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'BAKWATA is Like a Dead Spirit to Oppress Muslims'

Islamic Revivalism and Modes of Governance in Tanzania

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Abstract

During the 2015 general election campaigns in Tanzania, a controversy arose between the ruling party and the opposition coalition, concerning the proposed constitution draft and the position of Zanzibar within the Union. Beyond this controversy, there have existed the impacts of Islamic revivalism on the one hand, and a fear for the perpetuation of Islam in Tanzania on the other – issues which have played a significant role in the country since Independence. In this paper, we focus in particular upon popular Muslim preachers, such as Ponda Issa Ponda, who complain that the National Muslim Council of Tanzania [BAKWATA] is just an extension of the mainstream government – an organisation which is unsympathetic to Muslims' interests, which violates Muslims' rights, and which functions contrary to its own purpose. This complaint draws on long-term memory, reaching back even further than the 1968 banning of the East African Muslims Welfare Society [EAMWS]. Two interesting questions are addressed here concerning a central state's involvement in religious affairs under multi-party rule: How has the Tanzanian government managed religious diversity? And how should its management style be evaluated, given the perspective that has developed with the shift in focus from 'government' to 'governance' in policy and management sciences?

Keywords

BAKWATA – EAMWS – good democratic governance – Muslim welfare – new public management studies – post-secularism – religious diversity

1 Introduction

In contemporary policy sciences literature, the shift from ‘government’ to ‘governance’ – also referred to as ‘new public management’ studies – is viewed as a consequence of the neo-liberal agenda introduced in the 1970s in many countries, including Chile and China. This new perspective then spread to the United Kingdom and the United States, and subsequently it was adopted by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, providing a counterforce to the normative agenda of communism (Gauthier et al. 2013: 13-15).

This shift in framework from ‘government’ studies and praxis to ‘governance’ studies and praxis (Bang 2003: 2, Martikainen 2013: 131-133) can be summarised in the following normative developments: (i) a move away from the welfare state and an increased involvement of civil society organisations in the provision of social services at the local community level; (ii) a blurring of boundaries between public and private spheres, between state and civil society, with a change in the role of the government from control to regulation; (iii) an encouragement and stimulation of local group self-governance, and public-private partnerships in the handling of political, social and economic issues; (iv) the replacing of a top-down style of decision making with a bottom-up approach to policy formation and implementation, stimulating participation of civil society organisations in the process of governance; (v) the building of partnerships and a lessening of hierarchy in coordinating networks. In general, the new framework features a ‘democratisation of democracy’ – for example: the populace is no longer satisfied with ratifying a representative government’s rule by the majority vote, but insists upon the inclusion of minority voices.

In this respect, Tanzania is an interesting case of this shift in framework of modeling quality of democratic governments (Bakari and Ndumbaro 2006). As one of the African countries that practiced socialism immediately after Independence, Tanzania has experienced a shift from one-party politics and state controlled economy, to liberalism since 1985, and to democracy since 1992. The shift from President Nyerere to President Mwinyi – referred to as a shift from freedom (*uhuru*) to liberalism (*rukhsa*), marked Tanzania’s entrance

into the neo-liberal global era, reducing the role of the state and mushrooming privatisation of para-statal as encouraged by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank through their economic restructuring requisites for access to foreign revenue borrowing facilities.

As a socialist country from the outset, Independent Tanzania was purportedly a secular country, strictly separating religion and state, although many instances of 'civic religion' remained (Westerlund 1980) during Nyerere's era. Initiating Independence, Nyerere's message was twofold: 'religions, play your part' (in development and nation-building); but 'don't mix your religion with politics'. During Nyerere's period in executive office,¹ the government restricted registration of religious organisations and negotiated with mainline religious umbrella organisations. Since the succeeding Mwinyi presidential era, religious organisations have been free to register within the limits of the law; and the government has tried to regulate diversity within and between religions (Kikwete 2006).

Indeed, in a spirit of fostering socio-economic and political reforms in Tanzania, the subsequent Third Phase Government under President Mkapa emphasised national good governance. The National Framework on Good Governance (United Republic of Tanzania 1999: 4-5) underscored this:

As set out in the Government's policy paper *Vision 2025*: "Tanzania cherishes Good Governance and the rule of law in the process of creating wealth and sharing benefits in society and seeks to ensure that its people are empowered with the capacity to make leaders and public servants accountable. By 2025, good governance should have permeated the national socio-economic structure thereby ensuring a culture of accountability, rewarding good performance and effectively curbing corruption and other vices in society."

