of the generation and dissemination of knowledge declined with the formalization and institutionalization of learning via the establishment of schools and universities in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The overemphasis on religious studies as distinct from all forms of knowledge led to a stagnation or degeneration of non-religious studies. The advent of European colonialization and political, economic, and cultural imperialism and its tentacles in the Muslim world resulted in most Muslim countries having a dualistic curriculum based on the western paradigm, that is, centred on a rigid compartmentalization of education and the bifurcation of religious and non-religious education. The dualistic curriculum created the crisis of secularisation wherein the learning and experience gained in religious institutions mostly operated with outdated curriculum, archaic methods of teaching and shortage of qualified teachers contradicted what Muslims learnt in humanities,

and social and natural sciences classes. On the other hand, the impact of western science and technology created the crisis of modernization wherein spiritual development did not feature as one of the objectives of education. This completely contradicted the Islamic notion that since the human being consists of the mind, body, soul, and spirit, learning and education must be geared towards intellectual development, physical development, emotional development, and spiritual development. It also contradicted the Islamic idea that the transformation of the self is key to the transformation of the world. One of the most significant responses of the Muslim world to the crisis of secularization and the crisis of modernization was the agenda or project of the Islamization of knowledge. This emerged with the establishment of the Association of Muslim Scientists (AMS) in 1972 with the aim of addressing the intellectual problems facing Islamic thought. Importantly, the 1977 conference of AMS, focused on the crisis of the Muslim mind. This specifically referred to the ravages of western imperialism, orientalism, secularism, a dualistic curriculum, and western modernity on the Muslim identity. This conference birthed the International Institute of Islamic Thought (IIIT) which seeks to reform and revive Islamic thought and its methodology of *ijtihad*, and to overcome the division of Islamic education between religious knowledge and sciences.

The agenda of the Islamization of knowledge or rather the revival of Islamic thought and the regeneration of *ijtihad* was informed by the realization that Muslims were subjected to a dualism of unhappiness with mainstream education that jettisons Islamic paradigms and corrodes its values and unhappiness with the Islamic institutions with an outdated curriculum that is limited and incapable of preparing Muslims for challenges of the contemporary world.

While Muslims who were schooled in the humanities and social and natural sciences in highly secularised and Eurocentric institutions generally failed to appreciate Muslim heritage, those schooled in Islamic studies generally failed to appreciate the complexity of the modern era. Furthermore, the education practice and pedagogy centred on Eurocentric modernity generalised technical interest and imposed their control on other forms of knowledge with the effect of disabling nontechnical interests. The proposition of IIIT was a third way that encouraged and inspired Muslims to acquaint themselves with Islamic textual and historical sources of reference or their own

traditions but also opened them to acquisition of the wisdom offered by modern sciences, identifying and utilizing what is most beneficial from both traditions and reforming, transforming, or discarding what is not relevant for the time and place they live in. In other words, the solution proposed is an integrated education system in which the humanities, social and natural sciences are implanted in religious studies and in which Islamic knowledge is embedded in the teaching and learning of the humanities and social and natural sciences. This framework suggests a curriculum that comprises of three realms, namely,

- a) Absolute realm constituting of transcendent revealed theology and experiential speculative theory;
- b) The physical realms constituting of physical sciences;
- c) Intermediary disciplines such as metaphysical sciences that investigate human nature, society, religion, and sciences.

In our view, this approach, though useful, does not completely deviate from the compartmentalization of knowledge and education. However, the emphasis on *ijtihad* as a concept and practice that fosters free and independent effort, freedom of scholarly research, free expression of dissenting and contending views provides a useful framework for the development of a critical and borderless pedagogy in Islam. The building blocks of such a pedagogy are a living curriculum or a curriculum in action, that is less bound to textbooks and workbooks and is flexible enough to enlist the prior learning and lived experiences of both the learners and the teachers through a dynamic conversational, exploratory, and experimental teaching methodology.

A case in point: Upon my arrival at Assalaam Education Institute in 1989, I was pleasantly surprised to find that the Director and Principal of the Institute, Yusuf Mohammedy, seemed to know a lot about the personal, social, and political histories of each of us. He knew or tried to know about the hobbies, passions, and talents of each one of us and pointed us to the relevant resources, books, magazines, networks, forums, and people that he thought would help us enhance our talents. For those of us who were political activists, he knew exactly which section of the broad liberation movement we belonged to, gave us the relevant books, and connected us to people and circles in Durban that were part of the movements we belonged to, and sent us

to rallies and workshops of several Muslim and non-Muslim organizations.

At the same time, Yusuf Mohammedy provided us with reading materials that broadened our horizons about the struggles of the people of the Philippines, Palestine, and other parts of the Muslim world. This turned out to be his way of orienting us towards the leadership and Islamic history class that he taught at the institute. This linking of the teaching and learning that happens in the classroom with the learning from social practice and lived experience became more amplified when we attended the Islamic Tarbiyya Programme (ITP) of the Muslim Youth Movement of South Africa. The topics discussed resonated with our reality even as they introduced to us terms that were unfamiliar as new entrants in the fold of Islam, *qiyas*, *ijtihad*.

The use of group work, group discussions, group presentations, question & answer sessions and the *halaqa* in the mornings after *fajr* was familiar to the vibrant and robust dialogical pedagogy of *mzabalazo* that we knew in the form of political learning and discussion circles, *umrabulo*, and initiated us to an Islamic critical pedagogy that we could never encounter in traditional Muslim spaces in South Africa. Interestingly, our teachers at As-Salaam reinforced the spirit of critical inquiry and free thought in the way they taught Islam.

Very often, our teachers would introduce a topic, present the views of the different schools of thought in Islam, present a practical scenario based on South African realities, and then pose questions inviting our engagement with the topic. There was no imposition of a *madhab* or *tariqa* even though the teachers did not hide their affinities to different *madhabs* and *tariqas*. Learning was not confined to the classroom. We did fieldwork in the village near the Institute to find out about the social realities of the villages and explore what we can do as learners to ameliorate their situation or recommend outreach and development projects the institute could do. This is engaged pedagogy.

We were encouraged to do drama and poetry. We were in the rallies and protest demonstrations. This is pedagogy, a pedagogy in action. Of course, we demonstrated our consciousness and activism on the institute itself in protest of what we considered racist and unfair practices. Some of our teachers were expelled alongside us on the charge that they instigated us. The point I want to highlight is that the traditions of a critical and borderless Islamic pedagogy already exist in

South Africa. What is required is a deliberate programme of building this critical and borderless pedagogy that treats the world and every single space and moment in the world as a classroom in the same way that the world is a place of worship. Such a pedagogy must be rooted in the transcendental norms of absolute faith in Allah (SWT), the values of justice, equality, peace, diversity, solidarity, dignity, and integrity. It must be based on the purpose of education as the restoration of *fitra* and at enabling human beings to be *khalifa-fil-ard* and at building the capacity of human beings to be *insan al-kamilah*. It must be based on intellectual, physical, and spiritual aspects of human beings. It must be centred on self-reflection and reflexivity and aim for excellence, qualitatively and technically.

### **Embodying Islamic Holistic and Integrated Worldview**

At the level of external acts of worship, embodying a holistic and integrated worldview in every aspect of our life must start with abandoning the narrow view of the *masjid* as merely a place of rituals and ridding ourselves of the un-Islamic practice of locating *salat* and other acts of *ibadah* such as *zikr*, *saum* and *zakat* outside of social reality, thereby disrobing them of their articulation of the intrinsic link between the spiritual and the political, economic, and social. While the notion of the Quran as the house of Allah is often used in ways that discount the role of the Quran as a community centre, Allah says in the Holy Quran (3:96): "Behold, the first House established for humankind is the one at Bakkah: it is full of blessing and a centre of guidance for the whole world."

This verse that reminds humanity of the purpose for building the place of worship must be understood against the background in which Jews had turned engagement in legalistic trivia their major concern, allowing polytheism and decadence to creep into religion, while they indulged in endless discussions, hair-splitting legalism at the price of neglecting fundamentals of *din*. The restoration and renewal of the Kaaba took place in an environment in which ritualism and polytheism were the order of the day.

Against this background and the current wave of legalism and ritualism, this verse provides a textual base for the restoration of the *masjid* as a community centre and hub of physical, spiritual, social, political, cultural, and economic development programmes. Alongside this, is the need to see and use *salaat* in *jamaat* as daily reorientation

and social cohesion platform and *jummah* as a weekly community general assembly (with *hajj* being the international assembly dealing with religio-spiritual, moral, and ethical issues and as well as issues relating to human, social, political, and economic development). This calls for programmes and campaigns aimed at transforming our *masajids* into multipurpose community centres with amities and projects for education, training and development, and leisure, sports, arts, trade, business, and social development services.

At the conceptual, theosophical, and theoretical level, embodying a holistic and integrated worldview requires approaching Islam as a comprehensive system of life that provides specific and generic ethical, spiritual, social, political, and economic framework that should guide the institutions, principles, processes, and practices as informed by local and global dynamics. This implies an approach to Islam that perceives, facilitates, and explores boundless possibilities and avenues for interconnectedness, interconnections, intersections, associations, alliances, coalitions, and relationships based on a common humanity and is relevant and responsive to realities and arguments of time and place.

There is no single social, political, economic, cultural, ideological, or intellectual space- physical or virtual – that is absolutely and eternally right nor is there one that is absolutely and eternally wrong, neither is there a site, method, and form of engagement, struggle and activism or an issue, approach or platform that holds all the answers and solutions to today's and tomorrow's problems and challenges. Thus, there is need to revive total politics approach based on a critical interaction with and within all spaces, utilizing engagement, contestation, cooperation, and confrontation in a dynamic, nuanced, and contextual way informed by the specifics of time and place.

### **Re-Embedding the Economy and Building a Solidarity Economy**

My proposition is that re-embedding the economy should start with thinking and acting out of the statism and economism box. The point of entry in this regard should be identifying, recognizing, acknowledging the activities, inputs of households, communities, organizations, self-employed individuals, informal workers, and entrepreneurs that contribute to the economy and creating spaces and resourcing for optimising the inputs and outputs of such activities. In this regard, I propose an Islamic social partnership that comprises of

*masajids, madaries, daar-ulooms*, and Muslim businesses that is aimed at turning these spaces into a space for establishing a solidarity economy based on mutual consultation, mutual counselling, mutual advice, and mutual aid, shura councils, community trusts, cooperative networks, and social entrepreneurship.

### **Conclusion: Barriers and Potential Enablers to Application of Islamic Principles of Economic Development in South Africa**

#### ***Barriers***

The main barrier and disabler to the realization of Islamic principles of development is the dominance of vulgar and rigid generalizations, typologies, categories, separations, binaries, and dichotomies. This is diametrically at odds with a worldview based on *tawhid*. The tragedy is that most Muslim institutions, organizations, and governments have internalised and integrated compartmentalization in all the spheres and facets of life and have normalized the either-or worldview in their way of seeing, approaching, and doing things. This takes the form of embracing, without questioning, of the rigid first-world, second-world, third-world, underdeveloped, developed, and developing category labels, and the essentialization of socially constructed class, racial, ethnic, and national identities, and submission to the gated and bordered pedagogy that perceives academia, governance, law, culture, religion, politics, economics, and science etc. as separate and distinct provinces and have latched on the bifurcation of education into secular and Islamic education. While our lips pronounce *tawhid*, in many ways in our personal and social conduct and our organizational and institutional practices, we are yet to completely disentangle ourselves from the artificial binaries and trivial divisions. In Azania (South Africa) and Southern Africa, the Muslim community and Muslim institutions are yet to fundamentally extricate their cultural, social, political, and economic practices and institutions from the spatial and socio-economic arrangements characterised by the legacies, continuities, and expansions of racial, class and gender hierarchies entrenched by the intersection between the structures of settler-colonialism, racial-capitalism, and patriarchy.

The Muslim community has dismally failed to roll back the apartheid geography and the apartheid economy through its social, cultural, political, and economic conduct and institutional practices.

Not only does it comfortably run its businesses and institutions within the confines of the apartheid geography and the apartheid economy, in many instances it has consolidated and buttressed the apartheid geography and the apartheid economy by caste and ethnicity in the mix and by turning Muslim intuitions into fiefdoms (i.e., personal properties of individuals, families, or ethnic groups). Very often, at the mention of one institution, what immediately comes to mind is the name of a specific individual, cabal, family or ethnic or racial group. Very often the demise of one person around whom an institution is centred marks either the death or dormancy of such an institution.

### **Potential Enablers**

South Africa is a constitutional democracy that guarantees and promotes pluralism, diversity, and multi-culturalism. While this has its own challenges, its major benefit is that it provides for different religious and cultural communities to establish institutions that respond to their peculiar religious and cultural practices and needs within the limits of the broad principles of equality, justice, fairness and respect of human rights and civil liberties. This creates an enabling environment for the Muslim community to create spaces and platforms for human, social, political and economic development both within its own institutions and social structures and within the broad social, political and economic spaces available in South Africa.

Furthermore, the Muslim community of South Africa has a variety of *ulama* bodies, relief, welfare, advocacy, media, research, education, training, and development institutions that it can utilize to contribute to development of the Muslim community and broader society. There is also existing networks, collaborations, and partnerships within the Muslim community that can be expanded and consolidated to serve as a springboard for the realization of the Islamic principles of economic development in South Africa/Azania. Importantly, there is a significant participation of Muslims in politics, business, and activism. These are the key factors that can be used to pursue the strategic and tactical framework proposed above.

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# **Toward Water Sustainability in a Water Stress Urban Environment with Reference to the Western Cape, South Africa: A Muslim Approach**

Muhammad Ridwaan Gallant\*

## **Introduction**

Over a long period, climate change and urbanization gradually affected the Western Cape's water system. This was the case between 2015 and 2017 when the region faced an unusual water crisis; one in which a 'day zero' scenario was declared. While researchers and authorities looked at solving the problem by pursuing a scientific approach, some religious leaders viewed the scenario from a purely religious angle; this was alongside the scientific approach.

This article sheds light on these two approaches within the South African context. Since the Muslim community forms an integral part of the Western Cape heterogeneous communities, some of them, who had the relevant knowledge, infused their insights –drawing from Muslim's primary sources– in seeking solutions to the crisis.

