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Published in:
Journal of African History

DOI:
[10.1017/S0021853714000085](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853714000085)

Publication date:
2014

Document Version
Early version, also known as pre-print

Citation for published version (APA):
Kaarsholm, P. (2014). Zanzibaris or Amakhuwa? Sufi Networks in South Africa, Mozambique and the Indian Ocean. *Journal of African History*, 55(2), 191-210. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853714000085>

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ZANZIBARIS OR AMAKHUWA?
SUFI NETWORKS IN SOUTH AFRICA, MOZAMBIQUE, AND THE INDIAN
OCEAN*

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ABSTRACT: This article investigates the role of Sufi networks in keeping Durban's Zanzibari community of African Muslims together and developing their response to social change and political developments from the 1950s to the post-apartheid period. It focuses on the importance of religion in giving meaning to notions of community, and discusses the importance of the Makua language in maintaining links with northern Mozambique and framing understandings of Islam. The transmission of ritual practices of the Rifaiyya, Qadiriyya, and Shadhiliyya Sufi brotherhoods is highlighted, as is the significance of Maputo as a node for such linkages. The article discusses change over time in notions of cosmopolitanism, diaspora, and belonging, and examines new types of interactions after 1994 between people identifying themselves as Amakhuwa in Durban and Mozambique.

* The author is grateful to the members of the 'Amakhuwa Research Committee' in Bayview, Durban, for their support and collaboration – Salim Rapentha, Yussuf Abdul Rehman, the late Yacoob Ibrahim, Eddie Osman, Alpha Franks, Ismail Fraser, Aziza Dalika, and Zaithoon Maziya. He also thanks Goolam Vahed, Abdul Sheriff, Hafiz Jamu, Felicitas Becker, and Joel Cabrita for advice and assistance, and the three anonymous *Journal of African History* reviewers for their constructive comments. Author's e-mail: preben@ruc.dk

KEY WORDS: South Africa, Mozambique, Islam, diaspora.

The history of the 'Zanzibari' community in Durban, made up of people of predominantly northern Mozambican descent, provides an extraordinary illustration of the cultural linkages forged across the Indian Ocean, as well as of the particular importance of transnational Sufi Islamic networks in maintaining such linkages. The Indian Ocean slave trade not only involved the Cape, as documented by previous historians, but also encompassed the present-day area of KwaZulu-Natal. The history of Durban's Zanzibari community highlights the diverse ways in which descendants of freed slaves in southeastern Africa harnessed the power of religion to give meaning to their lives amid dramatic processes of social change. In response to shifting politics in South Africa and further afield, they engaged Islamic and Sufi ritual and networks to craft and codify stories-of-origin that promoted internal cohesion, respectability, and community progress. At times, Zanzibaris emphasized their cosmopolitanism as members of an Indian Ocean world and, at other times, they focused on more narrowly defined ties to discrete territorial locations in South Africa and Mozambique.

This article focuses on South Africa in the period from the 1950s onwards, when Zanzibaris' aspirations for government recognition as non-Africans intensified. These efforts culminated in their classification in 1961, under the urban apartheid legislation of the Group Areas Act, as 'Other Asiatics', and their removal from their original settlement on the Bluff – the bar of land shielding Durban's natural harbour from the Indian Ocean – to the new Indian township of Chatsworth. I examine the significance of both Islam and the Makua language for Zanzibaris' efforts to keep their community together, and consider their relations with other Muslims in Durban and the Cape, and their ties to northern Mozambique through mosques in Maputo and the Rifaiyya, Qadiriyya, and Shadiliyya Sufi orders or 'brotherhoods' (in Arabic

turuq, sing. *tariqa*).¹ The significance of these links changed during and after apartheid. In particular, Zanzibaris engaged Sufi networks after 1994 to develop a shared 'Amakhuwa' identity with Makua-speaking Muslims in Maputo and northern Mozambique.² They, thus, defied the secular tenets of public life in post-apartheid South Africa and post-independence Mozambique through the adaption and development of Sufi ritual practices of *dhikr*, *mawlid*, and *ziyara*.³

A small number of historical studies exist on South Africa's Zanzibaris.⁴ But these studies do not consider their predicament in the post-apartheid period. Moreover, while

¹ Together with the Alawiyya, the Rifaiyya, Qadiriyya, and Shadhiliyya are the most important Sufi orders extending down the African Indian Ocean coast from the Arab world. J. S. Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders in Islam* (Oxford, 1971), 31-66; B. G. Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods in 19th Century Africa* (Cambridge, 1976), 152-176; R. L. Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent: Cultural Change and Traditional Islam on the East African Coast, 800-1900* (Cambridge, 1987), 191-208.

² 'Amakhuwa' is the self-designation of Makua-speaking groups in both South Africa and Mozambique, aiming to emphasize their shared origins, as used for example by the 'Amakhuwa Research Committee' formed in Durban in 2011.

³ *Dhikr* (Arabic for remembrance and prayer; the main Sufi ritual), *ziyara* (Arabic for pilgrimage to the tomb of saints), and *mawlid* (Arabic for the celebration of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday as well as of that of the founders of the orders). As discussed below, *mawlid* may also refer to the particular ritual performances for such celebrations as well as to the texts used within them.

⁴ Z. K. Seedat, 'The "Zanzibaris" in Durban: a social anthropological study of the Muslim descendants of African freed slaves living in the Indian area of Chatsworth' (unpublished MA dissertation, University of Natal, Durban 1973); G. C. Oosthuizen [assisted by A. Dalika], *The Muslim Zanzibaris of South Africa: The Religious Expression of a Minority Group, Descendants of Freed Slaves* (Durban, 1982); A. Sheriff, 'The origins of the "Zanzibari" diaspora in Durban, South Africa', in K. K. Prasad and J.-P. Angenot (eds.), *TADIA The African Diaspora in Asia: Explorations on a Less Known Fact* (Bangalore, 2008), 547-78.

other scholars have explored relations between the Zanzibaris and Indian Muslims in Durban – most importantly the Juma Musjid Trust, they have paid little attention to their links to Islam in the Cape, and no attention to their ties to Muslim communities in Mozambique. Zubeda Seedat's anthropological study of the Zanzibari community in the early 1970s emphasizes their Makua origins, but focuses on their relations with Durban's Indian Muslims.⁵ Gerhardus Oosthuizen pays greater attention to Zanzibari ritual practices and their African indigenous dimensions, but does not explore the linkages through which these dimensions developed.⁶ Abdul Sheriff's important historical study traces the origins of the freed slaves arriving in Durban in the 1870s from northern Mozambique and southeastern Tanzania, but touches only very briefly on the twentieth-century 'Indian Ocean and Swahili connection'.⁷ The present article is therefore innovative in two respects. First, it traces Sufi Islamic networks stretching along the *African* Indian Ocean coast into South Africa, rather than from South and South East Asia. Second, it demonstrates how these networks developed through continued interaction between Durban, Maputo, and northern Mozambique across the twentieth century.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE ZANZIBARIS IN DURBAN

The Zanzibari community developed from a group of 508 liberated slaves, who were brought to Durban as indentured labourers in the 1870s and 1880s. The majority were Makua-speakers, freed by British Navy vessels off the northern Mozambican coast en route to slave markets in Madagascar or Pemba.⁸ Although most were taken to Durban by the British Navy,

⁵ Seedat, 'The Zanzibaris', 253-282.

⁶ Oosthuizen, *The Muslim Zanzibaris*, 30-46.

⁷ Sheriff, 'The Origins', 570-571.

⁸ Seedat, 'The "Zanzibaris"', 7-12; Sheriff, 'The Origins', 559-567. Makua is the most widely spoken language in northern Mozambique, and Makua-speakers comprised the majority of people taken and

some went first to Zanzibar, the site of the headquarters of the British anti-slavery campaign. In Durban, they were advertised to labour-hungry settlers in local newspapers as 'Liberated Africans from Zanzibar'. The Muslim majority of these freed slaves appropriated the name of 'Zanzibaris', marking themselves as distinct from local Zulu-speaking Africans. By contrast, a Christian minority among the freed slaves gradually becoming absorbed into the Zulu-speaking population.⁹

At the end of indenture, both groups came under the wings of missionaries and were settled on the Durban Bluff by a 'Mohammedan Trust' of Sunni and Barelwi businessmen with links to the Juma Musjid mosque on Grey Street,¹⁰ and by the Catholic St. Francis Xavier's Mission.¹¹ The contrasting paths of these liberated slaves – one group choosing to identify themselves as Zulu-speakers, the other group emphasizing their provenance from Zanzibar – corresponded to competing religious strategies operating in Natal in this period: Catholic

sold as slaves along the coast of Mozambique during the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Indian Ocean slave trade.