It is important to note that the National Framework discourse earmarked religious entities among the priority areas for targeting deliberate interventions, in order to achieve the national vision. 'Religious entities' were included under 'civil society', which was used broadly as an umbrella category to include along with religious entities, trade unions, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), charities, social and professional clubs, cooperatives, cultural groups, and more. Under the National Framework,

¹ Nyerere held the United Republic of Tanzania presidential office from 1964-1985, Myinyi 1985-1995, Mkapa 1995-2005, Kikwete 2005-2015, Magufuli 2015-present.

civil society organisations were credited insofar as “they serve as a means for protecting and strengthening cultural and religious beliefs and values” (United Republic of Tanzania 1999: 10). Since the rule of Mwinyi, religious and faith-based organisations have mushroomed, sometimes with considerable rivalry among themselves, as well as pressures emerging between the civic sector and the central state.

In this paper it is not religious revivalism as such that interests us, but modes of governing religious revivalism. As former President Kikwete (2007: 7) ended his speech a dozen years ago at the University of Boston:

I would like to conclude by cautioning that managing religious diversity is perhaps one of the greatest challenges we face now, nationally and internationally. We have no choice but to work harder to promote inter- and intra-religious tolerance and understanding as we deal with religious-motivated terrorism and political violence.

In this article we analyse and evaluate one case of religious diversity management. The alleged leader of the Baraza Kuu,² Ponda Issa Ponda, complains that the Baraza Kuu la Waislamu Tanzania [BAKWATA], the National Muslim Council of Tanzania, functions just as an extension component of the central state government, and that it violates Muslims’ interests and rights.³ In 2012, Ponda and fifty of his followers illegally entered a private plot in Chang’ombe,⁴ saying that the property belonged to Muslims, referring to the plot as former East African Muslims Welfare Society [EAMWS] property, being inherited by BAKWATA when EAMWS was banned, and sold by BAKWATA leaders for their own personal benefit.⁵ Through this accusation, Ponda Issa Ponda made a political statement, drawing on long-term memory, going back to the 1968 abandoning of the EAMWS, and even before.

BAKWATA presents an interesting illustration of state involvement in religious affairs. In the case of this National Muslim Council of Tanzania (BAKWATA), the Tanzanian government was found not only negotiating and

2 Note that the Kiswahili label ‘kuu’ (*adj.* high rank, superior, great) is meant to be in clear competition with the other umbrella organisation, BAKWATA, which also claims to be the ‘supreme’ Muslim organisation in the region. This shows the symbolic power of language.

3 See Ndaluka, Nyanto and Wijzen (2014) for background information on Ponda Issa Ponda.

4 Chang’ombe is an administrative ward in the Temeke district of the Dar es Salaam Region of Tanzania.

5 The story was covered by the media, including the daily newspaper *The Citizen*, November 29, 2012, and analysed further in J. Juma and A. Islam (2017).

collaborating with a religious organisation, but itself constituted one, in the existence of this Council.

The creation of such a government construction was highly controversial from the outset. As Njozi (2000: 7) argues: "... the conflict in Tanzania is not between Muslims and Christians, but between Muslims and the government. The problem is neither inter-religious nor horizontal, but political and vertical." In contrast with this pessimistic view, the official position of the Union of the Republic of Tanzania is that through its extension component, BAKWATA, the Tanzanian government tries to foster unity (*umoja*) and peace (*amani*). Repeatedly, the government voices that it has no religion (*serikali haina dini*) and no preference (*serikali haina ubaguzi*) for any existing religion. So what fuels the antagonism that BAKWATA has generated from the Muslim community itself.

There has been a quantifiable ambivalence among Muslims overall in their assessment of the government's relationship with the Islamic presence in Tanzania generally, and BAKWATA in particular. In their survey results published almost fifteen years ago, Bakari and Ndumbaro (2006: 253) reported that 74.6 per cent of the Sunni Muslims responded that the relation between religions and the state in Tanzania were good; 11.6 per cent responded that the relation was disharmonious.

