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Afro Eurasian Review is differentiated by the fact that it includes articles by experts in the field who have conducted research on a wide geographical area related to the countries in Afro-Eurasian continents and aims to make a high contribution to the academic literature, especially by benefiting the general readership as well as those who conduct scientific studies and practitioners. In this issue of the journal, different topics are included and their attracting attention in other geographies as well as the geographies they are related to are evaluated at national and international level.

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As a culmination of the research experience accumulated over the years, the Economic and Social Research Centre within MÜSİAD has embarked upon the challenge of publishing an international journal. Thus the Afro Eurasian Studies has been born in Türkiye, at the epicentre of Afro Eurasia, out of a desire to contribute to the international discourse on the new dynamics of the region.

*Editor*

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**Fransa ve Belçika’da Cihadçuların Çözülmesi ve Deradikalizasyon: Bazı Teorik Açıklamalar**  
**Öz**

Bu makale, bir kişiyi İslamcı şiddeti geride bırakmaya iten faktörleri belirlemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu ayrılma süreci olduğundan, tetikleyici bir unsurun değil, ayrılma denklemi içinde birbirine dolanan farklı değişkenlere bakmayı önermektedir. Ayrılmak için sebep oluşturan faktörler, bir cihatçı hayal kırıklığının ardından, bireyin beklentileri ile cihatçı hareket içinde bu beklentilere ulaşma olasılığı arasındaki bir uyumsuzluğun sonucudur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Fransa, Radikalizasyon, İslamcı gruplar, Cihatçı hareket

**Jihadist Disengagement And Deradicalization In France And Belgium:  
Some Theoretical Explanations**  
**Abstract**

This article attempts to identify what pushes a person to leave Islamic violence behind. Because disaffiliation is a process, this suggests looking not for a trigger element, but for the different variables are intertwined in an “equation of disaffiliation”. The reasons for getting out are the product of a jihadist disenchantment followed by a discordance between the individual’s aspirations and the possibility of reaching those aspirations within the jihadist movement.

**Keywords:** France, radicalization, Islamic groups, Jihadist movement

## Introduction

Although jihadist organizations continue to attract large numbers of people in their wake, particularly from Europe, their recruitment capacity should not mask the difficulties they are currently encountering. In the face of the military setbacks suffered by Caliph al-Baghdadi's organization, experts have noted not only a decline in departures to areas controlled by the Islamic State, but also difficulties in keeping members within the organization. Many of its supporters have decided to desert, abandoning the armed struggle. This phenomenon is confirmed by a King's College study led by Peter Neumann, which claims that between 20% and 30% of jihadists decide to return to their country of origin. This report is based on the testimony of 58 "deserters" from the Islamic State, including nine from Western Europe and Australia, who have publicly recounted their reasons for leaving. In France, according to a report by the Criminal Affairs Directorate, more than 200 individuals have returned from Syria and Iraq. This phenomenon of jihadist defection is not new. It was already observed in the 1970s-1990s among armed Islamic groups in Algeria (GIA, Armée islamique du Salut, Groupe salafiste de prédication et de combat), Morocco (Shabiba islâmiyya), or Egypt (Islamic jihad and Gamâ'a islâmiyya), for example.

While there is an abundance of literature on the factors that explain radicalization processes, few French-language scientific productions address the question of why and how Islamic-inspired terrorist groups emerge from violent action. This dimension is a blind spot in research into political violence, even though it has been an issue in terrorist organizations (extreme right-wing groups, extreme left-wing organizations, separatist movements, etc.) for years. So, working on jihadist disaffiliation offers an interesting perspective by "inversely" questioning Islamic violence itself. As Olivier Fillieule puts it, studying the process of defection in jihadist circles provides a deeper understanding of the conditions that lead to violent radicalization. For this author, "militant disengagement is a revelation of the conditions of possibility of commitment itself, or more precisely, a revelation of the drying up of these conditions. And this at both individual and organizational levels".

What's more, analyzing Islamic radicalization from a dynamic, evolving perspective means moving away from the essentialist definition of the timeless, universal nature of jihadists' own commitment, and thus avoiding freezing former jihadists in ideological and organic postures that are no longer necessarily their own.

Often reduced to de-radicalization, the processes involved in exiting jihadist logics, which I will refer to as disaffiliation, are complex. Disaffiliation can be voluntary or forced, individual or collective, brutal or slow. It can be suffered individually following arrest or conviction, or imposed collectively by the jihadist organization.

When an individual decides to no longer participate in the activities of the jihadist group, I will use the notion of disengagement (behavioral dimension of disaffiliation). When the individual no longer wishes to identify with the group, I will use the term dis-identification (organizational dimension of disaffiliation). Finally, disaffiliation is described as de-radicalization, when the individual no longer wishes to adhere to the value system advocated by the jihad (cognitive dimension of disaffiliation).

Because disaffiliation is a process, the aim is not to identify the trigger, but rather to show that its origin lies in the interweaving of several variables that explain the “disaffiliation equation”. The hypothesis is that the reasons for exiting are the product of “jihadist disenchantment”, characterized by a mismatch between individual aspirations and their realization within jihadist movements. A gap is opening up between the organization’s injunctions and its own inspirations. The personal satisfaction derived from commitment diminishes, leading to defection. In the process of disaffiliation, the individual becomes aware that something doesn’t suit him or her, or no longer does. Based on the initial testimonies I gathered from French and Belgian jihadi “repentees”, my hypothesis is that these initial doubts and questioning of commitment should be analyzed as triggers for disaffiliation. These are both macro- and micro-sociological factors that lead the individual to realize that something is no longer right with his or her violent commitment. This may stem from a feeling of being out of step with the jihadist values and environment, political and/or ideological contingencies, living conditions, personal reflection, or even contingencies outside the group, linked, for example, to unwelcome community pressures.

## **I. Ideological and political factors in jihadist disaffiliation**

### **a) Ideological revolutions andaggiornamentos**

The starting point of jihadist disaffiliation is “the decline of ideological and instrumental justifications for violence”, in the doctrinal “reversal” of the intellectual references that hitherto justified involvement in organizations advocating armed jihad (if possible, suggest simplifying this sentence a little). In Algeria, many members of the Armed Islamic Groups and the Islamic Salvation Army claim that their decisions to lay down their arms were prompted by fatwas issued by Saudi Arabian theologians calling for an end to fighting. At the instigation of Salafist Algerian preachers with close ties to Algiers, such as the Algerian sheikhs Abdelmalik Ramadan, Mohamed Ali Ferkous and Arif (is that right?), Saudi Arabian theologians issued religious opinions criticizing the Armée islamique du Salut and the Groupes islamiques armés for the un-Islamic nature of the fighting that pitted them against the Algerian government of the time. These condemnations completed the rupture between the



Algerian jihadists and the clerics of the Arabian Peninsula, who were nevertheless first-rate doctrinal references for the Algerian fighters. The stance taken by these theologians against Islamism and terrorism prompted the Algerian and Saudi governments to encourage the development of the pietistic Salafist movement. Even today, the quietist current of Salafism is mobilized to counter the influence of jihadism. For proof of this, you only need to visit Salafist websites, which multiply their warnings against the actions of the Islamic State, whose members are described by the unflattering term “dogs of Hell”.

While in Algeria it was necessary to call on Saudi religious references to encourage defection, in Egypt it was leaders belonging to the jihadist movement who provided a religious framework for abandoning the armed struggle. Indeed, the rejection of jihad by certain al-Qaeda militants and the ceasefire signed by Islamic Jihad and the Gamâ'a islâmiyya at the end of the 1990s were prompted in particular by the publication of a book by the intellectual reference of Osama bin Laden's organization, Imam al-Sharif, better known as Dr. Fadl. Although little-known, this fellow traveler of Osama bin Laden and Aymen al-Zawahiri was one of the founders of al-Qaeda in 1988, and the leader of the jihadist organization Islamic Jihad in Egypt, which carried out numerous attacks during the 1990s. After September 11, 2001, he was arrested in Yemen and transferred to Egypt, where he was sentenced to life imprisonment. During his imprisonment, he wrote a 200-page book, *Wathiqat tarshîd al-'aml al-jihadî fî-l Misr* (Guidance document on jihadist activity in the world and in Egypt), in which he argues that the killing of innocent people is contrary to Islamic values. He asserts that “Every drop of blood that has been shed or is being shed in Afghanistan and Iraq is the responsibility of Bin Laden, Zawahiri and their followers”. “The terrorist attacks of September 11 [2001] are immoral, and they have proved counterproductive,” he adds. “Attacking the United States head-on is now the shortest route to glory and power among Arabs and Muslims. But what's the point of destroying one of your enemy's buildings if your enemy then destroys one of your countries? What's the point of killing one of your own if, in return, he wipes out a thousand of yours? That, in a nutshell, is my analysis of 9/11. He is equally critical of Muslims who settle in the West and then commit terrorist acts. “If they have given you permission to enter their homes, to live with them, if they have provided security for you and your money, if they have offered you the opportunity to work or study, or have granted you political asylum,” explains Dr. Fadl, “then it is ‘contrary to honor’ to ‘betray them with death and destruction’”.

These ideological changes were accompanied by a shift in the way militants perceived their armed struggle. From being “fighters for freedom and divine justice” against taghût (idolatry), they become terrorists. This transformation undoubtedly diminishes the symbolic reward for their commitment: : they are no longer actors of divine will.

In addition to delegitimizing the use of violence in religious terms, these doctrinal reversals also take the form of a critical assessment of jihad. They are based on the idea that violence alone does not pay off; on the contrary, it can be counter-productive to the original aim of overthrowing godless power and creating an Islamic state.

### **b) The effects of public policies**

To explain exit processes, it is certainly important to highlight religious justifications aimed at delegitimizing jihad, but it is also worth emphasizing the role of state strategies aimed at making recourse to armed action more costly and less justified. Research into the effects of public policies, whether repressive or preventive, tends to show the ambivalent nature of their consequences. For the proponents of the various versions of frustration theory, repression tends to radicalize protesters and thus slow down or even prevent their disengagement. For proponents of resource mobilization theory, these policies would have a demobilizing effect and encourage disengagement, due to the imbalance between the costs, risks and benefits of violent action. Stephen Mullin believes that amnesty and rehabilitation policies for incarcerated jihadists have an effect on their relationship with radicalism. He shows that the release of jihadists has led them to abandon armed struggle. Indeed, the amnesty policies implemented in Algeria have contributed to the demobilization of jihadists. In 1999, two months after the election of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) proclaimed a unilateral ceasefire, followed a month later by President Bouteflika's Independence Day pardon for 2,300 imprisoned Islamist militants (is that right?). One gets the impression that it was the AIS that stopped fighting, even before the amnesty. This hardly corroborates the thesis defended above). At the same time, the Algerian president was defending before Parliament his "national reconciliation" law granting amnesty to AIS members and sympathizers. This law, adopted by an overwhelming majority in both chambers (288 votes in favor out of 380 in the National Assembly and 131 votes in favor out of 150 in the Council of the Nation), was ratified by referendum on September 16, 1999, and several thousand more prisoners were quickly released. Objectively, this policy encouraged many jihadists to lay down their arms, convinced that they would no longer be bothered by Algerian justice.

In Morocco, the main ideologues of the jihadist movement, who were sentenced to thirty years' imprisonment for being the brains behind the May 16, 2003 attacks in Casablanca, were almost all released after a few years. This early release, decided by the authorities, was negotiated between the Moroccan monarchy and the doctrinaires of jihad, in exchange for their ceasing all calls for violence and their opposition to armed action in the name of Islam. The best-known and most publicized of these ideologues is undoubtedly Muhammad al-Fizazi, long considered one of the most virulent

preachers of the Moroccan jihadist movement, until his imprisonment. A beneficiary of a royal pardon, he has since shown unwavering support for King Mohammed VI and frontally opposes the departure of Moroccans for the “jihad” in Syria. Another jihadist leader, Abu Hafs, also convicted of involvement in the 2003 Casablanca bombings and released in 2011, has become a leading opponent of the Islamic State, calling for a liberal reform of Muslim law to better counter it. In his own words, he “de-radicalized” himself while in prison, and today considers that “Islamic heritage” needs to be revised to fight Daesh.

Often presented as an incubator for radicalization, reinforcing the idea that only violence pays, prison can also have a “de-radicalizing” effect. Farid Benyettou and David Vallat, sentenced to 6 and 5 years respectively, claim to have been de-radicalized in prison. Following the example of John Rawls, according to whom prison serves to punish and protect society, it is possible to assert that, in the case of jihadist “radicalized” individuals, it contributes in theory to making them understand that they risk being punished if they commit further acts of terrorism. While a stay in detention may have a curative effect, it has above all a dissuasive effect, making some of them “aware” that the violent option is too costly in relation to the benefits of this type of commitment. Kamel Daoudi, a Franco-Algerian sentenced to 6 years’ imprisonment for intending to carry out an attack in front of the US embassy in France, testifies on a France 4 television program: “I can’t deny my past. It’s an integral part of my life. At the time, I thought that violence could make things better. Now I realize that it’s counter-productive. That period is behind me. All I want is to pick up where I left off...”. It is even possible that in the case of jihadist defendants, the fear of prison has a demobilizing effect, more so than incarceration itself. During the first trials we attended in France, it was striking to note that the vast majority of defendants indicted for terrorism stated that they had distanced themselves from the ideas of the Islamic State. While it is difficult to gauge the sincerity of these statements, they are very different from those of defendants from Corsican, Basque, far-left or far-right separatist circles, who continue to claim loud and clear before the magistrates the legitimacy of their struggle.

### **c) Jihadists’ entry into politics: from revolution to integration**

In some cases, the radicalization of Islamic organizations stems from the closure of the political field and their inability to defend their political project “peacefully”. This radicalization can increase with the repression of their members, who see power as a tyrant to be brought down by force. The justifications for the use of violence by the Muslim Brother Sayyid Qutb can be partly explained by his exclusion from the political arena. Similarly, the banning of the Islamic Salvation Front and the imprisonment of its leaders in 1991 led its members to turn to violence as the only way to respond to

repression and establish an Islamic state. Conversely, it can be argued that de-radicalization and disengagement can be the result of (re)integration into the political arena. De-radicalization of jihadists is therefore linked above all to the degree of institutionalization and political opportunities available to them. The more political opportunities they have, the more likely they are to abandon armed struggle. Movements such as the Gamâ'a islâmiyya in Egypt and the Shabiba islâmiyya in Morocco, which emphasized the revolutionary dimension of their activism, gradually abandoned violence and opted for legal action as they became more officially integrated into the political landscape. In the 1970s and 1980s, they engaged in violent action to destroy institutions they considered anti-Islamic from within, but were too weak to succeed. The international experience of September 11 2001 and the Casablanca bombings in 2003 have also had a kind of "regulating" effect on the majority of Islamist movements in the Arab world, helping them to avoid repression. Little by little, their leaders got caught up in the political game.

From revolutionary rhetoric, they moved on to protest demands, before becoming conservative pillars of society and the state. With the backing of various governments, the jihadists' model of political integration mobilizes a subtle game of self-inclusion and self-exclusion from the parliamentary system, the aim of which is to reassure its base, seduced by the anti-establishment dimension of the party's ideology, while at the same time seeking to appear to other parties and the political system as agreeable players and a stabilizing factor. The aim is to establish themselves as a stabilizing, non-disruptive political force, while retaining their protest potential. A large proportion of those who today claim to be moderate Islamists in the Maghreb and Egypt were militants of violent and radical action in the 1970s and 1980s, a means they felt was the only one capable of establishing an Islamic state in a context of closure and political repression of all forms of opposition. The Algerian Mahfoud Nahnah, founder of the Hamas movement, distinguished himself through sabotage operations. The current Moroccan Prime Minister, Abdelilah Ben Kirane, who founded the Justice and Development Party (PJD), began his career with the Shabiba islâmiyya, which is believed to be responsible for several political assassinations.

## **II. Micro-sociological and personal factors**

### **a) Jihadist disenchantment or the accumulation of negative experiences**

The logics of jihadist disaffiliation also draw on the exhaustion of the grand narratives and grand totalizing constructions of Islamic meaning that have largely constituted the ideological matrix of jihad. "Islam is the solution", the slogan underpinning the jihadists' utopia, through which religious reference was presented as a global framework

providing the answer to all questions concerning the organization of social life, is now “short of breath”. Much more than a slogan, this formula was fed by the idea that a total response, formulated on the basis of religion, could solve all the problems facing Muslims. While this expression enjoyed its heyday in the ranks of the jihadists at the start of each revolutionary uprising, creating the hope of an Islamic revival capable of founding a new society, and fuelling an Arabic-language literature on Islamic responses to the challenges of contemporary Muslim societies, it has shown its limitations when put to the test of reality. Indeed, after three years of hoping that the Islamic State would embody the fraternity and solidarity of the ideal city of Medina, more and more European jihadists are joining the ranks of deserters, citing the failure and unfulfilled promises of Daesh’s Caliph, al-Baghdadi, of a better life thanks to Islam. This totalizing approach is exhausted, not only because of its disconnect with the concrete experience of jihadists, but also because the idea of an Islamic panacea as a solution to the problems of Muslims everywhere is proving ineffective. Thus, jihadist disenchantment is characterized by a mismatch between individual aspirations and their realization within jihadist movements. Satisfaction with commitment declines.

On reading and listening to the accounts of disaffiliates, we can see that, on coming into contact with the jihadist reality, they all experienced strong disagreements with the milieu and, more specifically, with the *modus operandi* and political choices of the jihadist organizations to which they belonged. Whatever form these disagreements took, they provoked relatively strong feelings of disappointment or disillusionment in these individuals, prompting them to leave the jihadist organizations.

By setting high entry fees, jihadist organizations have *ab ovo* encouraged allegiance to the movement in a way that restricts speaking out or defecting. While European jihadists joined the ranks of the Islamic State with the conviction of participating in an Islamic front against the impiety of Bashar al-Assad, many left them having witnessed internal quarrels between the various jihadist factions. For Peter Neumann, “Many deserters argue that clashes against other Sunni groups are wrong, counterproductive and even religiously illegitimate” . Because the Islamic State kills Muslims, instead of protecting them, the jihadists only divide and weaken the Islamic opposition. Their brutality towards civilians and the corruption of their leaders also shock recruits. Deserters report that their superiors showed little consideration for possible collateral victims, particularly women and children. They were also offended by the arbitrary execution of hostages and the mistreatment of local populations. “The main reason I left was that I wasn’t doing what I came to do, which was to help the Syrian people on a humanitarian level,” Ibrahim told a CBS journalist in February 2015.

The practices of Saddam Hussein’s former regime still apply: “In the army, they treat you like a dog. It’s not an Islamic organization in the true sense of the word, where

everything is Islamic from beginning to end; it's only its members who claim to be Islamic. But the institutions and practices have nothing to do with that. They're more like the practices of the old Baathist regime," he says, referring to the movement to which Saddam Hussein, among others, belonged. He describes his daily life in the "caliphate" as a distressing period: "I've never experienced the humiliation, injustice and segregation of Dawla. However, Peter Neumann's study reminds us that it is only violence against other Sunnis that shocks the recruits. They are not indignant about the fate of religious minorities such as the Yezidis.

## **b) Fear of dying**

Numerous studies show the fascination of European jihadists with death. For some, dying a martyr's death seems to be the sole objective of their violent commitment. They are said to be driven by a mortifying nihilism. Clearly, the numerous attacks that have taken place in Europe and the Arab world seem to support this analysis. Moreover, one of the figures of jihadist commitment within the Islamic State is that of the *inghimasi*, literally the one who immerses or melts into an element. Unlike the *kamikaze*, another figure of jihadist militancy, the *inghimasi* fights with weapons in hand while wearing an explosive belt around his body that is activated only when he runs out of ammunition or feels trapped. Even if it's quite rare, an *inghimasi* sometimes comes back alive from a mission, which is never the case for a *kamikaze*, who is killed or captured if he fails.