⁹ Seedat, 'The Zanzibaris', 26-54.

¹⁰ 'Sunnis' and 'Barelwis' refer to groups of Muslim Indian traders from Gujarat – so-called 'passenger Indians' – who had followed the trail of the Indian indenture labourers into Natal from the 1860s. Their religious practices accommodated Sufi practices as they developed in Durban around the shrines of two Sufi saints Badsha Pir and Sufi Sahib. N. Green, *Bombay Islam: The Religious Economy of the West Indian Ocean, 1840-1915* (Cambridge, 2011), 208-234. Sunnis and Barelwis controlled Durban's biggest mosque, the Juma Masjid or Grey Street mosque, while the more scripturally dogmatic groups of 'Deobandis' or 'Tablighis' held sway at the West Street mosque, also located in central Durban. G. Vahed, 'Contesting "orthodoxy": the Tablighi-Sunni conflict among South African Muslims in the 1970s and 1980s', *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 23:2 (2003), 313-334.

¹¹ The Catholic mission of St. Francis Xavier established a station in Inanda to the northwest of Durban, and an important school on the Bluff where significant numbers of both Catholic and Muslim Zanzibaris were educated. Seedat, 'The "Zanzibaris"', 29-34; Oosthuizen, *The Muslim Zanzibaris*, 13-18.

missionaries' expansionary drive on one hand, Muslim efforts to gather a faithful minority on the other.¹²

However, the identification of the former slaves as Zanzibaris, rather than as 'natives' or 'Africans', was tested in 1937-8, when a Zanzibari named Hassan Fakiri was convicted for evading the poll tax, which all Africans were obliged to pay. With the financial and legal backing of the Juma Musjid Trust, Fakiri appealed the decision. As the grandchild of freed slaves who came from Zanzibar, a Muslim, and a 'Swahili'-speaker, Fakiri stated that he was not 'a Native within the definition of the legislation', i.e. not a member of 'an aboriginal tribe or race of Africa'.¹³ The case was lost but it demonstrated the possible political implications of Zanzibari identity: by figuring Zanzibar as outside of 'aboriginal' Africa and its inhabitants as 'descendant of Arabs', Fakiri could claim that he was not a 'Native of Africa'.¹⁴

[Insert Fig. 1 here]

Fig. 1. Map of greater Durban area.

Zanzibari exceptionalism came to the fore in the high apartheid period of the 1950s, when the regime's efforts to categorise the population according to race reached its peak. In 1961, Zanzibaris were re-classified under the Population Registration Act – another central piece of apartheid legislation – as 'Other Asiatics'. This meant that their forced removal in 1962-3 under the Group Areas Act, when the Bluff became a 'white' area, took them, not to the African township of Umlazi on the southern outskirts of Durban, but to Bayview (Unit Two) of

¹² 'Catholicism and Islam as Factors in the Creation, the Disappearance and the Persistence of Freed Slave Communities', in Seedat, 'The Zanzibaris', 26-54.

¹³ Seedat, 'The "Zanzibaris"', 36.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 37. It is likely, however, that what Fakiri claimed to be Swahili was in fact Makua, and that such representations of Makua as Swahili were not uncommon among Zanzibaris. *Ibid.*, 72f.

the neighbouring Indian township of Chatsworth (see Fig. 1). Though the move meant the loss of proximity to Durban's central business district, it affirmed Zanzibari claims to being 'non-native', and enhanced opportunities for pursuing education and achieving respectability. Because of its relative autonomy and the strength of its religious organisations, the Zanzibari community had long been a magnet for African Muslims visiting Durban, either as sailors or as migrant labourers from neighbouring countries. It also became a model for other African Muslim groups in the greater Durban area, and from the 1930s, African Muslims, mainly from Malawi, began to establish 'Zanzibari' societies in settlements like Mariannhill and Amaoti.¹⁵ At the same time, members of the Zanzibari community served as religious instructors and teachers of Arabic in African townships.¹⁶

LANGUAGE, ISLAM, AND INDIAN OCEAN NETWORKS

Makua language and traditions have figured prominently in Zanzibaris' cultural entrepreneurship projects. Together with a particular dedication to Islam, the Makua language became a key marker of Zanzibari identity. This emphasis upon language gained new significance as the community came to incorporate new members, including poor Indian families as well as immigrants from Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia. Such heterogeneity was nothing new; even the original group of 508 liberated slaves included a significant minority whose native languages were Ngindo and Yao rather than Makua. In the late nineteenth century, however, an extensive Makua diaspora emerged through the dispersal of

¹⁵ P. Kaarsholm, 'Transnational Islam and public sphere dynamics in KwaZulu-Natal: rethinking South Africa's place in the Indian Ocean world', *Africa*, 81:1 (2011), 113 and 115.

¹⁶ A Zanzibari elder, Yussuf Abdul Rehman, was – and continues to be – actively involved in this as a teacher of Arabic, and is remembered as such by Adam Mncanywa, an *imam* in the slum settlement of Amaoti, author of several Islamic pamphlets in Zulu, and chairman of the Islamic Nation Foundation. Interview with Adam Mncanywa, Durban on 28 June 2010.

slaves and freed slaves across western Indian Ocean region. Indeed, Makua may have been a *lingua franca* among the liberated slaves when they arrived in Durban in the 1870s. Thus, in her research on slave descendants in Madagascar, Klara Boyer-Rossol found that Makua had been spoken among different groups of slaves held on the African coast prior to their transportation across the Mozambique Channel.¹⁷ In most of the Makua diasporas that have been documented in the western Indian Ocean, including Somalia, Reunion, and Madagascar, the Makua language has been lost, importantly due to its association with slave status.¹⁸ The same erasure of the past took place among Zanzibaris who converted to Catholicism but not among those who remained or became Muslims. Yacoob Ibrahim – born in 1934 – remembered having his tongue pinched by Zanzibari elders if as a child he slipped from speaking Makua into Zulu.¹⁹

In the Fakiri case of 1938, Makua was presented as a Swahili dialect. In some regards, claims to a ‘Zanzibari’ identity in twentieth-century Durban were similar to claims to ‘Swahili’ identity common along the East African coast in the late nineteenth century. According to Jeremy Prestholdt, freedom for former slaves in Zanzibar involved ‘self-fashioning projects’ and ‘reinscription, making a new self out of the objectifying parameters of slavery [and]

¹⁷ K. Boyer-Rossol, ‘De Morima à Morondava: contribution à l’étude des makoa de l’ouest de Madagascar au XIXe siècle’, in D. Nativel et F. V. Rajaonah (eds.), *Madagascar et l’Afrique: Entre identité insulaire et appartenances historiques* (Paris, 2007), 192.

¹⁸ N. J. Gueunier, ‘Les Makoa “engagés” à Mayotte et à Nosy Be dans la deuxième moitié du XIXe siècle’, in Nativel and Rajaonah, *Madagascar et l’Afrique*, 163-182; E. A. Alpers, ‘Recollecting Africa: diasporic memory in the Indian Ocean world’, *African Studies Review*, 43 (2000), 83-99; F. Declich, ‘“Gendered narratives”, history and identity: Two centuries along the Juba river among the Zigula and Shanbara’, *History in Africa*, 22 (1995), 93-122.