In order to study this case we conducted critical discourse analysis (Fairclough 1992) on the data collected from twenty-five semi-structured interviews with elders and youngsters in Bukoba and Dar es Salaam.⁶ With respect to the elders, we focused on those who witnessed and recollected in conversations today the formation and banning of the EAMWS and the establishment of BAKWATA back in the late 1950s to the late 1960s. The age of the elders' group involved in our interviewing varied from 60 to 93 years. The other group of data centres around the views of youth, including individuals aware of the history of both EAMWS and BAKWATA not as eye-witnesses but through formal education, reading, oral history, and informal conversations. However, they have been direct witness to incidences happening in association with EAMWS and BAKWATA. The age of the youngsters in this second data group varied from 20 to 35 years. Concerning the subjects' social involvement, we included former and present leaders of the two institutions EAMWS and BAKWATA, as well as Muslim religious leaders, social activists in Islamic faith-based organisations,

⁶ Bukoba, population 100,000, is a city in the Northwest of Tanzania, Kagera Region. Dar es Salaam is the major city, population of nearly 4.4 million of Tanzania on the eastern coast of the Indian Ocean.

and youth enrolled in Tanzanian universities.⁷ The interviews were analysed and the summary conclusions drawn and spelt out here were derived from using the framework of critical discourse analysis. To put these conversations and interview contents in perspective, it is useful to consider some of the contemporary literature addressing what has been portrayed recently as the 'Islamic Crisis'.

2 Published Perspectives on the 'Islamic Crisis'

In his book *The Life and Times of Abdulwahid Sykes (1924-1968)*, Mohamed Said (1998) narrates the reasons that may have caused the banning of the East African Muslim Welfare Society [EAMWS] fifty years ago. Said says that already at the EAMWS Arusha meeting in 1966, there was a separatist group within EAMWS that called for a split of EAMWS into three national entities together with an indigenisation of the EAMWS constitution (Said 1998: 283). Moreover, the secretary-general of EAMWS had to be an African Muslim (Said 1998: 288).

By doing so, the separatist group within EAMWS – backed by the government – brought a racial and intra-religious dimension to the debate not heard so far (Said 1998: 287-289). Although the government of the day proclaimed national unity, by taking sides in the conflict the government inadvertently was promoting an intra-religious and inter-racial conflict. According to Said (1998: 289), the reason for doing this was not inadvertent; it was meant to divide the Muslim community and to weaken them politically. According to Said (1998: 286), the real cause of undermining the organisation emerged a year earlier when EAMWS president, Tewa Said, and EAMWS vice-president, Bibi Titi Mohamed, who were both central state cabinet ministers, lost their parliamentary seats in the 1965 general elections. The government was afraid that the two were building a new political power base through EAMWS, that EAMWS was a threat to popular and energetic machinery of the Tanganyikan African National Union (TANU),⁸ victorious in its achievement of liberation, and thus EAMWS had to be stopped.

7 A note to discourse analysis specialists: the method used to select the interviewees was purposive- based, following the snowball approach.

8 Julius Nyerere was the founder of the Tanganyikan African National Union (TANU), the party of African nationalism and Independence, in the 1950s. Its religious flavour was Christian redemptive.

After the proclamation of national unity and socialism in the 1967 Arusha declaration, the reasons understood for the banning of EAMWS shifted. According to Said (1998), Nyerere saw pan-Islamic unity and solidarity as a threat to nationalism; moreover in his view the Asian businessmen who dominated EAMWS did not want their businesses to be nationalised; and for this reason they did not support socialism.

Thus, the crisis which was first seen as an intra-religious Muslim issue, was later portrayed as a conflict between religion and state. Said (1998: 300) argues that the members of the splinter group that favored the banning of the EAMWS and putting BAKWATA in place "had nothing to do with Islam apart from having Muslims names." Another factor was Nyerere's being influenced by the Catholic Church, in institution which was alarmed by the Muslim unity and by the transfer of the EAMWS headquarters from Mombasa to Dar es Salaam (Said 1998: 314).

For Said (1998: 291), the influence of the Catholic Church was apparent: "the Roman Catholic Church had fielded its own independent candidates to oppose Muslim candidates nominated by TANU to contest local government elections in Kigoma and Bukoba" in 1963. Further, he commented, "No records exist which show that the government took any action against the Church" (Said 1998: 305-306). However, in the same year the all-Muslim Elders Council was dissolved because of "mixing religion and politics" (Said 1998: 291, 305-306). At one point, because of its alleged hostility to TANU's African socialist *Ujamaa* policy, EAMWS was declared unlawful (Mbogoni 2004: 135-136). Hamza Njozi (2000: 68) asserts that Nyerere nationalised the schools in order to pacify Muslims' discontent about the abolition of EAMWS. Quoting John Sivalon, Njozi (2000: 4) claims that Nyerere banned EAMWS at the request of the Catholic Church.