However, it would be wrong to assume that all Islamic State jihadists fight with the aim of systematically seeking death. Indeed, the first testimonies of "returnees" show that the fear of dying, or of having seen "brothers in arms" die, was one of the triggers for distancing oneself from violence. One explains that he decided to return to France after being wounded in combat, another that he was dismayed by the decisions of the Islamic State command to abandon French co-religionists to certain death without sending reinforcements. For Isabelle Sommier, "when death comes in the form of a concrete event, its effects are similar in all cases, putting the brakes on the warrior's momentum". From the few testimonies I've been able to gather, it's clear that the fear of dying for a cause that is ultimately beyond the individual's control prompts him to leave the jihad. In addition to death, the daily reality of lives perceived as difficult by jihadis can be a trigger for disaffiliation. The lack of hot water, basic foodstuffs or even the international coalition's bombardment of towns held by the Islamic State are highlighted by disaffiliates. "In Syria or Iraq, no imam, no Koranic school welcomes you when you arrive. In fact, in the cities, near the combat zones, there's nothing for guys like me who are new to religion. It's not their priority," 20-year-old Sofiane told France 2.

### **c) A burdensome jihadist commitment**

The key to disaffiliation in this context lies in the fact that the commitment is now perceived as burdensome and restrictive, all the more so as it has often been experienced as a sacrifice (of professional life, family life or university studies) or a “deviant career”. If there is a system of rewards for militancy among jihadists, both immaterial (satisfaction in serving the cause of Islam, feeling of belonging to an enlightened avant-garde and a religious aristocracy) and material (pay, for example), it struggles to satisfy a member who sees the costs around him multiplying. As a result, ad honorem and symbolic rewards are no longer enough to maintain commitments in the face of the multiplicity of risks run by jihadists. If, to quote Albert Hirschman, the militant can be satisfied with a situation in which “the individual benefit of collective action [is] not the difference between the hoped-for result and the effort made, but the sum of these two magnitudes”, he nonetheless expects this sacrifice to be rewarded by promotion. However, the returnees claim that positions of responsibility are monopolized by Iraqis and that French speakers are relegated to menial tasks and often regarded as cannon fodder. This assertion seems to be confirmed by the testimony of Abu Omar al-Faransi, who states in a video published on the Internet: “It’s the law of the strongest. The Iraqi is above everyone else. After that, it’s the emirs. Then it’s the man above the woman and the Muslim above the slave [...]. They’re not interested in anything that isn’t Arab and Sunni. They’re into nationalism, nothing to do with what we came here for. So, in fact, we’re dying for nothing. [...] It’s an Iraqi tribal enterprise”. Others denounce a form of racism. An Indian told the Times of India that he had been scrubbing toilets for six months.

The high level of commitment, experienced by these people in terms of constraints, soon raises other questions, notably that of the freedom left to individuals. Many will interpret their former commitment, or the commitment of jihadists in general, in terms of deprivation of freedom. From then on, the heaviness of life within the Islamic State (deprivation, moral rigorism, military discipline, etc.), opposing any autonomy for the individual, can be a factor in defection, because the community is experienced as a prison.

### **Towards a typology of jihadist disaffiliates**

On the basis of these elements, it is possible to propose a typology of the different figures of the disaffiliated. First, there is the disengaged figure (behavioral dimension of disaffiliation). Voluntarily, following an individual process of self-criticism of their militancy, or under duress (arrest, incarceration...), the disengaged no longer wish to participate in the activities of the jihadist group to which they belonged. This does



not mean, however, that they have abandoned the value system advocated by jihad. Michaël Younnes Delefortrie , a former member of Sharia4Belgium , explains in his book *J'ai été djihadiste en Syrie* (I was a jihadist in Syria) that he joined Syria at the end of 2013, spending six weeks in the ranks of the Islamic State. He affirms that he continues to share its ideology and would go back to Syria if he didn't risk prison. Next comes the figure of the dis-identified (organizational dimension of disaffiliation). This figure is often embodied by individuals who have become disillusioned with their involvement in jihadist organizations. While they may have broken with a particular organization or movement, this does not mean that they have abandoned the ideal of jihad. It is not uncommon, as David Thomson's survey tends to confirm, for returnees to be critical of the Islamic State apparatus, but they have not abandoned the idea that violence can be legitimate in building an Islamic society.

These same returnees make no secret of their desire to join other fields of jihad that they consider legitimate. In his book, David Thomson refers to a young woman who returned in the summer of 2015, saying that the attack on Charlie Hebdo was the happiest day of her life and that she dreams of a woman one day committing an attack in France, while recounting her disastrous experience during her stay with the Islamic State.

Finally, the figure of the de-radicalized. A disaffiliated person is qualified as such when the individual no longer wishes to adhere to the value system advocated by jihad (cognitive dimension of disaffiliation). While this is the best-known form of jihadist disaffiliation, it is not the most common, at least among European jihadists returning from Syria and Iraq. This is the ultimate aim of the de-radicalization programs underway in many European countries, which seek to deconstruct the system of representation and values and substitute others. In Germany, the ideological component is an important element of de-radicalization programs. This includes deconstructing the concepts of jihadist ideology. In Great Britain, the Active Change Foundation (ACF), set up by former Islamists in 2003, has set itself the goal of deconstructing and "delegitimizing" extremist jihadist discourse, through workshops on Islam.

Some jihadists opt for a depoliticized and "peaceful" form of Islam: quietist Salafism, which nevertheless shares a common doctrinal basis with jihadism. This de-radicalization by substitution is based on the idea that the military strategy of direct action and agitprop are not the best options for establishing God's sovereignty on Earth. Ex-jihadists who have become quietist Salafists are now convinced that the advent of Allah's reign on Earth will require a series of steps, including religious training to instill an Islamic consciousness. Through preaching, they hope for a total overthrow of the world's



hierarchical and social organization, which will grant them collective pre-eminence, no longer through violence but through religious training. They are thus waiting for a political and social revolution. Thus, the return to true Islam will give rise to a social movement that will enable the establishment of an Islamic state. While the radicality of this reading of Islam is not embodied in violence, which it otherwise condemns, it does take shape in a religious radicalism or even sectarianism in the Weberian sense of the term, insofar as it seems to serve a precise function: to delegitimize all forms of authority by theologically outlawing the belief system of parents and the social order insofar as the latter is based on a mode of unequal arrangement between young people and non-Muslim societies. In this context, the religious radicalism and anti-Western imprecations of militants act as a “safety valve” that distracts them from direct action.

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**RE- HISTORICISING AND RECLAIMING HISTORY - A GAMBIT OF EGEMONIC HINDUTVA IN AN ETHNOCENTRIC ETHOS**

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## **Tarihi Yeniden Tarihselleştirmek ve Geri Kazanmak - Etnosentrik Bir Ahlakta Hegemonik Hindutva'nın Bir Oyunu**

**Öz**

Çoğunlukçu siyasetin acımasız gündemini sürdüren Hindistan Halk Partisi hükümeti, metinleri istila ederek durmaksızın devlet propagandası yürütüyor. Althusserci anlamda bireyleri 'Hindu Öznesi' olarak çağırmanın kültürel hegemonyası, medyanın ve demagoji retorığının yardımıyla önemli bir yükseliş kaydetti. Tarih, temelde özelleştirilmiş bir Hindu kimliğine odaklanan kusurlu bir Ulus ve Milliyetçilik anlatısı üretmenin odak noktası haline geldi. Hindu milliyetçi ideolojisine uygun yeni bir okul müfredatının tasarımını başlatan Murli Manohar Joshi'nin mirasını takiben, Hindistan Halk Partisi yönetimindeki devletlerin, Hindu yöneticileri İslami 'Öteki'ye karşı savaşlarda galipler olarak tasvir etmek için yapılan önemli doğaçlamalarla sağcı bir dokunuş vermek için tarihi yeniden yazdığı iddia ediliyor. İkinci Dünya Savaşı sonrası çok ırklı İngiliz toplumunu 'İngilizlik'teki krize olan takıntısından dolayı eleştiren Paul Gilroy, Tarih'i nostaljinin sakatlayıcı etkisine karşı bir panzehir olarak sundu. Çağdaş Hint toplumu, Hindu olmayanları milliyetçilik karşıtı bir yabancı olarak inşa eden kültürel farklılık söylemlerine dayanan benzer bir neo-ırkçılıkla boğuşuyor. Bu makale, günümüzün kültürel tartışmalarına bir müdahale formüle etmeyi ve kozmopolitizm ve kültürlerarasılık teorileri aracılığıyla kimlikleri yeniden düşünmemize yardımcı olabilecek alternatif bir bakış açısı yaratmayı amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Tarih, Milliyetçilik, Hindutva, İdeoloji, Kozmopolitizm, Kültürlerarasılık.

### **Re- Historicising And Reclaiming History - A Gambit Of Egemonic Hindutva In An Ethnocentric Ethos**

**Abstract**

Riding on a brutal agenda of majoritarian politics, the BJP government is relentlessly running a state propaganda with textual invasion. In an Althusserian sense this cultural hegemony of interpellating individuals as 'Hindu Subjects' has seen significant rise with the aid of media and rhetoric of demagoguery. History has become a focal point to fabricate a flawed narrative of Nation and Nationalism which focuses fundamentally on an essentialised Hindu identity. Following the legacy of Murli Manohar Joshi who initiated the design of new school curriculum attuned to Hindu nationalist ideology, BJP ruled states are allegedly re-writing history to give it a right-wing touch with crucial improvisations made to depict Hindu rulers as victors in battles against the Islamic 'Other'. Paul Gilroy, critiquing post-second world-war multi-racial, British society for its obsession with the crisis in 'Englishness' offered History as an antidote against the crippling effect of nostalgia. Contemporary Indian society is grappling with a similar neo-racism founded on discourses of cultural difference that constructs the non-Hindu as an anti-nationalist outsider. This paper intends to formulate an intervention into the cultural debates of the day and create an alternate vantage point through theories of cosmopolitanism and transculturalism that could help us rethink identities.

**Key words:** History, Nationalism, Hindutva, Ideology, Cosmopolitanism, Transculturalism.

## Introduction

*Such being his attitude, the practical politician - and this is the condition I make - should at least act consistently in the case of a conflict and not suspect some danger to the State in the political theorist's opinions which are ventured and publicly expressed without any ulterior purpose.*

*Immanuel Kant, Perpetual Peace*

*It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words.*

*George Orwell, 1984*

One classic that has consistently topped the bestselling chart for years is, unarguably George Orwell's dystopian novel '1984'. The Trump era particularly, had advertently witnessed the ubiquity of dystopian literature in the reading lists of Americans with '1984' assuming canonical dimensions. Inhabiting a miniscule space in the Global South and living in a repressive environment of Ethnic Populism under the present BJP government, one could easily fathom the inner workings of the Orwellian protagonist Winston Smith who while working at the Ministry of truth to rewrite historical records, secretly harboured the desire of overthrowing the Party. Year 2014 marked the beginning of a populist rule under Bharatiya Janata Party whose political agenda comprises largely of majoritarian politics based on the hegemony of one dominant cultural tradition of Hinduism. Ruling a multicultural society with a diverse cultural ethos like that of India, has never been easy for any political leadership, secular or otherwise. However polarising movements of extremist far-right groups have significantly gained momentum transnationally, be it India, the US or Brazil. In a post-truth world, the manufacture of conspiracy theories and alternate factual universes with the use of propaganda machine has been quite a fruitful mission for most nationalist nation-states. Unquestionably, controlling institutionalised knowledge is axiomatic of power consolidation. The present ruling party is fanatically consumed by the idea of reformulating historical discourses to incorporate positive roles played by Hindus in nationalist historiography and to resurrect Hindu Supremacy in cultural texts. This corrective to History in order to accentuate an 'Essentialised Hindu Identity', is in an effort to create a moral panic that the demographic majority is under threat from minorities. This idea of an existential crisis of Hindus becomes a ruse to exclude all those minorities who in terms of 'heredity' do not have a place in the grand narrative of History and that of the Nation. Selective versions of History are legitimised through truth claims made by Hindu Supremacists to suppress all other forms of knowledge by dismissing them as 'anti-nationalists' or 'unpatriotic'. Debating a similar 'manufactured crisis' - 'the mugging scare',



(1) Stuart Hall elaborates on how the State, Judiciary and Media reports attempted to present ‘street crimes by gangs of youth’, (popularly known as ‘mugging’) as some form of national crime committed with an intent of brutal violence. He mentions the Handsworth Crime of 1973 as a case in point where excessive sentences were handed down to the criminals who understandably were from mixed ethnic backgrounds. This ritual punishment was of course to set an exemplary model.

In keeping with Hall’s commentary on the persecution of ‘Blacks and Asians’ in the guise of national security, similar instances of ‘beef-lynching’ has had overwhelming media coverage in India for quite obvious reasons. School level science textbooks have iconographic representations of the animal ‘cow’ as ‘Gaumata’ (Cow Goddess), the gendered connotation is evidently political. The defiling of Muslims as ‘beef-eaters’ and therefore profane, resulted in a backlash against the minority group, the young men of which were often mercilessly thrashed or lynched on the simple pretext of working in cattle trade or tanneries. Such acts of communal violence were carried out by Hindu Mobs proclaiming themselves as ‘Cow Protectors’. This atrocious aspect of mobocracy is ignited by a certain rhetoric of demagoguery by means of which a majority group is persuaded to believe that they are socially, economically and culturally menaced and marginalised by the minorities (particularly the Islamic Other).

This makes the debate around Appropriation of History extremely viable and relevant for further analysis. Mutilating historical record with an intent to situate Hindu subjects on the basis of ‘hereditary rights’ and thereby silencing the Non-Hindus on the grounds of illegitimacy and illegal claims to a homeland has seen quite some resonance in the political vocabulary of Naturalization, the valid example of which is the recently passed Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019. To quote The Economic Times (2019), ‘The Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019 seeks to amend the definition of illegal immigrant for Hindu, Sikh, Parsi, Buddhist and Christian immigrants from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who have lived in India without documentation.’ Interestingly, this world view percolates through BJP’s efforts in reconceptualising historical discourses where the role of Hindu Nationalism is deliberately aggrandized, crudely displaying a breast beating version of Ethno-Nationalism.

In this context one may consult Hannah Arendt (Arendt.,1951: 227 ) who coins a specific term ‘Tribal Nationalism’ to describe such tribal consciousness as, ‘ In psychological terms, the chief difference between even the most violent chauvinism and this tribal nationalism is that the one is extroverted, concerned with visible spiritual and material achievements of the nation, whereas the other, even in its mildest form (for example the German youth movement) is introverted, concentrates on the

individual's own soul which is considered as the embodiment of general national qualities.' Debating the institutionalization of English literary studies by the colonial administration, (Viswanathan, 1989) Gauri Viswanathan points out how cultural imperialism shaped native subjectivities to mask colonial rule under a pedagogic mission of humanist tutelage; with the study of English acting as a 'Surrogate Englishman'. To borrow a quote (Viswanathan, 1989: 3), 'The curriculum is conceived here not in the perennialist sense of an objective, essentialized entity but rather as discourse, activity, process - as one of the mechanisms through which knowledge is socially distributed and culturally validated.'

Along with interventions into academic curriculum, one can equally detect powerful hegemonic configurations at the level of cultural production and circulation. Mainstream Bollywood cinema has forayed into blatant patriotism with the cinematic space often occupied by a Hindu protagonist battling anti-Hindu (primarily Muslim) antagonism. Movies like *URI: The Surgical Strike* (2019), *Tanhaji* (2020), *Raazi* (2018) and *The Ghazi Attack* (2017) deserve a note.

Admitting the fact that contemporary tribal nationalisms (term used by Hannah Arendt) are now expanding exponentially as transnational movements, I would like to reiterate that the purpose of this paper is to look at how state initiatives of reshaping history along essentialist ideologies often suppress and subsume marginalised subjectivities which, if provided a free articulatory space could have possibly generated alternative transcultural and multi-ethnic models of agency and resistance. That is why people's histories and marginalised knowledge systems deserve independent expression to counter their incorporation into dominant discourses. This paper would make an attempt to debate whether post-national ideas of global empathy, cultural hybridity and cosmopolitanism can actually operate to negate fundamentalist ideologies across ethnic, racial and cultural bounds.

## **MYTHS OF ORIGIN AND THE 'ORIGIN' OF THE MYTH:**

The upsurge of fundamentalist nationalisms across nation-states in the past few years have caused unprecedented alarm among minorities and subaltern classes as the political rhetoric of autocratic states frequently constructed the minorities as the objects of their persecution in the endgame of domination. Therefore if 'any analysis of the State requires us to conceptualize a space that is constituted by the intersection of local, regional, national and transnational phenomena' (Sharma and Gupta, 2006 : 230), it becomes incumbent to analyse the role 'myth' plays in the discursive construction of the State. Highlighting on this aspect of myth in orientalist societies, (Viswanathan, 1989: 123) Gauri Viswanathan makes an emphatic point: In much the

same way that Mill interpreted the narrative structure of Indian drama as perpetuating the beliefs and practices of Hindu society, Levi-Strauss read the structure of myth as a coded message by means of which a culture offers models of belief and action to its individual members. In order to decode the message and probe the sources that give it form, the critical observer had first to break that form and recast the myth in a non-narrative mode. It is precisely in such an act that Levi-Strauss believed the inherent contradictions of the social system are exposed.

Elaborating on why British commentators considered Hindu Epics like the Ramayana and Mahabharata as problematic texts dealing with caste hierarchy and polyandry (Viswanathan, 1989: 124), Viswanathan indicates, 'When allegorized, these social customs received a sanctity that prevented the reader from distinguishing a moral act from an immoral one'. She further elucidates that the reader must 'learn to sift fact from legend'. (Viswanathan, 1989: 124) and that 'it was imperative to undo that form and recast it in another where the signs would be easily interpretable.'

Mythologizing the historical narrative by claiming mythical king Rama as the powerful ancestor of the present day Hindus has been a powerful conspiracy theory consumed largely on social media, by a ballistic Hindu community and in political circles by fundamentalist ideologues. Digital technology too helped proliferate Hindu supremacist ideas, redesigned in modern fables and legends that circulated virtually. In a conservative Indian society mockery of the polytheistic cult of Hindu deities is considered blasphemous and often social media dissent led to partisan strife wherein cropped up a variety of pejorative neologisms like 'Anti-national' or the more notorious 'Babar ki Aulad' (translated as 'Son of Babar, the Mughal Emperor). Over the past few years a number of stand-up comedians and artists have been rounded up on charges of subversion of authority. It is crucial at this point to examine the genesis of these 'myths of origin' and their functionality in the context of national history. To push the debate further along the lines of race, as a person of colour one has to acknowledge the dire condition of contemporary India, grappling as it is, with discourses of neo-racism where race operates more than just a social marker.

Avtar Brah, (Back and Solomos, 2000: 443) presents a persuasive argument about race; 'Social phenomena such as racism seek to fix and naturalise "difference" and create impervious boundaries between groups.' Theorizing the genealogy of Race and its discursive representation Etienne Balibar (Balibar and wallerstein, 1988: 17) conceptualises it as; 'Racism - a true "total social phenomena"- inscribes itself in practices (forms of violence, contempt , intolerance, humiliation and exploitation), in discourses and representations which are so many intellectual elaborations of the phantasm of prophylaxis or segregation (the need to purify the social body, to pre-

serve “one’s own” or “our” identity from all forms of mixing, interbreeding or invasion) and which are articulated around the stigmata of otherness (name, skin colour, religious practices)’.