## **Southern African Region: Impact of Climate Change**

Global warming and climate change had a world-wide impact on weather patterns during the last few decades. The Western Cape region in South Africa, despite it have access to both the Atlantic and Indian Oceans respectively, encountered this phenomenon. The region's cohort of experts had to assist in dealing with the water crises. According to researchers at Stanford University and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), this human-caused climate change phenomenon produced a 'Day Zero' scenario; an event that was not experienced before and that was almost impossible to imagine in the Greater Cape Town area. Its municipalities' water supply was about to be shut off forcing them to adopt drastic measures.<sup>1</sup>

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1 Daniel Torrent Tucker, "In a Warming World, Cape Town's 'Day Zero' An Anomaly", <https://news.stanford.edu/2020/22/09>

Anyone who studied the geographical location of the Western Cape would have been aware that it has a Mediterranean climate; one that consisted of heavy winter rains and summer droughts. In the case of the Cape Town area, much of the rains fall between the months of May and October. The amount of rain fall varies from 400 mm per annum along the coastal plains to 2000 mm per annum in the mountain ranges that flank the region.<sup>2</sup>

Cape Town's drought started in 2015 and it lasted until the end of 2017. Since 2015, the total rainfall was about 50 to 75 percent of the long-term average with the 2017 total being the lowest; the first written records similar to these were made in the late 1880s. This three-year drought is estimated to be an event that occurs as rarely as once-in-311 years, but possibly even less frequently.<sup>3</sup> Air temperature was also outside the norm in the same period but to a lesser degree.<sup>4</sup> In 2015, Cape Town recorded the highest temperature in 100 years at 42°C.<sup>5</sup> Global warming is causing an increase in temperature at a fast rate on a yearly basis. Modest increases in temperature, like the Western Cape, are expected to be accompanied by significantly decreased rainfall.<sup>6</sup>

At the end of the rains in 2014, Cape Town's reservoirs were at 100 percent of capacity; at the end of 2015, they were at 75 percent; and by the end of 2016, they were at 62 percent. This did not cause any immediate problems, because there was still enough water to last until the next rains in May of 2017. However, the authorities soon realized that if the 2017 rainy season was low, there wouldn't be enough water to last through to 2018. As a result, the first water restrictions were soon introduced.<sup>7</sup> Reductions in precipitation was severe between 2015 and 2017 compared to historical observations, but they seem to be in line with the projection of the Western Cape Region.

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2 Piotr Wolski, "What Cape Town Learned from Its Drought", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, April 16, 2018, <https://thebulletin.org/2018/04/what-cape-town-learned-from-its-drought/>

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

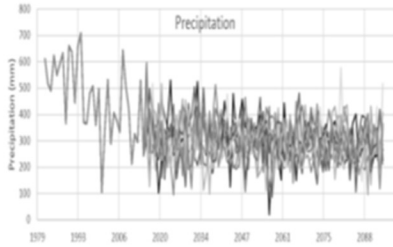
5 Jenny Day, Gail Cleaver-Christie, Liz Day and Louise Stafford, "Water and the Natural Environment: Biodiversity and Urban Water Management", in *Towards the Blue-Green City: Building Urban Water Resilience*, (Pretoria: Water Research Commission), accessible [https://wrcwebsite.azurewebsites.net/wp-content/uploads/mdocs/Towards%20a%20blue%20green%20city\\_final%20web.pdf](https://wrcwebsite.azurewebsites.net/wp-content/uploads/mdocs/Towards%20a%20blue%20green%20city_final%20web.pdf)

6 Ibid.

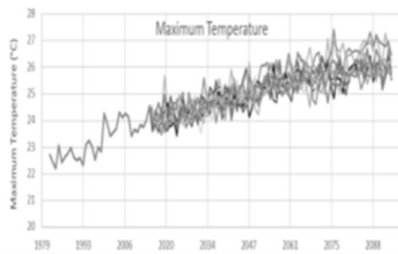
7 Piotr Wolski, "What Cape Town Learned from Its Drought".

## Western Cape Region

PRECIPITATION PROJECTION:



TEMPERATURE PROJECTION



**Figure 1:** Projections – Precipitation and Temperature

In 2017/2018, the Western Cape had its worst drought in decades which threatened water supply to its citizens. Climate Scientist predicts that the Western Cape will become drier and experience strong warming over the next hundred years. By 2050, the rainfall in the Western Cape is likely to decrease by approximately 30% from current levels.<sup>8</sup>

### Western Cape's Water Systems: Urbanization Effects

Water resources in any city are of vital importance for the survival of its citizens. The greatest challenge for any city in terms of its water resources can face is, if there is a sudden influx of people from other areas into a city. The strain is on the authorities to maintain and supply the quality and quantity of water for consumption and recreation of the general population as well as the alleviate hazards caused by floods, drainage, erosion and sedimentation.

Urbanization in the Western Cape since 1994 was rapid and unplanned. Provision of mains water and more significantly, waterborne mains sewerage lagged markedly behind population growth. Majority of the migrants are from the Eastern Cape, and they do not have the opportunity or resources to settle in the more established neighbourhoods of Cape Town, and are forced to find

8 Jenny Day, Gail Cleaver-Christie, Liz Day and Louise Stafford, "Water and the Natural Environment: Biodiversity and Urban Water Management", in *Towards the Blue-Green City: Building Urban Water Resilience* (Pretoria: Water Research Commission), 29.

accommodation in informal settlements. These settlements are characterized by having high population densities and poor living conditions.

The type of housing that migrants stay in the city plays a vital role on the effect on the environment. They stay in informal housing also known as 'shack' or 'squatter' housing. This type of housing does not comply with local building codes, which means that residents are always at risk of building collapse. Residents use communal taps and it is through this system that water is being wasted on a big scale because no residents bear responsibility for the cost. The cost of the water lies in the hands of the authorities.

Urbanization also affects the ground water quality. A case study in the vicinity of Milwaukee, Wisconsin supports the suggestion by other researchers that chloride and sulphate are the principal products of urbanization which alter ground-water chemistry. Groundwater samples taken from the Menomonee River Watershed contained high concentrations of ammonium, fecal coliform, and fecal streptococci bacteria. Field data suggested that contamination of ground water is caused by infiltration of surface water polluted by municipal and industrial wastes and leakages from sewer lines.<sup>9</sup>

The Berg River is one of the main rivers in the Cape region; it is essential for the local economy and ecology. It is one that supplies water to agriculture and industries, and it provides drinking water for the Cape Town region; on top of this, it supports rich aquatic ecosystems.<sup>10</sup> Human development such as increasing agricultural activities and increasing urbanization cause ecosystems in the Berg River area to cope with steadily increasing anthropogenic pressures; this includes higher nutrient inputs, unsustainable water management practices, and reduction in biodiversity.<sup>11</sup>

The Berg River is nowadays impacted by both diffuse pollution from agricultural run-off and point-source pollution from urban and industrial wastewater. The construction of a dam on the headwaters of the Berg River in 2007 and other impoundments have changed the hydrology of the upper catchment of the river. This combination of

9 Craig Eisena and Mary P. Anderson, "The Effects of Urbanization on Ground-Water Quality-A Case Study", *Groundwater* 17, issue 5 (September 1979).

10 E. Struyf et al. "Nitrogen, phosphorus and silicon in riparian ecosystems along the Berg River (South Africa): The Effect of Increasing Human Land Use", *Water SA* 38, no. 4. (July 2012), 597.

11 *ibid.*, 597.

pollutant input and hydrological effects may impact on the ecological functioning of the entire river. In regulated rivers, a combination of short unpredictable flood pulses, and relatively long stable periods results in a cascade of effects on the aquatic organisms.<sup>12</sup>

Struyf et al. claims that their results showed that after building of a dam on the Berg River there was a further nutrient enrichment in the riparian zone. The strongly shifting nutrient status of the riparian zone could affect all functions generally associated with these habitats. It may change the habitat function for vegetation, as it will favour fast-growing annual plants over typically perennial fynbos vegetation. This will in turn affect associated fauna.

The natural filter function will also be affected: it is uncertain whether this will still hold at higher nutrient levels, and their results already show that riparian zones could actually become a source of nutrients to the river in the future. Changes in vegetation will further alter the flooding characteristics and thus erosion-sedimentation characteristics. Major habitat changes could be expected as a result. Finally, the loss of native vegetation could also inflict a reduced affinity of the local community for the habitat, which could result in further deterioration as a result of reduced management efforts.<sup>13</sup>

### **Islamic System: Status of Water**

Leaving aside the Western Cape Berg River catchment area and turning the focus to the importance of water within Muslim settings, it is perhaps necessary to reflect on the significance of water and its use as understood from a Muslim perspective.

Three-quarters of the earth's surface is covered with water, little wonder it has been called the Blue Planet. Of this, 94% is in the form of salt water and 6% can be found in rivers, springs, wetlands, underground aquifers, and glaciers. Humanity needs to reflect on the wonders of Allah (SWT) and on the great Mercy Allah (SWT) shown us by providing us with sustenance in the form of water; for without water, we cannot grow crops nor perform our daily ablutions nor provide our animals with water.

Allah (SWT) speaks about the importance of water in the Holy Qur'an: "And We send down water from the sky (rain) in (due) measure, and We gave it lodging in the earth, and verily, We are able

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<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, 597.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, 605.

to take it away."<sup>14</sup> Allah (SWT) mentions His innumerable blessings to His servants, whereby He sends down rain in due measure; meaning, according to what is needed, not so much that it damages the lands and buildings, and not so little to be insufficient for crops and fruits, but whatever is needed for irrigation, drinking and other purposes.

All living species are dependent on water. Water is a life-sustaining and purifying resource. According to the Holy Qur'an, the origin of every living thing is in water and Allah (SWT) says: "And We have made from water every living thing."<sup>15</sup> Allah sends the water as sustenance to His creation. Subsequently, a human being and beast will benefit from the vegetation as stated in the Holy Qur'an: "It is He Who sends down water from the sky; and with it We produce vegetation of all kinds..."<sup>16</sup>

The precipitation is a blessing and provision for the His servants; it is a relief and means of survival for His creatures and it is a mercy for His creation. Water fulfils many functions in our society. Water is the mainstay of human society. Water is used by households, industry, agriculture, and also forms the habitat for marine and freshwater plants and animals; it is, by and large, an important food source for many societies.

Water is thus the basis of life and plays an indispensable role in the sustenance of all life on this earth. It is a matter of fact that life on earth will not be possible without the presence of water. Human beings only realize the value of water when there is a shortage. The Qur'an describes how water resuscitates the earth. "And Allah sends down water from the skies, and gives therewith life to the earth after its death..."<sup>17</sup> Without the rain the earth is lifeless. When the rain comes the earth becomes alive. Plants start to grow, flowers begin to bloom, man and animals can quench their thirst and benefit from the plants. A whole life cycle starts to bloom.

A human being does not appreciate the preciousness and the benefits of water. If the water would have been salty, sour, bitter it would have been unsuitable for drinking purposes as well as for the growing of plants. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Qur'an: "See you the water which you drink? Do you bring it down (in rain) from the cloud

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14 Qur'an, 23: 18.

15 Qur'an, 21: 30.

16 Qur'an, 6: 99.

17 Qur'an, 16: 65.

or do We? Were it Our Will, We could make it saltish. Then why do you not give thanks?"<sup>18</sup>

Every living species on the earth must have a right to water. The supply and preservation of fresh water was always regarded as of fundamental importance since the time of the Prophet (SAW). This can be deduced from the following *hadith*: "The Muslims are partners in three things: water, wild plants, and fire."<sup>19</sup> In another narration from Iyas bin 'Abd who stated that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) forbade selling surplus water.<sup>20</sup>

In Islam, it is not permissible to withhold excess water where there are others who have need of it. The Prophet (SAW) declared: "Excess water should not be withheld so that the growth of herbage may be hindered."<sup>21</sup> If other people and animals need the water then they must be allowed to use it. If water is withheld, it influences the growth of fodder which feeds the animals.

### Use of Water Sparingly

The usage of water is emphasised in the ritual life of a Muslim as the verse indicates: "O you who believe! When you intend to offer *as-salat* (the prayer), wash your faces and your hands (forearms) up to the elbows, rub (by passing wet hands over) your heads, and (wash) your feet up to ankles. If you are in a state of *janaba* (i.e. had a sexual discharge), purify yourself (bathe your whole body)."<sup>22</sup> However, the Prophet (SAW) emphasised to use water sparingly as indicated by the *hadith* as narrated by Anas: "The Prophet (SAW) used to take a bath with one *sa'a* (2.6 litres) or up to five mudds of water and used to take ablution with one *mudd* (2/3 litres) of water."<sup>23</sup>

This *hadith* clearly points out the minimal amount of water which one must use for ritualistic cleansing purposes. The basic teaching of Islam is against wasting of resources. Extravagance in using water is forbidden; this applies to private use as well as public use, and whether the water is scarce or abundant. The Prophet (SAW) emphasized the proper use of water without wasting it. It was narrated from 'Abdullah bin 'Amr that the Messenger of Allah passed by Sa'd, when he was

18 Qur'an 56: 68-70.

19 Sunan Abu Dawud. vol 4., hadith no. 3477 (Darussalaam Publications, Riyadh), 129.

20 Sunan Abu Dawud. vol 4., hadith no. 3478 (Darussalaam Publications, Riyadh), 130.

21 Sahih Muslim, vol. 3A, hadith no. 1566, (Darul Fikr Beirut), 38.

22 Qur'an 5: 6.

23 Sahih Bukhari, vol.1, 135 hadith no. 200, (Kazi Publications. Lahore, 1986).

performing ablution, and he said: "What is this extravagance? Sa'd replied: 'Can there be any extravagance while performing ablution?' The Prophet (SAW) replied: 'Yes, even if you perform it on the bank of a flowing river.'"<sup>24</sup>

Allah also says in the Holy Qur'an: "... waste not by extravagance, certainly He (Allah) likes not *al-musrifun* (those who waste by extravagance)."<sup>25</sup> This shows how wastage is disliked in Islam. This same idea is applied with water usage.

### Muslim Scholars and the Issue of Recycled Water

The issue of recycled water came to the fore in the last few decades since technology advanced in such a way that used water could be recycled on a big scale. Muslims started debating the issue on whether recycled water could be used for ritualistic purposes. Recycled water can save water on a big scale but it is important to look at the views of the different Muslim Scholars.