A more exhaustive literature review than space allows here will reveal a wide range of theoretical perspectives heatedly contesting whether there prevailed the sense of an Islamic threat to African socialism in the early years of Tanganyikan Independence – thus demonstrating that the interpretation of political history is contingent and ambiguous.

However this may be, Said (1998: 307) says that "the history of the country is being erased," that "more research by independent scholars needs to be done" (Said 1998: 339) and that "Muslims are at present in the process of rediscovering themselves and their rich history" (Said 1998: 315). It is fair to say that we are in the midst of this process and that such "rediscovering" constitutes the research interest and theoretical framework couching this current oral history project and the segment of its findings summarised here.

3 Let Us Have Our Own Organisation

Various interviewees referred to establishing BAKWATA as a consequence of Tanzania's Independence. Asked why the EAMWS was abandoned, one interviewee said:

After independence we were told for Muslim matters, we could not continue with the office which was in Nairobi instead we have changed to establish our office in Tanzania. So, we met at Muslim school, especially, I personally was there, also Adam Nasib, Naji Mahmoud and others who have died, so many, and we established a party called BAKWATA.⁹

Advocates of BAKWATA often said that it is good to have one national umbrella organisation which stresses unity and goes beyond divisions. They saw BAKWATA as the government's tool to combat extremism and radicalism. But many Muslims have contested its formation and mistrusted its *raison d'être* from its inception. The overall impression gained from our analysis is that the sense of acceptability of the government's management of religious diversity has depreciated considerably over the last dozen years.

4 Perceived Resistance to Muslims' Socio-economic Development

Some of those we interviewed were opposed to idea of banning EAMWS and establishing BAKWATA. On the other hand various interviewees were pleased that President Mwinyi allowed other Muslim organisations to register and perceived such permission as setting Muslims free from undue state control through BAKWATA. It was one interviewee's perception that as soon as President Mwinyi came into power, he discovered Muslims' limitations and decided to 'set them free' from BAKWATA by allowing registration of diverse active Muslim organisations independent from BAKWATA. Some regard the great social diversity portrayed throughout Muslim societies today as an important value within Islam, as shown by the persistence of two *Id ul Fitri* celebrations,

9 Baada ya kuupata Uhuru tukaambiwa kwamba hatutaweza kuendelea na ofisi ambayo iko Nairobi katika masuala ya waislamu tumeibadili tukaa tengeneza ofisi yetu yaa Tanzania. Basi tuliweza kukaa pale Muslim school hasa mimi mwenyewe nilikuwepo Adam Nasibu, Naji Mahmoud na wengine ambao wameshakufa wengi sana tukatengeneza chama kinaitwa Bakwata.

rather than one, among other aspects of the faith in practice according to divergent traditions.

Yet not all Muslims regard this diversity as a positive thing, from the point of view of socio economic welfare of their communities. Following the presidential encouragement for Muslims to register independent of BAKWATA, various organisations emerged to address matters of community development. At the same time, many Muslims urged greater institutional collaboration. The move for Muslims to unite in their own organisations registered as institutions might be a sign of recognition that they needed to come together to have a greater social and political influence.

A major objection to BAKWATA emerging from our collated opinions was the view that this organisation is incapable of coordinating Muslims' socio-economic development. BAKWATA was criticised for rendering a feeling of helplessness among Muslims, and suppressed their efforts to address their problems. Among the most significant concerns raised by those with whom we talked, the one that stood out and was repeatedly referred to as a central problem for Muslims in Tanzania was the failure to provide Muslim youth a quality education, understood since the 1980s as a basic human right and responsibility of democratic governance. We will focus on this concern for lack of sufficient time to adequately consider all the concerns raised by our interviewees.