¹⁹ Interview with Yacoob Ibrahim, Bayview, 13 Feb. 2010. Yacoob Ibrahim passed away on 20 January 2014.

creating a desirable social space within the structures of coastal social hierarchies'.²⁰ This involved observing Islam. Along the east African coast, the Sufi brotherhoods and their *mawlid* rituals – festive celebrations of the Prophet Muhammad's birthday involving chanting, recitals, singing, and, controversially, drumming – facilitated the incorporation of former slaves into Muslim communities.²¹ Similarly, speaking Swahili and adopting Swahili dress became signs of citizenship and belonging.²² It would have been unthinkable, however, along the east African coast in the late nineteenth-century to pass off the Makua language – with its strong associations with slave status – as Swahili, or to associate speaking Makua with aspirations to 'culturedness' (*utamaduni*) and 'Arabness' (*ustaarabu*). But in Natal, people with little knowledge of the rest of Africa accepted Makua as a form of Swahili. Paradoxically then, Makua language and culture became defining features of Zanzibari identity in Durban.

The Zanzibari community, in turn, embraced forms of Islam that could accommodate Makua cultural practices. In accordance with matrilineal traditions, women played prominent roles in the community, and girls and boys underwent elaborate ritual initiations.²³ Zanzibaris' religious practice incorporated certain forms of ancestor propitiation like the

²⁰ J. Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalisation* (Berkeley, 2008), 143.

²¹ Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 196-198; A. Bang, *Sufis and Scholars of the Sea: Family Networks in East Africa, 1860-1925* (Abingdon, 2003), 148-50.

²² J. Glassman, *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion, and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888* (London, 1995), 95; L. Fair, 'Dressing up: clothing, class and gender in post-abolition Zanzibar', *Journal of African History*, 39:1 (1998), 66. On the use of dance, see L. Fair, 'Identity, difference, and dance: female initiation in Zanzibar, 1890 to 1930', *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, 17:3 (1996), 150f.

²³ Interviews with Salim Rapentha, Bayview, 10 Feb. 2009, 12 Feb. 2010 and 15 Feb. 2011.

leaving of *msoro* offerings at particular trees.²⁴ Oosthuizen offers a syncretist interpretation of such practices as examples of 'indigenous Islam', in which '[t]raditional African customs and Islam merged into one another so that it is not easy to discern between the two at any given point'.²⁵ Yet, I argue that, among Zanzibaris, rather than being blended together, Makua practices co-existed with Sufi-inspired Islam that included rituals, like *mawlid*, controversial among reformist Muslims. Durban Zanzibaris upheld a distinction between the domain of Islamic practice and that of cultural custom, as represented by initiation or *msoro* rituals. This distinction, however, was flexible and frequently the subject of theological debates among community members. Far from religious syncretism, as Oosthuizen argues, there were a variety of understandings of Islam – including 'contextualised' ones that viewed Islam as embedded in and interacting with local cultural settings and 'purified' ones that were more antagonistic to divergent practices– as well as a general endeavour to appear to the outside world as a unified Muslim community.²⁶

Sufism became an important influence among the Zanzibaris through three different trajectories: one coming across the Indian Ocean from South Asia,²⁷ another through Cape

²⁴ Interview with Norma Symallin (King), Kings Rest, 16 Feb. 2010; for a discussion of Islam and *msoro* sacrifice in southeastern Tanzania, see F. Becker, *Becoming Muslim in Mainland Tanzania, 1890-2000* (Oxford, 2008), 169-172.

²⁵ Oosthuizen, *The Muslim Zanzibaris*, 33, 50.

²⁶ E. E. Rosander, 'Introduction: the Islamization of "tradition" and "modernity"', in E. E. Rosander and D. Westerlund (eds.), *African Islam and Islam in Africa: Encounters between Sufis and Islamists* (London, 1997), 2.

²⁷ Vahed, 'Contesting "orthodoxy"', 313-334; N. Green, 'Islam for the indentured Indian: a Muslim missionary in colonial South Africa', *Bulletin of SOAS*, 71:3 (2008), 529-552; S. Jeppie, *Language, Identity, Modernity: The Arabic Study Circle of Durban* (Cape Town, 2007).

Town from Indonesia and the Malay world,²⁸ and a third trajectory which extended down the Indian Ocean coast from Zanzibar and the Comoros through northern Mozambique to Durban.²⁹ While the first of these trajectories has been explored in detail within South African historiography, limited attention has been given to the second one, and the third has not been studied at all.

One set of Sufi influences on the Zanzibaris in Natal came from interaction, beginning in the early 1880s, with Indian Muslims in Durban, that is, with representatives of the first of three trajectories. Particularly influential were the group of Indian businessmen who controlled the Grey Street mosque and the Juma Musjid Trust.³⁰ Nile Green has described how such South Asian influence was rooted in the activities of 'Islamic firms' that operated within an 'economy of religious enchantment'. These firms developed through the intensification of international trade and industrialisation, and catered to the needs of new groups of migrant and working-class Muslims in the western Indian Ocean. As exemplified in Durban by the activities of Ghulam Muhammad and the Sufi Sahib network, such firms drew on brotherhood connections with Bombay-based firms and, with 'entrepreneurial flair', provided a variety of

²⁸ N. Green, 'Saints, rebels and booksellers: Sufis in the cosmopolitan western Indian Ocean, c. 1780-1920', in E. Simpson and K. Kresse (eds.), *Struggling with History: Islam and Cosmopolitanism in Western Indian Ocean* (London 2007), 125-166. Cf. A. Davids, *The Mosques of Bo-Kaap* (Athlone, 1980); A. Tayob, *Islam in South Africa: Mosques, Imams and Sermons* (Gainesville, FL, 1999).

²⁹ Bang, *Sufis and Scholars*; L. Bonate, 'Traditions and Transitions: Islam and Chiefship in Northern Mozambique ca. 1850-1874' (PhD dissertation, Cape Town 2007); A. Bang, *Ripples of Reform. Islamic Reform in the Southwestern Indian Ocean c. 1860-1930* (Leiden, forthcoming 2014).

³⁰ These include the Badsha Piri shrine and burial site in Durban's central business district, next to the Victoria Market and the highly prosperous Sufi Sahib centre at Riverside on the Umgeni River, established in 1896. See the latter's web site at <http://www.soofie.saheb.org.za/riverside.htm>

'religious productions', ranging from healing, charms, and medicines to tracts, clothing, and festivals to a new 'religious market of indentured rural migrants'.³¹

Sufi religious practice among the Zanzibaris, however, was predominantly informed by Shafi, not Hanafi, understandings of Islamic law, as was the case also with the majority of Muslims in the Cape where Sufi brotherhoods including the Rifaiyya, the Qadiriyya, the Shadhiliyya, and the Alawiyya held sway. This second trajectory of Sufi influence emerged in South Africa in the seventeenth century, imported from Southeast Asia and channelled through the networks of the Dutch colonial empire via the importation of slaves and exiling of political leaders from Java and Sumatra to the Cape of Good Hope.³² These immigrants' Sufi rituals included special forms of *mawlid* and *ratib* (the texts used during the ritual invocation of the name of God known as *dhikr* litanies and prayer recitation). A popular way of celebrating the birth of the Prophet – the *mawlid al-nabi* – was to have recitals and performances of the *mawlid al-barzanji*, the *ratib al-haddad*, and the *ratib al-rifa'i*.³³

Among these ritual practices, the *ratib al-rifa'i* became particularly well known (and controversial) as *ratiep* or *khalifa* – sometimes also called *refai-ee*, *debus*, or 'fakir dancing'. This involved body piercings performed by dancing males, accompanied by drumming, and had its origins in the practices of the Rifaiyya brotherhood.³⁴ Controversies around *mawlid* celebrations and whether and in what form they were truly Islamic – questions familiar in

³¹ Green, 'Bombay Islam in the Ocean's southern city', in *Bombay Islam*, 208-234.

³² Davids, *The Mosques*; Tayob, *Islam in South Africa*, 34-40. On the history of the Sufi orders in Indonesia and their relations with Dutch colonialism, see M. Laffan, *The Makings of Indonesian Islam: Orientalism and the Narration of a Sufi Past* (Princeton, N.J., 2011).

³³ Bang, *Sufis and Scholars*, 148f.; Bang, *Ripples of Reform*; Green, 'Saints, rebels and booksellers', 149f. and 156.