Elaborating further on the popular discourses on ‘the story of the tribe’ Balibar points out (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988: 19), ‘Unlike for example theologians, who must maintain a distance between esoteric speculation and a doctrine designed for popular consumption, historically effective racist ideologues have always developed “democratic” doctrines which are immediately intelligible to the masses and apparently suited from the outset to their supposed low level of intelligence, even when elaborating elitist themes’.

Christophe Jaffrelot in his extensive study of the ideological beginnings of Hinduism (Jaffrelot, 2007) elucidates that the doctrine of Hinduism is not a recent affair and can be traced back to as early as 1925 when the RSS or the National Volunteer Corp was founded. Jaffrelot maintains that Hindu Nationalism in the colonial phase was oppositional to the secular ideology of the Congress Party and all other forms of universalistic thinking of political personalities like Mahatma Gandhi.

Hindutva, as it is better known, stipulated that Indian Culture had to be recognised as Hindu Culture with the power of assimilating minorities to national interests. (Jaffrelot, 2007: 5) Its motto, ‘Hindu, Hindi, Hindustan’ echoed many other European Nationalisms based on religious identity, a common language, or even racial feeling.’ The Ethnic Nationalism called Hindutva which Jaffrelot talks about at length, has undergone profound genealogical changes over the past few decades, witnessing unprecedented rise during the Pandemic of 2020. Manipulating and influencing not just Culture and History but also generating conspiracy theories to target Muslims has been a constant agenda of the BJP in the Pandemic.

Flawed theories accusing the Muslims as prime contaminants of covid-19 have surfaced all over social media. This hysteria may also have found some resonance across the Atlantic when the virus is given a certain ethnic origin (China virus). Surmising the rationale behind such mythic constructions, (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988: 20) Balibar states, ‘Racist myths (the “Aryan myth”, the myth of heredity) are myths not only by virtue of their pseudo-scientific content, but in so far as they are forms of imaginary transcendence of the gulf separating intellectuality from the masses, forms in dissociable from the implicit fatalism which imprisons the masses in an allegedly natural infantilism’.

Arguing further (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988: 22), Balibar indicates how ‘Neo-Racism’ is based less on ‘biological heredity’ but on ‘Cultural differences’ (Balibar calls

this ‘Culturalist ‘ Racism) and that ‘Culture can also function like a nature, and it can in particular function as a way of locking individuals and groups a priori into a genealogy, into a determination that is immutable and intangible in origin’. Tracing the trajectory of ‘grand-myths’ operational as dominant discourses, one has to acknowledge the potency of the concept of ‘fictive ethnicity’ (a term coined by Balibar) in this context. (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988 : 49), ‘No Nation, that is, no national state, has an ethnic basis, which means that nationalism cannot be defined as an ethnocentrism except precisely in the sense of the product of a fictive ethnicity’. What Balibar actually meant when he theorised ethnicity as ‘fictional’ is what perhaps Benedict Anderson to a certain extent meant (Anderson, 1983: 7) when he emphasised on a ‘deep horizontal comradeship’, in both cases not necessarily physiological or physical but ethnic and cultural which through operation of ‘myths of origin’ and other cultural norms help one connect naturally (innately) to the national space.

The moment we articulate an imaginative space called ‘Nation’ with people in their ‘collectivity’, complex distinctions like (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988: 38), ‘internal racism (directed against a population regarded as “a minority” within the national space) and an external racism (considered as an extreme form of xenophobia)’ crop up. The present form of ‘internal racism’ that a minority Islamic community is subjected to, in India, makes it necessary to fathom the mythical constructions of identities naturalised through dominant narratives. As Balibar puts it (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988: 86), ‘The formation of the nation thus appears as the fulfilment of a “project” stretching over centuries, in which there are different stages and moments of coming to “self-awareness”- something that Immanuel Wallerstein (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988) terms ‘pastness’ designating a ‘golden era’ that we (the people of the nation) have fallen from and that this past is endangered by those who do not share ‘our ethnicity’ and do not participate in ‘our’ project.

So if such hereditary myths claim (Balibar and Wallerstein, 1988: 59), ‘annexation (“return”) to the national “body” of “lost” individuals and populations (for example, the Sudeten or Tyrolean Germans) which is, as is well known, closely linked to what might be called the pan-ic developments of nationalism (Pan-Slavism, Pan-Germanism, ...)’. Should we anticipate a Pan-Hinduism, a form of Hindu Supremacist movement (or sentiment) that will unite (metaphorically or otherwise) all Hindus around the Globe? Is the present regime diplomatically strategizing construction of ‘essentialised identities’ as ‘means’ to ‘political end’? Is this resurgence of reinforcing national tropes just a ‘passing affair’ or a deliberate agenda to culturally exorcise National Memory on ‘purist claims’?

Let us look back for a moment to the beginnings of Hindutva in its extremist form under one of its strongest proponents V.D. Savarkar who became a vanguard of the Hindu Mahasabha party in the late 1930s. In 'Hindutva: Who is a Hindu?' (Jaffrelot, 2007: 95) Savarkar clearly delineates the legitimacy of national subject hood in these words: We are one because we are a nation, a race and own a common sankriti (civilization) in the case of some of our Mohammedan or Christian countrymen who had originally been forcibly converted to a non-hindu religion and who consequently have inherited along with Hindus, a common Fatherland and a greater part of the wealth of common culture - language, law, customs, folklore and history - are not and cannot be recognised as Hindus.

In his detailed study of Hindutva Ideology, Chetan Bhatt (Back and Solomos, 2000: 575) points out certain striking characteristics of the movement: Hindutva movement reproduces a grand epistemology about Hinduism that fundamentally subverts the methods of history and historical sociology.

In this view, Hinduism or its essence is in some fundamental way unchanging and primordial (Hindutva is indeed based on this 'essence').....In this Hindutva conception, ideas such as Brahminism, Sanatana dharma ("the eternal religion") and so forth are detached from the historical processes in which they developed and mobilised as self-evident signifiers of a contemporary identity. In this sense 'Hinduism' becomes an abstraction, an empty but normative signification of something that exists above and beyond the histories of societies and cultures.

The temporal scheme of Hindu mythology are applied to contemporary histories (indeed, a realism is claimed for mythic temporalities).....Much of the structure and power of Hindutva discourse is derived by intentionally blending (and confusing) mythic, archaeological, medieval, colonial and contemporary time, space and event.

Bhatt further explains (Back and Solomos, 2000) how contemporary hindutva movement gained momentum by appropriating the myth of western Aryanism (particularly English and German comparative linguistics and Indology) which suggested that Aryans invaded physical India from outside to instead proclaim Aryans as 'autochthonous' people of India. To commemorate the mythical greatness of the Hindus, the Ayodhya issue (Jaffrelot, 2007) was revived in 1984 by Vishva Hindu Parishad and later in 1989 by L.K.Advani to culturally purify Ayodhya, the birthplace of Lord Rama (the protagonist of the hindu epic Ramayana) from any heathen contamination (the presence of a mosque built by the first Mughal emperor Babar on the same site). This perhaps was one symbolic moment when myth and realpolitik reached phantasmagorical proportion.

## **ALTERATIONS OF HISTORY TO ALTERCATIONS WITH HISTORY:**

Over time, the ideological machine of Hindutva mapped a certain discursive tradition covering roughly all academic disciplines including History, Sociology, Anthropology, Theology and often Medicine and Science. It would not thus be wrong to say that Hindutva is to Hindu Ideologues as Orientalism was to European cultural historians. To borrow a thought from Chetan Bhatt, (Back and Solomos, 2000: 583); Hinduism in this sense, is articulated in the Hindutva movement as not a religion at all but an eternally valid ethical code, a distinct orientation to the temporal and spiritual world, the natural social and political order, the fulfilment of civilization and a world-view for humankind. It cannot, therefore be compared with or comprehended by external western or Islamic paradigm. If Hinduism (Hindu Dharma) can be conceptualised not as a religion but as an incommensurable civilizational ethos, a further claim can be made that Hinduism is itself a tolerant genuinely secular way of being and not a religion as such.

These secular incarnations of Hindutva has seen prominent effusion in the History debate where selective versions of history are presented as authentic and unchangeable. 'Historical Negationism' (as the term suggests) is understood as some form of altering historical record with the purpose of distortion, the term 'negationism' was coined by French historian Henry Rousso (Rousso, 1994) while examining the politics of memory in Vichy France. According to Rousso the term is not to be confused with academic and legitimate restructuring of History (Historical Revisionism). (Back and Solomos, 2000) Chetan Bhatt examines how archaeology helped reproduce historical facts in the polarising debate around Aryan origins with the discovery of the urban ruins of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro in 1920s in and around old towns in Northern India and Pakistan.

The results exhibit startling facts which provide conclusive evidence of a violent Aryan invasion of India. Interestingly proponents of Hindutva have consistently denied all theories of an Aryan invasion as 'colonial products' to eclipse the post-colonial status of a young nation-state. So if Hindus are descendants of Aryans and have Aryan blood in their veins (as claimed by the Purists), how can they account for the presence of these ancient ruins in Pakistan, an Islamic majority country? Keeping in mind that the partition of India produced the present territorial divisions along religious lines, one needs to nevertheless acknowledge that theoretically, both Hindus and Muslims have equal claim to this ancestral lineage. Accepting this fact of history will undeniably contradict that segmented version of history which Hindutva promulgates. This altercation with history calls for more grave scholarly debates which



is unfortunately beyond the scope of this paper. Let us for the moment resume the contemporary debate around reformulating textual (historical) narratives in academic institutions. An online report on Text book Politics of BJP in Rajasthan, published in 2018 (Scroll.in, 2018), revealed startling facts:

Not only do the new text books reinforce the Hindu majoritarian world view, they all but erase minority identities. Science is explained through stories from Indian mythology and every Maths text book from class 3 to 8 has a chapter on Vedic maths. The banned practice of Sati is described in glowing terms, as are government schemes and initiatives. Books of practically every subject seek to instil nationalism and an unquestioning respect for the armed forces....Minority identities - Muslims, Christians and others- are nearly missing from the text books....The Class 5 Hindi textbook contains a letter in which the cow declares herself a purveyor of ‘strength, wisdom, longevity, health, happiness, prosperity and glory’, enjoins children to serve and protect her, and signs off with ‘yours, Kamdhenu Gaumata’. The Class 8 Hindi textbook includes a chapter on ‘Village development with Cow protection’. The report further exposed pressing facts on how Muslims are deliberately excluded from record of historical achievements by listing exclusively eminent Hindus in history text books.

The word Conspiracy in a class 3 Hindi text book is defined as ‘an act or plan against government or rulers’ (Scroll.in, 2018). A history book of class 7 goes one step ahead by completely reversing the outcome of the Battle of Haldighati which saw the defeat of Rana Pratap against Mughal emperor Akbar.

The Washington Post (2018) harps on how parties in power have always tried regularising historical narratives, citing Egyptian government’s scrubbing references to the Arab Spring Uprising of 2011 and of Chinese administration’s promotion of its socialist history. However the news report states that even though Congress Party in India did tamper with history when in power by glorifying the role of the Party in the freedom struggle, it nevertheless critiqued the controversy caused by the Emergency rule of 1970 and the wave of anti-Sikh sentiment that persisted throughout the 1980s. The BJP, on the other hand (The Washington Post, 2018), has incorporated Modi’s governmental schemes like Demonetization, Digital India and Clean India Missions in all text books in an impulse to stagnate the flux and heterogeneity of historical narration.

Revelations of an investigative journalistic article (The Wire, 2020) explains categorically why the idea of ‘Bharatavarsha’ as an Indian Nation-State (Hindu Rashtra) existing in ancient texts is a complete whitewash of authentic historical documentation.



The article further posits probing questions on conspiracy theories that suggest that the Taj Mahal is actually 'Tejo Mahalaya', a once Hindu temple. Representation of the colonial past is frantically manipulated to magnify the role played by Hindu Nationalists in the anti-colonial struggle. Such fabrications of history to present an unchanging and homogeneous trajectory of the post-colonial Indian nation-state, is nothing but an orchestrated political move to erase all heterogeneity from a multicultural society. The Hindustan Times (2017), reports how BJP ruled states are re-writing history to give it a right-wing twist. Hindu rulers are shown as victors in battles while Mughals are represented as mass murderers. The assassination of Mahatma Gandhi is glossed over and several political stalwarts like the country's first premier Jawaharlal Nehru and his role in Indian politics remains unacknowledged. On the other hand, RSS ideologues like Veer Savarkar finds a sympathetic portrayal in almost all history text books. (Jaffrelot, 2007), Christophe Jaffrelot explains how the status of RSS as a transnational organisation has facilitated its expanse overseas, particularly in the US (California) where it tried to pressurise the Board of Education to incorporate ideas about Aryan invasion and the Muslim atrocities committed in India. Hindu Nationalists from the Vedic Foundation and the Hindu Education Foundation (an affiliate of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh of America) submitted a disputed report of certain edits to be made in school textbooks. For organisations like Friends of South Asia (FOSA), these recommendations were a reflection of the Hindutva world view and struck a harmonious chord with the fundamentalist agenda of the Sangh Parivar in India and in the Hindu diaspora.

As the research provided by Jaffrelot suggests some of these recommendations were intended to delete or edit textual references to the complex caste system of India, the traditional practices of untouchability and the polytheistic matrix of Hinduism. In this context of educational reform and the historiographical intervention of the Hindutva, Jaffrelot cites another case in point (Jaffrelot, 2007), when Hindu Nationalists during the Janata Phase, 1977-9, wanted three history textbooks<sup>2</sup> to be withdrawn from the curriculum on the accusation that they failed to condemn the Muslim invasion of India and misrepresented heroes like Sri Aurobindo and Bal Gangadhar Tilak. It was under the aegis of Murli Manohar Joshi who acting as Minister of Human Resource Development and Sciences and technology (1998-2004) made extensive efforts at constructing an alternate tradition of history writing that could best fit the hindutva ideology. Jaffrelot elaborates how in an effort to reorient Education Joshi blamed the colonial rule for the destruction of the indigenous system through introduction of Western education and English language. A renewed reinforcement of gender stereotype was also detected in Joshi's directives of introducing courses

in home sciences and home industry exclusively for girls. Therefore, this political agenda of the Bharatiya Janata Party of interventionist policies in Education and intrusion into powerful discourses like that of history (through reform of curriculum), may not be a novelty after all. The question, however, is whether the efforts of BJP in instilling a sense of communal pride in Hindus through modifying national memory sustain a longer shelf life? Or let us hope that the attempts at mutilating history to alter the discursive pattern of cultural and intellectual tradition could just be a short lived euphoria, lasting a term or so. As prime witnesses to this large scale textual invasion, educated Indians must resist the state policies by creating alternate spaces of subversion and dissent.

Dennis Dworkin (Dworkin, 2009: 521) commenting on British cultural critic Paul Gilroy and his attempt to create alternate discursive spaces for ‘black Britons’, observes Gilroy’s ‘attention to structure and agency, focus on modes of dominance and resistance, privileging historicity and counter history’. Such counter hegemonic historiographies could invalidate dominant representations of essentialised identities. Dworkin estimates Gilroy’s critique of contemporary Britain ‘as an acclamation of multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism and transnationalism at a time when they are threatened by essentialist notions of national identity and unbridgeable cultural difference.’ Dworkin considers Gilroy’s initiative of rethinking British history from a transnational perspective as a tool to overthrow binary oppositions underpinning ethnic absolutism. In the view of the above argument, it is crucial for us to revive an authentic Indian historical tradition that could engage in serious academic conversation through rewriting of subaltern histories and histories’ of minorities, which may, in its turn, carve a counter hegemonic historical space to contain the hitherto undocumented voices of people. The present wave of ‘Revivalist Hinduism’ is both detrimental and oppositional to the fabric of non-hindu and secular cultural traditions that a culturally diverse Indian society has held through ages. If Cultural Historians can forge a dialogic relation with these suppressed and silenced narratives, our comprehensive history could no longer be framed along ‘essentialist’ and ‘exclusivist’ lines. One must also remember that History writing is subjective rather than objective and the subject position of the historian needs to be carefully evaluated so that readers as ‘actors’ can rightly engage from their respective subjectivities for a fair judgement of facts.

### **L’ETAT C’EST MOI: TOWARDS PATRIARCHALISM AND ETHNIC ABSOLUTISM:**

Encyclopaedia Britannica (Britannica, updated 2019) defines ‘Absolutism’ as ‘the political doctrine and practice of unlimited centralized authority and absolute sov-

ereignty, as vested specially in a monarch or dictator.’ Britannica points out that though it originated in early modern Europe with leaders of new nation-states, it was king Louis XIV (1643-1715) of France who asserted his autocratic demeanour with the French phrase, ‘L’etat c’est moi’ (I am the State). Moreover Absolutism has also existed in other parts of the world, including Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler and in the Soviet Union under Joseph Stalin.

(Sassoon, 2016) Such Absolutism often requires its supreme leaders to personify and incarnate personal ideologies as state agenda. Many autocrat rulers in the Middle East including former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein and Muhammad Gaddafi, the infamous Libyan politician, have followed the obnoxious legacy of Hitler or Stalin in documenting their lives through biographies/autobiographies.

It would hardly be an exaggeration if one claims that the present BJP rule is an embodiment of the life of the Supreme leader (Narendra Modi) represented (often metaphorically) as synonymous to the progress of India Shining<sup>3</sup> (an ordinary tea seller’s rags to riches tale advertised and sold as the ‘Great Indian Dream’). A recent CNN news report (2020) presented the subject of a nationwide debate in the US, following the death of a 46 year old black man (George Floyd) - the removal of contentious confederate monuments which remind African Americans of centuries of oppression and virulent racism.

It is intriguing that while Americans debate the irrationality or necessity of historical amnesia, a developing country like India sees a return to a fabled, nativist spectre of an imagined past.

Aljazeera reported (Aljazeera, 2018) the unveiling of a 182 metre statue, the world’s tallest, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to honour Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the country’s first home minister and one of the founding fathers which is speculated to be a deliberate political move to undermine Modi’s chief political rivals, the Gandhi-Nehru family. The report particularly mentions the biased concerns of the Hindutva project at ‘revising India’s history to suit the Hindu nationalist agenda’ which includes glorifying legacies of more ‘Pro-Hindu’ leaders like Patel over secular ones like Nehru or Gandhi. Another such controversial statue which is under construction in Mumbai is that of Maratha leader Shivaji Bhonsle, heralding a ‘Neo Nationalistic spirit’ for the posterity.

The rigorous harping on nationalist themes, the insistence on citizens to perform national rituals and exhorting the youth of the country to engage in more traditional (Hindu) forms of cultural practices rather than western, has produced a mass of confused, disoriented public whose political activism does not extend beyond ‘hashtag

debates'. There has also been a drastic curb on free speech in the past few years with routine rounding up of activists and strict censoring of journalistic activities. Recasting national ethnicities in compartmentalized, monolithic categories for electoral gain and persistent repetition of national tropes, has on the contrary, garnered quite a popular appeal.

(Britannica, 2021) provides a brief political career graph of Narendra Modi, from his meteoric rise to administrative power when he won the 2014 elections, prior to which he served as CM of a prominent Indian state (Gujrat) to his present status of being twice elected on popular vote. One striking fact of his career is his membership of the pro-hindu Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) organisation as early as in 1970s when Modi also set up a unit of the RSS student's wing, the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP). This wing has been often involved in turbulent political activities on a number of University campuses in recent times making it evident that Modi's career is tainted by deep controversy. Particularly during the communal riots in Gujrat in 2002 when on the accusation of having condoned the violence, he was barred from entering the United States.