5 Muslim Schools and Education

Very much related to the topic of socio-economic development were education and upward social mobility, including access to positions in government. Most of our interviewees singled out education as key for any personal, societal or national development. Most interviewees mentioned that EAMWS had promoted Muslim development by building Muslim schools and promoting education for Muslims. One interviewee applauded EAMWS for its success in mobilising, uniting, and sensitising Muslims for development. According to the interviewee, it was that spirit which empowered Muslims to build a number of Muslim schools in Bukoba region to promote both religious and secular education. Another interviewee asserted that the success in building Islamic schools under the EAMWS was mainly self motivated by Muslim communities acting independently, rather than relying on funding from government or elsewhere. He described personally contributing building materials for the construction of a school in his neighbourhood, transporting the bricks himself to the site. Asked by the interviewer about the source of funding for EAMWS to build Muslim schools such as Katoro in Bukoba, in Kenya, and elsewhere in

East Africa. Most funding for building schools and maintaining their function have come from individuals, as well as through charging school fees.

Another interviewee remarked that despite all their efforts, Muslims have always been the losers in education and health contests for government support, and that the community at large was aware of such social injustice. On his view, the efforts by Muslims under the EAMWS was exclusively focussed upon building schools for the Muslim communities in order to address that education gap, and not for any other reason.

But the problem was, some of Muslim development activities were taken over since as we say, German rule, British rule, even this Independence rule; there is something they have passed over to each other against Islam. Since that time, education has been based on the side of the rulers. Until we entered into Independence, and near to Independence, Muslims had seen there was a way they could enter into the system to manage education. Between 1950s-1960s, Muslims had Muslim schools. Those Muslim schools is not the ideal but from these nothing else was intended, only that to free themselves [from the oppression of ignorance and disease], just as all former rulerships paved themselves well and fully in education and health.¹⁰

In this narrative, the interviewee repeated the word freedom in relation to the ruling system, indicating the Muslim belief that through education Muslims could also achieve social equity, gainful employment, security, and healthful well being. Correlatively, this interviewee revealed that he believed the control of education and health sectors were important factors that defined sociopolitical and economic positions of all Tanzanians. On his view, because of the imbalances prevailing in education, Muslims are ranked as second class citizens in Tanzania.

10 Lakini kilichokuwa tatizo, waislamu walinyang'anywa baadhi ya shughuli zao za kiman-deleo kutoka pale tunaposema ni katika Wajerumani, Waingereza hata utawala huu waki-Uhuru; kuna kitu ambacho walirisishana dhidi ya uislamu. Elimu tangu wakati ule *ilibezi* upande wa hao watawala; mpaka tunaingia kwenye Uhuru, karibu ya kupata Uhuru waislamu walishaona kuna namna fulani na wao wanaweza wakaingia katika mfumo wa kusimamia elimu. Katika miaka ya 1950 kuja 1960, waislamu walikuwa na Muslim Schools. Zile Muslim Schools si kwamba walikuwa wanataka kufanya jambo jingine, bali nao walipenda kujikomboia kwasababu tawala zote zilizotangulia zilijiingiza vizuri na kiukamilifu katika elimu na katika tiba.

Equally debated was the decision taken by post-independence government to nationalise religious privately owned schools, banning any school from sustaining exclusively Muslim or Christian enrolments. Our interviewees who were critical of this decision considered the policy to be oppressive to Muslims. They narrated the nationalisation of education as a political move that had a hidden agenda to sabotage Muslims' efforts to secure education and therefore to ensure their own freedom. One interviewee stated that the decision perpetuated the successive governments' strategy to ensure that Muslims remain second-class citizens in Tanzania.

On the other hand, in various conversations, some interviewees expressed gratitude for the government's decision to make educational facilities available to all religious denominations. One interviewee commended non-denominational schooling because it built national unity among Tanzanians by creating environments for Muslim and Christian youth to mix together and get used to each other through sharing their school experiences. In various conversations, some interviewees also expressed gratitude for the government's decision to make educational facilities available to all religious denominations because it allowed Muslims upward economic mobility, by giving Muslims the opportunity to obtain the same quality of education as Christians. They said that many Muslims who are now established with good positions in politics and public service, because they were able to access education in the nationalised schools built by Christians.

However, most interviewees opposed the argument that nationalisation of Muslim schools helped more Muslims to access equal opportunities through equal education. They rather argued that the criteria for selection adopted in the nationalised schools left more and more Muslim students behind or out of the education system altogether, while more Christians continued to advance to higher levels of socio-economic attainment.

