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BOOK REVIEW

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear readers,

Welcome back to the new issue of *Ilahiyat Studies*.

First and foremost, we sincerely hope that all forms of injustice—particularly the situation in Gaza, which has stirred the conscience of humanity—will come to an end as soon as possible through the establishment of lasting peace and genuine justice. We believe that developing conditions for ontic security represents not only a unifying force for protecting human dignity but also holds a noble meaning that transcends this world.

This issue of *IS* features five research articles and a book review. In the first article, "Rethinking Propositions Beyond Tautology: al-Suhrawardī on the Ontological Basis of Propositions", Zehra Oruk Akman provides a detailed analysis of Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī's ontological critique of tautology in his Illuminationist philosophy. Al-Suhrawardī redefines the roles of the subject and predicate inside propositions, challenging logical frameworks of the Peripatetic tradition. Akman concludes that al-Suhrawardī develops a distinctive vision in which logic serves not merely as a formal tool but as a means of uncovering deeper ontological and epistemological truths.

In the second article, "Between Tacos and Ḥalāl: Exploring Ḥalāl Food Access and Consumption among Muslim Immigrants in Mexico City", Nik Hasif presents a study that aims to determine how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence dietary choices, using the theory of planned behavior (TPB). The research indicates that the majority of participants maintain a predominantly positive and contextually adaptable perspective, driven by religious convictions but influenced by accessibility challenges, fiqh-based permissibility, and an aspiration to connect with local culinary traditions.

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In the article "Simulation Theory in the Ontic and Epistemic Ground of Kalām", Seyithan Can attempts to discuss the possibility that the universe is a simulation, the creator of the simulation, the divine qualities of the simulation, and its theological implications. The author argues that the simulation hypothesis neither undermines the authenticity of human experience nor poses a threat to theology. However, this can assist in the further development of theology in terms of God's absolute goodness and power, thus rendering it more pertinent to the contemporary world.

Selman Zahid Özdemir's article, "Islamic Family Law in Morocco: Historical Developments and Reforms", investigates the historical trajectory and codification of Islamic family law in Morocco, tracing its evolution from indigenous and Islamic customs to a formalized legal framework influenced by colonial and postcolonial reforms. Özdemir analyzes the critiques of the formulation of Islamic family law in Morocco, initiated in 1957, offering illustrative cases, such as marriage guardianship, divorce, child custody, and restrictions on polygamy. Through this analysis, the author concludes that contemporary Islamic legal scholars are responsible for codifying the law while upholding the core principles of Islamic law by considering the dynamic relationships between law, society, and cultural norms.

In the last article of this issue, "Jewish Poets and Arabic Literary Culture in Pre-Islamic Arabia: Origins, Themes, and Questions of Authenticity", Muhammed Emin Bayır focuses primarily on Jewish poets in "Jewish Poets and Arabic Literary Culture in Pre-Islamic Arabia: Origins, Themes, and Questions of Authenticity"pre-Islamic Arabia. The author concludes that despite uncertainties regarding certain poems, the existing evidence suggests that pre-Islamic Jews authored poetry in Arabic, and there is no substantial distinction in the content or style of their poetry compared to the broader corpus of pre-Islamic poetry.

We, the editorial team, express gratitude to our authors, reviewers, and readers for their continued support and look forward to being with you in the next issues of *Ilahiyat Studies*.

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ARTICLES

RETHINKING PROPOSITIONS BEYOND TAUTOLOGY: AL-SUHRAWARDĪ ON THE ONTOLOGICAL BASIS OF PROPOSITIONS

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Abstract

This study examines Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī's ontological critique of tautology within his Illuminationist philosophy. Al-Suhrawardī challenges the Aristotelian view of tautologies such as "A is A" as meaningful, arguing that they lack epistemic value by failing to distinguish between the subject and predicate. His essence-based ontology demands that valid propositions involve distinct concepts fulfilling different epistemic roles. Tautologies, by collapsing this distinction, do not yield true judgment. This research analyzes al-Suhrawardī's position through his primary texts and a comparative reading of select medieval commentators. Methodologically, it combines close textual analysis with historical interpretation to show how his metaphysics shapes his logic. This study contributes to two areas: it repositions al-Suhrawardī as a critical figure in the history of logic and metaphysics, and it offers a conceptual framework that bridges logical form with ontological substance, highlighting the

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continued relevance of his thought to contemporary debates in logic, semantics, and the foundations of meaningful judgment.

Key Words: Logic, al-Suhrawardī, existence, proposition, tautology, subject, predicate

Introduction

Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 587/1191), the master of Illuminationist (*Ishrāqī)* philosophy and the founder of the Ishrāqī tradition, introduced a philosophical system that has been widely recognized for its departure from the Peripatetic tradition.[1] This divergence is not merely oppositional; it represents a profound shift in the philosophical discourse of his time. Al-Suhrawardī's metaphysical system, which is deeply influenced by mystical and Platonic approaches,[2] reimagines the concepts of existence and essence in ways that challenge conventional frameworks of thought. His interpretation of existence (*wujūd*) as a purely mental construct without a direct counterpart in the external world stands at the heart of this reimagining, offering a paradigm that intertwines metaphysics with logic.[3]

This ontological perspective has significant implications for al-Suhrawardī's understanding of propositions. By categorizing concepts such as "the being of something" (*kawn al-shayʾ*) and "thingness" (*shayʾiyyah*) as mental constructs or "beings of reason" (*iʿtibārāt ʿaqliyyah*),[4] al-Suhrawardī shifts the focus of logical inquiry from

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1 Abū l-Futūh Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyá ibn Ḥabash al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination: Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, ed. and trans. John Walbridge - Hossein Ziai (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1999), 31-76; Also see Sajjad H. Rizvi, "An Islamic Subversion of the Existence-Essence Distinction? Suhrawardī's Visionary Hierarchy of Lights", *Asian Philosophy* 9/3 (1999), 219.

2 For detailed information see al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 65-67.

3 Al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 123; Also see Mehdi Amin Razavi, *Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination*, ed. Ian Richard Netton (Surrey: Curzon Press, 1997), 33; Cevdet Kılıç, "Sühreverdî'nin Varlık Düşüncesinde Nurlar Hiyerarşisi ve Meşşâî Felsefe ile Karşılaştırılması", *Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 13/2 (December 2008), 57.

4 John Walbridge - Hossein Ziai, "Translators' Introduction", *The Philosophy of Illumination: Ḥikmat al-ishrāq*, auth. Abū l-Futūh Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyá ibn Ḥabash al-Suhrawardī (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1999), xxi.

external existence to intrinsic essences. This shift necessitates reevaluating how judgments are made and propositions are constructed. Consequently, the study of tautology, a concept often overlooked in classical logic, becomes crucial for understanding the deeper connections between al-Suhrawardī's metaphysics and his logical framework.

The term "tautology" has undergone considerable evolution in its usage. Just as a thematic or evidential connection between two propositions constitutes a fundamental condition for valid reasoning,[5] a similar coherence must also exist between the subject and predicate within a single proposition. This relationship shapes not only the formal structure of the proposition but also its capacity to generate meaning. The proposition is considered tautological if there is no semantic distinction between the subject and the predicate. Historically, it also referred to the repetition of a word or phrase.

In modern logic, the term "proposition" refers to a formula that holds true under every possible assignment of truth values, such as ~p ∨ p. This reflects a key distinction from classical logic, which analyzes statements primarily in subject-predicate form. Modern logic involves the evaluation of formulas on the basis of their truth-functional properties. As such, a tautology is defined as a formula that remains true regardless of the truth values assigned to its components, including both premises and conclusions. That is, tautological propositions are necessarily true, as they cannot be rendered false under any circumstances, holding their truth value invariant across all possible configurations of subject and predicate.[6] While analytically valid, these tautologies are often criticized for not providing any factual information.[7] This raises important questions about their status within classical logic:[8] Can a tautological statement be considered a proposition if it fails to convey new knowledge? Addressing this

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5 Zeynep Çelik, *Diyalojik İlgisizlik* (Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık, 2025), 94.

6 Şerife Büyükköse - Özlem Çakır, *Ayrık Matematik* (Ankara: Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık, 2019), 7; Teo Grünberg, *Modern Logic* (Ankara: METU Press, 2002), 12-13; Karama Hassan Hussain, "Tautology and Pleonasm in Political Interviews: A Semantic Study", *Journal of the College of Languages* 50 (2024), 63.

7 Alfred Jules Ayer, *Language, Truth and Logic* (London & New York: Penguin Books, 1971), 34-35.

8 For some reviews of a contemporary classical traditional logician see Elif Özel, "Mehmet Naci Bolay ve Mantıkçılığı", *Cumhuriyetimizin 100. Yılında Felsefecimiz*, ed. Elif Özel (Ankara: Nobel Yayıncılık, 2023), 109-117.

question is central to this study, as it uncovers the underlying assumptions about meaning and judgment in classical and modern logical systems.

Al-Suhrawardī's critique of tautology extends beyond the formal structures of logic. In his philosophy, propositions are not merely linguistic or symbolic constructions; they serve as vehicles of judgment, requiring meaningful information about their subjects. A proposition in which the subject and predicate convey the same meaning, even if expressed through different terms, fails to satisfy this criterion. Al-Suhrawardī challenges the validity of tautologies, contending that a proposition must involve two distinct concepts with differing epistemic functions: one serving as the "address" of a nature and the other as its "attribute". For instance, al-Suhrawardī critiques propositions such as "Human is man (*al-insān bashar*)", which ostensibly repeat the same concept, asserting that the subject and predicate differ in meaning owing to their distinct logical roles. This paper analyzes the ambiguity in al-Suhrawardī's treatment of propositions, particularly his insistence that the subject and predicate cannot both refer to a single, identical nature. By examining al-Suhrawardī's works, the study reveals that he implicitly rejects the notion that a proposition can simultaneously encompass a nature, its address, and its attributes. The research underscores that, for al-Suhrawardī, a valid proposition must feature an address signifying the nature itself in the subject term and an attribute related to the subject without being another nature in the predicate term.

This study defines tautology in this specific sense: as propositions where the subject and predicate are synonymous, leading to a lack of substantive judgment. Such propositions, common in rhetorical contexts,[9] challenge the foundational principles of classical logic, particularly the principle of identity.

The principle of identity itself is a tautological proposition, underscoring the complexity of the debate. Classical logic often treats tautological statements as foundational, but this study questions whether such statements fulfill the essential criteria of a proposition. Examining this issue within al-Suhrawardī's framework makes it clear

[9] Hussain, "Tautology and Pleonasm in Political Interviews", 63.

that tautologies fail to meet the requirements for meaningful judgment, thereby challenging their place in logical systems.

While tautology has been extensively studied in fields such as mathematical logic, computer science, and linguistics,[10] its implications for classical conceptual logic remain underexplored. Even less attention has been given to its relevance within al-Suhrawardī's philosophical framework. This study addresses this gap by investigating the possibility and validity of tautological propositions through al-Suhrawardī's lens.

The concepts used by al-Suhrawardī, such as "being a subject" (*mawḍūʿiyyah*) and "being a predicate" (*maḥmūliyyah*), redefine the parameters of propositional construction. His argument that a proposition cannot simultaneously be tautological and valid introduces a critical challenge to traditional Peripatetic logic. To clarify the scope and argumentative flow of this study, the discussion unfolds in three main sections. The first section contextualizes the concept of tautology within the Peripatetic tradition, focusing on how key logicians approached its logical and ontological dimensions. The second section turns to al-Suhrawardī's critique, analyzing his reinterpretation of predication and the conditions for meaningful propositions. The final section evaluates the broader implications of his framework for classical logic, especially with respect to the nature of identity, judgment, and propositional structure.

This study is structured into three sections to unpack this argument: the first section explores the treatment of tautology in the Peripatetic tradition, highlighting key logicians' perspectives; the second section focuses on al-Suhrawardī's critique and his redefinition of propositional judgment; and the concluding section evaluates the implications of his approach for the broader discourse on the nature of propositions.

The significance of this study lies in its twofold contribution: it not only advances our understanding of al-Suhrawardī's philosophy and

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[10] For some of these works see Hussain, "Tautology and Pleonasm in Political Interviews"; Marek Zainonc, "Probability Distribution for Simple Tautologies", *Theoretical Computer Science* 355/2 (2006), 243-260; Ali Muhammad Rushdi et al., "A Modern Syllogistic Method in Intuitionistic Fuzzy Logic with Realistic Tautology", *The Scientific World Journal* 1 (2015), 1-12; Hadumod Bussmann, *Routledge Dictionary of Language and Linguistics*, trans. and ed. Gregory P. Trauth - Kerstin Kazzazi (London & New York: Routledge, 2006), 1179.

logic but also fills a critical gap in classical logic scholarship. While al-Suhrawardī's Illuminationist metaphysics and epistemology have garnered substantial academic interest and his logical thought, including critiques of the Peripatetic tradition, symbolic language, syllogism, and modal concepts such as necessity and possibility, has been explored in several contexts,[11] existing studies tend to emphasize broader themes or specific modalities. To date, no research has systematically examined his treatment of tautological reasoning or the ontological grounding of propositions. This article directly engages with that neglected area, offering an original analysis of al-Suhrawardī's critique of tautology concerning the ontological structure of propositions. By doing so, it recovers a marginal but significant aspect of his thought and initiates a historical dialogue with contemporary debates concerning the limits of classical logic. Situating his critique in a broader conceptual framework, this study challenges prevailing assumptions about propositions, truth, and meaning and offers a new perspective at the intersection of metaphysics and logic. Ultimately, it encourages modern scholars to reassess the foundational tenets of logical systems, highlighting the continued relevance of al-Suhrawardī's insights in both historical and contemporary philosophical contexts.

1. Understanding Propositions through Subject-Predicate Dynamics

A proposition is a statement that can be either true or false. The simplest form of a proposition is the categorical proposition, also known as the predicate proposition, which serves as the foundation for more complex propositions. A categorical proposition, consisting

[11] For some of these works see Razavi, *Suhrawardi and the School of Illumination*; Rizvi, "An Islamic Subversion of the Existence-Essence Distinction? Suhrawardī's Visionary Hierarchy of Lights"; Eyüp Bekiryazıcı, *Şihâbeddin Sühreverdî'nin Felsefesinde Ontoloji Problemi* (Erzurum: Atatürk University, Institute of Social Sciences, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2005); Kılıç, "Sühreverdî'nin Varlık Düşüncesinde Nurlar Hiyerarşisi"; Zia Movahed, "Suhrawardi on Syllogisms", *Sophia Perennis* 2/4 (2010), 5-18; Kamil Kömürcü, "Meşşâî Burhandan İşrâkî İrfana Sühreverdî el-Maktül'ün Mantık Anlayışı", *Universal Journal of Theology* 2/1 (2017), 58-73; Jari Kaukua, "Iʿtibārī Concepts in Suhrawardī: The Case of Substance", *Oriens* 48/1-2 (2020), 40-66; Shahid Rahman - Alioune Seck, "Suhrawardī's Stance on Modalities and His Logic of Presence" (Conference on Arabic Logic in Honour of Tony Street, Berkely, United States, 2022).

of a subject and a predicate, asserts that the subject either is or is not the predicate.[12] In the classical tradition of logic, there must be a partial identity between the subject and predicate within a proposition. This identity entails both difference and unity (*ittiḥād*) between the subject and predicate terms. In other words, if there is no partial difference between the subject and predicate, two scenarios emerge: either there is a complete disjunction, preventing any predication, or there is a complete identity, as seen in tautologies, such as the proposition "Human is human".[13]

For a valid judgment to be made, unity between the subject and predicate must be established, but only after an initial disagreement. This unity can take various forms, including *ḥaqīqī* (real), *inżimāmī* (integrative or synergistic), *tarkībī* (composite), *mafhūmī* (conceptual), and *wujūdī* (existential).[14] Without any difference between the subject and predicate, the proposition results in "oneness" rather than meaningful unity, making the predication invalid. Therefore, a distinction must exist in one aspect, whereas unity must be present in another, as predication cannot occur between identical entities, nor is it meaningful for something to predicate itself.[15]

1.1. Forms of Unity: Conceptual and Existential

Unity occurs in two forms, conceptual and existential, under the condition that there is some form of disagreement between the subject and the predicate. *Conceptual unity* refers to a type of difference between the subject and predicate, as seen in definitional sentences, where the definition and the defined correspond to the same concept. In this form of unity, both general and detailed disagreements can arise. For example, in the sentence "Man is rational", no conceptual difference is found between the subject and the predicate. This

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[12] Al-Suhrawardī, "Kitāb Ḥikmat al-ishrāq", *Majmūʿah-ʾi duwwum-i Muṣannafāt-i Shaykh-i Ishrāq Shihāb al-Dīn Yaḥyá al-Suhrawardī dar ḥikmat-i ilāhī*, ed. Henry Corbin (Tehran: Instītū Īrān va Farānsah, 1952), 22.

[13] Muḥammad Ḥusayn al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, ed. ʿAbbās ʿAlī al-Zāriʿī al-Sabzwārī (Qom: Muʾassasat al-Maʿārif al-Islāmiyyah, 1377 HS), 131. Also see Mehmet Özturan, "Yüklemleme Dilemması: Taşköprüzade'nin Dışsal Özdeşlikçi Yüklemleme Teorisi", *Kutadgubilig Felsefe-Bilim Araştırmaları* 41 (2020), 167-180.

[14] Al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah,* 131.

[15] Zehra Oruk Akman, *Klasik Mantıkta Yargının Onto-Epistemolojisi: Konusunun Varlığı Bakımından Önermeler* (Ankara: Elis Yayınları, 2024), 76-77.

definition is equivalent to saying "Man is man".[16] To properly understand a tautological proposition, one must grasp the reflections of the types of unity between the subject and predicate within the proposition.

Existential unity occurs when the subject and predicate, although differing conceptually, coincide with the same existence. For example, the proposition "Man is laugher" is not a tautological expression. While "man" and "laugher" are not identical in concept, they refer to the same entity in terms of existence, thus achieving existential unity.[17] On the other hand, when the existence of something becomes necessary, predication will not serve any purpose. If an entity exists in a self-evident and necessary manner, meaning that its existence is ontologically certain and not contingent upon any condition, predication becomes meaningless in this context. Predication refers to the process of associating, defining, or explaining something in relation to another. However, when an entity's existence is already clear and self-evident, a predicative statement that affirms its existence does not add new information or meaning; it merely reiterates an already established fact. For example, a statement such as "God (if considered as Necessary Existent/*Wācib al-wujūd*) exists" does not provide any additional insight, as the existence of God is already apparent. Therefore, such predications become redundant, offering no new understanding. For predication to be meaningful, there must be a level of difference or an aspect that requires further explanation or

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16 Sayyid Kamāl al-Ḥaydarī, *Sharḥ Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, ed. Khalīl Rizq (Qom: Dār Farāqid li-l-Ṭibāʿah wa-l-Nashr, 3rd ed., 1431/2010), 2/96-97. According to Zayn al-Dīn al-Kashshī, there are three types of unity (*ittiḥād*):

1. *Unity in Meaning:* This type of unity can be interpreted as the correspondence of a term to its meaning, as seen in propositions like "The lion is a lion".
2. *Unity in Existence:* In this type of predication, the subject and predicate are distinct in kind, as exemplified by propositions such as "Humans are rational beings" or "Human is animal".
3. *Unity in Nature:* In this type of unity, the essence of the subject and the essence of the predicate unify within the same entity.

These types of unity are followed by propositions categorized based on the quantity of the subject (universal, particular, singular, or indefinite) and the quality of the proposition (affirmative or negative). Zayn al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn Muḥammad al-Kashshī (as Zeynuddîn Keşşî), *Mantık: Hadâiku'l-Hakâik [Logic Section of Ḥadāiq al-ḥaqāiq]*, ed. and trans. Ali Rıza Şahin (Ankara: Kitabe Yayınları, 2024), 76-77; Ali Rıza Şahin, *Zeynuddin el-Keşşî'de Önermeler* (Ankara: Kitabe Yayınları, 2023), 39-40.

17 Al-Ḥaydarī, *Sharḥ Bidāyat al-ḥikmah,* 2/96.

clarification. When unity between the subject and predicate is considered, the existence of different types of predications reflects the different forms of unity that arise from the nature of the subject and the predicate.

1.2. Types of Predications: A Priori and Synthetic-Common

In the Arabic logic literature, the types of predications have been addressed through different classifications.[18] However, without entering detailed classifications, all forms of predication may be broadly grouped into two main categories: *a priori* predication and synthetic-common predication. This categorization aims to offer a clearer way of understanding how propositions can be analyzed by distinguishing different types of relationships between subjects and predicates.

A priori predication is based on the intrinsic characteristics of the subject and predicate, and it represents universally accepted judgments. For example, the sentence "Human is rational" establishes a necessary relationship between the subject (human) and the predicate (rational). Such predication does not require empirical verification, as its truth is directly related to the essence of the terms involved.

Synthetic-common predication does not involve a direct internal relationship between the subject and predicate but expresses a relationship that holds true in the external world. Within synthetic-common predication, four subtypes can be identified to further explore its various dimensions, as outlined below. While this framework is intended to provide a useful tool for analysis, it is not definitive, and alternative categorizations may also be possible.

a. Syntactical/structural predication (in terms of affixes)
b. Categorical predication (in terms of considering individuals)
c. Internal predication (simple-compound)

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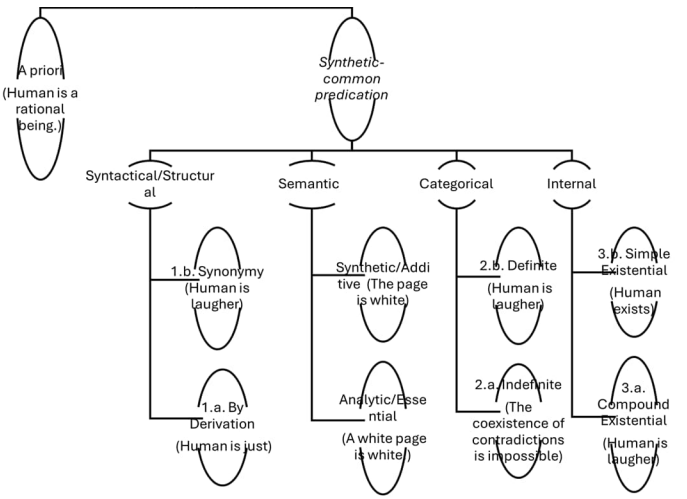
[18] For some see Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifāʾ al-Manṭiq 1: al-Madkhal*, ed. George C. Anawati et al. (Cairo: Wizārat al-Maʿārif al-ʿUmūmiyyah, 1371/1952), 28-29; al-Ṭabāṭabāʾī, *Bidāyat al-ḥikmah*, 132; Abū Jaʿfar Nasīr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ṭūsī, *Asās al-iqtibās fī l-manṭiq*, trans. Mullā Khusraw, ed. Ḥasan al-Shāfiʿī - Muḥammad Saʿīd Jamāl al-Dīn, (Cairo: al-Majlis al-Aʿlá li-l-Thaqāfah, 2004), 1/44; al-Ḥaydarī, *Sharḥ Bidāyat al-ḥikmah,* 2/96-100; Muḥammad Riḍā Muẓaffar, *al-Manṭiq* (Beirut: Dār al-Taʿāruf li'l-Maṭbūʿāt, 2006), 81-85; ʿAbd al-Jabbār al-Rifāʿī, *Mabādiʾ al-falsafah al-Islāmiyyah* (Beirut: Dār al-Hādī, 2001), 299-300.

d. Semantic predication (analytic-synthetic)

The categorization of predications into syntactical/structural, categorical, internal, and semantic dimensions plays a crucial role in providing a more nuanced understanding of propositions. Each category offers a distinct perspective that enriches the analysis of logical and philosophical structures. Syntactical/structural predication (in terms of affixes) emphasizes the importance of linguistic structure in forming propositions. By examining how words and their components, such as affixes, interact within a sentence, this category highlights the grammatical underpinnings that determine the meaning and relationships between the subject and predicate. On the other hand, categorical predication focuses on the individuals referred to by the subject and predicate, addressing the ontological aspect of propositions by considering what types of entities are being discussed and how they are categorized. Internal predication (simple-compound) allows for the distinction between basic assertions and more complex assertions, helping clarify propositions' internal structure and their logical implications. Finally, semantic predication (analytic-synthetic) explores the distinction between judgments that are true by definition (analytic) and those whose truth depends on empirical or external factors (synthetic). Together, these categories provide a comprehensive framework for analyzing propositions, enabling a deeper understanding of their structure, meaning, and ontological implications while also offering flexibility for future categorizations and interpretations.

The following table of predication types is presented to explore the different categories and their nuances further. It offers a structured framework for analyzing propositions and understanding the various dimensions of predication. These categories indicate an essential framework for the logical examination of predication, offering insight into the relationships between the subject and predicate and allowing the construction of various types of judgments.

Figure 1



Source: Oruk Akman, *Klasik Mantıkta Yargının Onto-Epistemolojisi*, 107.

Table 1

Types of predications	*Subtypes*	*Examples*	*Logical analysis*	*Tautological Nature*	*Justification*
Syntactical/Structural	*Synonymy*	*"Human is laugher."*	*The predicate is implied by the essence of the subject.*	*Nontautological*	*The predicate clarifies a property of the subject but does not restate it fully.*

	Derivation	*"Human is just."*	*The predicate introduces a derived property.*	*Nontautological*	*The predicate adds meaning by implying a contingent property.*
Semantic	*Synthetic*	*The page is white*	*The predicate depends on external verification.*	*Nontautological*	*Truth relies on empirical observation, not logical identity.*
	Analytic	*A white page is white*	*The predicate is implied but not identical.*	*Nontautological*	*While the predicate affirms an implied property, it does not restate the subject.*
Categorical	*Definite*	*Human is laugher*	*The predicate defines an inherent property.*	*Nontautological*	*The predicate adds meaning to the subject without being identical.*
	Indefinite	*The coexistence of contradictions is impossible*	*Express a logical impossibility.*	*Nontautological*	*The predicate introduces a principle about logical relationships.*
Internal	*Simple*	*Human exists*	*The predicate asserts existence.*	*Nontautological*	*Existence is not identical to the subject but an assertion about it.*
	Compound	*Human is laugher*	*The predicate defines an essential property.*	*Nontautological*	*The predicate adds an essential characteristic; it is not identical to the subject.*

The framework outlined above reveals that tautology is rendered impossible within Aristotelian logic as a mere repetition of the subject in the predicate. Each type of predication –syntactical/structural, categorical, internal, and semantic– ensures that the relationship between the subject and predicate remains meaningful and distinct rather than reducible to identity. For example, in syntactical/structural predication, the predicate may be implied by the subject's essence but is never identical to it. A proposition such as "Human is laugher" clarifies a specific property of the subject without redundantly restating its essence. This differentiation underscores the role of linguistic structure in preserving the logical integrity of propositions by avoiding tautological restatements.

Similarly, semantic predication upholds this principle by distinguishing between analytic and synthetic judgments. Analytic propositions, such as "A white page is white", affirm properties that are implied by the subject without collapsing into tautology. Although the predicate might seem self-evident, it emphasizes a particular attribute of the subject, thereby contributing to the proposition's overall meaning. In synthetic judgments, the predicate introduces information that relies on external verification, further distancing itself from tautological repetition. For example, "The page is white" connects the subject and predicate in a manner contingent on empirical observation, ensuring that the truth of the proposition is not confined to mere definitional identity.

This nuanced approach extends to categorical and internal predications. Categorical predication examines the ontological dimensions of propositions, distinguishing between definite and indefinite assertions. A statement such as "Human is laugher" defines an inherent property of the subject but does so in a way that enriches the proposition's meaning rather than restating the subject. Similarly, whether simple or compound, internal predication involves assertions about the subject that extend beyond mere identity. For example, "Human exists" asserts a relationship between the subject and the predicate that is nonidentical and contingent on existence itself.

Thus, as applied through this categorization, Aristotelian logic ensures that tautology is avoided by preserving the distinct contributions of subjects and predicates within propositions. By emphasizing the varied dimensions of predication –syntactical,

semantic, categorical, and internal– this framework maintains the logical and ontological depth necessary for meaningful analysis, rendering tautology impossible within its system.

1.3. The Subject-Predicate Relationship and Modality

In propositions, the scopes of the subject and the predicate usually differ from each other. In some cases, the predicate is equal to the subject, but more often, the predicate is more general than the subject.[19] This distinction is important in understanding the relationship between the subject and predicate in a proposition. The scope of the subject refers to the set of entities to which the subject term applies, whereas the scope of the predicate defines the set of characteristics or properties that can be attributed to those entities.

For example, in the proposition "Every human being is rational", the predicate term "rational" is not more general than the subject term "human". In fact, in this case, all possible members of the predicate are equal to all possible members of the subject. This is because, for a proposition, there is no possible rational being that is not human, nor can there be a human who is not rational. In other words, the set of rational beings is entirely contained within the set of human beings, with no external rational entities. The scope of the predicate "rational" and the scope of the subject "human" thus overlap entirely, and there is no possibility of existence for any individual who is rational but not human or who is human but not rational. However, this structural clarity between subject and predicate becomes unstable when the subject is examined in terms of its internal components or more abstract categorical parts. In such cases, the proposition may fail to preserve its universality since a component part of the subject may, in fact, be extensionally broader than the subject as a whole. For instance, consider the statement, "Every human being is rational". While this seems straightforward, the predicate "rational" cannot be universally

[19] The contradiction of a term that is equal to another term is itself equal, while the contradiction of a general term is more specific. In this context, if the predicate is identical to the subject, the negation of one term will remain equivalent to the negation of the other. However, if the predicate is more general than the subject, the contradiction of the general term corresponds to the negation of the more particular term. Ṣadr al-sharīʿah al-Thānī ʿUbayd Allāh ibn Masʿūd al-Maḥbūbī, "Sharḥ Taʿdīl al-ʿulūm/Taʿdīl al-mīzān", in *Sadru'ş-Şerîa'nın* Ta'dîlu'l-Ulûm*'unun Mantık Bölümü: Metin ve İnceleme* by İbrahim Özkılıç (İstanbul: Marmara University Social Sciences Institute, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2022), 298-299.

applied to all broader categories under which "human" falls – such as "animal" or "body". We cannot validly infer from this that "Every animal is rational (*kull ḥayawān nāṭiq)*." or "Every body is rational (*kull jism nāṭiq*)". The underlying logical form in such a case corresponds to the third figure in syllogistic reasoning: from "Every human is an animal" and "Every human is rational", the best we can derive is "Some animals are rational", which clearly lacks universality.[20]

For the formation of a valid proposition, additional elements beyond the subject-predicate pair and the copula that links them are needed. These include the nature of the subject (*dhāt al-mawḍūʿ*), the address of the subject (*ʿunwān al-mawḍūʿ*), the attribute of the subject (*waṣf al-mawḍūʿ*), and the attribute of the predicate (*waṣf al-maḥmūl*). Nature (*dhāt*) refers to the being or term to which both the address and the attribute are attributed. The address (*ʿunwān*) is the term that reflects the subject's wording (*lafẓ al-mawḍūʿ*).[21] According to the Aristotelian tradition, a nature (*dhāt*) cannot serve as the predicate of another nature, meaning that the nature of one being cannot be attributed to another.[22] This suggests that a being cannot possess more than one nature. Consequently, the nature of a thing cannot be fully captured in a proposition but is expressed within the subject as either an address (*ʿunwān*) or an attribute (*waṣf*). The inner reality of the address (*ḥaqīqat al-ʿunwān*) cannot exist independently (*tashakhkhuṣ*) but must remain tied to the nature to which it refers. In contrast, the attribute is a quality associated with this inner reality (*ḥaqīqah*). While the predicate can be an attribute, it is inappropriate for the address to serve as the predicate.

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[20] This line of reasoning holds effectively for affirmative propositions, but its applicability becomes more problematic in the case of negative propositions. The reason is that the negation of a collective or compound subject from a given predicate does not entail the negation of that predicate from each of the subject's constituent parts. For detail see Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Ashraf al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ al-Qiṣṭās*, ed. Mahrdād Ḥasanbagī (Tehran: Intishārāt-i Ṭūs, 2016), 250-251.