³⁴ Trimingham, *The Sufi Orders*, 37-40; Martin, *Muslim Brotherhoods*, 165. On Rifaiyya in Java, see Laffan, *The Makings*, 5, 31 and 104f.

east African contexts including Lamu, Mombasa and Zanzibar – were given extra spice in South Africa by also involving *ratiep*.³⁵ Such debates centered on how inclusive Islam should be, and which forms of ritual practice should be deemed legitimate.³⁶

³⁵ On *mawlid* controversies in Kenya and Zanzibar, see K. Kresse, 'Debating *maulidi*: ambiguities and transformations of Muslim identity along the Kenyan Swahili coast'; Hanni Nuotio, 'The dance that is not danced, the song that is not sung: Zanzibari women in the *maulidi* ritual', in R. Loimeier and R. Seesemann (eds.), *The Global Worlds of the Swahili: Interfaces of Islam, Identity and Space in 19th and 20th-Century East Africa* (Berlin, 2006), 209-228 and 187-208; and R. Loimeier, *Between Social Skills and Marketable Skills: The Politics of Islamic Education in 20th Century Zanzibar* (Leiden, 2009), 67-72. For debates on *mawlid* and *ziyara* practices in southeastern Tanzania, see Becker, *Becoming Muslim*, 200-206.

³⁶ It is interesting to examine how one of contemporary Cape Town's leading authorities on Islamic History, Achmat David, changed his views on *ratiep*, moving from considering it a heretic practice to seeing it as a central ingredient of the *mawlid* ritual as practiced in the Cape. In *The Mosques of Bo-Kaap* from 1980, Davids criticized *ratiep* as a practice 'probably of Hindu origin' and having 'nothing to do with Islam,' though it 'must have been impressive to the uninitiated slave and probably led to his conversion'. Davids, *The Mosques*, 33. By an 1998 article in *Muslim Views*, Davids had changed his mind, and identified Rifaiyya with Sheik Yussuf of Macassar, a founder of Islam in South Africa 'whose uncle initiated him into the Rifiyah Tariqa' and who, according to Davids, had first introduced the 'celebration of moulood' at the Cape in the 1690s. A. Davids, 'Practice of moulood has deep roots in the Cape. Moulood-un-Nabi feature', *Muslim Views* (June 1998), 10. This change of view may be related to the new interest that developed among Cape Muslims after 1994 in cultivating transnational linkages around common cultural origins with Indonesia and Malaysia, and recognizing the prominence of Sufi networks in facilitating and maintaining such linkages. S. Bangstad, 'Diasporic consciousness as strategic resource: a case study from a Cape Muslim community', in L. O. Manger and M. A. M. Assal (eds.), *Diasporas within and without Africa: Dynamism, Heterogeneity, Variation* (Uppsala, 2006), 46; S. Jappie, 'From the madrasah to the museum: the social life of the "kietaabs" of Cape Town', *History in*

Ritual celebrations of *mawlid* – including the *ratib al-rifa'i* – became prominent among Durban Zanzibaris through relations with family members and other Muslims in Cape Town.³⁷ Indian Muslims accommodated *ratiep* alongside ritual performances related to *muharram* processions that competed with Hindu festivals like *kavadi* which included fire-walking and body piercing with hooks and swords.³⁸ Photographs of the Sufi Sahib shrine in the northern Durban suburb of Riverside show Zanzibari Muslims as early as 1912, in the words of Green, 'performing the self-mutilating sword-and-skewer displays known as *ratiep*' as part of an *urs* holy day celebrating the death of the Saint.³⁹

But most importantly, Sufi brotherhood initiatives reached Natal through the third trajectory: Islamic networks that extended from Mozambique Island and Angoche to the Comoros, Zanzibar, Lamu, Brava, and Hadramawt. This trajectory also found expression in practices of *ratiep*. Oosthuizen writes about *ratiep* among the Zanzibaris in Durban, that '[s]ome maintain that [it was] brought from the East to Durban, where the early Zanzibaris took it on. Others maintain that it came from Mozambique and that it is not derived from the

Africa, 38:1 (2011), 369; P. Kaarsholm, 'Diaspora or transnational citizens: Indian Ocean networks and changing multiculturalisms in South Africa', *Social Dynamics*, 38:3 (2012), 454-466.

³⁷ Stimulated by the fact that in 1961 a minority of Zanzibaris were classified as 'Coloured' together with the majority of the Muslim population in the Cape. Interviews with Saleem Symallin, Johannesburg, 8 Feb. 2010, and with Sayda Moses and Lana Laila Pretorius, Wentworth, 16 Feb. 2010.

³⁸ In its origins, *muharram* is a *shia* Muslim ritual of mourning and self-mortification commemorating the death of Imam Hussayn in the battle of Karbala on the tenth day of the Muslim month of Muharram in the year 680 CE. *Kavadi* was brought to Durban by indentured labourers from Tamil Nadu. G. Vahed, 'Constructions of community and identity among Indians in colonial Natal, 1860-1910: the role of the Muharram festival', *Journal of African History*, 43:1 (2003), 77-93.

³⁹ Green, *Bombay Islam*, 228.

Malay *Khalifa*. Yet others believe the Malays brought it here.'⁴⁰ Writing in 1982, he mentions that 'Yusuf Abdul Rahman Mola, aged 56 . . . a dispatch controller with education up to Std. VI' is the 'Khalifa of the Ratieb among the Zanzibaris' and has been so 'for the past twenty years'.⁴¹ Oosthuizen also describes the *dhikr* practices of commemorative chanting of Zanzibari women: a 'women's devotional singing or *dhikr* is held on Thursdays and Sundays, at a specific home. The women seat themselves in a circle, after which they sway their heads and bodies rhythmically in African style'.⁴² This is similar to female *tufo* dancing well-known from Mozambique Island – with women chanting and dancing in a sitting position, accompanied by the drums. This, in turn, is a development of the *mawlid naquira* (in Makua the 'dancing mawlid') that in Zanzibar is known as *mawlid ya hom*, another seated dance still performed in Zanzibar by men.⁴³

Such links between Durban Zanzibaris and northern Mozambique have remained unexplored by scholars. Significantly, these links suggest that a coastal continuum of Islamic culture stretched into Natal and South Africa from the north across the boundaries that have usually been assumed in the Indian Ocean literature to exist around the historical centre of Sofala (near present-day Beira).⁴⁴ They also illustrate the central role of the Rifaiyya, Qadiriyya, and Shadhiliyya Sufi brotherhoods in maintaining links within this continuum, and

⁴⁰ Oosthuizen, *The Muslim Zanzibaris*, 40f.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 44.

⁴³ L. Bonate, 'Islam in Northern Mozambique: a historical overview', *History Compass*, 8:7 (2010), 581; S. Arnfred, 'Tufo: Muslim women's culture in Northern Mozambique' [1999], in S. Arnfred, *Sexuality and Gender Politics in Mozambique: Rethinking Gender in Africa* (Woodbridge, 2011), 265-290; Nuotio, 'The Dance', 197-202; Bonate, 'Traditions and transitions', 66. On *duffu* drums, the Shadhiliyya brotherhood, and *ngoma* dancing in Tanzania, see Becker, *Becoming Muslim*, 202-5.

⁴⁴ For a discussion of boundaries, see M. Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London 2003), 13-26.

demonstrate that these links were predominantly twentieth-century creations. While the Rifaiyya brotherhood was connected to earlier forms of Sufi Islam, the Qadiriyya and Shadhiliyya brotherhoods only entered northern Mozambique as part of Islamic reform endeavours from the late 1890s.⁴⁵ They, therefore, only became a presence among Zanzibaris through interactions with northern Mozambique that unfolded when the community was already well established in Durban. By contrast, according to Omar Bishehe Abdallah – a knowledgeable Qadiriyya *shehe* born in Nampula in 1920, '*tufu rifaiyya*' and the Rifaiyya brotherhood arrived in Mozambique Island from Tanzania much earlier, and moved from there to Maputo and further south.⁴⁶

Through Maputo (Lourenço Marques until 1974), Muslims in Natal connected to Sufi brotherhood networks centered on Mozambique Island. Liazzat Bonate writes that with the arrival of the Shadhiliyya and Qadiriyya brotherhoods in northern Mozambique in the late 1890s, 'the centre of Islam moved away from the independent Swahili settlements, such as Angoche, to Mozambique Island'.⁴⁷ The cosmopolitan port cities of Durban and Maputo stimulated exchanges across large distances and, by the end of the nineteenth century, labour migration between Mozambique and Durban was well established. In Durban, local Zulu-speakers referred to Mozambican workers living at the Bluff as both Zanzibaris and as 'Amanyambana' – those from Inhambane, a major coastal city in southern Mozambique

⁴⁵ Bonate, 'Traditions and transitions', 79-84; A. Bang, *Ripples of Reform*.