This sense of injustice was a major source of disenchantment with BAKWATA, which many of our interviewees saw as siding with the then government, rather than making efforts to develop schools that would provide a quality education for Muslims.

Most of the interviewees observed that in the ongoing liberalisation era of Tanzanian successive administrations, the ruling power did finally decide to return schools to their original Christian enrolment profiles which had once been nationalised. Yet the same retraction to allow original denominational enrolments was not provided to the initially Muslim schools, e.g. Zamzam and Kansene in Bukoba. These remained by law non-denominational with BAKWATA's endorsement and consent. In consequence, several problems with

obtaining government funds for Muslim children's education arose, and these concerns were raised by our interviewees.

The discussants noted that BAKWATA did not help to source funding from the private sector for the Muslim educational institutions. Asked whether Muslims received money from Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for their school building projects, one interviewee said he has never heard of IDB helping any Muslim school project. Commenting on the same concerning IDB, another interviewee said that IDB is a very recent bank and their school, named Qudus, did not know of any publically announced initiatives or proposals to enable them their school building and maintenance projects to benefit from the financial institution's dedicated social outreach policy in their school projects.

Further, some interviewees blamed the government for bias during the nationalisation of schools campaign, by their inaction with regard to nationalising the Christian minor seminaries. The seminaries were left to run as denominational training crucibles, as they were intended to be from inception. But our interviewees were of the opinion that leaving Christian seminaries to operate independently of government controls was a way of unfairly favouring one theological training tradition over another, further creating educational imbalances throughout the country, whereby more Christians would be able to obtain both basic and advanced educational experience and credentials through their seminary institutions than Muslims would be able to do.

6 Muslims' Socio-economic Development and External Funding

Another issue is where public revenue comes from and where it goes to. Most of the participants in our interviews discussed the need for money as key to promote Muslim communities' social and economic development. The majority of the interviewees regarded Muslim self-help efforts were the main source to support Muslim development projects. The interviewees accredited EAMWS for a good job in mobilising Muslims to contribute for their development, unlike BAKWATA's record. The foremost perception was that the government offered subsidies for Christian development projects but not for Muslims. One interviewee said there was a *de facto* deal between Christians and the government in what he dubbed a 'memorandum of understanding' between them to support Christian development projects.

More narrations were provided by interviewees concerning their suspicion about money laundering. They observed that the global discourse about Al Qaida was used to deter Muslim funding from external sources for Muslim

development projects. Agreements to provide community funding were thwarted by government if the contributing donors were based in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, or Indonesia. BAKWATA was accused of confiscating large sums received by Muslim citizens on the prejudicial pretext of their motives and purpose being suspect, because they were Muslim.

7 "BAKWATA is Like a Certain Dead Spirit to Oppress Muslims"

Contrary to the affection that most interviewees exhibited for the East African Muslim Welfare Society [EAMWS], they expressing frustration and hostility toward BAKWATA, blaming the latter directly for Muslim communities' critical situation of underdevelopment. Most interviewees complained that BAKWATA sided with the government and betrayed Muslims. Some expressed their views that the very *raison d'être* of BAKWATA as an organisation was ambiguous at best.

Many Muslims in this country fear BAKWATA; that it has not been a catalyst to assist them in their different matters. Therefore, you find out that BAKWATA has got big challenge; it has serious challenge from the Muslims of this country because the way it does not look as if it provides solution to them. People predict various possibilities. That is why I say, we are today youth who do not know history well. But those who know the history well, when you read it, or those who witnessed the banning of East Africa Muslim welfare society and establishment of BAKWATA, people see that BAKWATA is like a certain nightmare to oppress Muslims, ok.¹¹

Here the notion of a 'dead spirit' is used metaphorically. According to the seminal critical discourse analyst, Fairclough (1992: 194), "[m]etaphors structure the way we think and the way we act, and our systems of knowledge and belief, in a pervasive and fundamental way."

11 Waislamu wengi nchi hii wanaiogopa BAKWATA; kwamba imekuwa siyo chachu ya kuwasaidia kwenye mambo yao mbalimbali. Kwahiyo unakuta Bakwata ina '*challenge*' kubwa, ina changamoto kubwa na waislamu wa nchi hii kwasababu ilivyosimama inonekana haikuwa ni suluhisho. Watu wanadhani mambo mengi. Ndio maana nasema sisi ni vijana wa leo ambao hatujui historia vizuri. Lakini wanaojua historia vizuri, ukiisoma au walidiriki ile umoja wa waislamu ukivunjwa ule wa Afrika Mashariki na ikaundwa Bakwata watu wanaona kama BAKWATA ilikuwa ni mzimu fulani wa kuwabana waislamu, sawa.