#### Dr. Muzammil Siddiqi

Muzammil Siddiqi came with the following *fatwa*: "Briefly I can say the basic rule of the *shari'ah* about water is that by nature it is pure as long as its taste, color and smell have not changed. Nature also recycles itself. Allah (SWT) has put some laws in nature by which it restores itself. Some recycling methods are very much like natural methods, but in a faster way. If a recycling method restores the taste, color, and smell of some unclean water to its original level, then it will become pure. It can then be used for washing clothes, for making ablution and even for drinking purposes, if it is good for health. We must keep in mind that sometimes water looks like water, tastes and smells like water, but it could be very unhealthy and even deadly. Such water may not be used, not because it is impure but because it is unhealthy and dangerous."<sup>26</sup>

#### Maulana Siraj Desai

Port Elizabeth-based (now Gqeberha) Maulana Siraj Desai, member of the Majlis al-Ulama Port Elizabeth, argued that when water becomes *najis* or impure, there is absolutely no way that it can become *tahir* or

<sup>24</sup> *Ibn Majah*, vol. 1, hadith no. 425, (Darussalaam Publications, Riyadh, 1990), 147.

<sup>25</sup> *Qur'an* 7: 31.

<sup>26</sup> <https://muslimenvironment.wordpress.com/2010/03/21/using-recycled-water-islamic-approach/>

pure once again. Hence, Muslim jurists have never discussed ways of purifying water per se. The point was made that water that has become contaminated by *najasad* or impurity cannot be cleansed in any way; this, the argument goes, is due to the intrinsic nature of water.<sup>27</sup>

### Dr. Ali Moosagie

1. The following points were noted by Cape Town-based Dr. Ali Moosagie who was a member of the Muslim Judicial Council (MJC):
2. In terms of *usul al-fiqh* when the *illah* (ratio legis) is removed, the *hukm* (ruling) changes. The *hukm* is based and contingent on the *illah*.
3. In the case of *najasad*, the *illah* is tangible.
4. If any substance sufficiently undergoes changes, its *hukm* changes.
5. Since there are no clear textual evidence governing water reclamation, any ruling will invariably be based on juristic discretion and *qiyas* (analogical reasoning), resulting in differing opinions.

It is my view that, if any substance is pure in its original form, becomes impure, it can potentially be restored to its original state of purity after the removal of the impurity and undergoing some form of "cleansing" procedure.<sup>28</sup>

### Mufti Ebrahim Desai

Mufti Ebrahim Desai, a member of the Jamai'at al-Ulama of Kwazulu-Natal, identified three stages for the purification process. In his *fatwa* he says "that the advanced primary treatment which the water goes through in stage one does not 'purify' the water in terms of the *shariah*. He further stated that at stages two and three, if the water has still not met with *shariah* standards of purification, though it may be biologically clean, then it is still not pure."<sup>29</sup>

### Recycling of Ablution Water at a Masjid

The Environmental Desk at the Cape Town-based Muslim Judicial Council (MJC) has been requesting for a number of years for *masajid* to implement a facility for recycled ablution water. One *masjid* in

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<sup>27</sup> Abdulkader Ismail Tayob, Hamida Deedat, Azizur Rahman, *Islamic Jurisprudence and Conditions for Acceptability of Reclamation of Wastewater for Potable Use by Muslim Users: Report to the Water Research Commission* (WRC Report, The University of Cape Town), 118.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 128.

Mitchells Plain (in Greater Cape Town area) took the initiative to build a tank near the ablution area.

During 2022, the project is still under construction but the committee of the *masjid* claim that the ablution water collected will be given to the community on a donation basis whereby the recycled water will be used for gardening and domestic cleaning purposes. Figure 3 shows a proposed illustration on how ablution water can be recycled using a collection through, filtration unit, chlorine dispenser, and treated water collection tank.

Circulation of the water be it treated or untreated be it treated or untreated, would be fully automated with the aid of sensors and pumps in a close-loop flow network. Suitable pipes and fittings would be installed to deliver the water in the building and for external usage. The close-loop system has the advantage of minimizing water wastage via greywater discharge, as well as avoiding contamination from external sources.<sup>30</sup>

### 'Ulama's Role

During the Cape Town drought of 2015-2017 '*ulama* were requested to remind people to return to a life of repentance citing examples of people of the past as it is stated in the Holy Qur'an. Prophet Hud (RA) spoke to the people of 'Ad: "And O my people! Ask forgiveness of your Lord and then repent to Him, He will send you (from the sky) abundant rain, and add strength to your strength, so do not turn away as *mujrimun* (criminals, disbelievers in the Oneness of Allah)."<sup>31</sup> It was narrated by 'Abdullah bin 'Abbas that the Messenger of Allah (SAW) said: "Whoever persists in asking for forgiveness, Allah will grant him relief from every worry, and will grant him provision from (sources) he could never imagine."<sup>32</sup>

Nabi Nuḥ (RA) also spoke to his people: "I said (to them): 'Ask forgiveness from your Lord; Verily, He is Oft-Forgiving; He will send rain to you in abundance; And give you increase in wealth and children, and bestow on you gardens and bestow on your rivers.'"<sup>33</sup> It is recommended to recite Surah Nuh when the prayer for rain is performed due to these verses. 'Umar ibn al-Khattab ascended the

30 Suratkon et al. "Smart Wudhu: Recycling Ablution water for Sustainable Living in Malaysia", *Journal of Sustainable Development* 7, no. 6 (2014), 151.

31 Qur'an 11: 52.

32 *Sunan Ibn Majah*, vol. 5, hadith No. 3819, (Darussalaam. Riyadh), 90.

33 Qur'an 71: 10-12.

pulpit, he sought Allah's (SWT) forgiveness and recited: "Ask forgiveness from your Lord; Verily, He is Oft-Forgiving; He will send rain to you in abundance."<sup>34</sup>

Then 'Umar said: "Verily I have sought rain with the keys of the sky which cause the rain to descend."<sup>35</sup> Ibn Kathir also stated: "And give you increase in wealth and children, and bestow on you gardens and bestow on you rivers. This means, if you seek forgiveness and obey Allah, He will increase your provisions for you and provide you with water from the blessings of the sky. He will cause the blessings of the earth and crops to grow for you. He will increase your livestock animals for you and give you more wealth and children. It also means that he will give you more wealth, more children and gardens with various types of fruits. Allah will cause rivers to flow from among these gardens."<sup>36</sup> One can learn from the above-mentioned verses what one can achieve by applying the verses in the times of drought.

### **Salatul Istisqa' (Prayer for Rain): Sunnah of Nabi (SAW)**

It was reported by 'Aishah (RA), that she said: "The people complained to the Messenger of Allah about the lack of rain. So, he ordered his *minbar* (pulpit) be placed in the prayer ground (*musalla*), and he appointed a day for the people to come out. The Messenger of Allah went out when the sun's rays could be seen, and sat on the *minbar*. He glorified Allah and praised Him, then said: 'You have complained regarding the lack of rain on your lands, and the delay of rain from its usual time. And Allah (SWT), the Mighty and Sublime, has commanded you to supplicate to Him, and promised you that He will respond to you.'

Then he said: "Al-ḥamdulillahī rabbil-'alamin, ar-rahmanir-rahim, maliki yawmid-din. La ilaha illallah, yaf'alu ma yurid. Allahumma! Antallah, la illaha illah anta, al-ghanyyu wa naḥnul-fuqara'. Anzil 'alainal-ghaitha waj'al ma anzalta lana quwwatan wa balaghan ila ḥin" (All praise is due to Allah. The Rabb of all that exists, the Ever-Beneficent, the Most Merciful; King of the Day of Judgement. None has the right to be worshiped but Allah. He does what He wills. O Allah! You are Allah, none has the right to be worshiped but You. The Self-Sufficient Who is not in need of anything, and we are the destitute

34 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an il 'Azim*, vol. 4, (Beirut), 425-426.

35 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an il 'Azim*, vol. 4, (Beirut), 26.

36 Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an il 'Azim*, vol. 4, (Beirut), 426.

[always in need of You]. Send down rain upon us, and make what You have sent down a sustenance and a means to live by for a time being.)

Then he raised his hands, and continued to do so until the whiteness of his armpits could be seen. He then turned his back to the people, and turned –or turned upside down– his *rida'* around while his hands were raised. Then he turned around to face the people, descended (from the *minbar*) and prayed two *rak'ats*. So, Allah caused a cloud to form and it sent forth its lightning and thunder, then it rained by the permission of Allah. The Prophet (SAW) did not return to his *masjid* except those streams started flowing (in the streets). So, when he saw how quickly they were looking for shelter, he laughed so much that his molars could be seen, and said: 'I testify that Allah is capable of doing all things, and I am the slave of Allah and His Messenger.'<sup>37</sup>



Figure 2: *Salatul Istisqa'* in Cape Town 2018

## Conclusion

During 2016, researchers identified the water crisis situation in the Western Cape and authorities were looking for a quick solution. Many research groups were established to look for ways and means to save the 'day zero' situation. There was a request that religious communities turn to prayers. This was done at different localities by all faith groups.

The Muslim community also played their part. People were reminded and educated how to use water sparingly emphasizing the

<sup>37</sup> *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 2, hadith no. 1173 (Darussalaam, Riyadh), 22.

method of non-wasting as reflected in the two primary sources of Islam. The issue of recycled water was debated and a religious decree was issued. Muslims also turned to special prayers in their masses, at various venues, known as *Salatul Istisqa'*. On 13 October 2020, the *People's Post* reported that prayers were answered and the 'Day Zero' scenario was put on hold.<sup>38</sup>

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# Muslims' Contribution to the Media Development and Muslim Media in Mauritius

Mosadeq Sahebodin & Yasmine Mohabuth\*

## Media in the Republic of Mauritius<sup>1</sup>

Mauritius is a stable democracy that obtained its independence from Britain in 1968. The Indian Ocean Island is well known for its democratic characteristics and social peace. At the time of independence, Mauritius was a mono-crop economy (reliant on sugar). Financial services, information and communication technology, seafood processing, tourism, and cane industry are growing fields which propelled the country to an upper-middle developing level. Mauritius crossed the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century with a broadened and strong economy, a vigorous democratic structure, a well-established welfare state and a colorful written press.<sup>2</sup>

Freedom of expression is enshrined in section 12(1) of the Constitution of Mauritius. It guarantees to every person in this nation that they shall enjoy "the freedom to hold opinions and to receive and impart ideas and information without interference."<sup>3</sup> Freedom House,<sup>4</sup> a US-based press freedom monitoring organization, confirmed that Mauritius has a free press. The country is at the sixty-second place (seventh in the legal environment, tenth in the political environment and, and thirteenth in the economic environment). This trend has been maintained for the past three years. A report by the Africa Media

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1 Acknowledgments: Dr. Rukaya Kasenally, Associate Professor, University of Mauritius; Abdoollah Earally, Nawaz Noorbux, Husna Ramjanally; and *Defi Plus* as well as *The Star*.

2 Joseph Stiglitz, "The Mauritius Miracle", *Project Syndicate*, March 7, 2011, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-mauritius-miracle-2011-03>

3 The Constitution of the Republic of Mauritius, 1968.

4 Freedom House 2014; <https://freedomhouse.org/>

Barometer in 2010<sup>5</sup> claimed that in Mauritius media practitioners are generally ignorant of the rights of the individual. Together with their unfairness, this often results in articles that are not fair or ethical.

### **The Mauritian Media: A Historical Perspective**

Mauritius has a rich experience in the publication of newspapers, dating back to more than 250 years. The newspaper, which has the oldest history, is *Le Cernéen*; a paper that was supported by the whites who held the economic power through the sugar industry. Since it was decried for its racist editorial stand, it disappeared after 150 years of its existence. The march towards the independence of the country saw the emergence of a few press titles, mainly engaged in political mobilization. The Labour Party, which was led by Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam who would later become the first Prime Minister of an independent Mauritius, launched *Advance*; and, at that time, Dawood Rawat, who later became the CEO-Emeritus of the British American Insurance – a huge conglomerate with its activities spanning over four continents, funded *The Star* that was established as a broadsheet daily. *The Star* was perceived as a Muslim newspaper, a notoriety that its successor *Star*, still surfs on.

Most newspapers are either politically motivated or interest driven. *L'express*, which was the only morning daily for many years, seems to be funded by the sugar industry; with an active support from the private sector and the Catholic Church. Its business model was based on advertisements, partly from the private sector and partly from the government; and it is, however, reckoned for its innovative announcements columns. During the past few years, it has suffered, because it was deprived of government announcements. *Le Mauricien*, which was founded in 1908 by the so-called coloured people, was mainly funded by the private sector; and the Catholic Church provided it the necessary support; and its main income came from advertisements.

At present, the country has as much as 15 press titles; these include five dailies, eight weeklies, and a few specialized monthly magazines. Compared to the print media, the audio-visual landscape consists of four radios, three of them privately owned, and the state-owned

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5 <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/africa-media/08032.pdf> and <https://genderlinks.org.za/gmdc/publications/african-media-barometer-mauritius-2010-2012-04-11/>

national TV. During 2002, the population experienced the partial liberalization of the airwaves, with the first private FM radios competing directly with the mediocre state-driven MBC radio. The following years, with the advance in technology, various online platforms emerged; many of which turned out to be the ruling party's stooges.

### History of Muslim Media

The Muslim Media's history in Mauritius can be traced back to 1915 when the first publication known as *Islamisme* appeared; it, however, did not stand the test of time. In the 1970s, Azize Peeroo founded *La voix de l'Islam* (*The Voice of Islam*); the latter was a monthly broadsheet which dealt with issues pertaining to the Muslim Community. *La Voix de l'Islam* disappeared with the demise of its founder. Almost in the same period, the weekly broadsheet *The Star* was created by Dawood Rawat. It was perceived as the mouthpiece of the Muslim Committee of Action (CAM), a political party led by Sir Abdool Razack Mohamed who was its leader. After the disappearance of *The Star*, Reza Issack, who was then an Education Officer, and a few close collaborators (that included Siddick Naudeer, Mustapha Cadessaib, and Farhad Ramjaun) re-used the title –dropping the definite article 'the'– issued *Star* in 1980. As time went by, Issack was critiqued for using *Star* for his personal political leverage; he was then an active member of the Labour Party.