[21] Sayyid Kamāl al-Ḥaydarī, *Sharḥ Kitāb al-Manṭiq li-l-ʿAllāmah Muḥammad Riḍā al-Muẓaffar* (Baghdad: Muʾassasat al-Imām Jawād li-l-Fikr wa-l-Thaqāfah, 2015), 2/68-69; Muḥammad Ṭāhir Āl Shubayr al-Khāqānī, *al-Mathal al-aʿlá fī l-manṭiq* (Qom: Anwār al-Hudá, 1435 AH), 130.

[22] See Abū ʿAlī al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAbd Allāh Ibn Sīnā, *al-Shifāʾ al-Manṭiq (al-Maqūlāt)*, ed. Aḥmad Fuʾād al-Ahwānī et al. (Qom: Maktabat Āyat Allāh al-Marʿashī al-Najafī, 2006), 102-103.

This distinction between the subject and predicate is also critical when considering the conversion of propositions (*ʿaks al-qaḍiyyah*). For example, in the proposition "Man is literate", and its converted form "Literate is man", the two propositions are not equivalent in terms of necessity. The subject-predicate relationship in the first proposition is possible, but in the second proposition, this relationship is necessary. While not every individual is literate, anyone who is literate must be human.[23] Thus, the way the subject and predicate relate to each other in the original proposition differs significantly from the conversion.

The subject and predicate are considered two quarters (*qāsimān*), or parts (*qism*), that differ in their inner reality within the proposition. Their relationship depends on their role as subjects and predicates in terms of their position in the proposition. In a proposition such as "J is B", the subject term "J" is attributed to the predicate "B" through its role as a subject (*mawḍūʿiyyah*), whereas "B" is ascribed to "J" through its role as a predicate (*maḥmūliyyah*). In the conversion, the terms switch positions: "B is J" becomes "J is B", but the relationship between the subject and predicate in the converted proposition differs from the original.

Importantly, the position of a concept –whether it is a subject or predicate– determines its inner reality and its role in the proposition. For example, in the proposition "human is animal", the subject is required for the concept of "animality".[24] There are four possible dimensions for propositions in this context:

1. B's being a subject, not J's being a subject,
2. J's being a predicate, not B's being a predicate,
3. B's being a predicate, not J's being a predicate,
4. J's being a subject, not B's being a subject.

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[23] Al-Khāqānī, *al-Mathal al-aʿlá fī l-manṭiq*, 128-129.

[24] Hasan Akkanat, *Kadı Siraceddin el-Ürmevi ve Metaliu'l-Envar (Tahkik, Çeviri, İnceleme)* (Ankara: Ankara University Institute of Social Sciences, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2006), 28; İbrahim Özkılıç, *Sadru'ş-Şerîa'nın* Ta'dîlu'l-Ulûm*'unun Mantık Bölümü: Metin ve İnceleme* (İstanbul: Marmara University Social Sciences Institute, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2022), 171; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Quṭb al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Rāzī, *Lawāmiʿ al-asrār bi-sharḥ Maṭāliʿ al-anwār*, ed. Abū l-Qāsim al-Raḥmānī (Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy, n.d.), 2/32; al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ al-Qisṭās*, 178-181.

Thus, B and J cannot simultaneously hold the roles of being a subject and being a predicate in the same proposition. When one concept assumes the role of being a predicate, the other cannot do so.

This issue has prompted discussions in the Peripatetic tradition. Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 606/1210), a key logician in this tradition, suggested that if being a subject of one concept is equivalent to being a predicate of the other, the original and converted propositions do not differ in modality. However, al-Samarqandī (d. 702/1303) challenges this view, arguing that even if there is unity between the concepts (subject and predicate), the original and converted propositions still differ in modality. Al-Rāzī might have been right in his statement, that is, if the predicate with the same being a subject remained the same in the conversion. However, this is not the case, as the predicate replaces the subject.[25] Al-Samarqandī posits that being a subject is inherent in the subject term, whereas being a predicate exists in the predicate term. When these roles are reversed in conversion, the modality of the proposition changes. In the case of the proposition "human is animal", the necessity for the subject term to be human to possess animality suggests a structural dependency of the subject and predicate. However, the relationship between the subject and predicate remains a matter of debate owing to their distinct natures. Notably, if the subject and predicate were to unite (*ittiḥād*), it would result in a conceptual impossibility, akin to the existence of a single entity in two distinct locations.[26] The unity in question implies that the two distinct concepts represented by the subject and predicate convey the same meaning.

Ṣadr al-sharīʿah (d. 747/1346) offers a different perspective, asserting that the modalities of the original and converted propositions do not differ. He argues that if the subject is necessary for the predicate, the predicate must also exist to confirm the subject. For example, in the proposition "human is animal", animality is necessary for humanity, but there are other beings that can possess animality, such as other animals such as cats and dogs.[27] Ṣadr al-sharīʿah, examining the proposition structurally, suggests that the necessity in this context is also structural in nature. This is why the predicate cannot exist independently of the subject. In other words, the roles of being a

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[25] Al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ al-Qisṭās*, 180-181.
[26] Al-Samarqandī, *Sharḥ al-Qisṭās*, 180-181.
[27] Özkılıç, *Sadru'ş-Şerîa'nın* Ta'dîlu'l-Ulûm *'unun Mantık Bölümü*, 171.

subject and being a predicate inherently require one another rather than the subject and predicate themselves. For example, if the being a subject of humanness is necessary for animality, then the predicate of animality is likewise necessary for humanness. The modality of a proposition, however, lies in the relationship between the subject and predicate, representing a quality distinct from the subject and predicate that necessitate one another. This perspective addresses modalities as nonoppositional. Nonetheless, Ṣadr al-sharīʿah acknowledges that being a subject and being a predicate are fundamentally distinct concepts.

Examining the views of al-Suhrawardī alongside those of key Peripatetic thinkers, it is evident that when a conversion occurs between the subject and the predicate, the resulting proposition is not identical to the original. The subject retains its identity as a subject, whereas the predicate maintains its role as a predicate. Thus, an objection to the notion of tautology can be articulated through the Peripatetic tradition by examining propositions such as "every white is white". According to this perspective, such statements cannot be considered tautological because the roles of "white" in the subject and predicate positions differ fundamentally. In the subject position, "whiteness" functions as a designation or address, signifying an individual entity by virtue of its essential nature. In contrast, "white" in the predicate position refers to a quality or attribute that is inherent in the individual identified by the subject. This distinction highlights a nuanced difference: while the subject term captures an entity's essence or definitional nature, the predicate term ascribes a specific characteristic or property to it. As such, the apparent repetition in "Every white is white" does not result in pure tautology but instead reflects an interplay between different aspects of predication within the proposition.

2. The Logical and Ontological Foundations of the (Im)possibility of Tautology in al-Suhrawardī's Philosophy

The logical system developed by al-Suhrawardī, rooted in his metaphysical principles and influenced by the Peripatetic tradition, represents a unique synthesis of Aristotelian and Platonic philosophies. While building on the Peripatetic framework, al-

Suhrawardī introduces significant departures, particularly concerning the nature of existence, quiddity, and the role of logic. These differences are deeply embedded in his Illuminationist philosophy, which prioritizes the metaphysical principle of light and the unveiling of truths through illumination.

Al-Suhrawardī's integration of Aristotelian realism and Platonic idealism produces a logical framework that serves as more than a mechanical tool for reasoning. It is a system that reflects the ontological reality of existence and quiddity, treating logical propositions as windows into deeper metaphysical truths. His emphasis on the conceptual distinction between existence and quiddity led to a reinterpretation of foundational logical concepts, such as predication, judgment, and tautology.

A key aspect of al-Suhrawardī's logic is his rejection of tautology as a meaningful component of reasoning. His critique is grounded in the idea that propositions must convey differentiation and novelty to qualify as valid judgments. This perspective diverges sharply from Aristotelian logic, where tautological expressions might be accepted for their structural formality. Al-Suhrawardī argues that tautological statements fail to introduce substantive content, rendering them ineffective within a metaphysical framework that demands illumination and knowledge expansion.

A comprehensive understanding of al-Suhrawardī's rejection of tautology requires an inquiry into the ways in which his metaphysical principles shape his conception of logic. By situating his logical framework within the broader context of his Illuminationist philosophy, it is essential to explore al-Suhrawardī's novel contributions to the discourse on predication, existence, and propositions.

In al-Suhrawardī's framework, tautological statements are invalid not because of a deficiency in logical form but because of their failure to achieve the ontological and epistemological objectives of logic. Logic, for al-Suhrawardī, is a tool for revealing the realities of existence and quiddity, and it must, therefore, facilitate the acquisition of new knowledge. By analyzing al-Suhrawardī's critique of tautology through the lens of his metaphysics, this article demonstrates how his system bridges the gap between logic and ontology, offering a transformative view of reasoning and judgment.

2.1. Al-Suhrawardī's Approach to Predication and Propositions

According to al-Suhrawardī, for a proposition to be meaningful, the conceptions (*taṣawwur*) of the subject and predicate must differ, as they are common in the tradition. Judgment, he asserts, relies on two distinct conceptions, even if the underlying nature is unified. Tautological statements –where the subject and predicate share the same conception– do not constitute valid propositions. As mentioned above, the statement "Human is man" is equivalent to asserting that "Human is human" and fails to offer any new information. In such cases, the predicate merely reiterates the subject without adding any meaningful judgment or differentiation.[28]

To address this issue, al-Suhrawardī allows for modifications to such statements. For example, the proposition "Human is named as man" introduces an additional layer of meaning by focusing on naming rather than equivalence. Importantly, the predicate in such propositions does not merely indicate naming but conveys that the nature of humanity is fully represented in the term "man". However, even in these cases, al-Suhrawardī emphasizes that the addition must provide substantive content rather than mere redundancy. In propositions such as "Every J is B", the statement implies that what is designated as J can also be referred to as B. However, al-Suhrawardī emphasizes that, in essence, the subject remains fundamentally identified with either J or B. This nuanced view highlights that predicates must offer meaningful differentiation or context rather than simply reiterating the subject's essence.[29]

Naming, for al-Suhrawardī, is not an arbitrary process. In his system, a name encapsulates all the essential attributes of the entity being named.[30] Therefore, tautological expressions, such as "Human is man", fail to offer additional knowledge because the subject and predicate merely repeat the same essence without introducing new attributes. This principle underscores al-Suhrawardī's broader critique of

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[28] Al-Suhrawardī, *al-Mashāriʿ wa-l-muṭāraḥāt*, ed. Maqṣūd Muḥammadī - Ashraf ʿĀlīpūr (Qom: Markaz-i Pazhūhishī-yi ʿUlūm-i Islāmī, 2006), 43; al-Suhrawardī, *Manṭiq Talwīḥāt*, ed. ʿAlī Akbar Fayyāḍ (Tehran: Ṭabʿat Jāmiʿat Tahrān, 1955), 6; Synonymous means naming one thing with varies names; al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 8.

[29] Al-Suhrawardī, *Manṭiq Talwīḥāt*, 6.

[30] Al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 9.

propositions that lack differentiation between the subject and predicate.

Using the example of human attributes, al-Suhrawardī elaborates on his critique of tautology. In the propositions "Human is laugher" or "Laugher is human", the two necessary terms "human" and "laugher" refer to the same underlying entity. This entity is either a human or a laugher, but it cannot simultaneously embody both qualities in their entirety. While the same entity can be referred to as both "human" and "laugher", these terms do not have identical meanings in the context of judgment. Similarly, the proposition "Human is literate" introduces yet another attribute applicable to the same underlying entity. This suggests that the entity, while remaining singular in itself, can be described as human, literate, or laugher on the basis of different perspectives.[31] However, al-Suhrawardī emphasized that "laugher" does not encompass "literate" in terms of being laugher, and vice versa. What an entity is in its essence cannot be simultaneously identified as two distinct things; it remains one in its inner reality.

Al-Suhrawardī's approach posits that attributes such as being literate or laugher are not intrinsic to the entity's essence but are universal qualities ascribed to it.[32] These attributes are external additions to the entity's core reality of "being human". They represent meanings imposed conceptually after the fact rather than qualities inherent to the entity itself. Propositions, therefore, consist of meanings that refer to individuals, requiring differentiation between the terms used in judgments.

In short, for a proposition to be meaningful, al-Suhrawardī asserts that the terms used to describe the same entity must not have identical meanings. This principle represents a significant implication, which focuses on the roles of the subject and predicate by using the concepts of being a subject and being a predicate without necessarily demanding a novel contribution from the predicate. However, al-Suhrawardī's framework insists on predicates that introduce new and

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31 Al-Suhrawardī, *Manṭiq Talwīḥāt*, 6.

32 Al-Suhrawardī, *al-Mashāriʿ wa-l-muṭāraḥāt*, 45. According to al-Suhrawardī, the universal is not an entity that exists independently outside the mind. Rather, it consists of meanings that exist in the mind and serve to characterize individuals by being communicated to the many and shared in common; al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 7-8.

substantive content, ensuring that propositions illuminate rather than reiterate.

2.2. Ontological Foundations and the Rejection of Tautology

Al-Suhrawardī claims that some interpreters have misunderstood the problem of predication, suggesting that all qualities –including existence (*wujūd*)– are attributes added (*zāʾid*) to subjects, which are quiddities (*māhiyyāt*). Al-Suhrawardī rejects this notion, asserting that "thingness" (*sḥayʾiyyah*) or "being-a-thing" (*kawn al-shayʾ*) is real, but the inner reality of things is rooted in existence itself. Attributes such as humanness, laughing, or being literate are not intrinsic to the entity (*talḥaqᵗ*) but are realized (*taḥaqqaqa*) within it. The concepts of humanness or substance are not independent realities in the external world but rather exist as mind-dependent constructs (*iʿtibārī*). While they do not have an objective existence outside the mind, they are nonetheless real in the sense that we recognize them and assign names to them. Their essence, along with certain qualities that validate their existence, is attributed to these concepts. For example, humanness or substance are considered "things" or "realities" in this context, although their existence is tied to the mind's recognition and categorization.[33]

Al-Suhrawardī's views on tautology also extend to the role of demonstrative pronouns in propositions. For example, in statements such as "This is laugher" or "This is literate", the demonstrative pronoun "this" refers to the same underlying entity, yet the predicates "laugher" and "literate" remain distinct. This distinction prevents the predicates from being equated with each other, as one entity cannot simultaneously embody two distinct essences.[34] Al-Suhrawardī's rejection of tautology is thus grounded in his insistence on the ontological uniqueness of entities and their attributes.

Al-Suhrawardī's philosophy is grounded in a clear distinction between existence and the existent.[35] He argues that existence is not a

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[33] Al-Suhrawardī, *Manṭiq Talwīḥāt*, 6; al-Suhrawardī, *al-Mashāriʿ wa-l-muṭāraḥāt*, 727.

[34] Al-Suhrawardī, *al-Mashāriʿ wa-l-muṭāraḥāt*, 45. For mind-dependent existence in al-Suhrawardī's opinion see Kaukua, "Iʿtibārī Concepts in Suhrawardī".

[35] Rizvi discusses al-Suhrawardī's distinction between existence and existent in detail. See Rizvi, "An Islamic Subversion of the Existence-Essence Distinction?", 219-222; For further information about this discussion also see Fedor Benevich, "The

real thing in itself but precedes shape or quiddity. Nothing can be considered an object before it takes on a specific form. While existence and the being of a thing precede its attributes, a thing's actualization involves its quiddities. A thing exists independently of its essence, but the precise nature and form of this existence are indeterminate. It is certain, however, that existence does not lie outside the mind. This framework forms the foundation of al-Suhrawardī's Ishrāqī philosophy, summarized by two principles: knowledge by presence (*al-ʿilm al-ḥuḍūrī*) and the primacy of quiddity (*aṣālat al-māhiyyah*).[36]

Al-Suhrawardī's view that existence is mind-dependent, alongside the "primacy of quiddity", is central to his metaphysical and logical approach. In the medieval debate on universals, he distances himself from Peripatetic thought, aligning more with the Platonic view. For al-Suhrawardī, universals do not exist independently in the external world.[37] Existence as a universal concept is added to individual entities that have external reality, emphasizing its separation from the tangible reality of those entities.[38] Thus, rather than attributing Platonic realism to al-Suhrawardī, his view is better described as conceptualism, where existence is a mental construct, with certain mental forms reflected in external entities.

It is suggested that al-Suhrawardī's conceptualism diverges from the representational approach attributed to Ibn Sīnā. According to Ibn Sīnā, when we assess objects of knowledge in terms of existence and quiddity, mental forms and external objects share the same essence.[39] However, al-Suhrawardī rejects this notion, arguing that mental existents require a fitting predication. In his view, mental and external existents have separate quiddities. Thus, when a mental proposition is made about a mental entity, a predicate within the mind is necessary,

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Essence-Existence Distinction: Four Elements of the Post-Avicennian Metaphysical Dispute (11–13th Centuries)", *Oriens* 45/3-4 (2017), 217-226.

36 Walbridge - Ziai, "Translators' Introduction", xx-xxi.

37 Al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 7.

38 See Walbridge - Ziai, "Translators' Introduction", xxi; Bekiryazıcı, *Şihâbeddin Sühreverdî'nin Felsefesinde Ontoloji Problemi*, 105-106.

39 See Francesco Omar Zamboni, "Weak Discourses on People's Lips: Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī against Representationalism and Conceptualism", *Nazariyat* 9/2 (2023), 73-79.

whereas an appropriate external predicate must be used for an external object.[40]

For al-Suhrawardī, propositions must relate to something (a nature). In his conceptualism, the predicate of a proposition must correspond to the same kind of existence as the subject. Thus, in the proposition "A is A", both the subject and predicate are either entirely mental or entirely external. Since one nature cannot be attributed to another, the characteristics that a nature acquires depend on its role as a subject or predicate. A proposition's subject refers to a nature, which, although a mental concept, represents an external or mental nature. The nature to which the proposition refers determines whether it is external or mental. For a proposition to form, there must be a subject representing nature and a predicate adding a new attribute. A term can serve as both a subject and a predicate in different contexts, conveying distinct meanings. Therefore, attributing two things to each other, as in a tautological proposition, is not possible in this case.

Conclusion

This study explores al-Suhrawardī's rejection of tautology within the context of his Illuminationist philosophy, revealing its deep connections to both his metaphysical and logical systems. Through a careful analysis of predication, propositions, and the nature of existence, it is clear that al-Suhrawardī's critique of tautological reasoning is not simply a logical objection but an ontological stance that seeks to preserve the differentiation and illumination central to his philosophical project. By positioning his framework in opposition to the Peripatetic tradition, al-Suhrawardī emphasized the need for logical propositions to offer substantive content, moving beyond formal validity to engage with more profound metaphysical truths.

Al-Suhrawardī's synthesis of Aristotelian and Platonic ideas leads to a sophisticated reconfiguration of logical principles, wherein propositions are not merely mechanical statements but vehicles for revealing the nature of existence and quiddity. The insistence on meaningful differentiation between the subject and predicate in his system ensures that logic remains a dynamic tool for the acquisition of new knowledge rather than a static, self-contained structure. In this

[40] Al-Suhrawardī, *The Philosophy of Illumination*, 15.

way, al-Suhrawardī's approach challenges conventional understandings of tautology and offers a transformative perspective on the relationships among logic, ontology, and epistemology.

By grounding his critique of tautology in the ontological primacy of quiddity and the conceptual nature of existence, al-Suhrawardī invites a reconsideration of how we understand truth and judgment in both the mental and external realms. His philosophy, particularly his conceptualism, bridges the gap between logical form and metaphysical substance, offering a distinctive alternative to his predecessors' representationalist and realist views. His conceptualism asserts that being a subject and being a predicate are epistemic constructs rather than independent realities. These constructs arise within the mind, enabling the treatment of quiddities regardless of their external or mental status. In this sense, the subject and predicate positions represent distinct epistemic roles rather than ontological separations. al-Suhrawardī's framework ensures that A, as both subject and predicate in a proposition, represents the same nature while fulfilling different conceptual functions within that proposition. By redefining the roles of the subject and predicate within propositions, al-Suhrawardī offers a transformative perspective that challenges traditional logical frameworks while aligning them with his broader Illuminationist philosophy. This reinterpretation highlights the essential distinction between nature and attributes, ensuring that propositions remain vehicles of epistemic and ontological significance. Ultimately, al-Suhrawardī's work contributes to broader philosophical discourse by emphasizing the importance of differentiation, illumination, and the pursuit of knowledge through logical reasoning, solidifying his position as a key figure in the development of Islamic philosophy.

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BETWEEN TACOS AND ḤALĀL: EXPLORING ḤALĀL FOOD ACCESS AND CONSUMPTION AMONG MUSLIM IMMIGRANTS IN MEXICO CITY

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Abstract

Despite increasing Muslim migration to Mexico, little is known about how these immigrants navigate ḥalāl food practices in a predominantly non-Muslim setting. This study applies the theory of planned behavior (TPB) to explore how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence dietary choices. Based on ethnographic fieldwork and interviews with 43 Muslim immigrants in Mexico City, the study reveals that most participants adopt a positively inclined yet contextually flexible stance – motivated by religious belief but shaped by access issues, *fiqh*-based allowances (e.g., meat of the animals slaughtered by the "People of the Book"), and a desire to engage with local food culture. A smaller group strictly adheres to ḥalāl consumption, driven by strong religious commitment and parental responsibility. Social pressure to conform is generally low but is

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influenced by internalized family expectations, intercultural household negotiations, and transnational monitoring through digital platforms. Barriers such as high costs, the limited availability of ḥalāl products, and persistent food cravings further affect behavioral control. These findings highlight how Muslim immigrants balance religious commitments with the practical and cultural realities of life within a numerically negligible Muslim minority setting such as Mexico.

Key Words: Islam, Mexico, ḥalāl industry, food, Muslims, food consumption behavior

Introduction

Muslim populations in Mexico have gradually increased over the years,[1] reflecting the participation of Muslims in Mexico's diversity. Despite this rising presence, Muslims in Mexico remain a minority, and they navigate the complexities of maintaining their cultural and religious practices in a predominantly non-Muslim environment. One of the key aspects of this experience is the consumption of ḥalāl food, which is integral to their spirituality. Ḥalāl, an Arabic term meaning "permissible" or "lawful", refers to what is allowed under Islamic law in various aspects of life, including finance, clothing, conduct, and consumption. In the context of food, ḥalāl refers not only to the types of food that may be consumed but also to how food is sourced, slaughtered, prepared, and handled. Conversely, food that is explicitly prohibited is termed *ḥarām*, such as pork, alcohol, and improperly slaughtered animals. Among these two categories lies *mashbūh*, which refers to items that are doubtful or ambiguous in their permissibility due to unclear ingredients, processing methods, or lack of proper certification. For many Muslims, avoiding both *ḥarām* and *mashbūh* is an essential part of maintaining religious observance. In non-Muslim majority contexts, however, the scarcity of ḥalāl-certified products and establishments often complicates adherence to these dietary principles, leading to ethical, practical, and spiritual challenges for Muslim communities.[2]

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1 INEGI, "Censo de Población y Vivienda 2010", *INEGI* (Accessed August 2, 2021); INEGI, "Censo de Población y Vivienda 2020", *INEGI* (Accessed August 5, 2021).

2 Alhassan G. Mumuni et al., "Religious Identity, Community and Religious Minorities' Search Efforts for Religiously Sanctioned Food: The Case of Halal Food

In Mexico, pork has a significant role in Mexican gastronomy and is a staple in many traditional dishes and cultural celebrations. From tacos al pastor to carnitas, pork also exists in different versions based on various cured cuts (e.g., *lomo*, *spallacia*, *bacon*, and *coppa*) and disparate forms (e.g., cooking oil, ham, ham salami, and gelatin). Beyond its culinary prominence, the centrality of pork in Mexican cuisine is deeply rooted in colonial history. Prior to the Spanish conquest, indigenous civilizations such as the Mexica (Aztecs) and the Maya did not consume pork. Historian Jeffrey M. Pilcher,[3] in *¡Que vivan los tamales! Food and the Making of Mexican Identity*, explains that the Spanish introduced pigs to the Americas in the 16th century not merely as a new source of food but also as part of a broader effort to impose European dietary habits and Christian norms. Pork thus became a symbol of colonial assimilation, with its consumption closely linked to the adoption of Christian identity and loyalty to colonial authority. Similar dynamics have been observed in other parts of Latin America, such as Puerto Rico, where Chitwood[4] discusses how pork consumption became emblematic of cultural belonging in the colonial context.

As the Mexican food landscape offers limited access to ḥalāl markets and accentuates pork-based and other non-ḥalāl ingredients, this can create a complex environment for maintaining dietary practices aligned with Islamic dietary laws. This scenario necessitates a closer examination of how Muslim immigrants adapt their food practices in a setting where their dietary needs are often overlooked, highlighting their strategies for navigating new life in Catholic-majority countries.

This article focuses specifically on Muslim immigrants rather than converts or a combined analysis because of the distinct challenges that immigrants face in preserving traditional ḥalāl observances. Many

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in non-Muslim Majority Markets", *International Journal of Consumer Studies* 42/6 (January 2018), 586-598; Mohd Fauzi Abu-Hussin et al., "Halal Purchase Intention Among the Singaporean Muslim Minority", *Journal of Food Products Marketing* 23/7 (October 2017), 769-782.

3 Jeffrey M. Pilcher, *¡Que Vivan Los Tamales!: Food and the Making of Mexican Identity* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998).

4 Ken Chitwood, "Halāl Habichuelas: Food, Belonging, and the Conundrums of Being a Puerto Rican Muslim", *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 90/4 (December 2022), 916-936.

immigrants come from Muslim-majority countries where ḥalāl is embedded in everyday life, which makes the dietary transition in Mexico particularly complex. Converts, in contrast, often adopt ḥalāl practices more gradually and may not have the same depth of cultural attachment or access to community support structures.[5] By focusing on the immigrant experience, this study explores how ḥalāl consumption becomes a means of identity preservation and cultural continuity in a setting of limited accommodation. It also reveals how food practices intersect with broader issues of religious observance, belonging, and adaptation in a non-Muslim society. Moreover, compared with Latin American countries such as Brazil or Argentina, which have more robust ḥalāl industries, Mexico's smaller Muslim population and limited ḥalāl infrastructure amplify the challenges faced by Muslim immigrants, making their experiences uniquely revealing.

Prior to discussing how these Muslims consume food, it is important to consider the fundamental aspect of ḥalāl-ness, the characteristic that distinguishes Muslims with regard to food consumption. The connections between the Islamic faith and food consumption among practitioners, which is also known as a "ḥalāl consciousness",[6] can be divided into two categories: spirituality and obligatory acts. Spirituality, which supposedly provides benefits for one's body as a whole, is rooted in Islamic teaching and emphasizes that ḥalāl encompasses the way of life to which Muslims must adhere[7] and that the food and drink that Muslims consume affect the level of cleanliness of the body, mind, and soul. Therefore, eating ḥalāl means taking care of the body, and failing to do so can lead to bad behavior and damage the soul. According to one ḥadīth narrated by al-Nuʿmān ibn Bashīr,

> I heard Allah's Messenger saying, "Beware! There is a piece of flesh in the body; if it becomes good (reformed), the

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5 Harfiyah Abdel Haleem, "*Women Embracing Islam: Gender and Conversion in the West* Edited by Karen van Nieuwkerk", *Journal of Islamic Studies* 19/1 (February 2007), 151-154; Ali Köse, *Conversion to Islam: A Study of Native British Converts* (New York: Kegan Paul International, 1996).

6 Md Nor Othman - Azura Hashim, "Halal Food Consumption: A Comparative Study between Arab Muslims and Non Arab Muslims Consumers in Malaysia' (Australian and New Zealand Marketing Academy Conference, Perth, 2011).

7 Nader Al Jallad, "The Concepts of al-Halal and al-Haram in the Arab-Muslim Culture: A Translational and Lexicographical Study", *Language Design: Journal of Theoretical and Experimental Linguistics* 10 (2008), 77-86.

whole body becomes good, but if it gets spoilt, the whole body gets spoilt, and that is the heart".[8]

The other category, obligatory acts, is evidence of another link between the Islamic faith and food consumption that can be observed through the level of obedience demonstrated in certain practices. That is, eating ḥalāl is not intended to transgress the rules of Allah. Muslims who abide by ḥalāl laws can be observed in many ways through their actions, including declining food, checking ḥalāl certificates or logos, asking for clarifications and reviewing the ingredients.[9]

Although Islam provides clear guidelines on food restrictions and laws, each faith adherent varies in how they interpret and practice these guidelines. This study treats ordinary individuals not as idealized adherents of religious doctrine but as religious subjects who negotiate their beliefs and practices in the context of everyday life. Their identities are shaped through imperfect, and at times contested, engagements with religious norms. This approach draws on the concept of *lived religion*, which emphasizes how faith is embodied, improvised, and interpreted in diverse and personal ways beyond formal theology or belief. [10]

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[8] Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḥīḥ*, ed. Muḥibb al-Dīn al-Khaṭīb et al. (Cairo: al-Maṭbaʿah al-Salafiyyah, 1400 AH), "al-Īmān", 39 (No. 52)

[9] Qurroh Ayuniyyah et al., "Factors Affecting Consumers' Decision in Purchasing MUI Halal-Certified Food Products", *Tazkia Islamic Finance and Business Review* 10 (August 2017); Karijn Bonne et al., "Impact of Religion on Halal Meat Consumption Decision Making in Belgium", *Journal of International Food & Agribusiness Marketing* 21/1 (December 2008), 5-26.

[10] Kim Knibbe - Helena Kupari, "Theorizing Lived Religion: Introduction", *Journal of Contemporary Religion* 35/2 (May 2020), 157-176; David D. Hall (ed.), *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton Univ. Press, 1997); Mohammad Talib, "Lived Islam: Colloquial Religion in a Cosmopolitan Tradition", *Journal of Islamic Studies* 33/1 (December 2021), 147-148; Nadia Jeldtoft, "Lived Islam: Religious Identity with 'non-Organized' Muslim Minorities", *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 34/7 (2011), 1134-1151; Meredith B. McGuire, *Lived Religion: Faith and Practice in Everyday Life* (Cary: Oxford University Press, 2008); Nancy Tatom Ammerman, *Everyday Religion: Observing Modern Religious Lives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

1. The Growing Need for Ḥalāl Accommodation in Mexico's Small Markets

The study of ḥalāl practices among Muslims has gained significant attention in recent years,[11] with dominant clusters focusing on consumer behavior, the ḥalāl supply chain and marketing, ḥalāl certification, and ḥalāl tourism. With respect to consumer behavior, most work focuses on the navigation of choosing ḥalāl food and nonfood products in both the Muslim majority and minority. Although consumption patterns of ḥalāl food vary depending on individual experiences and levels of religiosity, the effort to identify and access ḥalāl food remains consistently significant. This finding indicates that despite differences in personal practices, the pursuit of ḥalāl dietary options continues to be a priority for many Muslims.[12] Moreover, decision-making regarding ḥalāl consumption extends to ḥalāl tourism, with research exploring how countries strive to become Muslim-friendly destinations.[13] In addition, ḥalāl research explores non-Muslim perceptions of ḥalāl food, particularly their awareness and understanding of it.[14] Another core cluster includes ḥalāl certification

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[11] Rishikesan Parthiban et al., "Empowering Rural Micro-Entrepreneurs through Technoficing: A Process Model for Mobilizing and Developing Indigenous Knowledge", *The Journal of Strategic Information Systems* 33/2 (June 2024), 101836.

[12] Yukari Sai - Johan Fischer, "Muslim Food Consumption in China: Between Qingzhen and Halal" *Halal Matters*, ed. Florence Bergeaud-Blackler et al. (Oxon, NY: Routledge, 2016); Mumuni et al., "Religious Identity, Community and Religious Minorities' Search Efforts for Religiously Sanctioned Food"; Mohd Fuaad Said et al., "Exploring Halal Tourism in Muslim-Minority Countries: Muslim Travellers' Needs and Concerns", *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 13/4 (March 2022), 824-842; Abu-Hussin et al., "Halal Purchase Intention Among the Singaporean Muslim Minority"; Nimit Soonsan - Zulfiqar Ali Jumani, "Perceptions of Halal-Friendly Attributes: A Quantitative Study of Tourists' Intention to Travel Non-Islamic Destination", *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 15/6 (May 2024), 1441-1460.

[13] Said et al., "Exploring *Halal* Tourism in Muslim-Minority Countries"; Serrin Razzaq et al., "The Capacity of New Zealand to Accommodate the Halal Tourism Market — Or Not", *Tourism Management Perspectives* 18 (April 2016), 92-97.