From his biographical record, it is easy to surmise why this altercation with history was choreographed by Modi at this contingent point; to revamp his political image would serve a cathartic end. If repetition of national codes is crucial in preventing the fragmentation of the nationalist myth, it is equally pertinent to reinvent and recast these national symbols in one's own personal image.

As an developing and emergent nation-state, India has enjoyed great visibility in the global landscape due to this 'brand furnishing' project of the PM in which as a National Icon he has inflated into a 'larger than life' character in this 'self-told story of the tribe'. It seems inevitable at this poignant moment that the myth of the Nation merges and superimposes itself with the myth of the Supreme Leader whose image reverberates with another mythical hero Lord Rama who accepted a life of hermitage by rejecting royalty. In an almost extraordinarily striking resemblance, Modi draws attention to himself as an ordinary man, an ascetic who has given up on a life of domestic bliss for a greater, transcendental goal. Indeed, 'Rama' is a culturally constructed category used by Hindu Supremacists and fundamentalists to thrive on 'difference', 'diversity' and 'alterity' much like many earlier forms of fascism.

In this context (Sharma and Gupta, 2006: 188), Wendy Brown while talking about devising a feminist critical theory of the bureaucratic state, highlights the gendered nature of the entity:

The masculinism of the state refers to those features of the state that signify, enact, sustain, and represent masculine power as a form of dominance. This dominance expresses itself as the power to describe and run the world and the power of access to women; it entails both a general claim to territory and claims to, about, and against specific 'others'.

Therefore, the discursive space of the state can be structured by the elements of masculinism to fit a certain heteronormative code so that the 'politicised subject' that is produced by it will be predominantly that of a 'Hindu Male'. (The Hindu, 2019) The Surrogacy regulation Bill, introduced in Rajya Sabha in 2019 by the Modi government which made commercial surrogacy illegal, is a case in point. This monitoring and disciplining of subjects with an intrusive power over their bodies and an accompanying somatophobia (According the bill the right to surrogacy is denied to homosexuals, single parents and live-in couples), is surely a reflection of the state's political control over subject's sexual lives. As I push this argument further I would like to draw attention to the underlying argument; how a powerful Hindu Male and an efficacious myth of Lord Rama intertwine to transform into a morphed image of each other and of the nation, empowered with the right to represent and construct subjects through a dominant hindutva historiography.

### **GLOBAL SOLUTIONS AGAINST HINDUIZATION OF HISTORY? THE POLITICS OF A COSMOPOLITAN COSMOS:**

The two world wars and the nuclear holocaust reshaped the spatio-temporal terrain of a large number of countries. To add insult, the failure of Communism and the lessons of the Cold War remained a rude reminder of the fragility of Nationhood. The end of the Cold war ushered in an extraordinary era of liberalism where countries, even the young nation-states had to tune their political systems in accordance with capitalist or socialist choices.

There are many who blame the present crisis to a growing world capital which deepened the economic divide between the 'haves' and the 'have-nots'. On the other hand there are historians like Yuval Harari who consider technological disruption as a significant turning point in human history. If both global governance and post-national systems of dominion have failed to lead us out of this impasse, equally aggravating has been the contemporary upsurge of chauvinistic nationalisms which have opened up zones of exclusion in domestic societies. In my paper, I have argued against this aspect of fundamentalism as extremely perilous and damaging to the fabric of democratic thought in a civil society. The intrusion into academic disciplines and institutions, the tampering of historical narratives can amplify the hierarchy of cultures,

internally as well externally. In a multicultural ethos that characterises Indian society, the politics of dominating minorities and culturally appropriating the discursive pattern of identities has been alarmingly high recently. If cultural difference does not survive in multiculturalism, can average Indians aspire to global citizenship in a cosmopolitan post-nation? Terms like Cosmopolitanism and Multiculturalism have gained a lot of momentum over time, as societies are viewed more in their fluidity and hybridity than in their cartographic and structural fixities.

One good reason of this is perhaps the politics of war and increasing economic opportunities that accentuated mass displacement and mobility of population groups; new Diasporas have altered older configurations and one may finally be hopeful of a borderless and mobile world in the future.

Nevertheless, there is still a dilemmatic situation to confront in internal politics; the national agenda of consolidating an essentialist notion of Hindu identity which has frequently seen resistance at the local level of some states. One apt example is West Bengal where some form of communal harmony has ensured peace for a considerable period. Party (Trinamool translated as grass root) which has been in power since 2011 has prioritised Secularism and its promotion as its top political goal. This politics of appeasing minorities has often put the state in occasional rifts with the centre as power struggle continues with each passing election. (Scroll.in, 2017) An online news source recollected how a Facebook post had scarred the communal rest in Basirhat in 2017 (Basirhat riots).

The news source specified how; ‘The ground violence in turn sparked off a narrative war, as the riot was used to score political goals. English language television news and many on social media portrayed it as an event in which Hindus were under unprecedented attack.’

Domestic politics of this kind can temporarily disable the politics of Nationalism but may again lead us to some other complexity of political conflict. Vaccine Nationalism is a relatively new coinage that has come to disposal extensively in the midst of the raging pandemic. If one follows this trend, there is a supreme danger of countries waging another world war over the access to vaccines for its own nationals. Global politics and Nationalist politics feed into each other in more ways than one.

Debating Cosmopolitanism (Robbins, 2002: 33), Bruce Robbins harps on the complex nuances of the term, Whatever comes from America, it appears, is American Imperialism. Indeed, these days this is also true for cosmopolitan ideas that do not come from America... Cosmopolitanism is imperialism, American imperialism,

even when it is aimed against American imperialism. (Robbins, 2002: 34) He also warns nation-states of the dangers of cosmopolitanism if not rightly articulated and implemented;

Cosmopolitanism would appear to belong like Habermas's public sphere, to that intriguing and frustrating set of terms- it would be interesting to speculate on whether or not they are restricted to the tradition of Kant - that seen perpetually torn between an empirical dimension and a normative dimension. The trade-off is familiar. To the extent that it seems to float outside or above social life, a normative concept like Cosmopolitanism will always be vulnerable to charges like elitism and inefficacy. Robbins's mention of Immanuel Kant makes us wonder what place Kantian views on Global empathy may have, in the present crisis.

Immanuel Kant (Kant, 1775: 107), in his political proposition lays down certain preliminary articles that would ensure peace among warring nations, 'Standing Armies (miles perpetuus) Shall in Time be Totally Abolished', is one such. However, if you look at the practical application of such a principle in the light of the Kashmir affair where an excess of military violence was exchanged between India and Pakistan, one sees the necessity perhaps of a form of temporary security troop (not quite the standing army Kant mentions) to ensure civilian safety. But again, frequently, it is the civilian population under the radar of the military.

While we are in the middle of this debate, the situation in Myanmar, which is under a military coup, becomes representative of the kind of internal aggression that can arise from an intimate enemy. Home grown Nationalisms are to be averted if democracies need to last. Every human thought that aims at bettering the world (starting from Levinas) is progressive. Let me end with Kant's principles of Universal Hospitality (Kant, 1795: 118), which can be described as 'the right of a stranger not to be treated as an enemy when he arrives in the land of another. One may refuse to receive him when this can be done without causing his destruction; but, so long as he peacefully occupies his place, one may not treat him with hostility'.

This is in keeping with Homi K. Bhabha's profound perseverance about 'transnational minorities' being the real 'empowering agents'. Cosmopolitan world view from this vantage point does not look so bleak and distant.



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**THROUGH THE EYES OF ATTACKERS: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF CYBERSECURITY STRATEGIES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

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## **Saldırganların Gözünden: Uluslararası İlişkilerde Siber Güvenlik Stratejilerinin Kapsamlı Bir Analizi**

### **Öz**

Teknolojinin diplomatik etkileşimlerin temelini oluşturduğu bu birbirine bağlı küresel ortamda, siber saldırganların karmaşık metodolojilerini anlamak son derece önemli hale geldi. Bu çalışma, dünya çapındaki siber güvenliğin temellerini derinlemesine inceliyor ve saldırıları düzenleyenlerin bakış açısından saldırı taktiklerinin araştırılmasını içeren benzersiz bir bakış açısı sunuyor. Disiplinlerarası bir metodoloji kullanan araştırma, bu dijital saldırganların teşviklerini, stratejilerini ve isteklerini çözmek için vaka çalışmalarını, uzman yayınlarını ve tehdit istihbaratı analizini birleştiriyor. Araştırma, Stuxnet olayı gibi tarihi olayları yakından inceleyerek, saldırgan siber faaliyetlerin evrimini ve bunların uluslararası ilişkiler alanındaki sonuçlarını ortaya koyuyor. Saldırı yolları, teknikleri ve saldırganları yönlendiren motivasyonların kapsamlı bir değerlendirmesiyle bu analiz, siber güvenlik, küresel politika ve ulusların istikrarı arasındaki karmaşık etkileşimi gün ışığına çıkarıyor. Siber tehditlerde ortaya çıkan eğilimleri öngörerek ve bölgesel perspektifleri derinlemesine inceleyerek bu çalışma, ufukta görünen zorluklar ve olasılıklar hakkında ileri odaklı bir bakış açısı sunuyor. Sonuçta bu araştırma, saldırgan siber taktiklerin karmaşık alanında gezinmek ve uluslararası ilişkilerin gelecekteki manzarasının korunmasını sağlamak için uluslararası işbirliğine, yenilikçi politika geliştirmeye ve proaktif önlemlere yönelik acil gereksinimi vurgulamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Siber güvenlik, Uluslararası İlişkiler, Stuxnet, Saldırgan Siber Faaliyetler, Siber Saldırganlar

## **Through the Eyes of Attackers: A Comprehensive Analysis of Cybersecurity Strategies in International Relations**

### **Abstract**

In this interconnected global landscape, where technology forms the foundation of diplomatic interactions, understanding the complicated methodologies of cyber attackers has become of utmost importance. This study delves into the core of worldwide cybersecurity, introducing a unique viewpoint that involves an exploration of offensive tactics from the vantage point of those orchestrating attacks. Employing an interdisciplinary methodology, the research amalgamates case studies, expert publications, and the analysis of threat intelligence to decode the incentives, strategies, and aspirations of these digital assailants. By closely examining historical events like the Stuxnet incident, the investigation reveals the evolution of offensive cyber activities and their consequences in the international relations field. Through a comprehensive assessment of attack avenues, techniques, and the motivations driving attackers, this analysis brings to light the complicated interaction between cybersecurity, global politics, and the stability of nations. By anticipating emerging trends in cyber threats and delving into regional perspectives, this study offers a forward-focused outlook on the challenges and possibilities that lie on the horizon. the preservation of the future landscape of international relations.

**Key Words:** Cybersecurity, International Relations, Stuxnet, Offensive Cyber Activities,

## Introduction

In an age characterized by unparalleled technological interconnectivity, the landscape of global interactions within international relations has undergone a profound transformation. This transformation has introduced novel avenues for diplomacy, trade, and collaboration, yet it has not been without its associated trials. The emergence of cyber threats and attacks has introduced a multifaceted layer of intricacy to the global arena, reshaping the dynamics of power, security, and the art of statecraft. As both nations and non-state actors leverage the digital domain to advance their objectives, comprehending the underpinning strategies and motivations driving these offensive cyber maneuvers becomes an imperative of the highest order (Buchanan, 2016). Relatively, in the complicated tapestry of international relations, cybersecurity has emerged as an indispensable cornerstone, exerting influence over state behavior and shaping the contours of diplomatic interactions. Digital infrastructure, beyond facilitating economic prosperity, empowers governments to engage with their counterparts across the spectrum of topics, from diplomacy to defense. However, this very interwoven connectivity has rendered nations susceptible to cyberattacks that traverse geographical borders with ease. The potential to disrupt essential infrastructure, pilfer sensitive data, and manipulate public perception through cyber means reverberates with far-reaching implications for both national security and global equilibrium. Furthermore, the swift evolution of cyber threats and attacks has cast an air of uncertainty over the global stage. No longer restricted to the confines of espionage or hacktivism, cyber operations have broadened to encompass a diverse array of motivations, spanning economic gains and political influence to ideological assertion and even military advantage. These attacks transcend conventional notions of conflict, surpassing established norms of engagement and deterrence, especially in a domain where attributing actions can prove elusive and the repercussions devastating.

Hence, this study embarks on an exhaustive exploration into the core of international cybersecurity, employing an innovative perspective: the investigation of offensive strategies from the vantage point of the attackers themselves. The aim is to delve deep into the motivations, tactics, and objectives that impel cyber attackers to orchestrate their activities within the cyber domain. By unraveling the complicated threads that compose these strategies, the intent of this study is to gain a profound comprehension of their implications for the complicated web of international relations. Drawing upon a multidisciplinary approach, encompassing historical scrutiny, expert perspectives, and analysis of threat intelligence, the objective is to furnish a comprehensive evaluation of the perspectives held by these cyber aggressors. Through this complicated examination, the paper strives to illuminate the complicated interplay of cybersecurity, geopolitics, and the stability of the global order.

Ultimately, this effort contributes to the broader dialogue concerning the safeguarding of the future of international relations within an era characterized by unyielding digital advancement.

### **Theoretical Framework: Cybersecurity Dilemma and Offensive Strategies**

The complicated landscape of global interactions within the digital era is marked by a complex interplay among technology, power dynamics, and security imperatives. The integration of computers and information technology into defense tactics has led to the emergence of several enhancers of military capabilities, such as C4I2SR Systems, Information Operations, and Network Centric Warfare (Sharma, 2010). Central to this complicated dynamic is the cybersecurity dilemma—a conceptual framework that elucidates the complicated balance between defensive measures and the deployment of offensive capabilities in the cyberspace realm.

The essence of the cybersecurity dilemma encapsulates a paradoxical scenario wherein nations, driven by the necessity to protect their national interests, invest in both the fortification of their defensive cyber capabilities to safeguard their networks and the acquisition of offensive cyber tools to project influence and power (Andress & Winterfeld, 2013). However, as efforts to bolster defensive mechanisms intensify, an unintended consequence materializes—a potential amplification of insecurity perceptions among other global actors. The enhancement of cyber defense mechanisms can inadvertently be construed as preparatory measures for impending offensive actions. This situation instigates a cycle of mistrust, fostering an environment conducive to escalation. The cybersecurity dilemma assumes particular significance in an era where technological vulnerabilities are widespread, and the ramifications of cyberattacks resonate beyond traditional territorial boundaries, transcending established concepts of sovereignty (Betz, 2017).

Buchanan, (2016) asserts that, nations employ cyber intrusions as a means to proactively forge offensive strategies against other nations long before the necessity arises. Countries adapt their operational conduct to align with their overarching strategic objectives. Decision-makers mold their stance on network intrusions based on the practical aspects of execution. In the pursuit of offensive capabilities, nations are strongly motivated to initiate their activities well in advance, anticipating their future demand. This inclination is rooted in the distinctive attributes inherent in the process of conducting network intrusions. The impetus behind these operational pursuits engenders the primary element of the cybersecurity dilemma, propelling nations to cultivate menacing capabilities preemptively, even before their apparent need emerges. The utilization of offensive cyber strategies has emerged as a potent instrument with-

in the arsenal of both state entities and non-state actors. Unlike conventional military engagements, offensive cyber operations can be executed covertly, affording an element of plausible deniability (Sigholm, 2013). The spectrum of these strategies spans from acts of disruption that compromise the integrity of critical infrastructure to espionage endeavors that aim to surreptitiously access sensitive information. Offensive cyber capabilities blur the conventional distinctions between traditional warfare and intelligence operations, introducing an entirely novel dimension of conflict where conventional norms of engagement may no longer be applicable (Lucas, 2017). Furthermore, the introduction of offensive cyber operations challenges established norms and engenders instability within the realm of international relations, as attributing responsibility for these attacks remains a complicated endeavor, often shrouded in ambiguity.

Comprehending the motivations and strategies of cyber assailants necessitates a deeper dive beyond mere technological aspects, beckoning an exploration into the domains of geopolitics, economics, ideology, and security concerns (Nordstrom & Carlson, 2014). Attackers-whether backed by state apparatuses or hacktivist collectives-operate within a multifaceted terrain where their actions are molded by a diverse spectrum of factors. The theoretical framework for grasping attackers' viewpoints rests upon the acknowledgment that their objectives are frequently interwoven with broader geopolitical aspirations, regional power dynamics, and the pursuit of strategic advantages. Through this lens, this paper unravels the complicated tapestry of offensive cyber strategies, thus forming a more holistic understanding of their intentions and the consequences they bring to the multifaceted framework of international relations. This notion stands as the basis upon which the examination of cybersecurity strategies through the lens of attackers is erected. By assimilating the tenets of the cybersecurity dilemma, probing the intricacies of offensive strategies, and contemplating attackers' motivations, this paper delves into the journey that reveals the complicated interactions between cybersecurity and the elaborate fabric of international relations.

## **Methodology**

Grasping the perspectives of cyber attackers demands a multidisciplinary perspective. The realms of cybersecurity and international relations are complicatedly interwoven, intermingling technological, political, economic, and sociocultural elements. An interdisciplinary approach acknowledges this complicated fabric, ensuring that the motivations driving attackers are not limited to a singular domain. By merging insights from various disciplines, the study endeavors to encompass the comprehensive spectrum of forces shaping offensive cyber strategies. The research methodol-



ogy adopted encompasses a variety of techniques, including scrutinizing case studies, conducting expert publication reviews, and meticulously analyzing data derived from threat intelligence. The study is characterized by its comprehensive approach, aiming to capture the complex aspects that steer and influence these cyber attackers. By merging a diverse array of information analysis techniques, the research endeavors to reconstruct the narratives underpinning these digital activities, providing insights that extend beyond the technical aspects into the realms of geopolitics, ideology, and the dynamics of power.

Case studies serve as portals to the past, enabling a profound examination of pivotal historical occurrences such as the Stuxnet attack. These case studies furnish context, enabling the identification of patterns, motives, and tactics that inform the actions of those orchestrating cyber-attacks. Expert publication reviews contributes a vital qualitative dimension, drawing from the insights of professionals, researchers, and policymakers immersed within the field. Their firsthand experiences offer a nuanced perspective on the motivations of attackers, their strategic goals, and the broader implications of their actions within the sphere of international relations. By examining the tools, techniques, and procedures employed by attackers, the research gains an understanding of the tactical subtleties that inform offensive cyber strategies.

### **Historical Examination: Stuxnet and its Ongoing Impact**

At the core of this historical exploration stands the iconic narrative of Stuxnet - an innovative portrayal of an offensive cyber operation that transcended the conventional confines of conflict (Valeriano & Maness, 2015). In the year 2010, an Iranian computer displayed unusual behavior by repeatedly restarting on its own, devoid of any observable operator influence (Jasper, 2017). Specialists in cybersecurity closely examined the machine and detected the presence of harmful code. Upon scrutinizing this malicious code, they pinpointed several uncommon characteristics. The code possessed the capability to self-propagate using innovative methods of transmission among computers. Its distinctiveness lay in its substantial size and advanced intricacy, surpassing the usual standards. Its primary focus appeared to be industrial control systems, demonstrating a high degree of precision in its targeting approach. Subsequent inquiries eventually unveiled that the intent behind the code was to clandestinely undermine Iran's nuclear initiative.

Dubbed "Stuxnet" by the detectives, the harmful code name was driven from particular files within its structure. As digital forensic analyses and leaked information gradually surfaced, it became evident that the code probably formed part of a collaborative operation between the United States and Israel (Desouza et al., 2020).

This cyberattack targeted the Iranian nuclear facility in Natanz and secretly disabled about a thousand centrifuges that process nuclear materials. This disruption accounted for nearly twenty percent of all uranium-enriching devices employed by Iran.