As a result of this, Issack's close collaborators that were closer to the Militant Movement of Mauritius (MMM), an opposition party, like Mustapha Cadessaib and the late Isshack Hasgarally left *Star* to launch *Impact News* on 1<sup>st</sup> of May 1993; the project got underway with the support of Farhad Ramjaun, Nasser Sahebally, Jamal Duymun, and late Nasir Gopaul. *Impact News* gave the chance to a new breed of Muslim journalists; they included Yasine Mohabuth, Rehade Jhuboo, and late Waheda Mungly.

The paper quickly became a reference point not only for the Muslim community but for the population at large; it gained fame with the famous Bacha and Glover affairs that reflected great political and social undertones. Its editorial policy was to stand up against all forms of injustice and favoritism no matter which ethnic group the victims came from. *Impact News'* former Chief Editor, Farhad Ramjaun stood

against all odds for 22 years; by then, the paper was acquired by the British American Insurance group.

Reza Issack was eventually elected at the 2005 Legislative Assembly elections under the banner of the Labour Party and also at the Municipal elections; he, then, became Lord Mayor of Port Louis. Around 2014, the British American Insurance group companies created a subsidiary company; the latter ventured into the media landscape. It purchased its own printing press and acquired *Star* and *Impact News*; which it converted into a magazine named *Impact*, and the only English language newspaper, *News on Sunday*.

### **The Defi Media Group: A New Venture**

In February 1996, *le Defi Plus* made its appearance as the first weekly tabloid appearing on Saturdays and it had a completely different business model. It was perceived as a Muslim initiative since its directors were mainly Muslims. It became popular among the Muslim readers, many of whom shifted from reading *L'express*. The paper made its imprint because of its innovative editorial approach; one that carried in-depth inquiries bringing to light hidden agendas; by and large, its language was provocative and sarcastic, and, on addition to that, it used shocking images. The editor and the team's main innovation were the publication of message-driven cartoons. Of course, it depended on advertisements for survival.

After a few years, the paper rose to compete with the other mainstream weeklies, *Weekend* and *5-Plus*. 2010 was, however, a major landmark for the small printing initiative. Banking on the greater demand for news during an electoral campaign, the budding family venture launched a new morning daily challenging the well-established *L'express*. *Le Defi Quotidien* is, at present, the leading daily in Mauritius. After the general elections, the group decided to diversify its content. It included a new supplement dedicated to economic affairs, and I<sup>6</sup> was called upon to contribute three pages every week on consumer issues.

At the same time, the group explored a new business model. While the income from advertisements remained significant, except for some period where government decided to reduce its advertisements as a retaliatory measure, the group, which meanwhile evolved into the Defi Media Group, set up a new subsidiary known as 'Events Plus'; the latter held exhibitions on a regular basis. The initiative consisted of

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6 Mosadeq Sahebodin.

organizing and marketing such national events as the 'Home and Garden Exhibition' or the 'Small Entrepreneurs Meeting;' these were where business operators would expose their products and attract large crowds. 'Events Plus' earned its income from rental of stalls to the operators and from entrance fees. This is how the group could cross-subsidize some of its publications.

Meanwhile, the number of titles it published also increased. The Group acquired the Sunday weekly *L'hebdo* from a local businessman, another Sunday weekly, *Le Dimanche*; the latter was well-known and circulated among the creole population. *News on Sunday*, the only English-language weekly at that time, was also in circulation. In 2002, Defi Media Group launched its own radio, *Radio Plus*, with Hassen Rojoa and Nawaz Noorbux as the key drivers of the project. *Radio Plus* and *Teleplus* have since progressed to become the leading outlets in the audio-visual landscape.

In 2014, Defi Media Group acquired *Star*; and since then, it continues to maintain its publication. *Star* went through a stylish transformation, diversifying its content with focus on the Muslim 'people' and enabling many opinion leaders to use the space to express themselves. It rose to become the reference for the Muslim community, and it may even be considered as the 'Muslim patrimony'.

We cannot close this essay on the Muslim newspapers without mentioning Imran Hosany; the latter was the owner of a printing press *Starprint*. This press printed the *Star* as well as *Impact News*. Hosany was a strong supporter of the Muslim media for which he provided the necessary financial support. He later became the chief editor and director of a new title, *Sunday Times*; this paper he subsequently sold to another Muslim businessman, namely Eshan Juman. The latter is at present an opposition member of parliament of the Labour Party. *Sunday Times*, with Zahira Radha as its editor, is still trying to grab some audience from the Muslim community. Due to strong competition during weekends, Eshan Juman decided to publish *Sunday Times* online.

### **MBC and Other Media Outlets: The Muslim Journalists**

From the previous section, it was observed to what extent Muslims got involved in the media industry and influenced the media landscape. Besides the owners, many embraced journalism. Muslim journalists thus made a significant impact on this landscape. Since the

list is quite long, it is best to select citing those who made their mark during the early days; they were Hassen Khan Naudeer, Swaley Mohabeer, Hossenjee Edoe, and Sulaiman Patel. At the Mauritius Broadcasting Service (now MBC TV), many Muslims served or continue to serve the corporation. Apart from Ahmadi family members, who made their mark at the MBC TV, there were Abdel Boolaky, Jaleela Hosenally, and others that played a significant role; it is important to note was that though many Muslims worked for MBC, they were, generally, never given opportunity to be promoted to MBC's higher posts; these were somewhat reserved to serve the political interest of the government.

In the mainstream media, one reads the columns of late Nazim Essoof, Abdoollah Earally, Naseem Ackbarally, Husna Ramjanally, Shenaz Patel, Monaf Hossenbocus, and Raschid Meerun; each of them made significant contributions to the promotion of the freedom of expression. Ehshan Kodarbux tops the list and currently, he is leading the most important press group in the country. Since Muslim journalists do play an active role in the press in Mauritius because of their hard work and confidence, they have made their mark as journalists. While the so-called mainstream newspapers subtly favoured a particular community, the Defi Media Group since 1996 enabled the creation of opportunities for the youth –Muslims and members from other faiths– from the working class. During the past few years, many young Muslims entered the field of journalism. The merit goes to the founder of Defi Media Group, Ehshan Kodarbux, who would not hesitate to offer the youth the chance to develop their talents. This is how more Muslim journalists emerged. From this crop of journalists came Ehsan Dinally who is currently the coordinator of *Star*; besides him there are Nasif Joomratty, Shezaad Jadoo, Rizwaan Khodabux, Jameela Jadoo, and Yasmine Mohabuth (co-author of this essay).

### **The Radio Stations and its Muslim Journalists**

Shifting from the print media to the private radios, it is observed that this sector has an extremely favourable status in the country. SOFRES concluded<sup>7</sup> that 93% of the population believe that “private

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7 SOFRES, Textbooks 2010: Paper and Digital Uses in Lower Secondary Schools, (TNS Sofres/Savoir Livre Survey). Available at <http://www.sne.fr/img/file/pdf/SNE/Groupes/SOFRES-Digitools-Eng.ppt>.

radios do their job well" only 1% state the contrary. All ethnic groups share this view: 95% of the General Population, 93% of the Muslims and 92% of the Hindus. The advent of private radios gave rise to new voices; Radio ONE, which was launched on 12<sup>th</sup> of March 2002, opened up opportunities for the youth and the names of Abdoolah Earally and Yasine Mohabuth (for sports coverage) come to the fore.

At *Radio Plus*, since April 13<sup>th</sup> 2002, Hassen Rojoa has contributed to the radio journalism, and Nawaz Noorbux was appointed the station's Chief Editor.<sup>8</sup> *Radio Plus* is a dominant station within the radio landscape and this has been proven by recent surveys. In September 2009, it crossed the prestigious bar of 50% and reached an audience of 52%. *Radio Plus* is the favourite station for current news; and it is also perceived as the most popular nation-wide.

Among Muslims, *Radio Plus* leads with 40% against Top FM 29%, *Radio One* and *Radio Mauritius* 25%. From the point of view of geographical distribution, *Radio Plus* is the most well-known "national radio" country-wide; it is considered as the first in urban areas (60%) as compared to the villages (38%). SOFRES also rate<sup>9</sup> *Radio Plus* as the best radio station; in urban areas, the vote is 61%, and in the rural areas it was voted a top station by 39%.

On *Top FM*, the closest competitor of *Radio Plus*, Shah Aqueel Madani attracted a significant audience as the station's night radio jockey. Habib Mosaheb, former MMM activist who also worked at the Seychelles Broadcasting Corporation, is a radio host and known for his weekly talk-shows.

### Muslim Journalists in Sports

Leaving aside the presence of Muslim journalists in the media sector, let us assess the impact that some made in the sports sector. Here we recall the glorious days of the *Mauritius Turf* with Titen Atchia who was a leading personality in the field of journalism. Raschid Meerun and Monaf Hossenbaccus are among those who made their contribution towards sport journalism; this was particularly the case when they were with *Le Mauricien/Week-End* group. The late Ismael Randeria was also known for his writings for the *Week-end*; he used the pen name of 'Ballon Rond'.

8 After the departure of Jacques Aristide, the then director of *News*.

9 TNS (Taylor Nelson Sofres), Digital Life Global Report, 2010. Available at: <https://amsr.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/Digital-TNS/id/o/rec/1>.

After Ally Mohamedeen's high school studies at Islamic College in Port Louis, he (following his father's footsteps) joined *l'Express* in 1992. After 5 years in the sports department, he joined the turf team and became the editor-in-chief. In charge of the Racing Desk of *La Sentinelle* group, Ally features, at present, in many publications: *L'Express*, *L'Express Turf*, *lexpress.mu*, and *5 Plus*. He participates in *LSL Radio's* weekly talk show dedicated to horse racing 'On the track.'

At *La Sentinelle*, Azmaal Hydoo is responsible for the international football desk; and Hydoo's opinion papers on international football are well read. Rehad Jhuboo and Qadeer Hoybun are the sports journalists for *5-Plus*. Ziyaad Issack (Reza Issack's son) is the sport host of *Radio Plus* and is frequently joined by Ashfaq Saroar. They together also contribute to the papers of Le Defi Media Group.

## **Mauritius' Muslim Journalists: A Selection**

### **Ehshan Kodarbux**

First and foremost, Ehshan Kodarbux is the first journalist who became a business entrepreneur; he took the CEO of the Group post and capably led from the front. In Mauritius, Kodarbux is recognized as one of the biggest success stories; from having started out as a street vendor to becoming a CEO of a press company. Under Kodarbux's leadership, the Defi Media Group became a recognizable media force. He has been at the helm of its affairs for 25 years and a successful media enterprise with 300 employees.

He recalls having been a street vendor at the age of 12; and alongside that, he attended secondary school thanks to a benefactor. At 18, he joined as a *Star* reporter and he describes himself as a passionate journalist who evolved into an avid entrepreneur through the force of circumstances.

Kodarbux developed as a journalist, then as the editor, and later as a press attaché for one of the ministers. Guided by Kodarbux, *Defi Plus* developed from a political newspaper filled with satire to a pluralistic platform; one that accommodated a radio station, a website, and a Web TV. According to Kodarbux, the whole package of media institutions mirrors the society. He is confident that Defi Media Group is in the best position to obtain a TV license.

## **Nawaz Noorbux**

In our view, Nawaz Noorbux is the most respected journalist currently. Noorbux has been a privileged witness of the liberalizing of airwaves and the creation of Radio Plus; a development that began twenty years ago. He moved up the media ladder from having been a Senior News Editor to a Director of News.

Prior to Noorbux's shift to Radio Plus, he was a news reporter and newscaster at the MBC TV. According to Noorbux, it was important to work hard and be thorough when undertaking a task. He stated that Radio Plus has also adopted a strong 'media advocacy' approach. It, for example, successfully advocated, with the collaboration of consumer associations, for the rejection of professional fees instituted by private pharmacies. Noorbux expressed his confidence that the Defi Media Group looks forward to the liberalization of television.

## **Abdoollah Earally**

Abdoollah Earally has 30 years of experience in journalism. He works from Mauritius as the exclusive correspondent for the three major francophone media outlets in Africa; he writes and reports for *Radio France Internationale*, *France 24*, and *Jeune Afrique*.

Earally's career started with sports journalism where he gained much experience and skills as a quality journalist. He covered major sporting events throughout Africa as well as in the Indian Ocean. When he shifted to radio journalism, he acquired a set of skills at *Radio France Internationale* by working smart. In the process, he mastered the techniques of TV reporting and video storytelling; this was at *Paris CELSA Sorbonne* (France).

He remains a passionate journalist who is well-informed and keeps abreast with the latest trends and innovations. A decade ago (that is, in 2011), he participated in the formation of *LSL Video* at Mauritius' *l'express* that subsequently became a benchmark for local media video production. At present, he is a Media & Communications Consultant, a Media Trainer, and an advocate for mobile journalism; a project that is currently the most powerful and flexible tool in this field.

Journalism gave him the opportunity to travel extensively covering the wonderful events and this included Barack Obama's election in 2008 as well as Nelson Mandela's funeral in 2014. He was in charge of the multimedia department of *La Sentinelle* since 2010 and he has also been Senior News Editor for *l'express.mu*. He, occasionally, acted as a

correspondent for *Radio-Télévision Canada*, *France Inter*, and *AFP*. For the record, mention should be made of the fact that Earally's first assignment was at *L'Entente*; a media platform that was founded by Abdul Khaleck and myself.

### **Husna Ramjanally**

Husna Ramjanally, like many journalists of her time, is an autodidact; she has since developed into an opinion leader that manages a respected opinion column in *Le Mauricien*. In 1989, she formed part of the first team that launched *5-Plus* magazine. Soon after she completed her secondary education, she took her first job as a journalist.

After four years at *5-Plus*, she joined *Le Mauricien – Weekend* Group. She has been a reporter for *Le Mauricien* for many years. Ramjanally experienced the days when the ruling party tried to suppress the press. She regrets the fact that the Muslim youth do not demonstrate much interest in journalism considering the opportunities in the field. At present, she is one of *Le Mauricien's* most respected columnists.