⁴⁶ Interview with Shehe Omar Bishehe Abdallah, Nampula, 27 Jan. 2011. A *shehe* is the local leader of a particular Sufi order; Nampula is the provincial capital of Nampula province, the most populous part of northern Mozambique between the Lurio and Ligonha Rivers, where Mozambique Island is also situated.

⁴⁷ Bonate, 'Traditions and transitions', 103–108, 123, 128. Interview with José Ibraimo Abudo, Maputo, 7 Feb. 2011.

through which migrant labourers travelling to South Africa would pass.⁴⁸ At the same time, Zanzibaris who were employed in the Durban harbour travelled to Maputo to do ship repairs and other work, moving frequently between the two cities even at the height of apartheid. Other connections were forged by Mozambican sailors who abandoned ship in Durban and found accommodation among the Zanzibaris, and by anti-colonial and anti-apartheid activists who clandestinely crisscrossed borders in pursuit of shelter and safety.⁴⁹ Significantly, brotherhood businesses (Green's 'religious firms') also forged networks of exchange and contact between Durban and Mozambique. These networks included travelling healers and drum-makers as well as traders of herbs, medicines, *daira* hand drums, and other provisions needed for the performance of Sufi ritual.⁵⁰

Members of the present-day Zanzibari community recount how these diverse networks brought their family members to Durban. The grandfather of Eddie Osman, born in 1935 and now a Zanzibari elder, came to Durban in the early twentieth century as a herbalist, and both he and Eddie's father became renowned makers of the drums needed for *ratiep*.⁵¹ Demonstrating the movement of community members between Durban and Mozambique, Yacoob Ibrahim remembered working in the 1950s for a French dredging company in the port of Durban, and then being transferred to work in Maputo harbour. He recalled visiting the Xipamanine market area and the townships of Mafalala and Minkajuine on the northern fringes of Maputo, home to Makua-speakers from Nampula and Ilha de Moçambique. At Mafalala, Zanzibaris would go to the Qadiriyya and Shadhiliyya mosques, whose imams were

⁴⁸ Seedat, 'The "Zanzibaris"', 30f.

⁴⁹ Interview with Billie Mola, Bayview, 13 Feb. 2011.

⁵⁰ Cf. Green, *Bombay Islam*, 22.

⁵¹ Interviews with Eddie Osman, Bayview, 11 Feb. 2010 and 16 December 2012.

brotherhood members from northern Mozambique and also sometimes from further north, including the Comoros.⁵²

Important to forging and maintaining links between Durban Zanzibaris and the Qadiriyya and Shadhiliyya mosques in Mafalala was Shehe Basheko Abdulrazak Rajaab. Born in 1913, he was an imam at the Shadhiliyya mosque and in charge of a healer's clinic in Minkajuine. Shehe Basheko hailed from Mozambique Island, and worked for forty-three years for the maritime administration in Maputo as an inspector of immigrants' health cards.⁵³ On Mozambique Island, he is linked to families of prominent Sufi leaders, including Sayyid ba Hasan who in the 1930s formed the Qadiriyya Sadat – one of the most important branches of the Qadiriyya brotherhood in northern Mozambique.⁵⁴ Sayyid ba Hasan was, until his death in 1963, an active traveller who frequently visited Durban and had family there.⁵⁵ He was buried in Maputo, and people still visit his grave and sing songs about his good works.⁵⁶ Sayyid ba

⁵² Interviews in Bayview with Yacoob Ibrahim, 22 Feb. 2011; with Eddie Osman, 23 June 2010 and 13 Feb. 2011; with Billie Mola 13 Feb. 2011; with Ismail Fraser, Glenmore, 19 Feb. 2011. Interviews with Shehe Yussuf bin Hajji Adam, Mafalala, 7 Feb. 2011; Sheykh Cassim David, Matola, 8 Feb. 2011; Shehe Basheko Abdulrazak Rajaab, Minkajuine, 7 Feb. 2011.

⁵³ Interview with Shehe Basheko, Minkajuine, 7 Feb. 2011. Shehe Basheko passed away in May 2013 – two weeks after his 100th birthday.

⁵⁴ L. Bonate, 'Traditions and transitions', 73-122; interviews with Hafiz Jamu and Saide Amur bin Gimba Amur, Nampula, 26 Jan. 2011. *Sadat* (Arabic) is the plural of *sayyid*, meaning a lord, master, or descendant of the Prophet.

⁵⁵ L. Bonate, 'Traditions and transitions', 194-202.

⁵⁶ When talking of Sayyid ba Hassan, Shehe Omar Bishehe Abdallah made a point of dissociating this great Qadiriyya leader from the Rifaiyya, emphasizing the distinction between 'high' and 'low' religiosity and between reformed and unreformed varieties of Sufism. The Qadiriyya and Shadhiliyya orders belonged in the 'high' category while the Rifaiyya ritual practices like the 'dancing *mawlid*' and *ratiep* had a lower status, associated with recent converts and sometimes with descendants of slaves.

Hasan's granddaughter, Shifa Yussufo, who still lives in his house on Mozambique Island and is a *khalifa* – a sub-leader beneath the *shehe* – of the Qadiriyya Sadat, remembers that when they were young Shehe Basheko had wanted to marry her, but she declined.⁵⁷ The Qadiriyya Sadat in the island maintains active relations with Maputo and the mosques in Mafalala, and *murides* – 'servants' – of the brotherhood travel to Durban and South Africa on cultural visits and herbalist business. They sometimes represent the *Mahafil Issilamo* cultural and sporting organisation, a Muslim association founded on Mozambique Island in 1931 that has supported *ratiep*, *tufo* dancing, and Rifaiyya ritual practices among other activities even in the face of secularist or dogmatist adversity.⁵⁸

As we saw, coastal Sufis were active among the Zanzibaris in the early twentieth century when, for example, Mustapha Osman from the Comoros became an imam at Durban's Kings Rest mosque.⁵⁹ In the 1940s and 1950s, a prominent person representing the Sufi brotherhoods in Durban was a brother of Shehe Basheko named Mkotela, reputed to be 'a very learned man' who came to Kings Rest from Maputo and married a sister of Yussuf Mola. Mola, in turn, was a *khalifa* of the Shadiliyya brotherhood among the Zanzibaris for about

Interview with Shehe Omar Bishehe Abdallah, Nampula, 27 Jan. 2011. Other informants make a similar distinction. Interviews with Saide Abdulrahmane 'Makamba' Shehan, a Mahafil Issilamo representative, and with Nakuti Adamo Nakuti, a Rifaiyya performance group leader, Ilha de Moçambique, 31 Jan. 2011. Shehe Assane Issufu of the Qadiriyya Sadat said in another interview that 'Rifaiyya is like a discotheque - not serious like the brotherhoods. But it is doing good work – it is popular and defends us against the attacks of the *wahhabis*'. Interview with Shehe Assane Issufu, Nampula, 26 Jan. 2011.

⁵⁷ Interview with Khalifa Shifa Yussufo, Ilha de Moçambique, 31 Jan. 2011.

⁵⁸ Interview with Ali Muhammed Ninkwanta, Ilha de Moçambique, 2 Feb. 2012.