[14] Nur Syazwani Abdul Jalil et al., "Attitudes of the Public Towards Halal Food and Associated Animal Welfare Issues in Two Countries with Predominantly Muslim and Non-Muslim Population", *PLOS ONE* 13/10 (October 2018), e0204094; Yukichika Kawata et al., "Non-Muslims' Acceptance of Imported Products with Halal Logo: A Case Study of Malaysia and Japan", *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 9/1 (2018); Vloreen Nity Mathew et al., "Acceptance on Halal Food Among Non-Muslim Consumers", *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 121 (March 2014), 262-271; Sasiwemon Sukhabot - Zulfiqar Ali Jumani, "Islamic Brands Attitudes and

issues, such as the authenticity of the ḥalāl certification and packaging.[15]

Numerous case studies investigate the complexities of ḥalāl consumption in various social, cultural, and economic contexts. Research has focused predominantly on multicultural urban environments, where diverse communities, including Muslim minorities, navigate the challenges of maintaining religious dietary practices. These studies often examine how Muslims balance their religious obligations with the realities of living in non-Muslim-majority societies, particularly in urban settings where multiculturalism plays a crucial role. The dynamics of ḥalāl consumption in such multicultural contexts are key in understanding how Muslim communities maintain their food practices while engaging with diverse populations.

For example, in London, a city known for its ethnic diversity, the study of ḥalāl food consumption highlights the intersection between religious identity and multiculturalism. Noah Allison's *Food and Multiculture: A Sensory Ethnography of East London*[16] explores how ḥalāl food practices shape identity in a city where Muslims constitute a significant minority. The research reveals the ways in which food choices act as markers of identity for people navigating the boundaries between religious tradition and the broader multicultural fabric of society. This ethnographic approach emphasizes the role of food not only as a means of sustenance but also as a cultural and religious symbol that connects Muslims to their faith and heritage while adapting to their new surroundings. Similarly, the study of ḥalāl food practices in the U.S. offers further insight into how Muslims in multicultural environments negotiate their religious identity. Jacqueline Fewkes'

Its Consumption Behaviour Among Non-Muslim Residents of Thailand", *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 14/1 (2023), 196-214; Ethan Ding et al., "Religion versus Social Relationships: How Chinese Muslims Deal with Halal Taboos in Social Eating", *Food, Culture & Society* 26/3 (May 2023), 725-741; Rana Muhammad Ayyub, "Exploring Perceptions of Non-Muslims Towards Halal Foods in UK", *British Food Journal* 117/9 (September 2015), 2328-2343; Mohamed Battour et al., "The Perception of Non-Muslim Tourists Towards Halal Tourism: Evidence from Turkey and Malaysia", *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 9/4 (October 2018), 823-840.

15 Silvia Serrano, "Bacon or Beef? 'Fake' Halal Scandals in the Russian Federation: Consolidating Halal Norms Through Secular Courts", *Sociology of Islam* 8/3-4 (December 2020), 387-408.

16 Noah Allison, "Food and Multiculture: A Sensory Ethnography of East London, by Alex Rhys-Taylor, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017. 173 pp.", *Food and Foodways* 27/4 (October 2019), 356-358.

"Siri is Alligator Halal?": Mobile Apps, Food Practices, and Religious Authority Among American Muslims"[17] examines how American Muslims utilize mobile apps to navigate ḥalāl food consumption, reflecting how technology intersects with religious practices in a highly diverse, technologically advanced society.

In the context of Latin America, there is a noticeable gap in research focusing on ḥalāl consumption practices. This can be attributed to the relatively small Muslim populations in the region[18] and the limited research efforts that focus on these communities. Most studies instead concentrate on the ḥalāl market, particularly in terms of ḥalāl food production, certification, and trade. Among the few studies that address ḥalāl consumption, "Halāl Habichuelas: Food, Belonging, and the Conundrums of Being a Puerto Rican Muslim"[19] stands out. This article delves into the challenges faced by Puerto Rican Muslims in maintaining ḥalāl dietary practices and identifies the complexities of navigating religious food requirements in a predominantly non-Muslim society. The study emphasizes how ḥalāl food consumption in Puerto Rico is intricately tied not only to personal and communal identity but also to the struggle to access ḥalāl food in a limited-supply environment.

However, much of the other literature on ḥalāl in Latin America centers primarily around the ḥalāl market, particularly the global ḥalāl meat trade.[20] This market focus is exemplified by Brazil, which despite having a relatively small Muslim population, has become a key player in the global ḥalāl meat export industry. As Ken Chitwood notes, "while most of the general public would assume that a Muslim-majority country would be the largest exporter of ḥalāl meat in the world, it is Brazil that holds the title"[21]. This insight underscores Brazil's

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17 Jacqueline H. Fewkes, "'Siri is Alligator Halal?': Mobile Apps, Food Practices, and Religious Authority Among American Muslims", *Anthropological Perspectives on the Religious Uses of Mobile Apps*, ed. Jacqueline H. Fewkes (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2019), 107-129.

18 This is according to the most recent data presented by the International Religious Freedom Reports in 2023.

19 Chitwood, "Halāl Habichuelas".

20 Hugo Jesús Salas-Canales, "Marketing Islámico y las Oportunidades del Mercado Halal: Una Revisión Sistemática de la Literatura", *Revista San Gregorio* 1/50 (2022), 116-132.

21 Ken Chitwood, *The Muslims of Latin America and the Caribbean* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2021), 127.

importance as a major supplier of ḥalāl-certified products, particularly meat, which is driven by its robust agricultural sector and strategic trade agreements with Muslim-majority countries.

Studies on Brazil's ḥalāl market[22] explore how the country capitalized on its ḥalāl certification infrastructure to tap into the global demand for ḥalāl products. This research focuses on ḥalāl industry dynamics, such as the complexities of ḥalāl certification, logistics, and international trade, but it tends to overlook the consumption practices of Muslims within Brazil.

With respect to Mexico, a country with a growing Muslim population, there is a noticeable gap in research concerning ḥalāl consumption and industry development. Most of the existing work on Islam focuses heavily on the history of Islam,[23] Muslim migration into the country,[24] and the conversion of the indigenous Maya to Islam.[25]

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[22] Flavio Romero Macau et al., "Food Value Chains: Social Networks and Knowledge Transfer in a Brazilian Halal Poultry Network", *International Food and Agribusiness Management Review* 19/3 (2016), 211-224; Salaam Gateway, "Brazilian Halal Beef: Humble at Home, Huge across the World", *Salaam Gateway - Global Islamic Economy Gateway* (20 November 2016); Shadia Husseini de Araújo, "Assembling Halal Meat and Poultry Production in Brazil: Agents, Practices, Power and Sites", *Geoforum* 100 (2019), 220-228; Chitwood, "Halal in Brazil and the Global Muslim Economy"; Shadia Husseini de Araújo et al., "Urban Food Environments and Cultural Adequacy: The (Dis)Assemblage of Urban Halal Food Environments in Muslim Minority Contexts", *Food, Culture & Society* 25/5 (October 2022), 899-916.

[23] Arely Medina, "El islam en México. Revisión histórica de su inserción al escenario religioso Mexicano", *Vuelo Libre* 5 (2014), 13; Mark Lindley-Highfield of Ballumbie Castle, "Islam in Mexico and Central America", *Routledge Handbook of Islam in the West*, ed. Roberto Tottoli (London - New York: Routledge, 2nd edition, 2022), 167-183; Jonathan Benzion, *Embracing Muslims in a Catholic Land: Rethinking the Genesis of Islām in Mexico* (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2022).

[24] Zidane Zeraoui, "Los árabes en méxico: entre la integración y el arabismo", *Revista Estudios* 12-13 (1995), 13-39; Zidane Zeraoui, "La comunidad musulmana en México: diversidad e integración", *Relaciones Internacionales* 20/40 (2011); Zidane Zeraoui, "Arabs and Muslims in Mexico: Paradiplomacy or Informal Lobby?", *Migration and New International Actors: An Old Phenomenon Seen with New Eyes*, ed. Maria Eugenia Cruset (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2012), 51-89; Nik Mohammad Hasif Mat, *Being Muslim, Performing Mexicanness: Religious Identity Negotiations Among Muslim Immigrants in Mexico* (Det Humanistiske Fakultet, Københavns Universitet, Ph.D. Dissertation, 2022); Nik Hasif, "Muslim Immigrant Identifications in Mexico's YouTube Sphere", *International Journal of Latin American Religions* 7 (May 2023), 480-520.

[25] Marco Lara Klahr, "¿El Islam en Chiapas?: El EZLN y el Movimiento Mundial Murabitun". *Revista Académica para el Estudio de las Religiones* 4 (2002), 79-91; Der Spiegel, "Islam is Gaining a Foothold in Chiapas" (2005); Glüsing, "Praying to

There is a notable absence of studies on the ḥalāl market in Mexico, particularly concerning the preferences and behaviors of individual Muslim consumers.

Perhaps the only work that specifically focuses on ḥalāl food consumption behavior is from Arely Medina[26] titled "El camino hacia lo *Halal*: Ética y sacralización de los alimentos en la vida del musulmán en Guadalajara (The Road to Ḥalāl: Ethics and Sacralization of Food in the Life of the Muslim in Guadalajara)". Her research is based on a decade-long ethnographic observation of Islam in Guadalajara that involves interviews with converts, migrants, and community leaders. It also draws from observations of community practices and religious festivities, particularly their interpretation of ḥalāl practices in daily life. The objective is to examine the transition and adaptation process of these Muslims after conversion. Her findings demonstrate that conversion to Islam had a profound effect on a person's dietary habits, with ḥalāl food becoming a prominent identity marker through which local culinary traditions are blended with Islamic dietary laws. Ḥalāl dietary practices also foster a sense of belonging and solidarity among converts and migrants, a bond that is further reinforced through social gatherings and religious ceremonies.

This article presents a novel approach in three significant ways. First, it places a specific emphasis on the locational context of Mexico

Allah in Mexico" (2005); Sandra Cañas Cuevas, *Koliyal Allah Tsotsunkotik: 'Gracias a Allah Que Somos Mas Fuertes' Identidades Étnicas y Relaciones de Género Entre Los Indígenas Sunníes en San Cristóbal de Las Casas, Chiapas* (El Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social [CIESAS], 2006); Medina, "El islam en México"; Arely Medina, *Islam En Guadalajara. Identidad y Relocalización, Zapopan, Jalisco* (Mexico: El Colegio de Jalisco, 2014); Arely Medina, "Conversions to the Islam in Mexico", *Encyclopedia of Latin American Religions*, ed. Henri Gooren (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2016), 1-3; Arely Medina - Michelle Vyoleta Romero Gallardo, "Islam en Chiapas: Uso de Internet en la Proyección de la Identidad Musulmana por Parte de Indígenas Tzotziles en San Cristóbal de Las Casas", *Apropiación y Uso de Tecnologías Digitales en Grupos Étnicos Minorizados en Chiapas* (Guadalajara: Universidad de Guadalajara, 2018), 71-82; Sandra Cañas Cuevas, "The Politics of Conversion to Islam in Southern Mexico", *Islam and the Americas*, ed. Aisha Khan (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2015), 163-185; Chitwood, *The Muslims of Latin America and the Caribbean*, 181-202; Silvia González Calderón et al., "El Espacio del Islam 'Vivo' en los Altos de Chiapas", *Academia XXII* 12/24 (2021), 85.

[26] Arely Medina, "El Camino Hacia lo *Halal*: Ética y Sacralización de los Alimentos en la Vida del Musulmán en Guadalajara", *Religião & Sociedade* 42/2 (2022), 155-175.

City,[27] recognizing it as the primary hub where a majority of Muslims reside in the country and where the growing market is located. By focusing on this particular area, I shed light on the unique challenges and opportunities that Muslim communities encounter in a diverse and vibrant locality. Second, my research examines Muslim immigrants as the primary subjects of inquiry. This scope allows for an examination of the dynamic nature of Muslims' ḥalāl practices in a non-Muslim majority environment, including the diversity of their practices, cultural adaptations and modifications, challenges of integration, and cultural exchange as they settle in.

Based on ethnographic fieldwork, this study finds that Muslim immigrants who choose to move to Mexico adopt a flexible approach to ḥalāl dietary practices. Their intention to adhere to religious dietary laws is shaped by several factors, including their perceived control over available resources, the inherent flexibility within Islamic law, convenience, local unfamiliarity with Islam, and their own attitudes toward practical adaptation. As a result, their voluntary migration triggers a pragmatic adjustment to ḥalāl practices that balances personal beliefs with external constraints and the need for survival and social cohesion in a new environment.

Compared with other similar studies, such as Medina's work on Muslim converts in Guadalajara and Chitwood's research on Puerto Rican Muslims, distinct patterns emerge. Medina highlights how Mexican converts navigate ḥalāl dietary practices amidst social anxieties by often concealing their faith to avoid judgment from family and peers. This concealment complicates adherence to ḥalāl, particularly with staple dishes containing pork, leading converts to reorganize their social lives around Muslim communities. A significant point in Medina's findings is the reclassification of local foods, such as corn and beans, prompted by critiques from foreign Islamic leaders promoting Arabization. These foods that are deeply embedded in Mexican identity are questioned as *makrūh* or doubtful, compelling converts to use analogy to reaffirm their permissibility. This reflects not only dietary adaptation but also broader negotiations between cultural heritage and external religious authority.

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[27] INEGI, *Panorama de Las Religiones en México 2010*. The 2010 census is the only source that provides the Muslim population by state in the country.

Similarly, Chitwood reports that for Puerto Rican Muslims (converts), food is central to their sense of belonging and cultural negotiation. While facing both loss and creative recombination, Puerto Rican Muslims use food as a medium to integrate their Islamic practices into their diverse heritage; one shaped by Taíno, African, Spanish, and other influences. Their adaptation is not only about substituting ingredients but also about reimagining traditions. Like Mexican converts, they experience tension between maintaining a Muslim identity and honoring local foodways, but they often respond with artistic and cultural innovation that affirms both.

In contrast, the experiences of Muslim immigrants in Mexico, as examined in this study, reveal a more flexible and pragmatic approach. Unlike converts, immigrants are less concerned with reconciling past and present identities. Their ḥalāl practices are shaped more by necessity, such as resource availability, convenience, and limited public understanding of Islam, than by theological reflection. Dietary adjustments among immigrants are typically practical and are aimed at maintaining religious observance without major cultural reinterpretation or conflict.

Although both groups engage in self-reflection, their motivations diverge. Converts confront deeper questions of identity, morality, and belonging, with food becoming a site of cultural and spiritual negotiation. In contrast, immigrants prioritize adaptability and survival, treating ḥalāl as a guideline that is navigated amid constraints rather than as a marker of identity transformation. This comparison underscores how religious observance can reflect different modes of integration, specifically, culturally embedded negotiation for converts and pragmatic adjustment for migrants.

Therefore, this study offers a unique contribution by examining how Muslim migrants in Mexico adjust their ḥalāl practices through a balance of personal faith, the flexibility inherent in Islamic law, and their interaction with the local environment; this marks a distinct shift from the experiences of Muslim converts in Puerto Rico and Mexico's long-established Muslim populations. The main research questions are how do Muslim immigrants in Mexico negotiate the challenges presented by adhering to ḥalāl dietary practices within a predominantly Catholic cultural and culinary environment and how do these negotiations relate to their integration into the host society's

culinary landscape? Studying observations at the consumer level means exploring ḥalāl consumption as a way of Muslim life from the bottom up. Understanding the intricacies of ḥalāl consumption within the framework of Muslim life can offer valuable perspectives for scholars, NGOs, businesses, and policy-makers seeking to engage with and support diverse Muslim populations outside of Muslim-majority countries, particularly in countries in Latin America such as Mexico.

2. Making Sense in Motion: Methodology and Framework

2.1. Profile of the Informants

All of the informants originated from Muslim-majority countries, including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Türkiye, Malaysia, Indonesia, Morocco, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria, Lebanon, Sudan, Somalia, and Albania. This diverse background provides a broad perspective of the experiences of Muslims from various cultural contexts. They are diverse in age, ranging from 18 to 54 years, with an average age of approximately 35 years. Their length of stay in the country varies widely, from 8 months to 21 years, with an average duration of approximately three years. In terms of gender distribution, 86% of the informants are male, while 14% are female. This disparity reflects both a sampling limitation and broader migration trends. First, male immigrants are generally more visible and accessible in public spaces such as mosques, restaurants, and community gatherings where much of the fieldwork was conducted. Second, this gender ratio mirrors the reality of Muslim immigration patterns to Mexico, where male-led migration is more common particularly among those who arrive first to establish economic or legal stability before bringing family members. Socioeconomically, the majority of informants are self-entrepreneurs, with a significant number also working in informal sectors such as language teaching, street vending, and tech fixes. Other categories include professionals, religious preachers, and students. This varied socioeconomic profile reflects the range of experiences and perspectives within the Muslim community in the country.

2.2. Interviews, Recruitment, and Participant Observations

I conducted semistructured in-depth interviews and informal conversations with the informants. Data saturation was determined when no new themes, patterns, or insights emerged from subsequent

interviews and this point was reached after engaging with 43 individuals. The primary requirement for recruitment for this study was that participants identify as foreign-born Muslims (not local Mexican Muslims), regardless of their level of religiosity. To maximize the reach, a nonprobability of snowball sampling was deployed because of the difficulty in accessing members of the communities in Mexico City. The interviews were conducted in locations chosen by the participants, including cafés, libraries, their homes, parks, and other preferred settings. All of the informants involved in this study provided signed consent forms. To ensure privacy, all real names were coded in the written report.

In addition to interviews, I conducted participant observations as part of my ethnographic fieldwork in Mexico. This included an initial period of observation from 2015 to 2016 and from February 2021 to January 2022. During both periods, I was based in Mexico City, where I resided and carried out the majority of my observations. My approach was overt-participant observation, drawing on "shadowing"[28] and "walking interview"[29] techniques. By physically following my informants in their routines and engaging in real-time conversations while moving through various environments, I was able to gain a deeper understanding of their experiences and cultural practices. For example, I frequently spent time with my informants in informal settings, such as by having meals together, attending social gatherings, participating in both religious and nonreligious festivals and visiting their workspace. Although it was quite time-consuming, this method of observation enabled me to gather rich, contextualized data and produce "thick descriptions"[30] of the social dynamics and experiences within the community.

Ensuring transparency and confidentiality while maintaining a nonjudgmental stance were critical aspects of my data collection process. These considerations were essential for building trust with the

[28] Barbara Czarniawska, *Shadowing, and Other Techniques for Doing Fieldwork in Modern Societies* (Ljubljana: Korotan Ljubljana & Malmö: Liber , 2007).

[29] Margarethe Kusenbach, "Street Phenomenology: The Go-Along as Ethnographic Research Tool", *Ethnography* 4/3 (September 2003), 455-485.

[30] Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

informants and encouraging them to provide honest, unscripted responses, thereby minimizing the risk of the "Hawthorne effect".[31]

3. The Theory of Planned Behavior

The theory of planned behavior (TPB)[32] offers a comprehensive framework for comprehending the intricacies of food consumption behavior, which can be applied to Muslim ḥalāl consumption. According to TPB, the success of a behavior relies on three factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Attitudes toward a behavior reflect a person's positive or negative evaluation of performing this behavior, which, within the context of religious individuals, can be closely tied to the role of religion. Subjective norms refer to social pressures, particularly within Muslim communities or the environment. Attitudes and subjective norms are thus pivotal in influencing individuals' intentions before engaging in behavior. Moreover, the third element of TPB, perceived behavior control, is the ease or difficulty of performing a behavior and can directly influence behavior performance. Thus, by examining attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control, researchers and practitioners can gain insights into the factors that shape Muslim individuals' choices (i.e., behavior intentions). This understanding can contribute to the development of interventions that promote informed and culturally sensitive decision-making in ḥalāl food consumption in a non-Muslim country where there is no assistance or certification present.

Although TPB is predominantly used in quantitative research focused on prediction, it has also been applied, albeit less frequently, in qualitative studies.[33] The limited use in qualitative research may be

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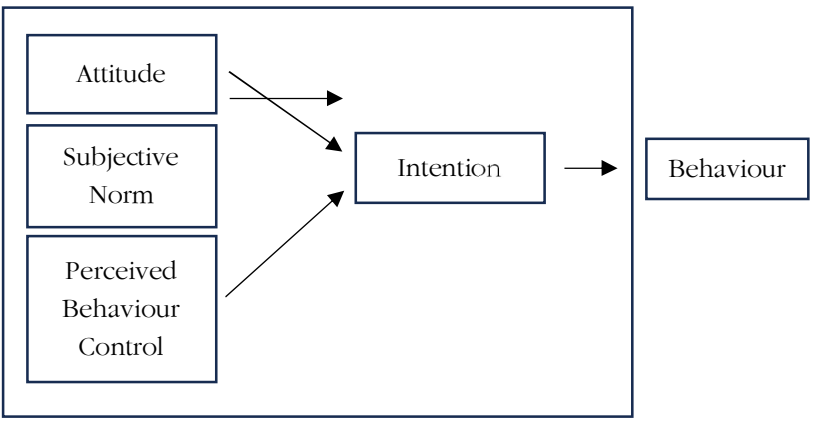
[31] Rob McCarney et al., "The Hawthorne Effect: A Randomised, Controlled Trial", *BMC Medical Research Methodology* 7/1 (December 2007), 30.

[32] Icek Ajzen, "From Intentions to Actions: A Theory of Planned Behavior", *Action Control*, ed. Julius Kuhl - Jürgen Beckmann (Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg, 1985), 11-39; Icek Ajzen, "The Theory of Planned Behavior", *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes* 50/2 (December 1991), 179-211.

[33] Seán Kelleher et al., "Factors That Influence Nursing and Midwifery Students' Intentions to Study Abroad: A Qualitative Study Using the Theory of Planned Behaviour", *Nurse Education Today* 44 (September 2016), 157-164.

attributed to the greater effort required to demonstrate the rigor and credibility of the findings.

Figure 1: Theory of Planned Behaviour



Source: Ajzen (1985)

This study employed inductive thematic analysis (TA) to examine the qualitative data collected from the informants. TA is a widely used method in qualitative research that involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (or themes) within data.[34] Once the data were coded by using NVivo 12, they were organized and interpreted using TPB as an analytical framework, enabling a deeper understanding of how individual beliefs, social influences, and perceived control shaped the informants' experiences.

4. Setting the Scene: Mexico and Ḥalāl

Islam has been present in Mexico in historical accounts of Spanish colonization, slavery, migration, and missionaries' missions. Currently, Muslims make up 0.003% of the population, which is approximately 7,982,[35] and the majority reside in the capital, Mexico City. This city has become a hub for Islamic activities and institutions, including embassies of Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member

[34] Virginia Braun - Victoria Clarke, "Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology", *Qualitative Research in Psychology* 3/2 (January 2006), 77-101.

[35] INEGI, "Censo de Población y Vivienda 2020".

countries, Muslim associations, and ḥalāl certification offices.[36] These entities have the potential to play a significant role in fostering cultural exchange and supporting Muslim communities.

Globally, the ḥalāl industry was valued at USD 5.73 trillion in 2016 and is projected to reach USD 9.71 trillion by 2025. The market is driven by both Muslims and non-Muslim consumers seeking ethical products.[37] Non-Muslim-majority countries such as Australia and Brazil have recognized the economic benefits of and become key players in this market, with Mexico also showing growing interest. To participate, manufacturers must adhere to stringent ḥalāl certification standards and undergo recognition processes, especially in countries with national ḥalāl authorities.

Mexico began actively pursuing opportunities in the ḥalāl market in the 21st century. The country's initial efforts in ḥalāl certification started in 2016 under then-President Enrique Peña Nieto, who aimed to diversify the national economy by reducing dependence on the U.S. and expanding into Middle Eastern and Southeast Asian markets. This initiative led to the certification of ḥalāl products, particularly in the agri-food sector, with a focus on exporting ḥalāl meat to Gulf countries.

Seminars and workshops organized by Islamic embassies in collaboration with global ḥalāl bodies have been crucial in promoting the ḥalāl industry in Mexico. For example, in 2016, the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (MATRADE) organized a seminar in Mexico to increase cooperation between Malaysian and Mexican businesses. Although this event focused primarily on various sectors, the discussion of ḥalāl certification sparked significant interest among Mexican attendees.

By 2018, the Mexican government took further steps to promote the ḥalāl industry by organizing a seminar called "Oportunidades de

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36 Mat Hasif, *Being Muslim, Performing Mexicanness: Religious Identity Negotiations Among Muslim Immigrants in Mexico*; Hasif, "Muslim Immigrant Identifications in Mexico's YouTube Sphere".

37 See Arif Billah et al., "Factors Influencing Muslim and Non-Muslim Consumers' Consumption Behavior: A Case Study on Halal Food", *Journal of Foodservice Business Research* 23/4 (July 2020), 324-349; Mathew et al., "Acceptance on Halal Food Among Non-Muslim Consumers"; Rezai Golnaz et al., "Non-Muslim Consumers' Understanding of Halal Principles in Malaysia", *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 3/1 (January 2012), 35-46.

Negocio en el Mercado Halāl" (Business Opportunities in the Ḥalāl Market) (see Figure 2). This seminar aimed to attract local businesses, especially in agriculture, to tap into the ḥalāl market. The targeted markets included Gulf countries and other Muslim-majority nations, such as Malaysia, Turkey, and Indonesia.[38] Another seminar in 2020, in collaboration with Halal Quality México S.A. de C.V., focused on ḥalāl certifications and market opportunities in Malaysia.

Figure 2: Poster for the Mexican Government's seminar on 'Business Opportunities in the Halal Market' held in Mexico City in 2018

[38] PROMEXICO, "Exporta Halal", *Gob.Mx* (18 November 2018).

4.1. Local Ḥalāl Certifiers

Despite the Mexican government's unsuccessful attempt to establish a top-down ḥalāl certification body, private companies have gradually filled this gap. The first ḥalāl certification body in Mexico, "Halal Consultants", was established in 1994 by Omar Weston, a British Muslim, under the auspices of Centro Cultural Islámico de México A.C. (CCIM). This certification service later evolved into Viva Halal A.C. and moved to the state of Morelos. Since then, more private ḥalāl certification bodies have emerged, many of which are led by immigrants. By 2023, three local-based and six international ḥalāl certification bodies were operating in Mexico (see Table 1). These organizations differ in coverage and fees based on their affiliations with global ḥalāl accreditations, which act as a passport to enter specific ḥalāl markets.

Table 1: The list of Ḥalāl Certifiers in Mexico City

N	Name	Type	Year of Establishment	Location
1	The Centro Cultural Islámico de México (CCIM) / (Viva Halal A.C.)	*Local*	1994	CDMX
2	Global Consulting & Business Halal Mexico	*Local*	2015	Polanco, CDMX
3	Regulatory Affairs Conformity Services (RACS)	*Headquartered in UAE*	2016	Cuauhtémoc, CDMX
4	Estándar Global de Certificación Halal S.L[39]	*Headquartered in Spain*	2017	Reforma, CDMX
5	Federação das Associações Muçulmanas do Brasil (FAMBRAS)	*Headquartered in Brazil*		CDMX

[39] The Mexico branch does not have a registered office other than a reception of call service and an address in Reforma, Mexico City.

6	Center for the Dissemination of Islam for Latin America (CDIAL)	*Headquartered in Brazil*	Unknown	CDMX
7	The Islamic Food and Nutrition Council of America (IFRANCA)	*Headquartered in Chicago, United States*	Unknown	CDMX
8	Halal Quality México S.A. de C.V	*Local*	2019	Reforma, CDMX

The main goal of these ḥalāl certifiers has been to export products, which target Muslim consumers outside of Latin America. However, the local Muslim community has also begun to benefit from these efforts, as ḥalāl-certified products are gradually becoming available domestically. As of 2021, only a few products with ḥalāl logos were available in Mexican supermarkets, including tostadas from the Mexican brand "Charras" and a few Nestlé products. Some of these products were primarily intended for the U.S. market but were also sold in Mexico. Interestingly, some products that once had the ḥalāl logo no longer do, such as packed meat from the "Sukarne" brand.

Figure 3: Crispy toast tortillas brand Charras is widely available in Mexican hypermarkets

Figure 4: Lechera (Condensed Milk) from Nestle that has the ḥalāl logo

4.2. Informal Sectors

Because of the limited availability of ḥalāl products in the formal market, some Muslims in Mexico rely on informal sectors to obtain ḥalāl meat. For example, unprocessed ḥalāl meat is often sold from the back of a van in front of the Centro Cultural Educativo Musulmán (CCEM), in Polanco, Mexico City, during Friday prayers, as shown in Figure 5. Customers can place orders in advance or purchase stock available that day. This informal sector, operated by individuals such as Mr. Hamzah, demonstrates how the ḥalāl food chain in Mexico has cultivated loyalty and extended purchasing power through networking.

In addition to individual vendors, Islamic associations also play a role in the informal ḥalāl sector. People can search online for these associations or use keywords such as "ḥalāl en Mexico" or "Islam en Mexico" to find sources for ḥalāl products. These associations may provide contact information for inquiries about ḥalāl products, prices, and orders. This informal network not only helps maintain ḥalāl dietary adherence but also fosters a sense of community connection and cultural continuity among Muslims living in Mexico, which compensates for the limited formal ḥalāl infrastructure in the country.

Accordingly, although Mexico's ḥalāl industry is still in its early stages, there has been steady progress in developing both local and international ḥalāl certification bodies and improving market access for

ḥalāl products in supermarkets and related outlets. The focus has largely been on export markets, which makes ḥalāl products increasingly available for international consumers. However, given this export-oriented approach, it would be valuable to explore how local Muslims navigate their ḥalāl dietary needs despite the limited domestic market.

Figure 5: Selling Ḥalāl Meat outside the Mosque

5. Attitudes Toward Ḥalāl Food Consumption

The attitudes toward ḥalāl consumption among Muslim immigrants in Mexico vary along a spectrum. These attitudes mark the initial stage of the behavioral process and reflect how beliefs and contextual factors shape subsequent ḥalāl consumption practices.

5.1. A Positively Inclined but Contextually Flexible Stance

Most of the Muslim informants began their stay in Mexico with positive intentions to adhere strictly to ḥalāl dietary laws, which were driven by deeply held religious convictions, a need to express their Muslim identity, and perceptions of cleanliness and purity. However, they also shared that, over time, their initial intentions evolved toward a more flexible approach. This gradual shift was influenced by practical challenges in daily life to “survive”, exposure to diverse

scholarly opinions within Islamic thought that permit personal interpretation, and a desire to adapt to the local gastronomic culture.

One Pakistani informant who moved to Mexico five years ago to join his Mexican wife and has since established a Pakistani clothing business shared the following:

> [After a few years,] I consulted many local [Mexican] imams and also imams in my home country [Pakistan] about my difficulty here. Many of them suggested that I opt for exemption, just eat normally [chicken or beef] with *bismillāh*. (Informant M27)

Given the limited presence of the Muslim community in the local context, the majority of the informants narrated a similar justification. They presented two main points of argument. First, there is a *Fiqh* concept that is always brought by Muslim scholars and practitioners in difficult situations called *rukhṣah* (the exemption). Based on their interpretation of Islamic texts, they argue that they should consider an exemption from the obligation in Islamic teaching to abide by ḥalāl slaughtering requirements, especially for their special situation of living in a country where it is difficult to find Muslim communities. When eating such food, one only needs to recite "Bismillāh" (in Allah's name).