### **Future of Media in the Republic of Mauritius**

Since each of these and a string of other media journalists made their input developing the media industry in Mauritius, they left a legacy. Currently, Mauritius media reflect the democratic and pluralistic traditions of its society.<sup>10</sup> These have been reinforced by the way it disseminates information that remains crucial in multi-ethnic Mauritian society. Generally, Mauritius is usually seen as a model of civil and political rights; and this is largely because of several institutions that ensure a functioning and vibrant democracy.

The media helped enhance the democratic space and this is largely due to the country's strong tradition for a free press.<sup>11</sup> The *Independent Broadcasting Authority* (IBA) has granted licenses to three private radio stations but has not granted any license for private local television stations yet. Journalists are often being criticized for their lack of

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10 Roukaya Kasenally, *The Dilemma of Africa's Media: How to Become More Independent of Advertising* (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Media Programme Sub-Sahara Africa, 2019).

11 Sheila Bunwaree & Roukaya Kasenally, *Political Parties and Democracy in Mauritius* (EISA, 2005).

training, and some of them are therefore unethical in their performance and writings.<sup>12</sup>

The sustainability of the Muslim media is, however, blurred. The critical question is: For how long will *Star* represent the Muslim community's interest considering the fact that many of the established Muslim journalists are about to retire? The other question is: where is the youth who are searching for work in the corporate communication field and who can make a difference if granted the chance to enter the growing field of journalism? Unlike the previous generation that is familiar with the traditional media, the future generations will have no interest in the print media for they are more interested in social media and the new innovative media tools.

### **Towards a Conclusion: Mentioning *Le Flambeau***

Finally, this essay would not be complete if no mention is made of *Le Flambeau*.<sup>13</sup> It was first published as the first Muslim news magazine by myself<sup>14</sup> and a group of activists during 1995; it, however, closed down ten months later due to lack of funds. And during 2014, *Le Flambeau* was resuscitated as an online newspaper. It remains in circulation to this day and its main objective is to promote critical thinking among the Muslim community. It hopes to develop into a pioneer as Mauritius' first *waqf*-based media.

As noted from this essay, Muslim journalists have played an important role in the formation and development of the country's media outlets. In the process, some ventured to enter the field by transforming the media industry into a competitive one. Many Muslims have since entered the arena and made their input. It may be argued that though the Muslims are statistically small compared to other religious communities, it has had a good number of representatives in the field. Each one made their mark and it is hoped that the youth will consider this as a field of interest.

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12 Christina Chan-Meetoo, *Media Ethics and Regulations: Insights from Africa* (Cameroon: Langaa Research & Publishing CIG), 2013.

13 [www.http://leflambeau.info](http://leflambeau.info).

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# Performing the Self in New Media: A Qualitative Study on the Experiences of South African Muslim Women Influencers on Instagram

Zara Schroeder\*

## Introduction and Background

This article examines how South African Muslim women influencers negotiate the self on Instagram. Drawing from interviews with South African influencers, it argues that Muslim women influencers perform an "authentic" identity on Instagram in order to find a sense of belonging in society. In this study, Instagram is considered as a new public sphere, where interactions and communication take place in the current era of globalisation. Modesty, piety, hijab and fashion are considered as modes of self-expression that help the participants perform "authenticity". These will be explored in relation to how the participants use these aspects to curate and portray an "authentic" online identity. The data for this research has found that the participants commodify their "authentic" identities in order to fit into society, and to make a profit from it, thus enabling them to resist Western stereotypes that depict them as submissive, docile women. Furthermore, their role as influencers requires them to appear as "relatable" and "authentic" as possible, in order to attract an audience, so that they may gain paid collaborations with bigger brands. By portraying their "authentic" religious identity, they are able to appeal to a niche audience of Muslim women, which distinguishes them from other influencers and makes them unique. At the same time, by depicting themselves online as fashionable, modern women, they are able to remain relevant and interesting to their followers. This in turn allows them to assimilate into the new digital public sphere, since Western secular society is understood by minority groups, such as Muslim women, as being the hegemonic culture which they should comply with. Lastly, there is not much existing literature on this topic, especially in the South African context. Therefore, this research can provide insights into the new ways South African Muslim women

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craft, negotiate, navigate and perform their “authentic” identities in the new public sphere.

Since it was founded in 2010, social media service Instagram’s popularity has grown exponentially with a total of 100 million users in 2013 and a record of 75 million users uploading pictures daily.<sup>1</sup> Muslim women influencers are becoming increasingly popular on social media, especially in advertisements for big brands. Their presence is greatly acknowledged and followed by thousands of Instagram users, thus making these women micro-celebrities.<sup>2</sup> Internationally renowned influencers Dina Tokio and Ascia Al-Faraj are the inspiration behind this research project.

In 2018 and 2019, Tokio and Al-Faraj decided to remove their *hijab*, creating an uproar of disapproval from their followers. Al-Faraj and Tokio’s popularity led me to question the role religious identity plays in the way these women portray and brand themselves on social media. Furthermore, the controversy these women garner raises questions about the different ways in which they capture the contradiction between the traditional Islamic notion of “modesty” and the overtly visual nature of social media.

Additionally, there has been research on Muslim women’s use of Instagram,<sup>3</sup> but it has not focused on influencers as such and, also more specifically, on female Muslim influencers in South Africa. This research thus provides a unique perspective of negotiating identity in a post-apartheid context. The study raises the following question: how do these women, and other Muslim influencers, negotiate modesty on Instagram?

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- 1 H. Ting, W. W. P. Ming, E. C. de Run, and S. L. Y. Choo, “Beliefs about the Use of Instagram: An Exploratory Study”, *International Journal of Business and Innovation* 2, no. 2 (2015): 15-31.
  - 2 Crystal Abidin, “Visibility Labour: Engaging with Influencers’ Fashion Brands and #OOTD Advertorial Campaigns on Instagram”, *Media International Australia*, 161(1), (2016): 86-100.
  - 3 Alila Pramiyanti, “Being me on Instagram: How Indonesian Hijabers Reframed the Nexus of Piety and Modernity” (Doctoral Dissertation, Queensland University of Technology, 2019); Kelsey Waninger, “The Veiled Identity: Hijabistas, Instagram and Branding in the Online Islamic Fashion Industry”, (Master’s Thesis, Georgia State University, 2015).

## Literature Review

### Defining the Concepts

#### Instagram as a New Platform of Digital Media

Instagram is a social media platform where individuals capture and share their instant life moments with friends and family globally.<sup>4</sup> It "offers its users a way to take pictures and videos, apply different manipulation tools (filters) to transform the appearance of an image and share it instantly with the user's friends on the application."<sup>5</sup> Instagram's countless editing and photo manipulation features enable influencers to craft their content in a way that allows them to appear "authentic" to their audiences in the most relatable way possible.

Foucault defines "technologies of the self" as methods that enable people to control their "bodies, minds, souls, and lifestyle"<sup>6</sup> on their own accord. Therefore, by being able to do so, Foucault argues<sup>7</sup> that this allows the individuals to reshape themselves so that they may achieve a particular quality of life that meets their desired standards. Instagram fits Foucault's description of technologies of the self,<sup>8</sup> as it provides a platform for individuals to transform and display their "authentic" identities in any way they wish. According to Çadırcı and Güngör,<sup>9</sup> social media platforms have created a new form of socialisation.

Piela states that pictures create "religious identity narratives of powerful women which thereby challenge the label of the Other, a victim of patriarchy."<sup>10</sup> This suggests why Muslim women have chosen Instagram as their specific site to portray their religious identity. By

4 Y. Hu, L. Manikonda, and S. Kambhampati, "What we Instagram: A First Analysis of Instagram Photo Content and User Types." In *Eighth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, 2014, May.

5 N. Hochman, and R. Schwartz, "Visualizing Instagram: Tracing Cultural Visual Rhythms." In *Sixth International AAAI Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*, 2012, May.

6 Michel Foucault, "Technologies of the Self", *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault* (Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1988), 16-49.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.

9 Tuğçe Ozansoy Çadırcı, and Ayşegül Sağkaya Güngör, "Love My Selfie: Selfies in Managing Impressions on Social Networks", *Journal of Marketing Communications*, (2016): 1-20.

10 Anna Piela, "Challenging Stereotypes: Muslim Women's Photographic Self-Representations on the Internet", *Heidelberg Journal of Religions on the Internet*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2010): 87-110.

sharing selfies and videos of themselves on Instagram, they are able to resist nuances of the Other yet comply with them at the same time by conforming to Western cultural notions of fashion and beauty.

For these women, the visually mediated self-expressions they share via images are commodities which become digital possessions which they can capitalise on.<sup>11</sup> This research explores how Muslim women influencers use Instagram as a platform to portray their "authentically" curated identities. Additionally, Instagram is not only a platform where information and communication can occur, but it also forges a bond between "authentic" self-expression and self-representation.<sup>12</sup> This enables these two functions to be performed in a public sphere by Muslim women in a way that has not been done before in post-apartheid South Africa.

Social media influencers gain an income through content creation with the aim of promoting a particular brand with the goal of acquiring a following as well as brand recognition.<sup>13</sup> What makes influencers useful as a unique form of marketing strategy for brands is the fact that they are able to promote brands through their personal lives, thus making them appealing to the average consumer.<sup>14</sup>

### Authenticity

This article argues that "authenticity" plays a crucial role in this negotiation. Umbach and Humphrey states<sup>15</sup> that when an individual is "authentic", they are able to accept a narrative of self-expression through a sense of selfhood that is original to them. "Authenticity" is an abstract concept which is not concretely defined; therefore, the performance of an "authentic" identity is one that is constantly changing and differs from person to person. Portraying an "authentic"

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11 T. O. Çadırcı and A. S. Güngör, "Love My Selfie: Selfies in Managing Impressions on Social Networks"

12 Alila Pramiyanti, "Being Me on Instagram: How Indonesian Hijabers Reframed the Nexus of Piety and Modernity" (Doctoral Dissertation, Queensland University of Technology, 2019), 46.

13 Morgan Glucksman, "The Rise of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Lifestyle Branding: A Case Study of Lucie Fink", *Strategic Communications* *Elon University: Elon Journal* 8, no. 2 (2017): 77-78.

14 Ibid.

15 M. Umbach, and M. Humphrey, "Authenticity and Consumption" and "The Nature of Authenticity, and the Authenticity of Nature", in *Authenticity: The Cultural History of a Political Concept* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), 13-38 and 95-121.

version of the self is integral to fitting into society and finding a sense of belonging.

Drawing from the experiences of Muslim influencers on Instagram, this study examines how Muslim women navigate identity and “authenticity” online. As a new public sphere, Instagram provides the participants with the opportunity to perform “authentic” versions of identities through the content they share. Habermas defines<sup>16</sup> the public sphere as a space where one is able to share one’s opinions in order to bring about necessary change within society. This relates to the work influencers do, whose portrayal of an “authentic” online persona enables them to gain monetarily from this activity.

Furthermore, it takes into consideration the fluidity and flexibility of identity. The performance of a specific identity is a norm in society ever since the concept of society was touted. The performance of such identity has now shifted with the emergence of the digital sphere to an online persona. According to Waninger,<sup>17</sup> performing an “authentic” persona is a necessity for branding on Instagram. However, the performance of an online persona is also undertaken by the ordinary Instagram user, since this is a requirement for assimilating and becoming popular in this new public sphere. Through the curation of an “authentic” persona, the participants are able to find a sense of belonging and navigate their identity in the digital sphere. “Authenticity” therefore explains how Muslim women influencers are able to negotiate their holistic identities on Instagram. With this research, we explore how influencers interpret the ways in which Western trends and discourses restrict them, but also enable their conscious choices and actions.

Muslims in South Africa constitute 1.09% of the total population. As a minority, their rights to freedom of religious expression are limited. Consequently, many of these Muslim women turn to digital platforms such as Instagram to express themselves. By acting as a new public sphere, Instagram affords these women an alternate opportunity of self-expression. Furthermore, social media is an

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16 Jürgen Habermas, Ludwig von Friedeburg, Christoph Oehler, and Friedrich Weltz, *Student und Politik: Eine soziologische Untersuchung zum politischen Bewußtsein Frankfurter Studenten (Student and Politics: A Sociological Study of the Political Consciousness of Frankfurt Students)*, (Neuwied/Berlin: Luchterhand, 1961).

17 Kelsey Waninger, “The Veiled Identity: Hijabistas, Instagram and Branding in the Online Islamic Fashion Industry”, (Master’s Thesis, Georgia State University, 2015).

important site for religious mobilisation and the creation of a pious religious identity.<sup>18</sup>

It is evident that the experiences of Muslim identity by individuals around South Africa are distinct from one another. "There is no fundamental identity that any South African clings to in common. Thus, these numerous identities of South African Muslims can be perceived as being crosscutting in that each overlaps a range of contexts, or a common context may contain many identities within it."<sup>19</sup> Therefore, this article aims to explore the different ways Muslim women in Cape Town experience their religious identity. When considering the Muslim population in South Africa, it is evident that Indian Muslims contribute to one of the largest sub-groups within the heterogenous Muslim population, whereas, the other consists of Malay Muslims.<sup>20</sup>

Additionally, Vahed states<sup>21</sup> that a significant number of Indian Muslims populate areas such as KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng, whereas, the majority of Malay Muslims are confined to the Western Cape. Thus, there is minimum contact between the two, which means their Muslim identities and cultures do not integrate with one another. The intentional choice of narrowing down the participants to Capetonian Muslim women Influencers makes their experiences of performing "authenticity" unique from other South African women. This is due to the fact that Malay Muslims have a history, culture and tradition that vastly juxtaposes that of Indian Muslims.<sup>22</sup>

According to Vahed, Muslims in South Africa accept numerous identities, and their religious identity is constantly being influenced by aspects such as "language, class, gender and region."<sup>23</sup> This is largely a result of apartheid, where all South Africans grew accustomed to adopting a 'hybrid' identity. This draws into the argument this thesis

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18 Kikue Hamayotsu, "The Limits of Civil Society in Democratic Indonesia: Media Freedom and Religious Intolerance", *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 43, no. 4, (2013): 658-677.

19 Robert Thornton, "The Potentials of Boundaries: Steps Toward a Theory of the Social Edge", Paper presented at the Wits History Workshop: Democracy, Popular Precedents, Practice and Culture, 1994, 14.