Peering into the motivations that underpinned the Stuxnet attack reveals a tapestry interwoven with considerations of geopolitics, security imperatives, and strategic calculations (Moore, 2022). Fundamentally, the operation aimed to erode Iran's nuclear ambitions, safeguarding regional stability and countering potential security hazards. The Stuxnet attack, characterized by its unparalleled complexity and audaciousness, forged new pathways within the realm of international relations (Healey & Jervis, 2020). Its discovery brought to the forefront the potency of cyber abilities in molding the equilibrium of power and influencing the behavior of states on a global scale. Another element of the U.S.' emergency strategy in this circumstance was seemingly called NITRO ZEUS. Just like Stuxnet, this undertaking aimed to execute an additional cyber offensive on Iran, intending to generate a physical, or kinetic, impact through the utilization of malicious computer code to incapacitate or dismantle facilities (Buchanan, 2016). This kind of result was remarkably unusual and extremely infrequent, even after Stuxnet had showcased the concept. What made NITRO ZEUS even more exceptional was its extensive range of targets. Unlike Stuxnet, which solely concentrated on the Iranian nuclear program, NITRO ZEUS adopted a broader approach, encompassing transportation infrastructure, power plants, and air defense systems across Iran (Sanger, 2018). Developers characterized it as the most far-reaching coupled kinetic and cyber initiative ever formulated by the United States, and likely the world.

The strategy required substantial unauthorized entry into Iranian systems. The U.S. acquired this access thanks to the initiatives of numerous individuals from its military and intelligence communities. Significant financial resources, in the order of tens of millions of dollars, were allocated, leading to infiltration of key systems all over Iran. To assure ongoing access, U.S. technicians kept up constant communication with their malicious code (Gartzke & Lindsay, 2015).

Moving beyond Stuxnet and NITRO ZEUS, the panorama of offensive cyber strategies has continued to evolve, unveiling a sequence of ensuing events that cast light on the evolving dynamics within this domain. The destructive NotPetya attack , for instance, targeted critical infrastructure, underscoring the capacity of cyber endeavors to precipitate cascading economic and political consequences. Intrusion campaigns accredited to nation-states, such as APT29 and APT35 , underscore the strategic complexity of offensive cyber actions, functioning as tools for gathering intelligence, shaping political narratives, and employing coercion. These incidents

collectively portray an advancing paradigm where cyber capabilities extend beyond technical instruments, embracing an array of objectives within the realm of international relations.

### **Exploring Attack Vectors and Techniques in the Cyber Arena**

Embedded within the complicated fabric of international conflicts are an array of attack vectors accessible to cyber operators, a collection as varied as it is potent (Lindsay, 2013). Skillfully capitalizing on vulnerabilities, these attackers gain illicit entry through avenues that span from networks to individuals. These vectors encompass supply chain attacks targeting trusted vendors and third-party software, alongside waterhole attacks compromising websites frequented by specific target demographics. Advanced persistent threats (APTs) emerge as another vector, characterized by their stealthy and protracted nature, enabling attackers to operate covertly for extended durations (Chakkaravarthy et al., 2019).

Amidst the spectrum of techniques, phishing assumes a central role - a duplicitous approach enticing victims to disclose sensitive information via malicious emails or websites (Mauro, 2022). Malware deployment, conversely, unleashes malicious software's potential to infiltrate systems, manipulate data, and disrupt operations. Zero-day exploits capitalize on undiscovered vulnerabilities, granting attackers a brief window to exploit weaknesses prior to patches being developed (Omolara et al., 2022). Moreover, social engineering manipulates human psychology, exploiting trust and vulnerabilities to attain unauthorized access (Fan et al., 2017). These techniques, honed to a high degree of sophistication, mirror the complicated strategies wielded by cyber aggressors in international conflicts. Furthermore, in the domain of international conflicts, the notion of attribution gains paramount significance. To veil their identities and deflect suspicion, cyber operators resort to leveraging cyber proxies-intermediary entities conducting attacks on behalf of others. This tactic introduces an additional layer of intricacy, muddling attribution endeavors. Similarly, false-flag operations involve creating deceptive digital trails pointing toward a source different from the actual attacker (Skopik & Pahi, 2020). Employing these tactics with finesse, attackers complicate the task of accurately identifying the origins of cyber actions in international contexts.

### **Strategies of Persistence and Advance Planning in Cyber Operations**

The execution of instructions, data transmission, and code processing all occur rapidly when it comes to cyber operations. However, there are numerous other steps that can be far less immediate in nature. These encompass activities such as creating new

tools, discovering a zero-day vulnerability and crafting an exploit, establishing entry points into the target system, obtaining political and legal approval, navigating the network, and setting up command and control mechanisms (Kennedy et al., 2011).

When combined, these delays result in the extended timeframes required for some intricate operations, such as the case of Stuxnet, which took years to be fully executed. Despite the perception of cyber operations as highly technological, the significant number of personnel employed by military and intelligence agencies reveals an unexpected reality: these operations are fundamentally human-driven and consist of several components that operate at a human-paced tempo (Buchanan, 2016). Seen from this perspective, cyber operations appear less as flashy, instantaneous solutions and more akin to other military and intelligence endeavors. They demand discipline, time, skilled personnel, patience, meticulous advanced planning, and well-crafted tools. Therefore, states cannot afford to delay building their capabilities or initiating their infiltrations until a crisis emerges.

As cyber intruders advance through the initial stages of an operation, they utilize diverse methods to maintain continuous access, even if the operation encounters difficulties later on (Chen et al., 2022). By doing this, attackers complicate efforts by defenders to exterminate them and build a path for future operations. This dynamic exacerbates the cybersecurity conundrum by giving states additional reason to launch early attacks. The potential worth of their presence in a foreign network rises over time if it is likely to last. Achieving persistence can be approached through various means. Intruders often modify compromised systems to facilitate easier access in the future, avoiding the need to breach the system anew (Hutchins, 2011). These adjustments are typically concealed so well that network defenders are not likely to stumble upon them accidentally.

An illustrative instance of this type of operation is the “Athens Affair ,” a significant surveillance operation carried out around 2004-2005 (Bamford, 2016). In this case, likely involving the NSA, an authentication system was altered to execute a command from the user, then six consecutive spaces with higher privileges. This alteration streamlined the process and provided an easier route for future access.

An alternative strategy for achieving persistence involves using previously compromised machines to perform a similar role. It is a logical outcome that attackers commonly focus on an assortment of computers and servers as they progress toward their final objective (Carr, 2012). These intermediate steps can act as backup positions as long as they maintain control, frequently by utilizing malicious code. Even if defenses are successful in stopping intruders at their intended goal, they can readily return to earlier phases. This situation occurred in a 2011 breach that was directed

at the US Chamber of Commerce. Despite collaborating with the FBI to eliminate the intruders from their network, the organization later discovered that devices like a corporate apartment thermostat and an office printer, which was connected to the internet, continued to communicate with computers in China. A similar situation first appeared in the Duqu 2 operation, which involved infecting the targeted network's machines again and again as needed (Makhdoom, 2018).

Infiltrators can go deeper into the layers of software that support the operation of computers and servers as an alternative method for creating persistence, which is closely comparable but maybe even more effective. While the majority of intrusions happen at the surface level by taking advantage of flaws in frequently used programs or those applications' underlying operating systems, it is possible for malicious code to penetrate more obscure components of computer systems. There is evidence of a concerted attempt made by a group called "Persistence Division," as detailed in NSA documents, which engages in such operations across a broad spectrum of technologies. They focus on the software beneath the operating system, often referred to as BIOS, to create a deeply inserted presence inside a network. Although these attacks are less discussed, vulnerabilities in this area are well-established. The NSA seems to have developed such capabilities against Dell computers and potentially other manufacturers since at least 2007. This level of infiltration makes it difficult to remove malicious code, as conventional detection tools struggle to identify such a low-level presence.

Similarly, attackers can achieve persistence by targeting the low-level software governing individual hardware components, known as firmware (Chevalier, 2017, December). This code largely evades the computer's operating system and is hard to access. Therefore, if intruders succeed in establishing this kind of presence, it becomes nearly impossible to eradicate. Even wiping a hard drive targeted in this manner and reinstalling the operating system will not eliminate the malicious code, as it resides in the firmware and will re-infect the computer. Attackers with access to firmware gain elevated privileges, making it easier to decrypt communications and enabling exploitation or attacks on the device (Alladi, 2020). This pursuit of persistence is sometimes termed "the race to the bare metal" of the machine by cybersecurity experts. Research by Kaspersky Lab strongly indicates that the United States has developed methods for this technique across hard drives from major manufacturers worldwide. A leading researcher from Kaspersky praised the American implementation, labeling it as the "ultimate persistence mechanism" with an unparalleled ability to resist removal. The convergence of delayed action, lack of momentum, and the potential for persistence gives rise to a fourth overarching point: intruders can preplan operational steps. Just as states can initiate cyber intrusions in advance, at-

tackers can begin components of operations that contribute to future capabilities. By starting preparations ahead of time, states can address time-consuming tasks, benefit from economies of scale by sharing responsibilities across operations, and establish procedures for optimal outcomes. Some aspects of the network intrusion model are particularly amenable to advance preparation, with development being particularly prominent. While some cyber operations, like Stuxnet, focus on unique targets, the majority do not. For almost every type of software, from operating systems and mobile phones to internet browsers and word processing suites, there are dominant players in the market. As a result, states are incentivized to identify and develop exploits against these systems long before they are needed. This includes creating the necessary tools to execute desired actions within the network, such as stealing files, recording keystrokes, or wiping machines.

Significant evidence indicates that states with substantial cyber operation resources already engage in this practice. The United States, for example, has allocated millions of dollars to contract firms that supply zero-day exploits. American authorities have openly acknowledged using these vulnerabilities for law enforcement and intelligence purposes. Certain NSA systems appear to draw from a prepared repository of exploits, selecting the most suitable one for a given target. The UK also prepares exploits for future use. Given the reported financial incentives for exploit brokers—such as the NSA’s payment of over \$25 million in one year to a single French company for access to zero days, and leaked emails suggesting that highly sought-after zero-day vulnerabilities command prices upwards of half a million dollars—the zero-day market appears to be active.

Intruders can also preplan significant portions of their operations and share progress across different endeavors to enhance efficiency in terms of speed and costs. For example, security researchers discovered that diverse intrusions targeting various targets relied on many of the same tools, streamlining the intruders’ activities. This effect was compared to a digital “quartermaster,” optimizing the supply chain so that operators can focus on their tasks. Similarly, key segments of malicious code are shared across multiple cyber operations conducted by the United States and its allies (ROOM, 2021). Although the purposes of these operations differ, four operations likely originating from the United States and/or Israel feature shared modules and core functionality. The preexistence of these modules accelerates the preparation and deployment of new operations using them, both by reducing development time and minimizing the need to train operators on new systems.

A crucial factor that enables effective scalability in computing is the reuse of code and interfaces. This principle applies equally to intruders. Furthermore, the infra-

structure used for launching operations can be positioned in advance and reused for operational tasks. A notable instance of this is APT30, a long-standing cyber espionage group that employed identical infrastructure and tools across numerous operations (Wardle, 2021). This infrastructure serves as the conduit through which operators send commands to malicious code, receive data, and coordinate the operation within the target network. Intruders typically avoid associating themselves with machines they directly own, preferring to use previously compromised computers or web presences registered under plausible pretenses (Buchanan, 2016). While both state and non-state actors can acquire such infrastructure, doing so before a cyber-operation can significantly save time. Documents from the Canadian signals intelligence agency suggest ongoing efforts to acquire new Operational Relay Boxes in non-5-Eyes countries to enhance plausible deniability when these computers serve as midpoint infrastructure in operations. As always, intruders seek operational options well in advance of when they are needed.

### **Impacts on International Relations: Transforming the Global Landscape**

Offensive cyber operations possess the capacity to reconfigure the very foundations of international relations. By challenging established norms, Cyber-attacks blur the boundaries between warfare and espionage, disrupting traditional perceptions of conflict (Taddeo, 2012). Trust between nations erodes swiftly as attributing cyber-attacks often involves complicated and contentious processes. This erosion incites cycles of suspicion, thereby undermining diplomatic avenues and destabilizing global stability. Furthermore, the landscape of cyber conflicts is fraught with threats of extreme escalation. The interconnectedness of critical infrastructure renders societies vulnerable to cascading repercussions. A solitary cyber incident may potentially snowball into a full-fledged crisis, yielding potentially disastrous consequences for economies, infrastructures, and even human lives.

The complicated interplay of technological vulnerabilities, challenges in attribution, and strategic calculations compound the complexity of these risks (Lindsay, 2014). Mitigating the amplification of tensions within the cyber realm necessitates the strategic implementation of deterrence mechanisms. The establishment of credible frameworks for cyber deterrence can discourage prospective attackers, cultivating restraint and nurturing stability (Soesanto & Smeets, 2021). Equally imperative is the precision in attributing cyber activities to their origins, a task loaded with complexity yet essential for accountability and effective response. Collaboration, spanning both regional and global levels, emerges as a potent instrument for managing cyber conflicts.



Collaborative efforts can lay the groundwork for shared norms, intensify the sharing of threat intelligence, and facilitate synchronized reactions to cyber incidents. The proactive exchange of information, technical proficiency, and best practices can defuse tensions, discourage potential attackers, and heighten the overall resilience of the international community (Brundage, 2018).

## **Conclusion**

The intersection of technology and global politics mandates vigilance, adaptability, and a proactive approach to confront the forthcoming challenges of the digital era. Relatively, countries desiring the potential for future cyber operations must take proactive measures to enable such activities. This involves actions such as building capabilities and training cyber personnel. While these actions could be seen as threatening if discovered, much like the buildup of military or intelligence capabilities, they can trigger feelings of insecurity in other nations due to the concept of the security dilemma (Dunn Cavelt, 2014).

In the realm of cyber operations, this dynamic is heightened due to the rapid pace of cyber activities, the gradual progression through operational stages, the persistent nature of actions, and the possibility of advanced preparation. As a result, nations are compelled to engage not only in planning and building capabilities but also in intrusion and acquiring access to networks (Buchanan, 2016). These preparations often extend beyond their own borders and involve infiltrating the networks of other entities, thus advancing the development of targeted malicious software. Such tasks might become impractical once a conflict begins. In general, it is wiser to develop contingency capabilities even if they are not immediately needed, rather than finding oneself in need but lacking the means to execute.

When a nation identifies another country's efforts to enhance cyber capabilities, it faces a challenge of interpretation. The intruding country might be getting ready for an imminent attack, or it could simply be bolstering contingency options, a common practice among advanced nations, without any malicious intent (Libicki, 2012). The nation experiencing the intrusion has to decide between these possibilities, despite having incomplete information, and formulate a response. If the analysis concludes with the misinterpretation of contingency capabilities, the concept of the cybersecurity dilemma surface. Throughout history, contingency plans have often been prone to misunderstandings, as seen in various security dilemma scenarios.

This voyage has shed light on an array of insights that converge to shape the contours of international relations in the digital epoch. However, the exploration of the



cybersecurity dilemma doesn't necessarily need to end here. The first aspect alone is enough to reveal certain ways in which unintentional escalation could occur in cyber operations. A clear call emerges for an ongoing commitment to vigilance, collaboration, and the continuous evolution of policies to adeptly navigate the complicated intricacies woven into offensive cyber operations.

The examination conducted throughout these pages has unraveled the motives, tactics, and objectives that propel actors in the cyber domain. The complexities of the cybersecurity paradox, where the coexistence of defensive measures and offensive capacities creates a delicate equilibrium that has the potential to foster instability and skepticism (Kello, 2013). The examination of historical occurrences, exemplified by the Stuxnet incident, has underscored the transformative capacity of offensive cyber tactics, reforming the dynamics of global power and employing influence over diplomatic actions.

This study does not conclude here; it rather marks the commencement of a collective endeavor. The importance of ongoing research cannot be overstated, as the cyber domain evolves in parallel with technological progress. Cooperation among nations, experts, and organizations remains pivotal in nurturing understanding, sharing information, and shaping common norms aimed at preventing the escalation of conflicts. Furthermore, policy development emerges as an essential cornerstone in the pursuit of harmonizing security and stability. The formulation of attribution mechanisms, ethical guidelines, and strategies for deterrence is crucial in cultivating a secure digital environment for nations and their citizens.

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**ISLAM AND POLITICS: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE THEOLOGICAL POSITIONS OF THE EGYPTIAN 'ALI ABD AL RAZIQ (D.1966) AND THE SENEGALESE CHEIKH MOUSSA KAMARA (D.1945)**

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**İslam ve siyaset: Mısırlı Ali Abd al-Rāzık (ö.1966) ve Senegalli Şeyh  
Moussa Kamara'nın (ö.1945) teolojik konumlarının karşılaştırmalı bir analizi**  
**Öz**

20. yüzyılın ortaları, son Müslüman halifelik olan Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun çöküşüne tanık oldu ve aynı zamanda Avrupa emperyalizmi, Müslümanların çoğunlukta olduğu toplumlarda yayılmaya devam etti. Avrupa ile Müslüman dünyası arasındaki çatışma aynı zamanda reformist fikirlerin ortaya çıkmasına da yol açarak demokrasi, kadın hakları, din ve iktidar arasındaki ilişki vb. konularda yoğun tartışmalara yol açtı. Buna ek olarak sömürgeleştirme, özellikle Sahra altı Afrika'daki köklü sistemleri de parçaladı ve kendi hegemonyasını dayattı. Bu bağlamda Müslümanların sömürgeci güçle sürdürmek zorunda olduğu ilişkiler de tartışma konusu oldu. Makalemizin amacı, İslam'ın siyasi doğasını ilk sorgulayanlardan biri olan ve şu anda ünlü olan El-İslam ve Uşûl el-Hukm (İslam ve Gücün Temelleri) kitabının yazarı Mısırlı Ali 'Abdurrazık'in teolojik düşüncesini analiz etmektir. Onun düşünceleri, sömürge Afrika'sında dinin iktidar amacıyla kullanılması üzerine bir düşünce olan Akhtar al-rāğibîn kitabının yazarı olan Sahra altı yazar Cheikh Moussa Kamara ile karşılaştırılarak analiz edilecektir. Amaç, her ikisinin de manevi otorite ile dünyevi güç arasındaki ilişki hakkında nasıl düşündüğünü vurgulamak olacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Afrika'da güç, din, hilafet, cihad, laiklik, siyaset, İslam

**Islam and politics: a comparative analysis of the theological positions of the Egyptian  
'Alī Abd al-Rāziq (d.1966) and the Senegalese Cheikh Moussa Kamara (d.1945)**  
**Abstract**

The mid-20th century saw the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the last Muslim caliphate, and at the same time, European imperialism continued to develop in Muslim-majority societies. The clash between Europe and the Muslim world also led to the emergence of reformist ideas, sparking intense debate on democracy, women's rights, the relationship between religion and power, and so on. Added to this, colonization also dismantled well-established systems, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, and imposed its hegemony. In this context, the relationship that Muslims had to maintain with colonial power was also the subject of debate. The aim of our contribution is to analyze the theological thinking of one of the first to question the political nature of Islam, namely the Egyptian 'Alī 'Abd al-Rāziq, author of the now famous book *Al-Islām wa uşûl al-ḥukm* (Islam and the Foundations of Power). His reflections will be analyzed in comparison with those of a sub-Saharan author, Cheikh Moussa Kamara, author of *Akhtar al-rāğibîn*, a reflection on the use of religion for power purposes in colonial Africa. The aim will be to highlight how both think about the relationship between spiritual authority and temporal power.