⁵⁹ Seedat, 'The Zanzibaris', 32f.; Oosthuizen, *The Muslim Zanzibaris*, 17.

thirty years.⁶⁰ Such familial connections established close links between Durban Zanzibaris and Makua-speaking northern Mozambicans *imams* at the Shadhiliyya and Qadiriyya mosques in Mafalala. Another important mediator between Durban and Mozambique was a Qadiriyya *shehe* named Habib Shali, who was simultaneously 'a great *shehe* of Rifaiyya' and travelled from the Qadiriyya mosque in Mafalala to Durban and Kings Rest in the 1940s.⁶¹ At Kings Rest, Habib Shali worked together with a man named Juma Abdulkader, the grandfather of the current prominent Zanzibari elder Salim Rapentha. Both Habib Shali and Juma Abdulkader were taught by an earlier *khalifa* from Mozambique named Hamad Jamfar who is claimed to have been the first to bring *ratiep* to Durban. Elders today remember Habib Shali as 'a respected spiritual guide' during his stay at Kings Rest:

Habib Shali taught us Makua and Arabic. He wanted us to go to Lourenço Marques to learn. He was a big *shehe*, who had a lot of good songs, and he would hit you very hard, if you played around.⁶²

Habib Shali returned to Mozambique in 1948. His work was continued in Durban by his brother-in-law Hassan Siraji who was also a *Qadiriyya* *shehe* from Mafalala, and who was then

⁶⁰ Interview with Eddie Osman and Billie Mola, 13 Feb. 2011; cf. Oosthuizen, *The Muslim Zanzibaris*, 41.

⁶¹ Interview with Shehe Yussuf bin Hajji Adam, Mafalala, 7 Feb. 2011. Habib Shali – whose name may refer to the famous Habib Salih of the *tariqa* Alawiyya, who was the founder of the Riyadh mosque and college in Lamu – was a *khalifa* at the Qadiriyya mosque in Mafalala who travelled to Durban and Kings Rest in the 1940s. On Habib Salih and the outreach activities of the Alawiyya, Qadiriyya, and Shadhiliyya brotherhoods, see Bang, *Sufis and Scholars*, 149f.

⁶² Interview with Yacoob Ibrahim, Bayview, 22 Feb. 2011; interview with Salim Rapentha, Bayview, 16 Dec. 2012.

succeeded as *khalifa* by the Durban-based Yussuf Mola.⁶³ As in Mozambique Island, performances in Durban of *ratiep* and the 'chanting of the Rifaiyya *râtib*' were sometimes viewed as 'cultural' rather than 'religious',⁶⁴ but importantly include singing the popular *mawlid al-barzanji* (see Fig. 2).⁶⁵

[Insert Fig. 2 here]

Fig. 2. The *mawlid-al-barzanji* recorded in an illuminated 1930s book of prayers and poems used by a Rifaiyya group in Mozambique Island (photo: Preben Kaarsholm, 31 January 2011).

Sufi orders in Durban remained informal with Zanzibaris largely relying on visiting *shehes* from Mozambique to represent the Qadiriyya and Shadhiliyya brotherhoods. There is no documentation of local Sufi leaders and religious authorities through the awarding of *ijazas* and *silsilas* before 1928.⁶⁶ Senior community members agree that Hamad Jamfar was the first holder of a Shadhiliyya *ijaza* to arrive in Durban. In 1935, Habib Shali became the next holder of an *ijaza* in Durban. Juma Abdulkader, in turn, succeeded him in the early 1950s. Yussuf Mola was then given a Shadhiliyya *ijaza* by Sheikh Anwarudeen in late 1962 or early 1963. Finally, before his death in the late 1990s, Yussuf Mola did not pass on a Shadhiliyya *ijaza* to a successor. Instead a '*ratiep* club', with whom Mola had worked closely –

⁶³ Interview with Eddie Osman and Billie Mola, 13 Feb. 2011.

⁶⁴ L. Bonate, 'Traditions and Transitions', 170f.

⁶⁵ Interview with Ismail Fraser, Glenmore, 19 Feb. 2011. On the history of the *mawlid al-barzanji*, see Pouwels, *Horn and Crescent*, 196; Bang, *Sufis and Scholars*, 149; Loimeier, *Between Social Skills*, 67f.

⁶⁶ *Ijazas* are certificates awarded by an acknowledged *tariqa* leader to recognize the authority of a new *shehe*. *Silsilas* are documents 'attesting to the legitimacy of the Order and its founder, containing a sequence of Sufi masters reaching back to the Prophet Muhammed'. Bonate, 'Traditions', viii and xi.

and which included Salim Rapentha, Eddie Osman, and Cassim Canthitoo – took over, relying on linkages with Maputo for more formal Shadhiliyya authority.⁶⁷

Several possible reasons exist for this uneven formalization of Sufi orders among Durban Zanzibaris. The first reason was hinted at in my 2011 interview with Shehe Basheko when he commented that the Shadhiliyya *dhikr* began in Mozambique, and had to be conducted there; thus, Durban, should be seen as an extension of Mozambican brotherhood.⁶⁸ A second reason may be that Zanzibaris were discreet about their Sufi affiliations, thinking it more important to emphasize the unity of Islam rather than sectarianism. Such concerns motivated Zanzibaris to engage Sufi networks more as benevolent societies or community development organizations rather than religious institutions. Third, by retaining a certain amount of informality as regards the Sufi orders, Zanzibaris maintained greater flexibility in defining the boundaries between Islam and cultural custom and fending off criticism from scripturalist reform movements. Finally, on the Mozambican side, discretion to the point of invisibility became necessary during the late 1970s and early 1980s when secularisation was high on the Mozambique Liberation Front (FRELIMO) government's agenda and Sufi brotherhoods were accused of being Mozambique National Resistance (RENAMO) supporters. On Mozambique Island, for example, Sufi enterprises like *Mahafil Issilamo* organized performances under the pseudonym *Estrela Vermelha* (Red Star).⁶⁹

In any case, within the Durban Zanzibari community from the 1930s, the Sufi brotherhoods were an important benevolent presence, even if individuals involved represented only a minority of the community. This minority worked with tact and discretion,

⁶⁷ This section is based on information in an e-mail from Aziza Dalika on 30 September 2013, following consultations with Salim Rapentha, Eddie Osman, Yussuf Abdul Rehman, and Alpha Franks.

⁶⁸ Interview with Shehe Basheko, Minkajuine, 7 Feb. 2011.

⁶⁹ On *Estrela Vermelha* and *tufo* dance group competitions in Ilha in a secularist setting, see Arnfred, 'Tufo'.

and became highly influential within the more broadly representative Rahmaniya Madressa Society, formed in 1947. It oversaw – and still does today – the larger of the two mosques in Bayview, and was an important forerunner of the Zanzibari Civic Association formed in the 1980s and the more recent Zanzibari Development Trust.⁷⁰ The second and smaller Iqbali mosque in Bayview was a weaker community organization. In recent years, however, it has become a stronghold of scripturally dogmatic interpretations of Islam as promoted both by the *Tablighi Jamaat*, an Islamic reform movement with roots in Pakistan and India, and by new Islamic non-governmental organizations, like the Africa Muslim Agency, with bases in the Arab world.⁷¹

Sufi brotherhoods, thus, played a major role in helping Zanzibaris to define themselves and negotiate their place within segregation and apartheid-era South Africa. Internally, dedication to Islam, Sufi ritual, and Makua language encouraged community pride and self-respect. These connections made Zanzibaris well-placed recipients of Indian Islamic philanthropy through the Juma Masjid Trust, providing a model of community development for other groups of African Muslims. Within South Africa, *ratiep* and brotherhood connections added to the exoticism of the community as a 'lost tribe' and supported representations of its members as quasi-Arab Zanzibaris with origins in the Swahili world, rather than in the less

⁷⁰ As explained in 'The Zanzibari Time Line' prepared and stencilled in 2006 by the Zanzibari Development Trust for 'The first celebration commemorating the arrival of the Zanzibaris to South Africa 133 years ago held on 4 August in Chatsworth' (copy kindly provided by Alpha Franks).

⁷¹ For Tablighi Jamaat in Durban, see Vahed, 'Contesting Indian Islam', 116. For the Africa Muslim Agency, see S. Sadouni, 'New religious actors in South Africa: the example of Islamic humanitarianism', in B. F. Soares and R. Otaeyek (eds.), *Islam and Muslim Politics in Africa* (Basingstoke, 2007), 103-118. An account of similar recent contestations elsewhere in northern Mozambique can be found in F. Declich, 'Transmission of Islamic practices and women's agency in Ibo island and Pemba (Mozambique)', *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 7:4 (2013): 588-606.

cosmopolitan South Africa of white domination. This was an impressive feat of religious and cultural entrepreneurship that allowed Zanzibaris some autonomy from restrictions imposed upon those classified as African.