Despite their flexibility in terms of slaughtering practices, these Muslims are still strict about avoiding pork. This avoidance is highly preferred not only by practicing Muslims but also by the majority of "cultural Muslims" in Mexico. According to Ruthven,[40] "cultural Muslims" or "nominal Muslims" are individuals who identify with Islamic culture, history, or civilization but may not actively practice religious rituals or adhere strictly to Islamic beliefs. Their connection to Islam is primarily ethnic, social, or cultural rather than theological or devotional. They may celebrate Muslim festivals, observe certain traditions, or uphold Muslim identity markers (such as a ḥalāl food preference or modest dress) but may not necessarily pray, fast, or engage deeply with religious doctrines. An example of this can be seen in a Lebanese informant who has lived in Mexico for over five years, is married to a local, and runs his own business. Despite admitting that

[40] Malise Ruthven, *Islam: A Very Short Introduction* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2012).

he drinks alcohol frequently, he emphasized that he still avoids eating pork. He shared the following:

> I eat anything here except pork and try to avoid it at all costs… but it's difficult. It does not pique my interest to try, though I can't deny that sometimes I'm curious about *tacos árabe* in Mexico, like how does it taste … particularly the one in Puebla because its origin is from Lebanon. (Informant M01)

This discussion illustrates the nuanced negotiation between cultural identity and environmental influence. Despite not identifying as highly devout, the informant draws a clear boundary around pork consumption, reflecting how pork avoidance persists as a powerful cultural and symbolic marker of Muslim identity. This aversion is particularly tested in Mexico, where pork is prevalent in national cuisine. Notably, *tacos árabes* ("Arab-style tacos") are a popular Mexican dish that originated in Puebla in the early 20th century and were introduced by immigrants from the Middle East, especially Lebanese and Syrian migrants. This style later evolved into the distinctly local creation of *tacos al pastor,* which incorporated Mexican flavors and ingredients. Both versions of these tacos are widely popular and deeply connected to Mexican identity.[41]

The overemphasis on avoiding pork may be explained by several factors, mostly due to Qurʾānic guidance. For example, the Qurʾān explicitly prohibits the consumption of pork in multiple verses (e.g., Q 2:173, 5:3, 6:145, 16:115), which makes it one of the clearest dietary restrictions in Islam. The repetition across various chapters reinforces its significance in Muslim consciousness. As Riaz and Chaudry report, "the most noted exclusion of common meat sources is pork".[42] However, in the case of cultural Muslims, pork avoidance is often less about doctrinal adherence and more about cultural inheritance (embedded in culinary history and food habits), socialization, and identity maintenance. Even when religious observance is minimal or flexible, the taboo around pork tends to persist because of its strong

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[41] Domingo García-Garza, "Prácticas Alimenticias y Clasificación Social ¿Los Tacos Son Un Alimento 'Popular'?", *Civitas - Revista de Ciências Sociais* 10/3 (February 2011).

[42] Mian Nadeem Riaz - Muhammad Munir Chaudry, *Halal Food Production* (Boca Raton: CRC Press, 2003), 182.

symbolic role in defining group boundaries. Additionally, many Muslims associate pork with impurity and health concerns. The fatty acid composition of pork fat is biochemically incompatible with that of human fat and metabolic systems.[43]

The second dominant argument is that the majority of Muslims believe that it is permissible in their situation to consume all meats other than pork "slaughtered" by locals. This is because Mexico is a majority Catholic country, and locals are classified as "People of the Book" (e.g., Christians and Jews). The permissibility of consuming in this way is mentioned in the Qurʾān:

> This day all the good things are allowed to you; and the food [slaughtered cattle, permissible animals] of those who have been given the Book is lawful for you and your food is lawful for them. (Q 5:5)

The word "slaughtered" is the main issue for consideration because it is the only permissible way of killing animals for meat, which in Islam, is called *dhabīḥah*. Other alternatives to slaughtering are considered non-*dhabīḥah*.[44] In practice, Islamic scholars generally agree that Muslims are not required to investigate in detail or to ask whether the animal was slaughtered or killed in a non-*dhabīḥah* manner, but if the latter is discovered, it becomes *ḥarām* to eat. Many informants align with these principles and acknowledge allowances such as consuming meat from People of the Book while navigating the challenges of maintaining ḥalāl dietary practices within their lived contexts. This reflects the dynamic interplay between religious doctrine and the practical realities faced by Muslim immigrants.

5.2. Religious Commitments and Parental Responsibility

A key dimension that shapes attitudes toward ḥalāl food consumption among Muslim immigrants is the strong sense of religious commitment coupled with parental responsibility. A smaller group of informants maintained strict adherence to ḥalāl diets, viewing this as a nonnegotiable aspect of their faith. Individuals in this category are often characterized by greater financial capacity, strong religious knowledge of slaughtering practices, or adherence to a more

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[43] J. A. Awan, "Islamic Food Laws-I: Philosophy of the Prohibition of Unlawful Foods'" *Science and Technology in the Islamic World* 6/3 (1988), 151-165.

[44] Animals that were killed, stoned, electrified, strangled, or drawn to death are examples of *ḥarām* meat that cannot be eaten.

conservative Islamic school of thought. Individuals in this category typically prepare their own meals at home or when eating out, choose seafood or kosher options. Although Islamic schools of thought (*madhhabs)* differ in their views on seafood, many consider it the safest alternative in the absence of readily available ḥalāl meat. For example, the previous Pakistani informant shared the following:

> I am particular about ḥalāl, and I cannot find any real ḥalāl restaurants here. [...] I have found a few Arab or Syrian restaurants around my area… and I thought they would sell ḥalāl food, but unfortunately, they don't. They also serve alcohol, which is quite upsetting. So, I normally cook at home and slaughter the animals by myself. [...] If I eat outside, I always go for fish and seafood options… but sometimes I am still worried and suspicious of the way the food is prepared, like maybe using alcohol … or using the same frying pan that they used to prepare the pork. [...] So to avoid doubt and asking so many questions of the waiters, that is why I barely eat outside. (Informant M27)

Strict ḥalāl adherents commonly choose the seafood option, usually by mentioning that they are vegetarian to ensure the quality of the food. Because of global understanding and a common moral obligation among food vendors or providers to ensure that their food is suitable for vegetarians, these Muslims are more confident that the food is free from any meat. However, as the informant stated, this option may still not be free from alcohol or other substances, so individuals still need to ask for confirmation.

Within the family, parental leadership, especially that of the husband, plays a crucial role in upholding strict ḥalāl dietary adherence. Parents often feel a strong responsibility to safeguard their children's religious identity and well-being by ensuring that all food consumed at home meets ḥalāl standards. This sense of duty drives a careful and intentional decision-making around dietary practices and reinforces a positive attitude toward maintaining ḥalāl despite the challenges of living in a minority context.

While living in Mexico City as an expatriate, a Malaysian informant described how his commitment to ḥalāl is largely shaped by his role as the family's religious guide and decision-maker regarding food consumption. He rarely dines out, preferring to maintain ḥalāl

standards at home, and attributes his consistency not only to personal conviction but also to his active leadership in shaping family practices. He explainned that

> We always eat at home because my wife can cook. She prepares a lunch pack for me and for my children, and we have our dinner together at home to ensure everything is ḥalāl […] I normally buy the ḥalāl meat at the mosque … yeah, it is more expensive but that is the only option we have. [...] For the chickens, we have our friend [Muslim colleague] who knows how to slaughter them, and we pay him twice a month for that. (Informant M19)

This narrative illustrates how, within Islam, some husbands take a proactive leadership role in creating a structured environment where religious dietary requirements are clearly prioritized and upheld. Their role not only is essential in ensuring ḥalāl consumption but also serves as a powerful symbol of the family's commitment to religious values. This form of leadership aligns with broader research in migration and religious studies that highlights the significance of family heads as cultural and religious custodians who actively preserve faith practices in diaspora communities.[45] Through their guidance, ḥalāl dietary observance becomes a conscious and nonnegotiable expression of both religious identity and family cohesion.

Notably, this informant's extensive cosmopolitan experience of having lived and worked in countries such as Vietnam and Germany prior to Mexico did not diminish his strict adherence to ḥalāl dietary practices. This suggests that cosmopolitanism and global mobility do not necessarily lead to cultural assimilation or a dilution of religious identity. Instead, for many migrants, these experiences may strengthen their resolve to maintain certain nonnegotiable aspects of their faith and underscore how migration can reaffirm rather than erode deeply held religious commitments.

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[45] Jonathan Scourfield et al., "Religious Nurture in British Muslim Families: Implications for Social Work", *International Social Work* 56/3 (May 2013), 326-342; Trees Pels, "Muslim Families from Morocco in the Netherlands: Gender Dynamics and Fathers' Roles in a Context of Change", *Current Sociology* 48/4 (2000), 75-93; Ziarat Hossain, "Fathers in Muslim Families in Bangladesh and Malaysia", *Fathers in Cultural Context*, ed. David W. Shwalb et al. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2012), 95-121.

5.3. Subjective Norms

Subjective norms surrounding ḥalāl food consumption among Muslim immigrants in Mexico reveal a complex interplay of social influences, both local and transnational, that shape everyday dietary decisions.

5.3.1. Lack of External Social Pressure

The interviews revealed that the informants felt minimal social pressure regarding their dietary choices. The general lack of awareness about Islam and the small Muslim population in Mexico contribute to a lower level of judgment or scrutiny. One interviewee, a woman from Afghanistan who considers herself a practicing Muslim but acknowledges the need for exemptions in certain situations, shared her experience. She arrived in Mexico on a refugee permit and is currently in the process of obtaining citizenship. She explained,

> There aren't many Muslims here, but our mosques are growing […] I feel free to make my own choices without worrying about judgment. The locals are quite open-minded about my dietary preferences. If I decline certain non-ḥalāl ingredients, they don't stare or question me as if I'm being scrutinized. It's a relaxed environment. (Informant M11)

According to her account and existing studies, the Muslim community in Mexico, particularly in Mexico City, clearly has been steadily growing and organizing through various associations that also function as mosques and community centers. At least nine such associations represent different sects of Islam (e.g., Sunnī, Shīʿī, and Aḥmadī), providing spaces for religious activities, prayers, and Friday congregational services. The informants report that although overt social pressure around dietary practices is generally absent, subtle negotiations and self-monitoring do occur. Although most community members adopt a flexible approach to ḥalāl food consumption based on their lived experiences, some remain cautiously aware of potential judgments from more observant or stricter Muslims within these gatherings. This dynamic creates a delicate balance between personal dietary choices and communal expectations and illustrates the nuanced interplay between individual practices and collective identity in Mexico's diverse Muslim community.

Based on the informants' experiences, host-society members in Mexico generally exhibit high levels of openness and low levels of

scrutiny toward Muslim dietary practices. Mexicans often respond to religious differences with curiosity and accommodation rather than judgment, especially in everyday interactions. In addition, local awareness of Islam remains limited, which, in turn, reduces the social pressure on Muslims to conform to or justify their dietary rules.

In practice, many informants deploy what they call the "religion card" – a brief, respectful explanation of their beliefs to request modifications to their orders (e.g., "Sorry, I cannot eat pork because of my religious beliefs; please remove any pork from my order"). Far from eliciting skepticism, this strategy typically garners deference, as the devout values underlying the request resonate within Mexico's own faith-oriented culture. Rather than facing confrontation, the informants reported that restaurant staff and peers readily accommodate their needs, which reflects a broader pattern of cultural hospitality toward religious minorities in the country.

5.3.2. Internalized Family Influence

Within the domain of subjective norms, internalized family influence emerged as a salient theme, particularly shaped by familial hierarchy. Although external community pressure was largely absent due to the minimal Muslim population, several informants highlighted that family members, especially parents and fathers, played a central role in shaping ḥalāl-related expectations and behaviors. For example, in households where the father was viewed as the primary religious authority, his commitment to full ḥalāl observance translated into stricter dietary enforcement for the entire family. Similarly, mothers are often perceived as caretakers of religious routines who reinforce ḥalāl consumption through meal preparation and reminders. This dynamic reflects a form of internalized normative pressure, where religious behavior is sustained not through communal accountability but through respect for familial roles and obligations. These findings align with past research[46] that demonstrates that family, particularly parental figures, can serve as a potent source of moral expectation in the absence of broader community enforcement.

[46] Mehkar Sherwani et al., "Determinants of Halal Meat Consumption in Germany", *Journal of Islamic Marketing* 9/4 (October 2018), 863-883; Afzaal Ali et al., "Factors Affecting Halal Meat Purchase Intention: Evidence from International Muslim Students in China", *British Food Journal* 119/3 (2017), 527-541.

5.3.3. Negotiating Norms in Intercultural Relationships

Another key theme under subjective norms is the negotiation of ḥalāl expectations in intercultural family settings, particularly among informants married to non-Muslim Mexicans or with non-Muslim in-laws. In such households, adherence to ḥalāl practices is often mediated by the need to maintain familial harmony and mutual respect. Some informants described adjusting their dietary expectations, such as tolerating non-ḥalāl-slaughtered meat or only avoiding pork, as part of a broader compromise with partners or extended family members who did not share the same religion.

For example, several informants discussed integrating Mexican cuisine into their household meals; sometimes in fully ḥalāl versions (e.g., using ḥalāl chicken purchased from a mosque) and at other times in partial adaptations, such as preparing traditional dishes with non-ḥalāl-slaughtered meat while still avoiding pork. An informant from Lebanon shared that his favorite home-cooked meal is ḥalāl enchiladas made with ḥalāl chicken, although when dining at his in-laws' home, he ate whatever was served to avoid conflict. Moreover, an Iraqi religious preacher explained that in the early stages of living with his in-laws, he ate whatever was served (except for pork), but over time, he communicated his ḥalāl dietary requirements. Now, he prepares his own food when eating at his in-laws' house or chooses non-meat options. At home, he and his Mexican wife alternate between Mexican and Iraqi dishes, collaboratively managing their meals by using substitute meats when necessary. He continued,

> There are many menus here that can be substituted with chicken or beef, so it is no problem. The thing is, I like the way Mexican food tastes, it's very "home cooking", but … I just don't eat spicy food [laughing]. (Informant M39)

The influence of non-Muslim spouses or in-laws often leads to pragmatic adjustments that prioritize family unity and cultural integration while still attempting to uphold core religious values. Moreover, the blending of culinary traditions highlights the flexibility and adaptability of individuals in their private lives. By incorporating elements of Mexican cuisine into their home cooking, they not only honor their cultural heritage but also find a way to feel more connected to their current environment. This practice of culinary integration

serves as a bridge between their past and present, allowing them to maintain their cultural identity while embracing new experiences.

5.3.4. Virtual and Transnational Influences

Despite being physically distant from their home communities, several informants reported feeling monitored or judged through virtual spaces such as social media platforms. These digital networks served as extended moral communities that upheld expectations around ḥalāl adherence, reinforcing a sense of accountability even in geographic isolation. For some, this translated into self-censorship or caution in online behavior. A Pakistani informant, who had previously sought guidance from imams, shared the following:

> I avoid posting pictures of myself eating outside. If I do, I know my cousins or followers back home will start asking, "Is that meat ḥalāl?" or worse, start labeling me as "a liberal Muslim" [….] I don't want to open debates with people back home who don't understand our situation. (Informant M27)

Similar experiences were also shared by other informants, particularly those from strong communal and collectivist cultures such as Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Egypt. These experiences demonstrate how transnational religious ties can also exert normative pressure that shapes consumption practices in subtle but powerful ways. The concern about being labeled a "liberal Muslim" carries a pejorative connotation and signals that such a label is associated with weakened religiosity or nonadherence to Islamic principles. The statement of "our situation" underscores the tension between maintaining religious integrity and managing expectations from those who are disconnected from the immigrant's everyday reality. This reflects broader patterns identified in scholarship,[47] where digital religiosity plays a central role in shaping identity and behavior among Muslim minorities in global contexts.

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[47] Nik Hasif, "Muslim Immigrant Identifications in Mexico's YouTube Sphere"; Wolfgang Wagner et al., "The Veil and Muslim Women's Identity: Cultural Pressures and Resistance to Stereotyping", *Culture & Psychology* 18/4 (2012), 521-541; Claire-Marie Hefner, "Morality, Religious Authority, and the Digital Edge: Indonesian Muslim Schoolgirls Online", *American Ethnologist* 49/3 (2022), 359-373; Bouziane Zaid et al., "Digital Islam and Muslim Millennials: How Social Media Influencers Reimagine Religious Authority and Islamic Practices", *Religions* 13/4 (April 2022), 335.

6. Perceived Behavioral Control

This section examines how Muslim immigrants navigate challenges such as limited ḥalāl availability and social factors, which shape their sense of control and lead to adaptive dietary choices and cultural integration.

6.1. Accessibility and Availability of Ḥalāl Food Options

Because of the very small Muslim population, the limited accessibility and availability of ḥalāl food options in Mexico present a substantial challenge for Muslim immigrants striving to maintain strict ḥalāl dietary practices. This scarcity affects perceived behavioral control by constraining individuals' ability to consistently perform the behavior of consuming fully ḥalāl food. As explained in the background section, ḥalāl production in Mexico is primarily geared toward export markets rather than local consumption, resulting in a limited supply of ḥalāl-certified products readily available for the local Muslim community. Consequently, many informants reported resorting to alternative strategies such as selective purchasing (e.g., buying ḥalāl chicken from mosque stores), preparing homemade meals from limited ingredients, or applying *fiqh*-based allowances such as consuming People of the Book meat to navigate these constraints.

The availability of kosher and vegetarian alternatives provides a practical solution for those unable to find ḥalāl food easily. However, even though alternatives are available, they still present challenges because of their high cost. A Sudanese informant, who has been studying in Mexico for more than two years, shared the challenges that he faced living alone in a non-Muslim environment. He shared as follows:

> Jewish kosher is more developed here, and butcher shops can be found all over Polanco. I consider *kosher* to be ḥalāl because it is permissible in Islam, so I always buy there, and it is the best option we have in Mexico because they are also strictly supervised … and the facility is clean, so you become confident when you buy there. [...] But the price is a little higher, and I don't think every Muslim here can afford it. (Informant M34)

Kosher is not one of the main options for most Muslims because it is not widely available in restaurants or stores in Mexico and is expensive. Consequently, demanding kosher food as an alternative is not possible except at special dedicated places such as in the Polanco, Condesa, and Santa Fe neighborhoods. Like ḥalāl, kosher is a Jewish term used to describe food or products that meet the dietary standards of Jewish law for the sake of spiritual health. Food that does not meet the requirements is called treif (unkosher or forbidden). The determination as to whether it is classified as kosher or treif is based on whether the sources are permitted and are not from prohibited animals (e.g., pigs, rabbits, camels, and shellfish); the approved preparation of meat (i.e., slaughtering and "koshering" to dry the blood); the use of utensils (e.g., they cannot have contact with non-kosher food); and the process of eating (e.g., meat and dairy cannot be eaten together, and the same cooking utensils cannot be used for this mixture). All of these determining factors are mentioned in the Torah, although some prohibitions are unexplored.

Globally, kosher has become one of the alternatives for Muslims, as the majority of Islamic scholars argue that it is permissible to eat kosher meat when it is difficult to find ḥalāl, as the meat is slaughtered by Ahl al-Kitāb (i.e., the People of the Book). Muslims prefer this option over non-ḥalāl certified products because it is close to the standards of ḥalāl cleanliness, if not stricter. At a scholarly level, there is still some debate about the incompatibility of kosher standards with Islamic dietary law, especially given the argument from the Ḥanafī school of law that Jews do not recite "In the name of Allah, most gracious and merciful" when slaughtering. Other than this, no other issue arises.

The kosher market has grown tremendously compared with that of ḥalāl, making it more visible in Mexico. Some hypermarket chains, such as Walmart, Superama, Soriana, and Gigante Mexico, even have a specific kosher section, in line with organic and gluten-free products. However, except for fresh products such as meat, these products are not local products; the majority of canned and grocery products in local stores are imported from the United States, while the oils and canned fish are sourced from Spain, chocolates come from European countries, and other products, such as jam and marmalades, are from France. American kosher products have dominated local markets because of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), an

agreement among the United States, Canada, and Mexico, which has zero tariffs and low transportation costs. The most common brands are Heinz, Borden, Florida Natural, Seneca Sweet, Arden, Vita, Natures Path, Hodgson Mill, Roland, Badia, Smucker's, Dickinson, and Hershey.

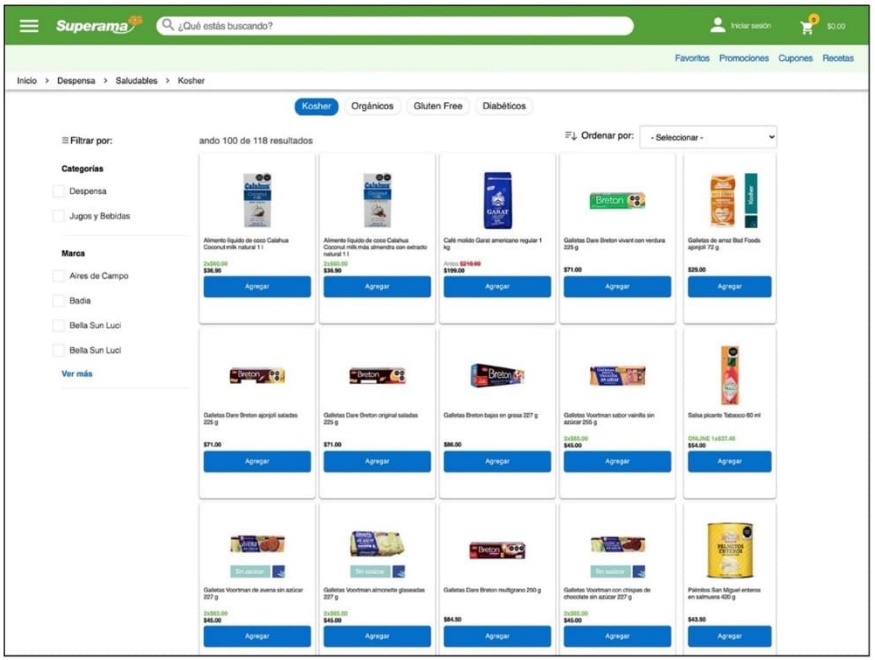

Figure 6: Some of the 118 kosher products available in Superama, Mexico under the healthy section of their website[48]

6.2. High Cost

In addition to kosher, the high cost of ḥalāl food also emerges as a significant barrier that affects Muslim immigrants' perceived behavioral control over maintaining strict ḥalāl dietary practices. When ḥalāl-certified products or meats sold informally are priced substantially higher than their non-ḥalāl counterparts are, individuals experience

[48] https://www.superama.com.mx/catalogo/d-despensa/f-despensa-saludable/l-despensa-kosher.

financial constraints that limit their ability to choose ḥalāl options consistently. This economic burden often forces them to prioritize affordability and accessibility over strict religious adherence, leading to compromises such as choosing non-ḥalāl-slaughtered meat while avoiding explicitly prohibited items such as pork. This financial challenge can weaken their intentions and result in inconsistent behavior, as observed in various Muslim-minority settings where ḥalāl food availability is limited and often expensive.[49] Consequently, economic pressures intersect with cultural and religious factors to shape a pragmatic approach to ḥalāl food, where the ideal is moderated by affordability.

6.3. Cultural Cravings and Food Habits

Beyond limited access, this flexibility is also driven by the challenge of changing deeply ingrained food habits. For many Muslim immigrants, the desire to maintain ties to familiar tastes –particularly fast food brands or culturally embedded dishes– presents a practical challenge to consistent ḥalāl adherence. Such cravings are often amplified by the lack of ḥalāl-certified alternatives, which makes individuals feel constrained in their ability to uphold ideal dietary practices. For example, an Indonesian informant who self-identified as a practicing Muslim stated that he still eats at any local restaurant or well-known franchise that clearly has no ḥalāl certification by simply avoiding meat from impermissible animals. Arriving in Mexico as a postgraduate student, he went on to establish a business, marry a Mexican partner, and raise children, ultimately calling the country home for more than twenty years. He shared the following:

> Here, I still eat at McDonald's because I know most of their burgers do not contain pork. [...] Living here for many years, it is difficult to resist, you know. (Informant M04)

This narrative illustrates the role of habitual cravings and contextual adaptation as barriers to consistent ḥalāl adherence. Although the informant retains an awareness of key religious restrictions, specifically the avoidance of pork, the long-term exposure to a non-ḥalāl

[49] Marco Tieman et al., "Consumer Perception on Halal Meat Logistics", *British Food Journal* 115/8 (2013), 1112-1129; Nuradli Ridzwan Shah Mohd Dali et al. "Is Halal Products Are More Expensive as Perceived by the Consumers? Muslimprenuers Challenges and Opportunities in Establishing a Blue Ocean Playing Field", *Journal of Management & Muamalah* 2 (January 2009), 39-62.

environment gradually weakens his behavioral control. This reflects how the perceived difficulty of consistently locating ḥalāl alternatives, coupled with the comfort and familiarity of certain foods, may override initial intentions. The use of the word "still" indicates that the food at McDonald's reminds him of his past when he used to be able to indulge in the same menu of the same franchise operating in his own Islamic country without needing to worry about ḥalāl-ness. This is what Mead[50] defines as "food habits", which are the manifestations of an individual's habitual decisions regarding the food or drink that they frequently consume in the form of lifestyles, thoughts, and feelings. On a societal level, it can be regarded as a collective behavior that occurs within cultural and geographical boundaries. Moreover, because of the dietary boundaries being contested in a new country, this informant embraced the exemption of being in a Christian country (i.e., eating meat slaughtered by Ahl al-Kitāb at a fast-food franchise) while still avoiding clear and non-debatable prohibited animals (e.g., pork) on the menu.

6.4. Emerging Cultural Integration

The desire to integrate into the local food culture also plays a role in shaping dietary practices. As immigrants settle over time, they often adapt their food habits by blending traditional ḥalāl requirements with local culinary practices. This dynamic process reflects not only practical adjustments but also evolving identities, where maintaining religious observance intersects with embracing elements of the host culture. Understanding this integration is crucial for appreciating how perceived ease or difficulty in adhering to ḥalāl norms fluctuates amid the realities of everyday life abroad.

For example, an Egyptian informant who has been living in Mexico for more than four years, works in an office environment and is married to a local explained his approach to adapting abroad. Embracing the principle of "when in Rome, do as the Romans do", he shared that

> Islam is *easy* [emphasis added], we are now in the country that does not have any ḥalāl restaurants at all […] We are in

[50] Margaret Maed, "The Problem of Changing Food Habits", *Food and Culture: A Reader*, ed. Carole Counihan - Penny van Esterik - Alice P. Julier (New York: Routledge, 2008), 18.

> Mexico, and I also want to try their food like the famous *tacos* and so on but of course not the ones made from pork because that is the limit. Our prophet once said, "You say bismillāh, and eat it"… then you just *tawakkal ʿalá Allāh*. (Informant M07)

"Easy" in this context can be interpreted as indicating that this Muslim believes that his religion is accommodating and flexible and provides solutions for every problem. Many of the informants expressed their love for Mexican food. The most popular local foods among these Muslims were *tacos, quesadillas, pozole, chilaquiles, enchiladas, mole, tostadas*, and *tamales,* and all of these dishes have non-pork options such as chicken or beef. For example, a Jordanian informant who has lived in the country for more than 21 years mentioned that his favorites are "*barbacua, mole*, and *tazajo* (from Oaxaca)". The most frequently mentioned exclusive pork-based dishes they avoid are *tacos al pastor, carnitas, cochinita pibil,* and *chilorio*.

Nonetheless, despite their enthusiasm for local cuisine, the informants still took several precautions to avoid over-compromising their Islamic faith-based demands, mostly by avoiding any ingredient contaminated by non-ḥalāl. For example, Mexicans use manteca (pork fat) in almost everything that they fry and bake, and they rarely use plant oil for the same purposes. This means that Muslims have to be quite vigilant before ordering. The most common question is "What type of oil do you use to fry this, vegetable oil or Manteca?" Other questions are "Is it pork?", "Is there any ingredient made of pork inside?", or "Do you use the same frying pan to prepare pork dishes?" In addition to pork, some informants check for the presence of other substances, such as alcohol and gelatin, especially in spaghettis and pastries. For instance, "Do you add wine to it?" or "Is there gelatin inside?" This is because gelatin is normally extracted from the skin or bones of pigs, which creates concern in Muslim communities.[51]

In some situations, cultural integration in Mexico occurs unintentionally, especially in social settings. For example, a Pakistani informant shared his experience during an emergency situation:

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[51] See Aizhan Rakhmanova et al., "Meeting the Requirements of Halal Gelatin: A Mini Review", *MOJ Food Processing & Technology* 6/6 (December 2018).

> I'm strict with ḥalāl and only choose vegetarian when I'm outside […] I noticed here that vegetarians are not that common in Mexico; Mexicans are still not obsessed with food identity, so they are not used to tolerating others' preferences. [...] I declined [chicken] one time during dinner when I visited my friend's home. I was surprised because he didn't tell me we were going to eat there, and his mom prepared a lot of food for us. […] I only ate salad and the rest. Although his mom did not look upset, my friend's brother said privately to me something like, "Didn't your religion teach you to appreciate others?" It's considered impolite in Mexico to refuse food because not everyone is wealthy enough to afford it. (Informant M27)

This statement reveals how Muslim immigrants encounter varying "breaking points" that compel them to negotiate their religious dietary commitments in real time. This in situ approach required the informant to make a quick decision without having the time to check all of the parameters beforehand. This crisis tested not only his decision-making abilities but also his ability to adapt. His reflection on "food identity" is particularly insightful. In many developed or more culturally diverse countries, there is broader social recognition and respect for dietary choices such as vegetarian, ḥalāl, kosher, vegan, and gluten-free, among others. Hosts often take these factors into consideration to avoid offense or discomfort. In contrast, in home-based social settings, the Mexican context described here features less familiarity with such dietary distinctions, often leading to misunderstandings and social friction.

However, despite these pressures, the informant's decision to maintain his ḥalāl principles demonstrates a strong personal commitment to religious beliefs even in this challenging situation. However, not all Muslim immigrants respond in the same way; some choose to accommodate social demands in similar circumstances by eating whatever is served to avoid conflict or social discomfort. This variation highlights the diverse strategies that Muslim immigrants employ to balance their religious commitments with the realities of intercultural living as they negotiate between personal conviction and social harmony in different ways.

7. Inconsistent Intention and Behavior in Ḥalāl Consumption

By combining the three TPB components, Muslim immigrants in Mexico initially hold a strong, positive intention toward ḥalāl consumption driven by religious obligations, identity, and perceptions of cleanliness. Over time, this intention often shifts to a contextually flexible stance, which reflects limited ḥalāl accommodations, the practical realities of living in a non-Muslim-majority country, and a desire for cultural integration. However, the intention to avoid non-ḥalāl animals (e.g., pork) remains unwavering, underscoring core religious commitments and for some, parental responsibility to protect family observance. A small subset of informants maintains strict intentions, persisting in fully ḥalāl-slaughtered consumption despite the barriers.

Behaviorally, the challenges result in the inconsistent consumption of ḥalāl-slaughtered meat, which is a rational outcome of attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. The informants leverage *fiqh*-based allowances (e.g., the People of the Book) and face low social pressure, yet experience internalized family influence, intercultural negotiations, and virtual/transnational monitoring, to guide their choices. They also navigate barriers such as limited access to affordable ḥalāl or kosher options, high costs, cultural cravings, and ongoing cultural integration. Despite some flexibility, the enduring intention to avoid pork manifests in precautionary behaviors by asking for confirmation and scrutinizing ingredients, highlighting how core religious values continue to inform daily practices.

Conclusion

This study sheds light on the complex ways in which Muslim immigrants in Mexico navigate ḥalāl food consumption in a minority context, using the theory of planned behavior (TPB) as an analytical lens. Although their initial intentions toward ḥalāl were generally strong, rooted in religious belief, identity, and cleanliness, most informants adopted a contextually flexible approach over time. This flexibility was shaped by a combination of practical barriers (such as limited access and affordability), exposure to diverse *fiqh*-based exemptions, and a desire for cultural integration. The study further highlights how subjective norms operate beyond physical

communities, with internalized family expectations, intercultural household negotiations, and transnational digital networks that influence dietary choices. Moreover, perceived behavioral control was affected not only by physical access to ḥalāl food but also by emotional attachments to familiar non-ḥalāl dishes and the high cost of certified alternatives. This study innovatively focuses on a numerically negligible Muslim minority outside the typical Western context (i.e., a medium-sized or large minority). It contributes to expanding ḥalāl consumption scholarship by revealing how religious practice is pragmatically adapted in less-researched, resource-limited settings such as Mexico. The findings emphasize that ḥalāl observance is not a binary act but a dynamic process negotiated through personal convictions, sociocultural environments, and global religious discourses. As Muslim migration continues to diversify globally, understanding these localized adaptations becomes crucial for policy-makers, community leaders, and researchers aiming to support religious inclusion and dietary accommodation in multicultural societies.