**Key words:** Power, religion, caliphate, jihād, secularism, politics, Islam in Africa

## Introduction

Speaking to the *Jeune Afrique* newspaper in 2014, the Tunisian historian of Islam and thinker Mohammed Talbi (d.2017) provocatively asserted that “Islam was born secular” (Zouari, 2014). Pointing to the Koranic verse stating that there is “No coercion in matters of religion”, he continues:

*“The Koran is the only sacred book that says this sentence, so clear, so secular. Everyone practices the religion he wishes. The state has no business interfering in religious affairs. Its only function is to create an atmosphere of peace for all. But what have Islamic states done? They have exercised religious coercion. And the Koran says no to Islamic states” (ibid).*

Talbi’s statements would not be a provocation if they were not made in a context where political Islam was developing in several countries of the Arab world, and if the author did not claim to belong to a religion where the majority of theologians consider Islam inseparable from politics. It is the famous triptych *Dīn* (Religion), *Dunyā* (worldly life) and *Dawla* (State) from which the theoretical orientation of contemporary Islamism derives. It is this kind of theological guidance, based on the aforementioned triptych, that inscribes Islam in what Muslim sociologist and reformist Omero Marongiu-Perria calls “the hegemonic paradigm” (Marongiu-Perria, 2017).

However, the relationship between religion and politics, or the use of religion for the purposes of power, has been the subject of debate in the Muslim world, especially in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This period corresponded not only to the fall of the Ottoman Empire, which marked the end of the caliphate, but also to a context in which many countries in the Arab world were living under Western colonization and/or protectorate. It was also a time when Muslim reformist ideas were developing in many countries, notably Egypt and Lebanon. This made it a favorable environment for questioning the traditionally accepted model of power in the Muslim world, namely the caliphate, and the application of legal principles derived from Muslim law (*fiqh*). It’s also worth noting the paradox that, at around the same time, political Islam was developing. Islamization or de-Islamization of politics becomes the subject of debate in the Muslim world. The purpose of our contribution is to analyze the theological thought of one of the first to question the political nature of Islam, namely the Egyptian ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq, author of the now famous work *Al-Islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm* (Islam and the Foundations of Power). His thought will be analyzed in comparison with that of an author from sub-Saharan Africa, still little studied today for his theological thought: Cheikh Moussa Kamara,



author of *Akṭar al-rāḡibīn*, which Prof. Amar Samb wrongly translated into French as “*Condamnation de la guerre sainte (Condamnation of the Holy War)*”.

We will use content analysis methodologies to highlight the theological thinking of both authors on the relationship between Islam and power. The conclusion will provide an opportunity to consider how far their thoughts are dictated by ideals of universalism or by a simple realism imposed by the context of Western domination. But first, let’s take a look at the contexts of both men’s work.

### **Crossover of two contexts**

The production contexts of Ali ‘Abd al-Rāziq’s work and that of Cheikh Moussa Kamara have some points of similarity. Both authors come from countries that have experienced Western domination. Senegal lived under French colonization and Egypt under British protectorate. Their theological writings were produced after the First World War. Both authors were in close contact with European authorities. Indeed, Cheikh Moussa Kamara was a close friend of many French Africanists such as Henry Gaden and Maurice Delafosse, to the point that much of his work was produced “during the colonial period, and often with the encouragement of the French authorities themselves” (Robinson, 1998, p.89). For his part, after obtaining a doctorate at Al-Azhar University in 1912, Rāziq enrolled at Oxford University for studies in economics before returning to Egypt in 1915 with the outbreak of the War. Apart from these points in common, other elements of context differentiate the two authors.

Let’s start with Ali ‘Abd al-Rāziq’s. The context of Rāziq’s birth, in 1887, corresponded to the emergence and development of reformist ideas carried by scholars who, from their contact with Europe and France in particular, wanted to bring about reforms that would enable the Muslim worlds to catch up with the West in terms of its economic development. However, the challenge was to follow Europe’s path in material terms, while preserving the spiritual dimension of Islam. To achieve this, Islam had to be stripped of all the superstitions added to it over the centuries. It was this return to the original Islam of the pious predecessors (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) that marked the birth of Salafism, which in its early days had a modernist orientation. The most illustrious of this current were, among others, Rifā‘a al-Ṭaḥṭāwī (d.1873), author of the classic *Or de Paris*, Muḥammad ‘Abduh (d.1905), initiator of the Salafīyya reform movement, Qāsim Amīn (d.1908), known for his writings on women’s liberation, and Ṭaha Ḥusayn (d.1973), one of the main precursors of historical criticism of Muslim tradition in the Arab world. It is in this continuity that the work of ‘Ali ‘Abd al-Rāziq fits.

The other element to take into account is the context in which the book was published. Although there is every reason to believe that the author “began working on the question of the foundations of justice in Islam as early as his return from England in 1915, ten years before the publication of his book” in 1925 (Ansary, 1994), the abolition of the Caliphate in Turkey in 1924 gave it added resonance in that Muslim thinkers, notably those at Al-Azhar, were working behind the scenes for a return of the Caliphate (Ḥusayn, 2012, p.36). Moreover, when his book was published, he, who was a Muslim judge in Egypt, was the subject of a lawsuit whose ruling on September 17, 1925 led to his dismissal. It was only later, when his brother Muṣṭafā ‘Abd al-Rāziq became the Grand Cheikh of Al-Azhar that ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq recovered his civic rights.

We thus see that the context in which he lived was conducive to the emergence of new debates on democracy, power or even women’s rights.

The geographical and temporal contexts in which Cheikh Moussa Kamara evolved were no less chaotic. Born around 1863 in Goûriki Samba-Diom in the canton of Damga in Matam, Senegal, his name is more closely associated with Gangel, in Elh-adji Oumar’s Fouta Toro, where he settled at the age of 20 (Djenidi, 1976, p.309). It must be said that this region of Fouta was the scene of several armed mobilizations. The end of the 19th century also saw the forced exile or “death under the banner of jihād of famous chiefs: Lat Dior (died 1886), Mamadou Lamine (died 1887), Samory (captured 1898), Al-Buri Ndiaye (died 1891)” (Djenidi, 1984, p.228). In addition to having witnessed the consequences of the Umarian conquest, whose “traces were fresh in the minds” of Fouta at the time of Kamara’s birth, our author was also in his youth, as Abdallah Djenidi recalls, a witness to the fall of the Almamis in 1881 and the installation of the colonial administration in Fouta (Djenidi, 1976, p.311). The Damga area also saw many of its children enlisted in the Umarian conquest. It is in the light of this geographical as well as temporal context, which saw the passage of armed wars and the installation of colonial administration, that Kamara’s theological thinking concerning the use of political affairs in the name of religion and, above all, the use of jihād in the name of Islam in a context of French domination must be read. Our cross-reading of the two contexts gives us the tools to analyze the theological positions of our two writers closely. More importantly, it allows us to grasp the motivations of the two authors in writing their two works, both of which have been subject to controversy.

### **Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq’s theological position**

Published in 1925, the book by Rāziq Al-Islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm (Islam and the

Foundations of Power), is in itself an innovation insofar as it proposes a reflection, not on power, but on the foundations of power (uṣūl). He thus operated an interpretative mobility of the concept of uṣūl (foundation) previously used in Muslim terminology in normative disciplines. Thus, we spoke of uṣūl al-fiqh (the foundations of normative theology) and uṣūl al-dīn (the foundations of dogmatic theology). In this sense, Al-Islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm is a revolution primarily epistemological before it is theological. In terms of theology, ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq maintains that there is no objective link between a religious belief, here Islam, and the management of power. The former is of divine order, the latter the fruit of human reflections and strategies. For the purposes of his demonstration, the author has put the issues of the caliphate and power in Islam to the test of his analysis. And the context is given right from the introduction:

*“I’ve been a judge in Egyptian Muslim courts since 1915. This prompted me to research the history of Islamic justice. Since Islamic justice, in all its facets, is part of power, and the two histories are closely linked [...], it is incumbent on anyone studying the history of Islamic justice to begin with its first pillar, namely power in Islam. And since the caliphate, sometimes called the supreme imamate, is the basis of all power in Islam, we are obliged to look at it” (Rāziq, 2012, p.3).*

Lets start with the caliphate, which he defines as managing the affairs of Muslims in replacement of the Prophet (ibid, p.9). In his view, this heritage leads Muslim traditionalists, the object of his criticism, to say that the caliph is thus governed by religion, whose rules frame his actions. As a result, the caliph could not, in theory, deviate from the right path. It is on the basis of these rules that fix the caliph as different from royalty (al-mulk) (ibid, p.14). This theoretical framework leads traditionalists to derive the caliph’s legitimacy first from God (istimdāduhū al-walāya min Allāh) (ibid, pp.16-20), then from the people (istimdād al-walāya min al-umma) (ibid, pp.20-22). The consequence of this legitimacy was to make the caliphate obligatory and necessary for the progress of the community (ibid, pp.23-24).

This thesis is contested by Al-Islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm. Rāziq’s criticism is primarily based on scriptural texts. According to him, no text of the Koran or hadith of the Prophet decrees the obligation to have a caliph. If the caliphate were obligatory, the Koran would speak of it, according to him, unless it were an incomplete book, which is theologically indefensible (ibid, p.27). This leaves the proponents of the obligatory nature of the caliphate with the argument of the consensus of scholars (ijmā’) on the necessity of a caliph for the running of the community (imtinā’ ḥuluw al-waqt min imām) (ibid, p.33).

Although recognizing consensus as a source of jurisprudence, the author of *Al-Islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm* disputes the existence of any consensus on this point:

*“The consensus they evoke is baseless since the Kharidjites say that it is not obligatory to have a caliph. The Mutazilite al-Aṣamm says the same thing [...]. This is enough for us to deconstruct the consensus thesis” (ibid, p.48).*

Another argument against the consensual character put forward by the author is that most of the caliphs were challenged or fought by their opponents, who were themselves Muslims. Let’s recall in this sense that three of the four so-called “right-guided” caliphs were assassinated. And Rāziq says: “This contestation of the caliphate is as old as the caliphate itself” (ibid, p.35)

Another argument advanced by ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq is philosophical. He argues that Islam is a religion of equality and the preservation of dignity, whereas the caliphate, as a political instrument, is based on terror and force (ibid, pp.38-43). This means that, for the author, linking the caliphate to Islam is the same as linking Islam to terror and violence. He states that the use of violence by caliphs was justified by their love of power, which turned them into tyrants:

*“If there’s one thing in this life that drives man to tyranny, injustice and easy adversity, it’s the position of caliph. The heart quickly becomes attached to it and even jealous of it. But when excessive love is combined with great jealousy, and strength accompanies them, only violence remains, and the only power becomes that of the sword. [...] What else but the love of power to be jealous of it and the abundance of strength drove Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiya to spill the pure and sanctified blood of Husayn, son of Fatima daughter of God’s Messenger? Was it anything else that drove Yazīd ibn Mu‘āwiya to desecrate the first capital of the Caliphate, the city of the Prophet? What else but love of the caliphate and strength led ‘Abd al-Malick ibn Marwān to occupy God’s sacred house and violate its sanctity? [...] This is the same way the Abbasids killed each other [...] The Mamlūks used to kill their kings after deposing them. All this is the fruit of a love of power and jealousy, combined with a dominating force. The same could be said of the Ottomans» (ibid, pp.42-43) <sup>1</sup>.*

This criticism of the caliphate does not mean that the author is against all forms of power. On the contrary, for him, nothing in religion stands in the way of men establishing forms of governance. However, governance differs from the caliphate for Rāziq in that the former is a human form decided upon by men, whereas the latter is

<sup>1</sup> We will see later that Cheikh Moussa Kamara uses the same argument to denounce jihād in Africa.

an enterprise sacralized through the centuries. While a form of governance for the management of power is a necessity, the caliphate, according to the author of *Islam and the Foundations of Law*, is necessary neither for the march of religion nor for the management of the affairs of life (*lā ḥāja bi-l-dīn walā bi-l-dunyā ilā-l-ḥilāfa*) (ibid, p.51). It could then be said that Rāziq is an advocate of the regime of separation between religion and politics. Questioning the Islamic nature of the caliphate irreducibly leads us to examine the status of the Prophet. Was he simply a messenger, or a prophet and head of state at the same time? This question is addressed in the second part of the book devoted to the question of power, which he began with a provocative question: “Was the Prophet a king?” (ibid, p.69).

The question is not an innocent one. It has theological consequences in that, to argue that Islam is both religion and state, would be to say that the Prophet was both prophet and king. If, after his death, prophecy came to an end, kingship was to continue. This is what the author disputes, pointing out that the Prophet had appointed no successor after his death and that Abū Bakr’s eventful election was a human decision (ibid, p.123). ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq sees that if Islam encompassed the realm of power, the Prophet would not have left a vacuum insofar as his mission was to convey the entire Islamic message (ibid, p.116). So where does Islam fit into all this? Islam is a “message and not a power, a religion and not a state”, replies ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq (ibid, p.87), who sees that the Prophet’s authority over his companions was spiritual and not political (ibid, pp.92-93).

Consequently, the power established after his death was “a new state invented by the Arabs; an Arab state and an Arab power” (ibid, p.124). As the first ruler of this state, Abū Bakr, the Prophet’s first successor, is called “the first king in Islam (*fa kāna huwa awwal malik fī-l-islām*)” by ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq (ibid, p.123).

We may note that for ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq, the caliphate is an invention subsequent to the death of the Prophet and has no Islamic foundation. Linking Islam to the caliphate is thus a theological heresy under his pen. Power management, on the other hand, is a matter for men, who have the responsibility to think for themselves and by themselves.

### **Cheikh Moussa Kamara’s theological position**

While the criticism of the use of power in the name of Islam is unambiguous in ‘Alī ‘Abd Rāziq’s writings, in Kamara’s, it is rather the consequences of the politicization of Islam that are indexed and not the political or non-political nature of the religion.

In other words, Cheikh Moussa Kamara's thinking is not concerned with whether or not Islam is political. What interests him is analyzing the consequences of the recourse of men of religion to politics. Having established this theoretical framework, we propose to look at its practical consequences in one of Cheikh Moussa Kamara's major books, written towards the end of his life (Robinson, 1988, p.106), namely his work with the long title: *Akṭar al-rāḡibīn fī-l-jihād ba'd al-nabiyyīn man yaḥtār al-zuhūr wa milk al-'ibād<sup>2</sup> wa lā yubālī bi man halaka fī jihādihī min al-'ibād*. A French translation by Amar Samb was published in 1976 (Kamara, 1976).

Let's emphasize from the outset that Kamara's text is essentially concerned with the consequences of jihād in Africa, particularly the one led by Elhadji Oumar, and not with the legality of jihād per se. Instead of questioning war in the name of Islam, he points to the motivations of warriors and, by extension, produces a reflection on the exercise of power based on his observations in the Fouta (Djenidi, 1976). We can begin with his reflections on the exercise of power, remembering that Kamara is primarily interested in its motivations and consequences. Right at the start of his book, he states that the first consequence of the politicization of Islam is the loss of interest in science that it can provoke in scholars and their descendants. The Almami election system of Fouta served as a theoretical framework. In this sense, he recalls two specific features of the Almami choices. Firstly, the leader is always chosen from among pious scholars, without any ethnic discrimination. Secondly, the choice of Almami is always made electively, which precludes any possibility of hereditary power. The consequence, according to Kamara, is that "if they elected Almāmy a scholar among them, if they made him a king, his son (even an ignorant one) would think only of acquiring kingship" (Kamar, 1976, p.61), which would de facto lead him away from the paths of knowledge and piety. Continuing his reflections in a comparative perspective, Kamara contrasts the Almami system with that of the Moors, where the sons of scholars devote themselves to the pursuit of knowledge, given that royalty was the exclusive preserve of a few particular families (ibid, p.162). The same system observed among the Moors is valid, in the words of Cheikh Moussa Kamara, for the Soninkés, the Sarakholés, the Zaghâwî and "the inhabitants of Fouta Djallon, where royalty is reserved only for certain families and not others [...], which enables the children of the learned to devote themselves solely [...]"

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2 Literally: Most of those who wish to lead jihād after the prophets are driven by the quest for popularity and dominance over God's servants and care nothing for those among God's servants who perish because of his jihād. A copy of the book's manuscript is available at IFAN. The book also benefited from a 2003 edition by Khadim Mbacké and Ahmed Choukri. Cf, Cheikh Moussa Kamara, 2003, *Akṭar al-rāḡibīn fī-l-jihād ba'd al-nabiyyīn man yaḥtār al-zuhūr wa milk al-'ibād wa lā yubālī bi man halaka fī jihādihī min al-'ibād*, Rabat, Manšūrāt Maḥhad al-Dirāsāt al-Ifrīqiyya. We'll see later why we take issue with some of Mbacké's and Shukri's editorial choices.

to the study of the sciences” (ibid, p.163). In addition to causing a loss of interest in knowledge, the political appetite of scholars was, according to Kamara, one of the main causes of their exile or death. In Mauritania, in Fouta Djallon, among the Soninké and in Kayor, any scholar who wanted to reign was “fought to the death” (ibid, p.164).

This reflection by Cheikh Moussa Kamara proves Abdallah Djenidi right when he judges that Kamara “would therefore, in theory, be a kind of monarchist, more favorable to the dynastic form of power of the Déniankobé pagans, than to the theocratic republic of the Almamis” (Djenidi, 1976, p.315).

His regret at seeing men of knowledge and religion taking an interest in the affairs of power is followed by his denunciation of the jihād undertaken in Fouta. An interesting fact is that he himself said to have been solicited by jihād entrepreneurs hoping for his support. He cites Mamadou Lamine, his nephew Soulé Samba Dioum and also Cheikh Mahfouz, nephew of Cheikh Sad Bouh and Elhadji Malick Sy from Tivaouane. Kamara’s response to each of these requests is more pragmatic than theological: “The French administration is now well established. It’s strengthened. At present, no one can fight the colonizers” (Kamara, 1976, p.165). Thus, we can see that it is more the context that dictates Cheikh Moussa Kamara’s political stance. In this sense, he is far from the radicalism of ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq, who believes that Islam is in itself an anti-political religion.

In addition to the context of colonial domination, unfavorable to any jihād undertaking, Cheikh Moussa Kamara’s position also seems to be influenced by the trauma left in Fouta by the Umarian conquest. It is on this basis that Kamara takes a principled theological stance: “among the reasons that must determine one to renounce jihād is the fear of killing a Muslim” (Kamara, 1976, p.168). But according to Cheikh Moussa Kamara, the war launched by Elhadji Oumar caused the death of thousands and thousands<sup>3</sup> of Muslims and led to forced emigration. Kamara reports scenes of “horror” that could justify his judgment. The following extracts are illustrative of this fact:

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<sup>3</sup> Amar Sambe made a mistake in translating ālāf alf as “a few million”. This prompted him to point out, in a footnote to the text (p.171), that the number was slightly exaggerated by Kamara. This may well be the case. However, the translation error also amplified the phenomenon.



*“...He forced the inhabitants to emigrate with him to Soudan Jomboghou, Nioro and other regions. Most of those who emigrated against their will died of hunger; others perished because of his wars, others were reduced to slavery [...]. During this emigration [...], hundreds of people would be tied together with thongs tied around their necks, one following the other. This is how long lines of people, men and women, would form, reluctantly heading for a destination desired by the Cheikh [...].”<sup>4</sup>*

*There was the case of Siré Adam [...] whom the Cheikh had put in charge of watching over those who tried to escape from the army and return to Fouta. It was said that Siré Adam would gather the fugitives in a hut and, after filling it, he would set fire to it and everyone would burn alive [...].*

Bôkar Binta Alfimbé of Guriiki told me: “Omar son of Mouhammed Moujtabâ also told me that Cheikh Omar’s army was so hungry that people ate each other, that they killed and devoured all those who weakened or were inattentive” (ibid, pp.171-172).