The community's appellation of 'Zanzibari' did not correspond to the actual north Mozambican roots of its founders who, only by coincidence, had become associated with Zanzibar through the British anti-slavery campaigns of the 1870s. During the twentieth century, however, east African affiliations acquired a new reality through Sufi networks that unfolded along the Indian Ocean coast and came to encompass Durban's Zanzibari community. Through these networks, Sufi rituals and practices spread not only to Cape Town and Mozambique Island but also to Natal and Durban.⁷²

ZANZIBARIS OR AMAKHUWA AFTER APARTHEID?

As apartheid governance crumbled in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the challenges facing Zanzibaris changed. Representations of the community as non-African Muslims with their own Swahili-like language proved advantageous under the Group Areas Act. In the context of the Act's forced removals, it was a political achievement to be classified as 'Other Asiatics' and awarded housing and facilities in Chatsworth rather than in Umlazi. After apartheid, by contrast, policies of the African Renaissance and Black Economic Empowerment made recognition as black African more politically and economically advantageous. Thus, it became increasingly common for Zanzibaris to present themselves as 'Amakhuwa', and locate their Indian Ocean roots in northern Mozambique rather than Zanzibar.

⁷² For the importance of Zanzibar from the late nineteenth century onwards as a centre for learning and the training of *imams* within these coastal networks, see Bang, *Sufis and Scholars*, 114f.; Loimeier, *Between Social Skills*, 105, 109; A. Bang, 'Zanzibari Islamic knowledge transmission revisited: loss, lament, legacy, transmission – and transformation', *Social Dynamics*, 38:3 (2012), 419-434; Bang, *Ripples of Reform*.

Such representations came into dramatic play in Zanzibaris' bid to return to Durban's Bluff. As apartheid was dismantled, land restitution was introduced as an instrument of transitional justice. In 1995, the Zanzibari Civic Association registered a formal claim with the government's Advisory Commission on Land Allocation to repossess the land on the Bluff from which they had been removed in 1962. The Juma Masjid Trust lodged a competing claim for restitution of the same land, arguing that they had been forced to sell to the government under the Group Areas Act in 1958.⁷³ The two competing claims caused division between the Zanzibaris and the predominantly Indian South African members of Juma Masjid Trust who had long seen themselves as the community's benefactors. The case was resolved in 2003, when most of the land on the Bluff was given back to the Zanzibari community. The Juma Masjid Trust only retained a small area around the mosque and cemetery.⁷⁴

Resettlement plans for the Bluff further fuelled discussions about the identity, origins, and culture of the Zanzibaris.⁷⁵ An important source for these debates has been a 52-minute

⁷³ Regional Land Claims Commission: KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg (RLCC), Claim form submitted to the Commission on the Restitution of Land Rights of 7 July 1995, signed by 'A. Franks – in my capacity as Secretary of the Zanzibari Civic Association' and c/o D. K. Singh, Vahed and Partners; Negotiation Report, The Zanzibari Civic Association and the Juma Masjid Trust, Claim reference nos.: KRN 6/2/3/E/8/817/2712/185 and KRN 6/2/3/E/8/817/2712/187.

⁷⁴ RLCC, Memorandum. Request for ministerial approval in terms of section 42D of the Restitution of Land Rights Act 22 of 1994 (as amended) for the claim by the Zanzibari Civic Association (ZCA), KRN6/2/3/E/8/817//2712/187.

⁷⁵ The 'Strategic Plan' for developing Kings Rest includes a 'Cultural village & market', a 'Museum, cultural & tourism centre', a 'Traditional restaurant with Zanzibari theme and cuisine' as well as an 'Islamic School and Centre' and a 'Guest house'. Income from cultural tourism and programmes to 'strengthen and promote the Islamic faith and identity of the Zanzibari community' were deemed vital. See RLCC, Zanzibari Development Trust, Strategic Plan, 5 Nov. 2003, 11; Appendix: Sustainability Plan,

TV programme produced by the South African Broadcasting Corporation in 1996. Entitled 'Zanzibaris', the programme is a carefully prepared self-representation of the community.⁷⁶ Zubeda Seedat served as researcher for the programme, largely articulating the views of the Zanzibari Civic Association and of the Rahmaniya Madressa Society in which Sufi order members were prominently represented. Divided into two parts – 'Identity and Community' and 'The Struggle for King's [sic] Rest', the programme includes rich photographic materials, historical press coverage, interviews with elders like Yussuf Mola, and recordings of *mawlid* and *dhikr* performances including *ratiep*.

The programme demonstrates the community's reorientation since 1994. It contains many references to the community's Zanzibar and Swahili origins, but also signals a break with notions of the Zanzibaris as a non-African 'mystery tribe'. Instead, it emphasises the history of the slave trade, and depicts Zanzibaris as victims of a shared African legacy of suffering. Through this representation, Zanzibaris shed their apartheid designation of 'Other Asiatics' and claim a common African history of dispossession, bolstering their political claims in the new South Africa.

At the same time, alongside these indigenizing developments, Islamic brotherhood exchanges between Durban and Mozambique have intensified since 1994. Improved roads have facilitated these exchanges by making it possible to go from Durban to Maputo by minibus in ten hours' time. Small groups of Zanzibari Muslims – increasingly referring to themselves as Amakhuwa without discarding completely their earlier identification as Zanzibari – travel regularly to Maputo to see family and friends, and attend Friday prayers and consultations at the Shadhiliyya and Qadiriyya mosques in Mafalala. From Maputo, some

13. Cf. Zanzibari Development Trust (ZDT), Zanzibari Heritage Centre. A proposal for the establishment of the Zanzibari Heritage Centre, n. d.

⁷⁶ J. Ahmed, 'Zanzibaris. Part One: Identity and Community. Part Two: The Struggle for King's Rest'. Produced by The Centre for Democratic Communications for SABC 1 (February 1996).

community members travel on to Nampula and Mozambique Island where they interact with fellow Muslims in exchanges facilitated by cultural leaders like Shehe Basheko. Durbanites also visit northern Mozambique, bringing back photos and stories from Mossuril and other key sites of the late nineteenth century slave trade. In December 2012 and January 2013, groups from Bayview travelled to Mossuril for a wedding attended by Shehe Basheko and for New Year celebrations. They also attended a Sufi *ziyara* celebration in Cabaçeira Pequena, organised by the Qadiriyya Sadat and its current leader, *shehe* Assane Issufu, a maternal grandson of Sayyid ba Hasan, as well as ba Hasan's daughter, *khalifa* Shifa.⁷⁷ Such visits stimulate discussion about local and transnational allegiances, both past and present.

By contrast, Sufi ritual practices like *ratiep*, *mawlid* celebrations, and *dhikr* performances have become less frequent in Durban's Bayview neighbourhood, and no formally accredited *khalifa* has presided since Yussuf Mola's death on 27 July 2007.⁷⁸ One reason for this is theological, linked to reform movements such as the Tablighi Jamaat and Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah. As described by Roman Loimeier and Felicitas Becker for Zanzibar and Tanzania, and by Goolam Vahed for Indian Muslims in Durban, reform movements aim to cleanse Islam of perceived cultural impurities including *mawlids*, ancestor worship, tomb visitations, and beliefs in spirits.⁷⁹ Among Zanzibaris, this impulse has led to debate around ritual practices and the role of Zanzibari initiation rites. Reformers argue that the *nimwaris* – young girls undergoing initiation – should shroud themselves in *burkhas* rather than

⁷⁷ Interviews with Salim Rapentha, 10 Feb. 2009, and with Eddie Osman, 23 June 2010. E-mail from Zaithoon Maziya, 21 May 2013. The term *ziyara* used by the informant here in reference to Sufi ceremonies of prayer, performance and recital more broadly, rather than to grave visitations.

⁷⁸ Interview with Ismail Fraser, 19 Feb. 2011.