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SIMULATION THEORY IN THE ONTIC AND EPISTEMIC GROUNDS OF KALĀM

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Abstract

The simulation hypothesis is shaped by a combination of philosophical questions, scientific advances, and cultural influences. This concept has been prevalent in philosophical thought since ancient times. However, in the modern era, with the development of computer and virtual reality technologies, this topic has been increasingly discussed. In his article on the "simulation hypothesis", Nick Bostrom argued that our universe and everything in it could be part of some type of computer simulation. This concept has led to speculation and debates among scientists and philosophers. Support for this hypothesis has attracted increased attention. In this study, we attempt to critique this hypothesis, which is continuously on the agenda, by applying an understanding of the existence and knowledge of theology. Since theologians base the reality of knowledge on the ontic structure of existence, they have adopted the principle of "the reality of things is fixed". However, simulation theory challenges this understanding of

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existence and knowledge, which forms a paradigm of the reality of knowledge. Although theologians accept that reality is objective, simulation theory contradicts this view. When these two ideas are considered from a neurobiological perspective, objects do not need to correspond to ontic reality for knowledge to be real. Therefore, the simulation hypothesis led us to question the meaning of the world in which we live, along with the concepts of reality and knowledge. In this context, we discuss the possibility that the universe is a simulation, as well as the creator of the simulation, the divine qualities of the simulation, and its theological implications. This study addresses other important issues of how simulation affects the meaning of human life and how it can be viewed as a test of free will. When we consider simulation theory from a theological perspective, we conclude that it poses no problem in terms of concepts such as the existence of God, creativity, heaven, or hell.

Keywords: Kalām, simulation, God, being, realms

Introduction

The possibility of living in a simulation is shaped by philosophical inquiries, scientific advances, and cultural phenomena. The notion that reality may be an illusion is present in various philosophical traditions, dating back to antiquity. Plato argued that humans can make mistakes when they perceive shadows as reality. The idea of living in simulations has been intensively discussed in the modern era. Advances in computer and virtual reality (VR) technologies have led to the question of their potential to create highly sophisticated simulations. As computing power and the complexity of virtual environments have increased, the idea of simulating the entire universe has become increasingly realistic.

The debate on living in a simulation gained momentum when philosopher Nick Bostrom proposed the "simulation hypothesis".[1] In his 2003 article, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?" Bostrom argued that it is highly likely that we live in a simulation. Bostrom's arguments have generated widespread interest and debate.[2] After

[1] Nick Bostrom, "The Simulation Argument: Reply to Weatherson", *The Philosophical Quarterly* 55/218 (2005), 92.

[2] Nick Bostrom, "The Simulation Argument: Some Explanations", *Analysis* 69/3 (2009), 458-461; Bostrom, "The Simulation Argument", 90-97; Nick

Bostrom's statement, the renowned science fiction writer Philip K. Dick also claimed that we are living in a simulation. Stephen Hawking argued that there is a 50% chance that we will encounter a simulated reality. Neil deGrasse Tyson, on the other hand, has stated that it is very likely that the universe is a simulation.[3]

The idea of living in a simulation has also been popularized through popular culture media, such as movies, television programs, and books. According to the simulation hypothesis, the universe and world we inhabit may be a type of simulation. That is, the universe and everything in it, including ourselves, are part of a computer-generated simulation. This idea is sometimes referred to as the "computer game hypothesis" or the "matrix hypothesis". The "computer game hypothesis" refers to a philosophical hypothesis suggesting that the universe or reality is a type of simulation or computer program. This hypothesis has often arisen because of the rapid development of human technology and the increasing realism and complexity of computer games. The term "matrix hypothesis" usually refers to the 1999 science fiction movie "The Matrix". In the movie, people discover that they are living in a simulation of the real world, leading them to question their perceptions and beliefs about the real world. The movie has many themes, often exploring the boundary between reality and virtual reality and delving into philosophical issues. Films such as "The Matrix" have contributed to debates about the fundamental nature of existence, capturing the public's imagination by depicting a dystopian future where people unconsciously live in a simulated reality.[4] In this context, discussions on living in simulations have emerged from a confluence of philosophical inquiries, technological advances, and cultural influences, triggering speculation and debates about the fundamental nature of existence. The term "matrix hypothesis" has been extended to refer to a state of perception of reality that questions or alters humans' conscious perception of reality. This concept has emerged from the impact of modern technologies, which have led to

Bostrom - Marcin Kulczycki, "A Patch for the Simulation Argument", *Analysis* 71/1 (2011), 54-61.

3 Rizwan Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis: An MIT Computer Scientist Shows Why AI, Quantum Physics and Eastern Mystics Agree We are in a Video Game* (Mountain View, California: Bayview Books, 2019), 17, 22.

4 Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 22; Ömer Faruk Görücü, "Simulation and God", *Tabula Rasa: Felsefe ve Teoloji* 42 (2024), 3.

a reflection on how reality is perceived and experienced and have even blurred the boundaries between reality and virtual reality. In this context, the "matrix hypothesis" refers to the complex relationship between reality and perception.[5]

When scientists and philosophers consider such hypotheses, they usually assess whether they are compatible with the available evidence. The scientists Max Planck and Amit Goswami have recognized this hypothesis as more of a speculative and intellectual exercise.[6] However, although it may seem like a work of science fiction at first glance, it contains important philosophical and theological claims. This hypothesis prompts a deep reflection on the nature of human experience and questions the boundaries between the reality of existence and simulation. This intersection of science fiction and philosophical debates raises important questions about the future of humanity and consciousness.[7] This encourages us to question conscious experiences and to consider the possibility of simulation in human existence.[8] Therefore, the question of whether humans live in simulations has inspired debates and research in various disciplines.

Rather than focusing on the truth or falsity of this hypothesis, we consider its theological implications, which lead thinkers to consider it seriously. If we truly live in a simulation and exist in a simulated universe, does this mean that our universe was created not by God but by other intelligent beings? However, given that theologians ground metaphysical knowledge in ontological reality, does the reality of metaphysical knowledge disappear if we live in a simulated world? Is there any point in discussing the meaning of life or believing in God in this world? This article also discusses the process of knowledge formation through the biological structure of human beings and the application of modern science to evaluate the perception of reality,

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5 Anna Longo, "How the True World Finally Became Virtual Reality", *Filozofski Vestnik* 42/2 (2021), 288.

6 Brian Weatherson, "Are You a Sim?", *The Philosophical Quarterly* 53/212 (2003), 425-431; Miloš Agatonović, "The Fiction of Simulation: A Critique of Bostrom's Simulation Argument", *AI & SOCIETY* 38/4 (2023), 1579-1586; Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 249.

7 Jonathan Birch, "On the 'Simulation Argument' and Selective Scepticism", *Erkenntnis* 78 (February 2013), 95-96.

8 Birch, "On the 'Simulation Argument' and Selective Scepticism", 96; Eric Steinhart, "Theological Implications of the Simulation Argument", *Ars Disputandi* 10/1 (January 2010), 23.

which is the foundation of the relationship between knowledge and existence. Finally, if it is possible to live in a simulated universe, this will be criticized in the context of God's existence, which is the main argument of theology.

Although many studies have been conducted on the claim of simulation in the West, we have not conducted a direct study on this subject in Türkiye. In this study, which employed the document analysis method, the primary and secondary sources constituting the research dataset were analyzed in detail.

1. The Claim that the Universe and Life are Simulations and That They Emerge

The "simulation hypothesis" is based on the philosophical claim that consciousness and its associated mental states are functions of material events and processes. According to one of the dominant interpretations of philosophical materialism, mental states and consciousness are functions of the information processed in the brain, which, in principle, is a system that can be reproduced on a sufficiently powerful digital computer. From this perspective, it is possible to construct a conscious mindset in a purely digital environment. This possibility is the basis for the view that it is theoretically possible and ultimately realizable to construct a complex "digital world" containing various conscious entities that would be epistemologically identical to our own (presumably material) world.

Modern simulation thinking is not new. In 1989, the physicist John Archibald Wheeler proposed that the universe is fundamentally mathematical and can emerge from information.[9] In 2003, philosopher Nick Bostrom published an article entitled "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?" In this article, he argued that people lived in a simulation.[10] Bostrom argued that most "living worlds" are simulated and digitally generated rather than natural biological worlds and that most conscious beings in the universe are digital simulations. Bostrom argued that the currently constructed simulated worlds exist; however,

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[9] Meghan O'Gieblyn, *God, Human, Animal, Machine: Technology, Metaphor, and the Search for Meaning* (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2021), 84.

[10] Nick Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", *Philosophical Quarterly* 53/211 (2003), 243-255.

in the future, with increased computing power, these simulations will become much more complex, and the beings inhabiting them will likely become conscious and self-aware. Bostrom suggested that future technological advances could transform planets and other celestial bodies into powerful computers with the computational power to be used by posthuman civilizations.[11] Currently, we do not have sufficiently powerful hardware or software to create a conscious mind on computers. However, convincing arguments have shown that these shortcomings can be overcome if technological progress remains unresolved. Some authors have claimed that this stage may only be a few decades away.[12] However, the current study did not make any assumptions about time. The simulation argument is equally valid for those who believe that humanity will reach a "posthuman" stage of civilization in hundreds of thousands of years, having achieved most of the technological capabilities that can now be shown to be compatible with physical laws and material and energy constraints.[13]

The fundamental question that Bostrom asks us to ponder is how to determine whether we are now in a real 21st-century history or a simulation. He writes that most people's minds, including our own, perhaps belong to a simulation created by the advanced descendants of an original arc, not to the real world. Bostrom believes that we are almost certainly living in a simulation, emphasizing that we are now much more likely to live in a simulated world than in the real world.[14] Bostrom's argument for his trilogy is as follows. Futurists and scientists predicted that large amounts of computing power would become available in the future. Therefore, subsequent generations were likely to run several detailed simulations of their ancestors. Bostrom also argued that these simulated humans are conscious, assuming that the widely accepted view of the philosophy of the mind is correct. He then concluded by probability calculations that we were likely one of the simulated minds rather than among the original biological minds.[15]

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[11] Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", 249.
[12] Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 67.
[13] Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", 250.
[14] O'Gieblyn, *God, Human, Animal, Machine*, 84-86; Ding-Yu Chung, "We Are Living in a Computer Simulation", *Journal of Modern Physics* 7/10 (2016), 1226.
[15] Abraham Lim, "Why We Are Not Living in the Computer Simulation", *International Journal for the Study of Skepticism* 12/4 (2022), 333.

Like Bostrom, David Chalmers considered the possibility of humanity existing in a simulation to be high.[16] He said, "I do not rule out that we are in a simulation, and I think we cannot rule out that we are in a simulation. Therefore, there is at least one serious theoretical possibility to conduct simulations. I do not want to say that it is necessarily probable –it is difficult to put a probability on it-– but it is a hypothesis that I take seriously. However, to some extent, I am thinking about it as a philosopher, and I am not currently proposing it as a scientific hypothesis. It is a thought experiment about what reality might be like." This is also linked to practical ideas. We will spend much of our time in virtual worlds in the coming years, which raises many important questions.[17] If Moore's law is correct and higher-order beings truly simulate us, both make sense.[18]

Since Bostrom suggested that the universe and everything in it could be a simulation, public speculation and debate regarding the nature of reality have been intense. The physicist Seth Lloyd of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the United States took the simulation hypothesis one step further, suggesting that the entire universe could be a giant quantum computer. Meanwhile, NASA physicist Tom Campbell and Caltech physicists Houman Owhadi, Joe Sauvageau, and David Watkinson launched a Kickstarter crowdfunding campaign to conduct and document experiments to test the simulation hypothesis. In a 2017 study, they concluded that the simulation hypothesis could be tested.[19] Public intellectuals, such as Tesla leader Elon Musk, have argued that the statistical inevitability of our world is slightly more than a cascading green code.[20] In 2016, billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk stirred up an enormous controversy by arguing that advances in computer technology would make our videos indistinguishable from reality; therefore, the

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16 Florian Neukart et al., "Constraints, Observations, and Experiments on the Simulation Hypothesis", *SSRN Electronic Journal* (2022), 5.

17 Dan Falk, "The Simulated World According to David Chalmers", *Nautilus* (Accessed February 19, 2024).

18 Deep Bhattacharjee, *Mandela Effect & Déjà Vu: Are We Living in a Simulated Reality?*, preprint (September 29, 2021), 3.

19 Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 254.

20 Jeff Grupp, "The Implantation Argument: Simulation Theory is Proof That God Exists", *Metaphysica* 22/2 (2021), 201; David Kipping, "A Bayesian Approach to the Simulation Argument", *Universe* 6/8 (2020), 1.

probability of being inside a simulation was billions to one.[21] These claims gained some credence by being repeated by luminaries no less respected than Neil deGrasse Tyson, director of the Hayden Planetarium and America's favorite science popularizer.[22]

Currently, because we do not have conclusive evidence, it is not possible to arrive at a definitive conclusion regarding whether our universe is in a simulation.[23] Although it is conceivable that we live in a natural, physical, and biological universe rather than in a digital environment, there is no way to verify this.[24] At this point, one might think that the simulation argument is being accepted too quickly or that objections might arise regarding the obstacles and feasibility of creating a simulated universe.[25] In fact, the German physicist Sabine Hossenfelder argued against the simulation hypothesis.[26] Lim challenged the refutation of this hypothesis.[27] However, further research is needed to determine how well this hypothesis aligns with reality. Although this raises intriguing questions about the nature of reality and the limits of human knowledge, there is currently no empirical evidence to conclusively support or refute the idea that we are living in a simulation.[28] Therefore, further experiments are needed to gain deeper insights.[29] However, many constraints prevent us from designing experiments that directly answer the questions of whether the universe was created and whether it is an infinite hierarchical chain of simulations.[30] Bostrom, who proposed the simulation hypothesis,

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21 Sanford L. Drob, "Are You Praying to a Videogame God? Some Theological and Philosophical Implications of the Simulation Hypothesis", *International Journal of Philosophy and Theology* 84/1 (2023), 77-78.

22 O'Gieblyn, *God, Human, Animal, Machine*, 84-86.

23 Drob, "Are You Praying to a Videogame God?", 77-78.

24 Drob, "Are You Praying to a Videogame God?", 77-78.

25 Aykut Alper Yılmaz, "Simulation Hypothesis and Theism: An Assessment in the Context of Multiverse", *Eskiyeni* 51 (2023), 997.

26 Neukart et al., "Constraints, Observations, and Experiments on the Simulation Hypothesis", 7.

27 See Lim, "Why We Are Not Living in the Computer Simulation", 349-350.

28 Alexandre Bibeau-Delisle - Gilles Brassard, "Probability and Consequences of Living Inside a Computer Simulation", *Proceedings of the Royal Society A: Mathematical, Physical and Engineering Sciences* 477/2247 (2021), 13.

29 Neukart et al., "Constraints, Observations, and Experiments on the Simulation Hypothesis", 25.

30 Neukart et al., "Constraints, Observations, and Experiments on the Simulation Hypothesis", 6.

noted certain obstacles to this claim. Therefore, we briefly consider the difficulties associated with the creation of a simulated universe inhabited by conscious beings.[31]

2. Ontological Views of Islamic Theologians in the Context of the Principle "The Reality of Things is Fixed"

Reality is a concept shaped by human perceptions and thoughts, yet it has an objective basis. On the other hand, the reality of existence as an ontological inquiry is the nature and quality of existence in relation to an object and its place in human perception.[32] Therefore, knowledge is the most important issue in kalām regarding the reality of existence. Discussions on the reality of existence in debates about the possibility of knowledge began with Muʿtazilī scholars.[33]

When we examine the history of thought, we observe that most scholars accept the truth of things and affirm the existence of certain knowledge of human beings. This is because they believed the human mind could accurately perceive the external world and understand objective reality.[34] The schools of kalām, namely, the Muʿtazilīs, Māturīdīs, and Ashʿarīs, also accept the existence of a fixed truth.[35] According to them, human beings become aware of the external reality of the universe through the information provided by their senses and certain rational principles. Any knowledge realized through any of these senses is necessary, in which there can be no doubt or hesitation

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31 Yılmaz, "Simulation Hypothesis and Theism", 997.

32 Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib ibn Muḥammad al-Bāqillānī, *al-Tamhīd fī l-radd ʿalá l-mulḥidah al-muʿaṭṭilah wa-l-Rāfiḍah wa-l-Ḵhawārij wa-l-Muʿtazilah*, ed. Muḥammad Maḥmūd al-Khuḍayrī - Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Hādī Abū Rīdah (Cairo: Dār al-Fikr al-ʿArabī, 1947), 24-29.

33 Hanifi Özcan, *Mâtürîdîde Bilgi Problemi* (İstanbul: İFAV Yayınları, 1993), 32-35.

34 Mustafa Bozkurt, *Fahreddin Râzî'de Bilgi Teorisi* (Ankara: Akçağ, 2016), 58; Abū l-Muʿīn Maymūn ibn Muḥammad al-Nasafī, *Kitāb al-Tamhīd li-qawāʿid al-tawḥīd*, ed. Ḥasan Aḥmad Jīb Allāh (Cairo: Dār al-Ṭibāʿah al-Muḥammadiyyah, 1986), 16.

35 İlyas Çelebi, "Giriş", *Mutezile'nin Beş İlkesi: Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-khamsah*, auth. Abū l- Ḥasan Qāḍī l-quḍāh ʿAbd al-Jabbār ibn Aḥmad al-Hamadānī, ed. and trans. İlyas Çelebi (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2013), 1/27.

about what is perceived.[36] According to theologians (*mutakallimūn*), the knowledge that emerges in the human mind and the reality of external objects are compatible. Without accepting the reality of existence and objects, one cannot speak of them. Knowledge can be explained and proven only after the reality of the objects is accepted. In this context, the principle on which theologians base their possibility of knowledge is that the reality of things is fixed.[37] This principle provides an important foundation for understanding existence and divinity. In fact, Muslim scholars who interacted with different cultures encountered skeptics who rejected knowledge and evaluated their claims regarding existence and knowledge.[38] They argued that the domain of existence, which is the basis of knowledge, is real and emphasized that the subject and object, which are the basis of knowledge, have separate existences.[39] Therefore, the basis of their system of thought was an understanding that "the truth of things is fixed" or "our knowledge of things is a realized knowledge".[40]

According to theologians, the fact that things do not have an independent existence calls into question the existence of a

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[36] Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn al-Ṭayyib ibn Muḥammad al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb Tamhīd al-awāʾil wa-talkhīṣ al-dalāʾil*, ed. ʿImād al-Dīn Aḥmad Ḥaydar (Beirut: Muʾassasat al-Kutub al-Thaqāfiyyah, 1407/1987), 29.

[37] Saʿd al-Dīn Masʿūd ibn Fakhr al-Dīn ʿUmar al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid al-Nasafiyyah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Salām ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī Shannār (Beirut: Dār al-Bayrūtī - Dār Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī, 1428/2007), 25; Abū l-Ḥasan ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Sayyid al-Sharīf al-Jurjānī, *Mevâkıf Şerhi: Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, ed. and trans. Ömer Türker (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2015), 1/276-277.

[38] Abū Manṣūr ʿAbd al-Qāhir ibn Ṭāhir al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Aḥmad Shams al-Dīn (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 1423/2002), 16; Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam* (Boston - Leiden: Brill, 2007), 301; Abū l-Yusr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Bazdawī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Hans Peter Linss - Aḥmad Ḥijāzī al-Saqā (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Azhariyyah li-l-Turāth, 2003), 17; Mehmet Dağ, "Eş'arî Kelâmında Bilgi Problemi", *İslâm İlimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 4 (1980), 102; Abū ʿAbd Allāh Fakhr al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿUmar al-Rāzī, *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl fī dirāyat al-uṣūl*, ed. Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Laṭīf Fūdah (Beirut: Dār al-Dhakhāʾir, 2015), 1/157.

[39] Fatma Aygün, "'Eşyânın Hakikâti Sabittir' İlkesini Benimseyen Kelâmcıların Sofestaiyye Eleştirisi", *KADER Kelam Araştırmaları Dergisi* 13/2 (2015), 828.

[40] Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid*, 25-26; Aygün, "'Eşyânın Hakikâti Sabittir' İlkesini Benimseyen Kelâmcıların Sofestaiyye Eleştirisi", 830-831; al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, 16-17.

hypothetical and imaginary world and the existence of a creator. This is because human beings can reason about the existence of God on the basis of real perceptions of the world and build a bridge between the known and the unknown.[41] If entities do not possess an objective reality, the entire universe would consist merely of transient attributes or illusions; in such a context, even the concept of God –like human constructs– would be reduced to an impermanent and illusory phenomenon. Similarly, if our knowledge is incapable of perceiving reality, everything we know is merely a relative and subjective concept. In this case, neither knowledge nor faith has value. Therefore, one must first prove and accept the existence of truth and the value of knowledge so that the issue of creation can serve as proof of the beginning of the universe and the existence of a creator. For this reason, when considering the issues of *ʿaqīdah*, we propose principles such as "things have a truth and our knowledge can comprehend them, which existed when they did not exist, and God has the power to create these truths out of nothing".[42]

Denying the reality of things can lead us to abandon all our beliefs and actions, rendering survival impossible. If we think we know God indirectly, the universe we observe provides us with indirect knowledge. Denying the reality of things makes it impossible for us to know God. Therefore, things and/or external realities have truths, and human beings can acquire this knowledge. Muslim theologians have no doubt about the reality of the external world and the objectivity of their knowledge of it.[43]

Consequently, the truth of things is the foundation of knowledge. Epistemologically, for something to have meaning, it must have reality. Thus, humans can only acquire knowledge about their existence. According to theologians, the reality of things and the unity of this reality are generally accepted. The knowledge formed in the human mind must be compatible with reality in the external world. Theologians' understanding of existence and knowledge, rooted in the

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[41] Aygün, "'Eşyânın Hakikâti Sabittir' İlkesini Benimseyen Kelâmcıların Sofestaiyye Eleştirisi", 829.

[42] Yusuf Ziya Yörükan, "İslâm Akaid Sisteminde Gelişmeler ve Ebu Mansur Matüridî", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 2/2-3 (1953), 137; al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. Hüseyin Atay (Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı, 1993), 1/62.

[43] Al-Nasafī, *Tabṣirat al-adillah*, 1/21-23.

basic religious sources of Islam, is based on the view that knowledge is possible for human beings because existence is objective and knowable. The principle of "the reality of things is fixed" forms the basis for the ontological and epistemological approaches of theologians. Theologians believe that the fundamental realities of the world of existence are immutable and have a fixed structure. In Islamic theology, this principle is based on God's power to control the world.

3. Human Sensation and Perceptions of Reality

Our sensory system operates through the body's nervous system, stimulating neurons in the brain through electrical signals and thus activating our perceptions.[44] When they encounter phenomena such as light, sound waves, and chemicals, all our sensory receptors act to convert this change into an electrical wave that the brain can understand and send to the nerves and then to the brain.[45] Therefore, vision does not occur in our eyes, hearing in our ears, taste in our tongue, smell in our nose, or touch in our skin.[46] In our brain, changes are perceived, and as a result, sensations are realized.[47] For example, beams of light reflected from objects are converted into electrical signals as image information by the optical structure of the eye and sent to the brain. The brain that perceives these signals analyzes this information to perceive images. Similarly, the sound waves coming into our ears, the smells coming into our noses, and the tactile sensations on our skin are also sent to our brains via signals, where they are analyzed and perceived as relevant sensations. Therefore, if the brain receives similar signals from the virtual touch of a virtual arm, there is no discernible difference.[48] The so-called external world is constructed in our minds on the basis of these perceptions. This

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44 Savaş Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği, Gerçek Dünyanın Sanallığı Bir Dijital Medya Ürünü Olarak Sanal Gerçeklik", *TRT Akademi* 1/2 (2016), 725-726.

45 Sinan Canan, *Değişen Be(y)nim* (İstanbul: Tuti Kitap, 2015), 200-201.

46 David Eagleman, *The Brain: The Story of You* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2015), 47; Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği", 725-726.

47 Norman Doidge, *The Brain That Changes Itself: Stories of Personal Triumph from the Frontiers of Brain Science* (New York: Penguin Books, 2014), 22.

48 Mustafa Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak* (İstanbul: Tuti Kitap, 2021), 23.

construction also takes the form of consciousness.[49] Brain processes are also involved in consciousness. First, consciousness and all mental phenomena are created in the brain by lower-level neurobiological processes.[50] Everything we perceive and experience, from the smallest details to the galaxies in the universe, is a representation of our minds.[51] Therefore, the brain is the primary site where human sensations are formed and developed. Therefore, the perception of reality is created by the brain.

4. Simulation in the Context of Reality Experience of the Senses

As mentioned in the previous section, according to current scientific assumptions, our perception of reality is related to what occurs inside the brain.[52] Everything we experience is the result of electrical activity in the brain. If, using hardware and software, computer-generated representations of the virtual world are converted into signals that can be detected by human senses, it is theoretically possible to create a simulation that is indistinguishable from the real world.[53] Although a user moves between virtual objects, their brain perceives them as real. This is because the brain is essentially a structure that receives and sends signals.[54] The proposed method does not consider signal generation. If the brain is artificially stimulated, it feels things that do not truly exist as if they do. Therefore, when the brain receives a signal, it receives it as an image, whereas when there is no signal, it does not.[55] Seeing, hearing, smelling, and touching objects that do not exist through artificially created images, sounds, touch, smell, humidity, and temperature information make it possible for our brains to perceive them as real. If this artificial information were sufficiently detailed so our sensory organs could perceive it, these perceptions would be more

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[49] Ray Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology* (East Rutherford: Penguin Publishing Group, 2005), 199-200.

[50] Leon L. Lau - Wang Lau, "Vital Phenomena: Life, Information, and Consciousness", *All Life* 13/1 (2020), 158.

[51] Canan, *Değişen Be(y)nim*, 138.

[52] Eagleman, *The Brain,* 47.

[53] Yuval Noah Harari, *Homo Deus: A Brief History of Tomorrow* (Toronto, Ontario: Signal, 2016), 89-90; Matjaž Mihelj et al., *Virtual Reality Technology and Applications* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2014), 13.

[54] Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği", 42.

[55] Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak*, 78-79.

realistic. In theory, the human brain can be removed and connected to a computer that sends electrical signals to provide artificial sensations, emotions, and false memories. However, a human being would not be able to tell whether it is a real or an artificial simulation of life.[56] The brain does not distinguish between being virtual and real. It only receives and sends signals. If it receives a signal, it accepts it as input and acts accordingly.[57]

There is no difference between the experience of living in a sufficiently advanced simulation and the everyday life we experience today.[58] The various senses of a user, such as hearing, smell, temperature, touch, and movement, can be stimulated very easily.[59] We have a theoretical possibility of enjoying the same pleasure in a simulation as in real life. To put it more clearly, the impressions, perceptions, and experiences of eating can be digitized.[60] Digitized human experiences can be created more effectively and to our liking than the actual taste and pleasure we obtain from physical eating. As knowledge is based on patterns of the brain's impulses, the capacity to make good inferences can be acquired independently of the nature of the objects with which we interact causally. This is because the structure of digital objects leads to brain states caused by the structure of the material objects. Consequently, most beliefs that are true in the material world are also true in the simulated world.[61] Thus, no difference is observed between the real and virtual spaces.

In a matrix scenario, the computer simulates the structure of the world. Although this structure is composed of data, the resulting brain

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56 Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği", 726-727.

57 Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak*, 78.

58 Mike Treder, "Emancipation from Death", *The Scientific Conquest of Death Essays on Infinite Lifespans* (Buenos Aires: Libros en Red, 2004), 193.

59 Dadan Sumardani et al., "Virtual Reality Media: The Simulation of Relativity Theory on Smartphone", *Formatif: Jurnal Ilmiah Pendidikan MIPA* 10/1 (2020), 13-24; Mihelj et al., *Virtual Reality Technology and Applications*, 177.

60 Ferhat, "Dijital Dünyanın Gerçekliği", 730; H. Hale Künüçen - Serpil Samur, "Dijital Çağın Gerçeklikleri Sanal, Artırılmış, Karma ve Genişletilmiş Gerçeklikler Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme", *Yeni Medya* 11 (2021), 42; Acungil, *Dijital Gelecekte İnsan Kalmak*, 70; İsmail Hakkı Aydın, *Beyin Sizsiniz 5.0 Metaverse Holistik Çağ* (İstanbul: Girdap Yayınları, 2022), 238; Emrah Kaya, *Metaverse* (İstanbul: Nemesis Kitap, 2022), 87-88; Kurzweil, *The Singularity is Near*, 376-377.

61 Longo, "How the True World Finally Became Virtual Reality", 291.

states and relationships are identical. For example, the brain state corresponding to the perception of a table will be the same whether the table is touched by my organic hands or by the hands of my avatar. Both the material and virtual worlds are visible because they are the phenomenal effects of the interaction between the brain and the structure of the elements that adapt it.[62]

Chalmers stated that a simulated brain can have the same consciousness as the original brain. In his view, a simulation of the human brain would have the same type of mind and the same type of conscious state as the brain it simulates. One way to achieve this is through a thought experiment in which we replace individual neurons in the human brain with silicon chips. At the end of this process, we would obtain a completely silicone brain that resembles the original brain. If this is the case, then a simulated brain can and will have the same consciousness as the original brain.[63] Chalmers claimed that we can acquire knowledge in simulations because we can control our avatars to interact in a satisfying way. [64] In this context, Bostrom is also a close collaborator of this idea. For him, consciousness was not necessarily a property that could be realized primarily in carbon-based biological neural networks inside the skull. In principle, silicon-based processors can perform the same task inside a computer.[65]

At the current stage of technological development, neither hardware nor software is necessary to create conscious minds in computers. However, convincing arguments have shown that if technological progress continues unabated, these shortcomings will eventually be overcome. Some scientists have argued that this stage may last only a few decades. However, the current study does not require any time-scale assumptions. The simulation argument is that humanity has developed many technological capabilities that can now be shown to be compatible with physical laws and material and energy constraints. [66] Having discussed the possibility of simulation theory in the context of the senses' experience of reality, we now attempt to

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62 Longo, "How the True World Finally Became Virtual Reality", 292.
63 Falk, "The Simulated World According to David Chalmers"; Alexander A. Berezin, "Simulation Argument in the Context of Ultimate Reality and Meaning", *Ultimate Reality and Meaning* 29/4 (2006), 247.
64 Longo, "How the True World Finally Became Virtual Reality", 291.
65 Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", 245.
66 Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", 247.

critique the idea of simulation in terms of theology's understanding of existence and knowledge.

5. Criticizing the Idea of Simulation within the Framework of Kalām's Understanding of Existence and Knowledge

The most important issue that *mutakallimūn* emphasize in their understanding of existence is the correspondence between knowledge in the mind and the reality of the object.[67] As we discussed in detail in the second chapter, according to the scholars of Kalām, the reality of things and the unity of this reality are accepted beyond doubt with the principle "the reality of things is fixed" (*ḥaqāʾiq al-ashyāʾ thābitat*[un]). The knowledge formed in the human mind must be compatible with reality in the external world. Denial of the reality of things can lead us to abandon all our beliefs and actions. If we believe that we know God indirectly, the universe we observe provides us with such indirect knowledge. Denying the reality of things makes it impossible for us to know God. Therefore, it is accepted that external realities possess truth and that human beings can attain this knowledge.[68]

Since the title of the chapter also has ontological content, the author can also discuss how Islamic theologians classify the universe ontologically by taking the theory of substance-accident theory as an axis. According to the *mutakallimūn*, the universe, which refers to everything outside God, is *ḥādith*. The entities in the universe consist of bodies, substances, and accidents. The substances that combine to form bodies occupy space (*mutaḥayyiz*), have size, and are self-subsistent (*qāʾim bi-dhātihī*). These substances cannot be devoid of accidents (*aʿrāḍ*), such as motion, rest, union and separation, color, heat, and cold.

These explanations reinforce the argument that the universe is grounded in objective reality, meaning that it is not a simulated construct. This is because both substances and accidents exist outside the mind in a real sense. It may not be sufficient to reject the theory of

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[67] Aygün, "'Eşyânın Hakikâti Sabittir' İlkesini Benimseyen Kelâmcıların Sofestaiyye Eleştirisi", 832.

[68] Al-Taftāzānī, *Sharḥ al-ʿAqāʾid*, 19; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, 1/276-277; al-Bāqillānī, *Kitāb Tamhīd al-awāʾil*, 29; Abū Manṣūr Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Māturīdī, *Kitāb al-Tawḥīd*, ed. Bekir Topaloğlu - Muḥammed Ārūchī (Ankara: İSAM Yayınları, 2003), 46-52; al-Bazdawī, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, 17.

simulation on the basis of the principle that the reality of things is fixed. *Mutakallimūn* gives special attention to the corporeality of both this world and the hereafter and considers that they are composed of substances and accidents. They prove God through the properties of substances, bodies, and accidents (a cosmological argument, i.e., the proof of *ḥudūth*).