20 Golaam Vahed, "Changing Islamic Traditions and Emerging Identities in South Africa", *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs* 20, no. 1 (2000): 43-73.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

makes of identity being multi-faceted. Furthermore, it is evident that Muslim women in Cape Town experience and project their religious identity differently from other Muslim women around South Africa. Therefore, their portrayal of "authenticity" on Instagram is an experience that is unique not only to their religious identity, but to their interpretation of their cultural identity as well.

### Agency

This article's thesis draws on Saba Mahmood's theory of Islamic feminism to examine Muslim women influencers' experiences on Instagram. Mahmood advocates<sup>24</sup> for liberated spaces, where women are able to discover actual emancipatory possibilities; such spaces should be ones where the influence of men and their intimidating presence does not feature and that women can claim as being their own. We suggest that Instagram is one of these spaces, offering Muslim women influencers the opportunity to negotiate their religious identity and express their own unique interpretation of modesty.

Agency is commonly perceived as free will and showing resistance to what is considered the norm, thus creating an antagonistic relationship of resistance between the actor (South African Muslim women Influencers) and the structure (Western culture). This insinuates that there is a nexus between compliance and resistance.<sup>25</sup> These women are able to resist Western stereotypes of what and how they should be by displaying their identities on Instagram and portraying themselves as agentic, fashionable, empowered individuals.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, this research seeks to explore the relation between these aspects and the role it plays in the negotiation and performance of an "authentic" religious identity on Instagram.

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24 Saba Mahmood, "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival", *Cultural Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (2001): 202-236.

25 Tine Davids and Karin Willemse, "Embodied Engagements: Feminist Ethnography at the Crossing of Knowledge Production and Representation: An Introduction", *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 43 (2014): 1-4.

26 Sirma Bilge, "Beyond Subordination vs. Resistance: An Intersectional Approach to the Agency of Veiled Muslim Women", *Journal of Intercultural Studies* 31, no. 1 (2010): 9-28.

Moreover, the role agency plays is important, for not only does agency disrupt the norm, it also reinforces it.<sup>27</sup>

The West is often perceived as the hegemonic culture that all minority groups are expected to conform to.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, adopting Western trends is crucial to their success as influencers, since their Western sense of fashion makes them attract followers and become popular on Instagram. By performing their cultural identities, these women are able to assimilate into society as well and find a sense of belonging.

Waninger argues<sup>29</sup> that traditional discourses of Islam are constantly measured against Western notions of consumerism, thus framing Islamic religion as antagonistic against modern fashion. However, Muslim women are navigating this by incorporating modern Westernised fashion trends into Islamic codes of dress through digital media. They integrate expressions of piety into their online identities, and by doing so they develop an Islamic consumer culture that enables religious belief to correspond with consumerism.<sup>30</sup>

Theories of Islamic feminism are applied to interpret the ways the participants challenge stereotypical Western representations of Muslim women. Islamic feminism is a new genre of feminism that is comprised of women from majority and minority countries.<sup>31</sup> According to Mir-Hosseini,<sup>32</sup> Islamic feminism creates a sphere for Muslim women to restore their faith and identity by resisting Western perceptions of Muslim womanhood.

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27 Tine Davids and Karin Willemse, "Embodied Engagements: Feminist Ethnography at the Crossing of Knowledge Production and Representation: An Introduction", *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 43 (2014): 1-4.

28 Elisabeth Eide, "Strategic Essentialism and Ethnification: Hand in Glove?", *Nordicom Review* 31, no. 2, (2010): 63-78.

29 Kelsey Waninger, "The Veiled Identity: Hijabistas, Instagram and Branding in the Online Islamic Fashion Industry", (Master's Thesis, Georgia State University, 2015).

30 Ibid.

31 Margot Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences*, (London: Oneworld Publications, 2008).

32 Ziba Mir-Hosseini, *Muslim Women's Quest for Equality: Between Islamic Law and Feminism*, *Critical Inquiry* 32, no. 4 (2006): 629-645.

## Modesty and Piety

Schielke and Orient state<sup>33</sup> that Islam is a discursive tradition which “informs the attempts of Muslims to live pious and moral lives”. Research on piety, ethics and tradition has found that the engagement Muslims have with their religion is an active process of interaction with perceptions of good character.<sup>34</sup>

In this study, piety is understood as an internal level of spirituality that is personal to an individual, whereas modesty is understood as an outward projection of piety which is depicted through means of dress and conduct. Some of the influencers portray modesty through dress and wearing *hijab*, whereas others do not. Additionally, being “modest” is something that is often attributed to Muslim women only but not to Muslim men; this research explores how female influencers navigate and negotiate this.

The concept of modesty in relation to piety is examined and what this means for female Muslim Instagram influencers. Many of these influencers brand themselves as modest, which implies a religious connotation, hence the reasoning behind exploring the aspect of piety in relation to how these women construct and portray their Muslim identity on Instagram with regards to modesty.

## Methodology

We chose “authenticity” as the frame through which to examine these women’s religious identities. This leads to the primary research question: how do South African Muslim women influencers perform “authenticity” on Instagram?

By making use of sociological notions of identity curation and performance, this question seeks to explore the social aspects involved in portraying an “authentic” identity online. In order to fully understand influencing, it is important to consider the following subsidiary questions:

1. How does Instagram serve as a specific site for the construction of religious and cultural identities?
2. How do the women construct their religious and cultural identities?

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33 Samuli Schielke, “Second Thoughts About the Anthropology of Islam, or How to Make Sense of Grand Schemes in Everyday Life”, In the SSOAR (Social Science Open Access Repository) 1, no. 2 (2010): 1-16.

34 Ibid.

3. How does portraying an “authentic” identity online help the influencers in curating their own identities?
4. What role, if any, does fashion and *hijab* play in the women’s construction of themselves as influencers and as Muslim women?

In order to gain insight into how the influencers craft an “authentic” identity online, an inductive, exploratory approach using qualitative research methods was used.<sup>35</sup> This research is inductive because it is based on empirical observations. Furthermore, patterns have been extracted from the data, which has allowed me to theorise how the influencers articulate their sense of selves on Instagram in an “authentic” manner. The intentional use of a qualitative approach enabled us to understand what it means to be a Muslim woman influencer in the post-apartheid context, due to the qualitative approach providing more descriptive and conceptual data.<sup>36</sup>

Silva describes qualitative research as a method that allows an in-depth understanding of a particular group of individuals,<sup>37</sup> which provides insight into nuances of social contexts and meaning-making processes that contribute to the construction of the self. Its results are not meant to be generalised, rather they are meant to provide knowledge on a particular topic, and act as a basis for further research.<sup>38</sup> Because of its focus on depth rather than breadth, the qualitative approach allowed me to explore the subjective experiences of these participants. Therefore, each of their experiences and performance of “authenticity” is unique.

This research study engaged with eight women Muslim Instagram influencers in South Africa. The ages of these women ranged from 19 to 29 years of age. The women vary in terms of the amount of promotional work they do, their income, years of experience in the influencing industry, followers and religiosity. The criteria consisted of women who currently work in the influencing industry, even if it has been only for one year. Participants had to be South African and be based in Cape Town. In order to overcome this and to accommodate two participants who were willing to participate but were unable to physically meet, we arranged an email-based interview.

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35 Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

36 Ibid.

37 J. M. Silva, “Using Qualitative Methods to Uncover the Hidden Mechanisms of Poverty and Inequality”, *AEI Paper and Studies*, 2019.

38 Ibid.

Liamputtong in Cook states<sup>39</sup> that online research methods such as email-based interviews have contributed to making research “user-friendly” by enhancing their “comfort and control”. As the email interview was the most convenient option for these participants, we sent them the questions from the interview, as well as some guiding questions for the PhotoVoice activity.

The methods used to collect data were PhotoVoice method, semi-structured in-depth interviews and email-based interviews. First, we used PhotoVoice, where we asked each participant to bring five pictures they felt best expresses their identity as a Muslim female in South Africa and their sense of self in general. These are pictures that have already been uploaded on Instagram and provided important insights into the different and possibly similar spatialities of these young women’s lives, as well as the ways in which they construct and portray their “authentic” identities on this platform. We had assumed that the participants only shared images on Instagram that were a true reflection of their “authentic” identities. Therefore, instead of asking them to take new pictures, it would be easier to select pictures that have already been shared on Instagram, since those images have contributed to the “authentic” narrative they are curating of themselves.

Sutton-Brown describes<sup>40</sup> PhotoVoice as a form of participatory action research strategy which is most commonly used with groups that are marginalised. This methodology seemed most applicable to this research therefore as it deals with Muslim women, a marginalised group in South Africa. Sutton-Brown explains<sup>41</sup> the significance of PhotoVoice by stating, “[u]sing ethnographic techniques that combine photography, critical dialogue and experiential knowledge, participants reflect on and communicate their culture, expose social problems, and to ignite social change”.

It is evident from this research that images play a crucial role in communicating what words cannot. PhotoVoice has offered these participants an opportunity to express their sense of selves; it has allowed me to observe how the participants construct and perform

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39 Liamputtong (2007) in Catherine Cook, “Email Interviewing: Generating Data with a Vulnerable Population”, *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 68, no. 6 (2012): 1331.

40 C. A. Sutton-Brown, “Photovoice: A Methodological Guide”, *Photography and Culture* 7, no.2 (2014): 169.

41 Ibid.

their “authentic” identities online as a means of assimilating into the digital public sphere.

## Discussion of the Findings

### Using Instagram and Influencing as Modes of Identity Expression

Besides being a space where the performance of an “authentic” identity occurs, Instagram is also a platform where Influencers can create their own businesses. Their business is based on their brand, which is based on the curation of an “authentic” identity that they perform. As Nala explain:

My Instagram page is my personal brand and it correlates with who I am. Instagram [has] adapted in a way that it became a platform where creatives could showcase [their] talent online. (Nala)

Piela states<sup>42</sup> that the development of an online space is vital for Muslim women to virtually engage with other women in order to find a better understanding and interpretation of Islam. Through the creation of this trust, the Influencers are able to convince their followers to adopt the same opinions they have, especially regarding Islam. Alia’s statement supports this: “I find that I have more engagement from my followers when I share real photos; when I post pictures that are styled and where I’m wearing makeup it doesn’t have much of an impact. I guess it’s because people can’t really relate to it.” Therefore, by monitoring which images and videos are popular amongst followers, influencers can determine how to curate their content in a manner that makes them appear most relatable and “authentic”.

This form of digital self-presentation online has the ability to impact the self-concept of users, which in turn impacts the nexus between their true identity and their “authentic” online persona.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, they make themselves brandable by creating a sense of relatability through their religious and cultural identities which enables them to advertise products through Instagram.

Through sharing images via Instagram, the creation of a certain form of religious self is made easier through the intentional and

<sup>42</sup> Anna Piela, *Muslim Women Online: Faith and Identity in Virtual Space* (Routledge, 2012).

<sup>43</sup> A. L. Gonzales, and J. T. Hancock, “Identity Shift in Computer-Mediated Environments”, *Media Psychology* 11, vol. 2 (2008): 167–185.

strategic manipulation of a certain way of being.<sup>44</sup> Vis-à-vis the emergence of Instagram, digital media have proven to be a significant aspect of contemporary culture, indeed, they have become a way young people communicate with one another.

### **Resisting Stereotypes from Western Secular Society on Instagram**

Mahmood defines<sup>45</sup> agency as: "not simply a synonym (equal) for resistance to relations of domination, but as a capacity for action that specific relations of subordination create and enable". This new way of thinking about gender discourses is relevant to the approach the participants take when they address gender inequalities.

Badran describes<sup>46</sup> Islamic feminism as: "a new paradigm in terms of approaching women's roles from women's perspectives, and it means that Islam and feminism cannot be viewed as an oxymoron". However, according to the West, Muslim women are commonly misinterpreted as docile beings who lack empowerment and agency over their existence.<sup>47</sup> This is illustrated in the way the participants use their cultural, religious, and gendered identities as influencers to criticise patriarchal discourses, through Instagram:

### **Curating an "Authentic" Version of the Self-Online**

These women need to appear as relatable and transparent as possible to their followers in order to build their brand and create a sense of trust within their online community; this ensures their success in the industry. The performance of an "authentic" online persona allows the participants to commodify their identity and profit from it. Additionally, the performance of "authenticity" allows the women to find a sense of belonging in the new public sphere, known as Instagram. Moreover, the performance of an "authentic" identity

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44 Alila Pramiyanti, "Being Me on Instagram: How Indonesian Hijabers Reframed the Nexus of Piety and Modernity", (Doctoral Dissertation, Queensland University of Technology, 2019), 53.

45 Saba Mahmood, "Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent: Some Reflections on the Egyptian Islamic Revival", *Cultural Anthropology* 16, no. 2 (2001): 203.

46 Margot Badran, *Feminism in Islam: Secular and Religious Convergences* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2008).

47 Elisabeth Eide, "Strategic Essentialism and Ethnification: Hand in Glove?", *Nordicom Review* 31, no. 2, (2010): 63-78.

online also provides the participants with the opportunity to explore the nexus between their religious and cultural identities in the ways that they negotiate and navigate them on Instagram.

Goffman's framework<sup>48</sup> of *The Presentation of Self* helps to interpret how the participants curate and perform their identities on Instagram, particularly with regards to the way they present the self-online via the images they share on Instagram.<sup>49</sup> This makes the selfie culture one that is explicit to a particular age and gender group, since it provides them with a new platform to display the "authentic" self. This is illustrated in Camilla's response:

Influencers curate their feed according to their target audience, which reflects Goffman's theory of performance of the self being curated in relation to a particular audience. It is evident that identity for these participants is something that is carefully crafted in a way that makes it appear "authentic", even if it is not so in reality. They intentionally share certain images and videos to depict their lives in a particular manner, however, there are certain instances where they need to make themselves appear more vulnerable in order to allow their followers to "buy into" their online persona. The performance of an online identity has recently emerged in this era; this is especially substantial since these women are able to profit from the identities they perform online.

When considering Goffman's concept of the front stage, it is evident that the concept of candidness to enhance relatability is apparent in the use of images, captions and hashtags that the influencers engage in as part of their online performance.<sup>50</sup> The backstage space is where influencers are able to decide how to present themselves online in a manner that they deem suitable. This includes "choosing, editing, censoring, changing or deleting posts."