⁷⁹ Becker, *Becoming Muslim*, 257-263; Loimeier, *Between Social Skills*, 125-135; G. Vahed, 'Contesting "orthodoxy"', 313-334.

traditional *mkumi* cloth or *capulanas*.⁸⁰ Reform efforts, however, have been checked by the elders in the Rahmaniya Madressa Society in which sympathisers with the Sufi orders are still a majority, and have retained control of the most important mosque in Bayview.

Another reason for the declining frequency of Sufi ritual in Durban may relate to lack of both funds and commitment among younger people. Further, the sense of *ratiep* performances has shifted from religious ritual towards cultural entertainment with *ratiep* groups performing at weddings.⁸¹ In April 2013, however, extensive *mawlid-al-nabi* performances to celebrate the Prophet's birthday were held in Bayview, featuring what the chairman of the Zanzibari Development Trust described as 'a cultural group from Mozambique [who] stole the show with their pulsating dancing and drumming, which brought tears of joy to some' (see Fig. 3).⁸²

[Insert Fig. 3 here]

Fig. 3. Performance of *ratiep* and Rifaiyya ritual at *mawlid-al-nabi* in Bayview, 28 April 2013 (photo from DVD recording courtesy of Ismail Fraser).

In Mozambique during the same period, *mawlid* celebrations increased. There has been a resurgence of Sufi Islam since the 1990s with the northern Mozambique-oriented Islamic Congress of Mozambique gaining influence vis-à-vis the reformist and *wahhabi*-oriented Islamic Council of Mozambique.⁸³ This has been the result of changing FRELIMO

⁸⁰ Interview with Saleem Symallin, a member of Ahlu Sunnah wal Jamaah, Johannesburg, 8 Feb. 2010. On the centrality of *capulanas* in Ilha *tufo* performances, see Arnfred, 'Tufo', 283-285.

⁸¹ Interview with Eddie Osman, 23 June 2010.

⁸² E-mail communication from Thamim Aboobacar, chairman of the Zanzibari Development Trust, 7 May 2013.

⁸³ E. Morier-Genoud, 'A prospect of secularization? Muslims and political power in Mozambique today'. *Journal for Islamic Studies*, 27 (2007), 233-266; Bonate, 'Islam in Northern Mozambique', 573-93.

policies aimed at outmanoeuvring RENAMO in the north, which led to the inclusion in national government between 1994 and 2004 of Muslims like Minister of Justice José Abudo, who is from Angoche and a Shadhiliyya *khalifa*.⁸⁴

Despite the contrasting fortunes of Sufi practice in Durban and Mozambique, there have been parallel strivings in both contexts to promote notions of a distinct Amakhuwa identity. The Sufi resurgence in Mozambique has also been one of Makua culture, and in 2008 extensive *mawlid* and *ziyara* celebrations in the Makua language were held in Maputo. This brought together Muslims and Makua-speakers from throughout Mozambique and from the Makua diaspora, including a delegation from Bayview. One of the organizers was José Abudo who – as minister – had visited the Bayview community in 2003 and expressed appreciation for its language conservation efforts: ‘people must travel to Durban to learn to speak pure Makua’.⁸⁵ The 2008 *ziyara* was an occasion for Mozambique to acknowledge and build links with its Makua-speaking diaspora. President Armando Emilio Guebuza attended the celebration, addressing the congregation and meeting the Durban visitors.

Most recently, Sufi Islam has been weakened in Maputo and southern Mozambique by the death of Shadhiliyya leaders like Shehe Basheko and the aging of other prominent leaders like Shehe Mohammad Ali Aboobacar (b. 1929) at the Qadiriyya mosque in Mafalala.⁸⁶ Older Sufi practices have also been overshadowed to some extent by the success of reform initiatives spurred by younger leaders trained in the Arab world.⁸⁷ Groups of Durban Muslims

⁸⁴ Interview with José Abudo, Maputo, 7 Feb 2011.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Interview with José Abudo, Maputo, 22 Jan. 2014; interviews with *shehe* Mohammad Ali Aboobacar, and *shehe* Yussuf Amadi, Qadiriyya mosque, Mafalala, 22 Jan. 2014.

⁸⁷ This includes Said Habib, a great-grandson of *shehe* Sayyid ba Hasan mentioned above, now an *imam* at the Mohammad mosque in central Maputo and an advisor on Islamic affairs to the President of Mozambique, with whom I visited the grave of ba Hasan in Maputo on 22 Jan. 2014.

– including a son of the late *shehe* Yussuf Mola – have been taking active part in these debates, aiming to preserve the Shadiliyya mosque within the control of the brotherhood. By contrast, in northern Mozambique, the influence of the Sufi orders have been increased, as indicated by the victory in the November 2013 local elections in Mozambique Island of a young Shadiliyya *shehe*, Saide Amur, as a FRELIMO candidate. This was duly celebrated at a spectacular *mawlid-an-nabi* ceremony, which I attended in Mozambique Island on 19 January 2014, beginning with a mass procession around the perimeter of the island, and replicated at another celebration of the Prophet's birthday in the port city of Nacala the week after (see Fig. 4).

[Insert Fig. 4 here]

Fig. 4. Rifaiyya group performing during celebrations of the Prophet's birthday – *mawlid-an-nabi* – in Mozambique Island, 19 January 2014 (photo: Preben Kaarsholm).

CONCLUSION

As part of constructing an Amakhuwa identity, Durban Zanzibaris have emphasized their preservation of the Makua language, their Sufi faith, and their slave history. Such emphasis aims not to claim external origins but to give depth and authenticity to their South African citizenship and its attendant rights. This strategy resembles that of 'Cape Malay' groups in post-apartheid South Africa who claim to be both South African and members of a Malaysian or Indonesia diaspora.⁸⁸

The coming years will tell how Zanzibaris resolve or do not resolve these tensions in their self-representations and commemorations of the past. These are not theoretical issues but practical ones that will play out as the land restitution project on the Bluff moves forward.

⁸⁸ Bangstad, 'Diasporic consciousness', 32-60; Jappie, 'From the madrasah to the museum', 369-99; Kaarsholm, 'Diaspora or transnational citizens', 454-66.

In a sense, the restitution project is an attempt to turn history backwards by recreating a community that was forcefully dismantled fifty years ago. Restitution in such a literal sense is, of course, not possible as many members and descendants of the original community have since died or moved away. Nonetheless, it compels community members to decide how they want their history as Zanzibaris and Amakhuwa to be represented in local archives and museums, and through educational and heritage tourism initiatives.

This complex history of identity formation and self-representation highlights a number of issues that have been largely overlooked in the literature on Islam in both South and southeastern Africa. These include the importance of Sufi brotherhoods and ritual for the development of Islam among Africans, particularly in Durban and KwaZulu-Natal. This history also highlights the interaction between the three different trajectories by which Sufism travelled to South Africa: with migrants from South Asia; with other migrants from Malaysia and Indonesia who settled in Cape Town; and with still a third set of migrants who travelled down the Indian Ocean coast from Zanzibar and the Comoros through northern Mozambique to Durban. The connectedness of Durban's Zanzibaris to Mozambican networks challenges notions of a South African 'exceptionalism' by providing a new perspective on the ways in which South Africa has been part of an Indian Ocean coastal continuum. Finally, this history of Durban's Zanzibaris adds to the growing number of studies that examine the large and diverse Makua diaspora that arose from the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century slave trade.

The two modes of communal self-understanding – Zanzibari and Amakhuwa – point to an uneasiness between the local and the transnational, an uneasiness found in other Indian Ocean situations. As shown, membership in Indian Ocean and specifically Sufi religious networks can serve as a basis for both cosmopolitan connection and narrow territorial claims. The particular paradox involved in this case is that cosmopolitanism – as represented in arguments for membership in a Indian Ocean Zanzibari community – aided this group during segregation and apartheid, eras normally associated with a narrowing and hardening of forms

of self-identification. By contrast, the more narrow territorial understanding of the community's origin in northern Mozambique emerged after the fall of apartheid in South Africa and the weakening of secular nationalism in Mozambique, shifts usually associated with multiculturalism and greater tolerance. Whether deployed as part of cosmopolitan connection or narrow territorial claims, Sufi networks offered vital resources for seeking recognition and citizenship.