Since Muslim theologians do not doubt the reality of the external world and the objectivity of their knowledge, it does not seem possible for them to accept that human beings live in a simulation. In this case, the simulation contradicts the paradigm that they established on the basis of the reality of knowledge. As the possibility and reality of knowledge depend on the ontological structure of the object, humans appear unable to reach real knowledge in the metaphysical realm. Most human beings today agree that objects, things, and the universe have ontological realities. When we consider theologians' paradigms in terms of the truth of things, they can oppose simulations. However, theologians' understanding of the ontological structure of matter should be reviewed in the context of neurobiology. From a neurobiological perspective, objects do not need to correspond to ontological reality for knowledge to be real. Knowledge is realized in the human brain. Stimulating the brain is sufficient for realizing this information. Therefore, the fact that humans live in a simulation does not imply that the information obtained is not real. Chalmers argued that even if we are in a perfect simulation, it is not an illusion: "I am still in a perfectly real world; this conversation I am having with you right now is a perfectly real conversation. Everything makes sense as before". However, the philosopher of the mind Tim Crane supports Chalmers' views by commenting that "the tables you encounter in the simulation are real tables, but instead of wood and metal, they are made of bits and bytes." Psychiatrists, such as Carl Jung, have explored the question of mental projection, where each individual perceives the world slightly differently, depending on what is happening in their minds. According to this view, much of the physical world that we think is "out there" is actually "in here" in our heads; like a dream, there is no objective physical reality.[69] Thus, the idea of "simulation realism" emerges. Thus, we do not find "real" knowledge when we leave the

[69] Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 20.

simulation. Instead, we find a world in which most of our knowledge is valid. In other words, the objects of real information are not physical entities but regular brain impulse patterns. These patterns can be perfectly represented using bits of information. Therefore, we may not realize that we are brains in a jar rather than in real life. The hypothesis that we are living in a simulation without realizing it can be considered a thought experiment to prove that any perceived world is an effect of brain stimulation and that it makes no significant difference whether the causes of phenomenal representations are physical or digital objects (data streams).[70] In this context, the fact that the universe in which we live is a simulation does not necessarily render it meaningless. Although objects in a simulated universe are created by software rather than real subatomic particles, life in such a world can still be meaningful.[71]

6. The Concept of Simulation in Theological Debates

The possibility of conscious beings existing within a simulated matrix directly raises many thoughts beyond the universe, such as the nature of a creator God or an "absolute" God, the fundamental nature of reality, the theological significance of the "afterlife", and the place of values in the cosmos.[72] In this context, one of the most important debates in the simulation argument is the idea of a simulation creator. Since there is no argument against the existence and/or value of the traditional creator God, especially because we have no way of knowing whether our world is a simulation, we cannot determine whether our creator is merely an ordinary (but highly advanced) being (biological or digital). In such cases, our prayers and supplications are not philosophically different from those of an all-powerful, earthly ruler. In summary, the simulation argument posits the rather unpleasant possibility that when I pray to a traditional god, I am actually praying to a (highly intelligent, but neither infinitely nor revered) simulation operator. Such an operator or engineer is not bound by moral standards. However, the existence of the simulation does not mean that it is a human product.[73] Such a claim is theoretically

[70] Longo, "How the True World Finally Became Virtual Reality", 288.
[71] Yılmaz, "Simulation Hypothesis and Theism", 999.
[72] Drob, "Are You Praying to a Videogame God?", 79-80.
[73] Drob, "Are You Praying to a Videogame God?", 80.

not different from saying that the world was created by an intelligent being. Chalmers and Bostrom's simulation argument suggests that it is possible that intelligent beings may have brought humans into existence. According to Chalmers and Bostrom, those who brought us into existence could be considered our gods, not only because they created our universe but also because they have knowledge, control, and power over it.[74] In this case, it is necessary to examine whether there is a similarity between the God that theology recognizes as the only supreme and absolute being in all aspects, and the God that Chalmers and Bostrom refer to. Chalmers and Bostrom posit that the being who creates the simulation is omniscient in all respects. If we are in a simulation and the simulator, in a sense, created this universe, then it is understood to be omnipotent and omniscient in terms of what is happening in it.[75] This issue can be evaluated within the scope of categories in Islamic theology. In the science of kalām, the subject of existence is either eternal (*qadīm*) or created. An eternal being is considered an omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent being that is not created by any one being.[76] When we consider the possibility that this simulation of existence could have been created by a being, we can easily say that we can develop the concepts of an omniscient, omnipotent, and absolute creator. In fact, a being with these characteristics stands out as a being who possesses the indispensable qualities of God's conception, as envisioned by a divine religion. This conception is similar to the category of eternal beings characterized as God in theology.[77] The simulation and the beings living in it are also included in the category of *ḥādith*; that is, they create beings who can continue their lives according to the principles, rules, and customs established by the creator. Therefore, in this context, we can state that the understanding of a simulation does not contradict the

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74 Bostrom, "Are You Living in a Computer Simulation?", 253-254; David J. Chalmers, *Reality+: Virtual Worlds and the Problems of Philosophy* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2002), 137.

75 Grupp, "The Implantation Argument", 205-206.

76 Mehmet Bulgen, "Mebdeʾ ve Meʿād: Kelam İlmi ve Modern Kozmoloji Açısından Evrenin Başlangıcı ve Sonu", *Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 63/2 (2022), 912.

77 Falk, "The Simulated World According to David Chalmers".

understanding of an absolute God. Some thinkers have already suggested the possibility that all simulations were created by God.[78]

One of the most important points claimed in simulation theory is that we are simulated by others.[79] As Bostrom puts it, "virtual machines can be superimposed: it is possible for one machine to simulate another machine, and this can go on for as many iteration steps as you like".[80] If the world around us is a simulation, it naturally leads us to question who (or what) is outside the rendered world. Who created us, and who (or what) continues to run the simulation even now?[81] One possibility, put forward by individuals from Elon Musk to Stephen Hawking, is that creators are some type of alien life form.[82] This idea seems to negate the existence of a god. Such claims can be evaluated within the framework of the *ḥudūth* argument, which theology uses to prove God's existence and perpetuity. This argument is based on the proposition that a created thing (*ḥādith*) should have a creator (*muḥdith*). However, according to this argument, a creation must end in a being that is eternal (*qadīm*) in every aspect and whose existence is necessary (*wājib al-wujūd*). If this creation does not end, succession occurs. Succession means "to continue one after another without interruption".[83] Islamic scholars have attempted to prove the existence of God using the "evidence of the existence", which we can call the chain of cosmological arguments. According to this argument, because every being in the universe (*ḥādith*) has a beginning, a creator (*muḥdith*) must continue its existence. The creator must have been uncreated, eternal, or necessary (*qadīm wa-wājib*). If every being has a beginning, an infinite chain of cause and effect is encountered, which is incompatible with reason. This situation is referred to as "succession" and involves a logical contradiction. Therefore, scholars have concluded that the order in the universe and the formation of beings could only have been created by an eternal and necessary being.[84]

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78 Yılmaz, "Simulation Hypothesis and Theism", 996.
79 Görücü, "Simulation and God", 2.
80 Steinhart, "Theological Implications of the Simulation Argument", 34.
81 Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 271.
82 Virk, *The Simulation Hypothesis*, 275.
83 Osman Demir, "Teselsül", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 2011), 40/536.
84 Abū l-Maʿālī Rukn al-Dīn ʿAbd al-Malik ibn ʿAbd Allāh al-Juwaynī, *al-Shāmil fī uṣūl al-dīn*, ed. ʿAlī Sāmī al-Nashshār et al. (Alexandria: Munshaʾat al-Maʿārif, 1969), 693; Abū l- Ḥasan Qāḍī l-quḍāh ʿAbd al-Jabbār

According to theologians, unless the chain of succession ends in an eternal creator, it is impossible to avoid the logical fallacy of judging the infinity of objects and events.[85]

When we consider simulation theory within this framework, the necessity of a necessary and eternal being that creates a simulation eventually emerges. An eternal and necessary being is one of its essences. It is not possible for an eternal and necessary being to have characteristics such as multiplicity, change, merger, and dissociation, as is the case with created beings. In other words, even if we are created by aliens or other beings, when we consider that they were also created by a being, it is logical that the simulation returns to a single necessary eternal being. Therefore, within the framework of the *ḥudūth* argument, it is possible that the simulation will eventually form a world created by God in theological terms.

Another important debate is whether it is possible to live a meaningful life in a simulation.[86] If we are in a perfect simulation, the idea that human life would be completely meaningless emerges. In addition, issues such as resurrection, heaven, hell, and trials are discussed. However, it must be emphasized that the simulation was not an illusion. The simulated world was completely realistic. In the simulated world, reality is experienced in the same way as in the current world. All of the actions individuals engage in, such as talking to people and eating, will be the experience of a completely real world, even if we are in a simulation. Therefore, the argument that being in a simulation renders life meaningless is unrealistic. When a person conducts a simulation, they will experience all phenomena that are indistinguishable from those in the real world, which can make life more meaningful. In fact, while living in a simulation, one does not believe that "I am in a simulation, so the goals and objectives and what I experience are illusions". Our conscious experiences and

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ibn Aḥmad al-Hamadānī, *Mutezile'nin Beş İlkesi: Sharḥ al-Uṣūl al-khamsah*, ed. and trans. İlyas Çelebi (İstanbul: Türkiye Yazma Eserler Kurumu Başkanlığı, 2013), 1/188; Demir, "Teselsül", 40/536; Bekir Topaloğlu, "Hudûs", *TDV İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (Ankara: TDV Yayınları, 1998), 18/304.

85 Al-Juwaynī, *Kitāb al-Irshād ilá qawāṭiʿ al-adillah fī uṣūl al-iʿtiqād*, ed. Muḥammad Yūsuf Mūsá - ʿAlī ʿAbd al-Munʿim ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd (Cairo: Maktabat al-Khānjī, 1950),28.

86 Falk, "The Simulated World According to David Chalmers".

relationships with other people will be as present in a simulation as they are in ordinary reality.[87] Thus, the fact that the universe in which we live is a simulation does not necessarily render it meaningless. This means that life on Earth can still be meaningful, even if everything in the simulated universe is software-generated.[88]

If we accept that we live in a simulation, we can conclude that the concept of resurrection is one of the most important ethical problems that could arise. Simulation may be perceived as diminishing the value of the afterlife as a window to reality and truth. This is because any information or revelation of reality offered to us about the afterlife would be subject to the same epistemic doubts that all empirical phenomena are subject to in our current lives.[89] However, the idea of heaven and hell raises doubts about the ultimate reality. However, if we assume that we live in a simulation, then we can conclude that no theoretical problem arises. Death in simulation can be considered the point at which the human consciousness and mind cease to be related to the simulation after the loss of the functions of the human avatar.[90] The process we call resurrection, which involves making human beings conscious again and rematching mental functions with simulations, does not pose any theological problem. When we think in terms of heaven and hell, we cannot see situations that can cause theological problems. Living in a simulation does not require the idea of not going to heaven or hell. After the simulation is created in this world, it can be recreated in such a way that the perception of reality is formed at a perfect level, such that people desire to live. With the new technology developed in this study, humans will have unlimited opportunities. If we are truly digital beings in a digital matrix, it is a simple matter for the entity that controls us to provide digital consciousness after death, just as it provides consciousness to our lives in the simulation. Heaven and hell are other simulations, and we will be told nothing about the true nature of things.

With new software, in which all evils of the past are erased and all feelings of envy and jealousy are purified, a life based on constant

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87 Falk, "The Simulated World According to David Chalmers".
88 Yılmaz, "Simulation Hypothesis and Theism", 999.
89 Drob, "Are You Praying to a Videogame God?", 81-82.
90 Erhan Demircioğlu, *Makinedeki Hayalet Zihin Felsefesine Giriş* (Ankara: Fol Yayıncılık, 2022), 47.

happiness can be offered in a new simulation where there is no pain or hardship. This simulation, based on the constant happiness of humans, can be regarded as a form of paradise.

Similarly, the hell dimension can be grounded in a mechanism that causes people to suffer. Like heaven, a simulation can be created that people enjoy, whereas in hell, people can live in a simulation in which they suffer in the same way. At this point, we emphasize that the simulation does not differ from real experience. When we consider that human emotions, such as pleasure, pain, feeling, and lust, occur in the brain, there is a situation in which reality can be fully experienced in simulations.

From the perspective of testing, the religious belief that people are sent to the world to be tested can be more reasonably justified. Thus, the suffering, hardship, bloodshed, wars, and genocide that people have experienced in this world and the genocide that is taking place in places such as Palestine today can be seen as more reasonable from the perspective of God's image in terms of testing. In the Qurʾān, when God began to create human beings, the angels' questions about creating a being that would create mischief on earth are answered by God saying [91], "I know what you do not know", and the devil saying, "I will lead most of the people astray from your path", which clearly shows that the test was not a pleasant one for humanity. In most current religions, the concept of achieving salvation or reaching heaven is often seen as a state available only to followers of that religion, whereas others are condemned to hell or similar punishments. This can lead to potential conflicts, especially in faith relations and between individuals with different belief systems. Those who do not believe in Islam are more likely to go to hell. In Christianity, those who do not believe in Jesus are less likely to go to heaven. Judaism teaches that only those who follow the Jewish faith have access to God's favor. Combining these belief systems leads to the idea that a large proportion of the global population will return to hell. In this scenario, Satan's claim is realized, while at the same time, the idea that angels are beings who will cause mischief in the world is revealed. Given God's omniscience and eternal knowledge, the idea that the world was created only to test people does not seem to align with

[91] Q 7:16.

God's absolute goodness or mercy. It is difficult to understand painful events, such as starvation or the bombing of innocent babies to death. The question of why a creator who knows that such suffering is possible would create such a world does not make a connection between God's absolute goodness and reality theologically plausible.

To better understand theology, we can interpret the simulated world as a test. It tests what humans do with their free will and what evils they achieve with their unlimited nature. At the same time, we are presented with an environment in which humans, despite God's support and guidance, can abandon their nature and become good. Therefore, the simulation hypothesis can be interpreted as a test of the limits of human will and the strength of human free will. This interpretation can be meaningful in terms of showing angels (Q 2:30) and all of humanity a life that defies and rejects God. Thus, the consequences of human choice and the importance of freedom are emphasized. Consequently, the notion of life as a simulation may become more meaningful and plausible through the concept of testing. In conclusion, interpreting life as a simulation can offer a more coherent and meaningful framework for understanding human existence as a trial or test. This perspective not only highlights the traditional divine attributes of omniscience and omnipotence but also preserves the often-contested qualities of God's absolute goodness and mercy. Furthermore, it provides a possible explanation for the existence of suffering and evil in the world, suggesting that such experiences may be temporary and embedded within a broader, intentional design. The simulation hypothesis renders these phenomena more intelligible and justifiable in this context.

Overall, although the simulation argument seems to oppose the inherent value of human life, human responsibility, and human free will, a closer examination reveals that this opposition can be weakened or perhaps eliminated altogether.[92]

[92] Berezin, "Simulation Argument in the Context of Ultimate Reality and Meaning", 259.

Conclusion

The simulation hypothesis is a complex issue that raises philosophical and scientific questions. However, it is impossible to confirm this hypothesis with certainty. Although it lacks experimental data and is highly speculative, it has been influential for many thinkers. At least for the time being, there is no significant reason to assume that we live in a simulated universe. However, it is clear that these debates will be important in a world where the relationship between the real and the virtual will be completely severed after virtual reality tools become more refined. This hypothesis raises intriguing questions about the nature of reality and the limits of human knowledge. We address these questions within the framework of principles such as "the reality of things is fixed", "the universe is *ḥādith*", and "the universe is contingent", in which the possibility of knowledge is discussed and the reality of existence is addressed. The principle of "the truth of things is fixed" holds a central place in Islamic theology, used for the possibility of knowledge, the existence of God, and the foundations of morality. On the basis of this principle, theologians affirm the ontological reality of the world and derive from it a system of values that forms the foundational tenets of the Islamic faith. However, we conclude that their views should be interpreted in light of neurobiology. According to modern science, the brain is the primary site of sensation formation and development. Consciousness and mental phenomena occur through neurobiological processes in the brain. Everything we perceive and experience is merely a representation of our minds. The so-called external world is constructed in our minds on the basis of our perceptions. A sufficiently advanced simulation can send the same signals to the brain as in the real world. In this case, we would not be able to distinguish between the simulated and real worlds. In fact, experiments on the reality of simulations have shown that the meaning of life can exist in a simulated universe. The simulation hypothesis does not make the human experience unrealistic. In simulated environments, people experience real emotions, form meaningful relationships, and pursue goals. This hypothesis can be viewed as a threat to theology, but it also offers new perspectives and ideas. When it is considered in its structure and in relation to questions about God's role, there is no problem. God maintains a role as creator and manager of the simulation. However, it

can be a tool that God uses to test people or to create different types of beings. This is the basis for faith-related issues, such as resurrection, heaven, and hell. The fact that we live in a simulation does not diminish the meaning of life. However, we believe this can help us further develop theology in terms of God's absolute goodness and power and make it relevant to the modern world. We emphasize the need to conduct a comprehensive analysis of simulation theory –considered in relation to the nature of reality– within the framework of theological causality, the metaphysics of substance and accidents, and fundamental ontological principles.

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ISLAMIC FAMILY LAW IN MOROCCO: HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND REFORMS

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Abstract

This research examines the historical trajectory and codification of Islamic family law in Morocco and analyses its transformation from indigenous and Islamic customs to a formalized legal framework shaped by colonial and postcolonial reforms. Moroccan family law was initially rooted in local customs and Mālikī *fiqh*. During the French protectorate (1912-1956), colonial authorities restricted Sharīʿah courts, prompting nationalist resistance that ultimately led to Morocco's independence and calls for legal reform. After Morocco gained independence, the first codified Islamic family law, Mudawwanat al-aḥwāl al-shakhṣiyyah (1957), reflected conservative Islamic principles and ignited opposition from women's rights groups due to gender inequalities. Incremental reforms in 1993 adjusted some marriage and guardianship rules but fell short of achieving gender equality, prompting ongoing activism. Finally, under King Mohammed VI, significant changes culminated in the 2004 Mudawwanat al-usrah, an

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Islamic family law that improved women's rights by increasing the age for marriage, improving divorce rights, and requiring mutual responsibility in family leadership. However, Islamic family law retained aspects such as polygamy and unequal inheritance, blending traditional values with progressive reforms. Islamic family law marked a milestone in Morocco's legal and social modernization within an Islamic framework. This study highlights Morocco's approach to balancing Islamic heritage with social modernization and illustrates the complexities of integrating religious tradition with contemporary legal frameworks.

Key Words: Islamic family law, Mālikī *fiqh*, Morocco, Mudawwanat al-aḥwāl al-shakhṣiyyah

Introduction

The 19th century was a historical period of many developments and rapid changes in the Islamic world. The fall of Andalusia in the 15th century and the negative developments faced by Muslims in the Iberian Peninsula led to the Western domination of these lands. Subsequently, with the acceleration of colonial movements, Islamic states in North Africa faced increasing adversity. One of the countries that was most affected by these developments was Morocco.[1]

In the first quarter of the 19th century, Morocco wanted to protect itself by closing its doors to the outside world. However, after the armed conflict with the French (1844), Morocco became the scene of the struggle for influence of Britain, France, Spain, and Germany in the second half of the 19th century. This struggle was followed by the occupation activities of France and Spain starting in 1907. The second wave of invasion took place in 1911. Morocco was eventually divided and colonized by France and Spain. Although the legal system of Morocco underwent significant changes during the French occupation

[1] Stephen Cory, "Sharīfian Rule in Morocco (Tenth-Twelfth/Sixteenth-Eighteenth Centuries)", *The New Cambridge History of Islam,* ed. Maribel Fierro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 453.

(1912-1956),[2] the colonizers did not interfere much with the application of Islamic family law in Morocco.[3]

Before colonization, Morocco had two judicial systems: Sharīʿah and the Makhzen courts. The judges in the Sharīʿah courts applied Islamic jurisprudence, and the *qāḍī*s adhered to the Mālikī *madhhab*. The Makhzen courts, which were initially limited to handling penal cases, gradually expanded their authority to include civil and commercial cases.[4]

After the French protectorate over Morocco was established in 1912,[5] a judicial vizierate was instituted to supervise the courts and consolidate all the powers of the *qāḍī*s. The Makhzen and the Sharīʿah courts were retained, but the French limited the jurisdiction of the Sharīʿah courts to cases of family law and property rights. Moreover, the procedures of the Shariʿah courts underwent reforms.[6]

Under French rule, with the implementation of two important royal decrees (*Ẓahīr*)[7] in the Moroccan legal system (1914, 1930), jurisdiction over the majority of Berber tribes was transferred to customary courts.

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2 Katherine E. Hoffman, "Berber Law by French Means: Customary Courts in the Moroccan Hinterlands, 1930-1956", *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 52/4 (2010), 853.

3 Davut Dursun, "Fas (Himaye Dönemi ve Bağımsızlık)", *Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi* (İstanbul: TDV Yayınları, 1995), 12/192-196; Muannif Ridwan et al., "Islamic Law in Morocco: Study on the Government System and the Development of Islamic Law", *ARRUS Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities* 1/1 (2021), 17; Richard Pennell, *Morocco Since 1830: A History* (London: Hurst & Company, 2000), 16-20, 103, 136, 141, 352.

4 Baudouin Dupret et al., "Filling Gaps in Legislation: The Use of *Fiqh* by Contemporary Courts in Morocco, Egypt, and Indonesia", *Islamic Law and Society* 26/4 (December 2019), 5.

5 The Treaty of Fez, concluded on March 30, 1912, declared Morocco a French protectorate via an agreement between Morocco and France. This treaty ensured the king's religious authority and supremacy while conferring all executive power to the French. Richard Pennell, *Morocco: From Empire to Independence* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2003), 136.

6 Dörthe Engelcke, *Reforming Family Law: Social and Political Change in Jordan and Morocco* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 53-54.

7 A *Ẓahīr* or royal *Ẓahīr* is a decree issued by the king of Morocco in his capacity as a supreme authority and a supreme representative of the nation. See Wikipedia, "Ẓahīr (al-Maghrib)" (Accessed February 26, 2023). A royal *Marsūm* is a royal decree issued by the king regarding state issues, including appointments and decisions. See Almaany, "Ẓahīr Sharīf" (Accessed October 26, 2023).

Therefore, the Berbers were deprived of the jurisdiction of the Sharīʿah courts. These decisions are seen as a significant turning point.[8]

As a result, during the colonial period, Islamic family law remained in effect. After the end of French colonialism and the independence of Morocco (1956),[9] legal reforms were emphasized.[10]

1. The Stages of Development of Islamic Family Law in Morocco

After independence, the need to establish a national legal identity and system became crucial, which led to the enactment of Mudawwanat al-aḥwāl al-shakhṣiyyah, or the Family Code (first enactment in 1957, repeated enactment in 1958). This was Morocco's first attempt to codify Islamic family law and was based on the rulings and jurisprudence (*aḥkām* and *ijtihād*s) of the Mālikī *madhhab*.[11]

This law, which was based on traditional interpretations of Islamic principles, soon came under criticism from women's rights groups, which argued that it institutionalized gender inequality. Over the years, demands for gender equality and family law reform by women's rights groups have led to amendments and reforms.

1.1. Mudawwanat al-aḥwāl al-shakhṣiyyah (1957 Moroccan Islamic Family Law)

The first phase in the historical development of the Mudawwanah commenced on August 19, 1957,[12] shortly after Morocco gained independence. On this date, King Mohammed V established the first Royal Committee with the mandate to draft a comprehensive legal code to govern family matters. The King consulted with *ʿulamāʾ* (Islamic scholars) and grounded al-Mudawwanah firmly in the

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8 Dupret et al., "Filling Gaps in Legislation", 5.

9 Ridwan et al., "Islamic Law in Morocco", 17.

10 Engelcke, *Reforming Family Law*, 59-60.

11 Muḥammad al-Qāsimī, "Maẓāhir al-thābit wa-l-mutaghayyir wa-l-khuṣūṣiyyah wa-l-ʿumūmiyyah fī taqnīn al-aḥwāl al-shakhṣiyyah al-Maghribiyyah", *Majallat al-bāhith li-l-dirāsāt al-qānūniyyah wa-l-qaḍāʾiyyah* 8 (October 2018), 65.

12 Some researchers claim that the first family law in Morocco was enacted in 1957, while others point to 1958. The reason for this contradiction is that the repealed family law was promulgated on the day of Morocco's independence in five royal Ẓahīrs, the first on November 22, 1957, and the last on April 3, 1958. See Muḥammad al-Kashbūr, *al-Wasīṭ fī sharḥ Mudawwanat al-usrah* (al-Dār al-Bayḍāʾ: Maṭbaʿat al-Najāḥ al-Jadīdah, 2009), 11.

principles of Mālikī jurisprudence,[13] reflecting both Morocco's Islamic heritage and its commitment to structuring the legal framework within an Islamic context.

Like people in every esteemed nation, Moroccans refused to adopt a system that was contrary to their values. In this environment, it made sense to recodify the laws in all spheres of life in line with the nation's identity and the country's characteristics.[14]

Al-Mudawwanah was the earliest of three regulations. Initially, family law in Morocco was largely analogous to that of other Islamic nations and was heavily influenced by the paradigms established by classical *fiqh*.[15]

In general, the provisions of the Mudawwanah were based on the jurisprudence of the Mālikī *madhhab*. For issues that were not addressed in the text of the Mudawwanah and for which the law could not offer a solution, it was stipulated that the books of the Mālikī *madhhab* should be consulted. Notably, the title of the new law explicitly referenced the classical *fiqh* tradition. Indeed, a book entitled *al-Mudawwanah al-kubrá* by Saḥnūn (d. 240/854), one of the leading scholars of the Mālikī *madhhab*, meant almost the same thing: "collection or code of laws", i.e., *mudawwanah*.[16]

The first Mudawwanah regulates multiple facets of family law, including marriage, divorce, inheritance, and custody. According to the Mudawwanah, men had the right to practice polygamy without their wives' consent. Married women, however, had to adhere to their husbands' directives.[17]

The law incorporated most of the distinctive characteristics of the traditional Mālikī *madhhab*. The *wilāyat al-nikāḥ*, which comprises fathers' and grandfathers' guardianship and their authority to compel a daughter into marriage, was incorporated in a modified version of the

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13 Rachel Salia, *Reflections on a Reform: Inside the Moroccan Family Code* (New York: Columbia University, Department of History, Senior's Thesis, 2011), 24.

14 Aḥmad Kāfī, "al-Aḥwāl wa-l-usrah: al-ṣiyāqāt wa-l-madhhabiyyah", *al-Furqān: Islāmiyyah thaqāfiyyah* 50 (2004), 44.

15 Sheila Fakhria - Siti Marpuah, "A Discourse of Mudawanah al-Usrah; Guaranteeing Women's Rights in Family Law Morocco's", *Tribakti: Jurnal Pemikiran Keislaman* 33/2 (August 2022), 309.

16 Léon Buskens, "Recent Debates on Family Law Reform in Morocco: Islamic Law as Politics in an Emerging Public Sphere", *Islamic Law and Society* 10/1 (February 2003), 73.

17 Fakhria - Marpuah, "A Discourse of Mudawanah al-Usrah", 311.

law. According to the law, even adult women could not consummate a marriage themselves; they had to rely on a male guardian (*walī*) for the marriage process. A judge's consent was required under the law before a father could compel a daughter to marry. First, the Mudawwanah established the minimum age for marriage to be eighteen for males and fifteen for females. Mudawwanah recognized only the Sunnah form of divorce as legally valid. Although polygamy was legally recognized, it could be harmful to the woman and, therefore, was justifiable grounds for a court-ordered divorce.[18] Furthermore, a woman could not initiate a divorce without her husband's consent, although a man did not require the court's approval to divorce his wife and possessed the exclusive authority to initiate the process.[19]

Following the enactment of the law, feminist organizations petitioned the government for amendments, arguing that the law had violated the principle of gender equality since its implementation. Indeed, Fatima Sadiqi asserts that the women's movement was profoundly disappointed with the first Mudawwanah.[20]

Since the promulgation of the code, proposals for amendments to the law have remained unaddressed for many years. For instance, neither the revised draft of the "Committee of Court Presidents" submitted four years after the date of publication nor the new law proposal submitted after the "Law on Unification of Jurisprudence" came into force (26.01.1965) was evaluated. In 1974, a "Ministerial Committee" was established within the Ministry of Justice but failed to amend the law. The appointed Royal Commission was similarly unsuccessful (05.05.1981).

The recurrent failures may stem from the lack of a national consensus among the diverse elements of the political landscape and legal affairs in Morocco coupled with the marginalization of civil society's role in the reforms of the women's movement. This situation can be interpreted as a failure of the women's movement and

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18 Buskens, "Recent Debates on Family Law Reform in Morocco", 74.

19 Fakhria - Marpuah, "A Discourse of Mudawanah al-Usrah", 313.

20 Fatima Sadiki, "Morocco", *Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa: Progress Amid Resistance*, ed. Sanja Kelly - Julia Breslin (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 311.

ultimately resulted in the amendment of Islamic family law (10.09.1993).[21]

1.2. Mudawwanat al-aḥwāl al-shakhṣiyyah al-Maghribiyyah (1993 Moroccan Islamic Family Law)

Since its codification, the first Mudawwanah faced demands for reform. The government failed in three previous attempts. In particular, the shortcomings of the regulations on marriage guardianship, polygamy, and alimony were emphasized, and methods were sought to change them. The most important step in the reform movement began in 1982, but these demands did not evolve into a contested discourse until the 1990s.[22]

In the context of revising the Family Code, Moroccan women's rights organizations began articulating their perspectives on a reinterpretation of the Qurʾān and ḥadīth with the rise of Islamism in the 1980s and 1990s. The One Million Signatures campaign, a petition advocating amendments to the Family Code, was initiated in 1992 by the Union de l'Action Féminine (UAF).[23] Islamic organizations condemned this initiative and perceived it as a danger to Islam in Morocco. The Jamāʿat al-iṣlāḥ wa-l-tajdīd issued a *fatwā* regarding this campaign and criticized it severely.[24] Even with the opposition of the *ʿulamāʾ* and some Muslim groups, women's movements managed to raise public discourse on the issue. In response to this public pressure, King Hassan II established a commission that comprised male judges and religious authorities to evaluate the Family Code.[25]

The 1990s were regarded as a pivotal time in the evolution of the Mudawwanah, ending with the promulgation of Islamic family law. In

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21 Fāṭimah Malūl, "Masār ṣiyāghat wa-taʿdīl Mudawwanat al-usrah al-Maghribiyyah", *Majallat al-manārah li-l-dirāsāt al-qānūniyyah wa-l-idāriyyah: Special Issue on Family Law* (2019), 12-13.

22 Leila Hanafi, "Moudawana and Women's Rights in Morocco: Balancing National and International Law", *ILSA Journal of International & Comparative Law* 18/2 (2012), 517.

23 Rachel Olick-Gibson, *From the Ulama to the Legislature: Hermeneutics & Morocco's Family Code* (St. Louis, MO: Washington University, School for International Training, Unpublished Paper, 2020), 7.

24 Fatima Harrak, "The History and Significance of the New Moroccan Family Code", *Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa (ISITA) Working Paper Series* 9/2 (March 2009), 3.

25 Olick-Gibson, *From the Ulama to the Legislature*, 8.

1993, the Moroccan monarchy enacted a reform that sought to resolve disagreements between groups.[26]

This legislation addresses child guardianship rights, divorce, polygamy, arbitration, conciliation (*muṣālaḥah*), and alimony.[27]

The abolition of guardians' authority over girls' marriages and the requirement that girls publicly express their agreement to marriage contracts were the two most notable changes added to the Mudawwanah.[28] Polygamy and the husband's unilateral right to divorce required judicial consent, and stricter financial compensation protocols for divorce were implemented. Legal guardianship of children was now conferred on the mother, and custody statutes were enacted in her favor.[29]

Nonetheless, these measures failed to meet the expectations of women's associations and, in fact, intensified their demands.[30] Moreover, while these revisions were initially applauded, they soon became the target of severe criticism. Critics dismissed them as superficial distractions and deceptive tactics, arguing that they were ineffective and inadequate and maintaining that a comprehensive reevaluation of the family law was necessary to eliminate women's subordination in their relationships with husbands or men in general. For these women's associations, the modification nevertheless yielded one positive outcome: it eliminated the exemption for the Mālikī provisions from alteration and repudiation.[31]

This phase, which spanned the 1970s to the early 1990s, marked a period in which the women's movement increasingly called for substantial revisions to specific provisions in family law, particularly with regard to inheritance, the abolition of polygamy, and

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26 Emanuela Dalmasso - Francesco Cavatorta, "Reforming the Family Code in Tunisia and Morocco – The Struggle between Religion, Globalisation and Democracy", *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 11/2 (2010), 18.