Another interviewee who claimed three times that he was “fed up” with BAKWATA because the institution did nothing to improve the situation, explained why he had left BAKWATA and why other Muslims have started building and running their own schools. Asked whether BAKWATA could ever make any reforms that Muslims would appreciate, he emphatically rejected the possibility that BAKWATA could ever change for the better, because it had “become dirty.” In the interviewee’s words:

BAKWATA has become impossible. BAKWATA, first of all the word BAKWATA in people’s minds has affected them, BAKWATA has affected them and to date you see how it is betraying them because they stay together with it to plan some matter but when BAKWATA goes away they plan other things differently, do you get me.

Interviewer: *Therefore, in your experience, at this level of the problem, what do you think could make BAKWATA better?*

Interviewee: BAKWATA cannot become better because it has become dirty.

Interviewer: *No possibility?*

Interviewee: No possibility.¹²

8 The Shift from Government to Governance

We may sum up these observations from the field by returning to the question that was posed at the beginning of this essay: From the perspective of policy and management sciences, guiding legislators, social researchers, professional policy consultants and practitioners to shift their focus from ‘government’ to ‘governance’, how is the banning of EAMWS and the establishment of BAKWATA to be evaluated? Three of the several parameters of the new management policy studies are valuable in analysing this data from the standpoint of (i) meeting the need to engage citizens in policy making decisions, (ii) ensuring impartiality and fairness in government implementation of policy,

12 BAKWATA imeshakuwa sugu. BAKWATA, kwanza neno BAKWATA kwenye akili ya watu imesha waathiri, BAKWATA imesha waathiri na mpaka sasa unaona jinsi inavyowageuka waislamu kwasababu wanakaa kupanga mambo wote kwa pamoja halafu ikirudi huku nyuma wanakwenda kupanga mambo mengine tofauti, unanipata. **Muulizaji:** *Kwahiyo kwa uzofu wako tatizo lilipofikia unadhani hamna namna ikafanya BAKWATA ikawa bora.*

Informant Jibu: BAKWATA haiwezi ikawa bora kwasababu ilishakuwa chafu. **Interviewer Muulizaji:** *Hakuna uwezekano? Jibu:* Hakuna uwezekano.

and (iii) protecting citizens' right to mobilize and pursue self-determined agendas collectively.

8.1 *Meeting the Demand for Participatory Governance*

From the public opinion gathered and carefully analysed, we concluded the following: By establishing BAKWATA and later negotiating with it, the Tanzanian government has tried to foster unity and peace, and to prevent and reconcile conflicts within Islam and between Islam and the central state. In the contemporary context of blurred boundaries between public and private spheres, and the active stimulation of public-private partnerships and civil society self-help engagement, this effort to unify people through their religious identities appears to be a laudable enterprise. But from the contemporary perspective which enlists the importance of democratic participation in government policy making, the abolition of EAMWS seems to have been too much of a top-down approach to social reform. And the insistence on its successor, BAKWATA, as "the supreme Muslim Council for Tanzania,"¹³ has evolved into a manifest violation of the principle of self-governance by civil society groups, a principle which stresses the importance of including minority voices in decision-making at all levels of governance.

From the perspective of our many interviewees, BAKWATA is no longer recognised by those who are supposed to be represented by it. It is not perceived by the majority of its constituents as a viable organisation functioning in their interests. This compels one to question if this umbrella organisation any longer serves its purpose. From the data sourced through our interviews, we can infer that BAKWATA is no longer recognised as the supreme or national Muslim council by its critics. This in itself is a source of tensions between majority and minority voices within the Muslim community, and between that community and the Tanzanian government.

Of course, one might argue that since BAKWATA is part of the problem of disunity in the country, then its reform therefore must be regarded as part of the solution. But, on the basis of our interviewees' strongly expressed views, one must question if this is still possible. Those we talked to used strong wordings such as, "BAKWATA is like a certain dead spirit to oppress Muslims;" "it has become dirty;" "BAKWATA has betrayed Muslims;" "it has become impossible" and "we are fed up with it."