A closer look at these extracts suggests that Cheikh Moussa Kamara was more concerned with the consequences of jihād than with jihād itself. In other words, he was not questioning the legitimacy of jihād or the use of religion in politics. He is, however, subtle enough to urge readers to pass unfavorable judgment on the politicization of religion. For this reason, we think Amar Samb was wrong to translate the book’s title into French as “Condamnation de la guerre sainte (Condemnation of the holy war)”. Kamara does not condemn the jihād but its apostles. Moreover, this war, in his eyes, is anything but holy. Instead of sanctifying the jihād, he desacralizes it.

Was Cheikh Moussa Kamara a secularist and supporter of the welfare state? Two isolated parts of the book help to answer this question. In his second chapter, he judges that “most jihad-makers are those who live in distant and weak kingdoms, or in countries that do not have great kings or a strong state organization” (ibid, p.166). This means that, for the author, it is the absence of the state, its weakness and lack of organization that fuel religious ideologies of contestation. As far as the relationship between religion and the state is concerned, the title of Chapter VII of the book is unambiguous: “A state does not rely solely on religion and piety,” he says, “but must also rely on politics, diplomacy, cunning and a sense of honor” (ibid, p.186). This is an original way of calling for the separation of the two spheres. Before concluding our contribution, an analysis of Kamara’s thinking on Islam and power requires a brief digression. Was Cheikh Moussa Kamara sincere in his criticism?

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<sup>4</sup> Kamara goes on to say that this forced emigration caused the loss of nine villages.



Doubtless, considering the violent scenes he recounts. But it's safe to assume that he was simply a realist, as French domination doomed any attempt at revolt to failure. Was he a follower of an Islam that could be described as liberal? Nor can this hypothesis be dismissed. Works on him state that, in addition to smoking tobacco, he “neglected the Ramadan fast and took liberties with certain obligations of Islamic law” (Robinson, 1988, p.98). He also “had ten wives, perhaps nine at a time” (ibid).

What if he was simply an opportunist? Nor is it unthinkable if we know that he was a close collaborator of the colonial administration and that, moreover, the very last chapter of his book in question is entitled “L’amour que me vouent les autorités de France” («The French authorities love for me»). This is the right place to question Amar Samb’s decision to remove this chapter from his translation of the book, and to focus solely on the other chapters. The same criticism applies to the 2003 edition by Khadim Mbacké and Ahmed Choukri, in which this chapter does not appear. Moreover, in an article published in 1984 based on the manuscript of the book available at the laboratory of islamology of the Institut fondamental d’Afrique noire (IFAN), Ceikh Anta Diop University, Djenidi noted that “a skilful hand has moved this chapter to the end of another writing” autobiographical of Cheikh Moussa Kamara (Djenidi, 1984, p.237). This choice of cutting Kamara’s text and isolating the last chapter not only undermines the integrity of the book, but also prevents us from asking another central and crucial question: what if Kamara’s book was commissioned by the colonial administration?

## **Conclusion**

In view of their production contexts, *Al-Islām wa uṣūl al-ḥukm* by ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq and *Akṭar al-rāḡibīn* by Cheikh Moussa Kamara can be described as subversive and contrary to the majority theological thinking of Islam, which sees it taking charge of the religious, social but also political lives of the faithful. Indeed, reactions and refutations of the two works have been quick to appear here and there. We also see that Ali Abd al-Rāziq is critical of the caliphate, which he considers to be a dogma that has become universal. For his part, his Senegalese counterpart, more pragmatic, without directly criticizing the political commitment of religious figures, finds shortcuts dictated by the context in order to condemn the consequences of politicizing men of knowledge and religion. In other words, one might think that Rāziq is a convinced secularist, whereas Kamara would be more pragmatic and inclined to adapt his theological position according to the context. In terms of the doctrinal production of Islam, the theological orientations of the two authors, Cheikh Moussa Kamara and ‘Alī ‘Abd al-Rāziq, represent a minority. However, their existence prevents us from falling into any essentialism on the political or non-political nature of Islam or on the compatibility between Islam and secularism.

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RELATIONS BETWEEN THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE AND THE COMOROS

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## Osmanlı İmparatorluğu ile Komorlar Arasındaki İlişkiler Öz

Afrika'nın en küçük ülkelerinden biri olan Komorlar, Hint Okyanusu'nda yer almaktadır. Büyük Komor, Anjuvan, Moheli ve Mayot adalarından oluşan Komorlar Adalarının ilk üçü bağımsız bir devleti meydana getirirken diğeri ise Fransa'nın deniz aşırı sömürgeci konumundadır. Doğu Afrika'da bulunan bu ada devletinde yaşayan yerli halkın neredeyse tamamı Müslümanlardan oluşur. Uzun yıllar jeopolitik konumu sebebiyle Avrupalı devletlerin yakından ilgilendiği Komorlar'ın tarih boyunca ilişkiler kurduğu devletlerden biri de Osmanlı Devleti'dir. XIX. yüzyılda İngilizler ile Fransızların etki ve nüfuz mücadelesine sahne olan Komorlar, Osmanlı Devleti'ne müracaat eden Müslüman ulema ve ileri gelenler vasıtasıyla karşılıklı ilişkiler tesis etmeye çalışmıştır. Buna göre Osmanlı Devleti'nden açıkça yardım isteyen Komor halkı yabancı işgaline karşı bir dayanak noktası teşkil etmeye çalışacaktır. Buna karşılık Bâbîâlî ise Komor Müslümanlarını Batılı sömürgecilere karşı himaye etmek için çeşitli tedbirler alma yoluna gidecektir. Bu çalışmada Osmanlı Devleti ile Komor Adaları arasındaki çok yönlü ilişkiler arşiv belgeleri ile belirli kaynaklar üzerinden incelenmeye ve değerlendirilmeye çalışılacaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Osmanlı Devleti, Doğu Afrika, Hint Okyanusu, Komor Adaları.

## Relations Between the Ottoman Empire and the Comoros Abstract

Comoros, one of the smallest countries in Africa, is located in the Indian Ocean. Consisting of the Grande Comore, Anjouan, Mwaliand, Mayotte islands, the first three of the Comoros Islands form an independent state, while the other is an overseas colony of France. Almost all of the people in this island state in East Africa are Muslims. One of the states that the Comoros, which has been closely interested by European states for many years due to its geopolitical position, has established relations throughout history is the Ottoman Empire. The Comoros, which witnessed the struggle for influence between the British and the French in the 19th century, tried to establish mutual relations through Muslim scholars and notables who applied to the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, Comoros, which specifically asked for help from the Ottoman Empire, will try to establish a main stay against foreign occupation for the community. On the other hand, the Sublime Porte would take various measures to protect the Comoros Muslims against the Western colonialists. In this study, the multifaceted relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Comoros Islands will be examined and evaluated through archival documents and specific sources.

**KeyWords:** Ottoman Empire, East Africa, Indian Ocean, Comoros Islands.

## Introduction

Comoros, where is located in the Indian Ocean, north of Madagascar and at the entrance of the Mozambique Channel; consists of four islands named the Grande Comore (Ngazidja), Anjouan, (Ndzuwani), Mwali (Moheli) and Mayotte. At the present time, the first three of these islands constitute the independent Union of Comoros, while the other island is affiliated to France with a special status. The total area of these three islands is 1862 square kilometres. Officially colonised by the French in 1912, the Union of the Comoros gained its independence in 1974 (Ataöv, 1975: 551; Kavas, 2002: 153; Özey, 2016: 18-20).

The capital of the Union of the Comoros, one of the smallest states in Africa, is Moroni, which is also the centre of Grande Comore. The centre of the other islands is Fomboni in Mwali (Moheli) and Mutsamu in Ndzuwani. The people of Comoros largely speak Comorian, a member of the Bantu language family under the influence of Arabic and Swahili. French and Arabic are also recognised as the official languages of the country. Almost all of the population is Muslim and belongs to the Shafī'i sect (Kavas, 2002: 153-154).

The entry of Islam into Comoros coincides with the period of Caliph Uthman ibn Affan in the VIIth century. According to the most widespread of the different narrations, two Comorians travelled to Medina in that period and became acquainted with Islam, and when they returned to their homeland, they preached Islam to the people. Likewise, Arab sailors operating in the Indian Ocean from the VIIth century onwards spread Islam in these islands, which they frequently touched and called as "Qumr" or "Jazāir al-Kamer" (Moon Islands) (Kavas, 2002: 153-154; Özey, 2016: 19; Kavas, 2021: 311).

In the 18th century, a small Ismaili community living in Oman settled in the Comoros. Furthermore, when the Buwayhids, who had been in Iran from the Xth century onwards, captured Shīraz in 934, some of the Sunni Arabs here migrated to the Indian Ocean islands off the coast of East Africa (Kavas, 2002: 154; Kavas, 2021: 311-312). After the Boudies branch of the Shirazis seized power in Iran, a large part of the population migrated to Zanzibar, some to Kilva, and others to the Grande Comore (Muhammad, 2009: 23).

On the other hand, during this period, migrations from the Persian Gulf and South Arabia to the Comoros also increased the Muslim population in the islands. After the establishment of The Kilwa Sultanate by Ali bin Isā of Shīraz in 975, the Comoros

Islands would also come under its rule. It is also widely rumoured that one of the Fatimid dignitaries who went to Comoros from Egypt in the XIth century settled in Anjouan. Thus, a new generation called “makoas” emerged from the marriage of local women with Arabs and Iranians. Those who had not yet accepted Islam were called “kafir” (Kavas, 2002: 154; Kavas, 2021: 311-312).

In addition to Arabs, Bantus who came from the interior of the continent; Arabs from Oman, Hadhramaut and Shiraz; Indonesian Malays; Malagasy peoples of Madagascar and Indian Gujaratis live in Comoros. However, those of Arab origin, called “ustaarabu”, constitute the noble class. Therewithal, both the administrators and the people widely use Arabic and Swahili (Kavas, 2002: 154, Kavas, 2021: 310-311). There are four major tribes in the Comoros Islands. The most important of these can be listed as Pirusa, Fwambaya, Mdombozi and Masela. However, there are various disputes about the origins of these tribes. Accordingly, the origin of these communities is attributed to the Shi’razis, Iraqi Persians, Jordanian and Khā’il Arabs (Sekāf, 1994: 48). Undoubtedly, the interaction of different cultures in the region has created the Swahili civilisation in the region extending from Somalia to Kenya, Tanzania to Mozambique, Madagascar to Comoros Islands in East Africa, which is an important part of the Islamic world (Özköse, 2021: 171). Although between 1500 and 1505 the Portuguese landed on the island of Ngazidja (Great Comoros), which was under the rule of the Kilwa Sultanate for many years, they could not hold on against the migrations coming from Shiraz. Between 1530 and 1550, the people of Shīraz, who established a new administration in the Comoros, named the common ruler of all the islands as “Sultan Tībe” (Kavas, 2002: 154-155, Kavas, 2021: 312). For instance, the rulers of Comoros have various nicknames such as Mafe, Bedja and Mebedja. After the spread of Islam, names such as Tybe (Tībe), Sheikh, and Mugni-mkuu began to be widely used (Sekāf, 1994: 48). In this sense, it should be noted that in 1557, some 20 local sultanates were established in the other three islands, 12 of which were in Ngazidja. However, their number decreased to 15 as of 1620. In Comoros, where the French also wanted to establish sovereignty from the 18th century onwards, neighbourhood sultanates such as Bamboa, Itsandra, Bûde, Havâil and Hamammed came to the fore politically. Just like the French, the British also wanted to dominate the Comoros and Captain Nathaniel North occupied a part of Ngazidja in 1701. (Kavas, 2002: 154-155, Kavas, 2021:312).

### **Relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Comoros**

According to Turkish and Arabic records, there are four large islands that make up the Comoros Islands: Grande Comore (Ngazija/Ngazidja), Anjouan (Ndzuwani/

Henzevan/Hinzuan/Johanna), Mwali (Mwali/Mohella), Mayotte (Şakir, 1988: 12-24; Karpat, 2017: 87-88). In addition, as far as we can determine, the first person to mention Comoros in the Ottoman Empire was the famous cartographer and navigator Muhyiddin bin Hacı Mehmed, i.e. Pîrî Reis (Bostan, 2007: 283-285), who lived in the 16th century (Özen, 2006: 124; Sevrans, 2019: 52). Accordingly, Kitâb-ı Bahriye provides various information about the location of Comoros, their relations with the Portuguese, the unique lifestyles of the locals and Muslims, their administrative and political structures, slave trade and vegetation cover (Kavas, 2007: 13-14; Kavas, 2019: 259, Kavas, 2021: 311).

In the words of Pîrî Reis, Madagascar Island, which the locals called “Tinku” and the Portuguese called San Lorenzo (Saint Laurent), was named “Grande Comore” by the first Arab geographers. Later, with the change of the name of this place, sailors travelling in the Indian Ocean gave the name of Grande Comore to the largest of the archipelagos in the north. In fact, as Pîrî Reis stated, the Comoros Islands, which consisted of four islands, were called Mû’alî (Mwali), Mâğûtâ (Mayotte), Zuvânî (Anjouan) and Kazîce (Ngazidja) by the natives (Kavas, 2017: 49; Kavas, 2021: 363-365).

As mentioned above, East Africa, which was divided into colonies between the British, French and Germans in the 19th century, covers an extremely large region extending from the Gulf of Aden to Sudan, from the Indian Ocean to the Red Sea coast and the Zambezi. Accordingly, in addition to those included within the borders of the African continent, there are various island countries in the Indian Ocean. These are Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius and Seychelles. Likewise, the islands of Mayotte, which is an extension of Reunion and Comoros, are also overseas colonies of the French (Özey, 2016: 1; Özköse, 2021: 163).

It would be appropriate to state that close relations have been established between the Comoros Islands, almost all of which are Muslims, and the Ottoman Empire, especially in recent periods (Gençoğlu, 2019: 948).

Relations between the Ottoman Empire and Comoros began in the colonization process of the islands in question. In the 19th century, the kingdoms of Sakalava and Merina in Madagascar, which claimed rights over the Comoros Islands, asked for help from the French (Özey, 2016). Thereupon, the French, who occupied Mayotte Island in 1841, did not give the Muslim people the opportunity to practice their religion. They even mistreated the Muslims on the island and destroyed the mosques in Mayotte (Kavas, 2019: 206). From 1843 onwards, the French began to look for opportunities to colonise the Grande Comore (Ngazija), Anjouan and Moheli islands. In 1848, the British opened a consulate in Anjouan (Henzevan) Island and appointed

Joseph Napier as its head. Undoubtedly, it should be emphasised that during this period, a fight between the British and the French for the share of the Comoros began. Sultan Abdullah of Anjouan, who ascended the throne in 1855, established close relations with the British consul William Sunley. In addition, Sunley, who started plantation agriculture and sugar production, succeeded in obtaining various concessions from Sultan Abdullah (Karpas, 2017: 88).

Sultan Abdullah of Anjouan organised a special army by procuring labour from Mozambique in line with the demands of the British. He also armed his slaves and settled in a private mansion outside the capital Mutsamu. This situation led to the formation of a new social order in Henzevan based on capital and wage labour. Sultan Abdullah, who initially governed his country with the help of the Henzawan High Council, attempted to eliminate the Muslim ulema under the pressure of the British in the following period (Karpas, 2017: 88).

Sunley, who differed with the ulema in Henzevan, was dismissed by the London administration, but he was patronised by Sultan Abdullah. The ulema and notables of the city, who were disturbed by this situation, applied to Istanbul for the restoration of the old social order. Hence, clergymen and notables of the society, most of whom were of Arab origins, such as Sayyid Abdurrahman ibni Sultan Ulvi, Sayyid Mekuibni Sultan Ahmad, Muhammad ibni Kadi'l-Muslimin, Ali ibni Sheikh Ahmad, Sayyid ibni Sheikh Ali, Sayyid Abu Bakr bin Abdi Rab, Fazil ibni Ali Kadi'l-Muslimin and Imam Abu Bakr bin Ali sent a letter addressed to Sultan Abdulaziz. Calling Sultan Abdulaziz "the successor of the Prophet and the protector of Mecca and Medina, the holder of the supreme caliphate and the head and leader of the Muslim Ummah", the prominent Muslim leaders of the island's population stated that the Christians were oppressing them and trying to prevent them from following the Sharia. Thus, they would ask the Caliph Sultan Abdülaziz to patronise the Muslim subjects in the Comoros and save them from extinction (Karpas, 2017: 88-89). In line with the contact established with the ulema of Henzevan from the 1860s onwards, Sayyid Muhammad bin Sultan and his brother Sayyid Abdullah bin Sultan, who belonged to the ruling family of Comoros, visited the Ottoman Sultan Sultan Abdulaziz, whom they regarded as "the protector of Islam and the sultan of Muslims", and asked him for help (Kavas, 2019: 260-261). As we have already pointed out, since Sultan Abdullah of Anjouan had submitted to the British since 1862, Sayyid Muhammad and Sayyid Abdullah, who were assigned to convey the demands of the Muslim people to Istanbul, first travelled to London. Seyyid Muhammad and Seyyid Abdullah, who aimed to complain to the British consul Sunley to his own state, also met with the Ottoman Ambassador to London, Kostaki Musurus Pasha of Greek origin (Kuneralp, 1970: 421-435). In addition, their expenses would be covered by the Ottoman



Empire during their stay. Seyyid Muhammad and Seyyid Abdullah, who would later go to Istanbul and directly ask for help from the sultan, received great attention from Sultan Abdülaziz (BOA, No: 29/1254; Kavas, 2006: 13, 52; Gençoğlu, 2018: 169; Kavas, 2021: 312-313).

On the other hand, Sayyid Abubakar Efendi, a muderris sent to Cape Town in 1863 by Sultan Abdülaziz to provide religious education to the people (Baktır and Eraslan, 1994: 276-277), also mentioned Comoros while talking about Madagascar Island. “There are a few islands called Comoros to the north. There are still Muslim inhabitants in this place, but the non-Muslim savage tribes are in sympathy with the Religion of Islam because they are morally related and similar to the people of Islam.” Ebubekir Efendi states that there are Muslims living in the Comoros and draws attention to the fact that other tribes are inclined towards Islam (Münif, 1281: 115; Gençoğlu, 2018: 169).

On 3 September 1863, according to the London Ambassador Musurus Pasha’s report to Istanbul, Sayyid Muhammad and Sayyid Abdullah, two of the Comorian princes currently there, gave important information about their homeland. Accordingly, Anjouan Island, which had been captured by the French in 1843, had been under Muslim control for 70 years. According to the oral statements, Sultan Abdullah, who took over the administration of the island with the support of the British, was the older brother of Sayyid Muhammad and Sayyid Abdullah (Münif, 1281: 104). However, he did not abide by the agreement he made with his brothers and acted against the Sharia and did not obey the laws to be applied for the protection of the country. He also prevented the Muslim population of approximately 200,000 people from fulfilling their worship. In addition, Sayyid Muhammad and Sayyid Abdullah, who mentioned that the British increased their influence in the Comoros, stated that although the ships belonging to Muslims were destroyed on Moris Island, they were compensated. Sayyid Muhammad and Sayyid Abdullah, who were apparently also aware of Sayyid Abubakar Efendi, who was sent here to teach the Muslim people living in the Cape of Good Hope about religious matters, pointed out that one of the ulema should be sent here for the Ottoman Empire to penetrate the Comoros. Sayyid Muhammad and Sayyid Abdullah stated that they wanted to come to Istanbul and convey this situation to Sultan Abdülaziz personally, and since they knew Arabic and English, their employment on behalf of the Ottoman Empire was deemed appropriate by Musurus Pasha and notified the Bâbîâlî.