27 Muḥammad al-Azhar, *Sharḥ Mudawwanat al-usrah: al-Zawāj, inḥilāl mīthāq al-zawjiyyah wa-āthāruhū, al-wilādah wa-natāʾijubā* (al-Dār al-Bayḍāʾ: n.p., 7th edition, 2015), 9.

28 Dalmasso - Cavatorta, "Reforming the Family Code in Tunisia and Morocco", 18.

29 Harrak, "The History and Significance of the New Moroccan Family Code", 3.

30 al-ʿAshī Nuwārah, "Taqnīn aḥkām al-usrah fī l-Jazāʾir wa-bāqī duwal al-Maghrib al-ʿArabī", *Dirāsāt wa-abḥāth* 11/2 (June 2019), 306.

31 Muḥammad al-Kashbūr, *al-Wāḍiḥ fī sharḥ Mudawwanat al-usrah: Inḥilāl mīthāq al-zawjiyyah* (al-Dār al-Bayḍāʾ: Maṭbaʿat al-Najāḥ al-Jadīdah, 3rd edition, 2015), 1/12.

guardianship rights. These demands prompted strong and, at times, intense reactions, especially when they challenged provisions that were central to the distinctive legislative principles of the Islamic legal framework.[32] Consequently, the intended objective was not achieved.

The influence of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)[33] on women's movements and legalization efforts is noteworthy and significantly impacted subsequent developments in women's rights and legal reforms.

Morocco ratified the agreement in June 1993, but it was never published in the Official Gazette.[34] In response, Morocco pledged to integrate the principle of gender equality into its constitution and legislative framework in accordance with Article 2 of the Convention. This commitment involved amending or abolishing existing laws, regulations, customs, and practices that discriminate against women. Additionally, the country committed to eliminating practices rooted in notions of gender superiority or inferiority, as stipulated in the first paragraph of Article 5 of the CEDAW.[35] Nevertheless, Morocco maintained a few objections regarding the Convention, which hindered its complete ratification.[36]

External reform pressures on Muslim countries and advocacy from internal women's movements resulted in a third wave of reform. However, scholars opposed these changes, contending that regulations should remain grounded in Islamic principles and reflect societal values. Their opposition did not imply that the family's

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[32] Khadījah Mufīd, "Mudawwanat al-usrah: Ayyᵘ jadīd?", *al-Furqān: Islāmiyyah thaqāfiyyah* 50 (2004), 13.

[33] CEDAW is an international legal instrument that requires governments to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls and uphold gender equality. Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on December 18, 1979, CEDAW became an international convention on September 3, 1981, following ratification by twenty countries. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), "Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (Accessed October 30, 2023).

[34] Salia, *Reflections on a Reform*, 10; Olick-Gibson, *From the Ulama to the Legislature*, 8.

[35] Hayʾat al-Taḥrīr, *Taṭawwur al-waḍʿ al-ḥuqūqī li-l-marʾah al-Maghribiyyah min Mudawwanat al-aḥwāl al-shakhṣiyyah li-sanat 1957 ilá Mudawwanat al-usrah li-sanat 2004: Mudākhalah fī-l-nadwah al-duwaliyyah al-munaẓẓamah min ṭaraf Muʾassasat al-Bayt al-ʿArabī bi-Mādrīd fī Isbāniyā yawm 4/11/2009* (Maghrib: Mukhtabar al-Bahth fī Qānūn al-Usrah wa-l-Hijrah, 2008), 291.

[36] Salia, *Reflections on a Reform*, 10.

circumstances did not require reform; instead, they emphasized that family, politics, economy, society, culture, and intellectual life required thoughtful, rational reforms aligned with the nation's reference for identity and constitution, which is Islam.[37]

1.3. Mudawwanat al-usrah (2004 Moroccan Islamic Family Law)

In 1999, King Mohammed VI pledged to improve gender equality within Moroccan society.[38] There were strong public expectations that the government would promote human rights and women's rights. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Yūsufī, the prime minister of the rotational administration led by the Socialist Union of Popular Forces (UNFP), prioritized gender equality during his tenure. In this context, women's nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) initiated a significant campaign to promote women's participation in public life and development, which was supported by World Bank funding.[39] In a government statement issued on April 17, 1998, by al-Yūsufī, a progressive reform of Islamic family law was pledged to ensure adherence to the principles of true Islamic values.[40]

In 1999, a draft was initiated to incorporate women into the development process.[41] This action intensified the discussion and commenced tangible actions in education, reproductive health, and economic empowerment.[42] Without delving into the specifics of the draft, which was intended, according to its authors, to improve women's social and economic status, it is notable that the section on personal status sparked a substantial uproar within Moroccan society. Strongly divergent views emerged, with some groups firmly supporting the reforms and others opposing them. This project represented a critical turning point, both materially and psychologically, in preparing for the eventual adoption of the

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37 Kāfī, "al-Aḥwāl wa-l-usrah", 44-45.

38 Olick-Gibson, *From the Ulama to the Legislature*, 8.

39 Harrak, "The History and Significance of the New Moroccan Family Code", 4. Because the initiative was backed by the World Bank, Islamists claimed that the changes were a neocolonial endeavor to secularize Moroccan society. Thousands of women marched with Islamists in Casablanca. See Olick-Gibson, *From the Ulama to the Legislature*, 8.

40 Al-Kashbūr, *al-Wasīṭ fī sharḥ Mudawwanat al-usrah*, 12.

41 Harrak, "The History and Significance of the New Moroccan Family Code", 4.

42 Fakhria - Marpuah, "A Discourse of Mudawanah al-Usrah", 314.

Mudawwanah. Furthermore, this policy led to the resolution of the dispute immediately after the royal announcement.

Perhaps the most debated topic is what was stated in the French version of the draft: citing Islamic legal traditions was deemed unacceptable unless these traditions demonstrated the capacity to address social transformations, economic development conditions, and democratic requirements.[43]

It was no secret that the dispute about family was part of the global pressure on Islamic countries, including Morocco, as evidenced by the violent confrontations at the Cairo Population Conference and the Beijing Conference, as well as other international conferences and agreements. Importantly, no one dared to call for reform of the Jewish Code of Status in Morocco, which was not subjected to the same treatment as Muslim law.[44]

In response to these criticisms, King Muḥammad VI subsequently established a commission to amend the Mudawwanat al-aḥwāl al-shakhṣiyyah one year after the 2001 protests in Casablanca and Rabat. The commission comprised politicians, judges, clergy, women's activists, intellectuals, and academics.[45] The King elevated the public status of women by appointing ten women to key governmental positions.[46] The terrorist attacks in Casablanca in May 2003 mobilized the reformers again.[47] On October 10, 2003, the remainder of Parliament declared essential modifications to the Family Code.

The final form of the new Mudawwanat al-usrah received approval in January 2004 and became effective on February 3, 2004.[48] It established several essential rights for women, including self-

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43 Al-Kashbūr, *al-Wasīṭ fī sharḥ Mudawwanat al-usrah*, 13.

44 Kāfī, "al-Aḥwāl wa-l-usrah", 44.

45 The Royal Commission's activities were segmented into three phases. Initially, it heard presentations from civil society representatives across several industries. Subsequently, it analyzed the family law of other Muslim-majority countries. The Royal Commission ultimately deliberated on the foundation of the legislation. Certain members proposed that the new code be founded on international human rights agreements, while others emphasized the need to ground the new code in Sharīʿah. After these conversations, the Royal Commission proffered suggestions to the king. Rather than enacting the modifications through royal decree, as prior monarchs had done, King Muḥammad VI presented the amendments to Parliament in October 2003. See Olick-Gibson, *From the Ulama to the Legislature*, 9.

46 Fakhria - Marpuah, "A Discourse of Mudawanah al-Usrah", 314.

47 Sadiki, "Morocco", 312.

48 Al-Kashbūr, *al-Wasīṭ fī sharḥ Mudawwanat al-usrah*, 21.

guardianship, divorce, and child custody. It additionally imposed more restrictions on polygamy, increased the legal marriage age from 15 to 18, and criminalized sexual harassment. However, the new legislation did not wholly abolish polygamy, unilateral divorce by the husband, separation through *khulʿ*, or disparities in inheritance laws.[49]

The amendments abolished the legal requirement for a wife's submission to her husband, established that both spouses are joint leaders of the family, and acknowledged their common responsibility for child-rearing. Nonetheless, the husband was legally obligated to support his wife financially under *fiqh*.[50]

Women's movements, which have long advocated reform, welcomed the Moroccan Family Code, which was published in 2004. According to these movements, women's access to their rights has been limited since independence.[51]

Moroccan society endorsed the implementation of the Mudawwanat al-usrah. After extensive discussion and vigorous debate on differing opinions and societal trends, a partial consensus was reached on this family law. The King had a pivotal role in resolving this situation.

Conclusion

The development of Islamic family law in Morocco, along with Islamization, was generally based on the Mālikī *madhhab*. This distinctive feature was consistently reflected in Morocco's codification efforts throughout the 20th century.

Even during the colonial period (1912-1956), Islamic family law remained in effect. Although the French intervened in the Moroccan legal system during this time, they mostly refrained from altering regulations governing Islamic family law. Concurrently, two significant

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[49] Sadiki, "Morocco", 313.

[50] Hanafi, "Moudawana and Women's Rights in Morocco", 518-519; al-Qāsimī, "Maẓāhir al-thābit wa-l-mutaghayyir wa-l-khuṣūṣiyyah wa-l-ʿumūmiyyah", 70.

[51] Fakhria - Marpuah, "A Discourse of Mudawanah al-Usrah", 315. Morocco's new family law is undoubtedly a positive legislative measure for Moroccan women. This is attributable to two distinguishing elements of the law. First, it acknowledges gender equality by reevaluating the notion of power inside the family in an Islamic framework. Second, the reforms were initiated after decades of effort by Moroccan women for increased access to justice. See Hanafi, "Moudawana and Women's Rights in Morocco", 515.

royal decrees were enacted in the Moroccan legal system that transferred jurisdiction over the majority of Berber tribes to customary courts. The Berbers were therefore deprived of the jurisdiction of the Sharīʿah courts. These decisions can be seen as an important turning point in Moroccan history.

Following the independence of Morocco (1956), the first Islamic family law, Mudawwanat al-aḥwāl al-shakhṣiyyah (1957), was published, which was drafted according to the rulings and jurisprudence of the Mālikī *madhhab*. However, the commissions established by the government from the early 1960s through the 1980s failed to address the demands of women's rights advocates, who argued that the law institutionalized gender inequality. Increasing pressure for amendments and reforms eventually overwhelmed the resistance of the administration.

The most criticized aspects of the Mudawwanah included issues such as polygamy, guardianship, the legal age of marriage, inheritance distribution, and the exclusive right of men to initiate divorce. The steps taken in the early 1980s under increasing internal and external pressure began to clearly show effects by the early 1990s. As a result, the second Mudawwanah was enacted in 1993. The new Mudawwanah introduced revised regulations on child custody rights, divorce, polygamy, arbitration, reconciliation, and alimony.

In its reformed form, the new Mudawwanah also failed to fulfill the expectations of the women's movement. Critics described the changes as deceptive tactics and called for more comprehensive reforms.

Notably, Morocco's ratification of the CEDAW convention adopted by the United Nations (UN) coincided with the promulgation of the reformed Mudawwanah (1993).

Morocco experienced a third wave of reforms in Islamic family law. Objections raised by academics and groups with Islamic sensitivities proved insufficient, resulting in the promulgation of the latest and most updated Mudawwanah, which remains in effect today (2004). The amendments to the law addressed several issues, including marriage guardianship, divorce, child custody, restrictions on polygamy, the establishment of a legal marriage age for both men and women, and the criminalization of sexual harassment. Additionally, the law introduced provisions for shared responsibility between spouses for family leadership. This reform was positively received by the

Moroccan women's movement and is considered a result of the struggle that Moroccan women have pursued since independence.

According to some perspectives, the new law reflects an effort to balance reform with respect for Morocco's cultural and religious heritage by maintaining at least some provisions of Islamic law.

As exemplified by Morocco, the Islamic world has attempted to codify Islamic family law based on principles of a particular *madhhab*. However, in the context of the global rise of the women's movement, the growing discourse of gender equality, and the CEDAW convention supported by the UN and similar initiatives, it faces difficulties in reflecting its own core values in legalization studies. Today's Islamic legal scholars have a duty to overcome these points of disagreement in the future codification of Islamic law.

This ongoing reform process serves as a significant example of how codification efforts in Morocco can be conducted without neglecting the fundamental principles of Islamic law by considering the dynamic relationships among law, society, and cultural norms. Important conclusions can be drawn from this experience by the Islamic world and Islamic jurists.

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JEWISH POETS AND ARABIC LITERARY CULTURE IN PRE-ISLAMIC ARABIA: ORIGINS, THEMES, AND QUESTIONS OF AUTHENTICITY

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Abstract

Prior to the advent of Islam, Jews had a long-standing presence in Arabia. They migrated to the region and engaged in commercial, political, religious, and especially literary activities. Hence, they both influenced the dominant culture in the region and were influenced by it. Aside from their religious practices, their lifestyle and language were not isolated from the dominant culture. According to historical sources, the Jews of this period composed poems in Arabic, adopting the style of pre-Islamic Arabic poetry. They also did not hesitate to write poems on prevalent themes of the Arabic literary tradition. Although Jewish poets and their poems mentioned in historical sources are limited, many of them have survived. The study of these poems provides insight into the literary and cultural practices of the pre-Islamic Jewish community. Additionally, this analysis addresses the debates concerning the authenticity of poems attributed to Jewish poets.

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1. Judaism in pre-Islamic Arabia

The origins of Hebrew communities in Arabia[1] and the extent of their activities in the region are topics that require separate discussions. First, since Judea, which is considered the center of Judaism, is located on the border of Arabia, political and commercial interactions have occurred between these two regions throughout history. There have been numerous waves of migration between the communities living there. It is highly probable that Jews settled *en masse* in Arabia due to major events such as the Babylonian exile, the Makkabi uprising and the Bar Kohba revolt, in addition to continuous individual and small-scale movements. However, determining the exact effect and influence of such migrations is challenging. Nevertheless, it is crucial to highlight the major events that likely facilitated these migrations.

A noteworthy perspective was put forward by Margoliouth. According to his argument, the Hebrews originated in Arabia and later migrated northward, eventually settling in Judea. After their migration, they distanced themselves from the Semitic identity they shared with the Arabs and adopted the sociocultural structure of the Canaanites living in the region. Margoliouth, who presented numerous linguistic arguments to support this claim, suggested that in ancient times, the Hebrews and Arabs of Southern Arabia spoke languages similar enough to allow mutual understanding. However, the Hebrews he refers to are not the same Jewish tribes mentioned by Islamic historians. According to him, these tribes, referred to as Jews in Islamic history, should not be considered Jews in the traditional sense. He argues that this religious group mentioned in the Qurʾān and Islamic history should be called "Rahmanists" and is quite different from the

[1] It is crucial to be cautious about references to Arabia in historical texts. Especially in ancient texts, references to places might not align with the current geographical definition of Arabia. However, we refer to Arabia as it was understood in the history of Islam and as it is recognized today.

institutionalized Judaism of the time.[2] Margoliouth's striking assertions about the pre-Islamic period likely reflect only a fraction of the overall reality. Whereas his views on the ancient period are considered credible, his assertions about the Jews mentioned in Islamic history have not found considerable support.

It is suggested that certain tribes settled in Arabia during the timeframe when the Jews were establishing their own kingdoms in Canaan. In particular, there are suggestions that the nomadic tribe of Shimon, one of the twelve tribes, may have settled in Northern Arabia. However, it is difficult to assert that the origins of the Jewish tribes of the Islamic period can be traced back to the tribe of Simeon.[3] Additionally, many doubts have been raised about the nature of this migration to Arabia. Given the scarcity of sources about that period and the fact that this event is thought to have occurred around the 12th century BCE, it is impossible to make a definitive judgment on this issue.[4]

The Book of Job contains the most conspicuous references to Jews in Arabia among all the texts in the Tanakh.[5] Indeed, the Prophet Job and his three friends, with whom he has extended dialogues, are depicted as residing in cities in Arabia. The most striking feature distinguishing this part of the Tanakh from the other parts is its poetry-like structure and its high level of eloquence.[6] Considering that pre-Islamic Arabs were also renowned for their poetry and eloquence, it is reasonable to infer that there was a strong tradition of poetry in this region. Thus, the events described in this chapter likely took place in or near Northern Arabia. The settlements of Shuʿah, Naʿamah, and Taymāʾ, from which Job's three friends hail, are considered significant cities in Northern Arabia. Furthermore, Taymāʾ, identified as the largest Jewish settlement during the Jāhiliyyah period, is mentioned as a

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2 David Samuel Margoliouth, *The Relations Between Arabs and Israelites Prior to the Rise of Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1924), 70-71.

3 Gökhan Efe, *İslam Öncesi Arabistan'da Yahudilik* (İstanbul: Marmara University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2002), 13.

4 Israel Wolfensohn, *Tārīkh al-Yahūd fī bilād al-ʿArab fī l-Jāhiliyyah wa-ṣadr al-Islām* (Cairo: Lajnat al-Taʾlīf wa-l-Tarjamah wa-l-Nashr, 1927), 3-4.

5 Margoliouth, *The Relations Between Arabs and Israelites*, 32.

6 Philip K. Hitti, *History of the Arabs from the Earliest Times to the Present* (London: MacMillan, 1993), 42-43.

commercial city (Job 6:19). This mention of Arabian geography in the Tanakh suggests a cosmopolitan model of Northern Arabia, where Hebrews, Arabs, and various other ethnic groups coexisted. Additionally, the fact that Nabonidus, one of the Babylonian kings, used Taymāʾ as his capital for a time underscores the city's geopolitical importance.[7] There is also a possibility that many Jews accompanied Nabonidus to Taymāʾ during this event following the Babylonian exile.[8]

The first major event in which the Hebrews left Judea en masse and began to live in diaspora was their exile to Babylon in the 6th century BCE, following the attack by Nebuchadnezzar. During this exile, some communities formed diasporas across the Middle East and surrounding regions. It is possible that some tribes sought safety in sheltered cities in the Arabian deserts during these attacks.[9] Similarly, many Jews likely sought refuge in Arabia during the continuous wars and harsh suppression of Jewish revolts under Roman rule in the first two centuries AD. Arabic sources, such as *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, mention two incidents regarding the arrival of Jews in Arabia. The first incident involves a group of Jews who fought with the Amalekites during the time of Moses and were not accepted back due to conflicts, subsequently settling in Arabia. This event is difficult to verify because of its antiquity and inconsistency with historical data. The second event is depicted in meticulous detail, underscoring the oppressive stance of the Roman Empire and offering a comprehensive explanation for Jewish migration to Arabia. The narrative provides the names of the tribes that settled in Hejaz and explains that the Roman armies sent after them perished due to the harsh conditions of the desert.[10] Likewise, the Talmud recounts stories of Jews seeking sanctuary in

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7 C. J. Gadd, "The Harran Inscriptions of Nabonidus", *Anatolian Studies* 8 (1958), 79.

8 Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 39.

9 Ṣāliḥ Mūsá Darādikah, *al-ʿAlāqāt al-ʿArabiyyah al-Yahūdiyyah ḫattá nihāyat ʿahd al-Khulafāʾ al-rāshidīn* (Amman: al-Ahliyyah li-l-Nashr wa-l-Tawzīʿ, 1992), 103-104.

10 Abū l-Faraj ʿAlī ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn Muḥammad al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, ed. Iḥsān ʿAbbās - Ibrāhīm al-Saʿāfīn - Bakr ʿAbbās (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2008), 22/77-78.

Arabia.[11] In parallel with these accounts, many researchers believe that the Jewish groups in Arabia during the Jāhiliyyah period were composed of those who arrived during this coercion.[12] Indeed, among the major events leading to the expulsion of the Jewish population from Judea were the attacks and oppression they faced under Roman rule in the first and second centuries CE.[13]

The deserts of Arabia have served as a natural refuge at various stages of Jewish history. During the Bar Kokhba revolt against Rome, Rabbi Akiva travelled to Arabia to seek help from the Jewish communities. Similarly, Paul, a Pharisee, spent three years in Arabia before his conversion to Christianity.[14] Events such as these indicate the presence of Judaism, specifically Pharisaic Judaism, in Arabia.

The aforementioned examples represent only a few instances of the Jewish presence in Northern Arabia, and numerous other significant events are documented in historical records. Substantial evidence and scholarly discourse suggest that Jewish migration to Arabia occurred at various points for diverse reasons, as demonstrated by these events. However, it is important to note that not all Jewish tribes referenced in Arabic sources from the early Islamic period were of Hebrew origin. These data and hypotheses merely demonstrate a continuous interaction between Jews and Arabs throughout history. Individuals and tribes of Hebrew descent inhabited Northern Arabia, establishing Jewish culture and religion in the region. Naturally, the culture and religion practiced by Jews in this region cannot be expected to be entirely identical to mainstream Judaism. They likely adopted a distinct

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11 Moshe Gil, *Jews in Islamic Countries in the Middle Ages*, trans. David Strassler (Leiden - Boston: Brill, 2004), 7.

12 Wolfensohn, *Tārīkh al-Yahūd fī bilād al-ʿArab*, 8-9; Darādikah, *al-ʿAlāqāt al-ʿArabiyyah al-Yahūdiyyah*, 105-106; Gordon Darnell Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia: From Ancient Times to Their Eclipse under Islam* (Columbia, S.C: University of South Carolina Press, 1988), 22-23; Newby, "The Jews of Arabia at the Birth of Islam", *A History of Jewish-Muslim Relations: From the Origins to the Present Day*, ed. Abdelwahab Meddeb - Benjamin Stora, trans. Jane Marie Todd - Michael B. Smith (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 41.

13 Seth Schwartz, *The Ancient Jews from Alexander to Muhammad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 85-88.

14 Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia*, 30.

way of life and adhered to some apocryphal beliefs.[15] However, the extent to which the practices of the Jews in Arabia paralleled those of mainstream Judaism is a separate issue.

On the other hand, some scholars propose that the Jewish presence in Arabia might have been negligible. The notable absence of any mention of a diaspora in Arabia is particularly striking, given the Jews' strong biblical tradition and extensive historiography.[16] There are only sporadic responsa concerning Jews living in Arab lands (Shabbat 6:6), but despite the extensive compilation of Jewish history by various authors, Arabia is often excluded. For example, in Josephus's account of Jewish uprisings, there is no mention of Jewish groups in Arabia, although Nabataean elements are referenced.[17] This omission challenges the notion of significant Jewish migration and settlement in Arabia throughout history. It is thus imperative to consider why, despite evidence of numerous Jewish elements in Arabia, they are not deemed significant by the Jews of Judea and other regions. Addressing this issue necessitates an examination of the origins of Jewish communities in Arabia and their relationship with mainstream Judaism. Understanding these dynamics is crucial in evaluating the extent and significance of the Jewish presence in Arabia.

The desert climate of Arabia acts as a natural barrier, providing refuge for various groups. However, while it offers defense against external threats, these harsh climatic conditions also shape the way in which the region's inhabitants live. It is evident that a Bedouin who wishes to survive in the desert must be in harmony with its flora, fauna, and landforms. In other parts of the world, humans have domesticated nature and molded it to fit their own cultures. In contrast, for those living in deserts, where life is more challenging, adaptation to nature is necessary. Jewish communities are known to survive long periods of forced exile or long-distance migration without assimilating completely. Nevertheless, after a certain period of time, they become influenced by the societies they live in; their language, cuisine, culture,

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15 Mustafa Baş, "Hicaz Yahudilerinin Menşe Problemi ve Tanrı Algıları", *İsrailiyat: İsrail ve Yahudi Çalışmaları Dergisi* 1 (Winter 2017), 91-104.

16 Wolfensohn, *Tārīkh al-Yahūd fī bilād al-ʿArab*, 11.

17 Darādikah, *al-ʿAlāqāt al-ʿArabiyyah al-Yahūdiyyah*, 105.

and even religious rituals reflect elements of the dominant culture.[18] The Ashkenazi, Sephardi, and Mizrahi Jews are examples of this phenomenon, as they retain their distinct identities while resembling their host communities in various respects.[19] For Arabia, this situation tends to favor Arab culture. The Arabization of outsiders was not necessarily due to the strength of Arab culture but rather a natural process driven by the demands of desert life.[20] This process of Arabization may explain why Jewish sources do not consider the Jewish communities in Arabia to be particularly significant. Determining the position of Jews in Arabia within the assimilation – identity preservation dichotomy is challenging. Islamic sources on the subject provide evidence supporting both perspectives. Analyzing the language of the Jewish tribes in Arabia, especially considering their poets, is of particular importance and will be discussed in the next section.

One of the most striking examples of the merging of Judaism with Arab culture in the pre-Islamic period is the presence of Jewish tribes living as Bedouins.[21] These tribes seem to have been neglected by historical sources owing to their relatively minor economic and political influence compared with sedentary Jewish communities.[22] Additionally, upon closer examination, it becomes increasingly evident that these tribes were likely indigenous Arabs who subsequently embraced Judaism. Islamic sources do mention

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18 Erich Gruen, "Diaspora and the 'Assimilated' Jew", *Early Judaism: New Insights and Scholarship*, ed. Frederick E. Greenspahn (New York: New York University Press, 2018); William Safran, "The Jewish Diaspora in a Comparative and Theoretical Perspective", *Israel Studies* 10/1 (Spring 2005), 36-60; Salo Wittmayer Baron, *A Social and Religious History of the Jews, vol. 1: To the Beginning of the Christian Era* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1952), 118.

19 Louis H. Feldman, *Jew and Gentile in the Ancient World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993), 43-44.

20 Theodor Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Poesie der Alten Araber* (Hannover: Carl Rümpler, 1864), 55; Wolfensohn, *Tārīkh al-Yahūd fī bilād al-ʿArab*, 22; Norman A. Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands: A History and Source Book* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publ. Soc. of America, 2010), 4-5.

21 Newby, "The Jews of Arabia at the Birth of Islam", 44; Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia*, 51.

22 Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia*, 55.

individuals who converted to Judaism or converted their children to Judaism.[23] Moreover, there are accounts of some Arab tribes converting to Judaism en masse, presumably continuing their nomadic lifestyle after the conversion.[24] These findings highlight the debate on the ethnic origins of Jews in Arabia, specifically the division between those of Hebrew descent and those of Arab descent, which remains one of the most controversial topics in the context of pre-Islamic Jews. Importantly, Western scholars tend to view these tribes as Arabs who adopted Judaism.[25] Conversely, Islamic history recognizes these tribes as being of Hebrew origin.[26] They are referred to as the Children of Israel in the Qurʾān and ḥadīths and are categorized as having a separate identity from the Arab population, influencing this perception.[27] This point is significant, as it helps us understand where the Jews of the region stood in the dichotomy of assimilation versus preservation of identity. Otherwise, if not properly contextualized, the debate may become one of those trivial early modern arguments about ethnicity. Just as a tribe of Hebrew origin could be considered Arab owing to complete Arabization, a tribe that has been Judaized and lost much of its Arabic identity should be considered Jewish. Throughout this discussion, numerous Hebrew tribes settled in Arabia and plausibly underwent complete Arabization, integrating into the local culture over time. Similarly, it is possible that some Arab tribes were influenced by Jews in certain parts of Arabia, adopted their culture, and came to be seen as Jews. In this case, it would be unnecessary to identify the origin of the tribe as Arab and treat it as non-Jewish on that

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23 Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān ibn al-Ashʿath ibn Isḥāq al-Sijistānī, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* (Beirut: Maṭbaʿat al-Saʿādah, 1950), "al-Jihād" 963 (No. 2682).

24 Abū ʿUbayd ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Andalusī al-Bakrī, *Muʿjam mā istaʿjam min asmāʾ al-bilād wa-l-mawāḍiʿ*, ed. Muṣṭafá al-Saqqā (Beirut: ʿĀlam al-Kutub, 1996), 1/29.

25 Efe, *İslam Öncesi Arabistan'da Yahudilik*, 57-58.

26 However, it is possible to find names that constitute an exception to this situation. Al-Yaʿqūbī attributed the Jewish tribes in Medina to the Judhām tribe; Abū l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad ibn Abī Yaʿqūb Isḥāq al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī* (Najaf: Maṭbaʿat al-Ghurrī, 1939), 2/36, 39.

27 Ahmed Hussein Mohammed al-Isawi, *Arapça Kaynaklara Göre Hz. Muhammed Döneminde Medine Yahudileri* (Çanakkale: Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University, Institute of Social Sciences, Master's Thesis, 2016), 6-9.

basis.[28] Hence, our attention should be directed toward the life, structure, and language of these tribes. Language is especially significant, as it functions both as a constructor and a carrier of culture. Therefore, the languages spoken by these tribes deserve detailed consideration.

2. Languages Used by Jews of Arabia in the Pre-Islamic Period

It is common knowledge that Jews in this region spoke and wrote in Arabic and had no problems using it. However, it is also possible that there were some Aramaic and Hebrew components in their language.[29] The crucial point to emphasize is which languages, in addition to Arabic, the Jews used and to what extent. In Islamic history, Jews occasionally conversed among themselves in languages[30] other than Arabic and occasionally translated Hebrew phrases from the Torah.[31] It is also narrated that Zayd ibn Thābit was tasked by the Prophet to learn the language spoken by the Jews, referred to as Syriac in some sources and Hebrew in others.[32] By this period, Jews generally did not use Hebrew except for Torah reading and religious rituals, and it was unlikely that the Jews of Medina were an exception. Instead, they likely adopted Aramaic as their vernacular, which is consistent with its widespread use across the Middle East. The term "Syriac" in historical accounts likely denotes the Aramaic language prevalent at the time, whereas confusion with the term "Hebrew" arises from its frequent misidentification by other communities. Of course, it is possible that religious scholars in particular possessed a level of proficiency in Hebrew in addition to Aramaic. Understanding the extent of Aramaic and Hebrew usage among these communities can elucidate their processes of cultural and linguistic assimilation while preserving distinct identities.

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28 Efe, *İslam Öncesi Arabistan'da Yahudilik*, 59-60.

29 Wolfensohn, *Tārīkh al-Yahūd fī bilād al-ʿArab*, 20.

30 Ahlam Sbaihat - Nama' Albanna, "Yathrib Jews' Language(s): A Study Based on Authentic Ḥadiṯs", *al-Jāmiʿah: Journal of Islamic Studies* 55/2 (2017), 329-330.

31 Sbaihat - Albanna, "Yathrib Jews' Language(s)", 334.

32 Sbaihat - Albanna, "Yathrib Jews' Language(s)", 343.

The linguistic relationship between Arabic and the language spoken by Jews remains ambiguous. Both languages share the same origins, suggesting a kinship, although it is likely that the Jewish language was a dialect of Arabic rather than a separate language.[33] In this case, the dialect in question is essentially Arabic but exhibits differences in vocabulary and pronunciation. Similar situations have often been observed in other Jewish diasporas. Languages such as Ladino[34] and Yiddish[35] emerged from the interaction between the dominant languages of the regions where Jews lived and the Aramaic and some Hebrew they used at the time. However, these languages belong to the European language families. It is conceivable that the language spoken in Arabia, also referred to as *al-Yahūdiyyah*,[36] was formed in a similar way. It should be noted, however, that the "Judeo-Arabic" spoken by Jews living in Arab lands, now known as Mizrahi Jews, is not related to this language. Indeed, the language known today as Judeo-Arabic should be characterized as a dialect with only minor differences, rather than a distinct language.[37] Similarly, in the pre-Islamic period, it is conceivable that Jews spoke with some pronunciation differences. For example, in some parts of al-Samawʾal's *Dīwān*, the letter "ث" is written as "ت".[38] This seems to reflect a pronunciation difference derived from Aramaic. If such a pronunciation difference existed, it may indicate that they used another language in addition to Arabic.