From a contemporary governance perspective, the current Tanzanian government's notion of national unity may be too narrow. 'Unity' does not signify

13 We referred already to the competing claim of BARAZA KUU which also labels itself to be the 'supreme' Muslim council.

uniformity. Being one does not imply that all people are the same. Managing diversity implies that you leave room for otherness, and that minorities have a voice in the populace's decision-making.

8.2 *Contemporary Secularism as Impartial and Equal Treatment*

With respect to the meaning of a secular state, again from a contemporary governance perspective, one may question whether the Union Republic of Tanzania's definition is in keeping with current norms. On the one hand, the notion of 'civic religion' has been part of the discourse about Tanzania's public space since Independence. This is clearly demonstrated by many markers; e.g. in the national anthem (Westerlund 1992), in the country's widely promulgated National Framework on Good Governance (United Republic of Tanzania 1999: 4-5). Further, the URT government claims explicitly that it wants to collaborate with religious and faith-based organisations; and in fact it does so.

Yet in this neo-liberal era, collaboration between a government and religious or faith-based organisations is unavoidable. In this sense, today's neo-liberal era has been characterised as a *post-secular* era (Molendijk et al. 2003). Thus, when the government collaborates with faith-based organisations, there is no traditional secularist standard, in the sense of sustaining a strict separation between religion and state, which is at stake. Rather, the normative concern today concerns the degree and quality of the state's neutrality and impartiality with respect to all religions, in the sense of its equal treatment of its citizens without preference for one or another faith-based organization or religious identity. And this is what our interviewees were questioning. Giving various examples, they said that the Tanzanian government uses different standards in dealing with Christians and Muslims.¹⁴

8.3 *The Political Right to Mobilise*

From the principle of encouraging self-governance of societal groups in handling political, social and economic issues, the Political Parties Act prohibiting political parties based on religion needs to be reconsidered. If a political party is considered to be a civil society organisation, is this Act not a violation of the fundamental right of citizens to organize themselves on the basis of whatever principle?¹⁵ In comparative perspective, Christian Democratic parties have

14 This perception has been articulated on a global scale, as what Ali Mazrui (2006: 96, 113) called 'global Apartheid', that is, the double moral standard by which Muslims and Christians the world over are increasingly treated.

15 On closer inspection, the Political Parties Act (dated 1st July 1992) reads that "no political party shall qualify for registration if by its constitution or policy [it] aims to advocate or further the interests of any religious belief or group" (section 8). Strictly speaking, the Act

ruled various European states for a long time. The population of Indonesia consists for 80% of Muslims and this country allows Islamic parties. Yet, these parties never attracted more than 10% of the electorate.¹⁶

Of course, allowing political parties to be based on religious principles requires a dualism between the Party and the Government. But in Tanzania the link between the ruling Party and the Government is this still very close. The Constitution Review process that we started with, but also the ongoing Zanzibar issue, are cases in point.

9 Conclusion

In answer to the question of how the Tanzanian government has managed religious diversity, and how its management style is to be evaluated from the perspective of the shift from 'government' to 'governance', we conclude that the management of religious diversity has been weakened by its top-down approach. The government has ignored self-governance of some religious groups and silenced minority voices in the processes of national decision-making. Whereas the nation adopted a neo-liberal agenda in the economic by allowing free markets, and to some extent in the political sphere by allowing more political parties, there continues to be a centralised approach to the state's administrative policies in the society's religious sphere.

From what can be gathered in our interviewees' perspectives, to balance this tendency requires a revision of the principle of strict separation between religion and state. The banning of EAMWS was a state involvement in religious affairs in any case; it clearly contrasted with Tanzania's self-definition as a secular state. Of course, it may be argued that giving free license to religious groups' organisational activities may threaten the unity of the country. But the alternative, that of silencing the voices of minorities, may strengthen their resentment, and in the long run may threaten national unity even more.

does not say that parties may not be based on belief or faith. Its main concern is the unity of the country. It is good to distinguish between religious organisations (organisations that aim to further their religious beliefs) and faith-based organisations.

16 What large-scale surveys such as the Gallop and Pew polls on religion, but also the World Value Survey, seem to indicate is that the overwhelming majority of Muslims in the world says that Islam is a spiritual and moral force in their personal lives, and has no political agenda. See Esposito and Mogahed (2007).

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