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48 Erving Goffman, *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (Great Britain: Pelican Books, 1959).

49 L. R. Smith, and J. Sanderson, "I'm Going to Instagram It! An Analysis of Athlete Self-Presentation on Instagram", *Journal of Broadcasting and Electronic Media* 59, no. 2 (2015): 342– 358; A. N. Geurin-Eagleman, and L. M. Burch, "Communicating via Photographs: A Gendered Analysis of Olympic Athletes' Visual Self-presentation on Instagram", *Sport Management Review* 19, no. 2, (2016): 133–145.

50 Alila Pramiyanti, "Being Me on Instagram: How Indonesian Hijabers Reframed the Nexus of Piety and Modernity", (Doctoral Dissertation, Queensland University of Technology, 2019), 54.

This suggests that the “authentic” online persona that the women refer to, is in fact carefully planned, curated, and performed. It is not a true reflection of their “authentic” identities, rather it has become essential for their assimilation into the new public sphere, and also for their success in the influencing industry.

### **The Curation of Self and the Nexus between Religious and Cultural Identities**

Eide describes<sup>51</sup> individuals from minority groups, such as Muslim women, as being misinterpreted as docile, disempowered beings. The incorporation of Western fashion and beauty trends in Islamic dress, contributes to the “authentic” portrayal and performance of both a religious and cultural identity, therefore, making the women appealing and relatable to a niche audience.

They are deemed as religious, because they are still dressed modestly; and they are considered to be Western, because they appear fashionable and trendy. However, it is evident that the participants do experience a sense of fulfilment from being Muslim, which was echoed through the following images of Amelia and Nadine.

It is evident that this feeling of being “proud” is depicted on Instagram for their followers to see. The way they attach a sense of belonging to certain areas, not only in Cape Town, but internationally, illustrates that these women associate certain traditions and expectations with being Muslim. It also implies that the women negotiate part of their religious identities in order to accommodate their cultural ones. The images these women share to illustrate the pride they feel being Muslim also contradicts commonly held conceptions of what traditional Muslim womanhood is.

The way these women navigate these traditions to suit their identities both online and off, reflects their need to accommodate both their religious *and* cultural identities, which they identify as Western. Their cultural identities are identified as Western, thus demonstrating how they construct their sense of self in relation to the Other. Mahmood argues<sup>52</sup> that the agency these Muslim women possess should not be understood only as resistance or submission, rather it

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51 Elisabeth Eide, “Strategic Essentialism”, *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopaedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies*, (2016): 1-2.

52 Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

should be perceived as the ability for an individual to develop a self in relation to dominant cultural norms such as those of the West.

The women have clear ideas of what traditional Muslim womanhood entails, therefore, the way they compose their identity is done in relation to cultural norms that are perpetuated by the West.

Beauty and fashion trends play a significant role in the curation and performance of cultural identity for the participants. Amelia explicitly illustrates how she perceives “fashion forward and modern” as synonymous, therefore implying that traditional Muslim women are usually not fashionable or modern. Sofia reiterates this by stating that she is not accustomed to traditional forms of dress, thus suggesting that she has negotiated her religious identity in favour of her cultural one.

This also elucidates how Instagram has become a platform where fashionable Muslim women can express themselves, and it has also become a style mediator for both Western and Islamic fashion.<sup>53</sup> This is apparent in the way the influencers try and redefine what it means to be a modest, modern Muslim woman on Instagram. From these PhotoVoice images we can deduce that fashion and beauty are key tools that are used to negotiate religious identity and with which to experiment with self-expression of one’s cultural identity.

Various scholars have argued, “[I]slamic fashion adheres to modernity and globalization, unlike the old label that Muslim women’s appearance lacks the ability to fit in with Western fashion.”<sup>54</sup> This means that modest fashion is becoming a trend, which makes it easier for Muslim women influencers to assimilate into the digital sphere and make themselves relevant through the curation of an identity that presents them as being religious, yet modern in a Western way.

Sairin (2011) argues, “[W]estern culture, especially from the US, has become the standard of modern life for many people globally, where the image of the West is perceived to be more superior.”<sup>55</sup> Camilla

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53 Reina Lewis, “Marketing Muslim Lifestyle: A New Media Genre”, *Journal of Middle East Women’s Studies* 6, no. 3, (2010): 58–90.

54 Emma Tarlo, *Visibly Muslim: Fashion, Politics, Faith* (Oxford: Berg, 2010); Annelies Moors and Emma Tarlo, “Introduction”, in E. Tarlo and A. Moors (Eds.), *Islamic Fashion and Anti-Fashion: New Perspectives from Europe and North America* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013): 1–30; Reina Lewis, *Muslim Fashion: Contemporary Style Cultures* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2015).

55 Sjafrin Sairin, “Modernization and Westernization: A Never-Ending Discourse in Indonesia”, *Journal of Governance and Development*, no. 7 (2011): 1–7.

identifies more with her cultural identity since she perceives that as being her true self. However, the image she shared on Instagram portrays her being modestly dressed, and in *hijab*, therefore Camilla is still portraying herself as an "authentic" Muslim woman to her followers.

According to Sairin,<sup>56</sup> this attempt to duplicate the West has become common through technology, and digital platforms such as Instagram. This implies that Camilla is self-reflective in what her identity is comprised of in terms of her religion and her cultural self. She defines a clear distinction between the two, thus suggesting that her being is multi-faceted. Additionally, the nexus between this modern and religious identity that Camilla refers to, implies that there is a certain degree of negotiation involved in the reappropriation of a new religious identity that meets the standards of the West.

The *hijab* has also become incorporated into fashion trends for these women, it allows them to be perceived as "authentic" Muslim women, while still remaining true to their cultural identities by being stylish. El Guindi defines<sup>57</sup> *hijab* as being symbolic of tradition and religious affiliation, whereas fashion is associated with being "ever-changing, consumer-based and decisively modern". It is apparent that the participants perceive *hijab* as a restriction on their progression in their careers as influencers.

The *hijab* has become a symbol in the public sphere, where it is perceived as being an expression of religious identity through fashion for many Muslim women around the world, but more specifically for Muslim women influencers on Instagram. This relates to group of participants with differing views on modesty, piety and *hijab*. Ultimately, these women have many external factors influencing the way they develop their multi-faceted identities.

### **"I can be modest and still be stylish"**

By incorporating Western fashion trends into Islamic forms of dress the women are, on the other hand, also performing their Western cultural identities. Piety is defined in this research as being a level of spirituality that differs from modesty. Dania, however, does not perceive herself as the ideal example of traditional Muslim womanhood; as she states: "I don't believe I fit the perception of what

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Fadwa El Guindi, *Veil: Modesty, Privacy, and Resistance* (Oxford: Berg, 1999), 4.

Muslim women are expected to be, I'm very opinionated and modern". She therefore indicates that her identity is composed of not only her religious identity, but a cultural one too. "These *hijabis* have presented modesty, and established a dialogue with their audiences, and in so doing disrupt the normalised associations of *hijabis* with passivity, and otherness by establishing intimacy with the audience."<sup>58</sup>

Dania's understanding of modesty and piety illustrates a nexus between these two terms, since the one (piety) is a projection of the other (modesty). It is evident that Dania affords a great level of importance to her religious identity, which has motivated her to incorporate it into her cultural identity through the means of fashion.

It is evident that Dania uses both her *hijab* and fashion sense as modes of "authentic" self-expression of her religious and cultural identities. Additionally, Dania portrays her identity as being an expression of hybridisation by integrating her religious identity with Western modernity. The conscious incorporation of Western culture into Dania's look illustrates the way in which she tries to navigate and negotiate her religious identity in order for her to assimilate into society and challenge the status quo.

By depicting herself in this way, Dania is challenging common perceptions of traditional Muslim womanhood. She incorporates "mainstream fashion trends" in order to communicate to her followers that she has an "authentic" Western cultural identity too. It is common for Muslim women who conform and abide to Islamic rules of modest dress to appropriate Western fashion styles in order for them to be acknowledged as modern. However, by wearing her *hijab* in a turban style she is not wearing her *hijab* in the traditional Muslim way, rather she is appropriating it to match her Western fashion sense of style.

By being career women in the digital sphere via Instagram, these women are able to generate a considerable amount of buying power. And these Muslim women influencers are able to do so through dressing modestly. Moreover, the intentional use of modest dress through fashion is the way these women try and challenge nuances of Islamic stereotypes, while being covered and wearing *hijab*.<sup>59</sup> Islamic fashion allows them to find a sense of belonging in the new public

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58 Anna Piela, "I Am Just Doing My Bit to Promote Modesty: Niqabis' Self-Portraits on Photo-Sharing Websites", *Feminist Media Studies* 13, issue 5 (2013): 781-790.

59 Annelies Moors and Emma Tarlo, *Fashion and Anti-Fashion: New Perspectives from Europe and North America* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013): 1-30.

sphere. By doing this on Instagram, she is engaging in a form of globalisation that involves a process of cultural transaction which is determined by a particular locality and global trend.

Modesty is more than a type of embodiment; it is also a tool that is used to pursue a constant practice of piety in all aspects of one's being. Thus, it contributes to the participants' performance of an "authentic" religious identity. Moreover, the ambiguous definition of modesty was raised by Sofia as well, "anyone can believe they dress modestly if they think it works for them, what might be modest for me, may not be modest for so many others".

Moreover, the modesty of Muslim women is dependent on various factors, such as "historical, political, and socio-cultural contexts" which makes it challenging to identify what is deemed as true pious fashion.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, this demonstrates that the identity of these women is multi-faceted. They are constantly trying to portray an "authentic" sense of self; however, this self is constantly changing since their identities are fluid.

## Conclusion

With the expansion of technology, human interactions have now become digitised. Social media platforms such as Instagram have become the new public sphere where communication currently takes place. Globalisation has allowed the intersection of a mirage of countries, cultures and people; digital media offer a new form of interaction for everyone around the world. Therefore, it is evident that Instagram offers a platform for individuals to curate, negotiate, navigate and perform an "authentic" sense of self in ways that have not been done before, especially in the South African context.

Furthermore, certain individuals, such as influencers, are able to capitalise from their "authentically" curated online personas. This research argues that performing "authenticity" is imperative to fitting into society; in this study society refers to the online society of Instagram. Appearing as "authentic" as possible enables the participants to appear "relatable" to their niche audience; this in turn ensures brand collaborations, which ultimately secures an income for them. Furthermore, by performing "authenticity", these women are also

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60 E. M. Bucar, "Secular Fashion, Religious Dress, and Modest Ambiguity: The Visual Ethics of Indonesian Fashion-Veiling", *Journal of Religious Ethics* 44, no. 1 (2016): 68–90.

striving to find a sense of belonging on Instagram. Therefore, influencing allows the participants to craft and explore their true "authentic" identities through the narrative they curate and share on Instagram.

When applying Mahmood, Hall, and Goffman's theories to the way the participants perform "authenticity" online, it is evident that their portrayal of their sense of self is dependent on their interaction with their audience; since one's construction and performance of the self is done in relation to the Other. Moreover, since each individual has an innate desire to belong, it is common for minority groups such as Muslim women to adopt social norms that are perpetuated by Western secular society. Western secular society is perceived as the hegemonic culture, especially for minority groups such as Muslim women. Therefore, in order to fit into society, these minority groups are expected to comply with Western fashion and beauty trends.

These Western trends are learnt, internalised and performed on Instagram. This portrayal entails the performance of an "authentic" cultural identity. Furthermore, it is important to acknowledge that the cultural identities of these women are complex, since besides having a Western cultural identity, these participants also possess a South African identity, which is complex and diverse due to the history of the country. Furthermore, the women who participated in this research also realise that Instagram provides them with a platform where they can be seen and heard in ways that South African Muslim women from the past have never been seen and heard before. Therefore, they use the platform as a way to resist common stereotypes of how and what traditional Muslim womanhood is meant to be.

By branding themselves as modern, modest women, they are able to make themselves appealing to a niche market of Muslim women, thus, distinguishing themselves from other influencers. This also allows them to gain cultural capital on a platform such as Instagram, where they are able to impact the fashion and influencing industry through their "authentic" religious identities. Therefore, the participants have created a nexus between religion and consumerism. Fashion also acts as a form of self-expression for their religious and cultural identities. It is evident that fashion and beauty play an integral role to the articulation and performance of both "authentic" religious and cultural identities for the participants - it allows them to negotiate,

navigate and express their sense of self, as well as capitalise on the "authentic" identities they portray.

The portrayal of an "authentic" religious identity also suggests a resistance from common misconceptions of traditional forms of Muslim womanhood. By displaying themselves as visible, vocal, and agentic on Instagram, these women are redefining what it means to be a Muslim woman in the digital era, as well as in the post-apartheid context. Furthermore, by participating in consumerism and neoliberalism, these women are resisting Western notions of Muslim women as docile, oppressed beings.

Another aspect that is used to perform "authenticity" is *hijab*, which has also become commodified to allow the participants to capitalise on it. However, it is evident that the *hijab* for these women is something that is not a true reflection of modesty in its totality. For most of these women, modesty is encompassed through more than dress: it is shown rather through aspects such as behaviour, speech and attitude. By wearing *hijab* on Instagram and branding themselves as modest Muslim women, the participants negotiate their cultural identities, and portray their "authentic" religious identities. For these participants, the *hijab* is a symbol that identifies them as Muslim women. In lieu of this, they depict themselves as being fluid because by commodifying the *hijab*, much like their identities, these women imply that by complying with their cultural identities there is a nexus between their cultural and religious identities. This research argues that the participants use Instagram to navigate and negotiate their "authentic" identities through influencing.

This research concludes that the participants perform "authentic" identities on Instagram in order to fit into society and to make a profit from their "authentic" identities online. By using various aspects of their identities to make them appear "relatable" and "authentic", the participants are able to build an online community and capitalise from their brand. The participants look for cues on how to construct their "authentic" identities, depending on the preferences of their followers, thus suggesting that their identities are multi-faceted and fluid, since they are ever-changing in relation to the Other.