Another point to be mentioned is the names of Jews in Arabia. Not only individuals but also the vast majority of tribes had Arabic names. Although this provides a clue that the Jews in the region were highly integrated into the local culture, it does not provide any data in terms of the language they spoke. Indeed, the acquisition of names influenced by Arabic culture does not preclude them from being bilingual. In addition, some names may have common usage in both

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33 Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia*, 22.

34 "Ladino Language", *Britannica* (Accessed May 23, 2024).

35 "Yiddish Language", *Britannica* (Accessed May 23, 2024).

36 Efe, *İslam Öncesi Arabistan'da Yahudilik*, 93-95.

37 Ella Shohat, "The Invention of Judeo-Arabic: Nation, Partition and the Linguistic Imaginary", *Interventions* 19/2 (February 2017), 153-200.

38 Al-Samawʾal ibn ʿĀdiyāʾ ibn Rifāʿah ibn al-Ḥārith ibn Kaʿb, *Dīwān al-Samawʾal*, ed. and comm. Wāḍiḥ al-Ṣamad (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1996), 85-86.

languages.[39] Tribal names also do not provide information about their origins in this context.[40] For example, historical sources suggest that numerous tribes were designated by the regions they inhabited.[41] Consequently, it is unsurprising that their names are of Arabic origin. Considering that such information is obtained from Arabic sources, the observations presented represent an external perspective on Jewish communities. Therefore, the internal dynamics and treatment of Jews among themselves may have diverged from what is documented.

Thus, it is evident that the Jews had their own dialect and religious understanding and lived with an identity that was distinct from the Arabs, but in certain respects, they were highly integrated into Arab culture.[42] Linguistically, one of the most compelling pieces of evidence of the deep integration of Jews into Arab culture is the literature they produced. In addition to demonstrating their full embrace and skillful use of the Arabic language, their literature also reflects their perceptions of life during that period. Poetry was generally considered the highest form of literature in Arab society, and it was in this field that they displayed their greatest skill. They articulated their emotions through poetry in times of war and peace, during moments of joy and sorrow, and in various significant events throughout their lives. Poets became the leading figures of society and represented their tribes in every field. Given the information shared in this work thus far, it is highly appropriate to conclude that the Jews, while not assimilating, were deeply integrated into Arab culture and language. This assertion is clearly evident in the poetry they produced, which reflects that they integrated into the Arab cultural and linguistic milieu without compromising their own identity. For this reason, an analysis of the literature of the Jews in Arabia, particularly their poetry, offers clearer insights into their relationship with the Arabic language.

3. Jewish Poets in the Main Arabic Sources

At this point, it has been observed that Jews in Arabia had a dialect close to Arabic, although it is possible that they used other languages.

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39 Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia*, 74.

40 Wolfensohn, *Tārīkh al-Yahūd fī bilād al-ʿArab*, 15.

41 Al-Yaʿqūbī, *Tārīkh al-Yaʿqūbī*, 2/36, 39.

42 Stillman, *The Jews of Arab Lands*, 4-5.

For example, in their religious literature, it appears unlikely that they relied on Arabic sources. Instead, it is more plausible that they utilized sources in languages such as Hebrew and Aramaic and perhaps texts translated from these languages into Arabic. Inferences from the Qurʾān and other sources show that the Jews had literature that was appreciated by the Arabs.[43] Western scholars have often emphasized these points and attempted to demonstrate the influence of Jews on Arab culture in general and on Islam in particular.[44] However, in addition to their religious literature, Jews in Arabia had other cultural practices with profane characteristics. The Jews could not remain detached from the tradition of poetry, which held an important position due to the social structure in the region. In addition to the odes of *ḥamāsah*, *fakhr*, and *hijw* common among the Arab tribes, they also composed many brief lines to express themselves. Moreover, considering that the available sources illuminate only a portion of the cultural resources, the evidence suggests that the Jews had a considerable poetic literary culture in Arabia.[45]

In *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, one of the oldest anthologies of Arabic poetry, a Jewish poet is mentioned anonymously.[46] The poem, whose title and period remain unknown owing to its anonymity, was later referenced in *Kitāb al-Aghānī* along with its story in relation to a Muslim individual.[47] It is common in oral cultures for a poem to circulate and be recited by different people. Therefore, different people may recite a poem in a manner that reflects their own contexts. However, al-Ḍabbī emphasizes the poet's Jewishness despite not identifying him. Considering the understanding of an omnipotent God in the final part of the poem, where submission to fate is emphasized as necessary, highlighting the poet's Jewishness seems fitting:

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43 Charles Cutler Torrey, *The Jewish Foundation of Islam* (New York: Jewish Institute of Religion Press, 1933), 31.

44 Hitti, *History of the Arabs*, 107.

45 It has been said that since Jews were less likely than polytheists to have embraced Islam, their poetry was less likely to be transmitted to later ages; see Wolfensohn, *Tārīkh al-Yahūd fī bilād al-ʿArab*, 25-26.

46 Abū l-ʿAbbās al-Mufaḍḍal ibn Muḥammad ibn Yaʿlá al-Ḍabbī, *al-Mufaḍḍaliyyāt*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir - ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Cairo: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.), 179-180.

47 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 12/171.

وَلكِنْ لهَا آمِرٌ قَادِرٌ إِذَا حَاوَلَ الأَمْرَ لا يُغلَبُ

But this is the work of a powerful ruler,
who cannot be resisted when he wishes something.

In another anthology compiled in the early period, *al-Aṣmaʿiyyāt*, two Jewish poets are mentioned, each with an ode. The first is Saʿyah ibn Ghurayḍ, and the other is the famous poet al-Samawʾal, who is mentioned in the book as his brother.[48] Of these, Saʿyah's poem is a classic example of *fakhr* poetry.[49] However, in addition to emphasizing the concept of an omnipotent God, al-Samawʾal's poem contains many implicit and explicit religious elements.[50] It is surprising that al-Samawʾal, who likely wrote many other poems, has only this work included in the anthology. Apparently, in the early period, such religious elements were associated with the literature of the Jews. Thus, poems with these elements were considered more valuable for quotation and were directly attributed to some Jews, such as al-Samawʾal. Indeed, the pre-Islamic Arabs, although they may have had a perception of a creator deity, did not possess the mindset offered by monotheistic and systematized religions. In contrast, a polytheist would have been drawn to exhortations about the randomness of life and the necessity of struggling against it. In addition, although at first glance the poem appears to be by a Jew, closer examination has raised serious doubts about its authenticity and its fabrication during the Islamic period.[51] Scholars have justifiably criticized the poem, on the basis of its references to the Qurʾān, which give the impression that it was retrospectively composed in the post-Islamic period.[52] There are other *dīwān* poems that have been subjected to historical and

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[48] Abū Saʿīd ʿAbd al-Malik ibn Qurayb al-Aṣmaʿī, *al-Aṣmaʿiyyāt*, ed. Aḥmad Muḥammad Shākir - ʿAbd al-Salām Muḥammad Hārūn (Beirut: Dār al-Maʿārif, n.d.), 82-86.

[49] The first couplet of the poem: ألا إني بليت وقد بقيت ... وإني لن أعود كما غنيت

[50] It also contains some Jewish elements: وأتتني الأنباء عن ملك داود ... فقرت عيني به ورضيت (The stories of the kingdom of David came to me, and I was glad and happy).

[51] The first couplet of the poem: نطفة ما منيت يوم منيت ... أمرت أمرها وفيها بريت al-Samawʾal, *Dīwān al-Samawʾal*, 82-88.

[52] D. S. Margoliouth, "A Poem Attributed to al-Samau'al", *The Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland* (April 1906), 363-371.

linguistic analyses, raising doubts about their authenticity.[53] Moreover, early literary scholars often debated the attribution of these poems. Considered together, such doubts also extend to the authenticity of other poems mentioned in historical sources and in the *dīwān*.

Another book compiled after these two anthologies, which also contains many poems from the early period, is Abū Tammām's *al-Ḥamāsah*. Only one Jewish poet and poem are mentioned in this book. This poem, attributed to al-Samawʾal, is considered one of the most classical examples of the genre owing to its eloquent and fluent style.[54] As one might infer from this, the poem adheres to the strict structure of classical Arabic *fakhr* themes and lacks any indication of Judaism or a monotheistic understanding. In reality, a sentence in the book preceding the poem hints that it could be the work of someone else.[55] In addition to this suspicion, the poem does not appear in the other two earlier anthologies. Moreover, considering that al-Aṣmaʿī quoted the poetry of al-Samawʾal, it is unexpected that he did not include this prominent poem in his book. Upon consideration of these two factors, the poem's attribution to al-Samawʾal weakens remarkably. Furthermore, according to al-Marzūqī, one of the book's commentators, the poem was written by ʿAbd al-Malik al-Ḥārithī, although he also admitted the possibility that it could be the work of al-Samawʾal.[56] It seems that he considers it less likely that the poem is the work of the former. Another commentator, al-Ṭabrīzī, first attributed the poem to al-Samawʾal and provided an extensive biography of him. He then suggested that it might have belonged to ʿAbd al-Malik al-Ḥārithī.[57] To summarize, different aspects of the poem's attribution have been highlighted, but since it contains no

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[53] Tadeusz Kowalski, "A Contribution to the Problem of the Authenticity of the Dīwān of as-Samau'al", *Archiv Orientální* 3/1 (April 1931), 156-161.

[54] The first couplet of the poem: إذا المرء لم يدنس من اللؤم عرضه ... فكل رداء يرتديه جميل

[55] Abū Tammām Ḥabīb ibn Aws ibn al-Ḥārith al-Ṭāʾī, *Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah*, ed. ʿAbd al-Munʿim Aḥmad Ṣāliḥ (Baghdad: Dār al-Rashīd, 1980), 42.

[56] Abū ʿAlī Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn al-Ḥasan al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah li-Abī Tammām*, ed. Gharīd al-Shaykh (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2003), 1/82-83.

[57] Abū Zakariyyā Yaḥyá ibn ʿAlī ibn Muḥammad al-Khaṭīb al-Tabrīzī, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥamāsah li-Abī Tammām*, ed. Gharīd al-Shaykh (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-ʿIlmiyyah, 2000), 1/85-86.

Jewish elements, no effort has been made to ascertain its origin on a religious basis.

After Abū Tammām, the other fundamental book in the genre of *ḥamāsah* is the work of al-Buḥturī. However, there are no odes attributed to any Jews in this work. There are only two short fragments of poems on specific topics. The first is a two-couplet poem on the subject of friendship, which is attributed to Shurayḥ ibn ʿAmrān.[58] The other is attributed to Waraqah ibn Nawfal, who is identified as a Jew in the work and whom the Prophet consulted when the first revelation came.[59] However, this second poem fragment is attributed to al-Samawʾal in *Kitāb al-Aghānī*. In addition, many other names have been suggested as possible authors of the poem. One such name is Waraqah, to whom al-Buḥturī also attributes the poem.[60] The fame of this short poem stems from the widespread belief that it was heard and approved by the Prophet. Literary books generally quote the couplets in the context of this event. Moreover, the incident is found not only in anthologies but also in ḥadīth literature. The fact that in the ḥadīths, the Prophet refers to the poet as a Jew without naming him seems to have led to various speculations about the poem's authorship.[61] An examination of the content of the poem reveals that it focuses on the necessity of helping the weak. However, this help is not underscored as a religious or moral obligation; rather, it is anticipated as a reciprocation for mutual benefits.

Following these anthological collections, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, one of the most extensive works in Arabic literature, references several Jewish poets. In addition, al-Iṣfahānī dedicates a specific section to the Jews of Yathrib in his work and then proceeds to recount a selection of

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[58] The first couplet of the poem: آخ الكرام إذا وجد ... ت إلى إخائهم سبيلا Abū ʿUbādah al-Walīd ibn ʿUbayd al-Ṭāʾī al-Buḥturī, *al-Ḥamāsah*, ed. Muḥammad Ibrāhīm Ḥuwwar - Aḥmad Muḥammad ʿAbīd (Abu Dhabi: Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture & Heritage, 2007), 138.

[59] The first couplet of the poem: ارفع ضعيفك لا يحربك ضعفه ... يوما فتدركه العواقب قد نما al-Buḥturī, *al-Ḥamāsah*, 488.

[60] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 3/79.

[61] Abū Bakr Ahmad ibn al-Ḥusayn ibn ʿAlī al-Bayhaqī, *al-Jāmiʿ li- shuʿab al-īmān*, ed. ʿAbd al-ʿAlī ʿAbd al- Ḥamīd Ḥāmid (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2003), 11/388.

stories and poems.[62] Almost none of these poems contain any reference to Judaism or religion. There is only one poem in which a Jewish man bids his wife who has converted to Islam to return. The remainder of the poems are classical Arabic pieces, dealing with specific subjects akin to those of the pre-Islamic era. The book continues with a chapter on al-Samawʾal and the story of his reputation for loyalty.[63] Although some short fragments of poetry are included in this story, the main focus lies in the events described. After al-Samawʾal, Saʿyah ibn Ghurayḍ, his grandson, is mentioned under a separate heading. Saʿyah seems to have attracted interest primarily because of his distinguished grandfather and his embrace of Islam. After Saʿyah, the next name in *Kitāb al-Aghānī* is Rabīʿ ibn Abī l-Ḥuqayq from the tribe of Qurayẓah, who is mentioned in a short story and some descriptive poems he recited with al-Nābighah.[64] Similarly, Rabīʿ's poetry does not differ from what is known in classical Arabic poetry. He was followed by Kaʿb ibn al-Ashraf, who was known for his hostility to Islam.[65] His recognition among Jewish poets stems from his creation of poems that vehemently opposed and humiliated the Prophet. His life and the fragments of his poetry are usually mentioned in this context. Kaʿb, like many other poets who denounced Islam and the Prophet, was assassinated at the Prophet's orders.

In addition to these anthologies, many biographical dictionaries were written in the early Islamic world. These dictionaries aim to collect poets who lived in the Arab world and quote some of their poems. Al-Jumāḥī's *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shuʿarāʾ*, one of the most prominent of these works, includes a separate section titled "شعراء يهود" (Jewish Poets). The poets mentioned in this section are al-Samawʾal, Rabīʿ ibn Abī l-Ḥuqayq, Kaʿb ibn al-Ashraf, Shurayḥ ibn ʿAmrān, Saʿyah ibn Ghurayḍ, Abū Qays ibn Rifāʿah, Abū Zayd, and Dirham ibn Zayd.[66] Since the work aims to collect biographies, it provides only short examples of poetry after the names. For this reason, although the

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62 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 22/79-83.

63 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 22/84-86.

64 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 22/91-93.

65 Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 22/94-95.

66 Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad ibn Sallām ibn ʿUbayd Allāh al-Jumaḥī, *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. Maḥmūd Muḥammad Shākir (Jeddah: Dār al-Madanī, n.d.), 280-296.

names we see in the work offer some insight into the number of Jewish poets, they fall short of providing comprehensive information about the subjects and motifs they used. Nevertheless, all of them, with the exception of al-Samawʾal's poem, are in the style of classical Arabic poetry. Al-Samawʾal's poetry, however, is a subject for the next chapter.

Another important biographical dictionary is al-Marzubānī's *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ*, which is quite extensive. However, since not all of this work has survived, we can only see the Jewish poets mentioned in some parts of it. These poets are ʿAmr ibn Abī Ṣakhr,[67] al-Qaʿqāʿ ibn Shibth,[68] Kaʿb ibn al-Ashraf,[69] Kaʿb ibn Asad,[70] Kinānah ibn Abī l-Ḥuqayq,[71] Rabīʿ ibn Abī l-Ḥuqayq,[72] Abū Athāyah, Abū l-Dhayyāl, Abū l-Qarthaʿ, and Abū Yāsir.[73] Although al-Marzubānī includes more Jewish names than other anthologies and dictionaries do, this number is still small considering the breadth of the book.

4. The Treatment of Jews in Islamic History and Some Doubts about Their Poetry

Although this study focuses primarily on Jewish poets in pre-Islamic Arabia, examining their trajectory into the early Islamic period is largely essential. The transition from the pre-Islamic period to the advent of Islam provides a critical context for evaluating Jewish poetic literacy. While this study centers on pre-Islamic Jewish poets, the early Islamic period, especially its poetry, represents a direct continuation of pre-Islamic traditions. Importantly, the poets who composed and circulated poetry during this period acquired their poetic skills before they became acquainted with Islam. Thus, many poets who were active before and after Islam were known as *mukhaḍramūn* and continued to adhere to pre-Islamic styles and themes, despite substantial shifts in the political and religious landscape. Additionally,

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67 Abū ʿUbayd Allāh Muḥammad ibn ʿImrān ibn Mūsá al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ*, ed. Fārūq Aslīm (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 2005), 84.

68 Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ*, 252.

69 Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ*, 276.

70 Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ*, 277.

71 Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ*, 293.

72 Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ*, 303.

73 Al-Marzubānī, *Muʿjam al-shuʿarāʾ*, 583-599.

it should be remembered that the scholars who wrote about the Jews compiled their works during the Islamic period and within the context of that era.

Thus far, this work has identified the names and poems of many Jewish poets from both the pre-Islamic era and the early Islamic period. In addition, there are poems collected by Niftawayh under the name *Dīwān al-Samaw'al*. Some of the poems in this *dīwān* are found in the aforementioned anthologies. Nevertheless, the fact that Niftawayh, one of the leading linguists of the early period, attempted to compile this poet's poems shows that he was a remarkable poet.[74] However, the same cannot be said for the other names mentioned in historical sources. Owing to the important position of poetry in Arab society, it is possible to find this art in every aspect of their lives. The presence of thousands of Arab poets in biographical dictionaries compiling the lives of poets clearly illustrates this situation. Therefore, it would be incorrect to assume that every aforementioned poet was among the prominent and well-known figures of the period. This is clearly seen in the poets mentioned in the history of *sīrah*. Many Jewish poets who criticized and were subsequently assassinated by the Prophet are included in these works. However, these poets should not be considered those who took poetry as a profession or were famous for their poetic skill. They merely expressed their opposition to Islam and the Prophet through poetry, in accordance with the spirit of the time.

Among the names of those who were assassinated for their harsh criticism of the Prophet are Abū ʿAfak, Sārah al-Quraẓī, Asmāʾ bint Marwān, and Kaʿb ibn al-Ashraf.[75] With the exception of Kaʿb ibn al-Ashraf, these names were not included in the anthology books or dictionaries. To summarize, although these names have an important place in the history of *sīrah*, they are negligible in terms of literary history. A similar situation applies to the poets of Medina. The fact that most of the names we see in historical sources are from the Naḍīr and

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[74] Yusuf Buhan, *Niftaveyh ve Maksûr-Memdûd Literatürü* (Bursa: Emin Yayınları, 2022), 86-87, 103.

[75] Esat Ayyıldız, "Klasik Arap Edebiyatında Yahudi Şairlere Düzenlenen Suikastlar", *Manisa Celal Bayar Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* 18 (October 2020), 129-138.

Qurayẓah tribes is due to the frequent mention of these tribes in Islamic history. Notably, the documentation and study of Arabic history, especially the history of Arabic literature, began with the advent of Islam. Therefore, upon analysis of these disciplines, it cannot be denied that there is an Islam-centered perspective. For example, in *Ṭabaqāt fuḥūl al-shuʿarāʾ*, which can be considered the most important of the abovementioned works, al-Jumāḥī begins by saying, "The Jews in and around Medina have quality poetry". Yathrib, a Jewish city, became known as Medina after the Prophet's migration there. Some of the Prophet's greatest battles were fought to break the power of the Jews in this city. Therefore, it is natural for such books to focus on the Jews in the heart of Medina.

The exception to this is the city of Taymāʾ and its poet al-Samawʾal, famous for his loyalty. Indeed, al-Samawʾal is a character who left his mark on the Arab imagination by exhibiting desert virtues in addition to his poetic prowess. His story involving Imruʾ al-Qays became famous enough to be the subject of poems by later poets.[76] Moreover, this event has no close connection with the emergence of Islam. Thus, the information that al-Samawʾal's story provides may paint a more realistic picture than what is said about other poets. Contrary to initial expectations, the corpus of poems attributed to him and the accounts concerning his life significantly surpass those of other Jewish poets in both quantity and detail. For this reason, in discussions of Jewish poets, al-Samawʾal is typically cited as a primary reference.

In conclusion, the works of the Jewish poets, including al-Samawʾal's poems and other Jews about whom short fragments have been narrated, did not deviate from Jāhiliyyah poetry in their style and themes.[77] The only case that is considered a clear exception, al-Samawʾal's unusual *dīwān* poetry, which contains religious elements, is also subject to doubt, as discussed in the previous chapter. These uncertainties make it difficult to draw definitive conclusions from al-Samawʾal's poetry, despite his status as the most prominent Jewish poet at that time. Nevertheless, several assertions can still be made about Jewish poets and their poems in pre-Islamic Arabia.

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[76] Al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-Aghānī*, 22/86-87.

[77] Newby, *A History of the Jews of Arabia*, 55-56; Nöldeke, *Beiträge zur Kenntniss der Poesie der Alten Araber*, 56-57.

The records presented throughout this work reveal that the Jews adhered to pre-Islamic poetic styles and themes when composing poetry in the Arabic language. One might also argue that it is wrong to draw conclusions from these records because of the deep suspicions about their authenticity. Nevertheless, the later literati of the Arab world readily attributed many skillfully structured and metered poems to pre-Islamic Jewish figures. It is clear from historical sources that the Jewishness of the poet was not considered a major factor affecting the poetry. The characterization of a poet as "Jewish" was not related to their poetry but served merely as an identifier. Therefore, although it is difficult to identify the poems of Jews and their authors definitively, we can still assert that these Jews wrote poems in Arabic and adhered to the pre-Islamic style and themes in their poetry.[78] Such an outcome would be expected from a community that spoke the Arabic language and adopted the Arab tribal structure. Accordingly, just as an Arab tribe in Arabia valued poetry and used it for survival, it would have held the same value and played a similar role for a Jewish tribe. Thus, there should be no difference in the styles and themes of poetry. In contrast to popular belief, poetry is not merely the product of spontaneous emotional outbursts or enthusiasm. While there is some emotion at the forefront of poetry, it is still built on traditionally established templates such as set meters, rhyme, wordplay, and emphasis. Therefore, whether of Arab or Hebrew origin, the poetry written in the prevailing Arabian context naturally conformed to the poetic traditions of the region.

Conclusion

Many ideas have been proposed concerning when and why Jews came to Arabia in the pre-Islamic period. Theories such as Babylonian attacks, Roman attacks, and commercial and social factors have been discussed both throughout Islamic history and in modern times. Following these ideas, the extent to which Jewish communities assimilated after migration and the degree to which they retained their identity have been debated. There is some evidence to suggest that the

[78] James T. Monroe, "Oral Composition in the Pre-Islamic Poetry", *Early Islamic Poetry and Poetics*, ed. Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate Variorum, 2009), 6.

Jews of Arabia were positioned close to both sides of this dilemma. However, it can be argued that the Jews in Arabia were highly integrated into Arab culture, both socially and linguistically. The harsh conditions of the desert climate may have forced them to more fully integrate into the region. In addition, it should be noted that there were Arab tribes that adopted Judaism. The Jewish presence in Arabia was composed of Hebrew tribes who migrated there and integrated into the dominant culture of the region, as well as some Arab tribes who adopted Judaism.

The situation becomes clearer when examining the languages employed by the Jews of this period. The Jewish tribes were proficient in both speaking and writing Arabic, although it is believed that they concurrently utilized another language. Furthermore, they engaged in poetry, the most prevalent form of artistic expression of the era. Given the harsh conditions of the Arabian deserts, poetry was an indispensable tool for a community striving for survival. The preservation of tribal honor, the satire of enemy tribes, and the composition of didactic poetry imparting life advice were of paramount importance for these tribes. Consequently, it is entirely plausible for Jewish tribes to participate in poetry and exhibit their prowess in this domain.

When the sources compiled in Islamic history are examined, many Jewish names emerge as prominent figures. The poems attributed to Jewish poets, especially the renowned al-Samawʾal, are often in a pre-Islamic style. The themes addressed and the styles employed align with those of pre-Islamic poetry. The only exceptions that come to mind in this context may be those few poems that reflect traces of a monotheistic or omnipotent worldview. The attribution of these poems to Jews may indicate such a tendency in their literature in pre-Islam. However, both historical sources and contemporary academic studies have highlighted certain deficiencies. The authenticity of the poems has been questioned, revealing that some do not originate from the pre-Islamic period. There are numerous doubts, especially concerning poems that contain religious elements. Consequently, it is plausible to assert that there are some uncertainties regarding the poems and *dīwān*s attributed to Jewish poets.

Although there are doubts about some of the poems, the available data indicate that pre-Islamic Jews composed poetry in Arabic.

Furthermore, there is no significant difference in the theme or style of their poetry compared with the broader corpus of pre-Islamic poetry. This is a natural phenomenon among individuals or tribes who wish to compose poetry in a particular language. Considering the robust tradition of poetry during the pre-Islamic period, it is difficult to envision poetry that does not draw upon this tradition in terms of meter, rhyme, wordplay, and emphasis. Additionally, given that poetry serves as a social tool, it is essential to consider it not only from the perspective of the poet or tribe reciting it but also from the perspective of the audience receiving it. A poem that is composed with the aim of gaining widespread popularity and appreciation must inevitably adhere to these accepted conventions. The Jews, who possessed a distinct religious literature during the pre-Islamic period, were no exception.

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BOOK REVIEW

Islam and the State in Ibn Taymiyya: Translation and Analysis
by Jaan S. Islam and Adem Eryiğit

Ali Maksum

Islam and the State in Ibn Taymiyya: Translation and Analysis by Jaan S. Islam and Adem Eryiğit. London and New York: Routledge, 2022. 290 pp. ISBN: 9781032131832.

Discussing the concept of the state from Ibn Taymiyyah's perspective reveals a tendency toward rigidity in application (Chun-Leung et al., 2024), even though the fundamental aim of government is to establish justice (Malkawi and Sonn 2011). Nevertheless, his thought can be regarded as moderate and reasonable, particularly when viewed as a means of protecting religion (Widigdo - Awang Pawi, 2023). The book *Islam and the State in Ibn Taymiyya: Translation and Analysis* by Jaan S. Islam and Adem Eryiğit seeks to position Ibn Taymiyyah's ideas precisely within the framework of contemporary Islamic political theory and decolonial thought. By doing so, it invites a fresh examination of how Ibn Taymiyyah's political thought can be interpreted in light of both historical necessity and modern theoretical discourse.

The 14th-century theologian Ibn Taymiyyah stands as a significant figure in Islamic intellectual history and is revered for his prolific scholarship and influential theological ideas (El-Tobgui, 2019). Rooted in the Ḥanbalī school of jurisprudence, his thoughts continue to shape discussions within contemporary Islamic thought, particularly in the realms of Salafism and Jihadism (Wiktorowicz, 2005). The theoretical backdrop against which Ibn Taymiyyah emerges is crucial for comprehending the foundation of his ideology. Born in 1263 in Harran, a city in present-day Türkiye, Ibn Taymiyyah navigated an era marked by pivotal historical and geopolitical shifts in the Islamic world. This period witnessed the decline of the Abbasid Caliphate and the rise of the Mamluk Sultanate in Egypt and Syria amidst Mongol invasions and internal Islamic conflicts (El-Tobgui, 2019).

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The core of Ibn Taymiyyah's theological contributions is advocacy for a return to the pristine teachings of Islam with an emphasis on adherence to the Qurʾān, the Sunnah, and the practices of the Salaf, the early righteous predecessors. His theological convictions, often characterized as proto-Salafist, advocate for a puritanical interpretation of Islam and a direct and literal application of religious texts (Vasalou 2015; Talmon-Heller 2019). Central to Ibn Taymiyyah's theological framework is the concept of *tawḥīd* and his staunch defense of the unity of God's attributes, which became a cornerstone of his theological legacy. Moreover, his views on *jihād*, governance, and the relationship between religious authority and the state have been the subjects of extensive debate and interpretation (Kazeem, 2022; Zakariya, 2019).

However, Ibn Taymiyyah's legacy is not without controversy. His perspectives on various theological and political matters have spurred diverse interpretations and debates, with some viewing his ideas as foundational to contemporary Salafist and Jihadist movements while others critique these interpretations and emphasize his broader intellectual contributions beyond political theology (Maevskaya, 2022; Kamolnick, 2012; Farooq Abdullah et al., 2022). Indeed, the book endeavors to navigate this intricate landscape by presenting translated works and providing a theoretical analysis of Ibn Taymiyyah's political thought. It seeks not only to shed light on his primary sources but also to offer insight into how his ideas resonate within contemporary discussions in Islamic political theory and the broader field of religious studies.

The book examines the intellectual heritage of Ibn Taymiyyah, who was a pivotal figure in shaping contemporary Salafism and Jihadism. It also offers a distinctive perspective by presenting an English translation of key political treatises by Ibn Taymiyyah, including *al-Ḥisbah fī l-Islām* (*The Office of Islamic Government*), alongside excerpts from *Majmūʿ fatāwá* (*The Collected Fatwás*), *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-nabawiyyah* (*The Prophetic Way*), and *al-Siyāsah al-sharʿiyyah fī iṣlāḥ al-rāʿī wa-l-raʿiyyah* (*Islamic Governance in Reconciling between the Ruler and the Ruled*). Beyond mere translation, the book provides valuable annotations and theoretical analysis and explores the relevance of Ibn Taymiyyah's thought in current Islamic political theory. It contextualizes his geopolitical

environment and offers insight into his normative political ideologies. Moreover, the book critically examines the implications of Ibn Taymiyyah's political theology in the context of Islamic decolonial theory, making it an essential read for scholars in political science, religious studies, and Islamic history.

The book is organized into three parts: an introduction to Ibn Taymiyyah's intellectual context, translations of his works, and a comprehensive analysis. The first part, which details his historical and geopolitical background, is thorough but would benefit from a more streamlined presentation to assist readers who are less familiar with his complex ideology (pp. 1-42).

The second part contains the translations, which are well annotated, making the text accessible to a broader audience. Chapters on "The Office of Islamic Government" and "Ordering Good and Prohibiting Evil" provide valuable insights into Ibn Taymiyyah's vision of an Islamic state and emphasize moral responsibility and justice. However, embedding critical analysis more closely within the translations would improve the reader's engagement by allowing for immediate interpretation of these complex ideas. The authors' emphasis on Ibn Taymiyyah's tendency to reject non-Ḥanbalī thought (p. 195) helps readers follow the trajectory of his arguments in the later sections, especially those who are new to the subject or less familiar with his ideas.

In the third part, Islam and Eryiğit analyze the applicability of Ibn Taymiyyah's political thought in a modern context. They argue for the relevance of his ideas to contemporary governance, particularly within the framework of decolonial theory (p. 221). This perspective is thought-provoking, yet the feasibility of these ideas in a modern nation-state may seem speculative (pp. 236-237). Addressing alternative interpretations and potential critiques of Ibn Taymiyyah's relevance to today's political systems would enrich the analysis and provide a more nuanced view.

A key strength of the book is its high-quality translations along with annotations that provide clarity on Ibn Taymiyyah's intent and terminology. By bringing historical texts into contemporary Islamic political theory, the authors open a dialogue that is relevant to scholars of political science and religious studies alike. The book's focus on the political dimensions of Ibn Taymiyyah's thought also highlights his

views on governance, which remain influential. However, the book's narrow emphasis on political theory may limit its appeal to those interested in the broader spectrum of Ibn Taymiyyah's scholarship. Additionally, while the book attempts to position Ibn Taymiyyah within decolonial discourse, engaging with contrasting viewpoints would present a more balanced perspective on his legacy and relevance.

Islam and the State in Ibn Taymiyya: Translation and Analysis by Jaan S. Islam and Adem Eryiğit is a notable contribution to Islamic studies and provides English readers with essential translations of Ibn Taymiyyah's work and an insightful analysis of his political thought. Despite areas where additional perspectives could enhance the depth of the discussion, the book remains a valuable resource for understanding Ibn Taymiyyah's enduring impact on Islamic political theory. This work will particularly interest scholars and students in political science, Islamic studies, and religious history who seek a comprehensive yet accessible exploration of Ibn Taymiyyah's political philosophy.

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Book

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Book Chapter

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Page references to works referred to in the text should take the following form: (Touraine 1995, 9-10). The verses of the Qurʾān should be referred to as follows: Q 2:23; Q 17:108; the references from the Old and New Testament should carry chapter name and number, and verse number.

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