It was decided that the Ottoman Empire should cover the 15-20 lira expenses of the princes, who were understood to be requesting a letter of advice from Sultan Abdülaziz to take them to Comoros, as well as the provision of accommodation in both

London and Istanbul. (BOA, No: 574/61).

According to the information given by Münif Mehmed Pasha (Uçman, 2003: 270-271; Doğan, 2006: 9-12), Sayyid Muhammed and Sayyid Abdullah, who appealed to Sultan Abdülaziz to warn their sovereign not to sell these islands to Europeans, had Abyssinian skin and resembled their ancestors, the Arabs. They were also not fat and of medium height. Colonel Sayyid Muhammad, who was a member of the Assembly in Comoros, was probably 35 years old, and Sayyid Abdullah, who was said to speak French, was between 25-30 years old and had been educated in a school in Anjouan that provided education according to new methods (Münif, 1281: 104-105). On 6 August 1864, according to İsmail Bey's notification to the Bâb-ı Asafî Mektubî Kalemî, Seyyid Muhammed and Seyyid Abdullah, who belonged to the clan ruled by the Muslims in the Comoros Islands, were good and well-mannered people and it was pointed out that they should be treated with respect and love (BOA, No: 749/9). Similarly, since Sayyid Muhammad and Sayyid Abdullah, the rulers of Comoros, who were decided to be sent to Basra and were understood to return to their country from there, were respected guests, they were instructed to be provided with convenience in every port they would pass through (BOA, No: 524/65, BOA, No: 590/85, BOA, No: 592/71). As stated by Dr. Mehmet Korkmaz, it was decided to send Seyyid Muhammad bin Sultan and Seyyid Abdullah bin Sultan, the sons of the ruler of the Comoros Islands, who were hosted in Istanbul, to their homeland with the Bursa and İzmir corvettes to be shipped to Basra (Korkmaz, 2019: 93). One of the duties of Bursa Corvette Cavalryman Kaymakam Ahmed Bey was to deliver a letter containing some recommendations to Sultan Abdullah of Anjouan upon their arrival in Comoros and to warn him on behalf of Caliph Sultan Abdülaziz in order to prevent him from persecuting his people by following the suggestions of European states (Eraslan, 1992: 400; Kavas, 2007: 18, Kavas, 2019: 262).

Since the Suez Canal had not yet been opened at the time in question, the corvettes of Bursa and İzmir were to sail to the Cape of Good Hope after visiting Spain and Brazil and finally reach Basra. Similarly, according to the instructions given by the Bâbîâlî, it was decided to visit Arab and African ports along the route. However, since the Comorian princes Sayyid Muhammed bin Sultan and Sayyid Abdullah bin Sultan were deemed inconvenient to return to their homeland on the corvettes Bursa and İzmir, it was decided to send them by another means (Korkmaz, 2019: 93). In the words of former Ambassador Prof. Dr. Ahmet Kavas, Sayyid Muhammad and Sayyid Abdullah were surprised that the Ottoman authorities had information about their homeland during their stay in Istanbul. This is a clear indication that the information in Pîrî Reis' Kitâb-ı Bahriye was also taken into consideration by the Bâbîâlî (Kavas, 2007: 18). As a matter of fact, the requests for help from the Muslims of Comoros

in a distant geography resonated with the state in Istanbul. In this way, the Ottoman Empire would try to take the necessary measures to protect the people who were subjected to ill-treatment (Kavas, 2006: 13, 52; Gençoğlu, 2018: 169).

However, Sayyid Ali, the grandson of Sultan Ahmed, who succeeded Sultan Ahmed in the Grande Comore (Kamer) Island in 1875, had to come to an agreement with the French and accept their patronage. In addition, Sayyid Emir Muhammad bin Abdullah, the legitimate heir of the Comoros Islands, who is known to have arrived in Istanbul as of 2 August 1877, reported that the government to which he was entitled had been usurped by his uncle Selim and his son Abdullah II and requested help from the Bâbiâlî. Sayyid Emir Muhammad bin Abdullah, who declared his loyalty to the Ottoman Empire and stated that he had been removed from the throne he was heir to by deceit, would ask for the patronage of Sultan Abdulhamid II. Accordingly, Sayyid Emir Muhammad bin Abdullah, who underlined that it would be very important to take the Comoros, where approximately 200,000 Muslims live, under the administration of Sultan Abdulhamid II, stated that his uncle Selim and his son Sultan Abdullah II persecuted the people and entered into agreements with French by accepting French patronage. Sayyid Emir Muhammad bin Abdullah, who stated that poverty had become widespread among the people in the face of these persecutions that had been going on for 30 years and that he himself had been threatened with death and driven away from his homeland, pointed out that if Sultan Abdulhamid II sent two frigates of the navy to Comoros, this place could be made one of the provinces of the Ottoman Empire and he himself could be appointed as the administrator (BOA, No: 516/83, BOA, No: 618/18).

General Gallieni, who had previously fought against the Muslim insurgents in Madagascar, would occupy Grande Comore and change the name of the island to San Lorenzo, establishing sovereignty here in exactly 10 years. However, the statements in a document dated 30 May 1883 refer to the Muslims of Saklawa in Madagascar, who were trying to unite with the Muslims of Comoros. According to the news published in *De Bats* and *Reform* newspapers, the Muslims in Comoros and Madagascar were determined to resist the French with the material and moral support of the Ottoman Empire. According to the information delivered to the Ottoman State's Foreign Ministry on 12 August 1886, the French government informed the British government on 26 July 1886 that it had taken the islands of Grande Comore, Anjouan and Moheli under its complete protection (BOA, No: 318/103, BOA, No: 90/131, BOA, No: 111/66, BOA, No: 62/14, BOA, No: 62/16, BOA, No: 32/98). Therefore, in 1886, the French, through Catholic missionaries, eliminated Sultan Abdullah III and established sovereignty on Anjouan Island. Thus, after successive occupations, the entire Comoros Islands, including Grande Comore, Mayotte and Anjouan, came

under French colonisation.

### **Sultan Abdulhamid II, the Yesruti Order and the Comoros**

During this period, the Yesrutîya branch of the Shâzelîye order, which fought against both European states and local collaborators in the Comoros, also had important ties with the Ottoman Empire (Martin, 1988: 197; Karpat, 2017: 439). In fact, the founder of the Yesrutî branch, Sheikh Ali Nureddin of Tunisia (Kavas, 2013: 499-500), was a student of Sheikh Muhammad bin Hamza Zafir al-Madanî, one of the most important advisors of Sultan Abdülhamid II (Sırma, 2013: 54, 60, 69; Özdemir, 2017: 21, 30, 41, 59; Kaya, 2021: 71-91) (Karpat, 2017: 439). The Yesrutîya branch of Shâzelîism has spread from Syria and Palestine to Lebanon, Jordan, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Comoros (Kavas, 2009: 17, 32, Kavas, 2013: 500; Yaşar, 2020: I, 8, 55, 107-108, 100, 114). In Comoros, where half of the Muslims in the country belong to a sect, the names that pioneered the spread of Yesrutism are Abdullah Dervish and Sheikh Saïd Muhammad Ma'rûf (Kavas, 2009: 31-32, 35).

Comorian Ebuleys Sheikh Abdullah Derviş, who belonged to a noble family, completed his first religious education in Zengibar, then travelled to Akkâ and stayed here for a while. He then visited the Kaaba and became a pilgrim, and during his years in Palestine, he became a follower of Shaykh Ali Nureddin and joined Yesrutism. After returning to Comoros, Sheikh Derviş assumed the caliphate of Sheikh Nureddin and carried out religious activities in Itsandra (Kavas, 2009: 33; Yaşar, 2020: 104-105).

Sheikh Ma'rûf, who was born in 1852 or 1853 in Grande Comore, was originally from Yemen. Sheikh Saïd Muhammad Ma'rûf, whose family travelled from Hadramawt to Comoros, took Qur'anic lessons in Comoros and then went to Zangibar to complete his education. Although he was initiated into the Qâdiriyya sect through Shaykh Üveys whom he met here, he would join the Yesrutî sect when he returned to the Comoros. Sheikh Ma'rûf, who followed Ali Itibarî's lessons for a while, visited Kaaba with his family and performed the pilgrimage. Sheikh Ma'rûf, who met Abdullah Dervish from Comoros on his return from the pilgrimage, was influenced by his Sufi indoctrination and started to preach Yesrutism. Although he first belonged to the Alawiya branch of the Shâzelîya, he opened a Yesrutî zawiyah in Moroni and started to preach. Sheikh Ma'rûf, who also gathered a large number of followers in Comoros, later settled in Anjouan Island (Martin, 1998: 197, 199-201; Vikør, 2000: 455-456; Kavas, 2009: 32-33; Yaşar, 2020: 105).

Although he was held in high esteem in Anjouan, he returned to Moroni with his entourage when he was criticised and insulted by the city's famous Shafi'i qadi, Sheikh Fazil bin Ali Mbangva, at a Friday greeting in the presence of Sultan Ali bin Umar

(Martin, 1998: 200; Kavas, 2009: 33-34). Sheikh Ma'rûf, who blamed Sultan Ali for collaborating with the French and openly opposed the sale of fertile lands on the island to foreigners, soon began not to mention the monarch's name in the sermons (Martin, 1998: 200; Karpát, 2017: 439). Thereupon, Sultan Ali, who collaborated with the French and Germans, ordered the elimination of Sheikh Ma'rûf (Martin, 1998: 200-201). Thereupon, Sultan Ali's men will follow and capture Sheikh Ma'rûf and throw him into the sea to die. Sheikh Ma'rûf was saved by the chance of boarding an Indian ferry passing by and took refuge in Nosy Be Island of Madagascar. He stayed here for a while, and travelled first to Mayotte Island and then to the Grande Comore Island. Sheikh Ma'rûf, who later settled in Zengibar, spread Yesrutism in the islands of Pemba and Mafia (Kavas, 2009: 33-34). Sheikh Muhammad bin Ahmed bin Abubakir al-Hunzuvânî, also from Comoros, spread Shâzelism in Tanzania and Kile Island (Martin, 1998: 200; Karpát, 2017: 439; Kavas, 2009: 34).

After a while, the French allowed Shaykh Ma'rûf to return to Moroni. When he returned to his homeland, he opened the Mirereni Zawiyah here and carried out religious activities until he died in 1905 (Martin, 1998: 201; Vikør, 2000: 455; Kavas, 2009: 34-35). As we have mentioned before, after these activities were carried out in Comoros, 50% of the Muslim population adopted Shâzeli/Yashrutî, 40% Kâdirî, and 10% Rifâiye and Aleviye. (Kavas, 2009: 34-35; Yaşar, 2020: 105-106) In the end, the Comorian Muslims, who continued to resist the French for many years, established sovereignty through some 20 local sultanates. As we mentioned before, they also established various political, commercial and diplomatic relations with the Portuguese, French, British and Germans in addition to the Ottoman Empire. However, in 1909, as a result of Leon Humbolt's pressures, all local leaders were eliminated (Özey, 2016: 20). Thus, by 1912, the Comorian people were completely colonised. Later, The French, who connected the Comoros Islands to Madagascar, left the country administratively and economically backward, leading to serious impoverishment of the people (Ataöy, 1975: 551; Kavas, 2021: 315).

### **Some Works Published in the Ottoman Empire on the Comoros Islands**

It would be appropriate to mention that various books and articles were also published about the Comoros, of which the Ottoman Empire had significant information and important relations. In this sense, Münif Mehmet Pasha, who published an article titled "Comoros Islands" in Mecmûa-i Fünûn in August 1864, draws attention to the fact that the people speak Arabic, Persian and Swahili. Münif Mehmed Pasha, who also gives remarkable information about the history, geography and social order of the Comoros, states that the country is divided into 22 administrative units in total and governed by different governors. Accordingly, there were 16 sanjaks

in Grande Comore, 4 in Henzevan and 2 in Moheli (Münif, 1281: 104-118). At the same time, the flag of the Comoros has a crescent star, similar to the Turkish flag. Münif Mehmed Pasha, who stated that the people were engaged in maritime and trade, stated that there were about 9,000 soldiers in the army. In addition, the vast majority of the organised and trained Comorian army consisted of Negro slaves. Also, there were 16 small warships in the navy, each of which had 12 cannons and 60-70 sailors. American and German officers served in the Comorian army. In fact, a man named Hacı Halil Bey from the Ottoman Empire also served as an officer in the Comorian army. Besides having been here for 15 years, he had been naturalised as a citizen and was known and loved by the people (Münif, 1281: 104-118). Similarly, Avanzâde Mehmed Süleyman Bey's article titled "Komor Adaları ve Ahali-i Mahalliyesi" (Comoros Islands and its Local People) dated 13 May 1909 and published in the journal Maarif provided significant information about the British and French occupation of the Comoros (Avanzâde, 1909: 274-275). Another work titled "Afrika'da Âlem-i İslâm Külliyyatından: Komor Adaları" (From the Collection of Islamic World in Africa: Comoros) written in 1923 by officer, writer, diplomat and philatelist İsmail Hakkı Tevfik (Okday) Bey, son of Ahmet Tevfik Pasha, one of the last grand viziers of the Ottoman Empire, is also a work that we should mention related to the subject. According to information mentioned by Okday the people of the Comoros Islands, which consist of the islands of Nagazidya, Yuhana, Mohelu and Mayut, are Muslims. Giving information about the origin, customs, social structure, educational status and population of the people, Okday states that Islam entered Comoros in the VIII century. From the IXth century onwards, the Islamisation process of the islands accelerated with the migration of İsmâ'îlîs belonging to Shi'ism. He also states that a prince belonging to the Fatimids travelled to Comoros in the 19th century and became the ruler. In general, Islam was accepted in the XIVth century thanks to an unknown Arab. However, it should be emphasised that the dates and the ways in which each island accepted Islam differed from each other. For instance, after the conquest of Nagazidya Island by the Sultanate of Kilwa in the 16th century, the locals accepted Islam. Again, the islands of Mayut and Mohelu would establish important relations with Muslims in the following periods (Tevfik, 1339: 1-62). The entry of Islam into the Comoros was mostly thanks to the merchants and sailors who settled or travelled to the islands. Accordingly, Muslim Arabs, Persians and Indians enabled the Comorian people to accept Islam through the commercial and marriage ties they established. In fact, during this period, in addition to the increase in the population, the marriages with the daughters of the ruling families made Arabs and Iranians especially influential in the administration of the country. However, it is not possible to talk about a single ruler in Comoros. Because different local sultans administered the administration in each island. Likewise, these local administrators struggle with each other to be the absolute ruler of the Comoros, whom they call



“Sultan Tiba” (Çiftçi, 2010). As the European states such as England, France and Germany started to expand their spheres of influence in the Comoros from the XIXth century onwards, the local sultans were directly influenced. Although the local people showed all their hospitality towards the Westerners, they would face the danger of being displaced from their lands after a while. Likewise, the European states, which supported the rulers they favoured in line with their own interests, exerted serious pressure on the administrators, dismissed them from office and even sent them into exile in countries such as Djibouti and Tanzania (Çiftçi, 2010). On the other hand, despite Britain and Germany, France established sovereignty in Comoros through missionaries. They will also try to spread Christianity by opening various missionary schools on the islands and starting education. Especially the French, who settled in Mohelu Island, tried to Christianise the people as well as the administrators. Therefore, we can state that the Comoros, who were initially subjected to the persecution of Madagascar pirates and slave traders, were later crushed under the armed power of Europeans. So much so that, although certain rebellion movements were seen among the Comoros during this period, they were colonised and turned into an object of slave trade because they could not resist heavy weapons and warships (Çiftçi, 2010).

## **Conclusion**

The spread of Islam in Comoros, the archipelago country of East Africa, dates back to ancient times. In this sense, Comoros, which incorporates many cultures such as Arab, Persian, Swahili and Indian, is also home to a rich civilisation. Many different Muslim dynasties successfully ruled in Comoros, where many local sultanates were established until the modern period. In addition to the neighbouring Muslim countries, they also established political, economic and commercial relations with Portugal, France, Britain and Germany.

Muslims were persecuted in Comoros, which became the target of European states that wanted to colonise the continent from the 19th century onwards. Thereupon, the Islamic ulema, who requested help from the Ottoman Empire, pioneered the beginning of official mutual relations. The Ottoman Empire, which tried to protect the Muslims of Comoros, especially against the colonial activities of the French and the British, endeavoured to establish a presence in the Indian Ocean against the imperialist states. In this sense, it is possible to state that the mutual relations that gained great momentum during the reign of Sultan Abdülaziz and Sultan Abdülhamid II formed the basis of the friendship that continues even today.

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## **Publication Principles & Representation of Footnotes and Reference**

Academic circles and popular media alike have been discussing the changes in the global economic and political balance of power. Whatever the future may bring; the region of Africa, Europe and Asia, i.e. the Old World, which was the cradle of world civilizations for millennia, is destined to play a significant role in shaping the world again. The Afro Eurasian Studies has been established in summer 2011 to offer a respected peer-reviewed outlet for the scholarly research in social and administrative sciences, which would shed light on the history and the current state of economic, political and social dynamics of Africa, Europe and Asia. The journal welcomes original manuscripts in English on a range of subject matters including economics, finance, management, political science, public policy and international relations with particular focus on the Afro Eurasian region. Afro Eurasian Studies Journal Writing Rules [ISSN: 2147110X]

The material submitted for publication may not be previously published or accepted for publication by another publisher.

1. Title of the Article: The title should suit the content and express and should be written in bold letters. in 11 Punto Cambria each word.

2. Author Name and Institution Information: Author name and institution information should not be written as they will go to the study referees who will be installed on the system. The article must be typed exactly as it appears in the Name, Surname, Organization Information (ENG), email and Orcid ID before receiving the final approval.

3. Abstract: The article should include an abstract in Turkish at the beginning. The abstract should explain the topic clearly and concisely in a minimum of 150 and a maximum of 200 words. The abstract should not include references to sources, figures and charts.

4. Keywords: Keywords of 5 to 8 words should be placed at the end of the abstract. Each word of the keywords must be written in Capital letters and a comma must be used between them.

5. Body Text: The texts sent, pictures, maps etc. should not exceed (9,000 words), including the attachments. Written letters should be written in A4 size with white space at the top 1,5 cm; left 2,5 cm, bottom 1,5 cm, right 2,5 cm “floor 1,2” line spacing, two sides, without line hyphenation and 12 points “Cambria” font. (For detailed and visual information, the “journal page layout example” should be looked at on the layout page.) For this reason, tables, figures, pictures, graphics and so on. smaller points and single spacing can be used in the elements. The “APA” system will be used for footnotes and references.

6 Section Titles: In the article, main, intermediate and subtitles can be used in order to provide compatibility with the content. These headings should be written in Capitalized Word.

7. Tables and Figures: Tables should have numbers and captions. The tables, figures, pictures, graphics and the like sent to the journal must not exceed 12x17 cm in order for the magazine not to go beyond the page dimensions and to be used more easily. For this reason, tables, figures, pictures, graphics and so on. smaller points and single spacing can be used in the elements.

8. Pictures: Pictures should be attached to the articles scanned in high-resolution print quality. The same rules for figures and tables apply in naming pictures. The number of pages for figures, tables and pictures should not exceed 10 pages (one-third of the article). Authors having the necessary technical equipment and software may themselves insert their figures, drawings and pictures into the text provided these are ready for printing.

9. Quotations and Citations:: Direct quotations should be placed in quotation marks. Quotations shorter than 3 lines should be placed within the flowing text. If the quotation is longer than 3 lines, it should be turned into a block quote with a 1.5 cm indentation on the right and left, and the font size should be 9 punto. Footnotes and endnotes should be avoided as much as possible. They should only be used for essential explanations and should be numbered (Office Word) automatically.

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