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# 'Insight Bulletin': Its Positive Impacts on Muslims

Sellina Siffat Gada\*

## Introduction

Between 1964, the date of independence, up until 1992, there were only two sources of print news in Malawi; these were two newspapers, namely *Daily Times* and *Malawi News* – a weekly. These were published and printed by the Malawi Broadcasting Corporation and the Malawi News Agency respectively.<sup>1</sup> During that time, there was no constitutional provision for 'freedom of expression' or 'freedom of the press.'

The news media was pro-government and pro-Malawi Congress Party (MCP) that was the ruling party. The situation changed since 1994 because it signaled the beginning of a new era in the media industry; a few media houses opened and this was welcomed. Around 2000, the country had only one radio station; this was exclusively for Muslims and it was called Radio Islam. Despite its limiting capacity, it countered the growing levels of prejudice and stigma associated with Muslims. Subsequent to this, other media houses that included the Malawi Muslim Website<sup>2</sup> and *Alhaqq*<sup>3</sup> appeared.

Later, in 2010, *Insight Magazine* was established as Malawi's first Muslim periodical; this was with the intention of highlighting Islam's generosity and social importance.<sup>4</sup> Even when it was not restricted by state laws, the majority of journalists and media professionals who worked in the media around the world adhered to the principle of 'freedom of expression.' They, however, voluntarily placed some restrictions on what they did, said, or how they spoke out of respect for the prevailing values of the societies in which they operated.

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1 Zeria Banda, "The Malawi News Media", (Master's Thesis, Indiana: Ball State University, 1998).

2 Malawi Muslim Website <https://malawimuslims.com/>

3 Alhaqq Publication <https://alhaqq-malawi.org/>

4 M. I. Shehu, M. F. Othman, & N. B. Osman, "The Social Media and Islam", *Sahel Analyst: Journal of Management Sciences* 15, no. 4 (2017): 67-80.

*Insight Bulletin* is a monthly Malawian publication. It analyses issues and promotes good governance as well as policies. Additionally, it seeks to promote the positive deeds carried out by Muslims that aid Malawi's social-political, religious, and economic development and the establishment of a free society. The Ulama Council of Malawi publishes the journal as a way to encourage social progress and effective government. The magazine has been of existence since 2010 and has been around for over 12 years. Being one of Malawi's media platforms, it has been a useful tool of communication that has helped to change readers' perceptions. Over the past few years, it has been able to enlighten, educate, and raise awareness about misunderstood issues. Its editorial section usually preaches about Muslim views and empowerment. It is issued freely with the intention of attracting the interest of, among others, Malawi's decision makers. While a lot has changed over the years, Muslims' viewpoints have been considered as a result of this magazine's input. Malawians have come to accept Islam as an important part of the country's religious identity. For this reason, it has also been a platform that constructed a communication bridge between the country's Muslims and Christians. Despite the magazine's relative impact, it is in need of several resources to assist in overcoming its challenges in the media industry; these have had a negative effect on its operations and this include extending and expanding its reach as a media platform.

These differed significantly from one society to the next, and these were much like how Muslim problems have been disregarded by the government and the nation since independence. Media professionals generally agreed that it was important to take religious believers' sensitivities into account, though they frequently disagreed on how far to go with personal conflicts and interests.

### **Muslims' Challenges: Before Malawi's Muslim Media Houses**

Similar to the time of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), Malawi's Muslims have been and are still engulfed with negative comments. Malawians generally associate Muslims with negative developments such as being uncivilized or uneducated. Since Muslims have been and are linked to terrorist activities in other African states such as Nigeria, Mali, and Somalia, the western media portrayed Muslims badly; they did that without looking at the actual causes for these terrible happenings.

Muslims have, for ages, been continuously named, shamed, and bullied by the secular state media; at the same time, the positive changes brought about health outcomes. The secular media and other institutions have, nonetheless, spread a lot of false information about Islam and Muslims in Malawi. Some even went so far as to utter blasphemous statements about the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) and these gave rise to the obscene portrayal of Muslims.

### **Muslims and Terrorism**

In 2003, five foreign nationals were arrested by the CIA in Malawi for being 'suspected' terrorists. Among them were Muhammad Sardar Issa, the director of the Islamic Zakat Fund (IZF); this is an organization that was responsible for the propagation of Islam through the media as well as involved in collecting *zakat* and dispensing it to the needy. The same happened to a Saudi Arabian national, namely Fahd al-Bahili; the latter was then the Director of the Committee of Amir Sultan ibn Abdul Aziz for Humanitarian Aid; then there was Khalifah Abdi Hassan who was a Saudi that taught Islamic studies at Mangochi's Assalam College; and there was the Turkish charity workers Arif Ulsam and Ibrahim Habbak who were also apprehended.

According to Mnela,<sup>5</sup> these 'terror' suspects were captured in Malawi and shipped out to various US intelligence outposts until they were incarcerated at the US Naval Base in Guantanamo Bay in Cuba. Though this was not officially said but conveyed by global human rights organizations. Later, it was reported that the suspects were apparent victims of flawed intelligence networks. Sheikh Issah and his four colleagues were victims of "extra-judicial kidnappings and extraditions." The news became distressing and led to the torture of the Muslims in the country.

### **Muslim Women and the Hijab**

Besides this event, there have been disagreements between the Muslim community and a church aided school as regards *hijab*; and it forced the government to resolve the matter. During October 2020, the Muslims were enraged over the decision of the head master of

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5 Mallick Mnela, "Jihad Journalist Whose Boss was a Suspected Terrorist", *Malawi Muslims Official Website*, 2019, <https://malawimuslims.com/news/jihad-journalist-whose-boss-was-a-suspected-terrorist/>.

Machinga's Mpiri Catholic School for sending the *hijabi* girls home. For three months, over four Christian schools were closed as a result of this disagreement. The matter was, however, resolved by the Minister of Education, Agnes Nyalonje, and Minister of Peace and Civic Education, Timothy Mtambo; Public Affairs Committee (PAC) issued a memorandum of understanding to create a conducive learning environment for every child in the country.<sup>6</sup>

In an *Insight Magazine* article,<sup>7</sup> it was recorded that many challenges emerged; several were related to the *hijab* issue at state schools, the work places, and in the business areas. Like stories elsewhere, Muslim women encountered situations in which they were forced to take off their headscarves; and in response, the communities witnessed vehement objections for these outcomes.

### ***Insight Bulletin: Its Effectiveness in the Muslim society***

During the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Islam in Malawi spread by word of mouth with no tangible impact on the communities. But soon after the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Malawi's Muslims were solidly established. Their visibility increased with many Muslim villages having their own mosque. In addition, Muslims would observe fasting during *Ramadan* and at the end celebrate *Eid al-Fitr*.

And when the pilgrimage month normally appears, they would celebrate *Eid al-Adha*; during this festivity, they would gather to slaughter sheep and other animals according to the *halal* system. Muslims around the world have made numerous contributions to the Malawian society; this has resulted in improved development across Malawian towns and cities as recorded by Bone and others.<sup>8</sup>

Anyhow, it is important to state that *Insight Bulletin* has dwelled much on promoting the social, economic, and political development of Muslim communities. The reformist wing often cited the key issues that help towards the advancement of Muslims in and outside an Islamic environment. The magazine's column that received lots of

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6 Bright Malenga, "Minister Mtambo hails Muslim, Christians on Hijab Deal", *Malawi Muslim Website Publication*, 2021, <https://malawimuslims.com/news/minister-mtambo-hails-muslim-christians-on-hijab-deal/>.

7 A. O. Mdala, "Why Muslim Girls Denied Hijab", *Insight Bulletin*, vol. 39 (2018).

8 D. S. Bone, "Malawi's Muslim Communities in Their Local and Global Context", (Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Malawi, 2007), 1.

attention was and remains the editor's note; it is that voice that always offered guidance and preached Islam's goodness.

### **Promoting Rights of Education for Muslims**

Since the *Insight Bulletin* advocated for the women's *hijab* rights, most of them are presently benefit from this advocacy stance. Generally, it took the Malawian society a long time to acknowledge that wearing *hijab* was and remains a Muslim woman's right and obligation wherever she goes. Although many Muslim women adopted the modest Muslim dress code, the predominantly Christian Malawian society minimized the *hijab's* significance. Through its many publications, *Insight* has attracted a wide range of readers to join, participate, and resolve the issues that the Islamic society faced and continues to encounter.

One of the articles that got the authorities' attention was authored by Abdullah Mdala.<sup>9</sup> It made reference to an agreement between the Malawi government and its people regardless of the faith through the Ministry of Education, provide the basic teachers and pay for their salaries. In addition, some other salaries were provided for secretaries, cooks, maintenance staff, etc. Educational resources such as textbooks were obtained collaboratively with the Ministry. For this reason, there was no point of denying any girl from wearing a headscarf. The letter also says that the dress code infringes on the memorandum of understanding between the churches and the government.

More and more stories were added to ensure that citizens understood the significance of the *hijab* to a Muslim woman. Finally, on 17 June 2021, the religious bodies of the Episcopal Conference of Malawi (ECM), the Malawi Council of Churches (MCC) and the Evangelical Association of Malawi (EAM) on behalf of the Christians and the Muslim Association of Malawi-MAM and the Quadria Muslim Association of Malawi-QMAM on behalf of the Muslims in the Republic of Malawi have signed a memorandum of understanding on the Islamic dressing code issue.<sup>10</sup>

Both parties agreed that *hijab* should identify Muslim girls, hence the signing of a memorandum of understanding. This is all a sign of tolerance and understanding among different religions in the country, and it shows that *Insight* served the two masters at once. Gaining the

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9 A. O. Mdala, "Why Muslim Girls Denied Hijab", *Insight Bulletin*, vol. 39 (2018).

10 Ibid.

*hijab* recognition and the symbol of coexistence among people of different faiths in the country, and as a result, it promotes tolerance among all citizens.

### **Health Issues: Muslim Approach**

*Insight Bulletin* plays a role in reporting on health issues; these are of great concern to Malawi's citizens. Apart from health matters, it too reports on education; an issue that is critical for everyone. It remains a burning issue throughout the country and it thus requires the necessary attention. The magazine creates space for civic education so that Malawians become mindful of practices such as abortion and contraception; it makes attempts to cause Muslim practices be in line with Islam; an all-embracing system that contains the solution for all humanity's problems. The magazine's editorial team considers Islam as a holistic system wherein all solutions, controls, and regulations are found.

Since Malawi's government introduced a bill in parliament that allows the acceptance of abortion, it was, however, later withdrawn as a result of societal pressure. One of the concerns of the magazine was that many women including Muslims did not fully understand the concepts of contraception and abortion, and its pages were used to share the correct perspectives. *Insight Bulletin* has generally published stories on maternal health; this, it felt, was one way of making society understand how Islam contributes to positive health development.<sup>11</sup>

Though Muslim scholars differ about the use of contraception, there has been an acceptance of the differences of opinion. From among them, the most conservative scholars prohibited the idea of birth control in all instances. Basically, all of them consider allowances for the mother's health, and most allow for, at least, some forms of birth control when a mutual decision emerged between the husband and wife.

Birth control is also becoming a necessity in Islam to regulate the intervals during which pregnancies are to be conceived. The advice given is that pregnancies be spaced to give the mother a longer lifespan; it has been proven that pregnancies at short intervals endanger the mother's life and put the health of the children at risk. Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran: "Allah commands justice, the doing of good, and liberality to kith and kin, and He forbids all heinous actions,

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11 O. Bwanali, "Islamic Views on Contraceptives", *Insight Bulletin*, vol. 39, (2022): 1-6.

injustice, and rebellion; he instructs you, that you may receive admonition."<sup>12</sup>

### **Muslims' Charitable Work**

The magazine counters social media's dominance; since some of it uses the platform to disseminate false information about Islam, it offers positive perspectives. Social media has since raised many problems and challenged communities' religious teachings and even questioned the social bonds and cohesion. Like other parts of the world, Malawi has not been immune from these developments.

Essentially, the magazine acts as a means of promoting Islam; it thus includes articles about Muslims and Islamic organizations that are doing a sterling work in society. Via its pages, readers are able to see and appreciate Islam's values and its gestures. As a result of its input and other developments, it may be argued that the removal of 'terrorism' from the public sphere was the outcome and this is a welcome relief for all. Another issue that gained traction over the past few years is the entrance of Islamic banking in the economic sector. The Malawian government realized its importance and has since accepted it as an alternative economic product. In this regard, *Insight* has included a column that reflects on Islamic finance and that promotes Islamic banking.

### **Magazine's Challenges**

*Insight* magazine, like any other Muslim media, has a number of challenges; one of the challengers came onto the scene of late is the social media; a diverse media platform that has become an important media player because of their brevity in conveying and disseminating info via Instagram and twitter among others. They have collectively attracted scores of individuals driving readers away from traditional media platforms.

Though the magazine has its own website, the magazine's team is able to post articles online at any time; while this allows for that flexibility, it is difficult to compete with the new platforms such as Facebook and others. The other challenge is that these platforms can change their info within hours of a day, the magazine only appears once a month and that scenario might have to change as it moves into the future. But while these do cause serious problems for the magazine

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<sup>12</sup> Qur'an, 15: 90.

not able to keep up with the latest news and fresh stories, it remains on the readers' radar.

Other issues that make it quite difficult for the magazine to function are: it relies on advertisements to publish, and in this sector the advertisers prefer social media as their new partners. In terms of its reach, this is limited since the magazine does not have all the necessary equipment nor vehicles to distribute the hard copies. Even though it serves the interest of the Muslim community, it lacks the required support from them and they do not value its role as a conveyer of information. On top of these, there has been an increase in printing costs and few subscribers as well as escalating staff costs.

### **Recommendations and Conclusion**

Considering these challenges and the role that the magazine plays, it is of the view that there is a need to empower communities using the magazine as a news platform even though on a monthly basis. So, since the magazine requires the financial and material support, it is in the position to make tangible changes. In other words, it can function as another method of *da'wah*; one that differs from traditional forms of mission.

With added resources, it should be able to have workshops for the emerging youth of how to write and use monthly, weekly, and daily newspapers; if these are held at intermittent periods, it will contribute towards empowerment. It can still continue to attract advertisers with a difference; and this is bringing them in as partners to either cover interns or organize workshops or present seminars using the advertisers' sponsorship as a way forward. *Insight* has the potential to grow and develop if support is given and if the community views it as an important and reliable platform from which they can extract their information.

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